

THE FIELD SYSTEM OF AN EAST KENT PARISH (DEAL)¹

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ALTHOUGH Kent was, by 1700, largely an enclosed county, unenclosed parcels of arable, meadow and marsh were not unknown. The arable fields which were subdivided into unenclosed parcels remain one of the most interesting enigmas of Kentish agrarian history. In some parishes the arable fields remained open until they disappeared during the late nineteenth century under the advancing sea of bricks and mortar. One such parish was Deal, where the six-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1905 records the outline pattern of a new housing estate encroaching upon the open fields, indicated by their pecked boundaries and numerous boundary stones.² In this paper, an attempt is made to describe the field system at Deal and to discover why some fields in the parish were enclosed early while others remained open until the end of the nineteenth century.

The Setting

The nineteenth century ecclesiastical parish of Deal lay on the lower edge of the dip-slope of the North Downs, in the east of the county. In the northern part of the parish lay the flat marshes of Lydden Valley and to the south the land rose very gradually, just reaching a hundred feet above sea level. To the south-east, the land descended to the sea, but in the north-east the marshes were separated from the sea by a sand and shingle spit, on part of which the modern town of Deal has been built (Fig. 1). The parish contained three main types of soil: the alluvial soils of the marshes, the fertile loams of the Brickearths and the more porous, thinner soils of the Upper Chalk.³ In detail, soils varied considerably from field to field but these three types provided the broad contrasts, and in the absence of any major contrasts of relief within the parish, contrasts of soil may be expected to have assumed a greater importance.

¹ This paper is based on Chapter 4 of my unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 'The Field Systems of Kent', University of London (1963), 183-216. I would like to acknowledge helpful criticisms in its preparation by Professor H. C. Darby and Mr. H. C. Prince, of the Department of Geography, University College, London. To Mr. K. Wass I owe thanks for drawing the maps.

² Ordnance Survey 6 in. Map (3rd ed., 1905), Kent, Sheet 58 N.E.

³ A. D. Hall and E. J. Russell, *A Report on the Agriculture and Soils of Kent, Surrey and Sussex* (1911), 54-72 and 94-107.

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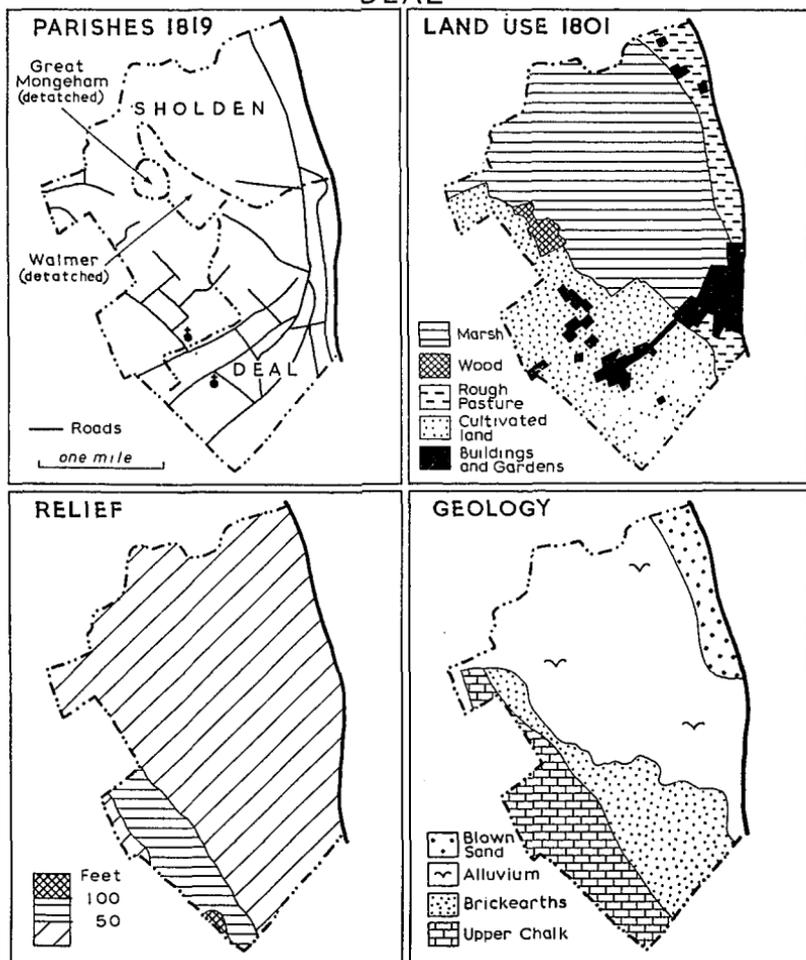


FIG. 1

FIG. 1. Deal: The Setting. Source: Index Map to the Tithe Survey (1819), Sheet 3; Ordnance Survey One-Inch Map (1st Edition, 1801); Ordnance Survey One-Inch Map (7th Edition, 1959), Sheet 173; Geological Survey One-Inch Map (Drift Edition, 1928), Sheet 290.

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In terms of field boundaries, the contrast between the open and the enclosed fields of Deal has often been commented upon. In fact, a number of investigators have glanced at the field patterns of Deal and one, M. Nightingale, has taken a closer look. Most have taken the existence of open fields, for which they produced abundant evidence, as proof of the existence of common fields, for which they produced no evidence. H. L. Gray found that in 1616 the tenants' holdings on the manor of Dale, or Court Ash, in the parish of Deal, 'lay almost entirely in open field' and, noting the same field names in a deed of 1381-2, he concluded that 'the conditions of the seventeenth century seem to be carried back to the fourteenth'. By the word 'conditions', Gray implied open fields rather than common fields.⁴ Other writers have been less discerning. W. P. D. Stebbing noted a 'primitive common field system of communal farming' in the parish of Deal, but the only evidence he cited was a map of 1734 which in fact shows open but not necessarily common fields.⁵ F. W. Hardman claimed that the land in Deal 'was cultivated in "shots" and "tighs", remnants of the old common field system', but he failed to cite the evidence on which he based this claim.⁶ More recently, M. Nightingale undertook a close comparison of a survey of 1616 and a map of 1811 and, noting only two examples of the consolidation of open parcels and four of division, he concluded that 'the evidence at Deal suggests that strips were not divided by Gavelkind from at least the end of the sixteenth century, if not before', that the divisions were probably created as part of some exchange and consolidation plan, and he thought it likely that common pasturing was practised over the strips although he admitted that he had found no documentary evidence for it.⁷ These studies of the fields of Deal show how an open field pattern is readily assumed to reflect a common field system.

