

THE SMALLEST ESTATES IN DOMESDAY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

K. A. BAILEY

This paper examines the evidence in the Domesday folios for Buckinghamshire relating to estates which were assessed at two hides or less, and in addition those which may have had larger assessments, but which had no more than two ploughlands. It will be shown that the wholesale redistribution of property which occurred after 1066 was not associated with any significant consolidation of the hitherto very fragmented pattern in many parts of Bucks. The question of whether these small estates represent discrete agricultural entities, or were part of the communal farming arrangements is also addressed. The paper concludes that despite their size, small estates were often dynamic elements in the landscape in 1086, and continued to be so for many centuries thereafter, with numbers being constantly augmented through inheritance and sale.

I

The Buckinghamshire Domesday contains details of 393 separate estates, although many of them are certainly not manors and often have few or no resources and population enumerated.¹ This paper is concerned with those whose geld assessment falls in the range nought-to-two hides, and in addition those with larger hidages, but with two ploughlands or less. (Conversely, some of the estates with assessments of less than two hides have more than two ploughlands, indicating that they are 'beneficially hidated'. That is, they have had their geld obligation reduced by the king, either before 1066, or since the Conquest; it is impossible to tell which in the case of Bucks.)

There are 149 estates with two hides or less (38% of the county total) and a further eighteen (4.6%) assessed at more than two hides, but with less than two ploughlands. Very small properties therefore account for almost half of all those in Bucks in 1086. Their total assessment, however, is only 219 hides, little more than 10% of the total. They are said to have land for 249 ploughs (8.3%), with only 208 actually at work (10.1%), and many of the smallest entities have none at all. The total recorded population of these estates was 540 (10.6%). Only twenty-five small estates are recorded as having demesne (land farmed for the tenant-in-chief, as opposed to the peasantry), representing 11% of the total, compared with 99% of larger properties. Twenty-six small estates were described as manors in 1086 (15%), and a further nineteen had lost that status since 1066 (total 27%).

This compares with 85% of holdings with more than two hides and/or two ploughlands.

Small Domesday properties are not therefore very significant in terms of their contribution to agricultural activity across Bucks. This is not so straightforward as it seems, however, since many of the very small properties are found in divided villis, where there are between two and ten entries under the same name in Domesday Book. In such cases, it is necessary to take an aggregate view of the resources deployed, always remembering that we have no evidence this early for the nature of field systems in Bucks, nor indeed of the pattern of settlements. The extent to which communal, open-field farming had developed, and with it the consolidation of hitherto scattered farms and hamlets into [planned] villages, cannot be discerned from the Domesday data. It may be, for example, that small estates in highly-fragmented villis were still separate farming units and settlement nuclei. Conversely, they may be part of much larger systems which are merely recorded separately because of ownership differences, which had yet to be consolidated after the events of 1066, although fragmented manorial structures remained commonplace in Bucks throughout the medieval period and beyond. When more detailed records become available in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and beyond, it is clear that in many Bucks parishes with open field systems, the lands of various manors and pseudo-manors, whose roots may well go back to Domesday Book and beyond, are intermingled in the fields and furlongs in such a way as to achieve

a roughly equitable sharing of resources. This does not, of course, tell us what the position was in 1086, nor how it had changed subsequently. What it does show, however, is that very small estates were long-lived and tenacious, surviving very significant upheavals in terms of ownership and land use, when it might have been expected that they would be consolidated or exchanged to achieve larger, more economic entities. In areas where the communal system of open fields did not occur, or where small subsidiary settlements survived in champion country, small estates obviously had even more chance of retaining their independence. It should also be remembered that there was a continuous process of creating new, very small units of property after 1066 as well as before, both by the operation of the laws of inheritance and by granting land to a vast range of religious foundations, many of them newly-created (for instance Biddlesden and Luffield Abbeys, Tickford and Snelshall Priors, to name only a few Bucks examples). Medieval cartularies are replete with the exchange of virgate-holdings of between fifteen and forty acres.

The fact that very small estates often occur in fragmented villis means that there are more of them in the north and east of the county than in the south: Chiltern/Aylesbury Hundreds, 36 (although there are none in Stoke Hundred, where the many detached parts of parishes are not assessed separately); Ashendon, 22; Cottesloe, 49; Buckingham, 17; and Newport, 43.

Table 1 summarises the relevant data for small estates, divided into broad size bands. Table 2 reduces this to a common basis of resources per hide.

Taking all 167 estates together, it can be seen that the average geld assessment is only 1.31 hides, compared with about 5.5 hides for all estates in Bucks. (Excluding small holdings, the average size increases to 8.4 hides.) If we assume that the ploughland (*terra x carucis*) formula is a measure of arable potential, and that the average annual output of the contemporary plough was one hundred acres, these estates had a mean capacity of only 148 acres, ranging from a mere 33 acres on those assessed at less than half a hide to 291 acres for those with two hides. Many of the smallest holdings had no recorded ploughs at work, not even fractions where the balance was made up by other units within the same vill in the case of multiple

entries. The apparent average of ploughed land was 124 acres, ranging from only eight in the case of holdings up to 0.5 hides to 271 on two-hide estates.

Population statistics in Domesday Book are even more questionable than those related to physical attributes. There is a consensus that figures for the free and semi-free members of the community (freemen, villeins, bordars, cottars) represent the heads of households, and need therefore to be grossed up by some multiplier to get the total. This ranges from 2.5-5, depending upon the authority selected and the assumptions made therein about the accuracy of the original data. It is equally commonly assumed that the figures for slaves (*servi*) represent individuals who formed part of the lord's demesne assets. Taking the recorded data first, the average number of people on small Bucks estates in 1086 was 3.23, ranging from 0.62 on properties of less than half a hide to 6.31 on those with two hides. A multiplier of five gives an overall average of 14-15 people per estate, ranging between 3 and 26 at the two extremes. In no case, therefore, need the population of these entities have been more than three or four family groups, and the number of dwellings involved would have ranged from about one to five at the maximum.

Turning to the values for these estates given in Domesday Book, and overlooking again what the precise significance of the figures may be, the total value is just under £200, and the average just 24/-. The mean value of estates of less than half a hide was only 3s.7d., while two-hide estates averaged 44/-. These data all point to a rough and ready basis of valuing one hide at 20/-, and therefore vary directly in proportion.

Reworked on a common basis of resources per hide, the smallest Bucks estates vary relatively little from one another in certain respects, more so in others. They have about 130 acres of potential arable land and 13-14 people per hide, with an average value of just over 20/-. Actual arable varies widely, however. The mean is 106 acres per hide, but this increases from 36 acres for estates of less than half a hide to 135 for those with two hides. This suggests that the smallest units could only have been made viable in conjunction with other holdings in the same or immediately adjacent villis, whereas the slightly larger ones may well have been sustainable farms or hamlets.

The 167 estates under consideration were far from uniformly distributed between the seventy-

TABLE 1 Small Buckinghamshire Estates in 1086 by Size Category

A. Total Values							
Hides	No.	Total H	Ploughland	Ploughteam	Popn	Value	Demesnes
<0.5	13	2.86	4.25	1.00	8	46.83	0
0.5	29	14.50	26.25	21.50	44	357.50	3
0.5-1	12	10.00	15.00	12.00	34	196.67	0
1	34	34.00	39.50	29.50	90	700.00	2
<i>S/T 0-1</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>61.36</i>	<i>85.00</i>	<i>64.00</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>1301.00</i>	<i>5</i>
1-1.5	11	13.73	12.50	8.25	29	180.00	1
1.5	15	22.50	23.00	18.25	52	422.00	3
1.5-2	6	10.44	12.00	11.00	23	200.00	2
2	29	58.00	84.50	78.50	183	1271.00	14
<i>S/T 1-2</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>104.67</i>	<i>132.00</i>	<i>116.00</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>2073.00</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>S/T 0-2</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>166.03</i>	<i>217.00</i>	<i>180.00</i>	<i>463</i>	<i>3374.00</i>	<i>25</i>
2+	18	52.74	32.00	28.00	77	622.00	8
<i>Total</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>218.77</i>	<i>249.00</i>	<i>208.00</i>	<i>540</i>	<i>3996.00</i>	<i>33</i>
B. Average Values							
Hides	Total H	Ploughland	Ploughteam	Popn	Value		
<0.5	0.22	0.33	0.08	0.62	3.60		
0.5	0.50	0.90	0.74	1.52	12.33		
0.5-1	0.83	1.25	1.00	2.83	16.39		
1	1.00	1.16	0.87	2.65	20.59		
<i>S/T 0-1</i>	<i>0.70</i>	<i>0.97</i>	<i>0.73</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>14.78</i>		
1-1.5	1.25	1.14	0.75	2.64	16.36		
1.5	1.50	1.53	1.22	3.47	28.13		
1.5-2	1.74	1.74	1.83	3.83	33.33		
2	2.00	2.91	2.71	6.31	43.83		
<i>S/T 1-2</i>	<i>1.72</i>	<i>2.16</i>	<i>1.90</i>	<i>4.70</i>	<i>33.98</i>		
<i>S/T 0-2</i>	<i>1.11</i>	<i>1.46</i>	<i>1.21</i>	<i>3.11</i>	<i>22.64</i>		
2+	2.93	1.77	1.56	4.28	34.56		
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.31</i>	<i>1.49</i>	<i>1.24</i>	<i>3.23</i>	<i>23.93</i>		

