

# IPSE TENET – HE HIMSELF HOLDS: ASPECTS OF ELEVENTH-CENTURY ESTATE MANAGEMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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*This paper is one of a series examining various aspects of Buckinghamshire society and economy as revealed in the folios of Domesday Book. For all its omissions, compressions and ambiguities, this is an unrivalled source for studying the settlement and exploitation of the landscape during a period of huge tenurial upheaval. Domesday Book represents the culmination of the Anglo-Saxon state, and shows it to have been highly sophisticated, not least because it provided the Norman incomers with the means to conduct a very thorough nationwide survey in less than a year. This paper is concerned with the estates kept "in hand" by their tenants-in-chief, rather than being farmed out to subtenants in exchange for services and rent, the former usually of a military nature. It will be shown that the direct exploitation of estates varied widely between different categories of overlord, and also in relation to the extent to which they held lands across different shires. There are differences, for example, between the needs of a monastic community (albeit none of those holding land in Buckinghamshire were based in the county), or those of a small tenant-in-chief with only one or two properties, all in Buckinghamshire, and those of great territorial magnates, such as the count of Mortain and Odo, bishop of Bayeux (William I's half-brother), to whom local estates were merely a source of profit. In so far as the pattern of landholding varied geographically, so too does that of lands held in hand.*

## I

Although the data in the Domesday Book were collected on a geographical basis, by vill, hundred and shire, with groups of commissioners visiting seven "circuits" of counties, they were reassembled on a tenurial basis in the compilation process. Buckinghamshire was in Circuit 3, along with Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.<sup>1</sup> The detailed folios covering rural estates in each shire were preceded by an entry for the county town, and by a list of the landowners (strictly tenants-in-chief other than the King, since all land was deemed to be "owned" by him, and merely enjoyed on a more-or-less secure basis by his ecclesiastical and lay lords). The Buckinghamshire list is headed by the King, followed by churchmen from the archbishop of Canterbury down to Reinbald the priest, one of Edward the Confessor's continental clergy, who continued to serve as Chancellor after 1066. A potential trap for the unwary is that the bishops of Bayeux (Odo had been disgraced in 1082, although his fief was still identified as such four years later), Coutances and Lisieux in Normandy are included

here, although their status in Buckinghamshire was purely as territorial magnates, rewarded with the sequestered estates of Englishmen. They exercised no spiritual functions, and their lands did not remain in church hands in later centuries. After the churchmen come the lay tenants-in-chief, progressing from larger to smaller in a far from straightforward way. For example, Earl Hugh of Chester with only 34 hides on four estates precedes Walter Giffard with 300 hides on 49 estates. In general, Normans take precedence over Flemings, and all men come before the three female landholders (Queen Matilda, Countess Judith and Azelina, wife of Ralph Tallboys), last of all there are the few surviving pre-Conquest owners, who are relegated to a miscellaneous section at the end. In total, there were seventy primary landowners in Buckinghamshire in 1086.

Domesday Book presents a variety of data in a formulaic fashion, including details of hidage, theoretical and actual ploughteams, population in various categories, meadow, woodland (here expressed in terms of its "capacity" for grazing swine), mills

and value, in 1066 and 1086 and usually at some date in between, probably around 1070. Pride of place however is given to the tenurial arrangements, and in particular whether the estate is retained by the tenant-in-chief, or subinfeudated to another person. Feudalism, although not introduced fully-fledged after 1066, and having antecedents in Anglo-Saxon history, was essentially a series of hierarchically-arranged personal relationships of rights and obligations, reaching downwards and outwards from the King to the lowest ranks of the peasantry.<sup>2</sup> The links between them could be in terms of military service, agricultural dues, personal services, payment of various dues and taxes, or the nebulous concept of "commendation" (soke), although in this region the latter was a casualty of the period after 1066. It is clear that the most important function of the Domesday returns was to reveal who held the land from the king, and who in turn held from them, since this involved the enormous labour of rearranging the local returns.