The parish of Deal was not coincident with any one manor. In fact, there were, within the parish, the lands of three manors: the manors of Court Ash, Deal Prebend and Chamberlain's Fee.⁸ For reasons related to the availability of source materials, it is with the first of these, the manor of Court Ash, that this paper is largely concerned.

⁴ H. L. Gray, *English Field Systems* (1915), 276-7.

⁵ W. P. D. Stebbing, *The Invader's Shore. Some Observations on the Physiology, Archaeology, History and Sociology of Deal and Walmer* (1937), 19 and 41. The 1734 map, formerly in private hands, is now deposited at the Kent County Archives Office (hereafter KAO): U725 Pl.

⁶ F. W. Hardman, 'The Sea Valley of Deal', *Arch. Cant.*, L (1938), 50-9, on p. 50.

⁷ M. Nightingale, 'Some Evidence of Open Field Agriculture in Kent', unpublished B. Litt. thesis, University of Oxford (1952), 50-2: Deal.

⁸ E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, IV (Folio ed., 1799), 160-3.

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The Early Nineteenth Century

In the early nineteenth century, the field pattern on the soils of the Upper Chalk contrasted with the field pattern on the soils of the Brickearths and the alluvium. On the Upper Chalk, the fields were unenclosed and mostly rectangular in shape : on the Brickearths, the fields were enclosed and largely rectangular ; and on the alluvium, the fields were enclosed, by ditches or hedges or both, and their boundaries showed a much greater sinuosity than any other field boundaries in the parish.⁹ The contrast was partially one between arable land in precisely rectangular open strips and pasture land held in roughly rectangular enclosures. This was not entirely so, for in 1843 although all the open strips were arable not all the enclosures were in pasture. The titheable lands of the parish in 1843 amounted to 736 acres, of which 536 acres were arable, 125 acres were meadow or pasture, and 75 acres were orchards and gardens.¹⁰ At the time of the Tithe Survey, the corn tithes were still taken in kind, all other tithes being compounded at the following fixed rates : potatoes 20s. an acre, radishes 15s. an acre, pasture 6s. an acre, turnips 5s. an acre, clover 10s. an acre and gardens 20s. an acre. The annual average value of the corn tithes was £261 3s. 9d. that of the compositions £204 14s. 5d. Corn production was clearly of paramount importance. Indeed, the arable land of the parish was 'of the very best quality' and some of the pastures were of 'poor quality'.¹¹ The contrast of field patterns reflected, in part, a contrast of land uses.¹²

Some farmers had land both in the enclosed and in the open parts of the parish. Deal Court Farm, for example, a fragmented holding, consisted in 1793 of open and enclosed arable lands on the Chalk and Brickearths, and a number of pasture fields in the marsh.¹³ On the other hand, some farmers had no fields in the marsh at all. A holding of 18½ acres in 1796, for example, comprised sixteen open parcels and two enclosed fields : most of the holding lay in named 'shots', in parcels intermixed with those of other owners. Its individual parcels were widely scattered, distant from the farmhouse, yet with no hint of

⁹ See the following maps : 'A map of the Town and Parish of Deal', 1819, KAO U725 P14 ; 'A Plan of several pieces of Marshland in the Parish of Deal, Kent, the property of Mr. Henry Webb Smith', 1815, KAO U725 P4. Also the Tithe Map, 1843, Tithe Redemption Office (hereafter TRO) 17/107. The Tithe Map is here an unreliable guide to the open or enclosed state of the fields, for all the boundaries are shown as continuous lines. These boundaries are ownership boundaries rather than field boundaries.

¹⁰ TRO 17/107 : Apportionment. TRO I. R. 18/3395 : Tithe File.

¹¹ Opinions expressed in 1842 by an Assistant Tithe Commissioner : TRO 18/3395.

¹² This contrast can be seen on the Ordnance Survey 1 in. Map (1st ed., 1801), on which generalized field boundaries are portrayed.

¹³ KAO De/P25.

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any regularity in their arrangement (Fig. 2).¹⁴ This holding formed part of the manor of Court Ash and a rental of the lands of the manor in 1803 shows that most of the tenants held similarly intermixed holdings.¹⁵ The rental's terminology is, in places, vague : for example,

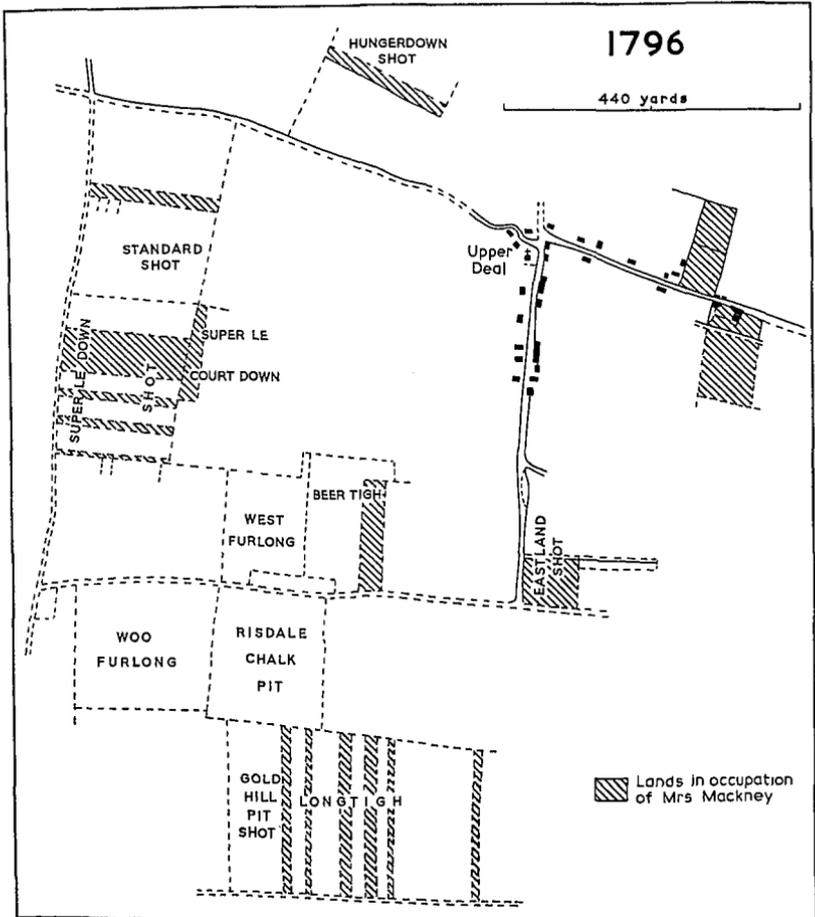


FIG. 2. A Landholding in Deal, 1796. Source : KAO U725 P2.