Notes: S/T=sub-total; H=hides; Value in shillings; 2+ hides includes only estates which have two ploughlands or less

one individuals who held land in Bucks in 1086, either in terms of who they were, or the total size of their holdings in the county. Thus, the king and queen had no very small properties, and among the churchmen only the bishop of Lincoln and Reinbald the priest had such lands. Reinbald was a continental appointee of Edward the Confessor and an important man at court. He had lands in several shires, of which the single hide at Boveney was an unimportant part. It belonged, however, to the minster church at Cookham, just over the Thames in Berkshire, also held by Reinbald. The local bishop of Lincoln (moved from Dorchester [Oxon.] after 1066) had acquired two of his small estates from Leofric, a man of Harold Godwineson, either by

grant or by forfeit. An unnamed half-hide in Burnham Hundred has been identified with that part of Beaconsfield which lay in Hertfordshire until the nineteenth century.² It lay in Burnham parish, but gelded with Lude, whose 1.5 hides made a ten-hide unit with neighbouring Wooburn. These were not, therefore, traditional properties of the diocese. Gawcott, on the other hand, assessed at one hide, belonged to the endowment of the church at Buckingham, but was treated separately from it.³ This presumably relates in some way to the special status of the inhabitants, 'rent-paying cottagers', who gave their name to the settlement (OE *gafol cot*).⁴ In 1086 there were two bordars (plus families) and one slave here, working 1.5 ploughs (the

TABLE 2 Small Buckinghamshire Estates in 1086: Rebased Data (Per Hide)

Size	PL	Teams	Popn	Value
<0.5	1.50	0.36	2.77	16.36
0.5	1.80	1.48	3.04	24.66
0.5-1	1.50	1.20	3.40	19.67
1	1.16	0.87	2.65	20.59
<i>S/T 0-1</i>	<i>1.39</i>	<i>1.04</i>	<i>2.87</i>	<i>21.20</i>
1-1.5	0.91	0.60	2.11	13.09
1.5	1.02	0.81	2.31	18.76
1.5-2	1.15	1.05	2.20	19.16
2	1.46	1.35	3.16	21.91
<i>S/T 1-2</i>	<i>1.26</i>	<i>1.11</i>	<i>2.74</i>	<i>19.81</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.31</i>	<i>1.08</i>	<i>2.79</i>	<i>20.32</i>
<i>All Bucks</i>	<i>1.08</i>	<i>0.97</i>	<i>2.39</i>	<i>18.35</i>

Notes: See Table 1B

balance being the 3.5 ploughs of the men of Buckingham-cum-Bourton).⁵

When we turn to lay tenants-in-chief, it is clear that the smallest estates were concentrated in the hands of the great magnates, and in those of men who held only a single scrap of land, most of them survivals from before 1066. On the seven holdings of more than one hundred hides in Bucks (total 1,074 hides, 51% of the county hidage), there were eighty-nine properties of two hides or less (total 97.75 hides) and another ten which gelded for more, but had two ploughlands or less (33.31 hides). Together, these represent three-fifths of the estates under consideration, but only 12% of these men's holdings. For example, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, William I's half-brother, had a portfolio of forty-three estates totalling 223 hides, which included seventeen very small properties. Miles Crispin, with a total holding in Bucks of 123 hides in thirty-three estates, had twenty very small properties.

The twenty-one individuals holding between ten and one hundred hides (total 546.6 hides), on the other hand, had only thirty-one very small estates, assessed at 39.6 hides (7.25%). This difference reflects the fact that large post-Conquest holdings in Bucks were built up from a large number of Anglo-Saxon estates, whereas the middling beneficiaries often had only one or two more substantial properties, typically of five or ten hides, sequestered from thegns who in many cases held no other land (in Bucks, at least).

The thirty-three tenants-in-chief with ten hides or less held in aggregate only 173.6 hides (8% of the shire total), of which 39.75 hides were on thirty estates of less than two hides/ploughlands (23% of their total). In many cases, these small scraps were the only land of the men concerned, and they can have been little more than better-off examples of the peasantry who worked their land. Many of the Englishmen whom fate had spared the loss of their land must have struggled to survive. In divided villis they or members of their families no doubt hired out their labour to more prosperous neighbours. Among the very small landowners was Godwin the priest who held a virgate in Wavendon (about 15-20 acres), one of the very few references to the parish clergy in the Bucks Domesday. Thurstan, the priest of Wingrave, had more land (half a hide), but was merely the subtenant of Miles Crispin. Another Godwin, the beadle in Soulbury, held half a hide in 1086, which he alleged had been forfeited by Alric Bolest after 1066.⁶

Given their often very limited resources, it is not surprising that the majority of small estates were not considered to have manorial status.⁷ In 1086, only 16% did so, although another 11% had been manors in 1066 and lost that status in the intervening period.

None of those assessed at less than 0.5 hides were manors at either date, and only one half-hide estate (Amersham 6) was so described, although that may have been a scribal error, for the descrip-

TABLE 3 Manorial Status of Small Buckinghamshire Estates

Hides	<i>Manerium</i>	<i>Pro Uno Manerio</i>	<i>Se Defendit</i>	Pre- 1066	Never? 1066	Total
<0.5	0	0	0	0	13	13
0.5	1	0	0	0	28	29
0.5-1	0	1	0	0	10	11
1	0	2	1	3	27	33
1-1.5	0	1	0	1	8	10
1.5	0	0	0	3	11	14
1.5-2	0	0	0	1	4	5
2	1	0	0	4	12	17
<2 >2PL	2	6	3	3	3	17
>2 <2PL	2	6	0	4	6	18
Total	6	16	4	19	122	167
%	3.6	9.6	2.4	11.4	73	

Note: PL=ploughlands

tion was not applied to any of the other six half-hide holdings in Amersham and Chesham. In the case of estates with between half and one hide, there was also only one manor (Hardmead 2). Three one-hide estates were manors in 1086 (Bourton, Broughton 2 and Hardmead 4), and a further three had been in 1066 (Haseley, Lavendon 9 and Little Brickhill). The concentration of these 'manors' in the north-east reflects the high level of fragmentation of villis, as well as the active clearance of land, probably by freemen (usually called 'thegns' in Domesday Book [see below]), which was often associated with a dispersed settlement pattern of farms and hamlets. Only one holding of 1-2 hides was a manor in 1086 (an unnamed property in Moulsoe Hundred), although five others had been (Stoke Goldington 1; Lude; Clifton Reynes 1 & 5 and an unnamed holding in Waddesdon Hundred, probably linked to Hoggston). Two-hide estates, although many of them had not only ploughs at work, but also meadow, woodland and reasonable values, were equally unlikely to be manors. Tetchwick, unusually not part of a subdivided vill, is the only example. Ludgershall 2, Swanbourne 5, Leckhampstead 1 and Maids Moreton 1 had all been downgraded since 1066. Of the 132 Bucks holdings with two hides and two ploughlands or less, only nineteen were manors in 1066, and seven in 1086.

