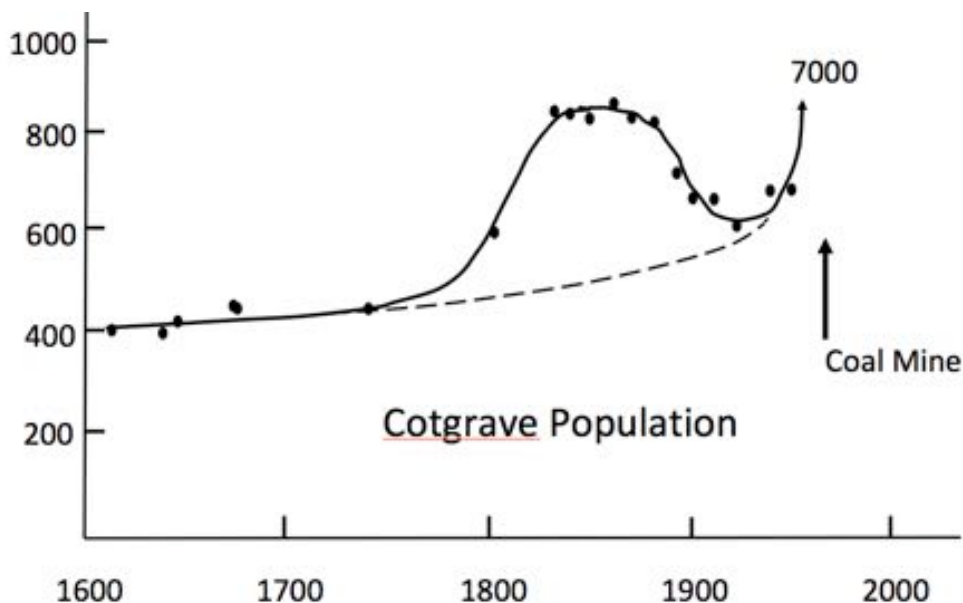


Cotgrave Inclosure and Afterwards

Background

Inclosure of country village land was widespread at and about the end of the eighteenth century and, needless to say, this had a marked effect on village life and, in particular the livelihood of villagers, both land-owners and farm labourers. It is also important to recognise that this period saw a sequence of wars between England and France, particularly the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815.

Very briefly, Inclosure was favoured by land-owners as an attempt to improve farming efficiency, compared with that of the open-field system which had dominated agricultural life since time immemorial. It did away with strip farming and encouraged the use of much larger fields which could be farmed on a grander scale, with correspondingly improved efficiency. In the long-run it was clearly advantageous to even modest land-owners, though expensive in the short term because of the need for hedging and ditching as demarcation between fields and the very necessary provision of improved drainage, together with the requirement for much improved roads connecting the various village areas. On the other hand, it did, in many cases, act seriously against the interests of those villagers living at the limits of sustainability. Their very survival had depended on the existence of communal land on which they might keep perhaps one cow, a few geese and two or three sheep, while the new arrangements tended to remove such land from many villages, leading to excessive hardship for the less well-off. Their only hope, under the new regime, was to get employment on the farms owned by either large or small land-owners or those run by tenant farmers. Even then, wages were frequently below subsistence level and some labourers were forced to leave their village homes to seek a modest fortune in the larger towns and cities. A typical example of such trends is represented by the movement of stockings and framework knitters from villages such as Cotgrave into the factory environment of Nottingham and Beeston. Yet another important social development was the increased birth rate which led to an increase in village populations. For example, Cotgrave's population in 1750 was a little over four hundred, while in 1800 and 1850 it was roughly six hundred and eight hundred, respectively. Needless to say, the land area available for farming remained relatively unchanged. It was clearly necessary that farming efficiency should improve significantly.



