

as a ruined mill. Based on its name, a ford is assumed at Chillesford. An enclosure surrounds every church in order to depict, not a churchyard, but the acreage of glebe, or land granted to support the clergy serving it. Churches might be very small, merely timber-framed chapels, but are conventionally depicted. There was insufficient space for incidental details, such as valuations and amounts of tax payable.

Density of population

A number of formulas are used by historians, but for the purpose of this article I have multiplied by a factor of five the adult working males listed under each place, to allow for a wife, one or two children and one or two living parents. Slaves (serfs) are counted as individuals without families. By applying our formula a total of 2,322 inhabitants of our map is estimated. In the area no fewer than 71% of the working men are free.

Certain things stand out in contrast with today. Wantisden had by far the largest population, while there was only one household in Tunstall. Boyton seems to have been very devout with three churches to serve a population of 220, as calculated from its 44 working males; other settlements had one or none. The landscape is occupied by 331 freemen and 34 villeins, the latter the ordinary villagers, who were granted land in exchange for part-time labour on the lord's farm. Below them were 96 smallholders – the borders or cottars who might variously be a swineherd, oxherd or shepherd with a smallholding on which to subsist. To counterbalance the standard image of feudal England, in our area there are only two serfs: the slave probably owned by Aelfled at Wantisden and another down at Carlton.

On the same basis the area of cultivation per person ranges from four fifths of an acre in Wantisden and Tunstall, between one and two acres in Rendlesham, Gedgrave, Boyton, and Sutton, to acreages of more than five per person in Butley and Capel, six in Chillesford, as high as nine in Shottisham and eleven in fertile Carlton. A rule-of-thumb calculation often used is that one acre is needed to support one person. However, it seems that a portion of the population will have supplemented the food supply, either in fishing or other activities, such as oyster-dredging, hunting and poultry-keeping, or in making products which could be traded for foodstuffs. The evaporation of salt, clay extraction, conversion of timber, rush and reed thatching, basket-making and weaving come to mind. Pottery and smithing were other rural occupations for specialists.

Farming

The largest areas under cultivation were in Hollesley, Sutton and Staverton, each with more than 500 acres. High acreages may either reflect the ease of ploughing light Sandlings soils, or alternatively suggest that some communities had surpluses to trade. Oxen were essential for arable farming; on the heavy land west of the A12 a team of eight might be required to draw a plough. In the Sandlings a team of six oxen seems to have been sufficient, and three would be able to work the lightest soil; half a team (three oxen) are quite frequently listed here. Where only one or two oxen are recorded, it seems likely that they were used to pull carts. Every settlement had oxen with the exception of Gilbert's small farm at Tunstall. No doubt he exchanged his labour in order to borrow a neighbouring farmer's team to plough his four acres.

The working life of an ox was about four years. Very few cows are listed and their milk was needed to rear the next generation of draught animals. However, the large herd of 20 goats which foraged at Staverton will have been milked to make cheese. More plentiful was the milk from sheep, the most numerous animal, traditionally walked on the heaths and salt marshes of the area. In addition their fleeces were the source of home-spun clothing, and mutton was a valued meat. Folded at night, the droppings of sheep fertilized the arable.

Pigs at that time might be semi-wild as they sometimes escaped. It is no coincidence that a large number of swine browsed the wooded valleys of Staverton and Hollesley. Piglets could be captured in the woods and fattened on roots, mast and acorns. Fat pork was easier to preserve than lean meat. It was also valued for the extra calories it provided during austere winter months. Pig meat was smoked in the chimney or cured. Although it is no longer necessary to use such methods, a preference for smoked or salted bacon is still with us.