It will come as no surprise to those familiar with the Buckinghamshire Domesday that the terminology used to describe landholding arrangements is not consistent, and employs a variety of formulae. Thus, among the royal holdings, Aylesbury is described as 'a household manor of the King', while Princes Risborough has been 'a vill of earl Harold' (the compiler is scrupulous in treating the last English king as a usurper). Swanbourne 1 and Upton (Slough) are also described in these terms, whereas Brill has been 'a manor of King Edward'. When we reach Biddlesden 1, however, the more usual formula for an estate retained by its tenant-in-chief is used: '*Bechesdene tenet Rex W*', 'King William holds Biddlesden'.<sup>3</sup> A slight variation is found at Halton, Monks Risborough and scores of other estates: '*Ipse Archiepiscopus tenet Hultone*', 'the archbishop holds Halton himself'.<sup>4</sup>

Where an estate is held by a subtenant, the usual formula is, 'X holds Y from Z', as for example at

Buckland, where we read that '*Bochelant tenet Walterius de Remigio episcopo*'. 'Walter holds Buckland from bishop Remigius [of Lincoln]'.<sup>5</sup> A slight variation is found at Wooburn, where '*Ipse Walterius tenet de eodem episcopo Waburne*', 'Walter holds Wooburn himself from the [same] bishop'.<sup>6</sup> A third version, less succinct, is '*Episcopus Baiocensis tenet in Stanes vii hidis. Helto tenet de eo*', 'the bishop of Bayeux holds seven hides in Stone; Helto holds from him'.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the formula, there are clearly two sorts of entry in the Buckinghamshire Domesday: those where the tenant-in-chief has kept them in hand, and those where another is interposed between him and the workforce of peasants and slaves. It is with the first category that this paper is concerned.

## II

A total of 393 separate holdings is listed in the Buckinghamshire section of Domesday Book, with a total assessment of 2,122.5 hides. Of these, 126 (32%) are said to be held directly by the tenant-in-chief. Their significance is greater than this, however, since their collective geld liability is 1,099 hides, 51.5% of the shire total, and their average size is 57% greater than the overall average: 8.7 compared with 5.5 hides. They are concentrated in places which have only a single Domesday entry (undivided vill). Some 124 out of the 393 holdings fall into this category, and of these sixty-eight are in hand (55% of both undivided vill and estates in hand). The remaining eighty named places are divided into 269 parts (ranging from two to ten), but only fifty-eight of them are in hand in 1086 (22%; 46% of holdings in-hand), of which nineteen are the largest holding in the vill concerned. Unlike the small estates which formed the subject of a recent paper,<sup>8</sup> it seems that larger properties, as expressed in hides at least, were more likely to be directly exploited.

There was a much greater probability that estates

TABLE I Estates In-Hand: Manorial Status.

	Category No.	In Hand %	All Entries %	% Category In-hand
Manerium	68	54.0	31.9	55.7
Pro Uno Manerio	12	9.5	16.4	19.0
Se Defendit	10	7.9	9.1	28.6
Lost 1066x1086	8	6.3	11.5	18.1
Never	28	22.2	31.1	23.5

held in-hand would be described as manors in one way or another.<sup>9</sup>

The highest correlation is between the use of the marginal **M** rubric and estates retained in hand by their tenant-in-chief, although almost half were still held by sub-tenants. In some respects these estates seem to be "classic" manors, in that they are concentrated in undivided villis (79 out of 122 places of this type). Here in later times there is likely to have been a central settlement, and probably a single, communal arable farming system. In divided villis, the holding denoted by **M** was usually the largest.<sup>10</sup> Relatively few in-hand estates lost their manorial status after 1066. More than a fifth were not manors at either date. Only one-sixth of estates in-hand are described by the 'held as one manor' and 'answers for X hides' formulae, compared with one-quarter of all Domesday holdings, and some estates so described may represent new endowments for retainers and others whom it was necessary to reward after 1066. This is probably the case with the *pro uno manerio* type, only one of which was an undivided vill. They are typical of the fragmented tenures of north Buckinghamshire.

Only ten of the seventy tenants-in-chief in 1086 had no estates in hand, and of these only Earl Hugh (34 hides), Roger of Ivry (21.5), Robert of Tosny (16.5) and Nigel of Aubigny (14.25) had more than ten hides in the county. Conversely, the thirteen individuals who held no land outside Buckinghamshire (in so far as one can tell with frequently

ambiguous personal names) had all of their lands in hand. They were generally small-scale landowners, and needed to retain their lands to subsist. In this category, only Alric the cook, who held the substantial twenty-hide estate of Steeple Claydon, and Leofwin of Nuneham with sixteen hides in five locations, held more than five hides. There is a broad correlation between the total size of a holding in the county and the proportion in hand, the only major distortion being that almost all church land was in-hand, irrespective of the size of holding.

