The Glebe Terriers of Cley

Changes in the landscape during the 17th and 18th Centuries

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Synopsis: changes in field patterns in Cley are analysed using a sequence of 200 years of glebe terriers. The few years between 1760 and 1765 are identified as the period when the medieval pattern of open fields largely disappeared and a new order was established. Information on 4 parsonages is presented and the Thomlinson family identified as key players in initiating change.

Introduction

Fields and hedges set against sea and marsh are reoccurring themes in the landscape of North Norfolk, a pattern broken occasionally by church towers that remind us of the omniscient presence of the church. Yet the origins of much of this familiar scene are comparatively recent with the present pattern of fields and hedges only emerging during the 17th and 18th centuries and even as late as the 19th. Yet how, why and when this happened is often far from clear at a local level. This paper uses one set of documents, glebe terriers, to explore some of the questions relating to fields and parsonages in the parish of Cley.

The production and form of the glebe terriers was established by the Acts of 1571 and 1604 and in a series of associated canons. They were to be prepared 'by the view of honest men in each parish' and performed regularly prior to an episcopal visitation and examination; copies were then deposited in the diocesan registry. They were concerned primarily with information on: (1) parsonage house or vicarage plus associated buildings; (2) glebe lands; (3) church plate and other moveable objects; (4) churchyard, and (5) rates and tithes.[1, 2] Much of their value for this study lies in the continuity of this record, nevertheless as these documents were prepared solely for the church (and not historians) the picture that emerges can be in places tantalisingly fragmentary.

As Dymond so expressively stated "The parson's glebe, in a sense, was the last surviving medieval tenement in the modern landscape". Indeed the origins of the glebe holdings must reside in the early development of parish churches and the endowments of benefactors wishing to make provision for their souls. Surprisingly, the upheaval of the Reformation left the glebe lands largely unaffected, but our knowledge of them was expanded by the production of written records.[2]

Cley Glebe Terriers

The first terrier is from 1613[3], prepared about a year after the major fire in Cley, then there is a gap until 1677[4] and from then onwards a continuous series

has survived, with usually one being available in each decade, although two were produced in a single year when there was a change of rector. Their value for the study of landscape history diminishes, however, with the production of detailed surveys for Parliamentary Enclosure and tithe apportionments in the 19th century.

The terrier for 1613 is a simple document containing basic information on the parsonage, the area of each piece of land held, where it was found and the whole divided into two groups on the basis of their location in the North or South Fields. This format persisted until 1765, although the descriptions of each piece of land were expanded from 1677 onwards to include data on abuttals and buildings. The abuttals gave the basic information for fixing the position of each piece by naming the occupiers of land to the north, south, west and east, and occasionally topographical features such as a highway or hill. Consequently the abuttals provide a wealth of information that expands the value of the terriers enormously.

These pieces of glebe land would have been cultivated either by or on behalf of the benefice or let to suitable tenants, while the surrounding pieces were farmed by lay people not necessarily living in the parish of Cley. Here a distinction has to be made between glebe lands and land owned by the Rector; the former are the property of the benefice with the Rector only being a transitory occupant, while the latter is held in his own right having inherited, purchased or even been given it. Indeed many rectors have held lands in Cley as individuals, including it would appear, rectors from other parishes.

The complicated structure of manors in Norfolk also impinges here, for often more than one manor held land in a parish and then not as single block, but scattered throughout the fields. In Cley there were at least five manors or honours recorded as holding land in the parish, while the Manor of Cley held land in Salthouse, Wiveton and Blakeney. So that glebe land for the benefice of Cley held in Salthouse abutted at times onto lands of the Manor of Salthouse on one side and the manorial lands of the Manor of Cley on another!

Care has to be taken when using information gleaned from the terriers, as the sample of land they cover is small compared to the overall size of the parish and the unique position of the glebe lands as the property of the benefice means they may have been atypical, while the possibility of data being copied from one terrier to the next without revision will always be a concern. On a more practical note, the value of the information is dependant on being able to follow individual pieces of land through successive terriers. For the period between 1613 and 1760 this is feasible, but after 1760 the reorganisation of the field patterns obscured many of the distinguishing features.

