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## Changes in the landscape of west Cambridge after Enclosure

1805–1870

Philomena Guillebaud

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*In the first 65 years after enclosure, the parish of St Giles saw little building, but transformation of the eastern part of an almost wholly arable landscape into pastures, pleasure gardens, nurseries and playing fields. This was in sharp contrast to the equivalent parish on the other side of town, St Andrew the Less, where enclosure was quickly followed by extensive housing development and rapid population rise. In St Giles fewer than a dozen 'gentlemen's residences' were erected, most of them on the periphery of the parish, while a moderate number of solid working class houses were built in the earlier populated areas of Castle Hill, Pound Hill and Newnham, again on the edges of the parish, and an unknown number of impermanent rural dwellings whose exact locations can only be conjectured. All but one of the colleges refrained from granting building leases, other corporate owners followed their lead and, since by 1870 most land in private ownership in the more accessible parts of the parish had been built on, further housing development had to await a change in college attitudes. This article explores development of the parish of St Giles in the first post-enclosure period and the roles played by some Cambridge colleges. The emphasis is on the colleges because it is they rather than the University which had the resources and hence the power to influence that development.*

### Introduction

The ancient Borough of Cambridge had three components: the town itself and its two great open fields, the West (sometime called Cambridge Fields) and the East or Barnwell Fields. In the first decade of the 19th century, each of the parishes encompassing the respective Fields was enclosed under Parliamentary Act.

The enclosure of the Parish of St Giles, the West Fields of Cambridge, was made official in May 1805. The background, process and immediate outcome of that enclosure have been the subject of a previous article (Guillebaud, P 2005). In considering subsequent changes, several periods may be distinguished: 1805 to 1870, a period of considerable agricultural change but very limited and peripheral housing development; 1870 to 1914, when several new colleges and

seminaries, new roads and many substantial residences were built; 1919 to 1939, less academic building but expanding housing development, and 1945 to the present, with another spurt of academic building and conversion but more limited house construction.

The area of the parish was 1361 acres. Of the 16 Cambridge colleges in existence when enclosure was complete, four owned no land in St Giles, five owned less than 10 acres apiece, the University owned under six acres (deriving mostly from small benefactions in the 13th century), and the major players were St John's (410 acres), Corpus Christi or Benet College with 115 acres, Jesus, Gonville and Caius, Clare, King's, Trinity Hall – and Merton College, Oxford, the third largest landholder, with 105 acres. Although 40% was not in college or University hands (the Diocese of Ely held 12% and one private landowner, Sir Charles Cotton, 10%) the academic community had the controlling voice.

The evolution of St Giles must be seen in the context of what was occurring in the parish of St Andrew the Less (henceforth referred to by its more common name of Barnwell), whose enclosure was begun in 1807 and completed in 1811. The area of each parish was roughly the same, but the outcome of the enclosure process was markedly different. By 1831, the population of Barnwell had grown from 250 in 1801 to 6650, while that of St Giles had increased from 900 to only 1900. By 1871 the contrast was even greater: the former had reached nearly 16,000, the latter had remained almost static at less than 2500 (Fig. 1).

The contrast is largely explained by the different pattern of land-ownership, as shown in the table below, and the varying attitudes to development shown by different categories of owners.

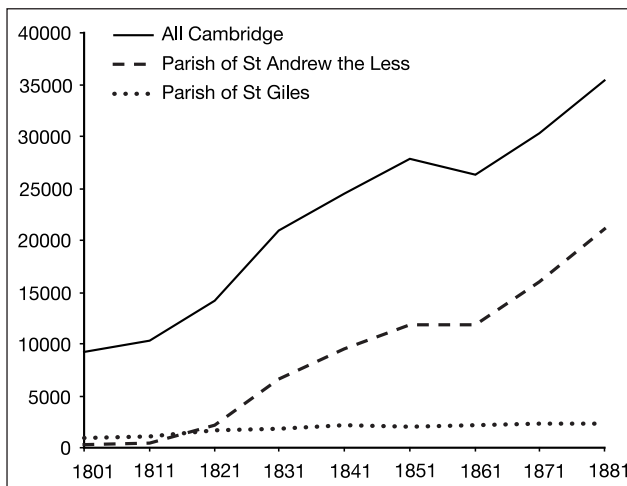


Figure 1. Population growth in two Cambridge parishes and in the town as a whole. Source: census data.

Whereas in St Giles colleges and University far outweighed other categories, in Barnwell they were second to private individuals.

Table 1. Land Ownership (% of total acreage) after Enclosure, Parishes of St Giles (1805) and St Andrew the Less or Barnwell (1811). Source: the Enclosure Awards for each parish.

Category of owner	St Giles	St Andrew the Less (Barnwell)
Colleges and University	60	42
Ecclesiastical bodies	15	1
Other corporate bodies	10	7
Private individuals	15	50
Total	100	100

These different patterns of ownership can be traced to the 16th century. In the later Middle Ages there had existed in Cambridge two dominant monastic entities: the Hospital of St John the Evangelist within the town but just on the border of the West Fields and the Priory of Barnwell in the East Fields, both beneficiaries of years of pious donations of land by citizens of Cambridge and its environs. At the time of enclosure the largest single landowner in each parish was the lay successor of its principal monastic house: in St Giles, St John's College, with 30% of the acreage, and in Barnwell, Mr Thomas Panton, with 33% of the acreage.

By the beginning of the 16th century, the town hospital of St John was dissolved and its endowment transferred to St John's, the new academic institution founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. The foundation of this new college was accompanied by a further burst of benefactions, so that the college was briefly the richest in the University until the foundation of Trinity College by Henry VIII

in 1546. When Henry dissolved the monasteries, the patrimony of the Hospital had already passed into lay hands and was untouched, whereas the property of the Priory of Barnwell was seized and sold to private individuals, much of it coming eventually into the hands of the said Thomas Panton.

### The early impact of enclosure in St Giles's Parish until 1870

#### Land-holding and land use

The commanding position of the colleges in the parish of St Giles in terms of acreage was a reality long before enclosure, and it would be difficult to demonstrate that the Commissioners of Enclosure bent the rules in their favour. But when we come to consider location rather than acreage, the matter is very different. Whether it was public knowledge at the time is unknown, but in 1803 the Syndicate established by the University to deal with such aspects of the enclosure as interested it produced the following document, whose proposals are germane to an understanding of what happened later (CUL, UA Minutes VI 1, p 135).

At a meeting of Syndics for St Giles Inclosure held on 5th day of July it was resolved to make the following proposals to the Commissioners for the said Inclosure.