Overall, lay tenants-in-chief were much less likely to have estates in-hand than churchmen or the king and queen (although Queen Matilda had only two holdings of her own totalling 35 hides – Hambleton and Marlow 4, neither of which had been in royal hands in 1066, being held by Earl Algar [i.e. Ælfgar, earl of Mercia and East Anglia]). Those with more than fifty hides in Buckinghamshire, however, had only 30% in-hand, whereas the much larger number with less than ten hides had 83% in-hand. The figure for the church would have been higher than 90%, but for the tendency of the bishop of Lincoln to subinfeudate his holdings. This may reflect pressures arising when the see was transferred from Dorchester (Oxon.), leaving the Buckinghamshire holdings remote from the new diocesan centre. The royal patrimony had been all but given up by 1086 in this county, with only 7% of the hidage remaining in crown control. There is unfortunately no indication in Buckinghamshire, as

TABLE 2 Proportion of Land In-hand by Type of Owner.

Owner	Total Hides	In Hand	%	% $\Sigma$ Hides	% $\Sigma$ In Hand
King/Queen	151.75	147.50	97.2	7.11	13.42
Church (7)	207.50	187.00	90.1	9.72	17.02
Laymen 100H+ (7)	1076.75	310.50	28.8	50.46	28.26
Laymen 25-100H (10)	385.87	248.00	64.3	18.08	22.57
Laymen 10-25H (11)	192.89	106.58	55.2	9.04	9.70
Laymen 5-10H (9)	74.37	60.87	81.8	3.49	5.54
Laymen 0-5H (25)	44.50	38.25	85.9	2.09	3.48
Total	2133.65	1098.70	51.5		
Laymen >50H (9)	1198.25	363.50	30.3	56.16	33.08
Laymen 10-50H (19)	457.27	301.58	65.9	21.43	27.45
Laymen <10H (34)	118.87	99.12	83.4	5.52	9.02
All Laymen (62)	1774.40	764.20	43.1	83.16	69.55

Note: Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of individuals in each category.

there is for Oxfordshire, of the relationship between royal centres and the surrounding hundreds.<sup>11</sup> It is probable, however, that ancient royal vills such as Brill and Aylesbury continued to draw renders from the locality when the king and his retinue came to hunt, dispense justice, and so on. The church of Aylesbury, probably a minster since the 660s, certainly continued to hold sway over a larger territory, drawing loads of corn and money dues from sokemen in the surrounding eight Hundreds.<sup>12</sup>

In order to see how typical Buckinghamshire was in terms of the extent to which estates were retained by tenants-in-chief, or were in the hands of sub-tenants in 1086, data have been collected for a sample of major landholders across seven south-eastern counties. These data are summarised below; all figures are percentages, except in the final column, which indicates the total number of hides held in these counties. Note that “—” indicates that the individual concerned held no land in that county.

This wider analysis generally conforms to that for Buckinghamshire alone. Royal and ecclesiastical lands remained overwhelmingly in hand, again with the exception of the bishop of Lincoln. Although the bishop had estates only in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire in this group of shires, half of them by hidage were subinfeudated. Major lay landowners retained only a minority of their holdings in hand, with the exception of Geoffrey de Mandeville, four-fifths of whose lands in these counties were retained. Robert D’Oilly and the Count of Mortain, both of whom had relatively

small holdings in Buckinghamshire, retained much more in hand elsewhere. At the opposite extreme was Hugh, earl of Chester, all of whose 158 hides were held by sub-tenants. This is not surprising in view of the remoteness of his power base and the difficulty of transporting supplies: cash and/or military service were more acceptable.

In the absence of comparable data before 1066, we cannot tell the extent to which the great Anglo-Saxon magnates sub-let lands in areas away from their principal holdings. By the time of Edward the Confessor the earls and ealdormen often had control of several shires, and although the principle of itinerating around one’s estates to consume food renders, collect rents and dispense justice was commonplace, it seems likely that major lay landowners were already relying on leases in Buckinghamshire, as in other shires, to ensure a consistent, portable return from their holdings.

Small landowners, and tenants-in-chief after 1066, were more bound to their localities and had much smaller portfolios of property. Even if they did not reside at or travel to each estate regularly, it was less onerous to manage them directly without middle men. It is interesting to note that at the level of the Domesday sub-tenant, individuals could take different estates from one or more than one overlord in an area, building up small territorial fiefdoms for their sustenance. Thus, Helto held Dinton, Hartwell 1, Stone 1 and Waldridge 1 from the bishop of Bayeux; Odbert held Ellesborough 2 and the Hampdens, and Walter Stoke Poges and its detached

TABLE 3 Major Tenants-in-Chief: Estates held in-hand in selected counties in 1086.