The picture is completely different for estates which were 'beneficially hidated' (that is, assessed at two hides or less, but with significantly more population and resources). There are seventeen of them and eleven were manors in 1086, compared with fourteen at the Conquest. The status of Boycott is unclear, since it appears in the Oxfordshire folios which do not give the same information. Otherwise only Soulbury 2 and Dadford 2 were not manors in 1086. Estates assessed at more than two hides but with two ploughlands or less resemble estates of less than two hides. Eight were manors in 1086, twelve in 1066. Although there are exceptions, it seems that two hides and two ploughlands were seen as some kind of threshold of manorial status, except in areas of highly fragmented settlement and, probably, individual farming effort, where very small entities could become and survive as manors.

The most common descriptor of manors in this group is that 'X holds Y *pro uno manerio*', 'as one manor' (16 examples [62% of this group, cf. 29%

for Bucks as a whole]), six are denoted by the marginal **M** rubric (23%, cf. 55%), and four 'answered for X hides' (15%, cf. 16%). This suggests that very small manors were not generally considered to be as fully-fledged as those assessed at five or ten hides and more. The proportion of small estates which had lost their manorial status between 1066 and 1086, 11%, is identical with the county as a whole.

II

This section is concerned with two groups of anomalies within the body of the smallest Domesday estates: those whose geld assessment is two hides or less, but which are said to have land for more than two ploughs, and those with assessments of more than two hides, but with two ploughlands or less. The first are examples of 'beneficial hidation', where the agricultural and population resources are in excess of what might be expected in relation to tax liability. In other words, the tenant-in-chief had to find less, often far less, to pay the king's geld demands than less fortunate neighbours. The second represent the converse of this situation, where the resources of the estate were less than might be expected, and where the incidence of taxation was penal. In both cases, virtually all of the estates are in divided villis, and the occurrence of beneficial or punitive hidation is clearly not random. (For the purposes of this discussion the borough of Buckingham [one hide; twelve ploughlands] has been ignored, since its status, population and resources are atypical of the great majority of estates. It was both an urban centre, with a well-endowed minster church, and the centre of a large area of arable land, some of which was described in Domesday under other, named villis.⁸)

There are seventeen beneficially-hidated small estates in the county in 1086, whose principal attributes are summarised in Table 4. Unusually for small Domesday properties, ten of them were described as a manor in 1086, and three had been in 1066. As such, they constitute the majority of small estates with manorial status. Many of these estates belong with other, larger manors in terms of their resources.

The total assessment of these seventeen properties is 30.45 hides, although twelve of them gelded at exactly two hides. They had an arable capacity of 71 ploughlands, roughly 7,000 acres, although only

TABLE 4 Small Beneficially-Hidated Estates in 1086

Estate	Owner 1066	1086	Hides	PL	PT	TT	DT	V	B	S	Pop
Drayton P 1	2 Aelfd Cild m	Bayeux	0.75	3	3	3	0	2	3		5
Boycott	n/a	Reinbald	1	3	1	0	1	1			1
Soulbury 2	Brictric m	Crispin	1.37	3	2	1	1	2			2
Chesham 2	Har m/Lfwn m	Bayeux	1.5	3	3	2	1	2	3	2	7
Soulbury 4	Edeva m	Jocelyn	1.83	4	4	3	1	4	2	3	9
Bedgrove	Alwin V m	Bayeux	2	3	3	2	1	5	5		10
Ibstone 1	Tovi KT	Hervey	2	5	4	2	2	7		4	11
Aston Sand 1	Avelin KT	Bayeux	2	5	5	2	3	7		4	11
Nashway	Edith m	Ivry	2	4	4	2	2	4	2	2	8
Grendon U	Boding	Ferrers	2	8	8	5	3	12	2	4	18
Wingrave 4	Brictric m	Crispin	2	3	3	2	1	7			7
Dadford 1	Burgred m	Ivry	2	4	1	1	0	4	1		5
Dadford 2	Raven/Wulfwd	Hugh	2	4	1	1	0		3		3
Shenley CE 1	Burchard	Hugh	2	10	8	5	3	5		6	11
Lavendon 1	Burgred m	Coutances	2	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	10
Wavendon 1	Godnir	Mortain	2	2.5	2	1	1	2	3	1	6
Wavendon 2	Harold m	Mortain	2	2.5	2	1	1	2	3	2	7

Key: 1086 – tenant-in-chief; PL – ploughlands; PT – plough teams; TT – tenants' teams; DT – demesne teams; V – villeins; B – bordars; S – slaves; Pop – total population

58 ploughs were at work in 1086, 35 operated by the tenants and 23 on the demesnes (60:40%, which compares with about 70:30% for all Bucks estates with demesnes). The enumerated population was 131 (50% villeins; 25% bordars and 25% slaves; [the Bucks averages are 57%, 26% and 17%, respectively]). The total value was £49 10s. At an average of 20/- per hide (see above), the expected hidage of these estates would therefore be 49.5, indicating an overall reduction of 39%, a considerable gain to those responsible for paying the geld, and an equivalent loss to the king's treasury.

The higher than average proportion of demesne ploughteams and slaves in this group of estates indicates that some at least were equivalent to demesne or home farms, and some may have been discrete entities, with their own buildings and fields in some cases. The most likely candidates for this are: Shenley Church End 1 (38% demesne teams and 54% slaves); Ibstone 1 (50 and 36%); Aston Sandford 1 (60 and 36%) and possibly Lavendon 1 (50 and 30%). All these are in divided villis, although all still have substantial amounts of tenant land. The most favourable geld liability is found at Grendon Underwood and Shenley Church End. In the latter case, it is assumed that the burden of eight hides had been transferred to Earl Hugh of Chester's manor at Mentmore.⁹ Grendon is more

problematic. It lies in ancient Bernwood and seems to have been a centre of active clearance and arable expansion in the late-eleventh century, with eight ploughs at work and a (grossed-up) population of about 75. One would expect at least a five-hide estate here. In 1086 it was held, along with part of neighbouring Shipton Lee, by Henry of Ferrers, his only Bucks estates. In 1066, both had been in the hands of Boding the constable, an important figure in the second rank of the lay hierarchy. They were likewise his only local properties. Shipton is neither beneficially nor punitively hidated (seven hides; seven ploughlands), although only four ploughs were at work and the population was only about 25. Perhaps they were considered together as an economic entity, but assessed very unequally. Another highly beneficial assessment was at Drayton Parslow 1, which gelded at only three virgates, but had three ploughteams at work and a population of around 25. In 1066 it was held by two brothers, Aelfward Cild's men, and in 1086 by Odo of Bayeux. (Although assessed at only 2.25 hides, the other estate at Drayton was equally favoured, having eight ploughlands and 5.5 teams. It owed guard duty at Windsor Castle, which may account for the geld reduction.¹⁰)

Soulbury 2 and 4 also enjoyed favourable tax status in 1086. Together assessed at only 3.2 hides,

they had seven ploughlands and six teams at work. They did not form part of a single entity, however, for Soulbury was very much a parish of multiple settlements. Soulbury 2 has been identified from its later manorial history as Bragenham, on the eastern bank of the Ouzel, while Soulbury 4 appears to have been Chelmscott.¹¹ The former had only two villein families, perhaps ten individuals, each working one team, of which one was said to be in demesne. The total value was only 20/-. This seems to have been a marginal settlement on the poor soils of the glacial and Woburn sands. Its name probably derives from OE **bræcen, hamm*, 'bracken-infested land by a river', which well describes its situation, rather than from an obscure personal name.¹² Chelmscott on the west side of the Ouzel was more intensively farmed, although not much more valuable (40/-). Here, about 30-35 people worked four ploughs, with three slaves and one plough in demesne. Assuming a team of two slaves to work the plough, the third was probably engaged at the watermill, which at 16/- contributed 40% of the manor's wealth, no doubt serving other local estates without mills of their own.