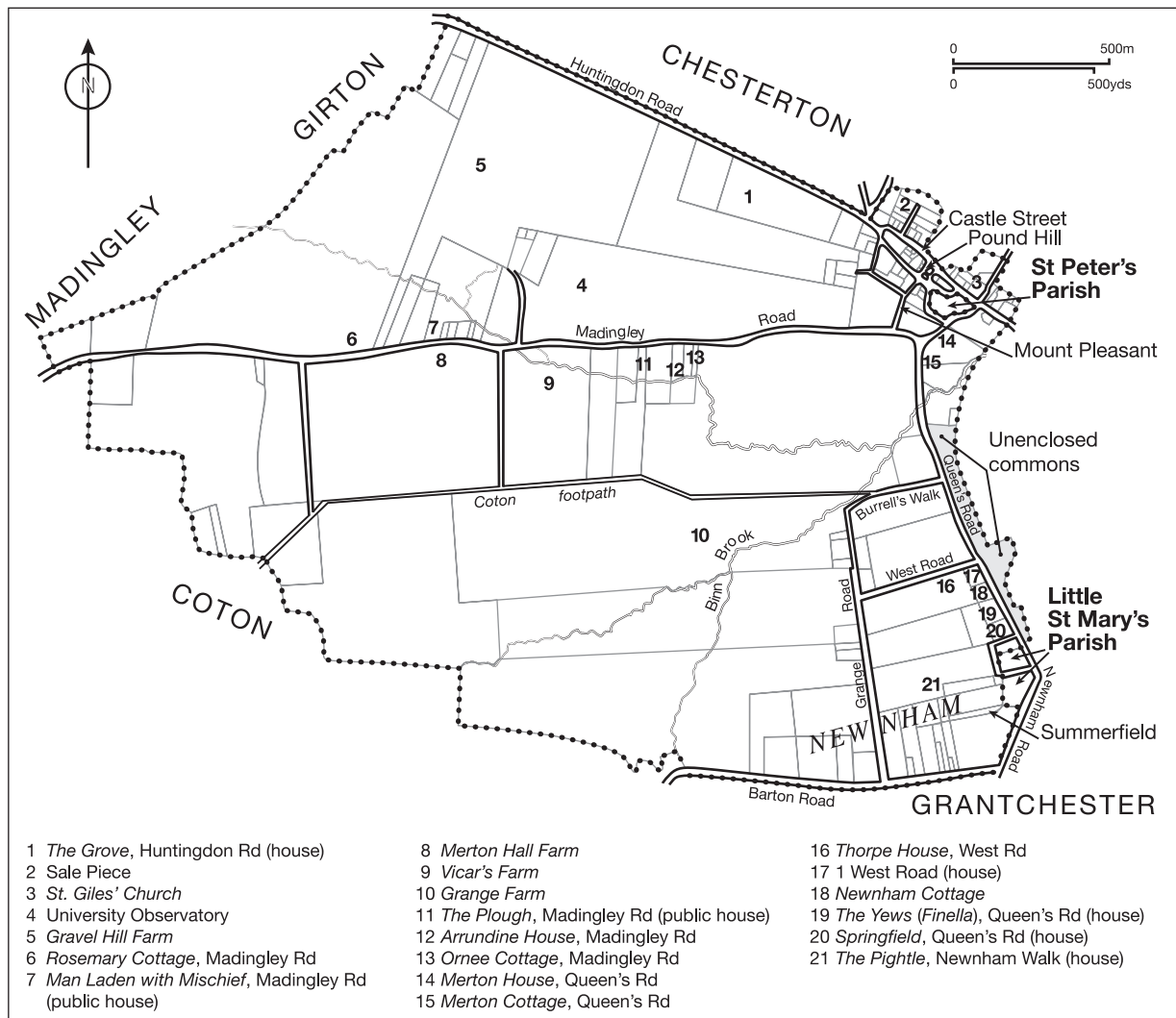
1. That in the Allotment, the Fencing, and the general Distribution of Land lying contiguous to the Turnpike Road [Queen's Road] which bounds the Public Walks behind the Colleges from the corner of Mr Wilkins's Orchard at the end of the Croaches [a small piece of land abutting Queen's Road on the east opposite the end of West Road which had once belonged to the Hostel of the Holy Cross (cruces) hence Croaches] to the corner of the field opposite to the entrance of Bell Lane [Northampton Street] care be taken to avoid, as much as possible, whatever may diminish the present Beauty of the Walks; and to contribute, as far as it can conveniently be done, to the future improvement of those Walks.

2. That in order to prevent any inconvenience which might arise from the erection of Dwelling-houses or other Buildings, no Land lying contiguous to the above-mentioned Road be allotted to Private Individuals, but that it be allotted, in part to the University, in part to such Colleges as have Property in the said Field; regard being had to the situation of each College.

3. That the Allotments along the said Road be as deep as the several Properties will admit.

4. That the Land which is to be allotted to the University be behind Trinity College.

Examination of Plate 1 shows that the Commissioners obliged the Syndics in every respect. Their response to the first item was to exclude from the process of enclosure such small remnants of the water meadows lying between the river and Queen's Road as had not already been absorbed into college gardens, thereby safeguarding the 'public walks' so much esteemed by the academics. Much larger areas of common land, including Midsummer, Coldhams and Sturbridge Commons, were excluded from enclosure



**Figure 2.** Parish of St Giles: places referred to in the text. Parish boundaries as at the time of the Enclosure Award of 1805.

**Modern name of road**

Madingley Road  
 Northampton Street  
 Lady Margaret Road  
 Queen's Road  
 West Road  
 Newnham Road  
 Barton Road  
 Grange Road

**Former name (where different)**

St Neot's Turnpike  
 Bell Lane  
 Bandyleg Walk  
 Arrington Road  
 New Road, Green's Road  
 Arrington Turnpike  
 Arrington Turnpike  
 Long Balk, House in the Fields Road, Parallelogram Road

in Barnwell, but there were no equivalent commons in St Giles.

Plate 1 shows that by obtaining the Commissioners' acquiescence to the second and third items in the above list, those colleges whose ancient grounds were clustered along the west side of the town largely succeeding in creating a 'cordon sanitaire' insulating themselves from any change in the proximate landscape of which they did not approve, specifically house-building. As the case of Barnwell makes clear, the colleges – and the University as a whole – were not necessarily opposed to development of any kind, but in St Giles they were determined to control what, where and when development took place. Nevertheless, even in St Giles this control was not total, because one college, Gonville and Caius, possessor of a strategically located 'old enclosure' unaffected by the activities of the Enclosure Commissioners (see Guillebaud 2005, p 195), refused to toe the general line, as will be shown later.

Agreement to the fourth proposal, as has been explained in Guillebaud 2005, p 196 made possible location of Trinity Fellows' Garden immediately opposite that college's back gate.