Name	Bucks	Beds	Berks	Herts	Middx	Oxon	Surrey	Total	ΣHides
King	96.4	90.5	96.5	86.3	—	100.0	98.3	96.4	1234
Bp. Bayeux	4.5	40.5	—	22.6	—	28.5	46.1	24.4	801
Canterbury	100.0	—	—	0	98.8	100.0	90.4	94.0	476
Giffard	28.4	24.8	94.4	—	—	26.8	—	31.7	471
Bp. Lincoln	30.5	0	—	—	—	53.6	—	50.7	418
Miles Crispin	36.2	92.9	29.6	—	—	53.6	16.7	42.9	388
Mandeville	70.2	—	85.4	75.8	90.1	51.9	86.4	81.7	351
D’Oilly	40.7	100.0	100.0	0	—	47.8	—	50.8	315
Westminster	100.0	100.0	100.0	92.6	93.5	—	96.6	95.3	296
Mortain	30.9	—	0	78.5	93.6	90.0	100.0	57.4	230
FitzAnsculf	13.1	—	29.0	—	0	0	91.0	29.3	215
Winchester	100.0	—	100.0	—	—	100.0	87.5	96.3	203
St. Albans	100.0	—	100.0	97.2	—	—	—	97.8	179
Hugh Chester	0	—	0	—	—	0	—	0	158

member Ditton, all from William fitzAnsculf. At North Marston, Ranulf held two small estates from the bishop of Coutances and fitzAnsculf. He also had an unnamed estate, probably part of Hoggeston, and Creslow, both from Edward of Salisbury. Swarting, one of the few Englishmen to survive the Conquest as a landholder had Cheddington 7 in his own right, Cheddington 3 from fitzAnsculf, neighbouring Horton 2 and 3 (in Slapton parish) as sub-tenant of Gilbert of Ghent and Miles Crispin, respectively, and Pitstone 6, also from Miles.

### III

We have seen that estates held in-hand were concentrated in villis with a single Domesday entry, denoted by the marginal **M** rubric (for *manerium*). It follows that a majority of such holdings had demesnes (102 out of 126). Of these, 82 (80%) had separate hidage assessments, compared with only 90 out of a total of 250 demesnes (36%). In other words, virtually all hidated demesnes were to be found on estates retained by tenants-in-chief. If the suggestion that this separate hidation represents an exemption from geld liability (a “tax-break” in modern parlance) is correct, two possibilities arise.<sup>13</sup> The first is that such land, either a discrete block or part of the communal field system, had always been exempted from the often onerous tax demands of English kings; in other words a concession arising at some distant time when the original royal patrimony was being broken up by grants to church and laymen, or more recently in connexion with the demands and strains experienced after c.900 with the ebb and flow of Danish wars and settlement. The second is that the removal of a significant part of earlier geld liability is a recent, post-Conquest phenomenon, a mark of favour from William to his leading henchmen. Since Domesday Book is a snapshot rather than a moving image, this question is impossible to answer, although there may be elements of both alternatives. If hidated demesnes do represent a reduced tax liability, the great majority of church estates seem to have benefited, which might tip the balance of probability towards a pre-1066 origin since, apart from the substitution of continental bishops for English in most sees and the removal of some diocesan seats to urban centres, there was strong continuity across the fateful year. One possible reason for a later remission might have been an impulse of remorse for the vanquished, which

seems uncharacteristic of William, a notably unmagnanimous victor (except in the case of Battle Abbey). It would also seem strange that the new lay magnates should be twice rewarded, first with valuable estates and then with tax remission, when the whole aim of the government, and a possible underlying reason for the Domesday survey, was to maximise revenue. Anglo-Saxon kings were more likely to have had to buy support in such a way, but it seems that if the average one-third reduction in geld liability is what the hidated demesnes reveal, William I felt incapable of overturning it.

Whatever the reason, it was much more likely that estates held in-hand would have hidated demesnes than otherwise (65% cf. 13%). Indeed, there were more such holdings without demesnes – twenty-eight compared with sixteen non-hidated demesnes.