Fields

Cley lies in a part of the county where the medieval pattern of farming was based on large open fields with individual farmers holding many small strips of land scattered across them. These strips were usually organised into blocks called furlongs that were then grouped together to form

fields. Characteristically there were no hedges marking the boundaries between strips and woodland was often scarce; a glance at Cotman's sketch of Wiveton and Blakeney from Cley emphasises the paucity of trees in this area even as late as the early 19th century. As Williamson states 'These were bleak and open landscapes".[5]

Gradually this landscape changed as land was enclosed, with hedges being planted around larger pieces of land formed by the amalgamation of smaller strips; typically these enclosed areas were owned by a single individual. The negotiations needed to achieve these changes must have been complex and protracted given the number of people who were involved. So the rate at which enclosure progressed varied enormously between parishes and regions and in many areas it was not completed until Parliamentary Enclosure was enforced during the 18th and 19th centuries. Cley presents another interesting complication for during the 17th and 18th centuries a diverse array of economic interests were represented in the Town ranging from farming to fishing and maritime trade, suggesting people with entrepreneurial flair were present.

The characteristic village of the open field system was large and nucleated with the farmers living within its envelope. However, despite being a linear village with nearly all the buildings concentrated along the interface between the land and the estuary, Cley still shows many of the appropriate characteristics. Yet this structure was also a response to its functions as a port during medieval and modern times. The manor court books show there were further refinements as the village was divided into Northgate, Southgate and Fleagate.[6] Southgate is now called Newgate and is the district around the church where in the 17th and 18th centuries the parsonages were concentrated.

The information from the Cley terriers is summarised in Tables 1–5. The basic data for fields being organised into four groups (Tables 1 and 3) that reflect stages in the evolution from a broadly medieval pattern of open fields to the enclosed fields of the 19th century:

Group 1: Years 1613 – 1725: land divided into furlongs lying in two fields with some closes or enclosures
Group 2: Years 1740 – 1760: a transition period with small changes in the organisation of the furlongs and one of the open fields subdivided
Group 3: Years 1765 – 1812: major changes – the two field arrangement disappears and a series of new divisions emerge
Group 4: Years 1812 onwards: further reorganisation under Parliamentary Enclosure; all the small pieces of glebe lands disappear and are replaced by a larger unit.

Group 1: Years 1613 – 1725
(Table 1)
The terriers reveal a very simple arrangement during the 17th century with, at least, two fields, North and South; on the east side of the Town the boundary between them followed a line that would have lain close to the route of the present road leading from Cley to Holt. The glebe land consisted of 18 pieces or strips spread over 16 furlongs with a total area of just over 23 acres, and these continued to form the