Meanwhile, how did the wars affect village life? One obvious factor was the ‘employment’ of young males in the army but the downside of this was their return to the village at the end of hostilities, helping to keep labourers’ wages low. During the war, it was far from easy to import food so local farmers were able to sell their produce at a good price and wages were correspondingly high. On the other hand, wars are expensive and taxes were high, which made life hard for small land-holders. The period from 1813 to 1816 was particularly difficult, resulting in a major depression. Land prices dropped by half, land was left uncultivated and many tenant farmers simply abandoned the countryside and moved away. Landlords were obliged to reduce rents and only the larger (and richer) ones were able to survive – there being a corresponding reduction in the number of small land-owners. An interesting feature of village life during these times was the severe rise in the cost of ‘poor relief’, a particular feature being the clause which provided more money for those poor families with more children. Was it surprising, therefore, that many poor families did their best to better themselves financially by having more children, rather than looking for work? That, in any case, seems to have been the outcome and, looked at from the viewpoint of the local landowners, they were nothing more than a burden on the Parish – and, therefore, of course, on the local landowners themselves.

Inclosure – the Evidence

So much for general background. The purpose of this research is to examine what data is available concerning the changes in Cotgrave land ownership during the course of Inclosure and in subsequent years. Cotgrave was not altogether typical in that Inclosure was achieved through an Act of Parliament which came into effect in 1791. Many small villages saw such an Act as prohibitively expensive and settled matters by agreement between the various interested parties, this being particularly true where there was only one large landowner who could dominate the negotiations. That Cotgrave should choose the more formal route may have been the result of a dispute between the Manvers family and the third-largest landholder in the village, William Ianson (sometimes written ‘I’Anson’, sometimes ‘Janson’). While Ianson owned only 300 acres, compared with Viscount Newark’s 2300 acres, he seems to have punched considerably above his weight. According to the ‘Yellow Book’ he frequently disputed with Newark’s agent William Sanday and caused much annoyance. Perhaps the significant fact was that Ianson had been a London lawyer before settling in Cotgrave and was well practiced in the art of disputation!

The evidence to be examined is held in the Nottingham University Archives at the Kings Meadow Campus and includes, first of all, the Inclosure Act itself, then a series of specially prepared maps and, finally, the results of various surveys conducted on behalf of Viscount Newark to list the Manvers tenants and their land holdings. As we shall see, there are problems in pinning down the precise dates of some of these documents but there is no doubt that they contain much valuable information concerning land usage in the village and, in particular, how much land was owned and farmed by the smaller landowners.