While it is not the intention in this article to refer, except in the most general terms, to the situation in Barnwell, which has been well described by Peter Bryan (1999), what happened in St Giles cannot be understood without reference to Barnwell. In the latter not only did private individuals own half the acreage enclosed but there was no great tithe-owner like the Bishop of Ely nor a clearly predominant college – though the colleges involved were much the same in each parish. In Barnwell the private owners were sufficiently powerful to block any college monopoly of land closest to the town, and the pattern of land distribution after enclosure showed far more intermingling of private and corporate ownership in Barnwell than in St Giles. The determination of the town to prevent a repetition of what happened in St Giles is illustrated by the public hearings conducted in June 1806 about the proposed Barnwell enclosure when resolutions were passed objecting not only to the enclosure itself but to 'the election of Commissioners, known Agents of the large Proprietors' as being 'contrary to a standing order of the House of Commons, and objectionable on that ground.' (Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 21 and 28 June 1806) The two Commissioners objected to, William Custance and Joseph Truslove, had been two of the three Commissioners for the enclosure of St Giles as well as of a number of villages near Cambridge with considerable college ownership. The town's objections were ignored in the final selection of the Commissioners, but the private owners clearly had the clout to deny the colleges the privileged position they had enjoyed in St Giles.

As described by Bryan, private owners in Barnwell wasted no time in embarking on housing development after enclosure, since the old town was bursting at the seams. The colleges followed suit somewhat later, entering cautiously into a type of investment with which they were unfamiliar, and tending to

build housing aimed at a wealthier clientele than the private landowners. Proportionately more college-built than privately-built housing survives in Barnwell to this day, quite a bit of the latter being torn down in the 20th century as slums. Censuses of the 19th century show that most of the almost unbroken climb in the town's population is accounted for by Barnwell parish, while a number of inner parishes showed a net loss. Arrival of the railway in 1845, with its station in Barnwell, was of course a contributory factor.

Barnwell provided a ready outlet for college experimentation in new kinds of investment, and house construction there took much of the pressure off the town, allowing the more conservative elements of the colleges to preserve in St Giles the rural setting with which they were familiar. But even here, significant changes were taking place. A parish map of 1831/2, evidently prepared for the purpose of administering the land tax, shows that almost all the eastern part of St Giles, ie closest to the town, had been converted from arable to pasture by that date. The map presents difficulties of comparison with that which accompanied the Enclosure Award of 1805: there are some new or changed boundaries, the entire plot numbering system has been changed, and whereas the older map showed names of owners and only rarely occupants, the newer one shows only occupants, and in the 25 years separating the two many changes of tenancies had occurred. What makes the later map interesting is that it shows land-use, giving three main categories, arable, 'grass' and woods, while orchards/nursery gardens and yards are also distinguished by use of colour or hatching. (Fig. 3).

Predictably, the category of woods is negligible, largely confined to a band of trees along the western extremity of Madingley Road and, somewhat surprisingly, the newly planted but evidently thick band of trees encircling Trinity Fellows' Garden. The interest lies in the shift from arable to pasture. That there should have been such a shift in that 25 year period is hardly surprising: in the agricultural depression after the end of the Napoleonic wars, grain prices dropped more sharply than those for animal products. Moreover, as already noted, the population of the town rose steadily, and was matched by a marked increase in the University population. Thus a growing demand for meat and dairy products could have been expected to lead to expansion of pasture in those areas closest to the town – particularly since St Giles was notoriously short of pasture (Hall and Ravensdale 1976, 28 *et seq*)

While the 1831 map shows pasture concentrated in the eastern sector near the town, it will be noticed that there are two patches of pasture at the northern and western extremities. These were probably holding pastures where slaughter cattle were rested and watered before the last leg of the drive into the town, and there was doubtless a third on the Barton Road, beyond the parish boundary.

Estimating how much pasture there was before enclosure is hard. As an obligatory part of the prepa-



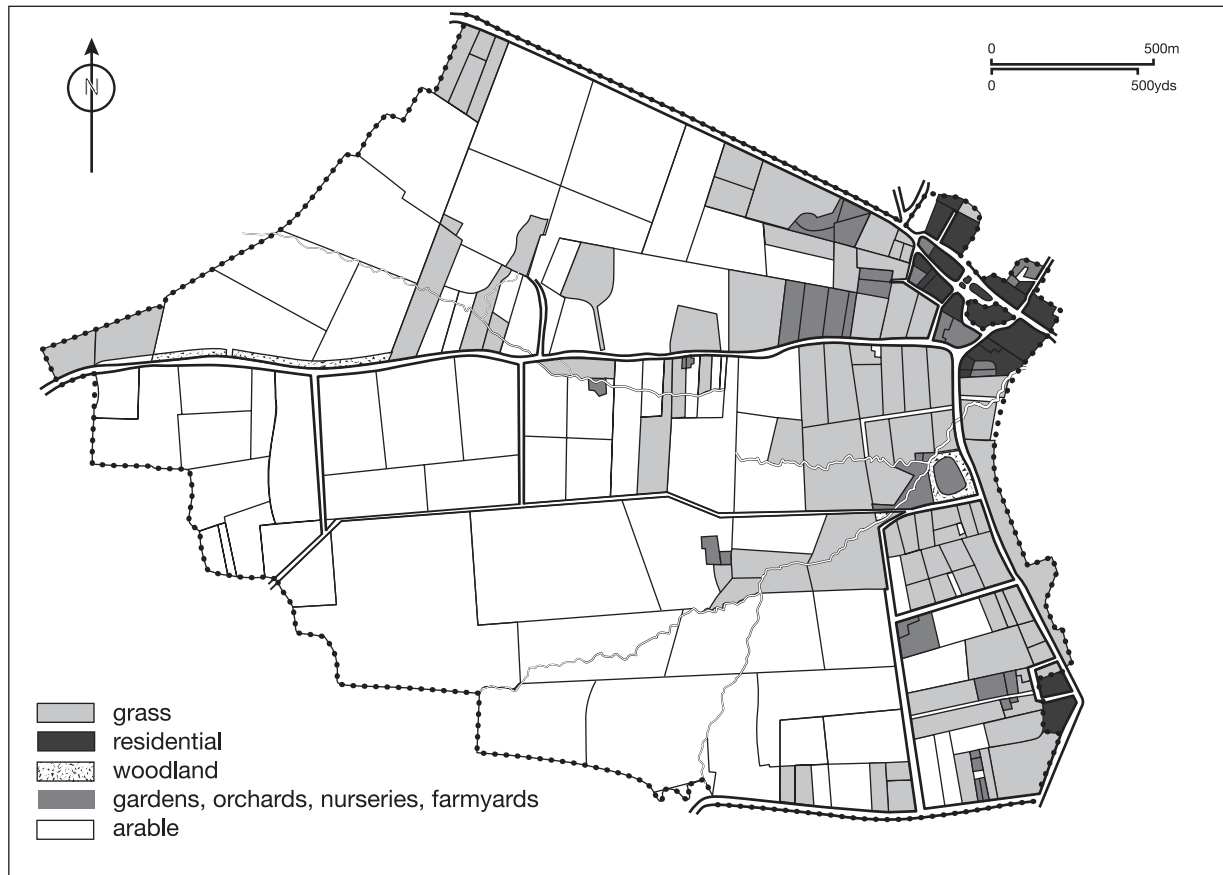


Figure 3. Parish of St Giles: land use in 1832. Boundaries from the Parish Map of 1832.

rations for the process, the Commissioners' surveyor drew up a map reflecting the *status quo ante*. The map, in bad condition, exists in the County Record Office, but the key or reference guide is missing. There are over 400 numbered plots or strips, but ownership is not identified. Some areas are marked in faded pink or green; comparison with later maps shows that the pink areas, all relatively small, are old enclosures specifically excluded from the activities of the Commissioners, and which may or may not have been pasture. As for the green areas, found on either side of each of the three small watercourses which intersect the parish, along the parish boundaries particularly to the north, along some of the major balks or ancient tracks, and notably on either side of the eastern end of Madingley Road, it seems clear that these represent more or less permanent pasture. At a rough guess, green areas might amount to about 10% of the acreage.

