

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IN 1341

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Medieval evidence for more than small areas within Buckinghamshire is unusual, and only the Domesday Book of 1086 comes close to providing complete coverage. Although the Hundred Rolls of 1255–1280 are often much more detailed than DB, they have different concerns, and usually provide information for only limited parts of the county. This paper is concerned with the Nonarum Inquisitiones or Survey of the Ninths, for which data were collected from the majority of Buckinghamshire parishes in 1341–2 on a consistent basis. This date is especially significant, coming as it does after several decades of crises in agriculture and less than ten years before the onset of the series of plagues known as the Black Death, which were to reduce the population of England by between one-third and one-half by the close of the fourteenth century. The Inquisitiones show how communities had fared since the high tide of medieval agriculture and settlement began to turn after 1300, although it should always be remembered that they were basically tax-related, and as such subject to the inevitable under- and over-reporting and downright evasion which are associated with all such enquiries at that time.

INTRODUCTION

After centuries of more or less dramatic expansion in land colonisation, arable cultivation and population numbers, the early years of the fourteenth century began to see a reversal. The causes were inevitably complex, but included climatic change, towards a wetter and cooler regime than that which had characterised the previous centuries. Inadequate fertilisation and the expansion of ploughing onto inherently unsuitable soils meant that much arable land was exhausted, with diminishing crop yields. Increasing rainfall seems to have been behind a series of very bad harvests between 1310 and 1320, and also caused widespread mortality among domestic livestock. These factors combined to produce famine in many areas, leading to a debilitated population, abandonment of marginal land, and an increased susceptibility to the pandemic which arrived in 1348–9. Unfortunately, local, essentially manorial, records are few and far between for the first half of the fourteenth century, and provide only sketchy evidence for the impact of these far-reaching changes.

A county-wide survey is therefore invaluable in providing at least some information on the recession in arable farming, as well as occasional snapshots of the impact of changing weather patterns. Also of great value are the names of local jurors, which provide another substantial corpus of personal names,

which can in some cases be related to those of the taxation returns of 1327–34 and the Hundred Rolls of 1274–80.¹ This paper is based on the published returns of the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* for Buckinghamshire.² The only previous study to include any discussion of this source appears to be the paper by Alan Baker, which looked at the whole of the returns from the viewpoint of contracting arable.³ Baker was concerned only with this aspect, and looks in some detail at the band of country between Cambridgeshire and south Buckinghamshire.

The context of the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, as so often with medieval taxation, was war; in this case the early stages of the so-called Hundred Years War between England and France. Large areas of France were still under the English crown at this period, and Edward III had begun serious hostilities in 1337 in pursuit of his claim to the French throne. In 1341, Parliament had granted Edward one-ninth of the value of corn, wool and lambs across England. The value of these commodities was assessed by panels of local men under oath. These appear in most cases to be entirely men of the vill or parish in question, although there are several examples, especially in the case of small vills, of the same men attesting to values in more than one location. The choice of the seemingly odd fraction of one-ninth arises because this tax was calculated after tithe had been taken and was therefore one-ninth of nine-tenths of lay agricultural production. In other words, it is identi-

cal with the tithe paid to the church, or a doubling of the usual tax burden. This had the merit of simplifying the calculation by jurors, who also had the assessments of one-tenth of clerical incomes undertaken for the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291.⁴ Given the agrarian recession which had taken place in many areas in the intervening half-century, it was necessary for jurors to offer an explanation of any discrepancies, and it is this which provides the most valuable feature of the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*. In many cases, of course, the estimates of land taken out of cultivation are suspiciously round figures, but we cannot know how far they might deviate from what had actually taken place. Similarly, the more or less ubiquitous phrase "sheep and lambs are few this year" hardly lends itself to statistical analysis, but nevertheless shows that many local farmers and peasants were being hit hard by a downturn at a time when medieval population was at its maximum.

There were other sources of discrepancy compared with the 1291 survey, not least the fact that clerical incomes included other tithes (the so-called small tithes on items such as poultry, flax and hemp) apart from those being double-taxed in 1341, as well as the value of glebe land and monastic land within most villis, and also the payment of sundry fees for services provided by the church to parishioners. Setting these changes aside, it was common for jurors to report a contraction of arable land since 1291, often using the phrases *terre jacerunt inculte et frisce*, '[that] lands were lying fallow and uncultivated', or that *terre jacerunt frisce que arari et seminari solebant*, '[that] lands were lying fallow which were accustomed to be ploughed and sown'.

The format of the Buckinghamshire returns to the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* uses villis within Rural Deaneries, reflecting its close links with Pope Nicholas's Taxation of half a century earlier. In this county, the deaneries generally follow closely the Triple Hundred groupings, and appear in the following order in the *Inquisitiones*:

Deanery	Hundreds
Mursley	Mursley, Cottelsoe, Yardley
Wendover	Aylesbury, Risborough ¹ , Stone + Quarrendon ²
Risborough	Monks Risborough and Halton ³
Buckingham	Lamua, Rowley, Stotfold
Burnham	Burnham, Stoke
Wycombe	Desborough

Newport	Moulsoe, Secklow, Bunsty
Waddesdon	Waddesdon, Ashendon, Ixhill ⁴

- Notes: 1 Quarrendon was a chapelry of Aylesbury, but located in Waddesdon Hundred.
 2 Bledow, Princes Risborough and Horsenden.
 3 These belonged to Canterbury Cathedral, forming an ecclesiastical peculiar.
 4. Chearsley and Nether Winchendon in Ashendon Hundred were grouped with Long Crendon in Ixhill Hundred.

The reason for dividing the three Chiltern Hundreds between the deaneries of Burnham and Wycombe is not clear, although all were larger than average. The order in which places are listed does not follow any particular pattern within each deanery, the main distinction being between "normal" churches and those of "lower tax", as expressed in terms of the 1291 Taxation. Many of the latter are in very small parishes, often established since the eleventh century.