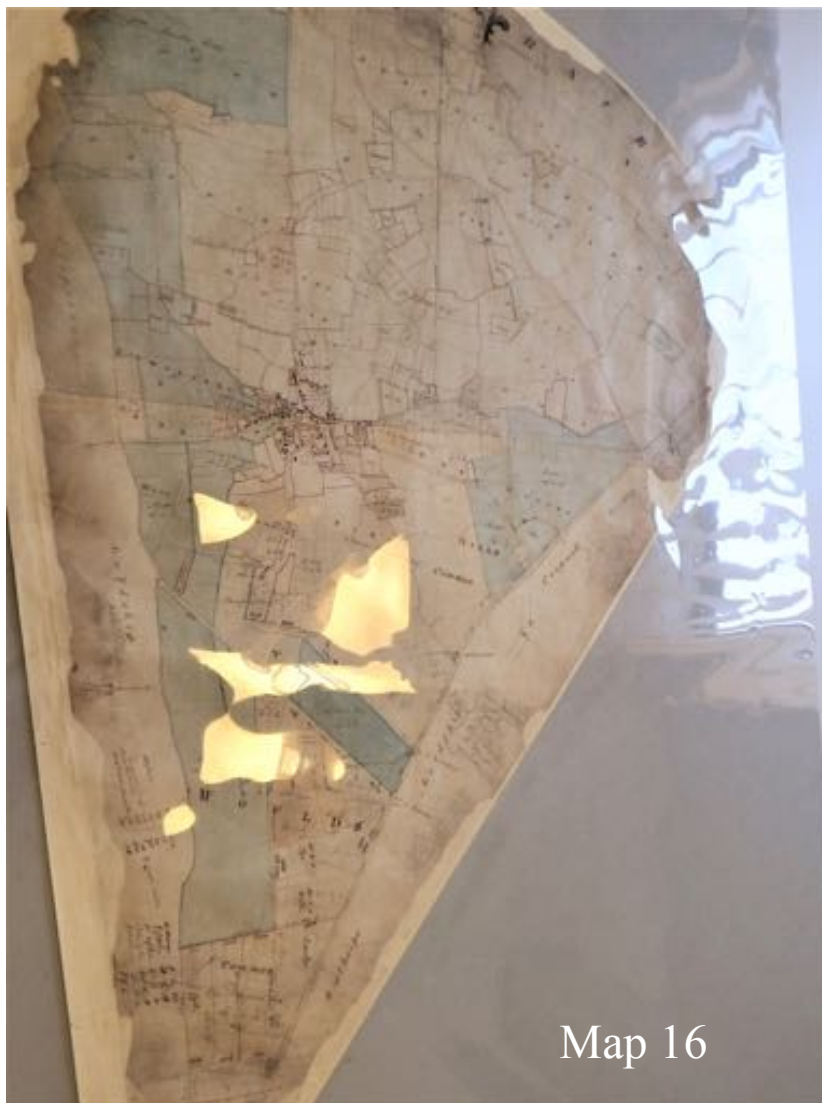
The Act of Parliament, itself (NUA reference MaB 19/1/1-2), specifies the total land area involved (3602 acres – 2365 open fields, 1237 Inclosed land), lists all private landowners, discusses various exchanges of land between them and specifies precisely the plots which each one would own when the Act came into effect. It also records details of roads to be maintained and hedging and ditching around all the plots. The details are, to say the least, tedious and fail to define acreages so we shall do no more than record the names of those involved – the maps will provide acreages when we come to look at them. However, one important detail should be recorded. This concerned the impounding of any cattle found on the roads, with an associated recovery fee of two shillings and sixpence. This specifically banned the earlier use of wasteland for the casual rearing of livestock and would clearly hit hard at the poor.

The Act Commissioners were William Fillingham of Flawborough (Notts), Gent and William Sanday of Holme Pierrepont, Gent. They were given the right to name a Surveyor who, according to evidence from the maps, turned out to be William Calvert. We note that Sanday, being Pierrepont's Agent, was hardly neutral!

The individual landowners named are as follows: Charles Pierrepont, Rev. Pierrepont Cromp (Rector), Lionella Clay, Thomas Kendall, William Morris, Thomas Morris, Joshua Mann, Mary Mann, John Collishaw, Thomas Frost, Richard Cole (a minor), Samuel Parr, John Champion, James Hickling, John Bagguley, William Sanday, Thomas Scottern and the Cotgrave Churchwardens.