When the Commissioners came to work out how much land to assign in compensation to former tithe owners, their decision was supposedly governed by a formula which had become standard by the early 19th century: tithe owners were to receive an acreage corresponding to 20% of arable plus 8% of pasture. In the present instance, they received 20.5% of the acreage, but since both the largest tithe owners possessed some land in the parish before enclosure there

is no way of distinguishing how much of their allotments was attributable to that factor and how much to tithe compensation. Certainly it sheds no light on the vexed question of how much pasture there actually was.

Examination of the leases issued by St John's immediately at the end or even before the end of the enclosure process makes it evident that there was some pasture, though measurement remains impossible. Before enclosure, St John's holdings in St Giles had been organised in five farms, with separate tenants and homesteads, although their lands were dispersed among the open fields. These farms were known as the Newnham lands (including some in Grantchester), St John's Barns (also known as Grange Farm), the Great Barn Farm, the Harlston lands and the Morris lands, the names of the last two recording acquisitions from important Cambridge families in 13th and 14th centuries. From an administrative point of view, the system was less than efficient: strips attached to each farm were scattered and intermingled over the great fields and it is arguable that one of the reasons that St John's pushed for enclosure was the desire to achieve a more manageable structure on its own properties.

After enclosure, the five-farm picture vanishes: Newnham Farm, a small unit, continues with the same tenant (Thomas Whittred about whom more

later) as does Grange Farm, (much the largest unit containing over 200 acres) though with a change of tenant, but the other three disappear, being replaced by 20 new individual tenancies, totalling 174 acres or over 40% of St John's land holding in St Giles. These tenancies are identified by the name of the tenant and the precise acreage, but unfortunately the leases give no direct information about location. Because of the existence of a contemporary plan detailing the areas covered by Grange Farm, we know that most if not all of these new units were in the northeast part of St John's holdings, ie nearest the town, that the majority were in the angle between the present Queen's and Madingley Roads, that some abutted upon the Coton footpath and that a few were north of Madingley Road. In size, they ranged from 2 to 46 acres. Three of them are identified as 'garden ground', i.e. market or nursery gardens, and their tenants are identified as gardeners.

It is notable that the above areas broadly coincide with the areas marked in green on the draft pre-enclosure map, ie having a predominance of pasture. With the exception of the three gardens and two other tenancies, the remaining 15 leases are for land described as 'arable and grass' and all contain the clause, after statement of the amount of yearly rental, 'and paying in like manner a further yearly Rent in the proportion of £10 of lawful money to an acre for every parcel of grass land which shall at any time be plowed broken up or converted into tillage during the said term'. In relation to the level of annual rent for the each unit, £10 per acre was so high as to be clearly meant as a penalty payment, and the clause confirms not only that there was some pasture but that it was precious.

The occupations of almost all the tenants are identified, and only one is described as a farmer. Apart from the three gardeners already mentioned, there are two cooks, a butcher, a grocer, a merchant, an upholsterer, a bricklayer, a surgeon, a breeches maker, a college porter, an innkeeper, a coach master – and three stable keepers. It was to stable keepers that the two largest leases, of 46 and 33 acres respectively, were granted, and each of their leases, while omitting the penalty clause referred to above, obliges the tenant to convert a specified acreage of land into pasture within ten years of the start of the lease. In the case of the 46-acre lease, the tenant had within that period 'to lay down for pasture with 10 lbs of red clover and 6 lbs of Dutch clover to every statute acre' 17 acres fenced off from the rest of his land, while the tenant with the 33-acre lease had to convert 7 acres in the same fashion.

This leaves little doubt that lack of horse pasture was a major concern. Nor was St John's alone in this: King's College, which acquired at enclosure a 16-acre site immediately opposite its back gate, made the initial choice, after reserving part as the Provost's private garden and paddock, to divide the rest into small lots and rent them to its Fellows for their horses. Nowadays this area is divided between the Fellows' Garden and the grounds of King's College Choir

School.

Reverting to St John's leases, all 20 of the new leases (though back-dated to Michaelmas 1803) were issued either in June or September 1804, ie shortly after the Enclosure Commissioners had authorised landowners to take possession of their new lands, and before the enclosure was officially complete. The meticulous care with which these leases are drafted suggests that they are the outcome of a carefully pre-determined strategy – of which no other evidence has so far been found in the college records.

If the need for pasture was the dominant motive, this provides no obvious explanation for creating 20 new units, 16 of which were less than 10 acres in extent. Perhaps it made easier the process of substituting rack rent for the almost universal practice of beneficial leases. The latter yielded a fixed or very slowly increasing customary rent, usually payable partly in money and partly in wheat and malt, where the full or true value of the lease was recouped by periodic 'fines' or lump sums payable to the landlord on the occasion of renewal of the lease, a system open to abuse by either party. Under rack rent, a property was leased at an annual rent reflecting its true value, the normal practice of the present day. All these new leases were rack rents. Or perhaps the smaller units gave the college greater flexibility in their land-use policy. Or did willingness to grant such leases reflect recognition of vestiges of the once-strong ties between the citizenry and the fields? In the absence of contemporary evidence one can only speculate.

As for Grange Farm, which as mentioned was the largest unit of St John's holdings in St Giles, a new lease was not issued until 1806, although the tenant, Thomas Attwood, had been in charge of the farm at least since 1804, as shown by the Rental Books. In this instance, the new lease required the tenant within the first seven years of the lease to convert 64 acres, or almost one-third of the farm, into pasture, the precise areas being marked on an attached plan. He was granted a beneficial lease, and it was not until 1812, when there was another change of tenant, that this was replaced by a rack rent.

The other colleges (including Merton College, Oxford) were slower to promote the conservation or expansion of pasture – at least as far as can be gathered from the wordings of their first leases issued after enclosure. Moreover none of them chose to make enclosure the occasion, at least initially, of altering their tenancy arrangements. Each assigned its whole entitlement, no matter where located (and in some cases not limited to lands in the Parish of St Giles) to the single tenant in charge of its lands before enclosure, and the Enclosure Award and accompanying map would seem to show that this was intentional rather than the result of inertia. However St John's, having planned (from the evidence of the enclosure map) to entrust an 80-acre site near the Coton boundary to a previous tenant, James Cock, later changed its mind and incorporated that area into its large Grange Farm under a new tenant.