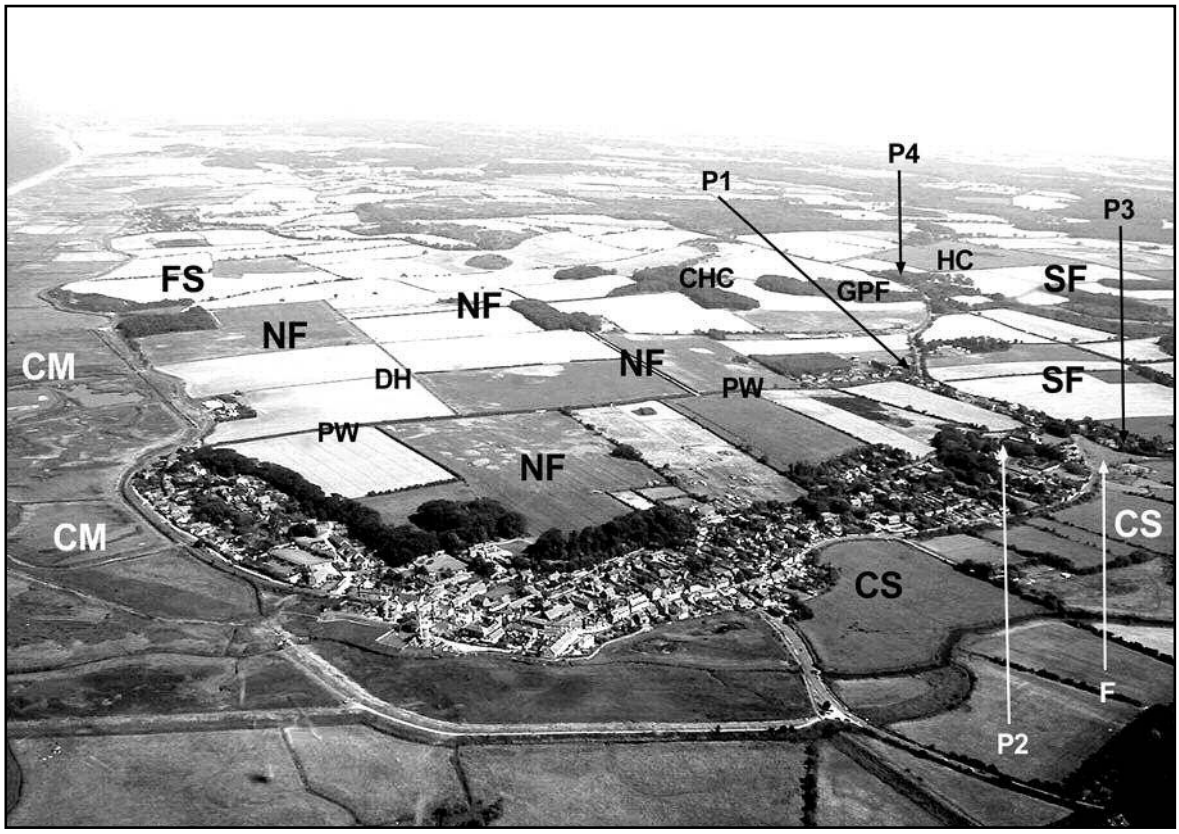

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of Cley looking south-east, 27 July 2002. Letters identify places or areas mentioned in the text: CHC = Cophill Close; CM = Cley Marsh; CS = Common Saltmarsh; DH = Dog Hill; F = Fairstead; FS = Field of Salthouse; GPF = Gravel Pit Field; HC = Hay Croft; NF = North Field; P1-4 = sites of four parsonages; PW = Processional Way; SF = South Field.

core of the glebe holdings over the next two centuries, for the habit of giving land to the Church and the benefice appears to have largely ceased by this time. The majority of these pieces had areas of less than one acre, with just a few pieces larger at 5, 3 and 2 acres.

The sizes recorded for each strip appear remarkably precise, but it is clear from commentaries in later terriers that this precision is somewhat illusory. Certainly earlier in medieval times, acre was not a precise area and it even varied between counties up to 1800.[7] The use of phrases in the terriers such as 'by estimation' or the qualifications 'a good' or 'generous' and even reasons why changes have been made suggest imprecision. However, towards the end of the 18th century precision appears to have increased with areas being quoted as 'by measurement'.

The frequent use of the term 'furlong' and the presence of two fields indicates that much of the parish retained a predominately medieval form with open fields divided into smaller units, furlongs, that were further subdivided into strips cultivated by individual farmers. It is impossible to deduce from the terriers whether there were any additional fields, but it was not unusual for parishes to have only two. In 1613 this scene would have been enhanced by open saltmarsh to the west and north and with Cley Common to the south-east, all providing common grazing for sheep and cattle.

Although the first terrier gives no indication of whether any land was enclosed, other sources are

more informative. Blomefield[11] records the gift by Lord Roos to the Rector in 1524 of a messuage and a close (see below), and in various documents relating to the Britiffes from the end of the 16th and early 17th centuries, closes surrounded by walls were recorded within or near to the Town[8]. While, in 1632 some 30 acres of Clockwode Close were recorded as a minor manor to the south of the parish near the boundary with Letheringsett, Cozens-Hardy[12] equating this close with a field known as Locker Breck that sloped down to Water Lane.

From 1677 onwards the terriers show a slight increase in enclosed lands, although the numbers recorded are small suggesting that enclosure was limited (table 2). At a micro level, other changes included adjustments to the size or shape of existing closes. For example, a comparison of the abuttals for a one acre piece of glebe land in the North Field shows that in 1686 it abutted Little Cophill Close only on the east, but by 1706 it abutted on both the east and the north indicating that the close had expanded or changed its shape. By 1686 this piece was described as having "furs growing thereon ye pasture" and by 1706 this had expanded to "ffuzz growing thereon having the Pasture of the Lord on the south". It was still described as pasture in 1725, but by 1735 there was no mention of pasture and it abutted Clay Pit Close to the south. Then by 1740 the description identifies it as abutting on the "Common Way to the Gravel Pit south" with no mention of the Close. Such descriptions provide a rich picture of the dynamics of short-term changes and perceptions suggesting that some enclosures, like Clay Pit Close, may have survived for only a short period.

So from 1613 to 1725 the glebe lands demonstrate a picture of stability with only a limited number of changes being introduced in the North Field and none in the South. The addition of three pieces in the 'Field of Salthouse' in the adjoining parish is rather puzzling, but it is interesting to speculate on the reasons – did they result from land exchanges or purchases or even additional gifts to the benefice? In stark contrast, during this period three separate buildings were listed as parsonages.