It is possible that the reduced geld liability of some estates had arisen before 1066. Soulbury 2 and Wingrave 4 had both been held by a man of Brictric, and both passed to Miles Crispin. At

Dadford near Stowe, there were two two-hide estates, each said to have land for four ploughs, but with only one apiece at work in 1086. Dadford 1 had been transferred from Leofwine, Burgred's man to Roger of Ivry, whose subtenant was Haimard. This estate was a manor, with four bordars and one slave. Although Domesday Book does not allocate the single plough to the demesne, it seems likely that this was in fact a demesne holding, with the population working directly for the lord, and only smallholdings of their own. Dadford 2 was held in 1066 by two thegns, Raven and Wulfward, and in 1086 by Hugh son of Gozhere, 'in alms'. Here three bordar families worked the land, again probably as a home farm. The combined arable of only c.200 acres compares with woodland for 400 swine, possibly 600 acres, which suggests that the ploughland assessment was based on an assumption of rapid woodland clearance. Neither Haimard nor Hugh is recorded as having any other property, in Bucks or elsewhere.

III

At the other end of the spectrum of small Domesday estates are those with two ploughlands or less, but having hidages in excess of two. There are eighteen of these, the great majority in the

TABLE 5 Small Punitive-Hidated Estates in 1086

Estate	Holder 1066	1086	Hides	PL	PT	TT	DT	V	B	S	Pop
Waldridge 1	1 M/1 F	Bayeux	2.25	2	2	1	1	2		1	3
Cheddington 7	Fin	Swarting	2.25	1	1	1	0	1		2	3
Lavendon 6	Wulfwig m	Giffard	2.31	2	2	1	1	5	8		13
Lavendon 7	Hunman, Alli m	Judith	2.31	2	2	1	1	3	2		5
Gt. Linford 4	3 Thegns	Bolbec	2.37	2	2	1	1	5	2		7
Grove	2 Bros.	Jocelyn	2.5	2	1	1	0	2			2
Shenley BE 1	Wulfward KT	Artificer	2.5	2	2	2	0	8		2	10
Shenley BE 2	Harold m	Urso	2.5	2	2	1	1				??
Lillingstone L 1	n/a	Artificer	2.5	2	2	1	1	3	1		4
Lillingstone L 2	n/a	Benzelin	2.5	2	2	1	1	5	1	1	7
Caldecote 3	Aelfric m	Swarting	2.5	1	1	1	0		2		2
Lenborough 2	Alric m	Giffard	3.0	2	1	1	0		2		2
Emberton	1 Godric/Wulfric	Coutances	3.0	2	2	2	0	2	2		4
Pitstone 1	Aelfgeat	Mortain	3.25	1	1	1	0		1		1
Pitstone 2	2 St. Albans m	Mortain	3.25	1	0.5	0.5	0		2		2
Caldecote 2	2 Ulf m	Ansculf	3.25	2	1	0	1	1			1
Pitstone 5	Brictric m	Crispin	5.0	2	1.5	0.5	1	3	1		4
Pitstone 4	Leofwin m	Giffard	5.5	2	2	2	0	3	3	1	7

Key: 1086 – tenant-in-chief; PL – ploughlands; PT – plough teams; TT – tenants' teams; DT – demesne teams; V – villeins; B – bordars; S – slaves; pop – total population

centre and north of the county, but with four estates at Pitstone in the Chiltern region.

The great majority of this group shows little significant variation between the geld assessment and the arable capacity expressed as land for x ploughs. Most have three hides or less, and two ploughlands. Only Cheddington 7, Caldecote 3 and Pitstone 1 and 2 have major discrepancies here. Much more onerous was the position at Pitstone 4 and 5, where a geld liability of 10.5 hides was supported by only four ploughlands, with 3.5 ploughs actually at work. The value of these two estates – 40/- each – is typical of two-hide properties. The presence of this group of punitively-hidated estates in Pitstone, which had six subdivisions is unlikely to be coincidental, although as so often with Domesday statistics, it is difficult to unravel the facts behind the bald data.

Pitstone, of course, is a classic strip parish of the chalk, stretching across successive bands of rock and soil to provide a balance of arable, meadow and upland grazing, with a suitable water supply at the scarp foot. It is seven miles long, but never more than one mile wide, with several settlement centres: Pitstone Green, Church End, Barley End and Nettleden, most probably in existence in the eleventh century. Unusually, all six subdivisions fall within the scope of this survey. The total hidage was 20.25, but there were only 7.5 ploughlands, and 6.5 teams at work, about 650 acres of arable out of a total area of 2,459 acres. The population was about 75 in total, with none recorded at Pitstone 3, despite the presence of half a plough. The degree of confusion which seems to surround the entries suggests that the tenurial position was in a state of flux before 1066, possibly reflecting the wide scatter of settlement and resources.¹³

With the exception of Pitstone 5 (five hides) and 4 (5.5 hides), both very under-resourced as we have seen, which may represent two thegnly holdings, although their pre-Conquest owners were not so

described, the other holdings are small fragments with odd assessments. It seems that within the territory which developed into Pitstone parish, an overall geld liability of twenty hides had been parcelled out in an arbitrary fashion in relation to the various land holders and their resources. This view is supported by the fact that three of the estates passed to the count of Mortain from sundry Englishmen (although they continued to have different sub-tenants: Ralph, Bernard and Fulkhold). Ralph held both Pitstone 1 and 4 from different overlords, although that does not necessarily mean that they were contiguous. The three entries for the count of Mortain are followed by one of those characteristically delphic statements which so tantalise the student of Domesday Book. It says that Thorgils, the count's man, took six hides from the manor of Pitstone, *which the count himself wrongly holds*, in his lordship.¹⁴ Since no permutation of Mortain's lands here makes six hides (1 and 2 together are 6.5 hides), it is difficult to see what the scribe means. Both estates followed the usual descent from Mortain, and Thorgils is not otherwise mentioned in Bucks.

IV

At the very bottom of the hierarchy of eleventh-century landholdings are the fourteen Domesday 'estates' with geld liabilities of a quarter-hide or less. All are in subdivided vills, with the exception of Southcote and an anonymous holding in Cottesloe Hundred, which Elvey would assign to Little Brook in Grove.¹⁵ Three of these properties are assessed at one half-virgate, the rest at one virgate (plus six acres in the case of Southcote). Their agricultural potential was, however, rated more highly (4.25 ploughlands cf. 2.86 hides), although in practice only three had *any* ploughteams at work: Hardmead 3 (two oxen), North Marston 2 (two oxen) and Hollingdon 2 (four oxen). Beachendon 1 and Burston 2 had neither ploughlands nor teams,

TABLE 6 Pitstone in 1066-1086

Est.	Holder 1066	Holder 1086	Hides	PL	PT	Pop	Value
1	Aelfgeat of Aylesbury	Mortain	3.25	1	1	1	25
2	2 St. Albans men	Mortain	3.25	1	0.5	2	20
3	Gladwin, St. Alban m	Mortain	1.25	0.5	0.5	0	10
4	Thorulf, Leofwin m	Giffard	5.5	2	2	7	40
5	Leofsig, Brictric m	Crispin	5	2	1.5	4	40
6	Leofsig, Brictric m	Crispin	2	1	1	3	20

even though two villeins are enumerated at the latter. Indeed, eight of the fourteen have no recorded population. It seems likely that as at Pitstone (see above), the fragmentation of many Bucks vills before 1066 was related only to questions of landownership, whereas the reality on the ground was often a single settlement with a single field system. Certainly those estates with less than the necessary eight oxen to pull a plough, and with inhabitants but no apparent means of subsistence, must have worked in concert with their neighbours. Despite this, none of these pocket handkerchief properties was valueless. They range from 2/- to 6/-, with an average of 3s.4d., which is equivalent to about 16s.4d. per hide, not too different from the 20/-:one hide 'norm'. Wavendon 5 is one of the more interesting of these entries, its one virgate being held in both 1066 and 1086 by Godwin the priest, one of a tiny handful of references to the church in the Bucks Domesday, and one which indicates that here at least, a parochial church had already been built. The land assigned to Godwin was capable of supporting half a plough (about fifty acres), although none was at work. Nevertheless, three bordars are assigned, perhaps fifteen individuals in all, who must have worked alongside the other peasants in Wavendon to support their priest. They may represent recently manumitted slaves.¹⁶

Half-hide estates are much more common (29), although even here eight have no ploughteams and eight no inhabitants (six having neither). One, Cheddington 6, was described as 'waste'. In aggregate these holdings may be said to be beneficially-hidated, since the ploughland capacity is 26.25, but in practice only 20.5 teams were at work, two of them (at Little Missenden 3 and Chesham 1) in demesne. The total population in this group was 44, perhaps 200-210 when grossed up. Villeins, who normally account for about 57% of the rural population, here provide only 36%, and slaves only 9% (cf. 16%), whereas bordars at 55% (cf. 26%) are much more prevalent. Bordars are often seen as being closely associated with work on the manorial demesne or inland, and if this is the case with these holdings, they must have been employed on neighbouring estates.¹⁷ The eight bordars at Amersham 1 and 6 are certainly too many to work two ploughs. Perhaps here, where the various 'Amersham' entries can be shown to be discrete entities on the ground,¹⁸ we have hamlets which provided a pool of labour for hire. The average value of the half-

hide estates was 24s.8d., rather above the level which might be expected, which confirms the view that their geld liability was on the low side.