Aside from St John's, the Cambridge colleges with

the largest shares in the acreage of St Giles, as well as the Bishop of Ely, entrusted their farms in their entirety to one of three individuals, Thomas Whittred, mentioned above, William Anderson and Jacob Smith who appear to have been professional farm managers on a large scale. Even St John's employed two of them: the one tenancy which St John's did not change at the time of enclosure was that of the Newnham Farm, initially held by Whittred and later by Anderson. On the other hand, Merton College Oxford, the third largest collegiate landowner, used none of them.

Whittred, the son of an Alderman, was a man of substance. Before enclosure, he had farmed the tithes both of the Bishop of Ely and Jesus College in St Giles, was tenant of all the land there owned by Benet College (Corpus Christi) as well as of St John's Farm in Newnham, and owned property in other parishes. Evidence is conflicting about his ownership of land in St Giles: a Land Tax table for that parish in 1798 in the County Record Office shows him liable as proprietor for £5.2.0 on an unidentified property, but he does not appear as an owner in the Enclosure Award. However that document shows him as tenant of record for lands totalling almost 350 acres, or more than a quarter of the parish.

William Anderson, like his father of the same name before him, farmed Mortimer's Manor for Gonville and Caius College. The Manor included lands in Barnwell Parish and elsewhere as well as land in Newnham and Newnham Mill. The son married one of the daughters of Thomas Whittred, and succeeded his father-in-law in several of his tenancies, notably the Benet lands (1811), Jesus lands (1812) and St John's Newnham farm (1817). However Whittred retained the tenancy of the lands assigned to the Bishop of Ely until 1824 (at or shortly before his death).

Jacob Smith was a landowner in his own right in St Giles, allotted 33 acres at enclosure, the second largest private owner after Sir Charles Cotton. Both before and after enclosure and until 1813 he farmed Clare Hall's estate known as Castle End Farm, which included 32 acres in St Giles and further land in Chesterton.

Perhaps because of the continuity of tenancy, some of the colleges took their time in issuing new leases, Benet College (Corpus Christi) not issuing theirs until 1814. This lease contains a unique feature: 13 acres in the Newnham area out of the more than 100 acres covered by the lease may be withdrawn if the College should decide to relocate itself across the river. No other college seems to have entertained such a radical idea.

Although none of these initial leases contain wording similar to those cited in St John's leases about preserving pasture, some later ones do, and the parish map of 1831 shows that by then almost all land close to the town, regardless of ownership, had been converted to pasture.

Since there is no doubt that the promotion of pasture was a deliberate policy, it is astonishing that it should be impossible to identify the individuals behind that policy. One might reasonably expect that

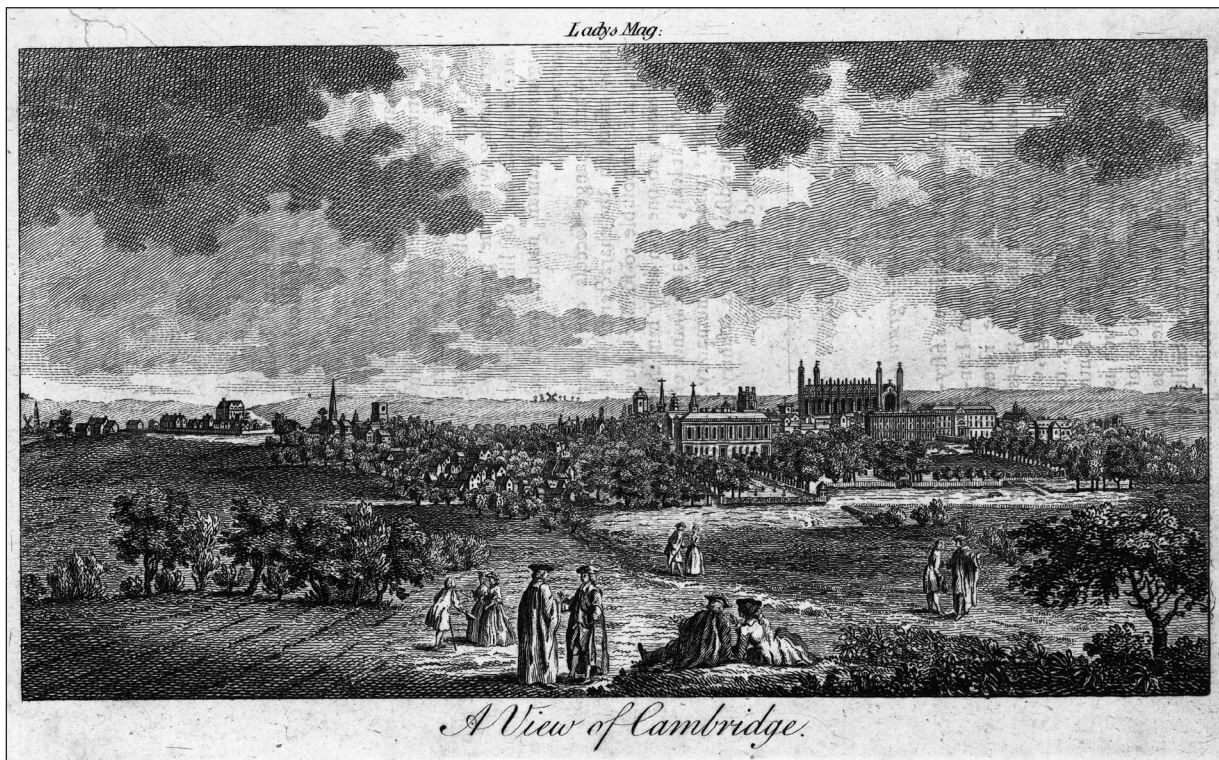
the Master and/or Senior Bursar of St John's were the moving spirits. The Master from 1789 to 1815 was William Craven, who had previously been Bursar and also, until 1795, Professor of Arabic. His obituary pays tribute to his amiable Christian character but says nothing whatever about any contributions he might have made to the college's agricultural policies. In the period of his mastership there were eight Senior Bursars, none of whom have left any evidence of interest in agricultural policy. The college's Conclusion Books shed no light on the matter, nor does Sir Henry Howard's book on St John's College finances (Howard 1935). The archives of other colleges have been no more fruitful.

