Social and Economic Change on Lancashire Landed Estates During the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to the Clifton Estate 1832-1916.

Submitted to the University of Lancaster for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

G. Rogers, B.A.
June, 1981.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to numerous individuals for their help with this thesis. Dr. David Foster first kindled my interest in the subject of Lancashire landed society and, in many important respects, pioneered the way. Dr. Eric Evans, Dr. David Howell and Dr. John Marshall have all offered me invaluable advice at various stages. I owe particular thanks to the staff of Lancashire Records Office and especially to one of its former archivists, Mr. David Smith, who pointed me in the direction of many sources where no other guide existed. Mrs. Pat Barker kindly typed the script.

I owe a special debt to my supervisor, Dr. John Walton, most of all for the high standards he impresses on others and to Mr. John Liddle with whom I have spent endless hours discussing aspects of this work. Finally I owe my greatest thanks to my parents and especially my wife without whose encouragement this thesis would never have been written.

G. Rogers.
June 1981.

TABLE OF CONTENTS: PAGE No.

ABSTRACT

One of the most fascinating aspects of 19th century social history is the adaptability and the capacity for survival shown by many of Britain's landed families. Admittedly they were increasingly moving on to the defensive. By the end of the century their collective social and political influence had undergone considerable erosion and their economic supremacy was under challenge. Indeed, by the end of the Great War, British society was fast moving into an age in which the landed aristocracy was no longer the dominant force it had once been.

Nevertheless, the experience of Britain's landed elite was not one of sudden decline and collapse; rather it took the form of a gradual eclipse. Indeed, if the overall position of landed society in 1914 was considerably weaker than it had been a hundred years before, then it was still remarkably impressive for all that. Certainly the wealth of the aristocratic leadership was even more prodigious than ever. In this respect, industrialisation did not just create a new generation of Lancashire "worthies"; it also reinforced at least the financial standing of long-established families. In fact, by the end of the century, Lancashire's leading magnates - Derby, Sefton, Devonshire, Wilton - were probably the wealthiest single group in the county. In much the same way the profits from business and urban property shored up the position of lesser landowners as well including, for instance, the Blundells, Lathoms, Scarisbricks and Lilfords. However, the end of the 19th century also saw the contraction and, in some cases, the

complete break-up of numerous Lancashire estates. In other words, landowners were travelling down two roads simultaneously during the course of the century - some to survival and others to oblivion.

Within this broad context this study justifies itself in several important ways. So far, little detailed work has been done on Lancashire landowners of the 19th century. This is all the more surprising considering the scale of economic change that took place, in a county where so much of the land was concentrated into relatively few hands. Hopefully, this study will go some way towards filling that gap. More especially, what follows re-examines aspects of landed behaviour; how, in fact, landowners related to the changes that were taking place around them. In certain respects it ventures qualifications to established interpretation and, in doing so, makes extensive use of new evidence.

For the most part the thesis concentrates on the Clifton estate based at Lytham on the south Fylde. There was nothing particularly exceptional about the estate. In many ways it was rather typical, but that is what makes it interesting. It was a large ancestral property running to about 16,000 acres, mainly agricultural in character, yet increasingly caught up in urban and commercial developments. As such, the estate provides a valuable insight into changing social and economic attitudes. The Clifton estate, however, is not considered in isolation. Where appropriate comparisons are drawn with the experience of other landowners within the region and nationwide.

The Clifton estate was one of those estates which failed to survive the rigours of economic change intact. In their case, the size of their landholding and its potential, at least in terms of business diversification, did not grant them immunity against financial disaster. In short, this suggests that much more is involved in explaining the predicament many landowners found themselves in at the end of the 19th century, than just the scale of their property and business assets. This is the theme taken up by the first two chapters. Chapter I looks specifically at landed incomes, the contribution made by non-agricultural sources and, most importantly, the motives which shaped landowners' attitudes towards income and investment. Incomes, of course, cannot be considered in isolation. Therefore Chapter II examines the spending habits of Lancashire landowners and the extent to which they were inclined towards debt-accumulating expenditure. It also suggests that the landowners' spending and their readiness to borrow money reflected their enduring confidence in the stability of their own social and financial position right up to the closing decades of the century.

However, in a county and in an age of rapid economic change, landowners were clearly presented with widening opportunities to exploit the resources of their estates. This is the theme for Chapter III, which deals with estate management and the respective roles of landowner and agent in managing and directing business affairs. It again poses the question as to the extent to which landowners in general, identified with the complexities and purposes of 19th century business management.

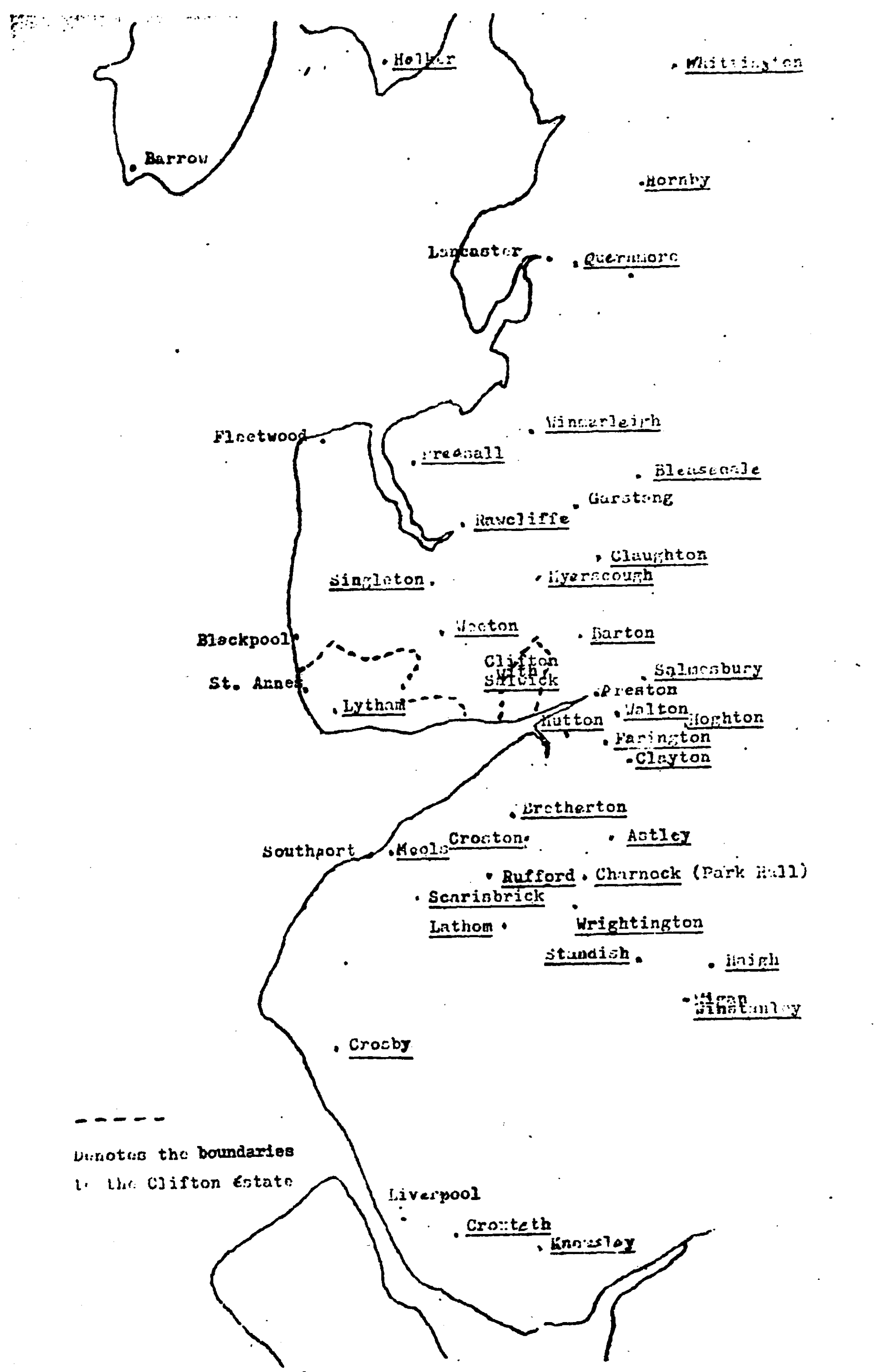
Chapter IV is concerned with agriculture and agricultural improvement and it brings together several themes which run through this study. Despite widening non-agricultural investment most landowners were still financially dependent on their agricultural property; on a personal level, many identified most strongly with land and agriculture; and they were sufficiently sure of themselves to embark on ambitious and expensive improvement schemes throughout the second and third quarters of the century.

Chapter V therefore examines the impact of the "great agricultural depression" on landowners who had spent heavily on their estates, who were still largely dependent on income from agriculture and who were also faced with the problem of mounting debt in a period when their revenue from farm rents began to stagnate and, in some cases, even contract. In this respect, it is argued that the late 19th century depression had much more serious social and financial repercussions for Lancashire landowners than has previously been supposed.

Chapter VI focuses more sharply on the Clifton estate for the purpose of showing how changing economic and financial circumstances in the closing decades of the century eventually brought about a fundamental shift in the way in which urban property on one estate was both regarded and managed.

The closing chapter has a strong social theme to it. It first of all explains that the estate was not just a financial unit but that it had an important social dimension to it as well. In other words, for much of the 19th century the landed elite, through their territorial dominance, exercised a powerful hold over social, political and administrative life outside the county's industrial towns. Yet, by the end of the period, their collective power had been seriously undermined because of their weakened financial position, the fast diminishing relevance of their social role and the intervention of statutory authority. As such, Lancashire's landed society survived into the new century but in a very much different guise.

The location of Lancashire Estates mentioned in this Study.



CHAPTER I

LAND, LANDOWNERS AND LANDED WEALTH

In September 1842 James Fair, land agent to the Clifton estate, wrote a glowing letter to the family solicitors, Wilson and Rawstorne. It expressed a buoyant mood of confidence. An extensive scheme of agricultural improvements was under way, rents were fully paid up, there was the prospect of further territorial expansion in the offing with the purchase of Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood's neighbouring Great Marton estate, and a respectable surplus had been deposited with the bankers.(1)

On the 6th February, 1886 Thomas Fair, who had succeeded his father in managing the Clifton estate, received a letter from the same family solicitors. This letter, however, forecast a very different future. "With £400,000 charged on the estates producing £36,000 per year in addition to £5,000 a year annuities and the present agricultural depression", it was pointed out, "there is little inducement to buy.....But, if W. Gladstone has not in the meantime distributed a large area among the labourers, it will be a great question, when young Clifton comes of age, whether you ought not to sell".(2) It was a rhetorical question to which there could be only one real answer. Property had to go if the estate was to be rescued from the brink of bankruptcy. Great Marton was the first portion to come under the auctioneer's hammer and the wheels were set in motion in the break-up of a great landed estate.

I

This picture of contrasting fortunes is significant for a number of reasons. Clearly the end of the century marked a crucial turning point in the financial circumstances of one of Lancashire's leading landed families. But, more importantly, it also marked a shift in the way in which the resources of the estate were to be managed. From 1900 onwards the Cliftons were principally regarded as urban landlords and developers. In the mid-nineteenth century however, their reputation had been based on their ancestral ownership of extensive green acres and of a model agricultural estate. In other words, a radical economic re-think took place as the 19th century approached its end. The realisation dawned that agricultural land did not pay either financially or socially as it once had. Instead, investment of a completely different kind, notably building investment, offered greater rewards and greater security. Above all, it was finally appreciated that the estate could be rescued from imminent insolvency only through ruthless accounting and business methods.

The events of the 1880s and the onset of the "great agricultural depression" dealt a massive blow to landed confidence. Of course, the Clifton estate, like many others, had run up against financial difficulties and problems in the past. There had been previous occasions when farm rentals had faltered and arrears had begun to pile up. Such was the case in the late 1840s and early 1850s, or following the bad winter of 1868; but then landowners and agents had reassured themselves that agriculture was basically sound and the problems would cure themselves in time. If, for instance, current income suffered a shortfall then the estate could usually borrow its way out of trouble.

Not so in the 1880s. The crisis then was of a fundamentally different order. As farm rents began to stagnate and mounting arrears and abatements began to deplete current income the burden of debts and family settlements, so confidently accumulated in the past, now became an unbearable millstone. In short, the Cliftons and, one suspects, many other landowners became trapped in a vicious circle from which they found it impossible to escape without resort to drastic measures. Income was inadequate to satisfy current expenditure. Falling land values made it difficult to placate existing creditors let alone find new ones who were prepared to advance more money to cover mounting deficits. How then was the expensive life-style of a leading county family to be maintained? How were new sources of income to be generated and how was this to be achieved without incurring still greater debt?

But the change of emphasis from an agricultural to an urban interest did not take place overnight. And a principal theme of this introductory chapter is the way in which many landowners and agents clung tenaciously to deep-seated notions about the primacy and respectability of land as against non-agricultural ventures, even on estates where non-agricultural opportunities were embraced early and eagerly. In the case of the Cliftons it took the desperate days of the late 19th century depression to awaken a keener interest in the urban side of their estate. They could no longer afford to let the agricultural domain take precedence in the way it once had. Instead they now handled their Blackpool property with a more lively commercial awareness. The expansion of Lytham and the new resort at St. Annes was seen as vital, whereas previously it had seemed that the estate was not unduly disturbed by the fact that both towns had struggled along in the shadow of burgeoning Blackpool and Southport.

Until the 1880s, such a drastic course of action involving the sale of land and a shift in business priorities would have been unthinkable. And this suggests that the business behaviour of a great landowner was not always governed by an overriding concern for profit. Just as important in many cases were considerations of a social nature. As Professor Spring has pointed out in connection with the 19th century aristocracy, "much of what they did, and especially what they said, cannot be expressed quantitatively."(3) But impressions of landowners' attitudes towards the getting of wealth have been gathered largely from statistical sources and biographical sketches. On this basis Professor Ward, in his study of Ayrshire landowners, concluded that he was dealing with men of commendable versatility. Their collective experience, he pointed out, "cut across the whole spectrum of political, social and economic activity - as farmers, politicians, mineral developers, transport pioneers, patrons, businessmen, harbour builders, socialites, scholars, sportsmen, merchants and military men."(4) Should we draw the same conclusions about Lancashire landowners? After all, it is difficult to think of a Lancashire town under industrial transformation or a railway line or canal under construction which did not have any connection with an established landed family. Or is this too simplistic a view? Was there, in fact, a wider spectrum of motive and attitude among landowners? Certainly

Professor Mingay came to the conclusion that it is impossible to generalise about the behaviour of landowners. They followed so many individual routes which, for him, reflected their bewildering "inadequacy.....before the mounting manifestations of the new industrial society".(5) Some clearly embraced new business opportunities with all the enthusiasm of middle-class entrepreneurs. Some may have simply got caught up in the tide of economic expansion. But when we look at such cases, "would it not be a mistake", as Professor Thompson has indicated "to conclude that the simple fact of a spread of economic interest necessarily made an aristocrat feel any identification with industrialists or sympathy with middle-class objectives?"(6) Moving to the other extreme, still more may have deliberately turned their backs on the pursuit of maximum profit, even when presented with the opportunity, content to lead the life of "country gentlemen" divorced from any participating association with the world of commerce and industry.

Nevertheless, at first sight it would appear that numerous landowners, both resident in Lancashire and non-resident, reaped considerable financial rewards from industrialisation. Bateman's monumental catalogue of British landowners and estates, despite all its recognised shortcomings and inaccuracies, has at least enabled historians to identify landowners with non-agricultural interests and provided a measure of the wealth to be derived from business sources.(7) For not a few the fortunes to be made from even a modest number of well-placed acres were of staggering proportions.

The large landowners, particularly in the southern parts of the county, were clearly better placed to take advantage of 19th century industrial and urban development. The fortune of the Earls of Wilton, for instance, stemmed from the establishment of a separate branch of the Egerton family at Heaton Hall, north Manchester, in 1801 and from the purchase of numerous properties in the neighbouring townships of Prestwich, Crumpsall and Radcliffe during the first quarter of the 19th century.(8) Thereafter, the explosion in urban and mining development established the Wiltons as one of the wealthiest families in the county. In 1882 their agent claimed that the estate was worth £65,000 a year though the account books suggest that this was a somewhat exaggerated figure. Nevertheless, there can be no mistaking the impressive climb in rentals throughout the century. In 1825 current income amounted to £19,100 p.a. By 1873/4 this figure had swollen to £41,100 and most parts of the estate had at least doubled their revenue. The rate of increase then slackened though the accounts showed a very healthy gross income of almost £64,000 in 1894.(9)

Urban estate also underpinned the Scarisbrick fortune. By any standards their wealth was of aristocratic proportions. Moreover, Charles Scarisbrick was one of Lancashire's most substantial landowners. At the time of his death in 1860 he owned in excess of 30,000 acres stretching across North Meols, Scarisbrick, Eccleston, Wrightington, Wigan, Halsall and Downholland. But his most crucial acquisition was the land he purchased in 1842/3 which formed the heart of Southport's future development. It was the Southport property which Scarisbrick settled on his three illegitimate children and it was they who became beneficiaries of their father's foresight and business acumen. On the eve of his death building land on the North Meols estate produced only £685 whereas farm rents produced over £7,500. Yet, from the 1870s onwards ground rents moved upwards at astonishing speed and accounted for the greater part of the £22,270 income which was drawn in 1902. This growth in income is all the more remarkable when set against the fact that between 1884 and 1908, £261,000 worth of property in the town was sold off.(10)

Of course no brief survey of aristocratic wealth in the county would be complete without a mention of the Earls of Derby. Their immense wealth was connected with spiralling urban rents, particularly in the later 19th century. Certainly there were landowners like the Dukes of Richmond, Buccleuch and Sutherland who could boast of larger estates but none were more valuable than the 70,000 acres which the 17th Earl inherited in 1908. Derby's agricultural estates alone were worth over £163,000 in 1876. But, by the turn of the century, the rents from residential and commercial property in Liverpool, Manchester, Salford, Bolton and Bury had pushed up the Earl's gross income to the princely sum of £300,000 a year.(11) Similarly, the industrial expansion of Barrow-in-Furness produced even more spectacular results for the Dukes of Devonshire. In view of the family's financial predicament in the late 1850s it could not have come at a more opportune moment. Then, interest charges on current debts were soaking away 40% of their gross annual income. By contrast, dividend payments from Barrow's ship-building yards, steel company and the Furness Railway pushed up estate income from £120,00 p.a. in the 1850s to a peak of £310,000 in 1874 and, consequently, the costs of servicing debt fell back to 16% of the annual return.(12) Mining and property interests were also the making of the Earls of Lilford. Their fortune was founded on the industrial development taking place on their mid-Lancashire estates of Atherton, Westhoughton and Leigh, where rentals more than doubled between 1836 and 1892.(13)