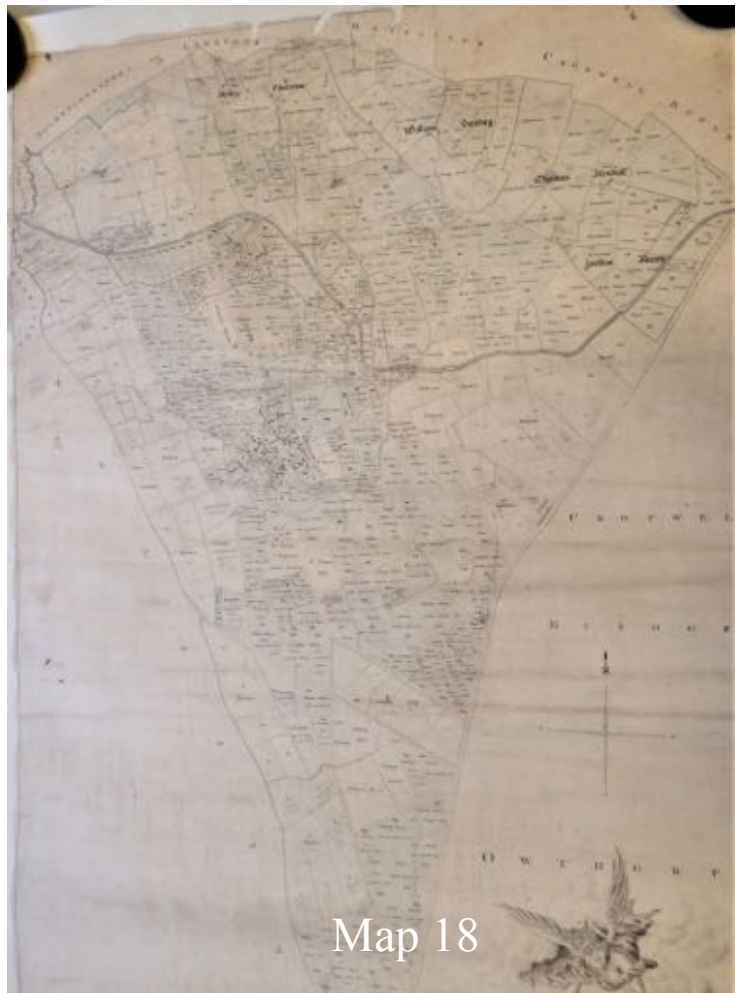
[There is an amusing story concerning John Bagguley, who apparently lived near the Church and asked that a right of way be made between his house and Risegate so that he could readily drive his livestock between the two. The Commissioners agreed to this but, perhaps feeling he was being unreasonable, got back at him by specifying that he may use no other route.]

The maps in question are labelled by the NUA as Ma2 P16/1, Ma2 P17, Ma2 P18 and Ma2 P19, respectively – for convenience, I shall refer to them simply as 16,17,18 and 19.





Map 17



Map 18



The first issue is that of identifying a date for each of them and this is aided by two specific features: the ownership of the land surrounding Cotgrave Place and the presence or absence of the Grantham canal. Maps 16, 17 and 18 show Cotgrave Place to be owned by Mrs Lionella Clay, while, in the case of Map 19, it is the above-mentioned William Ianson. To appreciate the significance of this distinction, we need to know something of the relationship between these two individuals.

Lionella was born into the Lambe family of Melbourne (Lord Melbourne was one of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers) and married William Clay of Southwell in 1771. When the Scrimshire family left Cotgrave in 1747 John Scrimshire sold all their estate (including Cotgrave Place) to a Thomas Lamb who was Lionella's uncle. Thomas then died, leaving everything to Lionella, including Orchard Cottage and two other properties in Scrimshire Lane. Round about Inclosure time Lionella exchanged these village plots, one at a time, for additional land outside the village.

Thus, on Map 16 Lionella is shown as owning all three properties, while on Map 17 she owns only Orchard Cottage. Then, on Map 18 she no longer owns even Orchard Cottage, so we can reasonably assume that this represents the date order – ie 16,17,18. Perhaps surprisingly, in 1790, Lionella sold all her estate to William Ianson, though in a somewhat unconventional fashion. The transfer was to come into effect in 1791 but she was not to receive a lump sum in payment, rather an annuity for the rest of her life. She died in December 1793 so Ianson obtained an absolute bargain! However, we can assume that she continued to live at Cotgrave Place up to her death so the fact that Map 19 shows Ianson to be in residence suggests that this map must date from 1794 or later. It would seem that Lionella and Ianson must have known one another for some time previous to all this – in fact, it may well have been their relationship which prompted him to settle in Cotgrave. Not that there was any impropriety implied – Ianson’s wife was with him in Cotgrave during these transactions. Finally, William Ianson died in 1800 (leaving his estate to his son Thomas) so Map 19 must have been drawn sometime between 1794 and 1800.

What, now, of the Grantham canal? This was officially opened by Act of Parliament in 1797 which, at first sight, seems to imply that any map showing it must date from 1797 or later. However, the original plan for the canal was presented in 1793 so it is possible that the line of the canal could have been included from 1793 onward. In fact, Maps 18 and 19 do include the course of the canal so we must assume they date from later than 1793. This is consistent with Ianson’s living at Cotgrave Place, as shown in Map 19, but draws a fine line in the case of Map 18 – indeed, we are driven to assume that Map 18 must date from 1793 precisely. On the same basis, we must assume that Map 16 and Map 17 date from before 1793.