One little-known feature of west Cambridge is the former existence of over a hundred small detached leisure gardens, of the kind found nowadays on the outskirts of certain Dutch or German cities. These were not allotments for growing vegetables, but small plots, usually fenced or hedged and often with a summer house or similar feature, where the town dweller could escape to relax among flowers and fruit trees (Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust Newsletter May 2004). As the cited publication explains, seven groups of such gardens have been found in west Cambridge, the earliest shown clearly if schematically on Baker's 1830 map of Cambridge as a mixture of orchards and grass plots surrounded by agricultural land on the north side of Madingley Road close to the present northern end of Grange Road. The 1888 Ordnance Survey map shows 15 well-established gardens at that location, while nearby to the northeast, another group of six gardens is shown, though the date when these latter were developed is not known. The third group is well documented: the gardens were established in 1841 on the former and now derelict site of Grange Farm homestead. At his wife's suggestion William Whewell, Master of Trinity, leased the ground from St John's to establish gardens for the benefit of Trinity College servants, but after his death in 1866 St John's took the lease back and used the facilities for its own servants until the sale of the site to Westminster College. The next three sites are found along Grange Road, one dating from the 1850s and the other two, of uncertain dates of foundation, on land allocated at the time of enclosure to two town churches in lieu of tithe. The last site is in Grantchester. All were eventually built upon, but one garden from the last of the sites to be sold (in 1925) still survives, with its summerhouse intact.

1858 was an important turning point in the development of this landscape: not only was it the year in which the Universities and College Estates Act was passed, permitting these bodies to offer 99-year building leases in place of the earlier limit of 40 years, which gave an impetus to the subsequent development of residential building in the area, but it was also the year when St John's laid out the first college playing field.

Until the latter half of the 19th century, the principal forms of exercise in the University were walking, riding and shooting; real tennis, played on a





**Figure 4.** A view of West Cambridge in 1750, showing the unhedged pre-Enclosure landscape. From the *Ladys Magazine*, courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection.

walled court, remained popular and some colleges maintained their courts as an integral part of their buildings until relatively recent times, but none of these activities required an open playing field. When interest in cricket arose, college games were played on Parker's Piece, often with several games going on at once, and the first purpose-built cricket field in Cambridge owes its existence to a private individual, FP Fenner, who in 1848 leased land from Gonville and Caius College in the former Barnwell Fields and laid out a field which he leased to the University cricket club and various college clubs. As Fenner's, it exists to this day, but when cricket became even more popular, it could not meet the demands of the colleges.

St John's playing field was laid out in the angle between the present Queen's Road and Madingley Road, but occupied a considerably smaller area than its present playing field. Two years later in 1860 Trinity, not to be outdone, for the same purpose rented and subsequently bought from St John's 16 acres of land which had been part of Grange Farm and lay west of what became Grange Road. The lease, like subsequent ones signed with other colleges, contained the provision that the lessee undertook not to break up or convert into tillage any of the land involved. Three other colleges, Emmanuel, Pembroke and Peterhouse joined forces in 1873 to rent a plot directly east of the Trinity ground, then followed Magdalene in 1878, Christ's together with Sidney in 1884 and Trinity Hall in 1892. All these rented from St John's but several other colleges which at the time of enclosure

had been allocated land conveniently located in west Cambridge (Gonville and Caius, Corpus, King's and Clare) laid out fields on their own territories. The Ordnance Survey map of 1888 shows the area south of Madingley Road and nearest to the town almost entirely covered by playing fields and gardens, including the Fellows' Gardens of Trinity, Clare, King's, Corpus and Gonville and Caius. The band of pasture land was therefore pushed further west.

### **Buildings**

Under the system of open-field agriculture as practiced in Cambridge, farmsteads were on the periphery of the fields and sometimes in the town itself. Thus the farmstead of Benet's (Corpus Christi's) main farm was for long at the George Inn in Bridge Street, while several farmsteads were located on Pound Hill. Newnham contained the homestead for part of the Benet lands in the West Fields, and next door the farmstead for St John's lands in Newnham. Not surprisingly, one consequence of enclosure was the move of some of these farmsteads to the newly consolidated holdings. Perhaps the first was Grange Farm, which was transferred in 1827 from its medieval site at the north corner of Madingley Road and Northampton Street, where it was known as St John's Barns, to a more central location which has since become the site of the University Athletics Centre. Baker's 1830 map shows Gravel Hill Farm, homestead for the Bishop of Ely's holdings, north of Madingley Road and Church (St Giles Vicarage) Farm south of



it. Merton Hall Farm also south of the same road was built around 1850, being transferred from beside the Hall in Northampton Street.

The first non-farm building to penetrate the fields was the University Observatory (Plate 2), built in 1822/3 on a site off Madingley Road bought from St John's College far enough from town to escape smoke pollution and on an eminence chosen such that the tower of Grantchester Church was lined up on the meridian to the south.

As for houses, Maitland (1898,120), after defining the pre-enclosure boundaries of the West Fields, claims to have found three houses there. The enclosure map shows only one: Newnham Cottage, on Queen's Road, built by William Wilkins Senior in 1799 on land leased from Gonville and Caius. Efforts to locate the other two have failed.

The fact that house building after enclosure was so heavily concentrated in the former Barnwell Fields did not mean that there was none in St Giles, but for the first 65 years after 1805 almost all of it took place on the small amount of land in the ownership of private individuals.

While 15% of the acreage of St Giles was allotted to private individuals, 10% was owned by Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, Lord of the Manor of Madingley, who died in 1812. He was succeeded by his son St Vincent Cotton, a colourful gambler who by the 1850s had dissipated his property and become a professional coachman to make ends meet. Those who subsequently owned his land in St Giles, all located in the

extreme northwest of the parish near the Madingley boundary, saw no market for housing, and virtually all of it remains agricultural land to this day. So it is the remaining 5% of land in private hands which saw most of the housing development up to 1870; by that date the only significant pieces of property in private hands (other than Cotton's former land) which remained undeveloped were an 11-acre site near the southern end of Grange Road, eventually developed as Selwyn Gardens in the mid-1880s, and Jacob Smith's 15-acre plot on Madingley Road beyond the Observatory, now the site of Conduit Head and Lansdowne Roads, built in the 20th century.

As described elsewhere (Guillebaud 2005) the Enclosure Commissioners in St Giles awarded small allotments to persons entitled to compensation in lieu of the abolished rights of common, and wherever possible they selected locations for these allotments convenient for the owners. Since most of the eligible commoners lived in the northeastern corner of the parish, the area of the old Roman town north of the Great Bridge, the allotments they received, with few exceptions, were either in Sail Piece, a previously undeveloped 6-acre piece of arable land at the top of Castle Hill, or were scattered among the existing houses on Pound Hill. Given the shortage of building land in the town and the fact that these plots were too small to be viable agricultural units, it is not surprising that within a short space of time almost all had been converted into houses and gardens. In the parish map of 1831, Sail Piece shows about 15 small