Although the intention of the *Inquisitiones* was evidently to cover every parish in the county, there are some omissions. There is a block of parishes in Mursley and Cottesloe Hundreds which seem to have been overlooked, or whose returns have been lost: Tattenhoe, Whaddon with Nash, Great Horwood, Swanbourne, Hoggston, Creslow, Whitchurch, Hardwick and Weedon, all of which, with the exception of the last appear in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*. Also in this part of the county there are no returns for Soulbury and Mentmore, both covered in 1291. Biddlesden is omitted, probably because its tithes were assigned wholly to the local abbey. Elsewhere, omission of places known to have churches in the fourteenth century seems to relate to their subordination to neighbours: Hedsor; Boveney; Little Linford and Cuddington. Conversely, there are some churches listed in 1341, but not in 1291: Winslow (including Little Horwood); Aston Abbots; Hawridge; Hogshaw; Ilmer; Horsenden; Bradenham; Edgcott; Chetwode; Barton Hartshorn; Foxcote; Cold Brayfield and Petsoe. The first two of these were estates of St. Albans Abbey, and may have been accounted for with their main block of properties in Hertfordshire (although cf. the local estates of other religious houses which do appear in the *Inquisitiones*). The rest are generally small parishes, although it is unlikely that any

of their churches were built after 1291. Some churches are grouped in 1341, with no possibility of separating out their details: Datchet and Fulmer; Langley and Wraybury; Oakley, Brill and Boarstall; Long Crendon, Nether Winchendon and Chearsley. Overall, however, the 1341 returns provide information on the great majority of parishes in the county, totalling 181.

The material collected for the 1341 survey is presented in a standardised form, as this example shows:

[DEANERY OF MURSLEY]

CUBLINGTON

With pension; tax 8½ marks

Value of the ninth in the same parish by presentment of Nicholas de Messendene, William le Baker, John North, Richard James, John le Bole and William Staneway 5½ marks and no more. They say that two carucates of land in the aforesaid parish are lying fallow and uncultivated and thirteen houses are standing empty and their tenants have withdrawn because of poverty, and sheep and lambs are few, and there are none in the parish who can be taxed at other than the fifteenth.

Value of the ninth 5½ marks

Where there were ecclesiastical pensions and portions in 1291, these are also mentioned, along with the tax due in that year. The jurors are named in all cases, and vary in number between two and twelve, albeit not in an apparently systematic way related to area or population. Where a religious house has "temporalities" in a parish, this is indicated, but not their amount. These include rents, lands and other assets. The jurors then indicate their assessment of the value of the ninth, which in virtually every case is accepted by the royal commissioners hearing the evidence. The jurors' reports on the amount of fallow land, the paucity of sheep and lambs, and comments on the reason for crop failure then follow, along with a comment on the liability of any parishioners other than for the "fifteenth". The latter was the rate of tax of movable goods and land which applied to estates other than ancient crown holdings and boroughs, which paid one-tenth. In Buckinghamshire, certain boroughs fall into this category, along with the royal estate of Brill/Oakley. There are often comments on other aspects of church property and

rights in the parish. Cublington is one of only two places to mention houses standing empty, the other being Saunderton St. Nicholas. Thirteen empty properties eight years before the arrival of the Black Death suggests a deep crisis in Cublington, matched by around two hundred acres of uncultivated land. We cannot know why this was so, or where the tenants had gone, but it may be evidence of the failure of the hamlet of Bredeingcote, which occupied the north-eastern part of the parish.⁵

In order to avoid unnecessary complexity in the discussion of the Buckinghamshire *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, the various elements have been treated separately, while recognising that many parishes reported more than one reason why their taxable value had declined between 1291 and 1342.

DECLINING ARABLE

The area of arable land had increased substantially across much of the county in the two centuries from 1066, in response to rapid population growth and the inability to make substantial improvements to agricultural productivity. In many cases, arable land had reached the parish boundary by the late-thirteenth century, and woodland had all but vanished in many areas outside the Chilterns and the far north. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive survey of the period around 1300 to match that provided by Domesday Book (1086), but the Hundred Rolls of 1279–80 suggest that in many places, the population and arable had doubled during the period.⁶ This was, however, a fragile system, and the onset of poor climatic conditions after 1310 led to famines and began the process of population contraction which was dramatically accelerated by the arrival of epidemic disease in 1348–9.

The returns of 1341 therefore provide a useful indication of where the arable had contracted as the retreat from the high water-mark of medieval farming got under way. Appendix 1 lists those places reporting such a decline, along with the amount. In no case, however, do we know what the total arable area of a parish was, and therefore cannot estimate the proportion which had gone out of use by 1341. Also, the size of acre varied between places, and many of the juries gave their answers in terms of virgates and carucates (ploughlands), which were equally variable. In some cases, fractions of the total are given, or, even more vaguely, such terms as 'a great part'.

Even allowing for the many problems associated with measurement, it is clear that an appreciable amount of arable land had gone out of cultivation by 1341. If, for the purposes of this analysis, we assume that a carucate or ploughland is equivalent to one hundred acres, that the average virgate size in this county is in the range 20–30 acres, and that all acres are of a similar size, the total area of arable land lying fallow and uncultivated was in excess of 13,350 acres. Unfortunately we have no clue as to the total area of arable land at the height of the medieval period c1280–1300, although seems likely to have been 60% or more of the total area of

the county (283,000 acres), in which case the uncultivated land of 1341 represents only 4–5% of the total. It seems that the crisis in agriculture, while real, was insignificant compared with changes after 1348.

As can be seen from Appendix 1, there were significant geographical variations in the incidence of uncultivated land, although this could reflect local “political agendas” as much as agrarian reality. Using the totals for Triple Hundred to smooth out some of the inconsistencies, the following result is obtained:

Group	Uncultivated	Notional Ac.*	% Total
Aylesbury	1030+a; 2 car; 18v	1680+	2.5+
Chilterns	1020+a; 29 car	3920+	3.9+
Ashendon	40a; 2 car; 5v	365	0.6
Cottesloe	2010a; 5½ car	2560	3.6
Buckingham	130a; 19+ car	2030+	3.6
Newport	1579a; 12 car; 1v	2804	3.5

* Taking acres at face value; carucates as 100 acres and virgates as 25 acres.