These landed notables were not exceptional in having sizeable and strategically well-situated estates which enabled them to take full advantage of industrialisation and urbanisation. They had their equivalents outside Lancashire. The Earls of Calthorpe, for instance, whose aristocratic life-style and influence was sustained, not by green agricultural acres, but by middle-class demand for houses on their urban estate at Edgbaston.(14) And, just as Barrow restored the financial health of the Dukes of Devonshire, South Wales coal and the growth of Cardiff's docks did much the same for the Earl of Bute's. In 1822 Bute's Glamorgan estates produced an income of £9,400 and that was almost entirely made up of agricultural rents. By 1868 gross receipts stood at over £109,500 and farm rents accounted for only 7.6% of that figure.(15) The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres of Haigh Hall, Wigan, derived an income of £39,250 from the surrounding coalfields. Yet his coal receipts pale into insignificance when set against the £113,800 which the Duke of Hamilton was reputed to be making from his own coal interests at the end of the century, or the Duke of Northumberland's £82,450.(16)

Moreover, the financial benefits of industrialisation reached down to the lower ranks of landed society. Just a few Lancashire acres where mining or building developments were taking place could mean all the difference between modest comfort and prestigious wealth or between success and failure in a landowner's efforts to hoist himself up the ladder of county society. The rise of the Weld-Blundells, squires of Ince-Blundell Hall near Liverpool, stemmed from the growth of one of Southport's most fashionable suburbs on their Birkdale property. In 1859 ground rents accounted for an insignificant £435 a year out of a total yearly income of £9,500. By 1876 the Weld-Blundell estates were said to be worth £60,000 p.a.(17) Residential building in Southport also took place on Charles Hesketh's North Meols property. Once again urbanisation revived the flagging financial fortunes of a small landed family. In 1842 debt put such heavy pressure on current income that only £871 was left out of a total rental of £3,900 once service charges and outgoings had been met. The following year Hesketh was forced into selling a part of his Southport property to the Scarisbricks, yet the remaining portions yielded a return which Hesketh could never in his wildest dreams have imagined or anticipated. By 1905 the Hesketh's were largely urban landlords, the owners of a highly lucrative asset and the beneficiaries of a £12,500 income.(18)

Urban rents and coal royalties in particular could produce spectacular rewards for a handful of landowners whose estates were small yet fortuitously located. The Cotham family, for instance, were small landowners from Claughton on the Fylde. Whereas their agricultural rents showed little significant improvement during the 19th century, their coal interests realised over £20,000 over a twenty year period after 1847. When the coal ran out they no doubt found some compensation in their St. Helens ground rents which increased from £1,670 in 1870 to £4,114 by 1898.(19) Likewise, between 1860 and 1880, ground rents and mining royalties swelled the income of the Anderton family who owned a number of scattered properties in Chorley and surrounding villages.(20) Leasehold property in Chorley also accounted for more than half of the income produced by the Cunliffe-Grundy estates.(21) Coal on William Bankes' 2,400 acre Winstanley estate brought him over £14,100 p.a. By contrast, his 69,000 acres in Ross-shire produced a rental of just £2,463 in 1883. Others did better still. James Deakin of Warrington Park, Launceston, would have remained a modest west country squire had it not been for the £16,000 a year he received from the one-hundred acres he owned in Lancashire. Mine rents in Lancashire provided John Leigh with £25,000 p.a. and allowed him to live in comfort on his small Kent estate. But the accolade must surely go to John Shaw whose one Lancashire acre was said to be worth £2,263 p.a. which was half what his 9,000 acres in Cheshire and Ross-shire could produce.(22)

Clearly this is an impressive catalogue of achievement to which other success stories could be added. Yet it would be easy, and at the same time, misleading to generalise out of these bald statistical statements, suggesting that landowners generally adopted a coldly commercial attitude in the matter of making money or that the whole of landed society in the county was carried along, in one way or another, on a flood tide of industrial and urban profits. Firstly, that would be to exaggerate the contribution which non-agricultural investments made to the total incomes of landed families. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it would deny the influence of other considerations, largely of a social nature, which clearly played some part in how individual landowners regarded business and the management of their estates. For instance, they did not all share Scarisbrick's strong entrepreneurial impulse by seizing on whatever means came to hand of increasing personal income. In some cases other matters may have outweighed the pursuit of profit. Individual landowners still set great store by the fact that, first and foremost, they were the trustees of ancestral properties and the guardians of established traditions and values. Land and agriculture were what had mattered in the past and still continued to do so. An agricultural estate carried pre-eminent status, influence and social esteem in a way in which commerce and industry did not. So, as long as land was able to provide, however modestly, as long as it continued to matter socially and politically, then landowners might be persuaded to reject business options - at least those which involved a radical shift in emphasis away from land - preferring to fill the more conventional role of owners of the soil. What is clear is that there is a need to part the statistical veil and to get at the personalities who lie behind it. Accordingly, the following case studies attempt a deeper insight into the complexity of motives which shaped landowners' attitudes in the financial management of their estates. Only then can a more realistic composite picture be built up.

II

At first sight it would again be easy to assume that the Cliftons were swept along on the same rising tide of business opportunity. During the course of the 19th century they became linked with a number of ventures, including the commercial operations of the Ribble Navigation Company and principally resort development at Lytham st. Annes and Blackpool. Yet this should not obscure the fact that, above all, the Cliftons were the ancestral owners of one of Lancashire's largest agricultural estates; 16,000 acres stretching across the south Fylde from Clifton-with-Salwick in the east to Lytham in the west. Moreover, it is this single fact of ownership which carried the greatest influence and,as will become apparent, only gradually and as financial pressures built up did attention move away from land and agriculture to focus on other and potentially more lucrative sources of income.

When Thomas Clifton came into his inheritance in 1832 there were strong financial reasons as well as social imperatives why he personally looked no further than the customary agricultural rent-roll to sustain his family's position. There were no crippling family debts to clear or past extravagances to put right which might have impelled him to hurriedly diversify his business interests.[(23)] In fact the Clifton's financial position was healthy enough. The current account was buoyant and there seemed to be every prospect that income would continue to improve. In 1832 farm rents from the 16,000 acre estate contributed £18,000 out of a total income of £24,862. Kirkham tithe and rack rents, leased from Christ Church Oxford, made up £5,550 of the remainder. Unfortunately, information on the level of expenditure is somewhat limited, but it is clear that the debt burden at this stage could not have made any threatening inroads into current income. Interest payments amounted to £4,152 of which at least two-thirds went towards servicing the unavoidable costs of the £65,000 which Thomas Clifton's father settled on the younger members of his family. Even so, taken together, interest charges, family allowances and annuities totalled £7,403, which left a very wide margin indeed to cater for the costs of maintenance and improvements on the estate.(24)

By any standards, then, Thomas Clifton enjoyed a very respectable income, which had been inflated by rising agricultural prices in the late 18th and early 19th centuries when farm rentals had kept pace with the movement in prices. Rents were generally 40-50% higher in 1790 compared with their levels in mid-century. During the Napoleonic wars further increases of up to 100% were not uncommon as growing market demand, mediocre seasons and an inelastic supply system forced up the price of agricultural produce and with it farm rentals.(25) The Cliftons shared handsomely in the upwards spiral in rents. In 1748 their rent roll amounted to £2,230 p.a. In 1785 it stood at

£3,049 but receipts had expanded to £15,167 by 1812 and £21,245 in 1822.[26]

In part this sharp increase in income can also be explained by the reorganisation of farm units, the revision of a number of life-leases and the reclamation and enclosure of land on Lytham, Salwick and Layton mosses.[27] Moreover, the Cliftons has been busy in the land market which, in the early 19th century, was as buoyant as agricultural rents, and favoured the substantial landowner over the smaller owner-occupier. The modest freeholder had limited scope for implementing improved farming practices, he was less resilient in the face of the occasional bad harvest, and inflated land values, allied to the persistent persuasion of a much bigger neighbour, made selling up a highly attractive proposition.[28] So, from the early decades of the 19th century, the Cliftons embarked on a relentless campaign to expand and consolidate their territorial influence. There is no doubt that the capital was there. Much of it could be found out of the current account in view of the fact that virtually every year seemed to produce an impressive cash surplus. The Cliftons were therefore able to forge ahead with two purchases in 1804, amounting to 200 customary acres, which virtually completed their hold over Little Marton.[29] At the same time pieces of Great Marton were gradually nibbled away as land in that parish came on to the market. Immediately after 1815 attention switched to neighbouring Warton with the acquisition of a string of properties whose former owners clearly found Clifton money more attractive than the uncertainties of the post-war recession. By far the largest purchase here was the Starky-Hopwood estate bought at a cost of £8,440 in 1818. It marked the onset of a spending spree in Warton which did not cease until 1885.(30)

The period after 1815 did not mark a sudden collapse in fortunes. They were not years of "general and persistent gloom" as was once thought.(31) Admittedly, landowners had to deal with moments of crisis in the early 1820s and again in the late 1840s and early 50s. But, taking the period 1815 to 1845, rents generally remained level and, in some instances, showed a steady increase. The only severe years were 1821-3 when the cold winds of delation were blowing. On the Clifton estate arrears shot up to £8,422 by 1821 and rent reductions of between 20 and 25% were made over the following two years. Yet, by 1825, arrears had been substantially reduced and rents were returning to their former level.(32) Rent movements on other estates followed a similar pattern. Receipts on the Derby, Sefton and Hesketh estates had fully recovered by the late 1820s though it would seem that the improvement in rents on the smaller estates was delayed until the mid-1830s.(33) . Nevertheless, in a thirty year period after 1815, the farm rents belonging to many landowners continued to move steadily upwards and some recorded considerable increases. The Clifton rent-roll rose by some 24% between 1813 and 1832, and this was far from being untypical. Increases on the Derby estate amounted to 27% over a similar period and the Earl of Sefton's farm income grew by 20%. Lesser landowners also saw their rents increase though not by the same proportion. Over the shorter period of 1819 to 1835 there was an increase in rentals of 17% on the Blundell estate at Crosby and the Ffaringtons' at Worden Hall, Leyland.(34)

This general increase in gross rentals cannot be put down to the engrossment of estates or urban development. The land which the Cliftons purchased in Marton and Warton certainly helped to inflate their rent-roll. But the income they derived from property in Lytham - thatched cottages in the main - would have been a marginal significance. For the most part, therefore, their improved income stemmed from the steady rise in farm rents across the agricultural estate.(35) The Derby accounts confirm the same trend. All but one of Derby's six agricultural estates in west Lancashire produced an increase in rents from 1815 to 1835, and additional property purchased over the same period will account for only a tenth of the overall 27% rise in receipts.(36) And on the other estates where increased rents are recorded there is no evidence of additional land purchases having taken place.

There was no compelling reason, then, why a landowner like Thomas Clifton should have shifted his attention towards other sources of income. Agriculture paid. The returns were far from being dazzling but they were sound and respectable. Moreover, there is a more general danger of exaggerating the contribution which business and industrial investment made to landed incomes even in Lancashire. Very few landowners, in fact, were in a position to forego their agricultural estates. Lord Derby is exceptional in the way in which urban and industrial profits assumed an increasing proportion of his total income. In any case it was almost inevitable that the character of Derby's income should change, without any positive encouragement on his part, considering the exceptional size and the strategic location of his estates. Even so, despite the fact that urban rents leaped ahead during the first decades of the 19th century, they accounted for only 32% of Lord Derby's total rentals in 1835.[37] Moreover, apart from the great mine owning and urban landlords like the Derbys, Seftons, Wiltons and Devonshires, most Lancashire landowners did not derive a consistent or even an impressively high income from their non-agricultural investments.

Admittedly, the return on urban property could be spectacular but it was often slow to mature. Other business concerns also produced results which may not always have come up to initial expectations. For instance, investment in railway projects must have been a largely unproductive exercise. Too many lines, built at too great a cost and competing for too small a volume of traffic must at best have meant low dividends for investors dazzled by the railway euphoria of the 1840s. The London and North-Western was one among many companies which briefly bathed in the prosperity of the mid-Victorian boom and then slid into deep recession by the late 1870s and 80s as working costs began to swamp receipts.[38] Consequently, William Garnett of Quernmore incurred heavy losses on virtually all his considerable railway investments from the mid-1850s onwards.[39] The Cliftons themselves were connected with several local lines. They made sizeable sums out of the sale of land to the railway companies but shares and stock amounted to little more than a liability. "Risky and unnecessary" summed up Thomas Clifton's verdict on the estate's involvement.(40) Dividends paid by the Preston and Wyre Railway Company, who built the lines to Fleetwood, Lytham and Blackpool between 1840 and 1846, were poor apart from the years when the railway was actually under construction.(41) True to form, the Lytham-Blackpool line, built between 1861 and 1863, was bedevilled by excessive costs and unanticipated debts. The estate had to come to the Company's rescue on two occasions, 1864 and 1877, by buying further stock and shares and suffered a financial loss in doing so.(42)

Industrial investment was not always any less hazardous. Many Lancashire estates had connections with mining, yet very few landowners could afford to regard coal as the mainstay of their incomes. Whilst the rewards could sometimes be impressive, they were often short-lived. In fact, industrial gross revenues probably rose faster than purely agricultural incomes up to the late 1870s, but they also fell faster thereafter. This was the experience of landowners in Staffordshire where a sharp fall in industrial income set in by the early 1880s.(43) The same trend is apparent in Lancashire and it had the effect of bringing the central importance of farm rents into sharper focus. The Hesketh of Rufford Hall, for instance, had exhausted their coal revenues by the 1870s. At the same time the trustees to the Anderton estate, near Chorley, made hurried investments in repairs and improvements on the agricultural estate following the collapse of their coal royalties.(44) Similarly, until the third quarter of the century, urban rents and coal royalties in particular had been the making of the Lilfords family fortune. Yet, after 1880, income from these sources levelled out and on occasions pitched downwards. As a result, Lilford's purely agricultural estate at Bank Hall took on much more than just a cosmetic importance. By 1890 farm rents accounted for more than 60% of estate income. Indeed the slide in coal revenues was such that agricultural land, despite all its problems, came to be regarded as sufficiently attractive an investment for Lilford to extend to his Bank Hall estate in the mid-1880s.(45)

Furthermore, not every business venture was paved with gold. The losses could be just as spectacular as the profits. Thomas Clifton was well aware of the misfortune which had fallen on other landowners in their pursuit of sudden wealth. Indeed the desperate position into which Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood fell may well have contributed to Clifton's own lack-lustre attitude towards urban development. In the 1830s Hesketh-Fleetwood committed everything he had to creating a port and resort at the mouth of the River Wyre. His vision of the new town of Fleetwood turned into a personal nightmare. Financing the Preston-Wyre railway and laying out the ground plan of the town brought him debts of £104,000 by 1840. And another £100,000 still had to be found for further railway works. In desperation he had to sell his North Meols estate to his brother, Charles Hesketh, in 1841 though the proceeds would never have been enough to save him from bankruptcy. By the 1850s Sir Peter was reduced to sending begging letters to his brother. Perhaps he had no other choice since Fleetwood's ground rents, amounting to only £877 in 1857, did not even go half way towards meeting interest charges on outstanding debts.[46] Mining also had its landed casualities. The Braddylls of Samlesbury Hall are a case in point. They ran up debts totalling £271,000 by 1847. Part can be explained by inept and fraudulent management and by the costs of building an imposing second seat at Conishead Priory in Furness. But by far the heaviest spending went into numerous collieries which mostly generated debt rather than profits. Consequently, Braddyll was compelled to sell off most of his estates culminating in the auction of Samlesbury Hall itself in 1862.[47]

Finally, it is worth pointing out that even among landowners who had a growing dependence on non-agricultural sources of income, there were those for whom no element of choice was involved. No positive decisions needed to be taken. Not every landowner had the same room for manoeuvre as the Cliftons or the Scarisbricks in deciding where to concentrate priority and resources. Even if they had, one wonders just how many would have acted with quite the same business acumen as Charles Scarisbrick, who tried his hand at a wide variety of ventures - paint-works, lead and slate quarries, canals, railways - and who finally settled the once barren wastes of Southport on his three illegitimate children on the shrewd assumption that urbanisation would provide them with a handsome return in the future. More became involved in industry or property speculation simply because this was their only route to wealth and fortune. The Earls of Calthorpe, for instance, derived an aristocratic fortune to match their aristocratic status from Birmingham's select residential suburb of Edgbaston. But for them, as their agents sensibly recognised, Edgbaston was the Calthorpes' only asset of income producing potential.(48)

The same was true of the Earls of Lilford. Until they inherited the extensive Bank Hall estate in 1860 the Lilford's landholdings were of a modest size. It was their good fortune, however, that their properties in Atherton, Westhoughton and Leigh were located on the coalfields of central Lancashire and that they also straddled what became the railway crossroads of the county.(49) In much the same way the Weld-Blundell family enthusiastically welcomed the interest which building speculators took in the agriculturally unproductive wastes of Formby and Birkdale. For them it came as a miraculous change in circumstance. In 1810 Charles Blundell had inherited the poorer part of the family's ancestral estates. As a result of bad feeling between himself and his father 6,000 much more valuable acres in Lostock, Anderton, Adlington and Horwich had been settled on Charles' two sisters. Charles himself was left with one valuable estate at Ince-Blundell, the barren sands along the coast and a significantly inferior income. Little wonder, then, that Blundell's successors readily took on the role of urban landlords.(50) Finally, the Earls of Wilton on their north Manchester estates could not have withstood the spreading tide of urbanisation. From the outset much of their property was characterised by terraced housing not green pastures.(51)

Landowners responded to widening sources of income in a variety of ways. It was by no means inevitable that they should have snatched at every business opportunity that came their way. Clearly there were some who did. Scarisbrick and Hesketh-Fleetwood are two examples of landowners who took the positive entrepreneurial decision to depart from a dependency on the customary agricultural rent-roll. Yet for others like Lords Lilford and Wilton, as was surely the case with the Earls of Calthorpe at Edgbaston, from a strictly financial point of view there existed no real alternative to encouraging industrial and urban development, if they were to equip their aristocratic titles with wealth of aristocratic proportions. Finally there was the broad band of landowners who became caught up, not unwillingly, in the business and commercial worlds though not to the extent that it devalued the social or financial importance they attached to their agricultural interests. Clifton and Lord Derby were just two among many who, as Professor Thompson has pointed out, "were fortunate enough to possess mineral and urban resources (and) exploited them or allowed them to be exploited simply because it was the sensible thing to do." And no more than that.(52)

So far the one other vital influence affecting landowners' attitudes towards exploiting the resources of their estates has been neglected and is worth exploring further. A landowner's concern to improve his income could and did conflict with imperatives of a social nature.

Indeed, at times, there seems to have been a distinct ambivalence about landed behaviour. For some it was clearly the case that land and agriculture mattered to the extent that they were prepared to disassociate themselves from any other kind of investment and even suffer a potential loss of income as a result.