Thomas Dawes, in addition to his messuage and outbuildings, held 18½ acres of land 'in divers pieces and in divers shots'.¹⁶ Occasionally, the rental is more specific, naming the 'shots' in which the various parcels lay : for example, John Cannon held 5 acres 'in Cow Tigh',

¹⁴ KAO U725 P2.

¹⁵ KAO U725 M1, ff. 28-34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 30.

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3 acres 'in Super le Down', $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres 'in Deal Mill', $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres 'in Goodwin Parva' and 3 acres 'in Ultra le North Wall'.¹⁷ In 1803, then, the manor of Court Ash consisted in part of arable 'shots' and 'furlongs', each of which was divided into the parcels of a number of tenants.

The rental suggests that parcels of land changed hands often : alongside the names of 'Present Tenants' are listed those of 'Former Tenants', and the frequent lack of resemblance between the two suggests that land holdings passed only rarely to heirs and relations and that the operation of the land market was more important than family inheritance in producing the pattern of land ownership. This suggestion is confirmed by manorial court records for 1803-34, recording transferences of land from one tenant to another.¹⁸ A total of 459 transferences may be classified as follows :

A.	% of total transferred by sale and/or exchange :	74
B.	% of total transferred by Will :	14
C.	% of total transferred to heirs of the former tenant for no specified reason :	8.5
D.	% of total transferred to heirs because of the intestacy of the former tenant :	1.5
E.	% of total transferred for miscellaneous reasons :	2

Three-quarters of the cases record the sale or exchange of land and in addition a number of parcels devised by Will were subsequently disposed of by the inheritor, so that the operation of the land market was undoubtedly the prime factor in shaping the pattern of land ownership. If the cases of land descending to heirs for no specified reason are added to those showing land descending because of an intestacy, then the partitioning effects of gavelkind tenure were only possible in 10 per cent. of the total transferences. In a number, however, the former tenant had only one heir, so that the possibility of the partitioning of his lands among his heirs did not arise and the figure of 10 per cent. is accordingly high. The effects of gavelkind tenure upon the parcel pattern of the manor of Court Ash in the early nineteenth century were extremely limited. Yet some land was held in that tenure, for one entry for 1829 records that John Lambert who held 'A Messuage and yard with the appurtenances in Glutton . . . is dead since the last Court and upon his decease the same descended and came to his two sons and co-heirs in Gavelkind, Thomas and George Lambert and their heirs'.¹⁹ The pattern of land ownership at Deal in the early nineteenth century was a product largely of the land market, partly of the devising of land

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, *passim*. This volume contains rentals and court records of the manor of Court Ash for 1803, 1804, 1806, 1811, 1817, 1823 and 1834.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 139.

by Will and negligibly of the partitioning of land among co-heirs as a result of an intestacy.²⁰

A single alienation could complicate the ownership pattern, as lands held formerly by one tenant could, on alienation, come into the hands of as many as ten tenants.²¹ Furthermore, a single parcel of land formerly held by one tenant could be subdivided on alienation to two or more tenants.²² The general picture formed is thus one of an ownership pattern rapidly changing during the early nineteenth century, principally in response to economic forces, but the parcel pattern itself seems to have been largely stable, for the subdivision of parcels, although it took place, was rare.²³

One reason for the rapidly changing ownership pattern may have been the prosperous nature of farming practised on the rich, loamy soils. That agriculture was prospering at the end of the eighteenth century we have the evidence of John Boys, who wrote: 'All that part of East Kent which lay within the vicinity of the towns of Faversham, Sandwich and Deal, is mostly arable, extremely fertile, and under the most excellent system of management.'²⁴ The soils, he noted, were rich, sandy loams, dry and easily worked at all seasons of the year so that 'no ridges or water-furrows are required', and capable of producing good crops of wheat, beans, barley, oats and peas.²⁵ The most usual rotation on the loams was barley, beans and wheat, with peas sometimes instead of beans.²⁶ The tithes of the adjoining parish of Sholden were in 1810 accounted for as follows: wheat 123 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres; barley 92 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres; beans and peas 48 acres; clover 50 acres; turnips 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres; canary 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres; radishes 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres; potatoes 2 acres; lucerne 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and 'upland' 80 acres. The tithes of the 'upland' were compounded at 12s. an acre, the tithes of wheat at 21s., of barley

²⁰ The records do not allow an analysis of the way in which land descending equally to the sons of an intestate were partitioned or perhaps jointly occupied. The court presentments in 1803 totalled 109: of these, 99 recorded the transference of land by alienation, 5 the transference of land by Will, and 5 the transference of land to collaterals of the deceased but without reference to a Will. These cases relating to a single year again show that the land market, rather than family ties, was responsible for the pattern of land ownership. KAO U725 M1, ff. 1-27.

²¹ For example, the lands formerly of Charles Booth: *ibid.*, ff. 5-6.

²² For example, 1 acre $\frac{1}{2}$ rood of land in 'Le Smock alias Drawsmock', formerly held by Samuel Fossick, was subdivided so that John Brown and John Cutfield held one part and James Bartlett held another part: *ibid.*, f. 2.

²³ The stability of the parcel pattern between 1616 and 1811 was noted by M. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, 50-2, but in fact the map of 1811 which he used was a copy, the original of which was made in 1766 (KAO U442 P83). Nightingale suggested that the few changes that did take place were probably the result of some exchange and consolidation plan, but the evidence here produced suggests that it was more likely to have been the result of alienations.

²⁴ J. Boys, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Kent* (2nd ed., 1813), 6. The First Edition was published in 1796.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 78 and 81.

at 10s. and of beans and peas at 10s. Others tithes were not then compounded.²⁷ The spread of turnip cultivation was a striking advance during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and Boys believed their most profitable use was in folding them off with sheep.²⁸ The East Kent flock-farmers usually bought their lambs at the Romney fair in August, kept them for two years, and then sold them to a fattening grazier or made them fat themselves on turnips and pea or bean straw.²⁹ Both sheep and soil benefited by folding, but its main purpose, according to Boys, was 'for the great improvement of the soil'.³⁰ The rearing of pigs and their fattening on the corn stubbles was also a profitable part of the activities of the East Kent farmer.³¹ The marshes provided pastures, not only for sheep but also for cattle, brought from North and South Wales to be fattened for market.³² The farming at Deal would have had most, if not all, of these features which Boys considered characteristic of East Kent: it was a prosperous farming area, founded on rich soils maintained by meticulous manuring, producing valuable cereal crops and fat stock.