Eleven Bucks estates were assessed at between half and one hide, nine of them at three and two at three-and-a-half virgates. All are fragments of divided vills, hived off to new owners before 1066. Most of the last English owners are described as 'X's man', although at Hollingdon 1 we have four freemen scraping a return from about one hundred acres of arable, three of whom may be the villeins who worked the land in 1086, a highly typical reduction in status which befell scores of men at the lower bounds of freedom. Godwin the priest who held Ivinghoe Aston 1 may have done so because he was the local minister, but he is described as 'archbishop Stigand's man', and the primate was noted not only for his own simony, but for rewarding his followers across many shires.

V

The largest group of very small estates is those assessed at precisely one hide. There are thirty-four of them ranged across Bucks from Boveney to Hardmead, although as with all the estates covered in this paper, they are virtually absent from the Chiltern region and the Thames valley. There is less evidence here of beneficial or punitive hidation. Twenty-three one-hide estates have a single ploughland; only Hartwell 2, Evershaw and Bourton have two. There are, however, only 29.5 teams at work, of which only one, at Bourton, is noted as being in demesne. The total value of these estates was £35, an average of 20s.6d., very close to the 'norm' of 20/- to the hide. This suggests a degree of deliberation in the creation of these holdings by subdivision of larger ones, although when and why this took place is another unanswerable Domesday question. Surviving charters and writs do not cover any of these estates, and it seems likely that more informal processes such as inheritance and the operation of some kind of land market were responsible.

Ninety individuals are recorded: 34 villeins (37.8%); 50 bordars (55.5%) and six slaves (6.7%). Despite the size of these holdings, five have no recorded population in 1086. The profile here is quite different from that of the county's overall population, and is in some ways contradictory. The shortfall in the number of villeins which might have been expected points to the one-hide holdings

not being those of independent 'free' peasants, either individually or in small groups. Conversely, the relative absence of slaves shows that they were not large enough to warrant the expense of keeping unfree labour. The preponderance of bordars on the other hand points to the use by relatively minor Anglo-Saxon landowners of semi-free smallholders to work these lands. Given the potential which one-hide properties have for shedding at least some light on society and economy in late-eleventh-century Buckinghamshire, it is worth devoting some closer attention to them.

Taking resources first, six estates had no ploughs at work, despite being assessed as having six ploughlands between them: Ibstone 2 and 3; Mursley 1; Lavendon 9; [Little] Brickhill and Milton Keynes 2. All are in divided villis, where the process of reporting and data transmission and rearrangement from a geographical to a tenurial basis could well have led to errors between neighbouring properties. This is especially likely in the case of Ibstone, where parts 2 and 3 are in the Oxfordshire folios, and also have no enumerated population. All three estates had the same post-Conquest owner – Hervey the Commissioner – and all the resources were entered under the Bucks portion (five ploughlands, four teams with seven villeins and four slaves), although it was only assessed at two hides.¹⁹ The total geld liability of four hides was more in line with the actual situation on the ground. Mursley 1 also had no recorded population. It was probably covered by neighbouring Salden 1, as they were both held in 1086 by the count of Mortain. In 1066, however, the situation had been much more complex, with the estate at Salden in the hands of four individuals, giving them an average of only 0.75 hides apiece, but while there had been consolidation here, Mursley 1 retained its own assessment. By contrast, two one-hide estates had ploughs at work in 1086, but nobody to work them: North Marston 1 and Horton [in Slapton] 3. In the latter case, the necessary manpower probably came from Pitstone 5, since both had the same owner in 1066 and 1086 (Leofsig, Brictric's man, and Miles Crispin). The separation of the holdings may have been responsible for maintaining separate geld liabilities, although there are many examples in the Chiltern region where this was not the case. The case of North Marston 1 is not so straightforward, however. In 1066 it had been held by a man of Azor, son of

Toti, from whom it came to Odo, bishop of Bayeux. Neither Azor nor Odo had any other holdings in Waddesdon Hundred with which the shortfall at North Marston could have been made up. Azor did hold Quainton 2, just to the west, but this did not pass to Odo. Perhaps the reason for the mismatch lies in changes to the system of farming in North Marston, where a change from discrete hamlets and farms to a centralised settlement with open fields may have led to errors in allocating resources. The total for the five Domesday estates assigned to North Marston is 9.75 hides, with 9.5 ploughlands and 8.25 teams at work; the population was 13. Only North Marston 3 (6.5 hides) was assessed at more than one hide. That there was some fluidity in the arrangements is indicated by the fact that in 1066, there had been seven holdings, the largest of five hides (possibly a thegn's estate held by Leofric, Earl Edwin's man), the rest ranging from two single virgates to one hide.

Nineteen one-hide estates have a neat one hide-one ploughland-one ploughteam equation, indicative of a farming unit of around one hundred acres, either held severally or communally. In three cases, there is also only a single villein recorded: Boveney 1, Littlecote 3 and Whaddon [in Slapton] 2. These may represent farms worked by the labour of one man and his (extended) family. Reinbald the king's priest was clearly an absentee landlord at Boveney, which is said to have been an outlying property of the minster church at Cookham. Herch, who held Littlecote 3 in 1066, may be the nameless villein of 1086, paying rent and dues to Miles Crispin. Whaddon 2 had been held by two of Brictric's men in 1066, one of whom might well be the villein of Hugh of Bolbec twenty years later. There were two holdings with a solitary bordar recorded: North Marston 4 and 5. The former was held by William fitzAnsculf, who also held the only major estate here. In 1066, these hides had been in the hands of Alwin and Seric, both men of Brictric, with no other holdings in the county. It is possible that they had been reduced even more dramatically in status, from freemen to bordars.

The remaining one hide:one ploughland estates have larger populations (see Table 7). It seems probable that the three brothers who had held Hardmead 4 freely in 1066 were consigned to the ranks of the semi-free peasantry by their new overlord. The possession of only 30-40 acres of arable each, however, meant that they had been very much

TABLE 7

	Villein	Bordar	Slave	Total	1066	1086
Broch	1	2		3	Odo, Brictric m	Bolbec
Shortley 1	1	1		2	2 thegns, Brictric m	Crispin
Burston 3		2	1	3	Aelfwen, Siward w	Giffard
Hardwick 2		2		2	Oswulf	Crispin
Beachampton 2	2			2	Leofric, Azor m	Ivry
Hillesden 1		3		3	Leofwin, Alric m	Mortain
Lathbury 1	3			3	Seric, Leofwin m	Bayeux
Broughton 2	1	1		2	Morcar	Judith
Clifton R 2	1	3	1	5	Wulfwin	Coutances
Hardmead 4	3			3	3 brothers	Ansculf
Wavendon 6	3	5	1	9	Leofwin, king's reeve	Leofwin Cave
Moulsoe H n/a 1	3	2		5	Ordwig, Wigot m	Crispin

at the margins of freedom, and in some respects were perhaps no worse off in 1086. The division of the hide here looks very much like the operation of partible inheritance, in an area of active woodland clearance and arable expansion.²⁰ It has been suggested that an excess of bordars often characterises estates in close proximity to towns.²¹ It is possible that some of these individuals were townsmen. Clifton Reynes 2, Wavendon 6 and the unnamed holding in Moulsoe Hundred (which may also have been in Wavendon) may represent this phenomenon in relation to the borough at Newport Pagnell, whose own entry has the enigmatic comment that 'the burgesses have 6½ ploughs of the other men who work outside the five hides', indicative of the symbiotic relationship between urban and rural populations which was typical of the medieval period.²² The five bordars at Milton Keynes 2, where agricultural activity seems to have been minimal, may also belong in some way to Newport. Bourton and Gawcott and to a lesser extent Haseley and Hillesden 1 among the one-hide estates fall within the orbit of the borough of Buckingham. It is possible on this basis that the seven bordars at Hartwell 2 were associated with the emergent urban centre at Aylesbury. Equally, in most of these cases, the 'surplus' population on the one-hide estates could have been absorbed by other parts of the same divided vill. The presence of a single slave on three of these estates is less easy to explain, since none is recorded as having any demesne, where such people were customarily employed.²³ They too evidently worked in parts of the same vill, and their allocation to these estates may be erroneous. Even local jurors reporting to the circuit commissioners will have had problems

untangling some of the tenurial niceties, especially in cases where settlement and agrarian arrangements were in a state of flux.