There is a clear difference between the two categories. Those with non-hidated demesnes have an average assessment of 7.9 hides, those without demesnes only 1.2 hides. (In-hand estates with hidated demesnes had average assessments of 11.5 hides; the overall average for all holdings was 5.4 hides.) All of the estates without demesnes are either components of divided villis or very small individually-named places, like *Wanden*, *Bradenham* and *Broch*. They represent “estates” of around one hundred acres or less, either farmed in severalty or part of the emerging common field systems, and were evidently the sole source of livelihood for their owners, whose very insignificance may have saved them from being annexed to the fiefs of greater men and depressed into the ranks of the peasantry. There were, of course, villeins who held this amount of land, so the distinction is one of relative freedom, rather than economic status. Some were held as part of a larger portfolio of estates. For example, Walter Vernon’s half-hide at Hartwell 5 came to him along with three hides at Fleet Marston from Thorgot, described as either a king’s thegn or earl Leofwin’s man. Some represented the sole landed property (in Buckinghamshire, at least) of men who must have played a very minor role in the Conquest. Thurstan Mantle had three half-hides in neighbouring parishes in the Chilterns, all from different Anglo-Saxon owners: Little Missenden 3, which had land for two ploughs (about two hundred acres), one of them in demesne; Amersham 5, with only one out of two possible ploughs at work, and Chesham 4, which was waste in 1086. Thurstan is commemorated by the two Mantles Greens in Missenden and

TABLE 4 In-Hand Estates 1086: Non-Hidated and Absent Demesnes

<i>Non-Hidated</i>	<i>Hides</i>	<i>No Demesne</i>	<i>Hides</i>
Aylesbury	16	Hartwell 5	0.5
Turville	5	Wendover 2	1
Brill	20	Wanden	0.5
Pollicott	10	Horsenden 4	1.5
Drayton Parslow 2	2.25	Amersham 5	0.5
Salden 2	2.87	Amersham 6	0.5
Shalstone 1	5	Chesham 4	0.5
Turweston	5	Bradenham	2
Padbury	20	Broch	1
Caldecote 2	3.25	Shipton Lee 1	1
Water Eaton	10	Shipton Lee 3	2
Great Linford 4	2.37	Soulbury 3	0.4
Newport Pagnell	5	Soulbury 5	0.5
Woughton 2	5.5	Soulbury 6	0.5
Milton Keynes 3	8.5	Cheddington 6	0.5
Tickford	5	Cheddington 7	2.25
		Whaddon 2	1
		Mursley 3	4
		Shenley Brook End 1	2.5
		Dadford 2	2
		Evershaw	1
		Gawcott	1
		Bradwell 2	0.75
		Simpson 2	1.25
		Lavendon 10	0.5
		Hardmead 5	0.12
		Wavendon 5	0.25
		Wavendon 6	1

Amersham. In two cases, the "tenants-in-chief" of these tiny estates are anonymous: three men at Wendover 2, and a *loripes*, 'bandy-legged man', at Evershaw, both one-hide holdings. Some are the pre-conquest owners still in control: Leofwin at Wanden; Harding at Horsenden 4 and with Swarting at Bradenham; the latter also held Cheddington 7 and Caldecote 3. At least these were more fortunate than Alric who held four hides at Marsh Gibbon from fitzAnsculf, which he had held in his own right in 1066, but now held at farm, 'harshly and wretchedly' (*graviter et miserabiliter*).<sup>14</sup>

Although having a disproportionate number of hidated demesnes and few examples of non-hidated demesnes, in-hand estates in Domesday Buckinghamshire generally accounted for about half of the total assets and resources, although only account-

ing for one-third of all holdings. Their total assessment was 1,099 hides, 51.5% of the total. Their total enumerated population (excluding any "urban" element) was 2,720 (53.2%), comprising 1,671 villeins (57.2%), 620 bordars (46.4%) and 429 slaves (50.1%). The higher echelons of the peasantry were therefore somewhat over-represented, comprising 61.4% of this group, compared with 57.1% for the county as a whole, whereas smallholders and cottagers were less common (22.8% cf. 26.1% in total). Slaves formed about one-sixth of the total in each case. These divergences are not statistically significant, but they reflect the relatively high proportion of small holdings held in-hand, many little more than family farms worked by the labour of villeins and their families, and missing the dependent semi-free and

unfree labour of bordars and serfs. The latter were, of course, present on the larger in-hand estates.

The number of ploughs at work on in-hand holdings was 1,116.5 (54% of the total). Of these 265 were on the demesnes (46.4% of all demesne teams) and 851.5 were worked by the tenants (56.8% of the total). Once more, the skewing of the distribution away from the demesne reflects the large number of small in-hand estates. Although the mills (water- and possibly hand-powered) in the Buckinghamshire Domesday were far from evenly distributed across the county, a reflection of the pattern of suitable water supplies and possibly under-recording, exactly half (67) were on in-hand properties.<sup>15</sup> Virtually all of them were on "proper" manors, that is holdings possessed of a full range of agricultural and human resources.