Because the agriculture of this region was described in such detail by Boys, and because he himself was a farmer at Betteshanger, only two miles from Deal,³³ it is worth noting another of his remarks: 'there is no portion of Kent that is occupied by a community of persons, as in many other counties'.³⁴ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the fields of Deal, although some of them were unenclosed and subdivided into strips, were not communally cultivated and pastured. An open field pattern was not synonymous with a common field system.

The Mid-eighteenth Century

Estate maps provide a clear picture of the fields of Deal in the middle of the eighteenth century. A map of part of the manor of Deal Prebend, for example, shows that some of its fields, located on the Brickearths, were rectangular enclosures, hedged and in one instance, fenced.³⁵ Two maps, of 1766 and 1734, together with a rental of c. 1750, enable a reconstruction of the holdings and settlement of the manor

²⁷ Lambeth Palace Library (hereafter LPL) CC 88022.

²⁸ J. Boys, *op. cit.*, 106-7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 178.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

³² *Ibid.*, 169.

³³ *Ibid.*, title page.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁵ 'A Map of Part of the Manor of Deal Prebend lying on the West side of Deal Town', 1788, LPL CC 8881.

of Court Ash.³⁶ A map of 1766, untitled, depicts a larger area than the earlier map and would seem to represent almost the entire lands of the manor of Court Ash. The field pattern shows the contrasts already noticed in the early nineteenth century. The settlement pattern was broadly as follows : a nucleated settlement around the Church of Upper Deal, a form of incipient ribbon development along the road from Upper to Lower Deal, and some dispersed buildings (not necessarily dwellings) on the cultivated area. The map of 1734, on the other hand, shows only 'so much of the Manor of Court Ash as is not inclosed or intermixed with other unlimited or uncertain lands', and it depicts nearly 200 acres, lying as unenclosed strips in twenty-four contiguous, named 'shots'. The parcels of a single landowner were, not surprisingly, distributed with no recognizable regularity (Fig. 3). The 'shots' varied in size, from the $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of 'Copped Thorn' to the $20\frac{1}{4}$ acres of 'Long Tigh'. The numbers of parcels within 'shots' similarly varied considerably : the $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of 'Copped Thorn' comprised a single parcel, as did also the $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres of 'Little Tigh', the $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of 'Kackernoll' and the $3\frac{3}{4}$ acres of 'Walmer Drove'. On the other hand, the $20\frac{1}{4}$ acres of 'Long Tigh' comprised nineteen parcels, the 18 acres of 'West Furlong' twelve parcels and the $11\frac{1}{4}$ acres of 'Super le Down' eleven parcels. Within a single 'shot', the sizes of parcels varied : the four parcels of 'Goldhill', for example, were $\frac{1}{4}$ acre, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 5 acres and 8 acres each. The parcel pattern thus showed signs of the consolidation of parcels by individual owners.

The rental of c. 1750 contains further evidence of this : two parcels of James Carr in 'Long Tigh', of 2 roods and 2 roods 20 perches respectively, were 'called 1 piece', and the four pieces of John Middleton in 'Woe Furlong' were 'all laid into one Piece containing 3.0.30'. The parcel pattern was gradually being simplified by consolidation. Furthermore, the rental lists the lands not shown on the 1734 map, so that these lands were presumably enclosed. They are listed in exactly the same way as the unenclosed lands, in that the tenants of each named area of land are stated, and this suggests that the enclosed lands had consisted, before enclosure, of open parcels in 'shots' and that enclosure was consequent upon consolidation of the parcels of a single 'shot' into a few owners' hands, or possibly even into a single owner's hands.

If it is assumed that the lands that were unenclosed in 1734 were still unenclosed c. 1750, it becomes possible to calculate the proportions of the manor that were unenclosed and enclosed respectively. The

³⁶ The map of Court Ash lands in 1766 is KAO U442 P83. This is not the original, but a tracing, made in 1936, of a copy, made in 1811. The map of 1734 is KAO U725 P1. This is not the original, but a copy made in 1825 ; the original, in a damaged condition, is KAO De/P24. The rental of c.1750 is KAO U725 M3.

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total area of the unenclosed lands, as stated in the rental, was 229 acres 1 rood 30 perches, and the enclosed lands totalled 310 acres 10 perches, so that the sum area of the manor was 739½ acres. The unenclosed area was thus only 31 per cent. of the total, so that even on a manor that had open fields in the middle of the eighteenth century, the enclosed land amounted to about twice the unenclosed land in area.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some tenants held only enclosed land and that some held both enclosed and unenclosed land. The

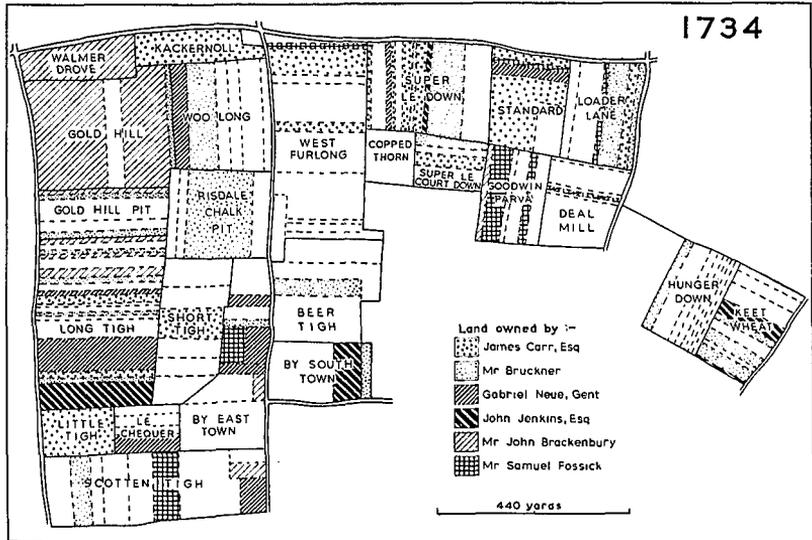


FIG. 3. The Unenclosed Lands of the Manor of Court Ash, in Deal, 1734.
Source : KAO U725 P1.

rental contains many references to changes in the tenants of individual parcels of land and again the evidence suggests that parcels were transferred from one family to another, rather than retained within a single family. This suggestion is confirmed by manorial court records of 1752-66, which note many changes of land ownership as a result of purchasing.³⁷ These records also show that the unenclosed nature of some of the parcels led to disputes over the intervening boundaries : on November 12th, 1754, Philpott Chambers was fined 4d. for ploughing up part of the lands of Peter Ham, John Iggulden and Adam Sampson, and on November 7th, 1753, William Carling and Ely Reader had been fined a similar amount each 'for want of a Marke' between their lands in 'Lower Didham'. Perhaps significantly, these records

³⁷ KAO U924 (Court Presentments, uncatalogued).