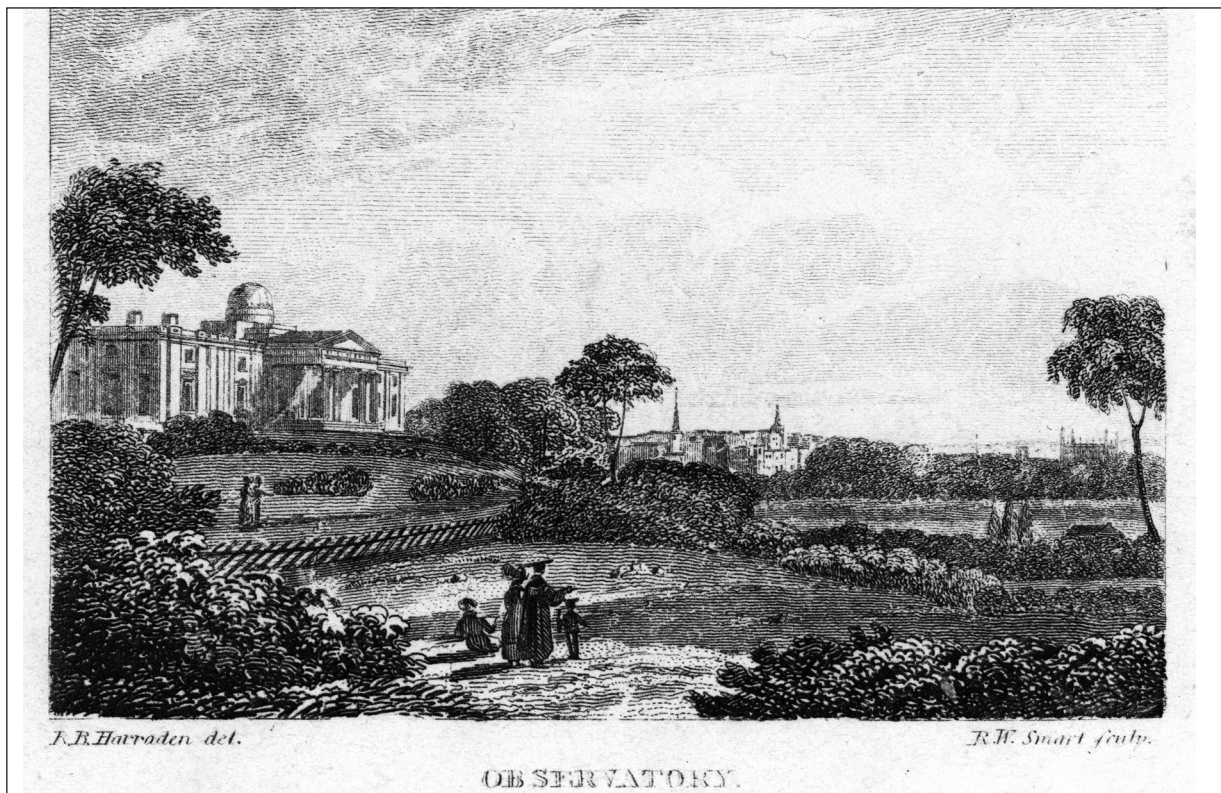


Figure 5. A mid-19th century view of the Cambridge Observatory (after a painting by R B Harraden). Courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection.

houses, several detached gardens, a timber-yard and only one acre still in cultivation, while the situation is similar on Pound Hill.

As mentioned above, the second largest private landowner in St Giles was Jacob Smith, also one of the three professional farm managers. His 33-acre allotment of land at enclosure comprised three pieces (of 16, 15 and 3 acres) and by 1811 he had sold his 15-acre piece on the south side of Huntingdon Road (Fig. 3) to William Custance, one of the three Commissioners for the enclosure of St Giles, who built there in 1812/13 the substantial house known as the Grove, now owned by Fitzwilliam College (Thompson 1989 and AGH 1990). Moreover by the time of his death in 1814, Smith had sold half of the 16-acre piece north of Madingley Road, also to Custance, and that half was eventually bought by Trinity College in 1854. It was adjacent to the head of the Trinity-owned conduit built in the middle ages to supply clean water to the Franciscan monastery and which later fed the fountain in the middle of Trinity Great Court. But some time before 1842 a 'beer house' called the 'Man Laden with Mischief' (Hopkin, 1997) came into existence on the southeastern corner of this lot on Madingley Road and was duly licensed in 1844. According to an article in the Cambridge Evening News of 19 October 1984, this house remained in existence until just before the Second World War, when it burned down. In 1851 a second public house, the Plough and Harrow (later the Churchill, later still a McDonalds restaurant, demolished in 2005) was licensed. The latter was half a mile nearer town than the Man Laden with Mischief, near the track leading south to Grange Farm. The only other new pubs in the period in question were in the built-up area of Castle and Pound Hills, whereas these two were the first out in the open country.

The existence of two new pubs raises the question of where their customers came from. Some presumably were travellers to or from Cambridge, but even granted that pubs in the early 19th century were often very small affairs doing their own brewing on the premises, there must have been some local demand to justify their existence.

Prior to 1840 we possess three useful maps of St Giles (the enclosure map of 1804/5, Baker's map of 1830 and the parish map of 1831/2) but no census data. From 1841 on, we have the decennial censuses, but no useful map until the Ordnance Survey of 1888. Although the enclosure map shows buildings, none are to be seen on or near Madingley Road. The two maps from the 1830s show the Observatory, Grange Farm in its new location and two other farms, Gravel Hill Farm and Clunch (Church) Farm, one north and the other south of the road, and some structures connected with the municipal gravel pits. However there are also a few small unidentified rectangles along the road. When we look at the 1841 census, we find the Observatory and the three farms, but enumerated under Madingley Road there are also a further 9 'dwellings', some containing more than one 'household.' The total population (including the Observatory and the 3 farms) is 63. If we look only at

the 9 undocumented 'dwellings', their population is 33 including 9 children below the age of 14; the occupations of the household heads are gardener (4), carpenter (3) and agricultural labourer (2).

In other words, we have a not-insignificant population, half of them living in dwellings whose precise locations are unknown and which have not survived to the present day.

The 1851 census data show a net increase of four or five dwellings over 1841 and a rise in total population to just over 100, mainly accounted for by increased family size. But there are problems of comparability and various anomalies. The Observatory and its staff are clearly identified in both censuses and Grange Farm can be identified because the name of the farmer is known from other sources, but the two other farms, Gravel Hill and Chalk (later Vicarage) Farm are named only in the 1841 census. In 1851, the head of one household is listed as 'Farm Bailiff of 220 acres/12 labs' and it is assumed that this is Gravel Hill Farm, owned by the Diocese of Ely, but the third farm is not identifiable.

The censuses of 1861 and 1871 show further gradual growth of population on or close to Madingley Road and continued dominance of farm labourers and gardeners among the occupations, although carpenters are now less numerous and shepherds are a new category. Other occupations represented are mason, nurseryman, publican, coachman (one of each in 1851). One major drawback of all the censuses is the lack of location data other than 'Madingley Road'. From maps and other sources we know the locations of the farms, the Observatory, the two pubs and two gentry houses which will be mentioned below, but precisely where the dwellings of the majority of the population we have been describing stood remains unknown.

Only in the case of the Plough and Harrow does the licensee identify himself as 'publican'. The license of the Man laden with Mischief changed hands in 1851, and neither the first licensee, Rowell, nor the second, Chapman, gives his occupation as publican, the first being 'gardener' and second 'coachman in family'. Running a pub could evidently be a part-time occupation.