#### IV

As always, the way in which any given Domesday feature was distributed across the county is far from uniform.

The overall proportion of in-hand estates in the county was 32.6%, but individual Hundreds ranged from 15.4% (Moulsoe) to 80% (Stoke), and even when grouped into their traditional threes to smooth out the variations, the range was between 25% (Buckingham) and 53% (Chilterns). In terms of hidage assessments, the range was even greater. While the overall average was 51.5% of hides held in-hand, the proportion ranged from a mere 5% in Rowley Hundred to 92% in Risborough. In the case of the Triple Hundreds, the range was from 28% (Buckingham) to 69% (Chilterns). On this basis, it is clear that the principal estates were more likely to be retained by tenants-in-chief in the Chiltern region and less so in the north-west extremity of the county. Refining the measurement slightly by using the standard deviation (s), Aylesbury and Stoke Hundreds have more than +1s of in-hand estates above the average, while Rowley and Moulsoe have less than -1s below it. In terms of hides in-hand, the greatest variations are Aylesbury, Risborough and Stoke (>+1s) and Stotfold, Rowley

TABLE 5 In-Hand Estates and Hides by Hundred

<i>Hundred</i>	<i>Entries</i>	<i>In-Hand%</i>	<i>Hides</i>	<i>In-Hand%</i>
Stone	22	18.1	157.00	29.3
Aylesbury	8	57.1	125.75	74.8
Risborough	7	42.8	99.25	92.2
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>42.8</i>	<i>382.00</i>	<i>60.6</i>
Stoke	10	80.0	125.50	88.0
Burnham	22	45.5	92.25	58.3
Desborough	21	47.6	150.00	60.2
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>52.8</i>	<i>367.75</i>	<i>68.9</i>
Ixhill	20	25.0	121.00	53.7
Ashendon	22	50.0	112.25	57.5
Waddesdon	16	41.1	91.12	73.5
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>39.7</i>	<i>324.37</i>	<i>60.6</i>
Cottesloe	37	24.3	142.41	43.3
Yardley	29	24.1	118.37	50.5
Mursley	22	45.5	120.12	46.5
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>29.5</i>	<i>380.91</i>	<i>46.5</i>
Stotfold	26	22.2	104.50	17.9
Rowley	17	17.6	101.00	4.9
Lamua	14	35.7	127.00	55.7
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>24.6</i>	<i>332.50</i>	<i>28.4</i>
Seckloe	29	41.4	128.50	62.7
Bunsty	26	23.1	98.75	40.5
Moulsoe	39	15.4	113.25	22.0
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>340.50</i>	<i>42.7</i>

and Moulsoe (<-1s), in all cases a clear divide between the north and south of the county.

It is not clear why this pattern should have emerged, although with the exception of estates in royal hands and those of the church, it must reflect the way in which estates were redistributed after 1066, as the various fiefs detailed in Domesday Book generally had no relevance before that date. There were many more English landholders than Norman-French-Breton ones, and it is probable that a higher proportion of the land was retained in-hand, by locally-based thegns. By 1086, a large proportion of Buckinghamshire was held by magnates whose main centres of power lay outside the county.

Taking first those Hundreds with a high proportion of land held in-hand, we find that in Aylesbury almost one-third of the total number of hides remained in the hands of the King (40 out of 126). He held Aylesbury itself, the location of an ancient minster church, a mint for much of the late-Saxon period and a strongpoint for central Buckinghamshire, although not accorded borough status in Domesday Book. Wendover, a very large parish which developed into a medieval market centre, represents a similar central place strategically placed at a gap in the Chiltern escarpment (cf. Princes Risborough). The bishop of Lincoln held Stoke Mandeville (eight hides), which seems likely to have been the estate originally set aside for the support of the minster priests at Aylesbury, as witness the reference in its Domesday entry to dues rendered by sokemen in the surrounding Hundreds. The name Stoke, which denotes an outlying or dependent settlement, can also have a religious connotation.<sup>16</sup> Aston Clinton was held in-hand by Edward of Salisbury, who had acquired it, as well as his other Buckinghamshire estate at Creslow, from Wulfwen of Creslow, an important female landowner under the Confessor, a class which all but vanished after 1066. (Wulfwen also held Chelsea and Great Gaddesden (Herts.) which passed to Edward.<sup>17</sup>) Both Aston and Creslow had a very high slave population (29% and 42% respectively), indicating a greater-than-average significance of desmesne farming. Mainou the Breton held the main estate at Ellesborough in-hand, transferred from Leofnoth. Risborough Hundred effectively comprised only three large estates of thirty hides each, plus Horsenden which made up the 99 hides. All were strip parishes running from the