The celebrated Cokes of Norfolk are a perfect example of a landed family for whom the traditional concerns of landownership carried greatest weight. Nothing was allowed to detract from their plans to expand and improve their Norfolk estates. So, to meet the costs involved, their urban properties were sold off between 1786 and 1804. Consequently they casually passed over the rich potential of their Manchester and London properties. The conclusions drawn by Coke's biographer are worth stating in full. "Coke," he wrote, "like other English landowners, used his estates not only as a money-making asset but as the foundation for social prestige and political importance in the county....The search for profit was tempered by the search for deference and esteem, at any rate from the articulate and prosperous sections of rural society."(53) Clearly the same social impulses were very much at work by the middle of the 19th century. This, for instance, was apparent in the way in which Sir James Graham handled his own finances. In his case the crippling costs of servicing large debts and the expense of repair and improvement work on his Netherby estate left him with a net income of only £7,000 a year out of a gross rental of £21,000. It would have made greater financial sense, as his agent pointed out, to have sold a part of the estate, cleared the debts and invested any residue more wisely. But more was at stake than money and no land was ever sold.(54) Similarly, Lord Calthorpe's financial future might have been very different indeed had he given way to temptations to relinquish his urban estate. In 1823 he seriously contemplated exchanging the lucrative potential of Edgbaston for the prestige and influence which 11,000 acres in Suffolk might have bestowed. In fact, it needed all the powers of persuasion which Calthorpe's agent could muster to reassert business priorities over his master's social and political impulses and convince him that suburban Edgbaston would more effectively pay the family's way in the world.(55)

Social considerations, then, could sometimes cloud a landowner's financial perceptions, all the more so in the case of individuals striving to haul themselves into the upper echelons of landed society. Case studies of two Lancashire landowners make this very clear.

Lawrence Rawstorne is an interesting figure because of his family's early connections with urban and industrial development in the county and because Rawstorne himself, sometimes with gay abandon, chose to devote most of his time and energy to pursuing the life-style of a conventional landed figure. By the end of the 17th century the Rawstornes themselves were already well-established among the broad base of Lancashire's landed families. As well as being Lords of the Manor of Farington they also owned estates at New Hall, Rawstenstall, and Hutton Hall, just south of the River Ribble at Preston. From then on a whole series of Rawstornes can be found supplying J.P.s, Deputy-Lieutenants, Colonels in the local militia and active political campaigners in the Borough of Preston.(56)

By 1810 Rawstorne was clearly intent on expanding his territorial influence. He set about purchasing an estate in Penwortham adjacent to his own property at Hutton Hall. His decision to do so was influenced by social ambitions as much as anything else. Scattered properties in Hutton, Preston, Farington and Rawstenstall brought him a comfortable income but collectively they did not afford the social merits of a compact estate. An engrossed estate comprising Hutton and Penwortham would achieve this. However, the costs were high. £92,000 was needed to buy the land and plans to rebuild Penwortham Priory as the new family seat worked out at a further £20,000. Some of the expense was to be offset by selling off detached properties elsewhere including holdings on Farington Moss and in Broughton, houses and building plots in Preston and agricultural land and textile mills in the Rossendale Valley in east Lancashire. He anticipated that these sales would realise £81,000 "leaving a debt of about £30,000 with a rental much increased (and) a compact and improveable estate."

However Rawstorne ran into difficulties from the outset. He failed to find immediate buyers for his urban and industrial properties and current income fell well short of matching the level of expenditure on servicing interest charges on his debts and on making further additions to his newly created estate. But an inadequate income did not deter

Rawstorne from pursuing every opportunity for territorial expansion or from crowning his estate with a sufficiently imposing seat. So part of his Farington land which he originally intended to sell off, was kept in reserve with a view to making an exchange with the Ffaringtons of Worden Hall for their Penwortham property. Moreover Rawstorne's spending did not stop there. In various efforts to consolidate his hold over Hutton and Penwortham £3,150 was spent on acquiring a large farm in Hutton in 1813, £1,100 on land near Penwortham Bridge in 1825 and a further £1,000 on a farm adjacent to Penwortham Priory in 1826. In addition, £1,870 went on extensions and improvements to Hutton Hall, whilst Penwortham Priory itself was closed in 1825 for an extra £8,000 worth of renovations. Of course all this had to be paid for and the money came not from the sale of other property but largely from Rawstorne's own bankers. By 1815 his debts still stood at £97,000. Consequently, taxes and interest charges swallowed all but £2,636 out of a total income of £8,921 and a part of that was needed for repairs and maintenance on the estate.

Nevertheless, as his diary makes clear, problems of income did little to dent Rawstorne's confidence. He lived the life-style of the country gentleman to the full. He spent the greater part of 1812 touring Scotland and studying Scottish farming methods, he carried out the duties of High-Sheriff of Lancashire in 1814 and, in 1816/7 he went on the socially obligatory "Grand Tour" of Europe. He was in an even more buoyant mood on his return. "I am now looking forward," he wrote, "to a change in my situation which is likely to lead to new objects and new interests. The knowledge thus attained confirms me in the resolution of directing my thoughts and actions to those objects of public and private good which belong to the sphere in which I move." But this change in circumstances had nothing to do with business. Rawstorne's solution to his financial problems lay through the time-honoured device of marrying into money. Unfortunately, marriage arrangements never got any further than the lawyer's office, where this potentially lucrative match foundered on the matter of the marriage settlement.

However nothing seemed to change Rawstorne's casual attitude towards managing his finances. By 1820 his income had grown to £10,500 a year but his spending more than kept pace. By 1821 annual expenditure was running at £1,000 above his income. He was compelled to continue his borrowing and so in 1824, he consolidated all his debts into a £100,000 loan from the Bank of England. Yet this did not mark the end to Rawstorne's mounting debts. In 1827 he had to borrow a further £3,000 from his Preston bankers just to cover current interest charges. And in 1832 he had to raise another £5,000 to pay off his sister's portion. It was enough to deflate even Rawstorne's own confidence. "I have quite determined to live off my income," he soberly reflected, "and if I cannot do it in any other way I shall break up and go away next year." But, like Sir James Graham at Netherby, that was always a last and drastic course of action to take. In fact strict accounting and household economies saved the day and, by 1842, there was a significant improvement in his real income to the extent that he was able to boast about having "£1,000 in hand at the bank." Passing years clearly imposed their own restraining hand, and yet Rawstorne never shook off the relentless impulse to enhance his own landed status. One of the last notes in his diary proudly recorded another foray into the land market.(57)

Lawrence Rawstorne's career is closely paralleled by that of William Garnett of Quernmore near Lancaster. Garnett, Like Rawstorne, was motivated by the same ambitious pursuit of land, status and standing in county society to the point that it involved making considerable financial sacrifices. The one major difference between the two men was that Garnett was able to launch himself into the upper tiers of landed society from a much better financial springboard. Yet in Garnett's case the lure of landed status meant a divorce from industrial connections and the loss of an industrial fortune.

Very little is known about William Garnett's background. His father was a Lancaster merchant who dealt in the Jamaican trade on a modest scale. On his death in 1800 his estate, valued at just under £2,000, was divided between his two sons. William Garnett put his inheritance to good use wisely investing it in property in Oldham and Manchester and a variety of manufacturing concerns. He was clearly successful because, in 1835, he took the decision to move into land by taking out a lease on Bleasedale Tower near Garstang. His first major purchase, however, did not take place until 1842 when he bought the nearby Quernmore estate for £29,300. It was a compact property comprising 1915 acres and including a home farm, eight tenanted farms and an imposing mansion erected in 1793 and described by the agent as "fit for the reception and residence of a family and establishment of the first importance."[58] A further £28,000 was spent on buying the copyholds and hereditaments and £1,000 on domestic fittings, library and household furniture. But that was only the start of the vast sums which Garnett lavished on his property. By 1870 a total of almost £207,000 had been spent on the purchase of and improvements to the Quernmore, Bleasedale, Scarthwaite and smaller Catterall estates.[59]

Where had the initial capital come from? It came from the sale of various business investments which were gradually disposed of as land purchase and large-scale improvements dictated - warehouses in Liverpool, shares in a multitude of railway companies, a stake in West Hartlepool Dock Company, bonds and shares in a copper mine and property in Oldham and Manchester. Of course the capital account itself could not have suffered from the conversion of business assets into another valuable asset, namely land. But the same could not be said for the current account. The account books speak for themselves. Prior to his heavy investment in land Garnett's non-agricultural sources produced an income of over £12,000 a year in 1841. However by 1847, three years after the Quernmore purchase, his total income had slipped to £8,342 with rents from his newly acquired estates accounting for 40% of that figure. Moreover, throughout the 1840s and 50s a considerable proportion of current income found its way into maintenance, a programme of farm rebuilding and extensive drainage work.

The sacrifices involved in establishing oneself in landed society were therefore quite considerable, and

Garnett restricted himself to a personal income of £2,000 in 1857. This was a far cry indeed from the £12,000 in interest which his investments had produced in 1841. In effect, Garnett's income found the level of the net return from his agricultural rents which levelled out at about £6,000 p.a. by 1870. However, not all his business investments had been sold. Some were kept in reserve ready to be turned into cash whenever developments on the estate required. Accordingly, when Garnett bought the Scarthwaite and Sowerby estates in 1859 and 1876-8 he found the purchase price of £22,000 from the sale of his West Hartlepool Harbour and Railway stock and various other railway shares. Garnett, in fact, never lost the eye for a good investment. For instance, he put £7,000 into a number of industrial concerns between 1876 and 1878, including sugar and margarine companies; but the objective was always short-term profit for the purpose of reinvestment in his estates rather than long-term income.[60]

Garnett may have suffered a loss of income but, like Rawstorne, he found that the life of a country gentleman had its social compensations. He quickly established a reputation for himself as one of the country's leading agricultural improvers and as a prominent figure at the meetings of the region's agricultural societies.[61] He carried the Conservative cause into the Lancashire towns with which he retained some connections and, for instance, spent over £5,000 on the 1841 elections in Salford. Furthermore, as Garnett's social standing in county society improved his social spending increased accordingly. In 1848 his charitable payments did not extend much beyond charities for the poor and the churches and schools within the vicinity of his own estate. Yet, by 1860, the level of Garnett's subscriptions and donations was twice that of the 1840s. His patronage extended to forty-nine separate causes covering a multitude of sporting events, schools, hospitals, memorials and militia organisations throughout north Lancashire. But Garnett eventually reaped the reward of what was essentially a social investment. He became High Sheriff of the county in 1879.(62)

III

In addition to the obvious financial importance which he attached to his agricultural estates, there were also strong social reasons why Thomas Clifton was anxious to cut a conventional landed figure. With 16,000 acres of some of Lancashire's more fertile acres and a rent-roll to match, the Cliftons were landowners of aristocratic proportions. But what the Cliftons possessed in land they had lacked in social prestige and influence. Until the 19th century the family's Catholic adherence had limited their social reach. It was a deficiency, however, which Thomas Clifton set about putting right by doggedly pursuing every means of thrusting himself to the fore of county society. He was ambitious to turn his estate into a showpiece of agricultural improvement. He renounced the Catholic Church and fervently embraced the Anglican establishment. He dutifully served as a J.P., as a Deputy-Lieutenant and as High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1835. The same social ambitions led him into buying a prestigious London address in Grosvenor Square and country houses in the aristocratically favoured retreats of Rutland and Northamptonshire.(63)

Furthermore, he saw to it that the social momentum was sustained by succeeding generations. His son John Talbot, who inherited the estates in 1851, served as Conservative M.P. for north Lancashire between 1844 and 1847 and became High Sheriff in 1853. The political mantle was eventually taken over by Clifton's grandson, Thomas Henry, who represented the same constituency from 1874 until his death in 1880. But, as was so often the case in the past, judicious marriage alliances were the most effective means of enhancing title, prestige and fortune. Thomas Clifton tried to revive his own family baronetcy which had become extinct in 1694, but with no success. However there was no shortage of aristocratic connections. John Talbot Clifton married into the Earl of Lonsdale's family. His brother, Charles Frederick did somewhat better. He married the Earl of Hasting's eldest daughter and duly came into three substantial estates in Leicestershire, Yorkshire and Ayrshire and eventually the title of Lord Donnington.(64) All told, by 1894, the Cliftons could claim connection by marriage with the families of at least a dozen peers of the realm.(65)

A heightened social awareness will also help to explain the Clifton's sometimes exaggerated response to the social and political issues of their day. For instance, Thomas Clifton's passionate defence of the Protectionist cause in the 1840s rested largely on his broader concern with protecting the interests of the landed order. The "free trade experiment", as he continued to call it, made little impact on his own agricultural interests.(66) Equally, his passionate defence of the Anglican Church and his victimisation of

Catholic and non-conformist groups on his own estate expressed the same unswerving commitment towards preserving the established order.(67) Moreover, the open contempt with which members of the Clifton family regarded Lancashire's "nouveaux riches" reflected their own concern to preserve the dominance and social exclusivity of their own elite. A dispute with a Lytham resident over the terms of his lease led Thomas Clifton to typically remark: "I must confess to some prejudices against the class to which Mr. Hornby belongs - viz. cotton spinners and persons who have the constant habit of driving bargains are always attempting to overreach themselves."(68) Lady Clifton took a very similar line. "We have the misfortune", she complained in 1868 to Thomas Fair, the land agent, "to belong to a county where merchants and wealth are far above, in their own opinion, the aristocracy and the old landed gentry."(69)

The continued emphasis on the agricultural estate, then, reflected a social impulse as well as objective financial judgements. Consequently, in 1836, James Fair was appointed as land agent to the Clifton estate with the specific task of improving the long-term profitability of the agricultural sector. And, in view of the general movement in farm rents, his efforts met with a substantial measure of success. Admittedly, the records are not as complete as they might have been. Few detailed statements of accounts survive for Thomas Clifton's period. Furthermore, capable as James Fair was as an agricultural manager, he had obvious shortcomings as an accountant. The cash books of his agency are a confused and a confusing source, some of the surviving account sheets were left unbalanced and quite a number went unsigned by Clifton himself. Extrapolating from these accounts is made all the more difficult by the fact that receipts from the occasional sale of hay, corn, timber and bricks tended to be lumped with the general farm income. Above all, the accounts themselves rarely distinguish between farm rents and the ground and property rents in Lytham.(70)

Nevertheless, despite these deficiencies in the evidence, there can be no mistaking the upward swing in estate income during the 1830s and 40s. Total income in 1832 stood at £24,862 and climbed to £29,942 in 1848, an increase of roughly 20%(71) Fortunately, a clearer statement of accounts does exist for 1857 which makes it possible to separate out the respective contributions of the Clifton's urban and agricultural estates to their gross income. By the middle of the 19th century Lytham was barely in the embryonic stage of development as a residential resort and, therefore, income from this source must have been limited. In fact, houses and ground rents in Lytham could have accounted for no more than about £2,500 of the family's total annual income, and that would be erring on the generous side.(72) This, therefore, puts the increase in farm rentals in a still better light. Between 1832 and 1848 they showed an increase of 31%. Of course, some allowance must be made for the income which came from the property purchased over the same period, notably in Marton, Great Plumpton and Warton. Even so, the rents from these properties could not have contributed more than 4% of the overall increase in agricultural income. The only area to show a loss in the years after 1832 were Kirkham tithe, glebe and rectory rents - in fact a substantial 50% drop.(73)

These years of steady progress, however, were interrupted by the sharp set-back which followed in the wake of the Corn Law repeal. There had of course been moments of crisis before when arrears had piled up, current income had been put under pressure and difficulties had ensued in meeting financial obligations. But the difference between the recession of the late 1840s and early 50s and that of the early 1820s was that, by mid-century, the estate was also faced with alternative approaches to staging a recovery. In this respect, 1848 proved to be a testing time for the Clifton estate. Landowner and agent were faced with a set of crucial questions. For instance, should land be sold off to reduce the current level of debts? If so, where would the axe fall - on part of the agricultural or urban estates? And the answers to those questions were inextricably bound up with another - which source was likely to secure an improving and dependable income in the future? In any case, to deal with more immediate and pressing problems economies would have to be made. Personal spending would certainly have to be cut back. So would expenditure on the estate. But where? On agricultural improvements or on schemes for urban development or both? These were all crucial questions with profound implications for the future.

In fact the future turned out to be less bleak than either Thomas Clifton or his agent, James Fair, first imagined. But, at the time, prospects seemed daunting enough. By 1848 arrears were beginning to mount, income had fallen back to £27,500, confidence seemed to be draining away and creditors were making alarming threats to call in their loans to the estate.[74] Moreover, by a twist of fate, the onset of the recession coincided with a period of particularly heavy expenditure. Large sums had been spent on house building and amenities in Lytham and on the first instalment of a loan taken out under the terms of the Government Drainage Bill.[75] In addition, there were family commitments to be met. £20,000 had to be found to launch one of Clifton's younger sons on a military career by buying him a company. £3,000 was needed to pay off the debts which Clifton's heir, John Talbot, had run up at his London Bank. And, shortly, £13,000 would be required to clear the portion settled on Clifton's brother, William.[76]

There was very little hope of Clifton borrowing his way out of trouble. Debts already amounted to £190,000 with interest charges absorbing 31% of the gross income in 1848.[77] Moreover, the family's Preston bankers were unlikely to be any more sympathetic to the idea of extending additional loan facilities. An accumulation of annual deficits in the current account between 1845 and 1848 had already produced an overdraft of £30,000.[78]

The only course of action was a programme of selective economies. Family spending was an obvious target. Clifton agreed to sell his London house and take a smaller residence in the country where "a much reduced household would be called for." Closing Lytham Hall would also contribute a certain saving as would a sharp reduction in the level of expenditure on the plantations, game and gardens.(79) But clearly savings in these areas would not add up to very much. Still greater retrenchment was needed. Yet, at the same time, potential income for the future had to be safeguarded.