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contain no reference to the straying of cattle or sheep over the unenclosed lands and the practice of folding would seem to explain this. Certainly wattles were part of a yeoman's equipment,³⁸ and folding was practised both before and after the period under discussion.

The Seventeenth Century

An idea of the type of farming practised at Deal in the seventeenth century is provided by probate inventories.³⁹ For the parish of Deal, there are extant over three hundred probate inventories for the period 1550-1750. Only about one third of these, however, contain details of an agrarian nature and of these one hundred inventories only twenty-five were made in the summer months before harvest.⁴⁰ The sample of useful inventories is thus small and any conclusions drawn from them will in consequence be narrowly based. Nevertheless, the value of the probate inventories lies not in the absolute measurements that they give but in the orders of magnitude that they suggest, permitting instructive comparisons between regions.⁴¹ As a test of their reliability the probate inventories of Deal have been divided into two groups: first, thirteen inventories for the years 1560-1630; secondly, twelve inventories for the years 1630-1700.⁴² A comparison of these inventories appears in Tables 1-4.⁴³

TABLE 1
CROPS AT DEAL, 1560-1630 AND 1630-1700

	Wheat	Barley	Rye	Oats	Pulses	Total Sown
1560-1630	97½ ac.	168¾ ac.	6½ ac.	6½ ac.	95½ ac.	376½ ac.
Percentage	26·0	44·9	1·7	1·9	25·5	100·0
1630-1700	144 ac.	226½ ac.	nil	nil	134½ ac.	502 ac.
Percentage	28·3	44·9	nil	nil	26·6	100·0

³⁸ KAO PRC 27/35/203—an inventory of Benjamin Ladd, yeoman, 1702.

³⁹ Inventories have to be used cautiously, however, for as a source material they have important limitations. For discussions on the merits and limitations of probate inventories in agrarian studies, see: W. G. Hoskins, *Essays in Leicestershire History* (1950), 125-6; J. Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming* (1957), 32; E. Melling, 'Aspects of Agriculture and Industry. A collection of examples from original sources in the Kent Archives Office; from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century', *Kentish Sources*, III (1961), 7-8; F.W.S., 'Short Guides to Records. 3. Probate Inventories', *History*, XLVII (1962), 287-90.

⁴⁰ KAO PRC 21/1-17, 27/1-43, 28/1-20.

⁴¹ J. Thirsk, *op. cit.*, 99.

⁴² A list of these twenty-five inventories and their analysis appears in A. R. H. Baker, *op. cit.*, Appendix IV (A), 393-6.

⁴³ Tables 1-4 are constructed on the same basis as those in J. Thirsk, *op. cit.*, which in turn were constructed on the same basis as those in W. G. Hoskins, *op. cit.* Thus the tables produced here are comparable with those in these two works, which deal with Lincolnshire and Leicestershire respectively.

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TABLE 2
ARABLE LAND AT DEAL, 1560-1630 AND 1630-1700

Area of sown land (acres)	No. of holdings 1560-1630	No. of holdings 1630-1700
Under 5	2	nil
5·1-10	2	1
10·1-20	3	2
20·1-30	3	1
30·1-40	1	3
40·1-60	nil	2
60·1-100	1	3
Over 100	1	nil
Total number of farms	13	12
Recorded sown area of median farm	19 ac.	36·38 ac.

TABLE 3
LIVESTOCK AT DEAL, 1560-1630

Number of animals	Number of Cattle Owners	Number of Horse Owners	Number of Pig Owners	Number of Sheep Owners
1-5	4	8	3	—
6-10	3	2	1	—
11-20	2	1	5	1
21-30	1	—	—	2
31-40	2	—	1	—
41-50	—	—	—	—
51-80	—	—	—	3
81-100	—	—	—	1
100+	—	—	—	2
Unspecified number	—	—	1	—
None	1	2	2	4
Total	13	13	13	13
Median number of animals	9 cattle	3 horses	11 pigs	58 sheep

Of the crops grown, barley occupied by far the largest acreage and was over two-fifths of the total recorded sown acreage. Wheat and pulses each occupied just over a quarter of the total, and only occasionally were rye or oats grown at all. Although not occupying as large an acreage as barley, wheat was the most valuable crop. Of the pulses, peas was the most common sown and was the principal fodder crop cultivated. A number of inventories mention hemp, apples and hops, but the record here is too inconsistent to allow generalization. The median farm in the period 1560-1630 had a recorded sown area of 19 acres, that in the period 1630-1700 a recorded sown area of 36·38 acres.

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TABLE 4
LIVESTOCK AT DEAL, 1630-1700

Number of animals	Number of Cattle Owners	Number of Horse Owners	Number of Pig Owners	Number of Sheep Owners
1-5	1	5	1	2
6-10	6	4	1	—
11-20	2	1	6	—
21-30	—	—	2	—
31-40	1	—	1	—
41-50	—	—	—	3
51-80	—	—	—	1
81-100	—	—	—	—
100+	—	—	—	—
Unspecified number	—	—	—	—
None	2	2	1	6
Total	12	12	12	12
Median number of animals	8 cattle	5-6 horses	18-19 pigs	45-46 sheep

If the inventories for the two periods are considered together, then the median farm in the years 1560-1700 had a recorded sown area of 33½ acres. Of the livestock, cattle, pigs and horses were found on almost every farm, and sheep on every one in two or three. The median farm in the period 1560-1630 carried 9 cattle, 11 pigs, 3 horses and 58 sheep, and the median farm in the period 1630-1700 carried 8 cattle, 5-6 horses, 18-19 pigs and 45-46 sheep. The cattle were principally dairy cattle, but some farms had a few store cattle fattening on the marshes.⁴⁴ Horses were the main draught animals, as well as being used for riding and as pack horses.⁴⁵ The pigs were usually kept in the yard, in 'hoggstacks'.⁴⁶ The sheep flock, valued both as a wool producer and as fat stock, was kept sometimes in the barns, but it was also often folded on the arable and pastured in the marshes.⁴⁷ The inventories show, in fact, that farming at Deal during the seventeenth century was mixed, but that the emphasis was upon wheat, barley and sheep.

The recorded sown acreage of the median farm in the period 1630-1700 was considerably higher than in the period 1560-1630, which suggests an increase in the size of individual farms during the seventeenth century. This suggestion is confirmed by comparing a survey of the manor of Court Ash in 1616 with the rental of the same manor

⁴⁴ KAO PRC 21/13, ff. 372-3 ; 21/17, ff. 157-8 ; 28/13, f. 54.

⁴⁵ KAO PRC 21/14, ff. 372-3.