There is also date information on the maps, themselves. Thus, Map 16 is headed “Cotgrave Prior to the general Inclosure 1709” (Obviously a misprint for 1790!). Map 17 is headed “The Lordship of Cotgrave in the county of Nottingham as allotted and divided in the year 1790, William Calvert Surveyor”. Finally, Map 18 is entitled “Manor of Cotgrave in the County of Nottingham, the Estate of the Rt Hon Charles, Lord Viscount Newark subsequent to an Inclosure of the open lands which was confirmed by an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1790, William Fillingham and William Sanday Commissioners and William Calvert Surveyor”

Putting all this evidence together, leads us to the following conclusion:

Map 16	Map 17	Map 18	Map 19
c.1790	c.1791	1793	c.1795

There is rather little uncertainty over the dates of Maps 16 and 17, almost none over Map 18 but rather more over Map 19 – it could possibly be as late as 1800. Having, thus, dated them all, we may now hope to derive useful evidence in regard of land ownership.

Finally, we shall look at two important documents in the form of surveys of Viscount Newark’s many tenants which were prepared, respectively, in the years 1801 and 1829. The NUM archive numbers are MS 40 and MaS 42. The first is headed as follows: “Survey and valuation of Cotgrave, Stragglethorpe, Clipston in the property of The Rt Hon Lord Viscount Newark, valued by Robert Clark Junior, 1801.” This provides us with well-defined evidence about the number of tenant farmers paying rent to the Manvers family and the size of their various holdings. . It is concerned with the situation just ten years after Inclosure and follows fairly closely on the information contained in Map 19. It says nothing, of course, about the number of independent landowners – we can only sum them up from the difference between the total acreage in Cotgrave and Stragglethorpe and the acreage of these tenancies.

Here we can find some help from the information in the above maps, though we should be careful that we have a reliable figure for this total (at Inclosure it was specified as being 3602 acres). The second survey is headed “Survey of Estates Cotgrave and Clipston – Adjusted at Lady Day 1829”. It provides very similar information concerning Manvers’ tenancies twenty-eight years later. We now look in greater depth at the available evidence.

Evidence from the Maps

Ideally, what we wish to know is: how much land was farmed in total, how much was farmed by independent landholders and how much by tenants of large landowners? Also, we should like to discover how these statistics changed over the years 1800 to 1820 (and, possibly, beyond). The maps show a variety of features, including the names of independent landowners and, in some instances, the acreage they held. In other cases it is possible to make a rough estimate of the acreages from a crude measurement of the area as shown on the map.

As for total acreage, we have a reasonable estimate from Census Returns, though the earliest is for 1851, when it was 3300 (possibly a slight underestimate because it depends on each and every landholder to report his acreage. This is in reasonable agreement with the figure of 3600 quoted in the Inclosure Act. Thus, in 1790, Viscount Newark is credited with 2450 acres, the Rector with 555 acres, Lionella Clay with 250 acres and a collection of small landowners with 350 acres (3605 acres in total) . Presumably, the land owned by Newark, Rector and Clay was actually farmed by a posse of tenant farmers. The tenants of Viscount Newark are listed by the Survey of 1801 – there seems to be no record of who farmed the Rector’s and Lionella’s Land. We shall come back to the Survey – what do the maps tell us?

Map 16, just prior to Inclosure, shows Lionella Clay to hold approximately 300 acres, 196 at Cotgrave Place, 63 on the Wolds and another 30 in various small parcels. The Rector holds numerous fields which we must assume total an area of 550 acres while Viscount Newark is credited with most of the rest. However, there are at least seven independent landowners (owning more than ten acres), as follows:

Thomas Kendall, William Morris, Thomas Morris, John Cowlshaw, Joshua Mann, Thomas Frost and Mary Mann. There may well have been several other small landowners whose names are omitted from the map but these seven appear to be the principal ones.