As far as Thomas Clifton was concerned there was only one choice and that was continuing the programme of improvements on the agricultural estate. "Our way ahead lies through redoubling the efforts of our farmers," he told James Fair, and "measures should be taken for their benefit which will at least raise their spirits and rouse them to continued exertion."(80) His motives were a mixture of paternalistic impulse and stubborn confidence in the basic stability of agriculture. In fact, Clifton's views fell closely in line with his agent's own thinking. What they both had in mind was a more energetic prosecution of the improvement scheme. So, in return for prompt rent payments, Fair promised the estate's tenants new farm buildings and "to put the drainage on such a footing as few landlords would have done."(81) He was as good as his word. The Inclosure Commissioners provided the capital, kilns and machinery were installed for the production of drainage pipes and tiles and, out of current income, additional sums were diverted into the construction of new embankments and water-courses.(82)

Clifton's heir was even more convinced that this was the right course of action to take. He had no doubts that the current difficulties would soon give way to better days provided landowners abandoned protectionism and instead encouraged "economic management and higher productivity". "Land now", he claimed, "is a very different article to what it used to be. It is a raw material from which, like the manufacturers, we are bound to get the greatest return." Rigorous business methods were what were needed - laying small and efficient farms together, getting rid of incompetent farmers and improving productivity through land improvements.(83)

So, as far as possible, investment in agriculture was to be maintained; but that involved making sacrifices elsewhere. Attention immediately focused on Lytham. What little promise Lytham had shown as a popular residential resort had been due almost entirely to Clifton money. The outline features of the town's physical development had been sketched in during the 1840s. In 1840-1 a new and imposing hotel, the Clifton Arms, had been built fronting a marine drive and promenade which were intended to be the site for substantial private residences and lodging houses. The first of these properties were financed and constructed by the estate along East and West Beaches and adjoining terraces. Steps were also taken to remodel the area around the Market Square and Clifton Street and replace the rows of squalid thatched cottages with shops and ornate cottages intended for seasonal occupation.(84)

Yet it was an expensive business with no prospect of an immediate return. Building operations in

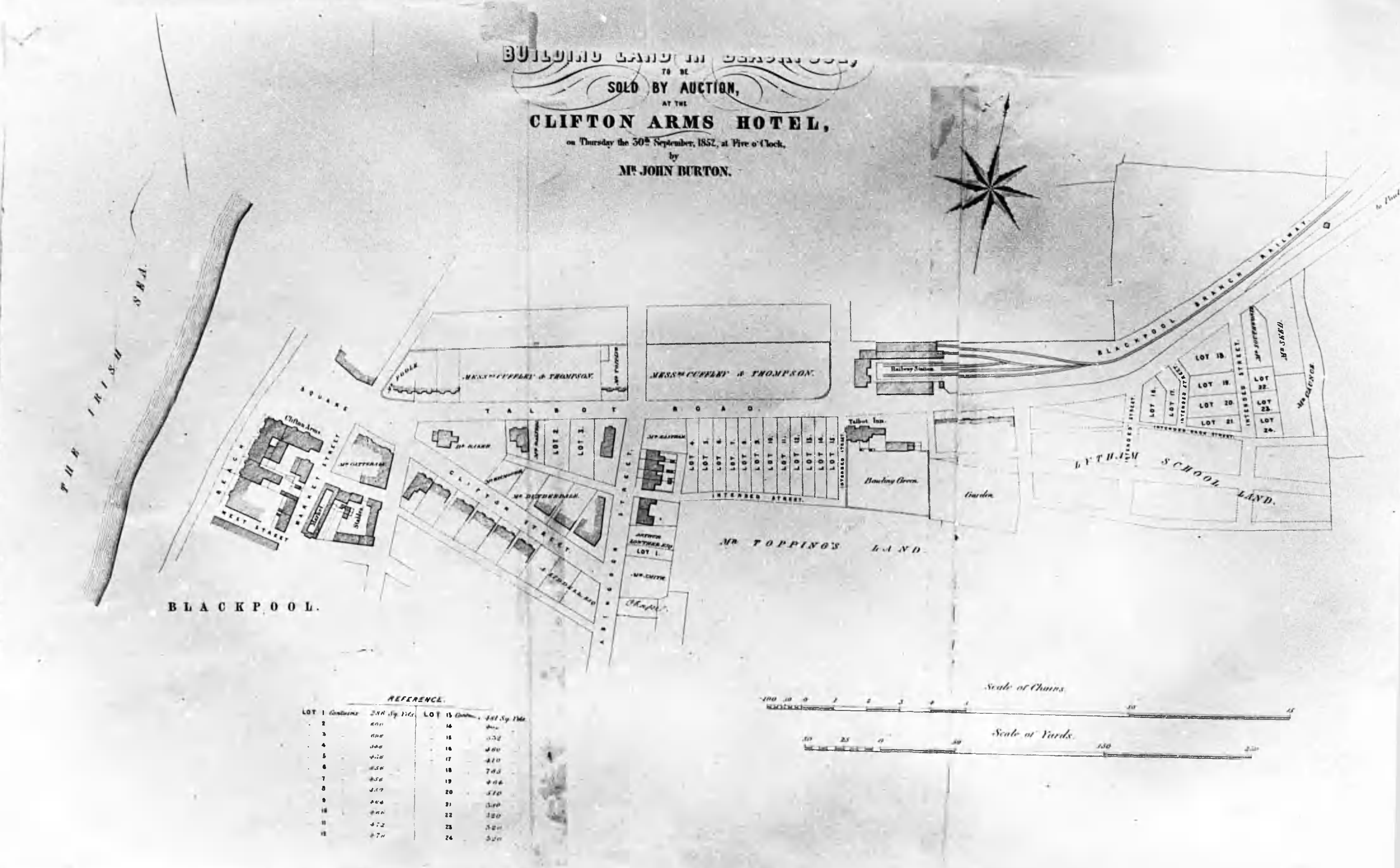
Lytham averaged £6,000 a year between 1845 and 1848. The costs of road making, sewering and opening up building land were met by a floating loan from the Preston Bank though that had the effect of inflating the rising level of debt charged on the estate.(85) Thomas Clifton was unimpressed. "An extravagance we can ill-afford," he remarked, using it to lend further weight to his argument that priority should be given to the agricultural estate.(86) Accordingly, expenditure on building work was cut back to £2,500 by 1850, of which by far the largest proportion went on renewal and repairs to farm buildings.(87)

Retrenchment involved not only selective reductions in estate expenditure but also the disposal of land. Of course none of the settled estates could be touched but that still left a number of properties which could be sold off. The range of choice was really limited to the land which Thomas Clifton had purchased since inheriting the estates in 1832, namely properties in Warton, Westby-with-Plumpton, Marton and Blackpool. Again, as far as Clifton was concerned the choice was never a difficult one to make. The acquisitions he had made in the townships adjacent to the ancestral core at Lytham were important measures of consolidation. Land in Marton, bought from Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood in 1841 crowned efforts to extend the Clifton estate in a coastal belt stretching from Lytham to the outskirts of Blackpool. The following year Clifton had also bought a substantial and largely compact holding, again from Hesketh-Fleetwood, which lay to the east of Blackpool between Great Marton village and Clifton's Layton Hall estate.

About the same time Clifton bought out Lord Derby's interest in Westby-with-Plumpton and, as a result, completed his hold over the township. Similarly, the piecemeal purchase of Warton, as it came on to the market, fell in line with the long-term objective of buying up the whole of the parish. In fact, even in the financially difficult years of the late 1840s and 50s, small purchases continued to be made in both Marton and Warton.(88)

That left the land in central Blackpool which came into Clifton's possession between 1843 and 1846.(89) Initially, however, the intention behind the purchase of the Blackpool property was not to make a speculative killing by putting it back on the market as soon as it had appreciated in value. On the contrary, the strategic location of these plots positively invited development. A later chapter looks more closely at the Cliftons' role as urban planners. Suffice to say at this stage that at first the estate enthusiastically took up plans to develop the site for itself.(90) The new Blackpool North railway station was built on Clifton land, an arterial road was constructed running from the sea-front inland as far as Layton Hall, various building schemes were discussed with a firm of Liverpool architects and almost £3,000 was spent on new roads, a new hotel and a rearrangement of property.(91)

However, by late 1847, such grandiose schemes had been abandoned. There is no doubt that the financial difficulties which the estate had run up against exerted the strongest influence in shaping the decision to sell. Moreover,


BUILDING LAND IN BLACKPOOL,
TO BE
SOLD BY AUCTION,
AT THE
CLIFTON ARMS HOTEL,
on Thursday the 30th September, 1852, at Five o'Clock,
by
Mr. JOHN BURTON.
THE IRISH SEA.
BLACKPOOL.
BEACH
SQUARE
Clifton Arms
MARKET STREET
WEST STREET
Market
Stables
TALBOT ROAD
CLIFTON STREET
ABINGDON STREET
MESSrs CUFFLEY & THOMPSON.
MESSrs CUFFLEY & THOMPSON.
LOT 1.
LOT 2.
LOT 3.
LOT 4.
LOT 5.
LOT 6.
LOT 7.
LOT 8.
LOT 9.
LOT 10.
LOT 11.
LOT 12.
LOT 13.
LOT 14.
LOT 15.
INTENDED STREET.
Talbot Inn.
Railway Station
Bowling Green.
Garden.
Mr TOPPING'S LAND.
LYTHAM SCHOOL LAND.
BLACKPOOL BRANCH RAILWAY
LOT 16.
LOT 17.
LOT 18.
LOT 19.
LOT 20.
LOT 21.
LOT 22.
LOT 23.
LOT 24.
INTENDED STREET.
Mr SEED.
Mr CAUNCE.
REFERENCE.
Scale of Chains.
Scale of Yards.

James Fair reasoned that he had bought cheaply enough and estimated that an immediate auction would net a substantial profit.[92] For, as he pointed out to the Scarisbricks' agent, land in Blackpool, which he had acquired for a fraction of a penny per square yard, managed to sell for as much as 5d. a square yard by "the mere fact of opening streets and roads." [93] Furthermore, at the time, he personally felt that land values in Blackpool had reached their peak.[94] But there were other important considerations which will also explain the Cliftons' withdrawal from an active and direct involvement in the resort's development. Their plans for a high-class residential area would clearly have conflicted with low-status building on neighbouring plots, which threatened the long-term profitability of the scheme. Finally, no emotional wrench was involved in breaking away from a property with which there was little ancestral connection and which was detached from the main body of the estates.

Thereafter, property in Blackpool was looked upon as a safety net to fall back on, a useful convertible asset which could be turned into cash whenever storm clouds gathered or left to appreciate in value as a harvest to be reaped at some future date. Accordingly, land in Blackpool and Layton was put up for auction in 1848, 1850, 1852 and 1856 though not with the success that was expected. The central properties close to the sea-front were disposed of but Layton Hall and substantial plots along Talbot Road were left on the estate's hands. Nevertheless, the land which was sold grossed over £5,300 by 1852 and a further £5,600 was realised from the sale of land to the railway company in Layton as well as in Lytham. And, as the accounts make clear, the money was used to clear some of the debt owed to the Preston Bank and to discharge part of the portions settled on Thomas Clifton's brothers.(95)

Clifton himself was far from unhappy with this arrangement. He preferred to put his faith in the agricultural estate and not in what he personally regarded as speculative ventures. In fact he took much the same blinkered view of Lytham's emergence as a residential resort, and he seemed not to have been unduly disturbed by the town's lethargic growth rate. His own social and aesthetic pre-occupations outweighed any desire for spectacular returns. However welcome additional income from ground rents might have been, unsightly building and, more especially, an onslaught of new residents with alien religions and political sympathies were not. "I have no wish to see hordes of Manchester men descend on us," Clifton informed James Fair in 1846, "We have no need for them."(96)

Of course it would be wrong to assume that, thereafter, the Cliftons and their agents treated the urban estate with indifference. Nevertheless, the difficulties of the late 1840s had prompted a re-examination of investment priorities. After all, most landowners below the level of the great territorial magnates had limited capital resources to play with. Most were not in the position of Lord Bute, for instance, who could well afford to lavish large sums on his agricultural estates out of the burgeoning income provided by royalties from his Glamorganshire coal-fields.[97] As is evident, nurturing building development was an expensive business. But agricultural improvements on the scale envisaged by the Cliftons was even more so. Yet, the decision to maintain and extend investment in agriculture was taken on the reasonable assumption that the agricultural estate would generate a solid, reliable, if unspectactular income. It was also a decision which equated with Clifton's strong social impulses. In this sense he was typical of the "generality of landowners (who) did not share the primary motivation of men making their way in the world to maximise profits."[98]

James Fair's outlook on the future was one of guarded confidence. "Rents are well paid up," he informed John Talbot Clifton in 1852, "and, provided that improvements continue to receive our diligent attention, there is every reason to suppose that they will be improved on."[99] But that must surely have been a long-term view. By 1860 total estate income was little more than £600 above the 1848 figure. The slow growth in agricultural revenue was the result of a combination of circumstances. Any adjustment to farm rents had to take account of tenancy changes, the prevailing level of arrears and, in particular, the estate's leasing policy. The fact that rents barely moved between 1848 and the early 1860s was due not only to the effects of the depression but also to the agent's preference for long and medium term leases; and it was not until about 1860 that the longer lease, which was usually attached to the large farms, gave way to annual agreements.[100]

Farm rents finally came under complete revision in 1866-7. By 1870 total income had climbed to £32,927 and £37,754 by 1880. Yet, taking the period 1850 to 1880 as a whole, by any standards the improvement in income was disappointing and, even then, the increase was concentrated largely in a ten year period between the mid-1860s and 70s. In view of the enormous sums that were spent on repairs and improvements, income from the agricultural estate fell well short of earlier expectations. Farm rents across the estate increased by an average of 11½% between 1865 and 1875. And this figure would have been even less impressive had it not been for the comparatively steeper increases on the farms in Lytham. They alone accounted for more than half of the rise in agricultural income. On other parts of the estate, further removed from the railway and the urban markets of the Fylde coastal towns, increases in farm rents were poor. Between 1866 and 1880 receipts from Westby-with-Plumpton and Clifton-with-Salwick rose by only 6% and 5½% respectively. Moreover, after 1875, the position deteriorated considerably and, by 1880, away from the Cliftons' coastal properties, farm rents were slipping below their 1870 levels.(101)

On the face of it, the urban estate showed little more promise. Some increase in revenue from property and ground rents in Lytham had taken place by 1866, but its apparent importance was inflated by the generally stationary income from agriculture. As a residential resort Lytham was stagnating. Its successful emergence as an attractive middle class resort capable of competing with Southport or even the more select districts of Blackpool depended on the landowner's readiness to maintain investment in amenities and building schemes. But clearly the claim of one Lytham resident in 1860 that "the landowner's best interests (lay) with improving the condition of the town" had fallen on deaf ears.(102) Instead agriculture exhausted the estate's resources. The Cliftons' remaining Blackpool interests suffered from the same basic lack of promotion. Hence, the annual income from urban property increased by only £2,000 between 1866 and 1880 and this figure would have been substantially worse had it not been for the St. Annes Building Company whose lease, taken out in 1874, contributed more than £1,500 of the overall increase.(103)

With the onset of the agricultural depression after 1880 the Clifton estate fell on hard times. Their income from farm rents began to fall away and the time was still some way off when revenue from the urban estate would be healthy enough to take up the slack. The predicament which the Cliftons eventually found themselves in was closely bound up with the way in which they and their agents had chosen to manage the resources of their estate. In their case decisions had been shaped by a combination of motives - by a strong sense of tradition, by social conventions as well as by an over-optimistic view of agriculture's future profitability. But they, along with other landowners mentioned in this study, demonstrate the wide variations which can be found in the ways in which individual landowners responded to the changing economic climate of the 19th century.

Indeed, it may be worth stressing that the picture of economic change on landed estates is as much one of opportunities missed as one of opportunities taken.

However, there is one element missing. The mixed fortunes experienced by landowners at the end of the century cannot be explained exclusively in terms of the breadth and diversity of a landowner's assets or the shrewdness of his managerial decisions. That some estates survived more or less intact and others contracted or broke up altogether was tied up with the spending of wealth as much as with its making. And it was characteristic of many landowners that they spent more than they actually earned.

REFERENCES

(1) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. James Fair to Wilson and Rawstorne, 12 September,1842.

(2) Ibid. Wilson and Deacon to Thomas Fair, 6 February, 1886.

(3) D. Spring, The English Landed Estate in the 19th Century: Its Administration. (1963), pp.51 & 182., Ibid. English Landownership in the 19th Century: A Critical Note, Economic History Review,IX,1957.p.472

(4) J.T. Ward, Ayrshire Landed Estates in the 19th Century, Ayshire Collection, Vol.8. 1967-69. pp.95-143.

(5) G.E. Mingay (1976), The Gentry. p.193.

(6) F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the 19th Century, (1963) p.268; Ibid. Unpublished paper presented at the 1978 C.O.R.A.L. Conference, Himley Hall, Wolverhampton.

(7) J. Bateman, The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland. (1882). Bateman's classificatory system suffers from over-simplification, and it is not always easy to fit individual landowners into his categories. Moreover, Bateman's figures rarely provide a clear definition of the extent of a landowner's non-agricultural property or of the income he specifically derived from such sources.

(8) L.R.O. DDEg. Boxes, 2,4,C,CZ,GI.

(9) Ibid. Account Books 1825-1894; Bateman, op.cit.

(10) Ibid. DDSc. Account Books.

(11) R.S. Churchill, Lord Derby - King of Lancashire (1959),p.95.

(12) D. Cannadine, The Landowner as Millionaire: The finances of the Dukes of Devonshire C.1800-C.1926, Agricultural History Review, XXV, 1977. pp.77-96.

(13) L.R.O. DDLi. Account Books.

(14) Cannadine, "The aristocracy and the towns in the 19th century: A case study of the Calthorpes and Birmingham, 1810-1910". Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford,1975, pp.118-155.

(15) J. Davies "Glamorgan and the Bute Estate 1766-1947", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales,1969. PP.377; 431-454.

(16) Ward, Landowners and Mining, in J.T. Ward and E.G. Wilson, Land and Industry, (1971), pp.67-70.

(17) L.R.O. DDLn. Account Books; Bateman, op.cit. Preston Guardian, 21 May 1892.

References (contd.)

(18) Hesketh Papers, Meols Hall, Southport. I am indebted to J.S. Liddle, who is currently engaged in research into the politics of urban development in 19th century Southport, for kindly providing me with information on the Hesketh Estate.

(19) L.R.O. DDCo. Hardthorn Box.

(20) Ibid. DDx. 1063. 1/1 Anderton Estate Accounts.

(21) Ibid. 2/1. Cunliffe-Grundy Estate Accounts.

(22) Bateman, Op.cit.; D.Foster, "The Changing social and political compositionoof the Lancashire County Magistracy. 1821-51". Unpublished Ph,D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1971, p.73.

(23) Spring, The English Landed Estate in the age of Coal and Iron, 1830-80. Journal of Economic History, XI, and, Op.cit. Economic History Review, IX, 1957, pp.473-6.

(24) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Estate Account Sheets.

(25) Mingay, English Landed Society in the 18th Century, (1963), pp.19-20; 50-52.

(26) L.R.O. DDCl. 1954 Deposit. Estate Rentals 1730-1822.

(27) Ibid. DDCl. 1618. Estate Surveys, 1816.

(28) Mingay, Landed Society Op.cit. ; pp.50-95.

(29) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 22.

(30) Ibid. Box 16; 1966 Deposit. Warton Deeds.

(31) Foster, Op.cit. p.61

(32) L.R.O. DDCl. 1954. Deposit. Estate Rentals.

(33) Foster, Op.cit. pp.64-65.