⁴⁶ KAO PRC 28/6, ff. 387-8 ; 28/17, ff. 206-7.

⁴⁷ KAO PRC 27/1, no. 84 ; 28/19, f. 112v ; 28/1, f. 93v ; 28/17, f. 206 ; 21/4, f. 201 ; 28/13, f. 38.

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c. 1750 already mentioned.⁴⁸ The survey of 1616 lists 'the shottes and places where the said tenements and landes lye', and names the tenants of their constituent parcels. The 'shottes' are readily identifiable with those of the eighteenth century but it is impossible to decide which lands were enclosed and which were unenclosed in 1616.⁴⁹ Nor is it possible to decide on the types of land that each holding comprised, although some of the names refer to 'mead' and to 'marsh'. On the assumption that the land unenclosed in 1734 and in c. 1750 was also unenclosed in 1616, we can make a number of comparisons.⁵⁰

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF PARCELS ON THOSE 'SHOTTES'
THAT WERE UNENCLOSED BY 1734

	1616-1734	1734-c.1750	1616-c.1750
Reduction in numbers	9	nil	7
Increase in numbers	3	9	6
No change	12	15	11
	—	—	—
	24	24	24

Over the period 1616-c. 1750, about half of the 'shottes' saw no change in the numbers of their parcels and about equal numbers saw an increase and a reduction : the general parcel pattern was fairly static and there was about as much increase in the number of parcels as there was reduction. Change was not great, and there was about as much subdivision as there was consolidation.

TABLE 6
COMPARISON OF THE NUMBERS OF PARCELS ON THOSE 'SHOTTES'
AND FIELDS THAT WERE ENCLOSED BY 1734

	1616-c.1750
Reduction in numbers	15
Increase in numbers	5
No change	14
	—
	34

⁴⁸ The survey of 1616 is Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) E164/40, ff. 8-11v ; the rental of c.1750 is KAO U725 M3.

⁴⁹ H. L. Gray thought that the tenants' holdings at Deal in 1616 'lay almost entirely in open field' ; *op. cit.*, 276. The later rental, of c.1750, shows, however, that both the enclosed and the unenclosed lands were listed in the same way and only with the aid of the map of 1734 is it possible to decide which lands were enclosed and which were unenclosed.

⁵⁰ For details, see A. R. H. Baker, *op. cit.*, Appendix IV (B), 396-9.

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Between 1616 and c. 1750 consolidation of parcels was a much more marked feature than further subdivision on those lands that became enclosed by 1734 than on those lands that remained open. The reduction is most noticeable in the cases of 'Kingstile' and 'Incipit Upland' :

	Number of parcels	
	1616	c.1750
'Kingstile'	14	7
'Incipit Upland'	21	13

Consolidation accompanied enclosure : probably consolidation of parcels preceded and thus enabled enclosure to take place. Thus one reason for the lack of enclosure elsewhere may have been the very difficulty of consolidating : the parcels of a holding were at times very small and very scattered, resulting from a former thorough intermixing of parcels, and it would not have been worth enclosing land unless a number of parcels could be acquired in juxtaposition.⁵¹

Similar comparisons are possible in relation to the numbers of tenants.

TABLE 7
COMPARISON OF THE NUMBERS OF TENANTS ON THOSE 'SHOTTES'
THAT WERE UNENCLOSED BY 1734

	1616-1734	1734-c.1750	1616-c.1750
Reduction in numbers	9	nil	3
Increase in numbers	5	16	12
No change	10	8	9
	—	—	—
	24	24	24

TABLE 8
COMPARISON OF THE NUMBERS OF TENANTS ON THOSE 'SHOTTES'
AND FIELDS THAT WERE ENCLOSED BY 1734

	1616-c.1750
Reduction in numbers	11
Increase in numbers	6
No change	15
Not known	2
	—
	34

⁵¹ The figures also show that M. Nightingale's claim, that the changes that took place in the numbers of parcels were few, was a considerable over-simplification ; *op. cit.*, 50-2 : Deal.

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On the lands that remained unenclosed by 1734, there was a strong tendency towards an increase in the number of tenants, while on the lands that were enclosed by 1734 there was a tendency towards a decrease in the number of tenants. The unenclosed lands also saw far more changes than did the enclosed lands.

In general, short term changes, both of parcel and tenant numbers, were many, but such changes tended to be evened out in the long term. The consolidation of parcels (i.e. the reduction of the number of parcels) together with a reduction in the number of tenants was most marked on those areas that were enclosed by 1734. On the unenclosed areas, the tendency in the long term was for about as much increase as decrease in the numbers of parcels and for an increase in the numbers of tenants. Thus the unenclosed, far more than the enclosed, areas were subjected to changes, both of their parcel patterns and of their numbers of tenants. Once parcels had been consolidated and enclosed, they became both physically and tenurially more stable than the areas that remained unenclosed.

Consolidation could be achieved by exchange and/or purchase. While there is little documentary evidence for the former, there is abundant evidence for the latter. In c.1670 'the widow peke's ffarme in Deale' was put up for sale, and the sale particulars list the parcels which the farm comprised.⁵² The farm comprised land in Deal and Sholden, the adjoining parish, and included scattered, unenclosed parcels lying in 'shotts' as well as parcels of marshland in Lydden Valley. In all, the farm totalled 98 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres: of these, the sale of 44 acres, in various parcels, to ten different purchasers shows how the parcels of one tenant could pass to a number of tenants. In this way the tenurial pattern, and possibly the physical parcel pattern, could be considerably changed. Consolidation by purchase was probably more instrumental in modifying the pattern than was consolidation by exchange, and the consolidation of holdings was accompanied by an augmentation of holdings. Between 1616 and 1803 there was a reduction in the number of very small holdings, of less than two acres, and an increase in the number of medium sized holdings, of 2-20 acres (Fig. 4).⁵³

The Later Middle Ages

The source material for the later middle ages relating to the manor of Court Ash or indeed to other lands in Deal is extremely fragmentary

⁵² KAO U124 E7/11.

⁵³ The median holding in 1616 was of 1-2 acres, and in c.1750 and in 1803 it was of 2-3 acres. These figures are considerably lower than figures provided by the inventories (see Table 2). An individual tenant held land of more than one manor and so median figures based on rentals for a single manor are no more than a very rough guide to the size of holdings.