At Shipton Lee 1, Horton [in Slapton] 3 and Mursley 1, the ploughland assessment falls short of the hidage, and at the last two, there was no recorded population. Again, this probably reflects the inherent difficulty of disaggregating the geld assessment of a vill into its constituents. At Hartwell 2, Little Missenden 1, Bourton, Gawcott, Haseley and Lavendon 9, however, the view was taken that the land would support more than one plough. In the divided vills, this may have been yet another allocation issue, a view supported by the fact that ploughs actually at work diverge from ploughlands in most cases. We have already suggested that Bourton, Gawcott and Haseley were influenced by the adjacent borough of Buckingham in some way.

The average value of the one-hide estates is 20s.7d., very close to the 'model' of one hide:one pound. As usual with Domesday Book, however, the average belies a wide variation between holdings. Fifteen of them were valued at precisely 20/-, but there were five worth 40/- and ten worth 10/- or less. Neither is there any neat correlation between value and resources. For example, Hervey the Commissioner's property at Ibstone 2 had no ploughs and no population, but was nevertheless 'worth' 20/-, whereas Ibstone 3, similarly devoid of assets, was worth only 10/-. Equally, some, but not all, of the 40/- estates had resources in excess of what might have been expected: Hartwell 2, for example, had only one plough at work, although there was said to be land for two; the excess value may relate in some way to activity or property in

Aylesbury, if that is the cause of the seemingly large number of bordars (see above). Gawcott and Haseley also have 40/- values which may be related to urban, or at least not purely agrarian, activities. Low-value estates were not necessarily lacking in assets, but their output was felt in some way to be less than average, perhaps a function of poor soils, or relative newness resulting from clearance of land for arable. It is also possible that the usual difficulty in allocating men and resources between the constituent parts of divided villis is also reflected in their values, and that only the aggregate for all the components is trustworthy.

VI

Whatever the causes of fragmentation within a named vill (multiple settlements, the effects of inheritance and the land market, etc), it was inevitable that some holdings would be assigned odd amounts of hides, even if their resources matched those of more regular holdings. There are ten estates with assessments of between one and one-and-a-half hides, seven of them with five virgates (1.25 hides), representing a quarter of a five-hide unit. Two (Weston Underwood 2 and Clifton Reynes 4) had one hide and half a virgate, in both cases the result of subdividing what had originally been a ten-hide entity. The Weston estate had only two oxen at work and two bordars, indicating that this was a tenorial, rather than an economic, arrangement. Chibnall assigns the Clifton holding to Newton Blossomville, otherwise unnamed in Domesday Book.²⁴ It had no ploughs (although there was said to be land for one) and two bordars. They must have been associated with the seven men and two ploughs at Clifton 5 (also identified with Newton). They had the same owner in 1086, Countess Judith, but in 1066 had been held by two thegns (i.e. freemen) of Alric son of Goding and Aelfric, Bishop Wulfwig's man, respectively. They still had separate sub-tenants in 1086 (Roger of Olney and Nigel).

All but one of these estates had land for one plough (Pitstone 3: 0.5), suggesting that they were viewed as one-hide holdings. This is supported by the fact that six were valued at 20/- and four at 10/-. Two had no ploughs at work (Clifton Reynes 4 and an unnamed five-virgate holding in Moulsoe Hundred [possibly Snelson in Lavendon, although that vill lay in Bunsty Hundred;²⁵ Wavendon may

be more likely, since its six named parts were collectively assessed at 8.75 hides, added to which the anonymous holding would make ten hides]). Pitstone 3 had half a plough but no inhabitants, Lavendon 4 half a plough and four men, the usual story of arbitrary allocations. The remaining five estates in this group had one ploughteam, none of them in demesne, and between one and six men.

Only one estate in this group was described as a manor – the anonymous holding in Moulsoe Hundred, which belongs to the *pro uno manerio*, 'held as one manor', group which are typical of manors in the small, highly-fragmented villis of north Bucks.²⁶ Stoke Goldington 1 had been a manor in 1066, held by two thegns (i.e. freemen, not relatively high-ranking landowners). Indeed, their tiny 2.5-virgate holdings (probably around 50-70 acres) had each been a 'manor'. In 1086, their geld liability will have been discharged through one of the bishop of Coutances' other local manors, Olney or Weston Underwood 1.

The only slaves in this group were four at an anonymous holding in Waddesdon Hundred, assessed at one hide, one-and-a-half virgates, whose other inhabitants were one villein and one bordar. This land represents the balance of a ten-hide unit with Hoggston, although that lay in Mursley Hundred, and both had different owners in 1066 and 1086.²⁷ There was some connexion between the unnamed holding and Creslow, however, since both passed from Wulfwen, one of the select band of female landowners in late Anglo-Saxon Bucks, to Edward of Salisbury. Creslow too had a disproportionate number of slaves amongst its population – five out of twelve (42%, cf. county average of 16%). There were four demesne ploughs at Creslow, and the combined total of nine slaves from the two properties would have provided sufficient manpower to operate them.²⁸ Since Creslow lay in yet a third Hundred, Cottesloe, it seems that the arrangements in 1066 reflect a complex division of an otherwise homogeneous landscape to provide various landowners with access to resources. The average value of this group of estates was only 16s.4d., comprising four at 10/- and six at 20/-. One of the former had no ploughs, another no recorded population, which would account for this low valuation. There seems to be no reason why Simpson 2, held by Leofwin Wavre ('restless, wavering')²⁹ in both 1066 and 1086, was

so poor, nor why the three men of Archbishop Stigand at Cheddington 1 only generated half of the expected worth. The 20/- estates have assets and populations which are typical of one-hide properties (see above), but seem to have been unfavourably treated by the division of geld liability between constituents of their vill.

Fourteen estates were assessed at 1.5 hides, but most seem again to partake of the attributes of one-hide estates. The average value was 28s.2d., equivalent to 18s.9d. per hide, and in fact half of the holdings were valued at 20/-. As usual, all belong to divided vill, the apparent exception of Lude being a member of Wooburn, with which it formed a ten-hide unit. Lude, together with Clifton Reynes 1 and 5 (the latter part of Newton Blossomville), had been manors in 1066, but were not twenty years later. Most of the group had one ploughland (seven) or two (five), the other two had 1.5. The range of ploughs at work was much greater, however, from two oxen at Ellesborough 2 to two teams at Clifton Reynes 1 and 5. Population ranged from nil at Drayton Beauchamp 1 to eleven at Clifton Reynes 5, averaging around 3.5 (about 15-20 people). Two holdings (Little Woolstone 2 and Bradwell 1) were said to have ploughs in demesne, even though they were not manors. Overall, Woolstone and Bradwell had a high proportion of all their ploughs in demesne, however (5 out of 9.5 and 3 out of 5, respectively), so this seems to be yet another quirk of allocation. Slaves occur on six of these estates, but whatever their role, it seems likely to have been on neighbouring lands, with the exception of the single slave at Bradwell 1, who probably worked the demesne plough just mentioned.