(34) L.R.O. DDFa. 96/97; DDK. 1806/7-109; DDHc 99/1-45, DDBl; DDCl. 1954 and 1966 Deposits, Estate Rentals.

(35) Ibid. DDCl. Estate Rentals.

(36) Ibid. DDK. 1806/7-109 Estate Rentals.

(37) Foster, Op.cit. pp.74-75.

(38) S.Broadbridge, Studies in Railway Expansion and Capital Market in England 1825-73. (1970), pp.38-66.

(39) L.R.O. DDQ. General Accounts.

References (contd.)

(40) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 26 July 1846.

(41) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325 Box 13. James Fair to Thomas Clifton, August 1845; 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-3.

(42) Ibid. Boxes 11 and 12. Clifton Railway Investments. E. Milne to T.Fair, 25 May 1854; Ledger Book 2.

(43) R.W. Sturgess "The response of agriculture in Staffordshire to the price changes of the 19th century". Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1965, p.573.

(44) L.R.O., DDX. 1063. 1/1

(45) Ibid. DDLi. Estate Rentals, Box 98. J. Selby to Lord Lilford, 20 October, 1886.

(46) Meols Hall, Southport. Hesketh Estate Accounts; Buck & Dickson to Charles Hesketh, 30 December,1857.

(47) L.R.O. DDTw/34; Preston Guardian, 23 June 1883.

(48) Cannadine, Thesis. op.cit. pp.118-155.

(49) L.R.O. DDLi. Boxes 6 and 7.

(50) Preston Guardian, 21 May 1892.

(51) L.R.O. DDEg. op.cit.

(52) Thompson, The End of a Great Estate, Economic History Review, Viii, 1955. p.52.

(53) R.A.C. Parker, Coke of Norfolk, (1975) pp.175-178; 201.

(54) Spring, A great agricultural estate. Netherby under Sir James Graham, 1820-45. Agricultural History, Vol.29 pp.80-81.

(55) Cannadine, Thesis. op.cit. pp.166-172.

(56) Victoria County History of Lancashire. Vol.VI. p.62., H.W. Clemesha, A Hiatory of Preston in Amounderness (1912), p.147; C.Hardwick, History of the Borough of Preston, (   ), p.594.

(57) L.R.O. The Diary of Lawrence Rawstorne, 1810-49.

(58) Ibid. DDQ. Bleasdale Papers.

(59) Ibid. DDQ. Acc.No. 1514. Estate Accounts.

(60) Ibid.

(61) W.Garnett, A Prize Winning Report on Farming in Lancashire, Preston, 1849.

References (contd.)

(62) L.R.O. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Accounts.

(63) J. Foster, Pedigree of Lancashire Families, 1873; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Deposit. Ledgers 1 and 2.

(64) Foster, Ibid. Victoria County History. op.cit.

(65) Ibid. Lytham and Kirkham Times, 1 December 1894.

(66) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 13. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 1 May 1850.

(67) Ibid. Rc.Ly. 7/5. Thomas Clifton to Rev.J.Walmesley, 23 February 1850.

(68) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 6 October 1848.

(69) Ibid. DDCl. 1207. Lady Clifton to Thomas Fair, July 1866.

(70) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Estate Rentals.

(71) Ibid.

(72) Ibid. Acc.No. 2831. Box 4. Lytham Rentals 1857.

(73) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Statement of Accounts 1845-48.

(74) Ibid. Preston Bank to James Fair, 22 September,1848.

(75) Ibid. Statement of Accounts 1845-48; Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 1 January 1848.

(76) Ibid. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 1 January and April 1848; E.Slaughter to R.Starkie-Shuttleworth 11 October 1849.

(77) Ibid. Statement of Accounts 1845-48.

(78) Ibid.

(79) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Box 11. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 22 December 1849.

(80) Ibid.

(81) Ibid. James Fair to Tenant Farmer,December 1845.

(82) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Estate Accounts 1850.

(83) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Box 11. John Talbot Clifton to James Fair, 1850.

(84) J. Mannex, Director and Gazateer of Lancashire,1866. L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit, Lytham Deeds.

(85) Ibid. Estate Accounts 1850.

References (contd.)

(86) Ibid. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 20 February 1850.

(87) Ibid. Estate Accounts 1850.

(88) Ibid. Marton and Warton Deeds; Acc.No.1225. Box 6. Sale of Warbrick Estate, 19 February 1849.

(89) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Boxes 7,8 and 16. Blackpool Plans and Deeds.

(90) See. Chapter VI.

(91) Ibid. DDCl. 1199 and 1200; 1966 Deposit. New Purchases made during Mr. Fair's Agency; W.J. Smith, *Blackpool - A Sketch of its Growth* ( ), pp.95-97; J.K.Walton, "The Social Development of Blackpool 1788-1914", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1974, pp.24-26.

(92) Ibid. 1194. James Fair to Thomas Clifton, 18 January 1843.

(93) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. James Fair to Thomas Part, 8 August, 1848.

(94) Ibid. 2232/3. J. Ashworth to James Fair, 11 November 1847.

(95) Ibid. 1966 Deposit and Acc.No. 1325. Box.8. Estate Accounts 1850 and 1853.

(96) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Thomas Clifton to James Fair, 12 March 1846.

(97) Davies, Thesis op.cit. pp.401-422.

(98) Ward and Wilson, *op.cit.* p.9.

(99) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. James Fair to John Talbot Clifton, 14 June 1852.

(100) Ibid. 1966 Deposit and Acct.No. 2831. Box 2. Estate Rentals 1850,1853,1855, 1857. Ledger Book 1; DDCl.552. Estate Surveys.

(101) Ibid. and Ledger Books 1 and 2.

(102) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. B. Crook to Thomas Fair, 19 May 1860.

(103) Ibid. Ledger Books 1 and 2.

CHAPTER II

THE SPENDING OF WEALTH

The spending habits among Britain's landowners and the extent to which they were inclined towards debt-financed expenditure has become the subject of considerable debate. Thirty years ago it was argued that, by the mid-nineteenth century, landowners generally had taken on a much more active role in the management of their estates. Consequently, so the argument went, they were able to increase their incomes and therefore reduce the burden of debt which their predecessors had accumulated through a lengthy process of neglect and extravagance.[1] Professor Thompson challenged this argument at an early stage, taking the view that no fundamental shift in the behaviour of landowners took place and that, for most, debt remained an enduring fact of life.[2] Evidence from estates in Lancashire suggests that this was indeed the case. In fact, what J.H. Plumb has said of 18th century landowners could also be applied to their 19th century counterparts: "For one that survived a score were destroyed, overtaken by those natural disasters which beset families - failure of heirs, wanton extravagance, reckless loyalty, sheer bad luck. But debt, the crushing inexorable burden of debt, extinguished most."[3]

I

As regards indebtedness among Lancashire landowners several points are worth making from the outset. Landowners who had a varied range of assets, who were able to call upon diverse sources of income, who were not over-dependent on agriculture and who, ideally, were not over-burdened by inherited debt were usually best placed to reduce debt or avoid indebtedness altogether. This, however, cannot have been true of many. Most of the estates encomapssed by this study carried debts though the incidence and size of indebtedness varied from one estate to the next. Even so, debt was not necessarily regarded as a calamitous affliction. In this sense a landowner's debts have to be considered in relation to his income and, more specifically, the proportion of his income which went into servicing the annual costs of any charges on his property. Debt, in other words, was perfectly tolerable so long as it could be comfortably financed out of current income.

In general, the great landed figures of the realm could call upon such a scale of income and disposable assets that it seems they were able to go in and out of debt throughout the 19th century almost at will. Despite their heavy spending on industrial ventures, land and houses, the profits from mining and urban property meant that the likes of the Northumberland, Sutherland and Dudley families only occasionally resorted to mortgaging and even then on a short-term basis. Moreover, the speed and scale of debt reduction among the territorial magnates could be spectacular. The Dukes of Marlborough solved their financial problems by selling off £4-500,000 worth of family heirlooms and treasures. The Duke of Bedford reduced encumbrances on his estates from a staggering £552,000 in 1839 to nothing by 1855. The Earl of Durham's debts stood at £635,000 in 1841 yet this figure had been reduced to only £100,000 by 1880. Lord Calthorpe accumulated debts totalling £141,000 in 1881 but had managed to clear the lot fourteen years later.(4)

Lancashire's leading landowners managed their own debts with the same versatility. The Dukes of Devonshire, for instance, disposed of charges on their estates with apparently the same consummate ease with which they were accumulated. In their case, gambling, the costs of settlements and the sixth Duke's passion for house building produced debts of not far short of £1 million by the early 1840s on which interest payments absorbed 55% of current income. But just as amazing was the capacity of the estate to swiftly reduce the mortgage burden to more manageable proportions. This was achieved through the sale of the family's Yorkshire estates which raised £575,000. Yet no great personal or financial sacrifice had been involved. They were able to retain their Lancashire property in Furness with its rich industrial and urban potential; and they were able to hold on to their ancestral estates in Ireland with which, for reasons of personal attachment and social prestige, the Devonshires were reluctant to part. Having reduced indebtedness to a more respectable level the Duke then enjoyed a halcyon period of rising incomes stemming mainly from the industrial growth of Barrow. However, in the late 1870s, fortunes suffered a sharp reversal as Barrow's ship-building, railway, jute and steel companies plunged into recession. The estate consequently found itself having to raise huge sums to shore up these ailing industries at a time when the income from dividends and royalties was falling away sharply. The end result was debts of £2 millions by 1888. Yet all was not lost by any means. Such was the scale of the Devonshires' resources that they were able to sell off land and property, clear the mortgages, rearrange investments and, by the turn of the century, secure a level of income which was as impressive as it had been during the golden days of the 1860s and 70s.(5)

Given the scale and diversity of his own assets and income, Lord Derby dealt with the problem of debt just as effortlessly. Owing to the unavoidable costs of family settlements charges on his estate amounted to £92,750 in 1818. This had been cut back to £64,000 in 1825 and had dropped still further to just over £36,000 by 1835. Yet these figures disguise the fact that over the same period numerous loans were taken out and all of them were repaid within a very short period. Current income or the sale of detached properties enabled Derby to clear his debts at will. In the same way, he bought land worth over £95,000 between 1815 and 1835. Yet the cost was never converted into a debt charge. Capital was readily available out of the estate. The sale of unwanted property brought in £31,000 whilst the remaining £64,000 was found out of current income. It was not a large sum to find considering that Derby's coal royalties alone produced £43,000 over roughly the same period and that, in 1849, between £101-104,000 was owed by various railway companies.(6)

The north Manchester estates belonging to the Earls of Wilton produced a buoyant income without any of the heavy obligations which fell on many other landowners. By 1894 the outwards sprawl of Manchester's satellite towns brought the Wiltons an income of almost £64,000 a year. Land

and property were managed in a cold and business-like manner. Nor were there any strong emotional ties with the family's agricultural estates scattered throughout Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Somerset. Their land in Somerset, for instance, was widely dispersed and, as Lady Wilton pointed out to her agent, the family had "no individual interest in the county." In fact, the Somerset estate was put on the market in 1866 specifically to avoid the heavy costs of restoring the condition of the land and repairing the dilapidated state of the farm buildings. Not surprisingly, as the trustees' accounts of 1898 make clear, there were no outstanding mortgages on the estate and a steadily rising income, together with the capital from land sales, were more than enough to deal with the cost of family settlements.(7)

II

In 1851 James Caird calculated that the amount of encumbered land was "greater than (was) generally supposed." By 1878 he apparently saw no reason to change this view. There were few landlords, he argued who "have not either inherited or found it necessary to create mortgages on their estates."(8)

This was certainly true of many Lancashire landowners below the level of the territorial magnates who were discussed in the previous section. Unlike the landed aristocrat, the lesser landowner generally had fewer means at his disposal to either avoid indebtedness or to quickly reduce the burden of debt when it assumed threatening proportions. Firstly, the smaller landowner did not enjoy the same size and diversity of income. True, many had non-agricultural investments, some drew an impressive income from mining or building speculation, but few could actually depend on an improving and, at the same time, long-term income from these sources. Moreover, additional income of this kind was not specifically used to reduce, let alone pay off, outstanding debts. But this was also true elsewhere. Only one of the many Staffordshire landowners engaged in non-agricultural ventures, for example, actually used income from these sources for the purpose of debt redemption.[9] Again, the sale of land offered another solution to the problem of the level of indebtedness but there were obvious limits to the extent to which individual landowners were able to dispose of property without eating into the main core of their estates. Certainly there was a distinct reluctance to part with really old ancestral land. In this respect, Sir James Graham of Netherby was probably typical of many in his preference to soldier on under the crushing burden of interest charges rather than sell part of his agricultural estates.[10]

Nevertheless, although it was difficult for the middling gentry to avoid or reduce debt by any appreciable amount, there is reason to believe that, collectively, they may not have been unduly disturbed by the prospect of indebtedness. Mortgages were tolerable so long as they were kept within manageable bounds and could be comfortably supported out of current income once other fixed items of expenditure had been met. Debt only became a threat when it reached the point of absorbing the greater part of a landowner's net income.

So, servicing mortgages was a feature of financial management on most estates. The Hesketh of Meols Hall, for instance, lived with debt throughout the 19th century despite their highly lucrative association with the development of Southport. Ironically, Charles Hesketh nearly abandoned North Meols in 1840 in favour of what he considered to be more profitable estates, firstly at Hornby near Lancaster and then at Wennington. At the time, his reasons were fairly apparent. Outgoings on his North Meols estate were absorbing almost 75% of his income. Fortuitously, he was able to acquire his brother's property in North Meols in the wake of Sir Peter's disastrous involvement in creating the new town and port of Fleetwood. Nevertheless, an increasing income from Southport ground rents was barely enough to keep pace with the heavy costs of settlements, annuities and interest payments. And, with mortgages amounting to £183,000 in 1898, Hesketh was left with barely £2,000 a year out of a gross income of over £10,000. But at least Hesketh had valuable urban property to fall back on and parts were gradually sold off to reduce the debt burden to a more manageable £121,000 by 1906.(11)

The problem of meeting interest payments clearly accounted for the hard line which was taken with lessees on Lord Lilford's estates. Mortgages on his Astley Hall estate, for example, absorbed 54% of Lilford's income from that particular property in 1887. Accordingly, when one of the local coal companies put in a request for a reduction in footage rates because of the deepening recession in the industry, their appeal was turned down. The estate was faced with its own difficulties as a letter from Lilford's agent makes perfectly clear. "That other lessors have made concessions to the company is not in itself a reason for abatement in the present case," he informed Lilford's solicitors, "for, bearing in mind the present charges on the estate, I think it will be of the first importance to the lessors to obtain the utmost possible income and to refuse to depart from the terms of the lease."(12)

The position on the large Hesketh estate at Rufford is also one of steadily accumulating debt. When Sir Thomas Hesketh inherited the property in 1842 debts amounted to over £104,000 with interest charges absorbing 31% of current income.(13) The level of indebtedness continued to rise thereafter, driven up by family settlements, personal extravagance and heavy capital investment on the estate. Again, despite Hesketh's breadth of non-agricultural investments, income from these sourses only contributed to servicing the interest payments; it was never sufficient to make possible a significant reduction in the debt capital. Quarries at Wrightington, for instance, brought in only £2,802 between 1814-39.(14) More was expected of the estate's mining interests in Great Harwood, Parbold and Shevington but again, the return was disappointing. Coal rents and royalties produced only £6,386 over the twenty year period 1822-41 and then production started to fall away. Consequently, Great Harwood was sold in 1848, the other two properties in 1875 and all at modest prices.[15] In the meantime, the level of expenditure on purchasing land and making improvements on the agricultural estate reached new heights after 1850.[16] And current income could not, by itself, have supported the heavy bursts of spending involved. The Hesketh Marsh reclamation project alone absorbed £35,000 in just five years between 1879 and 1884. Admittedly farm rents did increase, from c.£14,000 to c.£20,000 in 1880, yet much of this increase, as was the case on other estates, was concentrated in the period 1860 to 1876. The pattern of income and expenditure was clearly out of balance, as is evident from the accumulating deficits in the current account. By 1879 the estate was overdrawn by almost £19,000; by 1881 the figure had reached an alarming £46,000. But, following a number of property sales, it was reduced to an average of £25,500 throughout the 1880s. To a large extent, the mounting deficits can be explained by the soaring interest payments on a growing string of mortgages. In 1890 total debts amounted to over £587,000 which meant that interest charges on the Rufford estate alone took 90% of the gross rental.[17]

III

The relationship between income, expenditure and indebtedness on the Clifton estate falls into a similar pattern. Basically, a growing income was accompanied by even heavier expenditure and, consequently, mounting debt. Though the Cliftons' gross annual income climbed from £24,862 in 1832 to over £40,000 by 1899 the accumulation of debt more than kept pace. When Thomas Clifton inherited the estates in 1832 total encumbrances amounted to £113,000 of which £65,000 can be accounted for by portions settled on numerous younger children by his predecessors. At this stage interest payments took a very modest 16% of the landowner's gross income.[18] By 1850 the debt burden had risen to about £206,000 and interest charges had doubled, accounting for 27% of estate revenue. But the real surge in debt accumulation took place in the second half of the century. Family settlements, land purchases, estate improvements and individual extravagance drove mortgages up to £361,000 in 1880 and a massive £590,000 by 1900.[19]

However, it is worth emphasising that debt by itself was not the main course for concern. What really mattered was whether a certain level of debt could be supported and, therefore, as long as land values held up and as long as there was the expectation that income would steadily improve, landowners like the Cliftons would continue to finance major items of expenditure out of loan capital. In any case, there was little point in a landowner tightening his own purse strings if, as was the case with most, it meant reducing the mortgage burden by relatively meagre amounts. Certainly John Talbot Clifton thought along very similar lines. He was a firm believer in obtaining the highest credit which current income could afford. As he confidently told his agent in 1850, there was "no security as good as land; it stands to reason that a party or company would be happy to lend £200,000 on a security of £25,000 a year."[20] Equally, Thomas Fair was not himself unduly disturbed by increased interest charges provided a "commensurate increase in income" took place.(21) So, far from exercising restraint, estate borrowing forged ahead from the 1850s onwards. From 1853 to 1863 loan charges rose from £8,155 to £11,615, which represented 38% of gross income. But then the proportion of total income assumed by interest payments levelled out at an average of 38-9% between 1863 and 1878, when rents throughout the whole estate showed an increase.(22) The problems appeared only when interest payments and income moved dramatically in opposite directions from 1880 onwards. At that stage debt became a menacing threat.(23)

Until the 1880s the Cliftons had no difficulty in raising all the loan capital they wanted. It was available from a wide range of sources. Firstly, there was the personal level of friends and relatives. Of course, individual fortunes in the family did not amount to much more than own portions which were generally vested in the estate. Nevertheless, on the occasions when the estate ran into difficulties with its creditors, it was not unusual for family members to come to the rescue. Thomas Clifton's wife, Harriet, made £17,500 available during the trying months of 1848, Lady Clifton provided £10,000 in the 1880s and her daughter-in-law, Lady Donnington, a very welcome £7,500 in 1894 when few private investors were prepared to risk their money in land and in the Clifton estate in particular.(24)