Maps 17, 18 and 19 feature a system of field numbering which applies to all the land owned by Viscount Newark. Typically, it runs to something like 300 plots but, oddly, whereas Maps 18 and 19 are identical, Map 17 uses an entirely different system! Nevertheless, this numbering system is helpful in so far as it allows a clear indication of which land is owned by independents and which is farmed by Charles Pierrepont’s tenants. Independently owned land shows the name of the owner without a number, while tenant names are accompanied by a plot number. Maps 16, 17 and 18 show acreages in most cases (when they can be deciphered!) but Map 19 does not. However, reasonably accurate estimates can be made from the areas of the plots shown, compared with some standard plot whose area is known accurately.

It is of some advantage to look carefully at each map and make comparison with the others because we then realise that in some cases plots have been outlined but not named and it is reasonable to suppose that they should be attributed to the same landholder as was the case in another map. Following such procedure allows us to arrive at the following summary of all four maps. The acreages are only approximate but are accurate enough to give a reasonably clear picture.

Landholder	Map 16	Map 17	Map 18	Map19
Thomas Kendall	120 acres	133 acres	130 acres	130 acres
William Morris	50 acres	60 acres	75 acres	75 acres
Thomas Morris	37 acres	30 acres	30 acres	31 acres
John Collishaw	22 acres	25 acres	25 acres	22 acres
Joshua Mann	11 acres	24 acres	24 acres	24 acres
Thomas Frost	13 acres	14 acres	15 acres	15 acres
Mary Mann	12 acres	12 acres	12 acres	12 acres
Thomas Scottern	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres
James Hickling	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres
J Champion	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres
John Bagguley	3 acres	3 acres	3 acres	3 acres
Richard Cole		2 acres		
W Timms			2 acres	2 acres
Samuel Parr		2 acres	2 acres	
Cotgrave Church	-----	27 acres	25 acres	20 acres

Total private ownership 353 acres.

Allowing for the uncertainties involved, it becomes clear that there was very little change over the period covered by these four maps. Indeed, the situation prior to Inclosure differs little from the situation several years afterwards.

In addition to these principal landholders, there are quite a number of small ones, owning something like 2 to 5 acres each. The people involved are: James Hickling (4.5 acres), John Bagguley (3 acres), Richard Cole (2.5 acres), Samuel Parr (2 acres), John Champion (3 acres), Thomas Scottern (5 acres) and W. Timms (2.5 acres). (There is also a mysterious bit of land designated 'Stone' which is presumably a stone quarry to supply material for road-making.) It is noteworthy that this list includes all-but-one of those listed in the Inclosure Act. Again, the conclusion is that very little has changed (Note that the land owned originally by Richard Cole passed to W Timms – on map 19).

We can summarise the overall picture following Inclosure as follows;

Charles Pierrepont 2400 acres, The Rector 550 acres, Lionella Clay/William Ianson, 300 acres, all other landholders 350 acres – a grand total of approximately 3600 acres.

Map 18 makes clear for the first time that Stragglethorpe was divided into four farms, as follows (from north-west to south-east):

Guilmoor Henry Thornton

Dove Acres William Sanday

Askerham Thomas Kendall

Fosse Joshua Mann

All these were owned by Viscount Newark, the farmers being his tenants - there were no other landholders in Stragglethorpe. (Note that no acreages are given but the total for Stragglethorpe is roughly 700 acres, compared with Cotgrave's 2500 acres.)

Map 18 is unique in providing not only the names of private landholders but also those of tenants to Charles Pierrepont. As we noted earlier, these tenancies are characterised by plot numbers. The list of names amounts to approximately thirty, some of whom also own land in their own right. Roughly half of these tenancies can be classified as 'small', the rest varying from 'moderate' to 'very large' but I have made no attempt to sum the precise acreages. The major tenancies can be listed as follows: Thomas Morris, William Sanday, William Morris, Thomas Kendall, Joshua Mann, John Archer, William Upton, Henry Thornton, John Giles, John Waite, Widow Morley, William Thornton and William Gilbert.