Five holdings have hidages in the range 1.5-2 hides. Again this is usually the 'fragmentation effect'. Thus, the one hide, two-and-a-half virgates at Lavendon 3 must be taken with the 1.25 hides of Lavendon 4, both held by Burgred and Wulfic in 1066 and the bishop of Coutances in 1086, which explains the presence of 1.5 ploughs at the former with nobody recorded to work them, whereas the latter had three families and only half a plough. Conversely, Drayton Beauchamp 2 had no ploughs but two villeins and two slaves, who evidently worked on the count of Mortain's other holding, Drayton 1. They had had different owners in 1066, when the resources had presumably been allocated more rationally. Bierton, an undivided vill with

1.75 hides, seems not to fit with any of its neighbours, although it might conceivably represent part of an original twenty-hide unit at Aylesbury (itself a very odd sixteen hides in 1086). Bedgrove (see below) could form another two hides of such an entity, making 19.75 in all. The name Bierton (from an OE compound *burhtun*, 'fortified settlement', or 'settlement dependent on a *burh*'³⁰) supports such a view, since the latter alternative seems more likely in this case. Bierton has 1.5 ploughs and three bordars, characteristic of the rural population close to towns (see above). Elvey places the unnamed 1.75 hides in Ixhill Hundred in Towersey.³¹ This had been a manor in 1066, but was not in 1086. Hollingdon 3, in contrast, was apparently never a manor, but had one demesne team in 1086. The average value of this small group of holdings was 33s.4d., equivalent to 19s.2d. per hide.

VII

Buckinghamshire had seventeen two-hide estates in 1086, all apart from Bradenham north of the Chiltern escarpment, and most in the central belt of Aylesbury Vale comprising the Ashendon and Cottesloe Hundreds. With the exception of Bradenham and Tetchwick, all were parts of divided vill and the same types of mismatch between resources, population and values occur as we have seen in other small estates. What stands out most with the two-hide holdings, however, is their low value. On average this is 27s.9d., equivalent to only 13s.10d. per hide, about two-thirds of what might be expected. Only three of these properties were said to be worth 40/-: Burston 1, Hardwick 1 and Great Linford 1, and although the last was the most populous, it does not stand out in other respects.

A majority was said to have land for two ploughs, although four holdings had only one. The average was 1.74, as against 1.73 teams actually at work, an unusually close correlation. As befits their larger size, five two-hide estates had ploughs in demesne, even though only one, Tetchwick, was actually considered to be a manor. (This shares with Lavendon 1 the unique distinction among small Bucks estates of having the rubric *M* for *manerium*, although the latter was a clear case of beneficial hidation, with much greater resources [see above].³²) Four others in the group (Ludgershall 2; Swanbourne 5; Leckhampstead 1

and Maids Moreton 1) had been manors in 1066, but lost that status since, although only the first two of these had demesnes in 1086. Hartwell 6 and Burston 1 each had a demesne plough, but apparently had never been manors. In the former case, the demesne may have belonged to another estate in the vill, but at Burston, none of the four components were manors, according to Domesday Book. Shipton Lee 3, held in 1066 by Wulfward's daughter and in 1086 by Alfsi, had only one ploughland and half a team at work, and no recorded population. Wulfward, who was a man of Queen Edith, held neighbouring Shortley 2 (identified with Doddershall), while his wife Edeva held Wotton Underwood. Domesday confirms that the property at Shipton was their daughter's dowry, saying that it was taken by Alfsi with his wife, who had been given by the queen to Alfsi with the Shortley estate.³³ (Alfsi must have been highly favoured by Edith since all ten hides were acquired from her, and, very surprisingly, retained amid the tenurial maelstrom after 1066.)

The recorded population of the two-hide estates ranges from nil to eleven, with an average of 4.5 (2.25 per hide, very close to the mean value for the county as a whole). Bordars are again more common than might be expected, however, at 41% of the total, compared with 43% villeins and 16% slaves. Since the latter is the same as the average for Bucks, it is villeins who were affected by the 'small estate' factor. There is no neat correlation between the presence of slaves and of demesne ploughs, however. The four slaves at Hartwell 3 must have been employed elsewhere in the vill, as must the two at Pitstone 6 and Thornborough 2. Only at Tetchwick, a 'proper' manor, do we find both a slave and a demesne plough. Bordars are clustered at Hartwell 3 and 6, Ashendon 2 and Beachendon 2, East Claydon 3, Maids Moreton 1 and Great Linford 1. The first two and last two may be accounted for by the close proximity of urban centres (see above); the others are more likely to represent freed slaves, set up as smallholders to provide labour on demesne and superior peasant-holdings within their vill.

The relatively low worth of two-hide estates has already been noticed. In most cases, this seems to be a function of punitive hidation, in the sense that the geld liability of the property is high in relation to its agricultural potential and activity. While we can know nothing of the way in which hides were

allocated within an overall total for a vill, nor indeed when this happened, it seems that, as so often in the history of taxation, it was the small man who bore the greatest burden. A geld levy of six shillings per hide, which William I did actually make in 1083, much to the consternation of the English chronicler,³⁴ would have left precious little profit on an estate of two hides worth only 20/-, even if the burden was passed to the hapless peasants in the shape of raised exactions of one form or another. Apart from Bradenham and Tetchwick, however, it is virtually impossible to know the extent to which these holdings were free-standing in 1086, or whether they had been or were in the process of being grouped in 'classic' common-field systems, with centralised village settlements.

VIII

We have noticed several times the apparent perversity of the Domesday returns, which failed to group small holdings in the same vill with the same post-Conquest tenant-in-chief, even if they had had different Anglo-Saxon owners. Sometimes this is the result of there being different sub-tenants in 1086, but that is not the whole story. The Bucks folios reveal that there were many more holdings which had been more or less subdivided in 1066, but which had been grouped together twenty years later. This is of course what might be expected in a dynamic tenurial system such as seems to have operated before the Conquest, and certainly did in the later medieval period. Domesday Book is only a snapshot, albeit one taken at a fascinating point in history.

There are twenty-two entries for estates which were unified in 1086, but fragmented in 1066, and where some or all of the constituent parts were assessed at two hides or less. The degree of subdivision ranges from two or three up to five (Weston Turville and Tyringham 2), seven (Woughton 1) and eight (Moulsoe). The last three lie in the north-east of the county, where intense fragmentation of vill is still commonplace in 1086, but they provide clear evidence that the process was not irreversible. Often the small fragments were of one or two virgates, representing at best the holding of a modest freeman or superior peasant.

Many of the holders are described as 'X's man', suggesting that they had only been set up temporarily with the holding, drawing its benefits for a limited period, perhaps a long-lost lease of the sort

which survives only in the archives of major churches.³⁵ For example, at Hartwell 1 we find Archbishop Stigand's man and Avelin's man with a half-hide each and Earl Leofwin's man with two hides. Avelin himself held a single hide at Hartwell 2, but a much more valuable estate of fifteen hides at Dinton. He was a king's thegn. Maids Moreton 2 was divided in 1066 between Alric (2 hides), Asgar's man (1.5) and Saeward, Azor's man (0.5). Asgar the Staller was an important figure at King Edward's court and held land in eight counties. His 'man' at Maids Moreton was no doubt a freeman who had commended himself to the great man for protection. Azor was a king's thegn with lands scattered across Bucks, and Saeward doubtless occupied the same position vis-à-vis him.

Moulsoe is an unusual case in the eponymous Hundred of a vill which had been highly fragmented in 1066 and fully consolidated in 1086. Woughton had had seven 'owners' at the former date, but only two by the time the Domesday commissioners arrived to take evidence. In fact, the situation at Woughton was even more complex. Its total hidage was 9.5, the missing half-hide probably a function of the fission we are examining. In 1086, the count of Mortain held four hides and Martin five and a half. This is the only appearance of Martin in the county, and from his position in the order of tenants-in-chief he seems likely to have been of Breton or Flemish origin, rewarded with this modest prize. In 1066, it had been held by Azor, son of Toti, whom we have just met at Maids Moreton. Even here, a second thegn, Azor's man, freely held one hide.³⁶ (This use of thegn for two very different types of pre-conquest landholder in Bucks, and also in neighbouring Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, is very confusing, although the root of the word in Old English is merely 'one who serves'.³⁷ The small thegns were evidently what appear elsewhere as freemen, and the fate of many of both sorts was to be reduced in status to the upper echelons of the semi-free peasantry.) The Mortain holding in contrast was an amalgamation of ten men's lands. The four men of Alwin Varus could not have scraped much of a living from their two virgates, having only 5-15 acres apiece. Perhaps they were the unfortunate co-heirs of a freeman. Alric son of Goding's man at least had four-and-a-half virgates, sufficient to make a reasonable farm holding if land in Woughton was still held severally in 1086. Wulfward's man had five

virgates, and was similarly favoured. Saeward's man in contrast had only one, although fifteen acres was sufficient to support a single peasant family. The balance of this jigsaw was made up of three half-hide holdings, held by the men of Leofwin son of Estan, Baldwin and Morcar.