With the exception of the Aylesbury and Ashendon Triple Hundreds, a consistent pattern emerges from the data, with 3.5–4.0% of the total area out of cultivation in 1341. To what extent this reflects a decline in population cannot be ascertained, although the substantial number of shrunken and deserted settlements in north Buckinghamshire suggests that there was at least an incipient demographic crisis before the arrival of the Black Death. Why the area to the west, north-west and south of Aylesbury had apparently experienced less decline in arable is equally unclear, while the position in the Chilterns may be overstated by the data from Hambleden, which is reported as having 12 carucates uncultivated, almost one-fifth of the parish area; perhaps virgates was meant.

LIVESTOCK

Turning the records sheep and lambs in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, the situation is even more impressionistic. The great majority of parishes which mention this aspect of local farming report only that there were “few” animals, giving no indication as to what was “normal”, nor the extent of

under-reporting in order to avoid the tax, and this seems to have been accepted by the commissioners. Apart from the odd reference to disease and sheepfolds – the latter apparently used as a local measure of the number of sheep, although this is again unstated – it is merely possible to list those places which record livestock shortfalls in 1341. The data are summarised in Appendix 2.

The “one-quarter of usual” report from Beaconsfield may or may not be typical of the many “sheep and lambs are few” entries from across Buckinghamshire. The fact that disease and murrain were reported from widely-separated places indicates that there was some truth behind the claims of local jurors, or perhaps they thought that such answers sounded more plausible. There are reference to deficient pasture at Great Crawley and to deficient sheepfolds at Weston Turville and Little Marlow, while Stoke Mandeville reported no pasture. This suggests that arable land was not the only casualty of climatic deterioration in the fourteenth century. Perhaps a wetter climate had increased flooding as well as making the sheep more liable to disease. Based on the Triple Hundred groups, the following proportions of parishes

reported sheep and lamb shortages in 1341: Aylesbury 52%; Chilterns 31%; Ashendon 19%; Cottesloe 32%; Buckingham 55% and Newport 56%. These data and those for uncultivated arable indicate that the crisis in farming was most severe in the northern third of the county, but are less clear for the remainder, apart from Ashendon, where, as with uncultivated arable, most parishes seem much less affected.

CROPS AND POVERTY

The third major element in the Buckinghamshire *Nonarum Inquisitiones* concerns the change in the output of leguminous crops (beans and peas) since 1291. These were an important source of food for men and animals, and also for their nitrogen-fixing, one of the few ways to improve soil fertility in medieval times. As with sheep and lambs, however the reports of parochial jurors are impressionistic. Appendix 3 also details reports of poverty and general crop failure.

Sixteen parishes specifically cite the poverty of local people as a reason for claiming a reduction in their tax assessment. This is a notoriously difficult area, with no clue as to how poverty was defined in any given place. We should probably not read too much into the clusters of poverty in the Chilterns, near Aylesbury and around Buckingham, although they do correlate broadly with areas where uncultivated land is above average, and sheep scarce. The repeated claim that beans and occasionally the spring corn were deficient in 1341 because of the dry summer has the ring of truth about it, although it does seem that the north-east of the county was drier than most other areas! At least the jurors of Great Brickhill thought to use their soil conditions as an excuse, with the well-drained Greensand failing to retain water. Far to the south, Taplow and Burnham were suffering from the effects of flooding by the Thames, although this apparently failed to affect their neighbours. Bierton, the Hampdens, West Wycombe and Hedgerley all reported destruction of crops by mildew, a fungal growth more associated with damp than dry conditions.

THE TREND IN THE VALUES, 1291-1341

Having examined the evidence on arable, sheep and lambs, crops and alleged poverty, we turn to

the evidence for changing values since the Papal Taxation of 1291. Since both are nominally one-tenth of the total value of commodities to the Church, the results are directly comparable. The results are set in Appendix 4 for all locations with valid data at both dates (see the Introduction for those places which do not appear in one or other of these surveys), ranked by the change in value, and also indicating which areas of decline were mentioned by local jurors.

That the decline in agriculture was far from universal in fourteenth-century Buckinghamshire is underlined by the fact that no fewer than fifty-nine parishes recorded no decline in value since 1291 (32.5%), while ten actually recorded increases (5.5%), some as high as one-sixth. In both categories, there were records of decline, however, showing that the latter could occur without necessarily having an adverse impact on values and taxation. Fifty-nine places also recorded no change in value, twenty reported land out of cultivation (34%), twenty-seven reductions in sheep and lambs (46%), seventeen failures in crops (29%) but just two mentioned poverty of the tenants (3%). Ten places recorded decline in two or more categories, while only nine make no mention of any type of decline. Among parishes with increased values, four each reported decline in arable, sheep and crops, but none mentioned poverty. It appears therefore that a shrinking agricultural base did not necessarily have a financial impact.

Nineteen parishes (10.5%) recorded reductions of between nil and 10% in their assessments, of which three mention no causes of decline. Thirty-five parishes (19%) claimed reductions of between 10 and 20%, five of them for no obvious reason. Forty-two parishes (23%) were allowed rebates of between one-fifth and one-third, only three of which had no record of declining agriculture or prosperity, whereas no fewer than 26 mentioned multiple reasons, some in all four categories. In this group there seems to be more justification for the reductions allowed in assessments. In seven of the parishes recording the greatest reductions in value after 1291 there is no mention of any decline in agriculture or tenant poverty. Given that Buckingham and Aylesbury are both in this group, and show massive reductions in their tax base, it may be that urban decline was more significant than rural, with townspeople affected by food shortages. Quarrendon also fea-

tures here, and became one of the best-known deserted villages in the county, albeit not finally succumbing until long after the 1340s.

Overall, one cannot help feeling that in the majority of cases, those charged with undertaking the inquisitions took whatever local juries told them at face value, without considering the logic for doing so. Of course, the official records make no mention of bribery and corruption, but as this was a prominent feature of all medieval tax collection, it is very unlikely that none occurred as the commissioners made their rounds in 1341.