Here the limitations of the glebe terriers are evident, for Simon Britiffe, as Lord of the Manor, embanked the salt marshes to the north of the parish in about 1650,[8, 9] thereby creating both new land and improving access to existing land on Cley Eye, an island that had previously been isolated in the estuary. Whether these areas were used for pasture or arable crops is not known, but their availability could have reduced the pressure for enclosure elsewhere in the parish and increased the quality of pasture available. However, these changes would have impacted on common grazing rights, although the common saltmarshes to the west of the parish survived until 1823, when the sluice and road were constructed and the marshes reclaimed.[10]

At a county level the beginning of the 18th century saw landowners and farmers responding to opportunities presented by new crops and new practices. The responses, however, were not uniform and considerable variation existed at regional and parish levels and this persisted until Parliamentary Enclosure. This was also an era that saw the emergence of large estates and along the coast

Table 1	**Group 1**				**Group 2**	
Year	*1613*	*1677*	*1706*	*1725*	*1740*	*1760*
Location						
Barn + yard (site of Parsonage 1)		2a	2a	2a	1r	1r
Parsonage 2		X	1r	1r	1a	1a2r
Close		2a	2a	2a	2a2r	2a
Parsonage 3		------	X	X	2a	2a
North Field						
Parsonage 2	X					
Close	2a					
No. of Furlong						
13	3r	3r	3r	3r	1a	1a
20	3r	3r	3r	3r	3r	3r
26	3r	3r	3r	3r	3r	3r
29	3a	------	------	------	------	-----
29	2r	2r	------	------	------	-----
30	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	2r
31	1a	1a	1a	1a	1a	3r
32	2a	2a	2a	2a	2a	2a
32	------	3r	3r	2a	3r	2r
33	0.5a	------	------	------	------	------
33	------	1a	1a	1a	1a	1a1r
34	0.5a	------	------	------	------	------
South Field					**No. of Furlong**	
1	5a	5a	5a	5a	**35** 5a	4a
2	3r	1a	1a	1a	**36** 1a	1a
17	3.5r	3r	3r	3r	**52** 3r	3r
18	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	**53** .5r	1.5r
19	3.5r	3r	3r	3r	**54** 3r	3r
19	2r	2r	2r	2r	**55** 2r	2r
						Hay Croft
25	3r	3r	3r	3r	**61** 3r	3r
27	2a	2a	2a	2a	**63** 2a	2a
Field of Salthouse						
Walshough Furlong		1a	1a	1a	1a	1a
Mose (Moors) Furlong		3r	3r	3r	3r	3r
Thirleshough Furlong		1r	1r	1r	1r	1r

Note: 1. 'X' building recorded , but no area given for associated land.
2. Areas given in acres and roods: 4 roods = 1 acre.
3. In 1613 Parsonage 2 and Close included in North Field, in all subsequent terriers treated separately.

Table 1. Summary of glebe lands for selected years between 1613 and 1760: the information is divided into two groups (see text). NB: in the first terrier there is no mention of Parsonage 1 or the barn.

at Holkham improvements in land use and extended leases for tenants were being implemented.[14]

What was the impact of these developments on Cley? All the evidence from the terriers suggests this was a parish where traditional methods of agriculture continued and where extensive enclosure or consolidation of land into larger blocks was slow to develop. Indeed the survival of the open fields indicates that sheep-corn husbandry still flourished and was vital for maintaining soil fertility on the largely 'hungry' sandy soils of the area.

Group 2: Years 1740 - 1760
(Table 1)
This small group of terriers covering the period from 1740 to 1760 can be characterised as transitionary, foreshadowing the major changes that were to occur in the five years after 1760.

The first of these terriers is somewhat curious; the data in Table 1 demonstrate that the numbering of the furlongs in the South Field changed to form a continuous series with the North, with variations in the sequence between 52 and 63. This suggests that other changes affecting the organisation of the furlongs had occurred, although not revealed in the terriers.

By 1743 the South Field is subdivided into two parts, one retained the old field name and this was probably the largest portion, while the other was called the 'South-East field commonly call'd Hay Croft'. The name 'Hay Croft' is interesting, as 'croft' is usually associated with a small enclosure, but as one of the key texts on field names[15] indicates "other elements may combine with 'croft' to indicate a piece of land set aside for the growing of particular crops" and therefore not necessarily enclosed. In this case the crop was hay and the area included at least two furlongs with several tenants; this could be the forerunner of changes about 20 years later when fields were subdivided.

Then in 1760 two terriers were produced with almost identical wording; one was signed by the retiring Rector, J W Girdlestone, the other by the new Minister, Robert Thomlinson. This signalled the replacement of the old with the new, but with the father of the new, John Thomlinson, sitting in the wings. There is no evidence of two terriers like this being produced on any other occasion and the change was even reflected in the style of the documents, one was clearly organised and written with a bold hand, the other was clear but written in an archaic style on a narrow strip of parchment!