The 1801 Survey

This survey (MS 40) is entitled: "Survey and Valuation of Cotgrave, Stragglethorpe, Clipston in the property of The Right Hon. Lord Viscount Newark, valued by Robert Clark Junior, 1801" It comes just over ten years after Inclosure and lists no fewer than forty-nine names, of which eleven holdings can be classified as 'large'. These belonged to: Robert Burgess (413 acres), William Sanday (322 acres), Richard Rayner (271 acres), Thomas Smith (237 acres), Henry Clayter (194 acres), William Morris (186 acres), Joshua Mann (163 acres), John Morley (148 acres), Robert Barlow (146 acres), Thomas Morris (103 acres) and John Archer (89 acres). Compared to the above list taken from Map 18, there are six new names, viz: Robert Burgess, Thomas Smith, Henry Clayter, Richard Rayner, John Morley and Robert Barlow. In other words, change over a period of ten years is considerable, at least in terms of personnel. However, the total acreage belonging to the Pierrepont family is more-or-less unchanged – adding the above acreages yields a total of 2,272 acres, while the additional thirty-eight small plots probably represent roughly an additional 100 acres, giving an overall total of about 2,370 acres, in good agreement with the figure quoted immediately after Inclosure. There were still four farms in Stragglethorpe, looked after by Robert Burgess (149 acres), William Sanday (163 acres), Thomas Smith (c. 140 acres?) and Joshua Mann (163 acres). (Note that two of these farmers were different from those listed on Map 18.) The survey makes a telling point about Joshua Mann's farm: "This farm is extremely injured by the canal" – it cuts right through the middle of it and must have complicated life for Joshua, no end, there being no hint of any bridge along this stretch.

In passing, we might comment on Robert Burgess (1782 – 1846). He was born in Ashby-de-la-Zouche and, according to the 1801 survey, he farmed land (264 acres) at Cotgrave Place and may, actually, have been living there – the survey describes him as having built part of the house himself. The White’s Trade Directory of 1832 describes him as being Agent for Earl Manvers and the Census Return for 1841 as a farmer, living at Cotgrave Place. He and his brother Joseph were well-known in farming circles as a breeders of prize cattle and sheep. In 1808 he married Elizabeth Donnithorne at Holme Pierrepont Church – her father Rev. Thomas Donnithorne was Rector there. There are memorial tablets in the church to Robert and Elizabeth and to Thomas and his wife. One puzzling feature of all this is that Burgess was registered as farming Cotgrave Place *as a Manvers tenant* in 1801, whereas I firmly believed that Cotgrave Place was owned by the Ianson family until 1807, when Thomas sold it to Earl Manvers. What are we to make of it?

1829 Survey

A second Manvers Survey of tenancies is dated: “Adjusted at Lady Day 1829”. It lists just under sixty names, including many who rented only a very few acres. There were twelve tenants renting 35 acres or more (ten with over 100 acres) and a total of 2676 acres in all. The largest acreage was rented by Robert Burgess (372 acres) but it is unclear how much of this was in Stragglethorpe. The increase in total acreage from 2274 to 2676 is largely accounted for by the transfer of the 300 acres of Ianson land to Manvers ownership in 1807 but it may also represent a further small (~ 100 acres) reduction in privately-owned land.

It is also interesting to compare this data with that provided by the Manvers Sale in 1941, the overall picture being represented by the following table, where we are assuming the total land acreage remains constant at 3600 throughout and that Burgess still farmed 264 acres at Cotgrave Place in 1829 :

Year	1789	1791	1801	1829	1941
Cotgrave	1643	1644	1643	2130(?)	2106
Stragglethorpe	631	630	632	546(?)	985
Total Estate	2274	2274	2275	2676	3091
Privately Owned	1326	1326	1325	924	569

Note that in 1880 (or thereabouts) the Rector, Rev Hensley sold all his land (550 acres in Cotgrave) to the Third Earl Manvers, so one would expect the 1941 acreage for Cotgrave to be about 2680, rather than 2106. However, the discrepancy is partially accounted for by an unexpected increase in Stragglethorpe acreage (from 630 to 985). It suggests that ‘Stragglethorpe’ may have been differently defined in 1941. Note that the total Estate figure does rise by 415 acres but that still represents a discrepancy of 135 acres. Did the Estate sell off such a small area of land?