Thame valley across the clay vale and up the chalk to the high Chiltern woodlands, providing all of the necessary resources and, apart from Horsenden, not divided before 1086. Bledlow was held by Eadmer Ator, a king's thegn, in 1066, and by the count of Mortain twenty years later. Monks Risborough was a Canterbury estate, and had been since the tenth century.<sup>18</sup> It was for the support of the monastic community. Princes Risborough was a royal estate, centred on a gap in the Chiltern escarpment and forming a triangle with those at Wendover and Aylesbury.

Stoke Hundred was assessed at 125.5 hides, the same as Aylesbury. There are only ten Domesday entries, which conceals a complex pattern of detached portions of estates and parishes and multiple settlements, which in other parts of the county might well have appeared as long lists of holdings under common names. Only Stoke Poges and its detached member Ditton were not in-hand in 1086. Both had passed from Sired, a man of earl Harold to William fitzAnsculf. Of the rest, only Denham and Upton [Slough] were not in the hands of major lay tenants-in-chief. Westminster had been granted Denham immediately before 1066.<sup>19</sup> Upton was a royal estate. It is impossible to tell why other holders did not subinfeudate their estates. Datchet was the principal Buckinghamshire estate of Giles brother of Ansculf, who also had lands in Berkshire (all in-hand), Northants. (mostly sublet), and Oxfordshire (2.5 hides, sublet). Walter fitzOthere held Eton (including Wexham and Hedgerley) and Horton in-hand, as was nearby Burnham. Only his remote, anonymous estate in Moulsoe Hundred was sublet. He too had estates scattered across the Home Counties, of which 46 hides was in hand and 42 hides sublet. Farnham Royal was Bertram of Verdun's only Buckinghamshire estate, whereas Robert D'Oilly held not only Iyer, but also [High] Wycombe, part of an ancient royal estate, both in-hand. His remaining five estates, assessed at almost forty hides, were all sublet. Wraybury (with Langley) was Robert Gernon's only estate in the county, although he too had holdings in other south-eastern counties, another example of the way in which William I consciously sought to avoid the problem of over-mighty territorial magnates who might threaten his position. Apart from the royal and church holdings, it is not clear why a high proportion of estates were retained in hand in these three Hundreds. Even if their pre-Conquest owners

had had no other property, it does not follow that the new tenants-in-chief would not have sublet them, as they did most of their other holdings in the county and elsewhere. In very few cases were the new holders dependent solely on them for their income. One possible explanation is that the dynamics of subinfeudation were frozen by the Domesday survey, like so many other facets of local economy and society, and that had the exercise been repeated or postponed, the picture revealed would have been more or less different. The patterns of landholding certainly became more complex in the centuries following 1086.

Moving to the far north of the county, a disproportionately small amount of land was retained in-hand, as measured by hidage. Stotfold and Rowley Hundreds represent the immediate hinterland of the county town, and an earlier paper showed that the presence of Buckingham had a distorting effect on the make-up of the population in this area, with relatively fewer villeins and an surplus of bordars.<sup>20</sup> *Prima facie* this might lead to the expectation that more rather than fewer estates would be held in hand, worked by the labour of a semi-free peasantry. However, only one-fifth of Domesday holdings in this area were in-hand, and scarcely one-tenth of the hides. It is not clear why the count of Mortain's sole holding in Stotfold, three virgates of waste in Biddlesden, should have been in-hand, since it hardly represented a worthwhile asset. Dadford 2 was Hugh son of Gozhere's only holding, unusually for a Norman relegated to the miscellaneous owners section at the end. Neighbouring Evershaw was held by "bandy-legged man". Both were said to be held from the king in alms, and could thus be regarded as sub-tenancies. Quite what lies behind this Domesday does not reveal. The presence of a possibly significant religious site at Stowe,<sup>21</sup> and the intriguing name Lamport (OE *lang port*, 'long trading/market place/settlement', presumably referring in some way to the Alchester-Towcester Roman road which passes through the area),<sup>22</sup> suggests a history which would repay more investigation, not least through analysis of field-name material.