Outside of the immediate family, the world of the "local solicitor, maiden aunt and the country parson" was a plentiful source of capital.(25) In fact, the Cliftons acquired most of their loans through local solicitors who channelled trust funds and private investments in the direction of the Clifton estate. Of course investors never got an impressively high return but they could depend on an income that was both regular and secure. Consequently there was no shortage of individuals ready to loan money in varying amounts. Many of the advances were quite small. Typical was the £1,500 advanced by two spinsters in 1864 which in fact remained vested in the estate for the rest of the century. Also local clergymen provided sums from £10,000 to £90,000. At the top of the scale, members of the Miller family, Preston's leading cotton manufacturers, loaned the Cliftons a total of £150,000 by 1900.(26)

Apart from the money from trust funds and a wide circle of friends and relatives, banks - particularly the local institutions - played a crucial role in meeting the deficits which invariably built up in the landowner's and the estate's accounts. Support was available at two levels. Firstly, the Preston Bank, for instance, organised short-term loans to help the estate through temporary difficulties. In 1844 it stepped in to clear the portions owed to Thomas Clifton's brothers until such time as mortgages could be arranged. The bank also found the money for the construction work which took place in Lytham in the late 1840s. The costs were finally converted into a mortgage in 1857. It also made another £25,000 available, this time in 1894, when the estate was under pressure to meet current interest charges on its borrowings.(27)

Secondly, a bank's overdraft facilities to all intents and purposes became an instrument of long-term borrowing. For, as the detailed account books after 1862 make clear, it was rare for the estate or the landowner's family to be in credit with any of their Lancashire or London bankers. Instead it was usual practice to run up a substantial deficit which, when mutually convenient, could be converted into a mortgage. In this way a mortgage of £90,000 was taken out in 1866 partly to clear £51,000 of debt which had built up in the Cliftons' accounts in Preston and London over a period of seventeen years.(28)

However, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, government sources and especially the large financial institutions became increasingly important in funding British landowners. Thomas Clifton took advantage of the 1846 Public Money Drainage Act and borrowed £10,000 of government money for the purpose of extending the drainage scheme on his own estate. But greater use was made of the private improvement companies and, in the early 1860s and again in the early 1880s, Clifton borrowed a total of almost £30,000 from the Lands Improvement Company largely for drainage work. It was not until 1876 that the estate approached the Royal Insurance Company for capital but, from then onwards, insurance companies provided an increasing proportion of the Cliftons' total loans. The advantages in this arrangement were immediately apparent. Sizeable advances could be ontained at competitive rates, a string of smaller mortgages could then be consolidated into one and a considerable saving made on interest charges and solicitors' costs. By the end of the century the Royal became, in effect, the financial prop of the whole estate. Initially, Clifton borrowed £65,000; this was increased to £162,000 by 1900 in addition to which the Lancashire Insurance Company advanced a further £12,000.(29)

The Cliftons' spending habits, their steady accumulation of debt and their readiness to borrow money reflected several things - unavoidable family obligation, ambitious investment schemes, personal extravagance but also over-confidence in the financial durability of their own estate. Family settlements were a cross which most landowners had to carry and often resulted in recurrent as well as heavy debt. The process of settlement was designed to protect the interests of future heirs against the mismanagement or depredations of the current owner by imposing restrictions - at least in theory though rarely in practice - on his freedom to buy and sell land, lease property or raise mortgages. It was also intended to secure the payment of a wife's jointure as well as the portions and annuities of any younger children out of the rentals from the estate. The major problem with settlements, however, was that they left the financial health of the estate at the mercy of biological chance. Moreover, in estimating the size of portions and jointures, landowners had the tendency to overestimate the estate's capacity to pay into the future.(30)

According to one local observer in 1896 there were many financially crippled landowners in Britain whose "predicament was largely the result of charges, particularly settlements, on the estate."(31) In 1832 Thomas Clifton inherited a charge of £65,000 which was vested in the estate by way of portions. Included in this sum was the £40,000 which his father had settled on three younger sons and two daughters. Moreover, settlements carried the additional sting of including annuities for spouses, younger children and other family relatives. John Clifton's Will provided annuities for his children totalling £1,500 p.a.(32) There was no other alternative but to burden the estate with discharging the settlements. Neither John Clifton nor his successors left personal estates large enough to make anything more than a dent in the total debt. John Clifton's personal estate, for instance, amounted to only £4,500 and, as was usual where such modest amounts were involved, this sum was used to benefit the younger children.(33)

There was therefore no prospect of paying off this kind of debt except on a long-term basis. For the sake of legal and administrative convenience it was usual to clear the portions by raising the sum on mortgage. But, whether or not the portions remained vested in the estate, the result was exactly the same - a steady accumulation of debt which passed from one generation to the next. Hence, by 1875, only £12,000 of John Clifton's £40,000 had been entirely cleared.(34)

Thomas Clifton had to provide for a progeny which was almost as numerous as his father's. He settled a further £40,000 on his three younger sons and an annuity of £300 each. When he died in 1851 he also left a very modest personal estate and, again, it was not used for reducing the charge on the estate. Instead it was used to provide a £10,000 trust for his wife and a £5,000 insurance was divided among his younger children.(35) Once more, very little of the £40,000 was actually paid off. In 1848 £2,000 was discharged with the money which came from the sale of several properties in Blackpool. Apart from this small sum, the rest was converted into a mortgage in 1866 when it was decided to disentail the estate. Clearly this arrangement made sounder financial sense than servicing the settlement charges out of the estate. By the 1860s lower interest rates were generally available in the money market. Moreover, as long as portions remained vested in the estate, they constantly raised legal complications which were both inconvenient and expensive to deal with.(36)

Nevertheless, settlements continued to act as a constant drain on the estate's resources. John Talbot Clifton had just one son, Thomas Henry, but, when he died in 1880, he not only left personal debts of £2,700 but a wife and seven children to be provided for. As a result, the estate was charged with yet another settlement, this time £36,000. In total the accumulation of family settlements throughout the 19th century came to £146,000 and yet, by 1894, only £20,000 had been cleared.(37)

Settlements, then, were burdensome, but they only partly explain an accelerating rate of indebtedness;

for, whereas in mid-century debt of this kind accounted for little more than half the total charges on the estate, by the 1890s it represented a much smaller fraction. With the Cliftons' debts standing at over £590,000 in 1900 a massive £464,000 still needs to be explained.(38)

To begin with, it is easy to see why the Cliftons had to resort to such heavy borrowing. Quite simply, between 1862 and 1900, the current account showed a surplus on only seven occasions. In all the other years deficits were recorded ranging from as little as £934 in 1867 to £42,634 in 1893. As a result, about £338,000 worth of debt piled up in the current account between 1862 and 1900 which was eventually farmed out among private and institutional mortgagors.(39)

But how is this prolific over-spending to be explained? The purchase of land is an obvious starting point. It is generally agreed that the rate with which landowners acquired new property slowed down in the second half of the 19th century, yet it is also apparent that increasing and consolidating their estates still retained a powerful attraction for many landowners.(40) The Earls of Lisburne, for example, despite onerous family debts, actually intensified efforts to consolidate their estate between 1876 and 1886.(41) The same pressing concern for compactness will also explain the Earl of Scarbrough's regular forays into the land market in the 1860s and 70s.(42) And the larger landowners in Staffordshire continued to increase the size of their estates well into the later 19th century.(43)

But, in many cases, land purchase was a cause of heavy borrowing. It was an expensive business which few, apart from the great territorial magnates, could afford to finance out of current income.

The Cliftons' spending on land falls into this general pattern. Their large-scale purchases took place during the first half of the century followed by a process of consolidation thereafter. Major acquisitions completed their hold over Westby-with-Plumpton and Marton and strengthened their grip in Layton and Warton.(44) After 1850 the Cliftons busied themselves buying up "in-lying" fields and farms and consolidating their estates. Warton was the principal target with £31,500 being spend between 1852 and 1886 on twelve separate properties of varying size.(45) Other Lancashire landowners were apparently just as active. Sir Thomas Hesketh bought land in Tarleton (1852), Mawdesley (1874) and Croston (1879), again as a consolidating measure.(46) Lord Lilford's Bank Hall estate was already a large and compact property when it came into his ownership in 1861. His immediate predecessor had spent £73,000 on an additional 1226 acres during the 1840s and 50s. But Lilford himself seized on every opportunity to complete the ancestral core of the estate through a string of small purchases culminating in the acquisition of Sir Thomas Hesketh's remaining 167 acres in Bretherton.(47) Similarly, in a series of transactions between 1854 and 1866, the Starkie family bought up the 1550 acres which comprised the Ashton Hall estate, formerly the residence of the Dukes of Hamilton. Lord Cardwell established his own claim to a substantial territorial interest in Lancashire with his purchase of the 1199 acre Ellerbeck estate in 1860. And, on a lesser scale, the Alison family of Park Hall, near Chorley, extended their estate by buying up farmland in Euxton and Eccleston in 1873.(48)

The continued purchase of agricultural land can be included among projects such as house building or the beautifying of parks which were intended to enhance status and prestige. At the same time, it was not expected that investment in land would show a financial loss. But, as Rawstorne's agent pointed out, the return on land needed a long-term perspective, especially if land had been bought on mortgage and at the inflationary price of the 1870s.(49) The land market in Lancashire remained busy because there was no shortage of eager buyers for whom land was still a highly desirable social asset. In this respect, the demand for land was generated from outside the circle of the established elite as well as from within. The Garnetts of Quernmore were not the only family to use business wealth to equip themselves with landed status. The Fylde district alone contained quite a scattering of new landowners who, during the first half of the 19th century, had used the profits of commerce and industry to launch themselves into landed society.

The Jacksons of Barton Hall spring to mind as does James Pedder, Preston's foremost linen merchant, who purchased the Bispham Lodge estate in 1834.(50) Nearby, John Kenyon, a Liverpool merchant, channelled a small fortune into buying and improving an estate at Stalmine during the 1830s.(51) Even after 1850 the movement into land continued, prompting Thomas Fair to remark that "the old families (would) soon be unable to compete with the fortunes of men of commerce."(52) Certainly very few could have competed with the scale and speed with which Thomas Miller bought his way into landed society. His enormous wealth came from Preston's largest cotton spinning company which his grandfather had helped to build in the early years of the century. In 1839 Miller inherited over £64,000 on his father's death together with a string of cotton mills in which he became the major shareholder in 1842. By 1853 he had set himself up as one of the Fylde's leading landowners by buying Preese Hall for £30,000 and what became the new family seat, Singleton Hall, for just over £70,000. But the Millers did not stop at that. Between 1853 and 1865 they bought up land in five neighbouring parishes and no expense was spared in creating a model estate at Singleton. A new mansion house was built together with new cottages, church and school and thousands of pounds spent on restoring the poor condition of the land.(53)

Again, a mixture of social and political motives influenced the Cliftons' continuing activity in the local land market. For instance, in 1845, the auction of a farm in Woodplumpton caught John Talbot's attention simply because it carried "voters' qualifications and a pew in the parish church."(54) And once the wheels had been set in motion to purchase the control of a parish it was difficult to stop the momentum. Every property which came on to the market was invariably snapped up irrespective of cost. So, having bought a part of Thomas Warbrick's Marton property in September 1848, Clifton pointed out to his agent that not only was it "desirable to obtain the rest but necessary." The following month he bought Crookhall's farm in Warton. At the time it was financially "rather inconvenient" yet "it was preferable to letting the property fall into other hands."[55]

Inevitably, any indication that the Cliftons were interested buyers had an inflationary effect on prices. In 1873 Clifton paid just over £100 an acre for Crossfield's 67 acre farm in Warton. It was one of the few remaining owner-occupied farms in the parish and its owners used this very fact to put pressure on the estate and extract the highest possible price. "I have a very great dislike to an auction," Crossfield told Thomas Fair, "nor have I any desire to introduce into the township a lot of little owners, or in fact any other party, and with that view have all along urged the policy of offering the land to Colonel Clifton privately - as I was sure it was far more desirable to him than any other person - and would be a step towards acquiring the whole township." His last remark went straight to the heart of the matter and Clifton paid just £250 short of Crossfield's asking price.[56]

In total, the Cliftons spent over £91,000 between 1832 and 1885 in expanding and consolidating their estates in the south-west corner of the Fylde. Generally, they bought at high prices. Land values climbed steeply during the middle decades of the century in the wake of transport improvements, the growth of urban markets and relentless demand among buyers. Where a farm and four acres in Warton fetched £400 in 1829, Clifton had to pay £635 in 1854. Similarly four acres along the Blackpool-Lytham road in Great Marton sold for £182 in 1834; in 1857 Clifton paid £635.(57) Admittedly, such expenditure was partly offset by the sale of other land which brought in £44,000. However, land sales and purchases rarely coincided. Indeed it was not until after 1876, when most of the acquisitions had in fact been made, that any substantial amount of land was sold off. Until then, land, almost without exception, was bought with borrowed capital. Sometimes the vendor chose to leave the purchase money vested in the estate often for quite lengthy periods. For instance, in 1863, interest was still being paid to Robert Rawcliffe's trustees whose estate had been bought by the Cliftons in 1842.(58) Normally, though, the purchase money was advanced by the local banks, solicitors and insurance companies and only on one occasion was land paid for directly out of current income.(59)

Not only was land bought, it also had to be improved, and that was another major area of debt-accumulating expenditure. Several points are worth emphasising here. Improvement work - draining, fencing, farm buildings - involved large sums and, in general, much of the capital cost tended to be borne by the landowners themselves. In mid-century drainage alone worked out at an average cost of £5 an acre and that presumably excluded the cost of seed where land was put down to grass, fertilizers and the interest charge on borrowed money.(60) Land reclamation was even more expensive. Dawson-Green of Whittington Hall, Lancaster, shied away from plans to drain four hundred acres of Cockerham Moss in 1866 after a survey estimated that the cost of drainage, banking and manuring would run out at £50 an acre.(61) Reclamation work on Hesketh Marsh came to £22 per acre between 1879 and 1884 and that excluded a further £11,000 which was spent on new roads, fences, gates and farm buildings.(62) Moreover, rarely were costs evenly spread over a number of years, and there was usually some time delay before farm rents could be adjusted upwards. It is therefore unlikely that, in most cases, expenditure on the scale envisaged by many landowners could be found out of current income.(63)

It has been estimated that British landowners expended some £24 millions on a variety of agricultural improvements between 1846 and 1876. £12 million of this figure was borrowed from government sources and private improvement companies.(64) In fact, Lancashire landowners were among the first to apply for government loans under the 1846 Public Money Drainage Act. Lord Derby borrowed £34,000 and Lord Francis Egerton took out £20,000 for the purpose of draining moss land on his Leigh estate. Thomas Clifton was also among the more substantial borrowers. He initially applied for £25,000 but actually took up only £10,000 which he used to build a main drain across his estates.(65) In addition, on two separate occasions, Clifton borrowed a total of almost £30,000 from the Lands Improvement Company.(66)

The rest of the capital came from other sources though what proportion was funded directly out of current income and how much was converted into debt is difficult to estimate. Thomas Fair claimed that, between 1838 and 1894, a total of £296,000 had been spent on farm buildings, roads, drainage and "general improvements" throughout the Clifton estate.(67) Clearly, £40,000 came from the Inclosure Commissioners and the Lands Improvement Company. However, it is reasonable to suppose that as much as 50% of the remainder found its way into the annual deficits in the current account which were eventually converted into a mortgage debt.

Thomas Fair's own balance of estimates make this quite clear. Once "fixed outgoings" had been deducted - and by this he meant annuities, family payments, interest charges, taxes, managerial expenses, insurance, donations and subscriptions - what was left out of current income was patently insufficient to meet the rising costs of repairs and improvements which he considered so vital to the estate's development. Income from the agricultural estate advanced in fits and starts and could not have kept pace with the gathering momentum of improvement expenditure. In 1874/5 outgoing left a balance of just £3,911, and yet the costs of drainage work alone in 1874 came to £1,342, while throughout the 1860s and 70s yearly expenditure on buildings averaged £5,000. Fair's predicament in 1878 was even gloomier. He was left with a balance of only £1,885 "for repairs of buildings, drainage, roads, plantations and all estate improvements, irrespective of contingent outlays which (were) constantly and unavoidably occurring." Indeed, building costs alone topped £8,000 in 1878.(68)

Indebtedness among landowners can also be explained by their spending on urban, industrial and commercial undertakings. Earl Fitzwilliam ran up debts of £800,000 in the 1840s largely as a result of his investment in mining on his Wentworth-Woodhouse estate. The Earls of Durham and Londonderry went into considerable debt for much the same reason.(69) On a lesser scale the Earl of Scarbrough increased the debt charge on his estate from £40,000 to £120,000 in order to launch the new resort of Skegness in the 1870s.(70) And Hesketh-Fleetwood bankrupted himself because of the debts he incurred in creating the port of Fleetwood.(71)

Similarly, the mounting deficits in the Cliftons' current account and their steady accumulation of mortgages partly resulted from their investment in Lytham and St. Annes. They concentrated most of their spending on Lytham in the late 1840s and early 50s, building villas, cottages, promenades, public baths and assembly rooms at a total cost of about £41,750.(72) Thereafter, smaller though still quite considerable sums were ploughed into various amenities in an effort to enhance the resort's image, but at the cost of widening the deficit in the estate's account. In 1863 over-spending amounted to £29,000, of which £19,000 can be attributed to investment in the Blackpool-Lytham railway line, extensions to Lytham's public baths and a major stake in the newly formed Fylde Waterworks Company.

Urban rents showed a healthier increase after 1873 but any improvement in income was more than offset by the £14,300 which was spent on building a new coastal road connecting Lytham with the new resort at St. Annes.(73)

Expenditure on the scale which took place on both the urban and agricultural estates will largely explain the Cliftons' colossal overspending between 1832 and 1880. But this is not quite the whole story. Not even investment on this level will totally account for debts of £361,000 in 1880. Moreover, whereas capital investment began to tail off after 1880, the debt burden actually shot up to a crushing £590,000 by 1900. This sudden acceleration was symptomatic of a cancer that had been eating away at the financial health of the estate throughout the second hald of the century. In short it was the consequence of years of expensive self-indulgence by three successive generations of Cliftons.

There seems to be little quarrel among historians concerning the extravagant behaviour which characterised landowners of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Reckless irresponsibility is said to have brought about the Duke of Buckingham's notorious bankruptcy by 1848; and, if few could match the sixth Duke of Devonshire's spending power, fewer still could match the speed with which his passion for houses, travel and collecting art treasures piled up debt.(74) By contrast, the mid-Victorian years have been regarded as an era which supposedly ushered in a "reaction to the loose spending of earlier generations."