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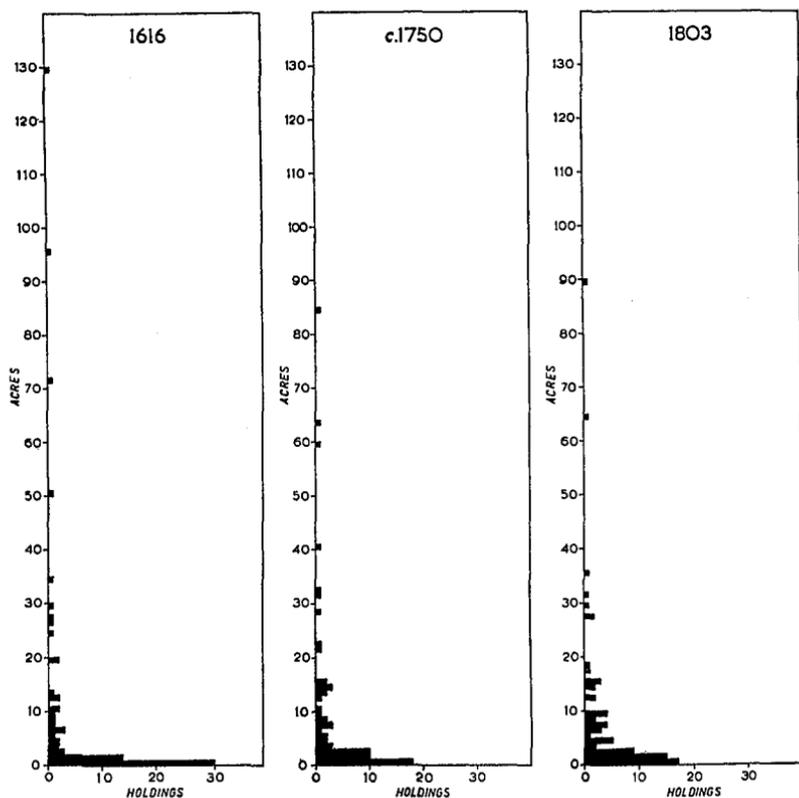


FIG. 4. Relative Sizes of Holdings on the Manor of Court Ash, in Deal, in 1616, c.1750 and 1803.

Source : PRO E164/40, ff. 8-11 ; KAO U725 M3 ; KAO U725 M1.

and is largely confined to charters. Nevertheless, the charter evidence can be very useful : on the evidence of one charter of 1381-2, H. L. Gray claimed that seventeenth century conditions seemed to have existed in the fourteenth.⁵⁴ A series of twenty-three charters for the period 1421-1698 show how a family holding, by the processes of purchase and exchange, was gradually augmented and consolidated⁵⁵ and numerous other deeds suggest that these phenomena were not the prerogative of one family. The charters frequently contain detailed descriptions of the abutments of the land being transferred and these show that often land was being purchased adjacent to land already in the hands of the purchaser. For example, in 1385 Simon Monger granted to Richard

⁵⁴ H. L. Gray, *op. cit.*, 277.

⁵⁵ KAO U36 T193-216.

Seyer 1 acre 1 rood 4 feet of land in the parish of Deal of which $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lay 'apud Dalemelle' between the land of the said Simon on the east and the land of the heirs of John Staple on the west ; 1 rood lay between the messuage and land of the said Richard on the south and north, and the highway on the east ; $1\frac{1}{2}$ roods 4 feet lay 'apud Horshame' between the land of the said Richard on the west and east, and the common way on the north ; and $\frac{1}{2}$ rood lay 'apud Goldyneryde' between the land of the said Richard Seyer on the west and the common way on the east. Thus Richard Seyer was acquiring four parcels of land, three of which lay adjacent to lands already in his possession.⁵⁶ In 1496 Thomas Wellys granted to Thomas Baker $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres 1 rood of land lying in three separate parcels :

(i) 1 acre 3 roods lay in a certain furlong called 'Hungredown' between the land of John Edwold on the west, the land of Richard Moys on the south, and the land of John Monys on the east and north ;

(ii) 3 roods lay in the same furlong between the land of the same Thomas Baker on the east, the land of Richard Moys on the south, and the land of the said John Monys on the west and north ;

(iii) $\frac{1}{2}$ acre $\frac{1}{2}$ rood lay 'apud Chalkpette' between the land of Richard Gaytter on the south, the common way on the west, the land of John Monys on the north, and the land of the heirs of Thomas Oxney on the east.

From these descriptions, it is clear that Thomas Baker, in acquiring the parcel of 3 roods in 'Hungredown', was consolidating and enlarging the parcels already in his possession.⁵⁷

The deeds also show that land parcels of the later medieval period were considerably smaller than the parcels of the seventeenth century, and this again illustrates that the purpose of consolidation was to enlarge the sizes of individual parcels as well as to concentrate the scattered constituents of a single holding. Such consolidation could be achieved by purchasing or renting additional parcels, and, unless the holding was to be enlarged, there often occurred the selling of other parcels. A similar balance could be achieved by an exchange agreement. In c. 1350 John Colley and Margaret (his wife?) granted to John Monyn, Rector of Deal, 1 acre 3 roods of land, of which 1 acre lay next to the lands of the said John Monyn on the south, and 3 roods lay between a certain way on the south and the land of John son of William Richer on the north. For his part, John Monyn gave *in escambo* to John Colley and Margaret all that part of his messuage which formerly belonged to John de Foulmed. For the Rector at least, the exchange effected a consolidation of parcels.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ KAO U386 T52 (9 Richard II).

⁵⁷ KAO U396 T198 (1496).

⁵⁸ KAO U386 T52 (c.1350).

The charters in fact show that the unenclosed fields of Deal were, in the fourteenth century, more minutely divided than in the seventeenth and that, by a number of means, consolidation was in progress at least from the mid-fourteenth century. Evidence for the reverse process, the further subdivision of parcels, is difficult to find. One charter of 1431 records that John and Thomas Richer, sons and heirs of William Richer of Deal, quitclaimed to Hamo Richer, their brother, all their right to $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land, 1 acre of sandy land (*zabuli*) and 1 acre of meadow, which lands were formerly their father's.⁵⁹ By surrendering their part of their rightful inheritance, John and Thomas Richer obviated the necessity for partitioning their father's holding, which fell in its entirety to their brother. Subdivision of the five parcels which comprised the holding was avoided. This example suggests that at times when subdivision was possible in theory it was not always enacted in practice. The implication seems to be that the general tendency from the end of the fourteenth century at least was towards consolidation rather than further subdivision. Parcels were very small by c. 1350 and their further subdivision may have become uneconomical.