NAMES

The *Nonarum Inquisitiones* provide a substantial sample of personal names for analysis. Allowing for the small number of individuals who appear as jurors in more than one parish (usually adjacent to one another), a total of 982 men is named. Unlike the Hundred Rolls of the 1250s to 1270s, no female names appear, because women were unable to act as jurors. The names occur in groups from two up to twelve depending on the parish, with six by far the most common number. As such they may be assumed to form a random sample of forenames and surnames, biased towards the upper echelons of the tenantry, with manorial lords and semi- or unfree peasants not represented. Compared with the Hundred Rolls, it seems that surnames had moved further towards the point at which they became fixed, in the sense that there are fewer names such as X the Smith and Y of Bletchley. Such names are still commonplace, however, and it is probably valid to assume that they reflect the actual occupation or origin of the individual concerned. By 1341, there are few names of the form A son of B, but equally the modern forms like Adam Johnson are absent, with forms such as Robert Roger being used. More than half of the surnames appear to be neither occupational nor topographical, although there may well be ambiguities of form which conceal such origins. Many are by-names or nicknames, whose antiquity is difficult to judge, as is the extent to which they had become "fixed".

There are 176 occupational names (17.9%), with examples of no fewer than 67 different trades or positions, ranging from bailiff to reeve and baker to tailor. The majority, however, occur only once or twice in this sample, accounting for 42 names

(63% of occupations), while a further seventeen names occur between three and five times (25%). Given that most of these names are potentially ubiquitous, in the sense that they could occur in any parish, it is difficult to explain this pattern. Chibnall's study of early Buckinghamshire tax returns, which covers the period 1327-1336 and provides evidence for a larger sample of individuals in most parishes, is virtually contemporary with the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*.⁷ It also shows that a relatively small number of occupational names are widespread, while others are far less common. In some cases, for example the name Tiler at Penn, this relates to a localised industry. This does not account for only two Bailiffs in the tax returns and three in 1341 survey. The most frequently occurring names in this group are:

Smith	21	Reeve	6
Clerk	10	Carter	6
Cook	10	Beadle	5
Tailor	7	Millward	5

Most of these names still occur very frequently today.

Unambiguous topographical surnames occur 247 times (25.1% of the total), of which 94 are purely local names, for example *at the Brook*, *at the Bridge*, *Above Town*, which like occupational names might be expected to occur in any parish, but for some reason do not. The range of places of origin is wide, although it is impossible to tell from a single source when the first member given the name moved into a parish, nor in the case of commonplace names precisely where they originated. By no means all of the origins can be identified from the often quirky spellings in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*. Many are men whose name is the same as that of their parish: John de Wexham, Elias de Mursley and William de Seybrok (Seabrook in Cheddington), and many such names have either been lost or replaced over the centuries. Much migration is over relatively short distances, for example Tilsworth (Beds.) to Marsworth, Tingewick to Radclive, Moulsoe to Ravenstone. Others came from further afield: Norfolk to Aylesbury, Kimble to Buckingham and Tyringham, but Simon de Bretayne (Brittany) seems to be the sole example of an overseas name in this sample.

Little of general import can be said of the

remaining 559 surnames (56.9% of the total), not least because the spellings are often ambiguous. There are examples of nicknames referring to stature (long, short), hair colouring (black, brown, white), while a substantial group represent forenames adopted as surnames (Henry, Richard, William and so on). There are in this group a few echoes of the naming patterns of the twelfth century, possibly even earlier, for example Osegod, Osebern and Godwyne.

Turning to the 982 Christian names, there is a complete contrast with the multitude of surnames, with only thirty-nine different names represented, an average of twenty-five individuals per name. One name is illegible, and a further ten occur only once, and six only twice, including rather surprisingly Michael, Matthew and James. Even stranger is the complete absence of any Edwards given that kings of that name had been on the throne since 1272, and the erstwhile popularity of Edward the Confessor as a naming model.

The ten most popular names are:

Name	No.	%	Name	No.	%
John	286	29.1	Henry	38	3.9
William	159	16.2	Walter	37	3.8
Richard	95	9.7	Roger	29	2.9
Robert	79	8.0	Nicholas	29	2.9
Thomas	65	6.6	Hugh	27	2.7
Top 5	684	69.6			
6-10	160	16.3			
Top 10	844	85.9			

By the 1340s, none of the most popular boys' names was of "English" origin, and none of those above was used in the lower echelons of society until well after the Norman Conquest. John is a runaway favourite, and together with William accounts for almost half of all forenames. Thomas is no doubt in honour of Thomas Becket, very much the national saint of the late-medieval period. Henry is an echo of the three kings of that name, the last of whom died in 1272. Richard, Robert, Walter, Roger and Hugh are all classic Norman-French names, and account for almost one-third of names in this sample. By comparison with the lists of taxpayers which survive for much of the county during the 1330s, it appears that the jurors of 1341 were drawn from quite a wide spectrum of the ten-

antry, with few identifiable manorial lords and few or none from the ranks of the semi-free and landless, as would be expected.

DISCUSSION

The evidence from parish juries indicates widespread agrarian problems in Buckinghamshire in the early-1340s, variously affecting the amount of arable sown, the harvest of beans, peas and corn, and numbers of sheep and lambs, all translating into poverty and the risk of disease and starvation for the peasant population. This survey uses 1291 as a datum, which conveniently marks the high water-mark of medieval population and prosperity. Of course, things were about to get dramatically worse as the plague pandemic spread across the county after 1348. Disease found a debilitated people, who had already experienced several decades of crises brought about by deteriorating climatic conditions and their inability to maintain fertility and yield levels.

It is important, however, not to exaggerate the decline reported in 1341. The several hundred local men who represented their communities at this enquiry seem to have come from the middle ranks of local society, and many were farmers in their own right. They knew their local situation, and seem in most cases to have avoided overstatement. There is no evidence that they took the opportunity to claim very substantial arable decline, suggesting that where a large area of uncultivated land is recorded, this probably reflected the true situation. Since it is impossible to know precisely what area of land was affected at any given location, or how it related to the total under the plough at its maximum, we cannot proceed much further with the available evidence. The incidence of uncultivated land across the county is not uniform, and it seems as likely that it arose from declining population and demand for arable, as from any climatic cause. The very low level of arable loss in the Ashendon Hundreds supports this view, as do the many examples of adjacent parishes with very different experiences.