And yet it is questionable whether landowners had generally become more interested in "redeeming the debts of the past."(75) In their behaviour and spending habits landowners were probably no different from their predecessors. In other words, their ranks were likely to contain the same mixture of the profligate and carefree as well as the thrifty and industrious. Staffordshire, for example, could boast its fair share of enterprising landowners who increased their incomes through cultivating the resources of their estates; but, at one and the same time, the diligent and the frugal rubbed shoulders with those who wantonly disposed of fortunes almost as quickly as they were made.(76) Similarly, Lord Lisburne's efforts to improve estate income were undermined by the debts which his eldest son ran up. This harmful tradition of family extravagance persisted into the 1880s and resulted in mounting debt in a period of declining revenue.(77)

Much more work needs to be done on the life-styles and personal spending habits of Lancashire landowners; but it may be that few were prepared to trim their own spending to the fluctuating level of estate income. In this respect, the Garnetts of Quernmore were exceptional in the way in which the sober, frugal habits of their business background lived on for several generations. William Garnett, the founding father of the estate, gave priority to the purchase and improvement of land. He scrupulously observed the limits to his own personal spending, scrutinised the accounts for unnecessary expenditure and repeatedly told his agent to cut back on the household budget. His son, William James, carried on in the same tradition. He apparently had a personal dread of going into debt and kept a similar tight rein on spending.(79) Interestingly, by the time the estate passed into the third generation, there are signs of a slight change in attitude. The Garnett's social spending on charities, political causes and the trappings of status increased as they become more entrenched in landed circles. In 1879 William Garnett spent £2,121 on the duties of High Sheriff and, in the same year, extended the family mansion at a cost of £1,800. And, for the first time, deficits began to appear in the current account.(79) Other landowners seemed to have been less restrained in their spending. In part the Braddylls' financial liabilities can be linked with the rebuilding of their imposing seat at Conishead Priory in the 1850s, and the De Hoghtons lavished a small fortune on the complete restoration of Hoghton Tower in the 1870s.(80) Still others preferred to distance themselves from their Lancashire estates altogether and, like Lilford or Hesketh, retreat to the warmer and more expensive climes of the south of England, Europe and the Caribbean.(81)

However, few landowners could have matched the Cliftons' extravagant tastes or their almost total disregard for the staggering debts which their reckless self-indulgence piled up. Whereas Thomas Clifton had always shown himself willing to moderate his spending when the estate was under financial pressure, his successors were clearly not prepared to make the same sacrifices. Once John Talbot Clifton has exhausted his interest in a political and military career he spent most of his later life in the gaming clubs of London, amid the hunting circles of Northamptonshire and cruising the Mediterranean in a series of ocean-going yachts. The bills inevitably found their way back to the estate office. April 1854 was typical of the many occasions the agent had to come to his employer's rescue. Then, £3,000 was needed to cover the costs of refurbishing Clifton's London home in Berkeley Square, repairs to his hunting lodge amounted to £500 and there was the matter of clearing £5,000 worth of debts owed to Clifton's private bankers.[82]

"Keeping up this play of being rich with nothing at the bank and £5,000 in debt," he complained, "will break any man's spirits."[83] But it did not dampen Clifton's enthusiasm for spending more. He lived from one financial crisis to the next in the comfortable knowledge that the bills could be settled later; and no amount of pleading and cajoling by his wife and agent made the slightest difference to his extravagant habits.[84] By 1864 Clifton had run up a further overdraft of £6,000 which the estate had to pay off in yearly instalments.[85] But no sooner had one debt been cleared than another began to gather in its place. Between 1864 and 1874 Clifton and his son received additional payments of almost £19,000 which were used to discharge their personal liabilities.[86] Yet clearing this accumulation of debt increased the estate's outgoings, widened the deficit in the current account still further and compounded the mortgage requirement. In addition, the estate then had to deal with debts of £30,000 which

John Talbot Clifton left on his death in 1882.(87)

However, by chance, the deaths of Thomas Henry Clifton and his father brought a temporary respite to the problem of coping with excessive family expenditure. The estate passed to a minor and its management was placed in the hands of trustees. At last Thomas Fair was in a position of being able to make his financial projections on the basis of fairly reliable estimates. Family payments rarely exceeded £10,000 a year throughout the 1880s and this was sufficient at least to stabilise the gulf between income and expenditure which had been progressively widening until 1880. Indeed, the estate accounts recorded the almost unprecedented achievement of showing a small surplus on several successive occasions.(88)

Yet this turned out to be nothing more than the calm before the storm. By 1900 another £129,000 worth of debt had accumulated most of it after 1889. The main explanation for this alarming increase is obvious. Family expenditure shot up to almost £40,000 in 1889, £32,800 in 1890, £39,000 in 1891, £20,500 in 1892 and a peak of £46,000 in 1893.(89) Spending on this scale coincided with the young John Talbot Clifton attaining his majority and, with it, the freedom to indulge his expensive whims. His roaming expeditions into the most remote corners of the world made his grandfather's Mediterranean cruises cheap by comparison. "How very much the estate will be crippled in the future." the accountants warned Thomas Fair. "We fear Mr. Clifton's income will be much diminished and must be regretted on his own account."[90] At a conservative estimate Clifton exceeded his allowance by £140-150,000 between 1889 and 1900. It could not have come at a worse time with the deepening agricultural recession putting still greater pressure on current income.

Nevertheless, Clifton's reckless behaviour should not obscure the fact that the estate was vulnerable long before be applied the final blow in 1889. The Cliftons, like many other landowners, were already weighed down by heavy debt. Yet this was a condition which few could have avoided and even fewer could have entirely escaped from unless, of course, they had the income and assets of Lord Derby or the Duke of Devonshire. They borrowed money to pay off portions, to buy and improve land, to promote business ventures and to finance an expensive life-style and the visible trappings of status. At the same time, they borrowed money on the assumption that income would continue to improve and, as long as this was the case, even an increasing level of debt could be tolerated. But, in the end, an inflated sense of self-assurance, an over-confidence in the security of land pushed the Clifton estate to the brink of disaster. John Talbot Clifton simply helped it over the edge.

REFERENCES

(1) Spring, Op.cit., Journal of Economic History, Xi, 1, 1951.

(2) Thompson, The End of a Great Estate, Economic History Review, Viii, 1, 1955. p.52. The whole question of aristocratic indebtedness has been recently re-examined in Cannadine, Aristocratic Indebtedness in the 19th Century: The Case Re-opened, Economic History Review, XXX, 1977.

(3) J.H. Plumb, Nobility and Gentry in the early 18th century, History Today, v, 1955, p.114

(4) Cannadine, Op.cit., Economic History Review, 1977.

(5) L.R.O. DDCa. 1/342. Statement of Income and Expenditure, Debts and Investment, 1834-1857; Cannadine, The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire c.1800-c.1920, Agricultural History Review, XXV, 1977.

(6) Ibid. DDk Ledger Book 1810-35; General Rentals 1815-35; DDK 1806/87-109. Derby Rent Books; DDK 982/834 and 1066.

(7) Ibid. DDEg. Wilton Estate Accounts; Box 6. Lady Wilton to W.H. Warren, 27 May 1866.

(8) J. Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, p.495; Idem, The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food, (1878), pp.105-106.

(9) Sturgess in Ward and Wilson, Op.cit., p.197.

(10) Spring, Op.cit., Agricultural History, 29, 1955, pp. 76-80.

(11) Hesketh Estate Accounts, Meols Hall, Southport.

(12) L.R.O. DDLi. Estate Rentals. Summary of Receipts from the Astley Hall Estate 1887; Box 98, A. Selby to Messrs. Lowe and Co., 25 October 1887.

(13) Ibid. DDHc. Uncalendared Estate Accounts.

(14) Ibid. 99/16-45.

(15) Ibid. 99/21-45.

(16) See Chapter III.

(17) L.R.O. DDHc. 99/44 and 99/76 Estate Rentals; 79/14. Hesketh Marsh Reclamation and Enclosure 1879-1884; 62/23. Cash Books; Uncalandared Estate Accounts; DDLi. Box 98.

References (contd.)

(18) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Estate Accounts 1832.

(19) Ibid. Estate Accounts 1850; Ledger Books 3 and 4.

(20) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Box 11, J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 1850.

(21) Ibid. J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 1850; 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to Lady Clifton, 22 March 1867.

(22) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Estate Rentals 1852, 1854, 1858 and Ledger Books 1 and 2.

(23) See Chapter V.

(24) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Statement of Accounts 1845-48; Ledger Books 2,3 and 4.

(25) Cannadine, Op.cit., Economic History Review, 1977.

(26) L.R.O. DDx. 103. Wilson, Wright and Ashcroft Papers; Clifton Deeds.

(27) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit; 1844 Settlement Deeds; Estate Accounts 1853; Ledger Books 1 and 4.

(28) Ibid. Ledger Books 1-4.

(29) Ibid; Spring, The English Landed Estate, Op.cit., pp. 143-8.

(30) Mingay, English Landed Society in the 18th Century, Op.cit., pp.35-38; G.C. Broderick, English Land and English Landlords, 1881, pp.89-150; H.J.Habakkuk, English Landownership 1680-1740, Economic History Review, X, 1940.

(31) Preston Guardian, 4 April 1896.

(32) L.R.O. DDx. 103. The Settlement of John Clifton; Broderick,Op.cit.pp. 100-101.

(33) Ibid.

(34) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Book 2.

(35) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Box 26. The Settlement of Thomas Clifton.

(36) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Wilson and Deacon to Thomas Fair, 19 May 1866.

(37) Ibid. Estimates of Lady Drummond's Income 1889; Ledger Book 4; Preston Guardian; 3 April 1880.

(38) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Box 17; DDx.103. Wilson, Wright and Ashcroft Papers. Clifton Deeds.

References (contd.)

(39) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-4.

(40) Thompson, English Landed Society in the 19th Century, Op.cit. pp. 34-43.

(41) Howells, Thesis. Op.cit., pp.227,258-261.

(42) Beastall, A North Country Estate During the 19th Century, 1975. pp. 152-3.

(43) Sturgess, Thesis, Op.cit., pp. 537-9, 591.

(44) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 16; 1966 Deposit. Warton, Marton, Layton and Westby-with-Plumpton Deeds.

(45) Ibid.

(46) Ibid. DDx. 1063.

(47) Ibid. DDLi. Box 51. Land Purchases 1810-59; 1869-1883.

(48) Ibid. DDx. 1063.

(49) Preston Guardian, 31 January 1883.

(50) L.R.O. DDx. 1063/4 and 8.

(51) IBID. DDx. 322.

(52) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Thomas Fair to Lady Clifton, 14 June 1864.

(53) Ibid. Miller Papers, Ledger E; Preston Guardian, 6 October 1894; Bateman, Op.cit.

(54) Ibid. DDCl. 1199. J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 7 August 1845.

(55) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Thomas Clifton to J.Fair, 30 August and 22 September 1848.

(56) Ibid. Acc.No. 1325. Crossfield to Thomas Fair, October 1873.

(57) Ibid. Box. 28. Threlfall's Estate Deeds; Box 6. Great Marton Deeds.

(58) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Land Bought under J. Fair's Agency; Ledger Books 1-3.

(59) Ibid.

(60) Sturgess. The Agricultural Revolution on the English Clays, Agricultural History Review, XIV,1966.

(61) L.R.O. DDGr. Box A8.

References (contd.)

(62) Ibid. DDHe. 78/14

(63) See Chapter III.

(64) J.H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, II, (1932) pp.271-2.

(65) Foster, Op.cit., p.68; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit Statement of Accounts 1845-48; Estate Accounts 1850.

(66) Ibid. Ledger Books 1,3 and 5.

(67) P.P. 1894, Evidence of G.Wilson-Fox, Op.cit., p.10

(68) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Statement of Income and Outgoings 1878.

(69) Ward, The Earls Fitzwilliam and the Wentworth-Woodhouse Estate in the 19th Century, Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, March 1960, p.23; Cannadine, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, 1977. p.643.

(70) Beastall, Op.cit., pp.183-6.

(71) See pp. 19-20.

(72) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 119 May 1866.

(73) Ibid. Ledger Books 1 and 2.

(74) W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise, 1964, p.307; Cannadine, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, 1977, pp.80-82.

(75) S.G. Checkland, The Rise of Industrial Society in England 1815-1885, 1964. p.283. G. Kitson-Clarke, The Making of Victorian England, 1962. p.217.

(76) Sturgess, Thesis, Op.cit., pp.564-574.

(77) Howell, Thesis. Op.cit., pp.239-256.

(78) L.R.O. DDQ. Estate Account Book 1850-2. I am indebted to Major W.J. Garnett for this information which is based on a complete set of 19th Century family diaries which are retained in his private possession.

(79) Ibid. Estate Account Books 1860-82.

(80) Ibid. DDTW/34; Preston Guardian, 2 June 1882 and 23 June 1883.

(81) Preston Guardian, 10 July 1880.

References (contd.)

(82) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1205. Box 11. J.T. Clifton to T. Fair, April 1854.

(83) Ibid.

(84) Ibid. DDCl. 1225. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 1870; 1213. 29 May 1872; 30 May 1874; 1218. 20 June 1877; "I do not see my prospect of money matters mending in the least," Lady Clifton wrote in 1877. "He has lived more on board the yacht, the expenditure has been greater......much money has been given away. He talks of getting a steam yacht and the usual thing that his allowance must be increased. He does not show any inclination for caring or doing anything beyond what occurs at the moment."

(85) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to Sir Samuel Scott, 13 December 1864.

(86) Ibid. Statement of Accounts 1864-74; H. Banner to J. Fair, 23 September 1874.

(87) Ibid. Ledger Book 3; John Talbot Clifton's Estate.

(88) Ibid.

(89) Ibid. Ledger Book 4.

(90) Ibid. H. Banner to T. Fair, 14 October 1891.

CHAPTER III

THE LANDOWNER AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT

It has been argued that the landowners' "persistent energies for change" provided the basic momentum behind the agricultural advance of the 19th century.[(1)] Historical judgements on the entrepreneurial activities of landowners in the non-agricultural sector have been no less generous. It has been suggested, for instance, that the landowners' role in industrial development was probably of equal importance to the part they played in the course of agricultural change over the period 1700-1870.[(2)] In this respect the wheel has turned full circle. No-one can now seriously accept the view published by 19th century radicals that, in contrast to the dynamism of the industrial and commercial "middle classes", Britain's landed elite were both backward and lethargic in their economic thinking and in the management of their estates.

However, a real danger lies in assuming that, merely by act of association, landowners were the major source of initiative and instinctively responded to new business opportunities. Outward impressions of the land-owner-as-industrialise run the risk of investing him with entrepreneurial qualities which in reality he did not always possess. For instance, because of the direct links between the growth of Barrow as a centre for the iron and ship-building industries and the Devonshire estate, it is tempting to ascribe the qualities of business leadership to the landowner himself. Yet it has been said of the seventh Duke that his administrative involvement in Barrow's development was negligible, it is doubtful whether he was even familiar with the geography of the town, and that he felt more at ease in the conventional surroundings of the Lonsdale Agricultural Society.(3) Professor Ward's bald statement of business enterprise on the part of 19th century Ayrshire landowners could just as easily apply to most Lancashire landowners and be just as misleading.(4) By virtue of the geographical extent of their estates Lancashire's major landowners were singularly well placed to reap the rewards of industrial and urban development in the county. In virtually every case - turnpikes, canals, railway promotion, mining, ports, seaside resorts, residential building - <u>connections</u> of some kind can be traced to the landed interest in the county.

Crude overviews of this kind beg a number of pressing questions, answers to which may very well provide a more complex, yet at the same time, more valid, picture of landowners' response to the economic challenge of their day. At the heart of the matter lies the extent to which landowners were actually involved in the management of their estates. It is to be expected that, as leaders of society, they should have had the freedom and leisure to pursue occupations of a social and political kind unencumbered by the petty details of estate supervision. Nevertheless, Professor Thompson has warned that "it would be wrong to conclude that landowners confined themselves exclusively to the expenditure of incomes and were content to leave administration to agents and servants." Indeed he saw the role of landowners as being far more positive than that since "the tendency on the part of the great landowners was to become more fully involved in management and the general impression is that a growing proportion of them did in fact behave as directors of estates."(5)

However, what form did their participation take? Involvement could be expressed at several levels; at the titular level in the way in which the landowner added the weight of his rank and status to the promotion of the vested interests of his estate; at an administrative level, in that some landowners did have the control which stemmed from a detailed, working knowledge of investments and developments on their properties; and finally at the creative level in the sense of a landowners being alert to new opportunities and having the readiness to assume the initiative. There is no doubt that this is an interesting and useful analytical formula, though it remains difficult to locate individual landowners in one or more of these categories. However, it expresses an approach shared by Dr. Cannadine whose study of the managerial roles of the Earls of Calthorpe and their agents led him to conclude that "there were many intermediate positions between impressive power and total impotence...a broad spectrum ranging from informed idleness to circumscribed exuberance."(6) What is clear is that only through case studies of how business decisions were shaped on individual estates can historians acquire a fuller understanding not only of changes in landowners' attitudes but also of the adaptability and capacity for survival displayed by some, though by no means all, of the landed elite.

Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter focuses primarily on the Clifton estate at Lytham but also offers comparisons with the managerial experiences on a number of other Lancashire estates, in the hope that it will make a further contribution to building up a composite picture of the attitudes and function of major landowners in an era of profound economic change. Evidence is difficult to unearth, but the estates so far researched do underline the fact that there was no typical model, no definitive form of landowner-agent managerial relationship. Personal idiosyncracies, the size of an estate, the mounting complexities of estate business, the emergence of more rigorous professional standards among agents and an increasing tendency among the larger proprietors towards prolonged absenteeism, all these factors had a bearing on the role of the landowner in business affairs.