In the course of the 1850s two substantial houses were built on privately owned land on the south side of Madingley Road, between the Plough and Harrow and the access track to Grange Farm (later Wilberforce Road). One, variously known as Arrundine Cottage/ House/ Villa, began as a two-storeyed, two-bay house and was later added to both horizontally and vertically. As 35 Madingley Road it still stands today, while its two-storeyed neighbour to the east, named Ornee Cottage though hardly a cottage since a sale notice of 1901 describes it as having eight rooms, was pulled down in the 1960s when a row of maisonettes was built along Wilberforce Road on the site of the house and its garden. Curiously, nothing appears to be known about just when these houses were built, and by whom. According to the 1861 census data, Arrundine Cottage was occupied by John Ballard,



aged 53, described as ‘proprietor of houses and land’, and Ornee Cottage by John Hodson, 64, retired farmer. Not until 1885 was another ‘gentleman’s residence’ put up on Madingley Road (Alfred Marshall’s house, 6 Madingley Road, now part of Lucy Cavendish College.)

Madingley Road, two miles long from the northern corner of the Backs to the parish boundary with Coton, was only one of three turnpike roads leading westwards out of Cambridge, but it constituted the central spine of the parish and perhaps for that reason experienced more development than the two others (the Huntingdon and Barton Roads) judging from census data. However there was also some limited development along the Backs, and in Newnham.

It will be recalled that at the request of the Vice-Chancellor the Commissioners of Enclosure had awarded all the land available for enclosure immediately west of what became Queen’s Road to colleges, to prevent building by private developers. With one exception, those colleges refrained from offering building leases for over 60 years, the exception being Gonville and Caius. The latter owned, *inter alia*, a strip of old enclosed land of almost 6 acres adjoining Queen’s Road on the west and known as Butcher’s Closes, which extended south from the modern West Road into what is now the Caius Fellows’ Garden on the south side of Sidgwick Avenue. Old enclosed land was excluded from the activities of the Commissioners of Enclosure, and remained intact in the hands of the original owner. Already in 1799, the college had granted a building lease on one acre of this land to William Wilkins Sr, architect and father of the more famous William Wilkins Jr, designer of numerous distinguished buildings in Cambridge and elsewhere, and between 1836 and 1867 it proceeded to grant a further three leases which between them took up all of the western side of Queen’s Road between West Road and what would become Sidgwick Avenue.

In the meantime, from 1835 on, it also developed the southern side of West Road, on land allotted to it at enclosure, with a mixture of building leases and nurseries – and produced another instance of ephemeral houses: some time before 1819, at a time when the land in question was being farmed by William Anderson, four (or perhaps five) cottages were put up at the western end of what eventually became West Road where it met the undeveloped Grange Road. These, together with their small gardens, were leased by Caius in 1819 to the Rev Joseph Powell, for what purpose is unknown. On Baker’s map, by which time the land around them had become Stittle’s Nursery, they show as ‘Powell’s Buildings’, and the parish map of 1831 lists the names of four occupants. But a new lease of 1835 of nearly 5 acres to Henry Green, nurseryman, refers to the inclusion in that lease of the site ‘whereon lately stood four several cottages with the garden ground thereto attached.’ And the cottages are gone, with as little explanation for their disappearance as for their original erection.

Reverting to Queen’s Road, Merton College

Oxford granted two building leases in 1817 and 1819, for the construction of Merton Cottage and Merton House respectively, at the northern end of Queen’s Road where it approaches Northampton Street. Both were built on previously enclosed land belonging to that college, hence excluded from the activities of the Enclosure Commissioners, and perhaps Merton, like Caius, did not feel obliged to cater to the University’s expressed wish to discourage building along Queen’s Road.

Newnham has always been somewhat of an anomaly. From ancient times it had been a satellite of Cambridge, as witness the fact that it had no church of its own until the late 19th century but was divided between three town parishes, St Botolph, Little St Mary and St Giles, as well as Grantchester. Leases, which normally identify properties by parish, tend to refer to ‘Newnham’ as though it were somehow outside the parish system, and it differs from the rest of the area discussed by its long-standing populated area, much of it not in St Giles, and by its complicated chequerboard of ownership of small plots, many of them old enclosures involving a number of colleges as well as private owners.

Mention has been made of St John’s Newnham Farm, whose homestead abutted Newnham Road. Having granted the lessee of the farm, Thomas Whittred, a new lease in 1804, five years later St John’s allowed him to pull down the old farmhouse and erect a new and larger one, which over subsequent decades metamorphosed into a substantial private dwelling known as Newnham House, later sold to Corpus Christi. The adjacent Corpus Christi homestead later also underwent transformation and is now Ashton House.

It was also in Newnham that St John’s in 1864 granted its first 99-year lease in St Giles, to a Fellow of the college, Professor George Liveing. In this as in so many other respects Newnham was an exception to the rule, in this instance to that college’s reluctance to grant building leases in west Cambridge. Liveing’s house, the Pightle on Newnham Walk, now belongs to Newnham College.

Two other developments in Newnham both begun in the 1860s must be mentioned: Summerfield, a row of artisan cottages on private land immediately north of Caius’s playing field, and Newnham Terrace, not in St Giles but immediately across the parish boundary on Newnham Road (or the Arrington Turnpike as it was then), middle-class terrace housing of a type usually found in a more urban setting. But in St Giles itself over the course of the first 65 years after enclosure fewer than a dozen substantial residences (not counting farm houses or public houses) were built, almost all either on private land or land belong to Gonville and Caius College. The other corporate owners (Ely Diocese, Storey’s Charity, Cambridge Corporation and other lesser entities) followed the example of the majority of colleges and refrained from granting building leases.

After 1870 it is possible to detect a subtle shift in attitude, as is shown by a growing number of approach-



es to colleges from individuals inquiring about the availability of building leases in west Cambridge. One of the less well-endowed colleges, Corpus Christi, granted two building leases in 1871, Caius another in 1872 and by 1873 we find Miss Clough, the future Principal of Newnham College, writing to the Bursar of St Johns inquiring about the availability of land on Madingley Road belonging to that college 'which I believe it is intended to lease out for building.' This foreshadows the building boom up to the First World War, which saw the erection of Newnham College, Ridley Hall, Selwyn College and several other institutions subsequently linked to the University, as well as many private houses, the construction of new roads and the improvement of existing ones.

map 124/P36 with reference book dated 1831 P29/28/2  
Ordnance Survey Map 1888, sheets 40.13, 40.14, 41.1

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## Maps

- Map (undated draft made by William Collisson, Surveyor to the Commissioners of Enclosure) showing pre-enclosure boundaries of properties in the Parish of St Giles, Cambridge with later post-enclosure alterations. CRO map 124/P35  
 Map 'Plan of the Parish of St Giles in the Town and County of Cambridge made on the Inclosure 1804' CRO map Q/RDc6  
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 Map of Property in the Parish of St Giles in Cambridge with the names of the present Occupiers 1832. CRO