The shortfall in the numbers of sheep and lambs is even more imprecisely described in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, with the Ashendon Hundreds once more standing out as suffering least, along with the adjoining Cottesloe and Chiltern groups. The need for stubble or fallow land on which to graze ani-

imals for part of the year might have meant that arable contraction favoured the expansion of flocks, but this cannot be determined from the evidence of the 1341 enquiry. Conversely, declining population may have caused livestock numbers to reduce as demand fell. The shortage of sheep to graze on the fallow, or to provide dung from sheepfolds, both of which enhanced fertility, might have contributed to the decline in arable.

In the case of legumes, and occasionally other named crops, it appears that there had been an immediate impact of the preceding dry summer (either 1340 or 1341), but this may have been no more than a short-term phenomenon. Likewise flooding is recorded at just two places on the Thames, with their neighbours seemingly escaping any damage.

There is virtually no mention of empty houses or depopulation across Buckinghamshire in 1341, which may be taken as further evidence that the state of the agrarian economy had not yet had a significant impact on the number of people. References to poverty are likewise scarce. The most that can be said is that things had got worse for substantial numbers of men, women and children across the county in the first few decades of the fourteenth century, but nothing like as bad as they were shortly to become.

CONCLUSION

The *Nonarum Inquisitiones* of 1341 are an important source for the medieval history of Buckinghamshire, but have been little used by local historians. Falling between the high point of medieval agriculture and the onset of pandemic disease, they offer invaluable information about the state of farming across the whole county. Returns collected for the purposes of taxation do not tell present-day researchers many of the basic things they wish to know: notably the size of the virgate or yardland and acre in each place, or the size of flocks. Notwithstanding these problems, it is to be hoped that researchers will use these data in connection with other sources to build up a fuller picture of Buckinghamshire's agrarian economy.

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APPENDIX 1

Arable decline in Buckinghamshire 1291–1341

<i>Place</i>	<i>Hund. Uncult</i>	
Wendover Deanery		
Buckland	Ayl	100a
Ellesborough	Ayl	100+a
Gt. Missenden	Ayl	200a
Hampden	Ayl	30a
Lt. Missenden	Ayl	200+a
Stoke Mandeville	Ayl	1 car
Wendover	Ayl	1/5 th
Horsenden	Ris	40a
Monks Risborough	Ris	16v
Dinton	Stn	1 car
Gt. Kimble	Stn	200a
Halton	Stn	Gt. Part
Lt. Kimble	Stn	60+a
Weston Turville	Stn	2v
<i>TOTAL</i>		<i>1030+a; 2 car; 18v</i>
Burnham Deanery		
Beaconsfield	Bur	2 car
Burnham	Bur	300a
Chalfont St. Peter	Bur	1/6 th
Chenies	Bur	100a
Chesham	Bur	25%
Hitcham	Bur	50a
Penn	Bur	1/3 rd
Langley+Wraybury	Stk	80a

Buckinghamshire in 1341

Stoke Poges	Stk	2 car/50a	Chetwode	Row	Great part
Wexham	Stk	40a	Preston Bisset	Row	100a
TOTAL		620a; 4 car; ++	Thornton	Row	1 car
Wycombe Deanery			Foxcote	Stf	Great part
Averingdown	Des	25%	Leckhampstead	Stf	2 car
Bradenham	Des	1/3 rd	Lillingstone Dayrell	Stf	1 car
Fawley	Des	4 car	Maids Moreton	Stf	30a
Fingest	Des	Great part	Radclive	Stf	Great part
Great Marlow	Des	25%	Shalstone	Stf	3 car
Hambleton	Des	12 car	Stowe	Stf	3 car
Hughenden	Des	300+a	Turweston	Stf	1+ car
Little Marlow	Des	1/6 th	Water Stratford	Stf	1 car
Medmenham	Des	100+a	Westbury	Stf	3 car
Saunderton St. Mary	Des	1 car	TOTAL		130a; 19+ car; ++
Saunderton St. Nicholas	Des	Uncultivated	Newport Deanery		
Turville	Des	2 parts	Cold Brayfield	Bun	1 car
Wooburn	Des	1/5 th	Filgrave	Bun	20a
TOTAL		400+a; 17 car; ++	Hanslope	Bun	3 car
Waddesdon Deanery			Haversham	Bun	100a
Ashendon	Ash	40a	Lavendon	Bun	2 car
North Marston	Ash	Much land	Newton Blossomville	Bun	1 car
Oving	Ash	Certain lands	Ravenstone	Bun	40a
Wotton Underwood	Ash	5v	Stoke Goldington	Bun	80a
Worminghall	Ixb	1 car	Bow Brickhill	Mou	100a
Little Claydon	Wad	1 car	Emberton	Mou	100a
TOTAL		40a; 2 car; 5v; +	Great Brickhill	Mou	60a
Mursley Deanery			Great Crawley	Mou	200a
Aston Abbots	Cot	100a	Milton Keynes	Mou	200a
Cublington	Cot	2 car	Petsoe	Mou	80a
Linslade	Cot	200a	Wavendon	Mou	60a
Wing	Cot	300a	Bradwell	Sec	100a
Drayton Parslow	Mur	1 car	Calverton	Sec	2 car
Mursley	Mur	1 car	Great Linford	Sec	2 car
Stewkley	Mur	70a	Little Loughton	Sec	40a
Winslow	Mur	400a	Little Woolstone	Sec	9a
Drayton Beauchamp	Yar	1½ car	Newport Pagnell	Sec	1 car demesne
Edlesborough	Yar	300a	Newton Longville	Sec	1v
Ivinghoe	Yar	400a	Shenley Church End	Sec	100a
Marsworth	Yar	100a	Stantonbury	Sec	60a
Pitstone	Yar	140a	Stoke Hammond	Sec	30a
TOTAL		2010a; 5½ car	Wolverton	Sec	200a
Buckingham Deanery			TOTAL		1579a; 12 car; 1v
Addington	Lam	2v	GRAND TOTAL		5809+a; 69½+ car; 24v
Edgcott	Lam	Great part			
Padbury	Lam	1 car			
Thornborough	Lam	1 car			
Barton Hartshorn	Row	1 car			
Beachampton	Row	1 car			