Finally, we may note the tenancies of the Stragglethorpe land as follows:

Year	1789	1791	1801	1829	1851
Sanday	165 acres	163	165	165	
Mann	130	131	128	119	306
Kendall	177	177			
Thornton	159	159			
Burgess			149	108(?)	
Smith			190	154	
Caparn					250
Total	631	630	632	546(?)	556

Note that the 1841 Census lists only two farmers in Stragglethorpe – Thomas Smith and Joshua Mann but it doesn't list acreages.



It appears that Stragglethorpe was fully enclosed long before the Cotgrave enclosure of 1791. In 1742 the Manvers Estate set up four farms – Guilmore (now North), Dove Acres (now long gone), Askerham (now Askham) and Fosse (now Hollygate), all the land being owned by the Estate, so it is difficult to understand the drop in acreage between 1801 and 1829, though it may be related to the demise of the Dove Acres Farm. The figure of 630 acres is consistent with the area of the land to the NE of the Nottingham Road in Map

19, so it is also difficult to understand the big increase in total area as of 1941, when there were three farms – North Farm (439 acres), Askham Farm (310 acres) and Hollygate Farm (236 acres). Examination of the Sale maps, however, shows that these three farms extended some way to the SE side of the road – thus redefining the area of land known as Stragglethorpe and reducing the area of Cotgrave.



Stragglethorpe

It is useful to look at the farming of Stragglethorpe land as recorded in the various census returns. Thus, we have as farmers:

1841	Joshua Mann	Thomas Smith	
1851	Joshua Mann-306 acres	William Caparn-250 acres	
1861	Joshua Mann-300 acres	William Caparn-270 acres	
1871	Joshua Mann(2)-300 acres	William Caparn-300 acres	
1881	Joshua Mann(2)-335 acres	Charlotte Caparn-350 acres	
1891	Joshua Mann(2)	Harry Sheldon	
1901	Joshua Mann(2)	Harry Sheldon	
1911	Joshua Mann(2)	Harry Sheldon	
1939	William S Gadd	George E Shelton	Joseph Temperton

Then, at the Manvers Sale in 1941, we have:

William S Gadd	Hollygate Farm	236 acres
T W Brown	Askham Farm	310 acres
George E Shelton	North Farm	439 acres

However, there is also a number of Farm Bailiffs and Farm Foremen listed (without acreages):

1851 William Bagshaw, 1861 William Bagshaw, Thomas Kirk, 1871 John Marshall, 1881 William Bradley, Edward Short, 1891 William Richards, 1911 John Brown, John Thomas Wright. These men apparently lived in Stragglethorpe but whether they ran farms there is not clear. Possibly they worked for the Joshua Manns and William Caparns? Or did they run separate farms? We need another Manvers Survey to help sort out these uncertainties.

It is helpful to estimate the relative sizes of Cotgrave and Stragglethorpe from the various maps. If we assume that Stragglethorpe is that area of land to the north of the Nottingham Road, then we conclude that Cotgrave represented 4/5 and Stragglethorpe 1/5 of the total area. This implies that Stragglethorpe should have an acreage of 720 and Cotgrave 2,880. However, the Inclosure Act specifies 1237 acres of inclosed land and 2365 acres of open land, so some of the inclosed land must have been to the south of the Nottingham Road. However, in 1941, it appears that Stragglethorpe was defined somewhat differently because it is relatively much larger – 985 acres, compared with 2106 acres – almost one third of the total.

John Orton - 2019