Maids Moreton 3, Shalstone 1 and Turweston are all more "normal" five-hide estates, the first held by an Englishman, Leofwin of Nuneham, who had managed to retain several holdings in Buckinghamshire. Shalstone was unusual in being kept in-hand by Odo of Bayeux, while Turweston was

William of Feugeres' only holding in the country. (His brother Ralph held Twyford and Charndon, both in-hand, although he had land scattered across six other shires.) Four hides at Beachampton 3 were also held by Leofwin in-hand, although he had apparently lost one hide to Roger d'Ivry. Gawcott was in the hands of the bishop of Lincoln, but was something of a special case. Its name derives from Old English *gafol cot*, 'cottage[s] held for rent',<sup>23</sup> and the population in 1086 comprised only two bordars and one slave. It was part of the endowment of the minister at Buckingham, whose church was also held by the bishop.<sup>24</sup>

In north-east Buckinghamshire, the generally fragmented villis of Moulsoe Hundred had almost no land in the hands of tenants-in-chief: only six of thirty-nine estates. Milton Keynes 3 (8.5 hides) was the major estate there, held by Godric Cratel. Despite his English name, he was not the owner in 1066, that being Queen Edith, most of whose lands were transferred to Normans thereafter. The bishop of Coutances held Sherington, a ten-hide estate which had been divided among three owners in 1066.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the need to consolidate the various parts led to its retention in the short term, as the bishop kept only a minority of his assorted Buckinghamshire properties in hand, albeit the larger and more valuable. Tickford was a five-hide estate held by William fitzAnsculf. It was closely associated with the borough at Newport Pagnell in Seckloe Hundred, also held by William in-hand. Both had belonged to Ulf, a thegn of king Edward. William's successor Paynel founded Tickford Priory close to Newport castle c.1100.<sup>26</sup>

The remaining in-hand estates in Moulsoe were much less significant. Hugh of Bolbec's Hardmead 5 was assessed at half a virgate, worth 2/-, scarcely more than a bordar's holding. Chibnall located it in the otherwise unrecorded Great Crawley.<sup>27</sup> Its owner in 1066, Ulfgrim, had a Scandinavian name, but is otherwise unknown. Bolbec held Wavendon 4 and Great Linford 4 in this area. The Hardmead holding may have the demesne of Walter Giffard's Hardmead 1, which was subinfeudated to Hugh.<sup>28</sup> At Wavendon 5, one virgate was held by Godwin the priest in 1066 and 1086, and it seems likely that he served the parish church, although there is no evidence of an eleventh-century building in the existing fabric. Wavendon 6 was held by Leofwin Cave ('the quick or active') in 1086. It was assessed at one hide. Leofwin was described in

1066 as the king's reeve (? for the vill or for the Hundred), and this holding represents that of the highest level of villein, although Leofwin was clearly a cut above that, having three villeins, five bordars and a slave under his control. This seems excessive for a single plough, so some must have been employed on other components of Wavendon.

### V

This review of that half of Buckinghamshire hides and resources which were retained in-hand in 1086, as opposed to being subinfeudated, often for military service, has shown that although there is a relationship between the type of overlord and the propensity to retain estates, the reasons for doing so are usually obscure. Apart from a few very small tenants-in-chief, the king and the church were the only ones to exploit almost all of their assets directly. Given the special needs of cathedral and monastic clergy for food renders and saleable surpluses, this is not surprising, and the king was still to some extent peripatetic around his core estates, consuming his dues *in situ*. Very small owners were bound to their holdings for subsistence, although they too no doubt participated in the market economy to some extent.

The large- and medium-sized lay tenants-in-chief had a much smaller proportion of their estates in-hand. There were no major fiefs based in Buckinghamshire, and the decision to retain or let out any given holding was probably *ad hoc* to some extent. The freeze-frame effect of Domesday Book may well distort the impression, as it does with other types of data. It was less than two decades since the mass sequestration and reallocation of great tracts of the English landscape to new owners, many of whom must still have been experimenting with the best management policy in 1086. The tendency for relatively few Norman-French owners to replace much larger numbers of more locally-based Englishmen compounded the problem by giving the former fiefs which were often scattered across many shires. The debate about the merits of direct exploitation versus farming-out continued throughout the medieval period, sometimes moving in favour of the former, sometimes the latter.<sup>29</sup> It was clearly a live issue in much of Buckinghamshire in 1086.

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