APPENDIX 2

Livestock Scarcity in Buckinghamshire 1341

<i>Place</i>	<i>Hund</i>	<i>Sheep &c</i>			
Wendover Deanery			Mursley	Mur	Few
Buckland	Ayl	Few	Winslow	Mur	Few
Ellesborough	Ayl	Few	Cheddington	Yar	Few
Gt. Missenden	Ayl	Disease	Drayton Beauchamp	Yar	Scarce
Hulcott	Ayl	Few	Edlesborough	Yar	Disease
Lt. Missenden	Ayl	Few	Ivinghoe	Yar	Disease
Stoke Mandeville	Ayl	No pasture	Marsworth	Yar	Few
Horsenden	Ris	Few	Buckingham Deanery		
Monks Risborough	Ris	Few	Addington	Lam	Few
Princes Risborough	Ris	Few	Padbury	Lam	Few
Dinton	Stn	Few	Steeple Claydon	Lam	Few
Lt. Kimble	Stn	Few	Thornborough	Lam	Few
Stone	Stn	Few	Beachampton	Row	Few
Weston Turville	Stn	V. few; 4 folds deficient	Thornton	Row	Few
Burnham Deanery			Tingewick	Row	Few
Beaconsfield	Bur	25% usual	Evershaw	Stf	Few
Burnham	Bur	Murrain	Foxcote	Stf	Few
Isenhampstead Chenduit	Bur	Few	Leckhampstead	Stf	Few
St Leonards	Bur	Poor	Lillingstone Dayrell	Stf	Few
Wycombe Deanery			Radelive	Stf	Murrain
Averingdown	Des	Few	Shalstone	Stf	Few
Fawley	Des	Few	Stowe	Stf	Few
Hughenden	Des	Disease	Turweston	Stf	Few
Little Marlow	Des	6 folds deficient	Water Stratford	Stf	Few
Medmenham	Des	Few	Westbury	Stf	Few
Radnage	Des	Few	Newport Deanery		
Saunderton St. Mary	Des	Few	Filgrave	Bun	Few
Saunderton St. Nicholas	Des	Murrain	Gayhurst	Bun	Few
Turville	Des	Few	Lathbury	Bun	Few
Waddesdon Deanery			Lavendon	Bun	Few
Upper Winchendon	Ash	Few	Newton Blossomville	Bun	Few
Ickford	Ixh	Few	Stoke Goldington	Bun	Few
Ilmer	Ixh	Few	Tyringham	Bun	Few
Kingsey	Ixh	Few	Astwood	Mou	Very few
East Claydon	Wad	Few	Bow Brickhill	Mou	Few
Hogshaw	Wad	Few	Chicheley	Mou	Few
Mursley Deanery			Clifton Keynes	Mou	Few
Aston Abbots	Cot	Few	Great Brickhill	Mou	Few
Cublington	Cot	Few	Great Crawley	Mou	Few, deficient pasture
Grove	Cot	Few	Hardmead	Mou	Few
Wingrave	Cot	Few	Moulsoe	Mou	Few
			Petsoe	Mou	Few
			Sherington	Mou	Few
			Wavendon	Mou	Few
			Bradwell	Sec	Few
			Calverton	Sec	Few
			Great Loughton	Sec	Few
			Little Woolstone	Sec	Few
			Newton Longville	Sec	Few

Buckinghamshire in 1341

Shenley Church End	Sec	Few
Simpson	Sec	Few, low price
Stoke Hammond	Sec	Very few
Wolverton	Sec	Few

APPENDIX 3

Shortages of Beans & Peas in 1341

<i>Place</i>	<i>Hund.</i>	<i>Beans, crops etc.</i>
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Wendover Deanery

Bierton	Ayl	Deficient "dry"/Mildew [crops]
Hampden	Ayl	Mildew [crops]
Hulcott	Ayl	People poor
Horsenden	Ris	People poor
Great Kimble	Stn	200ac. worth little
Haddenham	Stn	Deficient "dry"
Halton	Stn	People poor
Little Kimble	Stn	1/3rd debilitated

Burnham Deanery

Taplow	Bur	Crops flooded
Burnham	Bur	Crops flooded/People poor
Penn	Bur	Many poor
Hitcham	Bur	People poor
Iver	Stk	Lent corn deficient "dry"
Hedgerley	Stk	Mildew [crops]

Wycombe Deanery

Turville	Des	Destitute tenants
Fawley	Des	Destitute tenants
Radnage	Des	Many impoverished
Averingdown	Des	Mildew [crops]
Saunderton St. Nicholas	Des	Poverty
Hambleden	Des	Poverty
Hughenden	Des	Tenants impotent

Waddesdon Deanery

Upper Winchendon	Ash	Deficient "dry"
Wotton Underwood	Ash	Deficient "dry"
Grendon Underwood	Ash	Deficient "dry"
Ludgershall	Ash	Deficient "dry"
Quainton	Ash	Deficient "dry"
Aston Sandford	Ixh	60a sown, no

Chilton & Dorton	Ixh	seed
Oakley/Brill/Boarstall	Ixh	Deficient "dry"
Shabbington	Ixh	Deficient "dry"
Ilmer	Ixh	People impoverished
Hogshaw	Wad	Deficient "dry"

Mursley Deanery

Wingrave	Cot	1/4 no render
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Buckingham Deanery

Adstock	Lam	Deficient "dry"
Steeple Claydon	Lam	Spring corn deficient "dry"
Caversfield	Lam	Spring corn deficient "dry"
Preston Bisset	Row	Deficient "dry"
Chetwode	Row	Serfs & others poor
Westbury	Stf	People poor
Foxcote	Stf	People poor
Maids Moreton	Stf	People poor