The Thomlinsons first appeared in the terrier of 1725 with Richard Thomlinson being named in the abuttals, having recently acquired the Cley Hall estate.[6] In hindsight it is tempting to interpret this as an entrepreneurial family seizing an opportunity to purchase a minor estate. By mid-century Richard is replaced by his son, John Thomlinson, who became one of the major landowners and holder of the advowson for the church. Here the sequence is not clear, but according to Cozens-Hardy,[6] John Thomlinson wanted to appoint his son, Robert Thomlinson, to the living but Robert was under age being born in about 1742. So as an interim measure Dr Backhouse was appointed Rector; yet irrespective of this measure it was Robert who wrote and signed the

Table 2

Year	*1677*	*1735*	*1760*	*1765*	*1791*	*1801*
Field	2	2	3	4	5	5
Inclosure	4	5	5	7	5	7
Piece				4	5	5

Table 2. Numbers of fields, enclosures or closes and pieces recorded in selected years.

terrier of 1760 as Minister with no mention of Backhouse.

Group 3: Years 1765 - 1812
(Table 3)
The contrast between the terrier of 1760 and that made 5 years later can only be described as dramatic. The term 'furlong' disappeared from the descriptions of the glebe lands as the pattern of two open fields was replaced with new divisions sporting a new suite of names. However, some degree of caution must be applied, as the sample in the terriers is probably too small to be certain whether the open field pattern disappeared completely in one initial burst of reform or whether the process was ongoing. Nevertheless, it was as though the appointment of Robert Thomlinson as rector had provided the catalyst for change.

In the new order, open fields were subdivided to form large blocks of land with consequential consolidation of many furlongs and probably the engrossment of farms. The names given to these new divisions are informative: a few were obviously derived from local features such as Dog Hill (a field) or Gravel Pit Field, while others were termed 'pieces' with a prefix giving an area and in some cases the name of an individual, presumably the owner (see Table 4). The addition of the latter was obviously needed to distinguish one '12 acre piece' from another. The proliferation of such simple descriptors in these names probably reflects the speed of change and in the absence of any traditional names the need to concoct an identifying tag; this follows a similar pattern of naming found in other parts of the country.[16]

The use of the terms 'field' and 'close' in the terriers from 1677 onwards was unambiguous, as was 'piece' to describe a small parcel of land and these terms continued to be used in this context after 1760. But if the use of the word 'piece' in the names of the large blocks of land from 1765 onwards was different, what did it imply? Certainly the names were the precursors of the field names that appeared in the tithe apportionments of 1841. So why, in 1765, were the new blocks of land not called 'fields'?

The abuttals and the names of the pieces indicate that these new blocks were occupied or owned by one or only a few individuals with occasional strips or closes, like those belonging to the glebe, embedded in them. They were certainly not organised around furlongs and may even have operated as a series of smaller 'open fields'

Figure 2. A traditional form of husbandry: a flock of sheep grazing on Cley marshes tended by a shepherd (detail from early 20th century postcard).

enabling specialist crops to be grown in a more effective manner. In this new situation it is likely that decisions regarding crops or rotations were no longer the prerogative of village assemblies, but rather the responsibility of a few individuals who could have operated in an autocratic manner. Using an alternative to the familiar term 'field', with its links to the past, may have reinforced the changed circumstances. So by the end of this period the medieval pattern of open fields had disappeared, at least, over substantial areas of the parish, although the typically enclosed landscape with small fields in the ownership of a single individual was not fully achieved. Was this compromise peculiar to Cley and a halfway stage towards full enclosure?

It is interesting to speculate on the visual impact of this reorganisation on the landscape; initially it may have been far less intrusive than might be anticipated, for much would have depended on whether the new blocks of land were enclosed with hedges. Sheep and cattle would have continued to be important components, as John Winn Thomlinson testifies in his enclosure claim, even though this was undoubtedly biased to maximise the area of land he was awarded. This Thomlinson, the son of Robert Thomlinson the Rector, held the Manor of Cley having inherited land acquired by successive generations of his family and he claimed "exclusive rights of sheepwalk and shackage over and upon the common salt marshes, commons, commonable lands and waste grounds" and he also mentions "commonable cattle".[10] Whether these animals were 'folded' on open fields or whether they grazed on enclosed pastures must remain speculative, but the use of the term 'shackage' implies that at least in some areas the traditional rights of grazing were retained.