At this stage of the investigation, the question arises: why were parcels so small by c. 1350? In other words, their origin is still the central problem to be solved. A paucity of documentary material makes the problem an especially difficult one. A solitary grant made in the late thirteenth provides a clue. A grant, made in 1289, gave to Dover Priory three shillings and two hens of annual rent which Roger Skot, Allan Skot, Lambert Skot, Thomas Le Hors, Alan Le Hors, William Le Hors and their *participes* owed for 17 acres of land which they held in 'Skottesteghe' and 'Horsesteghe', and which John Le Stok owed for the tenement he held in 'Stokkenteghe'.⁶⁰ The interesting point is the close correspondence between the personal names of the tenants and the names of the lands in which they held parcels. Deal differed not at all in this respect from many other parts of Kent where, during the thirteenth century, the personal names of tenants often corresponded closely with the names of the lands which they occupied.⁶¹ This makes it at least *possible* that the lands at Deal had a similar origin to those at, for example, Gillingham and Wrotham, where the partitioning of patrimonial holdings held in gavelkind tenure sometimes produced a field pattern of unenclosed parcels.

A partial glimpse of agricultural activity at Deal in the fourteenth century is obtainable from an account roll, covering only 23 weeks of

⁵⁹ KAO U36 T211.

⁶⁰ LPL Ms. 241, f. 157v.

⁶¹ For example, at Wye: H. L. Gray, *op. cit.*, 296; and at Gillingham: A. R. H. Baker, *op. cit.*, 118.

a year in the early or middle part of the century.⁶² Because the account relates only to a single year, and indeed to only part of that year, no precise conclusions can be drawn from it. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the ploughing was undertaken by two paid ploughmen, and that a shepherd was employed full-time and an oxherd part-time. That folding was practised is evidenced in the purchase of 12 wattles *ad fald'* and in the statement that 5 acres of land had been manured with the fold (*compostat' cum fald'*) in comparison with 4 acres manured with cartloads of manure (*compostat' cum carect'*). In other respects, the medieval agriculture of Deal remains obscure.

Conclusions and Conjectures

The early field system of Deal remains obscure, although there is at least a hint that the parcel pattern of the thirteenth century may have been connected with the subdivision, if not of actual family farms, at least of units of land at one time in the occupation of a group collaterals. By the mid-fourteenth century, the fields were minutely parcelled and the process of consolidation in progress. Consolidation by purchase and exchange continued throughout the following centuries and was accompanied by an increase in the inequality of holding sizes and a general increase in the size of individual holdings. From the seventeenth century at least, the operation of the land market was of more importance than the partitioning effects of gavelkind tenure in influencing the field and ownership patterns at Deal. Some consolidation led to enclosure and by the mid-eighteenth century only one-third of the lands of the manor of Court Ash were still unenclosed. The unenclosed fields were not, however, organized into any two, three, four, six or eight field system and no evidence has come to light of communal agricultural practices. The pasturing of livestock on the unenclosed arable was made possible by folding and it seems that individuals folded their own stock on their own lands, there being no evidence of fold courses such as were used in East Anglia.⁶³

It is now possible to attempt an answer to the question : why were some of the fields in the parish of Deal enclosed early while others remained open until the late nineteenth century ? Three complementary rather than mutually exclusive explanations may be suggested :

⁶² PRO SC 6/1128/5, m4.

⁶³ H. L. Gray, *op. cit.*, 305-54 ; K. J. Allison, 'The Sheep-Corn Husbandry of Norfolk in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Agricultural History Review*, V (1957), 12-31 ; M. R. Postgate, 'The Field Systems of Breckland', *Agricultural History Review*, X (1962), 80-101. Individuals certainly folded their own stock on their own lands within open fields on the Sussex Downs : A. M. M. Melville, 'The Pastoral Custom and Local Wool Trade of Medieval Sussex, 1085-1485', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London (1931), 75 and 128 ; J. C. Cornwall, 'The Agrarian History of Sussex, 1560-1640', unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London (1953), 98-100.

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(i) The area that was unenclosed by 1734 may in earlier times have been so minutely subdivided into parcels that consolidation was extremely difficult and slow.

(ii) The arable bias given to agriculture and the high suitability of the soils for arable cultivation favoured the maximum utilization of the land, whereas hedges would have limited the arable area. Periodic grazing on the arable lands was made possible by folding.

(iii) The contrasting field patterns at Deal reflected a contrast of soils : the open fields were located on the soils formed on the Upper Chalk, the enclosed fields were located on the soils formed on the Brickearths and alluvium. The lands that remained unenclosed in the nineteenth century were situated on light, dry loamy soils, in an exposed situation and the growing of hedges may have been a problem not easily overcome.⁶⁴

A correlation between open fields and the chalk soils in the neighbourhood of Deal was observed by E. Hasted at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus of Ripple, a parish to the south-west of Deal, Hasted wrote : 'The soil of it is much inclined to chalk, though there is a great deal of fertile land in it. The country is mostly open and the lands uninclosed ; it has no wood in it.'⁶⁵ Of the adjoining parish of Great Mongeham, he wrote : 'The face of the country throughout this parish is somewhat different from that of Ripple last described, for it is more flat, even, and more inclosed with trees and hedgerows of elm ; the soil is more fertile, having less chalk and much loam, and deep earth throughout it.'⁶⁶ Of Little Mongeham, he wrote : 'It is rather more hilly, and the soil more inclined to chalk, than Great Mongeham, last described, and the fields are more open and uninclosed.'⁶⁷ In Deal itself, lands of the manor of Deal Prebend situated on soils described in 1647 as 'being chalky' were unenclosed then and were still unenclosed in 1766, but lands situated on 'haysill moule' were unenclosed in 1647 but enclosed by 1766.⁶⁸ This correlation of the open fields with the Upper Chalk and the enclosed fields with the Brickearths and alluvium is also to be seen in a map of part of Sholden parish, to the west of Deal, in 1784.⁶⁹

In many ways this study of the field system of Deal has been

⁶⁴ A. D. Hall and E. J. Russell, *op. cit.*, 102 : on the chalk arable country 'hedges will not grow in a very satisfactory manner'.

⁶⁵ E. Hasted, *op. cit.*, 134.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁶⁸ For 1647, see LPL Commonwealth Records/Parliamentary Surveys, Book A, ff. 314-27 : 'Cophthorne' lay on the 'chalky' soils, 'Didham' on the 'haysill moule'. For 1766, see KAO U442 P83. The land of the manor of Court Ash called 'Copped Thorne' was unenclosed in 1734 but land called 'Dodham' was enclosed by then : KAO U725 P1.

⁶⁹ LPL CC 8887.

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unsatisfactory. In particular, the paucity of the medieval sources has meant that the origin of the open fields remains largely in doubt. Nevertheless, it has established that an open field pattern was not synonymous with a common field system, at least from the seventeenth century. It has also shown that many more manorial studies will be necessary before the enigma of the open fields of Kent is resolved.