Newport Deanery

Tyringham	Bun	Deficient
Haversham	Bun	Deficient "dry"
Olney	Bun	Deficient "dry"
Walton	Mou	Deficient
Moulsoe	Mou	Deficient "dry"
Hardmead	Mou	Deficient "dry"
Sherington	Mou	Deficient "dry"
Emberton	Mou	Deficient "dry"
Broughton	Mou	Deficient "dry"
Great Brickhill	Mou	Sandy soil
Great Loughton	Sec	Deficient
Newport Pagnell	Sec	Deficient "dry"
Stantonbury	Sec	Deficient "dry"
Willen	Sec	Deficient "dry"
Woughton	Sec	Deficient "dry"
Great Woolstone	Sec	Deficient "dry"

APPENDIX 4

Change in Value of the Tithe 1291–1341, with Reasons for Decline in the *Inquisitiones Nonarum*
[Values in Marks (=13/4 or £0.67)]

Parish	Hund.	1291	1341	± %	Arable	Sheep	Crops	Poverty
Buckingham	Row	260	39	-85.0				
Quarrendon	Wad	32	12	-62.5				
Aylesbury Chapels	Ayl	105	40	-62.0				
Little Brickhill	Mou	6.5	3	-53.8				
Grove	Cot	4	2	-50.0		X		
Fingest	Des	8	4	-50.0	X			
Ivinghoe	Yar	60	32	-46.7	X	X		
High Wycombe	Des	52	30	-42.3				
Amersham	Bur	68	40	-41.2				
Fleet Marston	Wad	10.5	6.5	-38.1				
Turville	Des	12	7.5	-37.5	X	X		X
Hughenden	Des	36.5	23	-37.0	X	X		X
Cublington	Cot	8.5	5.5	-35.3	X	X		X
Penn	Bur	20	13	-35.0	X			X
Marsh Gibbon	Lam	24	16	-33.3				
Leckhampstead	Stf	24	16	-33.3	X	X		
Cippenham	Bur	12	8	-33.3				
Medmenham	Des	12	8	-33.3	X	X		
Ravenstone	Bun	22.5	15	-33.3	X			
Hardmead	Mou	11.5	8	-30.3		X	X	
Dorney	Bur	10	7	-30.0				
Great Marlow	Des	50	35	-30.0	X			
Fawley	Des	17	12	-29.5	X	X		X
Marsworth	Yar	21.25	15	-29.4	X	X		
Emberton	Mou	17	12	-29.4	X		X	
Wolverton	Sec	22.5	16	-28.9	X	X		
Filgrave	Bun	7	5	-28.6	X	X		
Wing	Cot	46	33	-28.3	X			
Chesham	Bur	60	43	-28.3	X			
Wendover	Ayl	50	36	-28.0	X			
Westbury	Stf	12.5	9	-28.0	X	X		X
Horsenden	Ris	5.5	4	-27.3	X	X		X
Newport Pagnell	Sec	37	27	-27.0	X		X	
Drayton Parslow	Mur	15	11	-26.7	X			
Edlesborough	Yar	45	33	-26.7	X	X		
Farnham Royal	Bur	24	18	-25.0				
Hedgerley	Stk	3	2.25	-25.0			X	
Wexham	Stk	10	7.5	-25.0	X			
Averingdown	Des	40	30	-25.0	X	X	X	
Bradenham	Des	4	3	-25.0	X			
Radnage	Des	10	7.5	-25.0		X		X
Saunderton St. Mary	Des	8	6	-25.0	X	X		
Saunderton St. Nich.	Des	8	6	-25.0	X	X		X
Newton Blossomville	Bun	8	6	-25.0	X	X		
Stoke Goldington	Bun	20	15	-25.0	X	X		

Buckinghamshire in 1341

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Hund.</i>	<i>1291</i>	<i>1341</i>	$\pm \%$	Arable	Sheep	Crops	Poverty
Tyringham	Bun	20	15	-25.0		X	X	
Maids Moreton	Stf	9.28	7	-24.6	X			X
Burnham	Bur	61	46	-24.6	X	X	X	X
Little Kimble	Stn	9.25	7	-24.3	X	X	X	
Wooburn	Des	19.75	15	-24.1	X			
Linslade	Cot	13	10	-23.1	X			
Mursley	Mur	19.5	15	-23.1	X	X		
Chalfont St. Peter	Bur	26	20	-23.1	X			
Hitcham	Bur	6.5	5	-23.1	X			X
Chenies	Bur	7	5	-22.6	X			
Petsoe	Mou	4.5	3.5	-22.2	X	X		
Little Marlow	Des	23	18	-22.0	X	X		
Wingrave	Cot	25	20	-20.0		X	X	
Hampden	Ayl	10	8	-20.0	X		X	
Caversfield	Lam	10	8	-20.0			X	
Twyford	Lam	25	20	-20.0				
Foxcote	Stf	5	4	-20.0	X	X		X
Shalstone	Stf	10	8	-20.0	X	X		
Stowe	Stf	15	12	-20.0	X	X		
Olney	Bun	50	40	-20.0			X	
Great Brickhill	Mou	12.5	10	-20.0	X	X	X	
Turweston	Stf	12.3	10	-18.7	X	X		
Calverton	Sec	22	18	-18.2	X	X		
North Marston	Ash	11.5	9.5	-17.4	X			
Hartwell	Stn	12	10	-16.7				
Stoke Poges	Stk	18	15	-16.7	X			
Broughton	Mou	9	7.5	-16.7			X	
Milton Keynes	Mou	18	15	-16.7	X			
Stoke Hammond	Sec	12	10	-16.7	X	X		
Bow Brickhill	Mou	9.5	8	-15.8	X	X		
Steeple Claydon	Lam	14	12	-14.3		X	X	
Hambleton	Des	35	30	-14.3	X			X
Cold Brayfield	Bun	3.5	3	-14.3	X			
Hanslope	Bun	70	60	-14.3	X			
Willen	Sec	3.5	3	-14.3			X	
Waddesdon	Wad	55	47.5	-13.6				
Halton	Stn	15	13	-13.3	X			X
Addington	Lam	7.5	6.5	-13.3	X	X		
Beaconsfield	Bur	23	20	-13.1	X	X		
Eton	Stk	16	14	-12.5				
Monks Risborough	Ris	25	22	-12.0	X	X		
Thornton	Row	8.75	7.75	-11.5	X	X		
Stewkley	Mur	18	16	-11.1	X			
Ellesborough	Ayl	22.5	20	-11.1	X	X		
Bledlow	Ris	33.75	30	-11.1				
Padbury	Lam	18	16	-11.1	X	X		
Radclive	Des	9	8	-11.1	X	X		
Cheddington	Yar	10	9	-10.0		X		
Great Missenden	Ayl	15	13.5	-10.0	X	X		