Shackage was the right to graze or fold sheep on open fields from the end of harvest until March or longer on fields being left fallow, thereby ensuring the fertility of the soil and the maintenance of high yields of corn, particularly barley.[13, 14] At other times of the year grazing would have moved not only onto the heathland common to the south of the parish, but also on the extensive saltmarsh, an often

Table 3

	Group 3			Group 4
Year	*1765*	*1791*	*1801*	*1827*
Location				
Barn + yard (site of Parsonage 1)	2a	2a	2a	28p
Parsonage 2	1r	X	X	1r
Close	2a	2a	2a	
Parsonage 3	1a2r	1a2r	------	------
Location not specified	2r	2r	------	17a2r13p 3r 1r
Dog Hill (Field)	2a	1a	1a	
16 Acre Piece	5r	5r	5r	
Fifty Acre Piece	3r	3r	3	
Twelve Acre Piece	2r	2r	------	
Gravel Pit Field	2a2r	2a2r	2a2r	
	2r	2r	2r	
	1a1r	1a1r	1a1r	
Hay Croft	3r	3r	3r	
	2a	2a	2r	
South Field	2r	2r	2r	
	3r	3r	3r	
	1.5r	1.5r	1.5r	
	3r	3r	3r	
	4a	4a	4a	
	1a	1a	1a	
Field of Salthouse				
Walshough Furlong	1a	1a	1a	1a
Moors	3r	3r	3r	3r
Girdlestones Furlong	1r	1r	1r	1r

Note: 40 perches = 1 rood; 4 roods = 1 acre.

Table 3. Summary of glebe lands for selected years between 1765 and 1827: the information is divided into two groups (see text).

North Field *1613*	**South Field *1613***
Long Furlong *1677*	Dowell's Pightle *1677*
St Adams Hill *1677*	Candle (Kandle) Hill *1677*
Little Cop Hill Close *1677*	White Bread Hill *1740*
(Coppice *1765*)	Hay Croft *1760*
Procession Way *1725*	
Fairstead *1760*	
Dog Hill *1760*	
Gravel Pit Field *1765*	
Mr Hipkin's 16 Acre Piece *1765*	
50 Acre Piece *1765*	
Richard Johnson's 12 Acre Piece *1765*	
Roger's 12 Acre Piece *1765*	
John Johnson's 12 Acre Piece *1791*	
23 Acre Piece *1791*	

Table 4. Place names appearing in the terriers together with the date of their first appearance.

underestimated resource for these coastal parishes.

Unfortunately place names provide few clues to land use in any of the terriers from this period, 'Hay Croft', Clay Pit Close and Gravel Pit Close are three examples that do. Another is Little Cop-Hill Close, where in a single instance Close is replaced with the word Coppice indicating this was a managed woodland where the young growths from stools were harvested. Although not land use, Procession Way appears in the abuttals to land in the North Field, referring to the road now known as Old Woman Lane and this extended across the embanked marshes to Cley Eye.[9] This 'Way' refers to 'beating the bounds', the traditional practice for securing and maintaining the boundaries of the parish that had been enforceable in law since Tudor and Stuart times.

The far-reaching changes in the organisation of the land that occurred in the very short period-between 1760 and 1765 would have demanded the agreement and drive of the major landowners or occupiers who wanted to 'increase efficiency'.[13, 14, 17] This objective was probably motivated by the opportunities presented by a marked rise in agricultural products being traded through Blakeney Haven in the second half of the 18th century, a trend whose origins must have been apparent earlier in the century.[18] So economic pressures would have, at least, reinforced the desire for land reform and even provided the driving force that initiated it.

The names of some of the individuals involved in these reforms can be deduced from Table 5 where for selected years the occupiers of land abutting onto the glebe land are listed together with the number of times these individuals were mentioned. The table also illustrates the trend for land to be concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals or families during the 18th century. However, this list does not include all landowners or

1735		*1760*		*1765*		*1791*	
Richard Thomlinson	11	Robt Rogers	15	Richard Johnson	15	John Johnson	18
Thomas Rogers	11	John Thomlinson	12	John Thomlinson	12	Rev. Robert Thomlinson	11
Elizabeth Low	8	Thomas Dewing	9	Augustine Dewing	12	John Thomlinson	10
Henry Baynes	7	Framingham Jay	6	Framingham Jay	10	Heirs of Framingham Jay	7
John Royall	4	late Robert Lowd	5	Robert Jennis	7	Robert Jennis	6
'diverse men'	4	'diverse men'	3	'Various Owners'	2	John Mann	1
William Stirges	2	Robert Frankling	1	Peter Coble	1		
Elizabeth Greeve	1	Elizabeth Greeve	1	John Johnson	1		
Barbara Garret	1	John Johnson	1	John and Mallet Musset	1		
Framlingham Jay	1						
Peter Mallet	1						
Joseph Ward	1						
Lydia Pells	1						

Table 5. Names of individuals appearing in the abuttals to glebe lands during the 18th century, together with the number of times the names appear.

tenants, indeed major players such as Lord Calthorpe are absent; rather it is an attempt to use the terriers to identify some individuals who could have benefited most from land reforms. These would have included landowners and merchants, individuals like Robert Rogers, John Thomlinson, Thomas Dewing and Framingham Jay in 1760, or Richard Johnson, Augustine Dewing and Robert Jennis in 1765.