Although Woughton is now a classic deserted medieval village, it was equally typical of the open-field landscape of north Bucks in the medieval period, with almost the entire parish area taken up by furlongs and strips. The presence of a notable village green with the farms grouped around it bespeaks a planned creation of the sort which is known to have occurred at various dates between the ninth and twelfth centuries in many parts of England, although here there are earthworks on the green itself which need to be explained.³⁸ The Weoca whose estate it once was is otherwise unknown and undatable, although the name is typical of the period 800-1086. Is it therefore possible that the Domesday snapshot of Woughton actually shows the process of abandoning hitherto separate farms and/or hamlets in favour of a planned village with open fields?

Moulsoe is one of only a handful of apparently unitary villis in the north-eastern corner of Bucks in 1086, but it, like Sherington and Tickford, was subdivided in 1066. In aggregate Moulsoe was a 'typical' ten-hide vill, held along with dozens of others by Walter Giffard at the time of the Domesday survey. Here he had acquired the holdings of eight men, all of them called thegn, but in reality only more or less prosperous freemen (see above). Alwin and Ulf, Asgar's man, held two hides apiece, and Algar, a man of Edward Cild, 1.5 hides; all these represent goodly amounts of land, perhaps as much as 200 acres. Alfsi, Thorkell, Lodi and Oswulf each held one hide, and seem to have been entirely their own men, free to dispose of their land and not commended to a greater lord. Last comes Alric with his half-hide, still not to be despised in terms of its potential. Unfortunately, we are not given a breakdown of the resources at Moulsoe in 1066, and it is possible that some of these holdings were not in reality such valuable assets as they appear, as was the case with many of the estates already examined earlier. Whatever their fate, these eight men had become invisible by 1086, some of them no doubt counted among the seven villeins and nine bordars on Giffard's estate. The high proportion of bordars, peasant smallholders with

around five acres of land, and the sole plough assigned to the demesne (out of seven) may indicate that the various holdings of 1066 were still separate entities, with their own labour force.

That the small holdings which were consolidated between 1066 and 1086 were no different from those which survived at the latter date is supported by their geld liability. The average for the 149 estates of two hides or less in 1086 was 1.11 hides, and for the fifty-three identifiable examples in 1066 it was 1.09 hides. There were yet more very small estates in Bucks at the time of the Conquest, but where details are not given in Domesday Book. Waldrige 1, Helsthorpe 2, Salden 1 and Bradwell 3 all had components of less than two hides, the average assessment of which was 0.93 hides. This was clearly a very fluid tenurial and economic system before 1066, and once the upheaval of rewarding the Conqueror's followers had been gone through and had settled down, no doubt continued to be so. The great difference was that now the land market and inheritance customs operated at the peasant level, rather than that of the minor landowner.

IX

While their contribution to the society and economy of eleventh-century Buckinghamshire may not have exceeded 10%, a study of the very small holdings in Domesday Book does help to reveal something of the complexity of land ownership, both before and after 1066. Given that they make up almost half of all the entries, it might almost be said that estates of two hides or less, or with up to two ploughlands, were the norm, rather than the exception. Certainly over large swathes of the county, more or less highly fragmented villis testify to the extent to which the great multiple estates of the seventh and eighth centuries had been subject to disintegration, not only by the well-known devices of grants by charter and writ, but more subtly by inheritance and probably sale of areas as small as ten acres. In other words, there is little difference in many places from the situation recorded in later medieval cartularies, except that before 1086 we see only the end product, rather than the processes at work.

The allocation of hidages below the level of the county had been going on for centuries, although more formally since the early-tenth century, when

the shire of Buckingham was created. The more the ownership of land was disaggregated, the more difficult it must have been to decide how to apportion hides, with the result that many of the estates which have been discussed here show a high degree of arbitrariness. There is also the added issue of beneficial hidation, which had the effect of remitting geld liability at the expense of the crown. Reduced to its basics, however, it seems that there were only two types of very small estate: those considered as one-hide units and those of two hides, which between them comprise the vast bulk of very small Domesday holdings. There is also good evidence of a rough and ready rule of thumb being applied so that one hide was felt to be worth 20/-.

Naturally, there were many estates which had ploughs but no men, and men but no ploughs. Some were, or had been, manors, but most were not. It is only to be expected that the highly rushed collection of data for the great survey, even allowing for its use of previous documents relating to matters such as hidation, would lead to errors, both at the start and in the process of collation and transformation from a geographical to a tenurial basis. It is only by taking the component parts of divided villis and re-aggregating them that we can make sense of the Domesday entries.

The vexed questions of the nature of settlement patterns and agricultural systems in the county in 1086 are not so easily solved, however. Given that this was a period of often considerable change in both areas, we would need considerably more detail than is provided by Domesday Book, as well as a series of snapshots, rather than just the one. The evidence examined in this paper provides a few pointers, suggesting that in some places the high proportion of small estates reflects a scatter of farms and hamlets, possibly with their own fields, whereas in others, this pattern was being replaced by centrally-located villages and communally-farmed open fields.

Evidence from the centuries after 1086 shows clearly that small estates continued to flourish in Bucks. Even if many of those which existed then were rapidly subsumed into neighbours sharing a tenant-in-chief, new ones were always springing up to replace them. The system of land ownership was always dynamic, and was underpinned by an active market among the peasantry, driven by inheritance, marriage and overtly economic factors.³⁹

REFERENCES

1. K.A. Bailey, 'The Manor in Domesday Buckinghamshire I', *Recs Bucks*, **38** (1998 for 1996), 125-138.
2. G.R. Elvey, 'Buckinghamshire in 1086', *Recs Bucks*, **16** pt.5 (1960), 358.
3. Domesday Book (hereafter DB), I, 144a.
4. A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*, Cambridge 1925, 60-61.
5. DB, I, 143a.
6. DB, I, 153b.
7. Bailey, 'The Manor', 128-129.
8. A.H.J. Baines, 'The Development of the Borough of Buckingham', *Recs Bucks*, **27** (1985), 53-64.
9. DB, I, 146d; Elvey, 352.
10. DB, I, 151c, d.
11. *Victoria County History of Buckinghamshire*, **III**, 415-417.
12. Mawer and Stenton, 83; A.H. Smith, *The Place-Name Elements*, Cambridge 1956, **I**, 45-47.
13. DB, I, 146b, c; 147b; 150b.
14. DB, I, 146c.
15. Elvey, 359.
16. R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship*, Leicester 1997, 61-64.
17. *Ibid.*, 70-75.
18. Elvey, 355-357 and map.
19. DB, I, 152c; 160c.
20. A.C. Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington*, Chichester 1979, *passim*.
21. C.C. Dyer, 'Towns and cottages in eleventh-century England', in H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davis*, 1985, 91-106.
22. A.H.J. Baines, 'The Origins of the Borough of Newport Pagnell', *Recs Bucks*, **28** (1986), 128-137.
23. K.A. Bailey, 'Buckinghamshire Slavery in 1086', *Recs Bucks*, **37** (1997 for 1995), 67-78.
24. Chibnall, 208 and ch. 21.
25. Elvey, 359 and n.94.
26. Bailey, 'The Manor', 127-129.
27. Elvey, 358.
28. DB, I, 150c.
29. Note 57.9 in the Phillimore edn. of Domesday Book, Chichester 1978.
30. Mawer and Stenton, 146-147; Smith, **I**, 62.
31. Elvey, 358.
32. Bailey, 'The Manor', 125.
33. DB, I, 153a.
34. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. G.N. Garmonsway, 1954, 215; see also p.173 for a comment on the geld before 1066.
35. Faith, 161-163, 180-183.
36. DB, I, 152c.
37. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v.; Faith, 126-129.
38. R.A. Croft and D.C. Mynard, *The Changing Landscape of Milton Keynes*, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph 5 (1993), 201-207.
39. Faith, *passim*; M.M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society*, 1972.