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Humd.</i>	<i>1291</i>	<i>1341</i>	\pm %	Arable	Sheep	Crops	Poverty
Preston Bisset	Row	10	9	-10.0	X		X	
Iver	Stk	50	45	-10.0			X	
Great Crawley	Mou	30	27	-10.0	X	X		
Sherington	Mou	20	18	-10.0		X	X	
Shenley Church End	Sec	20	18	-10.0	X	X		
Moulsoe	Mou	7.75	7	-9.7		X	X	
Great Kimble	Stn	18.5	17	-8.1	X		X	
Drayton Beauchamp	Yar	14	13	-7.2	X	X		
Upton	Stk	21.5	20	-7.0				
Bletchley	Sec	21.5	20	-7.0				
Wavendon	Mou	15	14	-6.7	X	X		
Pitstone	Yar	16	15	-6.2	X			
Slapton	Yar	18	17	-5.6				
Stone	Stn	18	17	-5.6		X		
Thornborough	Lam	14.5	14	-3.4	X	X		
Langley & Wraysbury	Stk	50	49	-2.0	X			
Hawridge	Yar	1	1	0				
Aston Clinton	Ayl	30	30	0				
Bierton	Ayl	30	30	0			X	
Buckland	Ayl	10	10	0	X	X		
Hulcott	Ayl	7.5	7.5	0		X		X
Little Missenden	Ayl	11	11	0	X	X		
Stoke Mandeville	Ayl	18	18	0	X	X		
St Leonards	Ayl	2	2	0		X		
Princes Risborough	Ris	22	22	0		X		
Dinton	Stn	30	30	0	X	X		
Weston Turville	Stn	20	20	0	X	X		
Adstock	Lam	10	10	0			X	
Edgcott	Lam	5	5	0	X			
Barton Hartshorn	Row	2	2	0	X			
Chetwode	Row	5	5	0	X		X	
Hillesdon	Row	11	11	0				
Tingewick	Row	11	11	0		X		
Akeley	Stf	5	5	0				
Evershaw	Stf	1	1	0		X		
Lillingstone Lovell	Oxon	12	12	0				
Water Stratford	Stf	5	5	0	X	X		
Chalfont St. Giles	Bur	20	20	0				
Isenhampstead	Bur	2.5	2.5	0		X		
Taplow	Bur	10	10	0			X	
Datchet & Fulmer	Stk	20	20	0				
Denham	Stk	24	24	0				
Horton	Stk	21	21	0				
Gayhurst	Bun	8	8	0		X		
Lathbury	Bun	15	15	0		X		
Lavendon	Bun	8	8	0	X	X		
Astwood	Mou	10	10	0		X		
Chicheley	Mou	9	9	0		X		
Clifton Reynes	Mou	13	13	0		X		

Buckinghamshire in 1341

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Hund.</i>	<i>1291</i>	<i>1341</i>	\pm %	<i>Arable</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Crops</i>	<i>Poverty</i>
Walton	Mou	8	8	0			X	
Bradwell	Sec	5	5	0	X	X		
Great Linford	Sec	15	15	0	X			
Great Loughton	Sec	4.5	4.5	0		X	X	
Great Woolstone	Sec	7.5	7.5	0			X	
Little Loughton	Sec	2.5	2.5	0	X			
Little Woolstone	Sec	6.5	6.5	0	X	X		
Newton Longville	Sec	10	10	0	X	X		
Simpson	Sec	8	8	0		X		
Stantonbury	Sec	7	7	0	X		X	
Woughton	Sec	10	10	0			X	
Ashendon	Ash	9	9	0	X			
Grendon Underwood	Ash	10	10	0			X	
Ludgershall	Ash	11.5	11.5	0			X	
Wotton Underwood	Ash	10	10	0	X		X	
Aston Sandford	Ixh	7	7	0			X	
Chilton & Dorton	Ixh	11	11	0			X	
Ilmer	Ixh	8.5	8.5	0		X		X
Kingsey	Ixh	10	10	0		X		
Oakley/Brill/Boarstall	Ixh	40	40	0			X	
Shabbington	Ixh	12.75	12.75	0			X	
Worminghall	Ixh	7	7	0	X			
Long Crendon*	Ixh/Ash	31.5	31.5	0				
East Claydon	Wad	10.75	10.75	0		X		
Hogshaw	Wad	10	10	0		X	X	
Little Claydon	Wad	5	5	0	X			
Quainton	Ash	33	33.25	+0.8			X	
Lillingstone Dayrell	Stf	8	8.25	+3.1	X	X		
Oving	Ash	6.5	6.75	+3.8	X			
Pitchcott	Wad	8.45	9	+6.5				
Haddenham	Stn	46.5	50	+7.5			X	
Haversham	Bun	18	20	+11.1	X		X	
Dunton	Mur	4	4.5	+12.5				
Ickford	Ixh	12	13.5	+12.5		X		
Beachampton	Row	6	7	+16.7	X	X		
Upper Winchendon	Ash	8.5	10	+17.6		X	X	
Aston Abbots**	Cot	?	4.5	?	X	X		
Winslow**	Mur	?	24	?	X	X		

Notes: * includes Chearsley and Nether Winchendon; ** no data given in *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*