Group 4: Years 1812 onwards (Table 3)

There were two Enclosure Awards for Cley, the first[10] was concerned primarily with existing land and reclaimed marsh, the other with the enclosure of the saltmarsh that lay between Cley and Wiveton[19]. The former extended the consolidation of land into blocks and established the process of legally enclosing fields with hedges. These reforms left John Winn Thomlinson as the major beneficiary dominating the land holdings in the parish.

While these acts signalled the final stage in the demise of the Medieval field system in Cley, the glebe lands survived to provide an income for the benefice, albeit in a modified form. They were consolidated into a single block with the addition of some small pieces. In contrast, the three pieces of land held in furlongs in the Field of Salthouse continued to survive for a short time. So even at the beginning of the 19th century the diversity of land management on a local scale persisted.

Parsonage and Associated Buildings

Cley is recorded as having four parsonages, even though there is only one standing today. In the terrier for 1611 a Parsonage is listed in the North Field with land of two acres. In the next, for 1677, there is a new Parsonage and the old one is indicated as “the old parsonage”. This is followed in the terrier of 1706 by a further new parsonage

Figure 3. Cley Church from the the south-east; this would have been the view from the site of Parsonage 1 across the North Field. In the early 17th century there would have been no hedges except around a close on the right, very few trees, and the field would have been divided into furlongs and strips. Parsonage 2 was near the house nestling in the trees to the right.

and by the middle of the 19th century there was still another. It is tempting to think the Rectors of Cley were rather careless with their parsonages or did the wealth of the benefice play a role!

There are no descriptions of the first two parsonages, for the third there is an informative account and the fourth is still standing and lived in, albeit not by the Rector. Why successive houses were abandoned is not recorded, but the fact that both of the earlier buildings disappeared rapidly after being abandoned suggests they were in poor repair. Gales and rages could have wreaked havoc and although there are no records for Cley, across in Wiveton there are faculty documents for 1687[20] preserved in the diocesan archives recording storm damage to the tithe barn and seeking permision to pull it down.

Parsonage 1

The limited information available on this parsonage emanates from references in many terriers to a barn on a site where "…long time since ye old parsonage house did stand containing by estima(t)ion two acres, & it standeth att ye East end of ye Towne by ye high-way side". This was the description in 1677 and the location can be identified on an estate map of 1841 by the presence of a tithe barn; today the site is occupied by a large metal barn belonging to Cley Hall Farm near the junction of Old Woman Lane and the Holt Road.

This parsonage probably defined the eastern extremity of Newgate at a time when it was a prosperous area. Christopher Newgate, the wealthiest inhabitant of the parish in 1592, lived in what is now called Newgate Farm and the discovery of house foundations when the road was widened through this area indicates that once there were more habitations in this part of the Town.[6]

In 1791 a detailed description of the barn states: "Also a large Barn seventy five feet long & twenty feet wide – a Lean too eighteen feet long, and twelve feet wide – all Brick, stone and tiled".

Unfortunately the age of this barn is not known, but it could have dated from the early 16th century or even earlier. It was certainly large, but it did not compare with the gigantic barns at Waxham and Paston that were 180 and 175 feet long respectively.[2] The disparity in size may be a reflection of differences in the local economy of the two areas: one having a mixed economy with maritime trade, fishing and farming, the other being solely farming; one being sheep-corn, the other arable, and with the lands having different levels of productivity when the barns were built – the sandy soils of Cley giving lower yields compared to the rich loams of east Norfolk.

Parsonage 2

The site of this parsonage is instantly recognisable for it is clearly stated in every terrier, the churchyard lay to the south and this enables it to be equated with a gift made to the benefice in 1524. Indeed some of the site, if not all, was eventually incorporated into the present churchyard.

In Blomefield's History of Norfolk[11] there is recorded under Cley that "On July 3, 1524, license was granted to *Thomas Manners* Lord *Roos* to give a messuage, with a close, late *Colles*, lying between the churchyard of Cley to the south, and a messuage belonging to the guild of *St. Margaret* to the north, and the close lying thereby between the churchyard, west, and the demean land of the lord, east; ..... clear to *John Wyatt*, then rector of this church, and to his sucessors for ever".

It is hardly surprising that nearly two centuries later this building was in a bad state of repair, although in the terrier of 1686 it is still referred to as the 'new parsonage, but by 1706 there was yet another new parsonage! The wording of the terriers in both 1706 and 1725 suggests it was demolished. The abuttals are also illuminating for they identify the close on the east separated from the churchyard by a 'common way'; so this close would have been sited near the present churchyard extension. While the messuage that belonged to the 'Guild of St Margaret' was no longer occupied by them.

Parsonage 3

This parsonage was first mentioned in 1706, it was a substantial building as the description in 1791 makes clear, although by then it was let having been occupied by the Rector until, at least, 1768. This description also indicates the nature of the lifestyle and status of the Rector: "...in Front to the West thirty one feet & eighteen feet wide a staircase to the North ten feet wide – a Kitchen & Back Kitchen to the South thirty feet long & nineteen feet wide – one Hay House & Stable adjoining forty seven feet long & ten feet wide – a Chaise house fourteen feet long & fifteen feet wide – another building across the yard eighteen feet long & fifteen feet wide – a coal House & small Stable twenty feet long & ten feet wide – all the above buildings are Brick & Stone and all tiled with Pantiles"

It was sited with the Fairstead, now called Newgate Green, on the east, close to the site where the Cley Fair was held until the enclosure of the marshes. Different descriptions state there was a garden and yards containing about one acre and a half and lying with the Kings Highway and the Common Marsh on the west. The

main house was eventually demolished, but it is possible that some of the buildings now abutting onto Newgate Green are remnants of the parsonage complex.

Robert Thomlinson, as Rector, lived in this parsonage when he was first appointed to the parish, but by 1791 he was the major landowner in Cley and installed in the improperly named 'Manor House' in The Street.[6] It was this Thomlinson who recorded in the parish registers much of the information on the 'rages' when the sea flooded the Town at least 8 times in the 18th century. So Robert Thomlinson's interest in storms may have emanated not solely from his position as Rector or as the major landowner, but from a very personal viewpoint living in a Rectory vulnerable to flood damage. One can imagine him sitting in his parlour watching the sea level rise and adding another note to the registers!

Parsonage 4

The last parsonage was built in the mid 19th century and is, therefore, not part of this story. It is an imposing building still standing today, although in private hands and in a location divorced from the village.

Conclusions

Cley lies at the interface between sea and land and much has been written about the history and impact of maritime trade and the magnificence of the Church. Yet many of the gravestones in the nave and the chancel are also a lasting testament to men who were involved with the land, some were merchants, others Lords of the Manor, with the most important landowner in his time being the Reverend Robert Thomlinson, Rector of the Parish, buried in the chancel not far from the altar.

The glebe terriers enable changes in the landscape to be charted in a parish that is devoid of records from a major estate. Moreover, these changes must have been initiated or influenced by those men whose memorials lie in the Church. As could be anticipated the resulting picture is imperfect and incomplete, but the terriers provide a simple framework that can be examined and expanded.

At the start of the 17th century open fields dominated the landscape and their persistence well into the 18th century is indicative of the continuing power of traditional forms of sheep-corn husbandry. Nevertheless, there is evidence of some piecemeal enclosure and the division of one field leading to the establishment of 'Hay Croft' in the mid 18th century heralded an important shift in the organisation of the land.

Dramatic changes occurred in the short period between the terriers of 1760 and 1765; open fields were consolidated into larger blocks controlled by either single or a few joint owners, but with strips of glebe lands embedded. Initially such arrangements might appear chaotic, but in the progression from open fields towards enforced enclosure such situations should be anticipated, especially in villages where the potential existed for 'strong' individuals to be vying for their share. Cley with the close juxtaposition of landowners and merchants might have provided such a situation, for here were men familiar with business and legal agreements. And maybe some were

attracted to the area by the opportunities presented by rising trade in agricultural products through Blakeney Haven?

The final death knoll for the open field system in Cley was sounded by Parliamentary Enclosure, nevertheless the medieval concept of glebe lands continued to flourish with the only change being their consolidation into a larger unit.

The parsonages present a less coherent story, as they are episodes in a much broader picture concerned with the wealth of the benefice and wider church affairs. The history of the first three buildings appears to be one of deterioration, demolition and building on a new site, with the fourth parsonage still standing. Yet appropriately the gift from the Roos family in 1523 remains within the control of the church, incorporated into the main churchyard and with at least some of the adjoining close returned as the churchyard extension.

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