I

At one end of the scale stands the figure of Charles Scarisbrick, founding-father of the seaside resort of Southport. In the fullest entrepreneurial sense, the flair and foresight behind schemes to diversify investments as widely as possible outside the confines of his ancestral and agricultural estate was unmistakably Scarisbrick's. With properties scattered across central and south-west

Lancashire, a complex administrative structure evolved on his estate. As chief agent, W.H. Talbot supervised the running of the whole estate from his base at Wrightington Hall. A team of sub-agents was delegated to look after specific interests - Richard Wright at Southport, Samuel Jones at the Green Slate quarries and coal managers at the Wigan collieries. But none of these men exercised managerial autonomy. Instructions were passed down the command structure from on high, for it was essentially Scarisbrick who retained exclusive control of business decisions. Indeed, the instructions he issued to Talbot were not only detailed but they embraced every conceivable aspect of estate affairs ranging from trivial administrative matters to complex large-scale investments - the deployment of workmen around the property, the provision of pensions for the widows of estate workers, the construction of cottages, the sinking of a new coal-pit, all came under Scarisbrick's close scrutiny. Nothing seems to have escaped his attention. He had an intimate knowledge of the character and abilities of his tenant farmers and of the cropping arrangements on individual farms. Little, if anything, was left to the discretion of his agent as is evident, for example, from his precise instructions on farm letting. "Pennington," he informed Talbot in December 1855, "though a good-natured fellow, is too great a fool to be a neighbour as he has shown - Let Gore have the Burscough fields. Keep the remainder together until we see further. Pilkington to have the next chance......Forshaw has the next offer." But Scarisbrick was just at home in the business world taking personal control over such matters as share transactions and the buying and selling of land.(7)

Sir Thomas Hesketh was very much of the same mould as Charles Scarisbrick. In his case prolonged absences from Rufford Hall did not make Hesketh any less an effective director of his estate. He governed at a distance. He was deliberate and firm in his instructions and unrelenting in his demands upon his long-service and long-suffering agent William Shakeshaft. The volume and the tone of the correspondence between the two leaves no doubt that Hesketh intended his agent to act as little more than a general factotum. Failure to execute Hesketh's instructions to the full was met with threatening censure. His autocratic, uncompromising temperament was plainly expressed in a sharp rebuke he delivered to his agent in 1817: "The enormous amount of arrears and the evident plan to continue the system by not paying their present rents bespeak a total disregard of you as my steward....If any tenant cannot pay sell him up and turn him off. Better to farm the lands myself than go upon a system which has now existed so many years and has certainly increased in an extraordinary manner during your stewardship"; and he went on to warn his agent that if he did not "have...authority enough to overcome this or exertion enough to do so there can be but one alternative."(8)

This could just as easily have been a description of the Scarisbrick estate since Hesketh's agent was left with minimal scope for independent action. Certainly the broader policies governing estate development lay exclusively within the prerogative of the landowner.

But not even the minutiae of day-to-day administration went without his correction. Indeed the managerial tone was set by the general instructions which were issued to Shakeshaft on his appointment in 1809. Estate policy for the rationalisation of farm units, land-use, drainage and rents was sole preserve of the landowner. The agent was appointed to implement it. Twenty five years later there was no evidence to suggest that Hesketh had in any way relaxed his grip over estate affairs. He was adament, for instance, in maintaining a watchful eye on building costs. "Before you begin repairs of any kind", Hesketh informed his agent in 1833, "I desire I may have particulars with a sketch of the premises and as nearly as you can of the expense requisite for each." The suggestion that perhaps more repairs were needed prompted an immediate reaction: "I must repear my orders positively that in making necessary repairs I will not alter, new-build and modernise old houses - as they have hitherto done for the tenantry, so they shall continue to do."(9) His supervision of other administrative tasks was no less exhaustive. In one of Hesketh's typically wide ranging letters Shakeshaft was instructed not to let farms on the Great Harwood estate since Hesketh himself intended to go over "everyone of them immediately after the rent day... in order that I may fix more decidedly on what I will do in the winter." Indeed, not a ditch was cleaned out nor a field drained without his specific direction or approval.(10)

More significantly, the reach of Hesketh's personal involvement extended far beyond the conventional administrative tasks of running a large agricultural estate. His business interests included quarries in Wrightington, coal-mining in Shevington and Great Harwood and Parbold and a substantial stake in the Ribble Navigation Company. However, here he was less sure of his ground, and he wisely took expert advice from an experienced coal-agent in Bolton, and worked closely with the estate's Preston solicitors on the finer legal issues of his business affairs.[11] Yet Hesketh nevertheless insisted on retaining complete control over decision making. For instance, his dealings with a Liverpool based mining company which was interested in carrying out exploratory work in Shevington in 1816 had all the hallmarks of his autocratic manner. Claiming that he was "always ready to receive any fair and equitable offer from any respectable and responsible people," Hesketh went on to specify his own stringent conditions. Damage to property was to be made good "honestly, faithfully and without disputes." On no account was the estate to incur any of the expenses. Borings were to be taken only where Hesketh thought fit. The lease would be limited to twelve months and Hesketh reserved the right to close down operations should "any injurious activity" take place.[12] Not altogether surprisingly the company objected to the landowner's terms which, they thought, reflected "a seemingly unfriendly disposition manifested throughout the whole tenor of them."[13] In particular they wanted permission to bore as long as there was a reasonable hope of success and without the restrictions of having Hesketh's appointed supervisor permanently on site.[14] Hesketh's reaction suggested a greater concern with protecting his own authority and status that with taking immediate advantage of what was no doubt a potentially lucrative business offer. "I have no wish to let my coals," he announced, "and I am heartily wearied with so tedious a correspondence. I now finally and decisively conclude the negotiations by saying that the conditions as laid down and forwarded to you must be immediately accepted or wholly rejected." To conclude the narrative, the mining company failed to meet the deadline of one week and so negotiations were brought to an abrupt end.[15] Hesketh was very much his own master.

His personal handling of coal-mining on his estates was not untypical of Hesketh's style. The same decisive action was evident in his dealings with the Ribble Navigation Company. Hesketh had in fact been a shareholder in the company since its formation in 1806.[16] A new company was incorporated in 1837 for the purpose of carrying out further improvement work to the Port of Preston and the Ribble estuary, after eight years of protracted discussion and negotiation between the interested parties, who included a number of prominent landowners.[17] In a personal memorandum Hesketh made his own estimation of the company's prospects and the terms on which he would be prepared to participate in the scheme. In general he took a pessimistic view of the company's future profitability. A current company debt of over £3,800 had to be paid off and there was every indication that cargo traffic would transfer itself up the coast to Glasson dock, since cargo intended for Preston had first to be disembarked at the mouth of the Ribble estuary at Lytham. Hesketh was proved right in his views of Preston's viability as a port and he wisely kept his own share stake in the new company to a minimum.[18]

As the owner of a relatively modest and largely agricultural estatem Charles Blundell typified the diligent squire of the early 19th century. In his case absence from the estate did not imply detachment from its administration. From his London home he bombarded his agent, an Ormskirk solicitor, with searching questions and detailed comment on estate affairs - how to deal with tenants in arrears of rent, grazing arrangements on the Hall Park, the sale of surplus stock, which of his Preston properties to sell and when.[19] For better or worse there could be little doubt with whim the final decision lay. "I now find," Blundell remarked to his agent in connection with a property deal of 1825, "that I should have done well to have purchased when land was low, as you recommended, for, though I should have sold at the present prices, it would have been the best investment."[20]

Scarisbrick and Hesketh and Blundell, then, are just three examples of landowners who, in varying degree, stamped their own authority on the management of their estates.[21] Yet, moving to the other end of the spectrum, there were others who were more or less content to leave estate affairs in the hands of their agents. Indeed, whilst there are numerous examples of a joint initiative between landowner and agent behind successful business ventures, at the same time, there were also aristocratic ironmasters like Lord Granville or colliery owners like the second Earl of Durham who continued to regard their estates as a unit of consumption rather than as a business concern requiring careful management.(22) In fact, it may well have been the case that the 19th century witnessed a more pronounced withdrawal by landowners generally, and by the gentry in particular, from an active administrative role. As their business interests widened and called for much greater managerial complexity, they were able to fall back on the professional skills of agents who were better versed in business and financial matters.

Of course it did not always follow that delegating powers of control to an agent necessarily meant better management. In a period when recruitment procedure was ill-defined, appointing the right kind of agent could largely be a matter of luck. In fact, some were distinctly unfortunate in their choice. To some extent the Braddylls' financial misfortunes stemmed from the incompetence and plain dishonesty of their agent. The coal mines for which he had full managerial responsibility operated at a heavy loss. More seriously, "deficiencies" in the agent's accounts amounted to £49,000.(23) The Earl of Wilton of Heaton Hall, Manchester, suffered a similar experience. In 1841 claims were also made against his agent, Richard Denham, for the "errors" in his accounts which came to almost £38,000 spread over a period of sixteen years.(24) But the fact that these unfortunate occurrences took place at all gives some indication of a lack of managerial supervision by the landowner himself.

Lord Lilford's estate offers a good example of the way in which managerial arrangements were influenced by the nature of business affairs, by the landowner's virtually permanent absence from the property and by his own lack of business experience. Until the acquisition of Bank Hall, Bretherton in 1861 urban property and coal mining at Leigh and Atherton were the central concerns of the Lilford estate.(25) Lilford himself maintained an overview of estate developments as the weighty correspondence with his agent will testify. But he was content to leave both policy and detailed planning to his agent and solicitors and many of his letters merely reiterated and approved proposals put forward by his staff. "I must be guided by your judgement of what is best," he told his agent Richard Hodgkinson on one occasion when negotiations were being conducted with a group of coal speculators.(26) But even Hodgkinson did not measure up to the more complex demands of running a large and diverse 19th century estate.

Lilford's agent had all the commendable qualities of a loyal and hard-working steward but, in certain important respects, he fell short of what was increasingly required of the modern business manager. By 1836 he confessed to being bewildered by the complexities of dealing with mine operators and building speculators who besieged his office for operational concessions on the estate. Hodgkinson's candid assessment of his own position is worth quoting in full. "I know not why it so happens," he complained to the estate's lawyers, "but it has so happened for the last twelve months that no bargain that I have made has been carried into effect, some flaw or defect or other has been found or pretended to be found in the title of wording of the contract, so as to render my utmost exertions abortive and hence my situation has for some time been very irksome; and, if it cannot be improved, I must quit it up altogether."(27) By the end of the year Hodgkinson had in fact resigned and he made way for William Selby and his son, men who first and foremost were mining engineers and products of the business world. As a result the Lilford estate came under the managerial control of agents who had specialised expertise, powerful opinions and a strong influence over their employer. It was essentially they who developed a competitive and finely tuned policy towards the mining companies; and it was they who, through their comprehensive knowledge of mining operations in the locality, determined the pace and conditions under which coal was to be mined.(28) Moreover, this situation on the Lilford estate was not exceptional. Despite all their mineral wealth, the administration on the Earls of Dudley's Midlands estates during the early 19th century was woefully archaic. Supervision was distant, accounting methods were primitive and the obsolete practices of 18th century stewardship prevailed. In short, the Dudley estates were "under the everyday management of men who were not qualified in land or mine valuation, still less in mining engineering."(29)

However, it must be added that Lilford, like Dudley was no passive observer. There were occasions when he made a firm managerial intervention and yet, when he did so, it was not always for sound business reasons. In this respect two episodes are worth recalling. The first, in 1836, concerned building policy in Atherton and Leigh. Normally such matters as building covenants, lease terms, street plans and land values were dealt with by a management team of agent, surveyors and lawyers. Lilford played no part except for signing bundles of leases on his rare visits to the county.(30) In 1836, however, a proposal to build a gasworks in Atherton resulted in a sharp difference of opinion between Lilford and his agent. Keen to encourage building expansion in Atherton, Hodgkinson had no doubts that it would pay the estate to offer generous terms to the gas company, namely a ground rent of ½d. per square yard instead of the customary 1d. together with a 999 year lease. His letters to Lilford were suitably deferential but they expressed a commercially sound argument which was seemingly difficult to resist. Indeed Hodgkinson had already pre-empted a formal letter of approval. "As it was indispensible that your Lordship's name or mine should first appear in the list (of subscribers) I put down your name for ten shares with an expressed stipulation that I must have them myself if your Lordship declined taking them."(31) Lilford's reaction was not the one Hodgkinson expected. His sense of business opportunity gave way to a greater sense of fair play which argued that Atherton should be treated no differently from Leigh. Lilford was firmly opposed to letting land in Atherton for anything less than the 1d. per square yard he charged at Leigh and he was prepared to "offer a lease of 99 years and no more."(32) Hodgkinson refused to relent. "It is not for me," he replied, "to point out to your Lordship any particular line of conduct for your Lordship to adopt in any particular question - but it may perhaps be part of my duty to acquaint your Lordship of the feelings in any particular question arising solely between your Lordship and your tenants." There already existed three factories in Atherton, he went on, capable of consuming more gas than the whole township of Leigh. A gas works had already been built at Leigh and on land belonging "to a private person who among us is noted for making most of his property." Furthermore, "the inhabitants of Atherton feel strongly upon what they call the preference given to Leigh over Atherton on the subject of leasing."(33) Ultimately, this combination of ingratiation and hard reasoning carried the day. The gas-works at Atherton was built and 999 year leases became the standard building term.(34)

A second area of conflict between landowner and agent centred on the intense rivalry among the railway companies to gain access across Lilford's estate, which was strategically situated between Liverpool and Lancashire's industrial heartland, Bolton and Manchester. The early years of Lancashire's railway history had been formative ones in equipping estate administrators with the experience of dealing with the railway companies. Indeed the Lilford estate was connected with two of the first lines to be built, the Bolton/Leigh and the Newton/Warrington lines, which opened in 1831.(35) Hodgkinson and the estate's solicitors were basically responsible for articulating the landowner's interests. Their command over the complexities of railway promotion was vital - for instance, the timing and presentation of objections before parliamentary committee or compensation to be paid for damage done to agricultural land. In the case of the Bolton-Leigh railway bill it was the estate's solicitors who drew up the detailed and specific clauses which excluded the railway company from building roads and warehouses which might have been a threat to Lilford's own coal trade in Atherton. At the same time these early ventures registered the fact that transactions with the railway companies could be highly lucrative. One and a half acres sold to the Newton-Warrington railway company made £433 and the Bolton and Leigh company paid £1,000 for their tract of land.(36)

It was partly the speculative attraction of selling railway land to the highest bidder which prompted Lilford's unusual intervention in the negotiations between the estate office and two rival companies over the construction of a Manchester-Southport line in 1845. The intense rivalry to win Lilford's support involved the Grand Union and a Manchester based consortium whom proposed building two lines - Manchester/Southport and Liverpool/Preston - served by a junction at Atherton. No doubt Lilford was aware that, in the railway mania which characterised the 1840s, exorbitant prices could be asked and obtained. His own preference settled on the Grand Union. They offered a cash price of £200 per acre as opposed to a share allocation in the company. Yet, there were also motives of a more personal nature involved. He took offence at the fact that his agent Selby and the directors of the competing company had earlier reached a preliminary agreement without his prior knowledge or consent.(37) Nevertheless, Selby's own assessment of the situation made sound commercial sense. Carriage charges demanded by the Grand Union and their associate companies had previously made it difficult for Atherton coal to penetrate the Liverpool and Manchester markets and he was more than anxious to prevent the Grand Union from completing what would amount to a monopoly over the railway network in the locality.(38) In the end the prospects of a speculative killing and Lilford's sense of wounded pride gave way to his agent's sounder business assessment. In all, Lord Lilford could be described neither as a disinterested onlooker nor a dynamic participant in the management of estate affairs. He could and did act decisively in influencing managerial decisions but not in a way which suggests a mature commercial awareness.

II

The Clifton estate highlights important features of managerial relationships on what was a large and complex property. In this respect the period of Thomas Clifton's ownership, from 1832 to 1851, is of particular interest. After all, these were formative years in the estate's development when agriculture was being reorganised, railways built and the first heavy investment made in the urban property. It was also a period in which the landowner was administratively more active. Even so, Clifton's role, like that of Lord Lilford's, tended to be heavily restricted by his own absenteeism and his inability to come to terms with business affairs outside matters of an agricultural kind. After mid-century successive owners continued to matter though not in any serious administrative sense. Briefly, they tended to be more concerned with the spending of wealth rather than with the means which generated it.

In terms of managerial influence there were other groups of people who mattered more than the Cliftons. Firstly, every landed family needed a body of solicitors at its back if only to fight the seemingly endless litigations which formed a conventional part of a landowner's life-style. But, clearly, the role of the legal body was more important than that. Cutting through the complex knot of family settlements, land laws, conveyance, covenants and mortgages required intense legal supervision. Indeed the Cliftons had personal experience of the kind of problems which the absence of professional guidance could create. The attempt by Hesketh-Fleetwood's steward to carry out the sale of the Marton estate to the Cliftons in 1842 without regular legal advice resulted in such difficulties with mortgages that the whole transaction was threatend at one stage.(39) Furthermore, solicitors' wide experience of building procedures and leasing policies proved to be of crucial importance to an estate increasingly concerned with urban development. Indeed the Cliftons' solicitors were fully involved in every stage of planning especially when the building of St. Annes got under way.(40) Moreover, where solicitors acted in the dual role of legal advisors and trustees to an estate, as was the case at Southport, they were in a position to exert a more considerable influence over policy.(41)

Above all, as has already been suggested, a trusted firm of solicitors filled the vital role of mortgage broker.(42) Given their wide-ranging influence and connections as well as their genuine sense of tradition and long service to the estate, Wilson and Deacon came to the rescue of the Cliftons on more than one occasion. Their familiarity with the local money market enabled them to find consolidating mortgages at the best rates. In the difficult days of 1850, for instance, they persuaded a local business-man and property owner, J.W. Shuttleworth, to part with £76,000 for the purpose of clearing a number of smaller and more expensive loans and, as a result, reduced the level of fixed outgoings on interest charges.(43) And, in moments of crisis such as in 1894, they personally put up the money to shore up the estate's solvency.(44)

But by far the most important administrative group were the land agents. Indeed, behind every successul landowner, it could be argued, there could be found an equally successful agent. The fortunes of the Bedford, Stafford and Fitzwilliam families, for example, were built on the devotion and capability of agents like John Haedy, James Locke and Daniel Maude.(45) These impressive figures also had their regional equivalents. The Hales saw to the central administration of Lord Derby's multifarious estates. Succeeding generations of Selbys took command of Lord Lilford's widely scattered urban and agricultural properties. The Devonshire interests were left in the capable hands of James Drewry. And, at one time or another, all of these men canvassed the knowledge and experience of the Fairs who, in effect, masterminded the sweeping changes taking place on the Clifton estate during the 19th century. Furthermore,many of these agents established dynastic links with their respective estates ensuring a continuity of management procedures and policies. In their role as agents the Shakeshaft family became as indelibly linked with the Rufford Hall estate as the landowner. Similarly, the first of the Fairs, James Fair, arrived as agent to the Clifton estate in 1836 and his grandson was carrying out the same administrative duties at the turn of the century.

Clearly, the real test of a good agent was not just his unimpeachable character but his technical expertise is meeting the ever-widening demands made on his managerial skills. By the middle of the 19th century it no longer sufficed to recruit from among groups which had been traditionally favoured by landowners, namely local solicitors and retired army officers, on the grounds that individuals such as these were regarded as socially fitting.(46) Managing the rapidly diversifying interests of the 19th century estate called for qualities of an essentially professional kind. Energy, initiative, technical expertise and broad administrative abilities were required to deal with the scale of enterprise evident on many of Lancashire's large estates. Agricultural affairs alone demanded a thorough business-like approach. Implementing a good system of farming involved a vigilant attention to the condition of every farm and every field, familiarity with technical advances in farming methods, proficiency in drainage operations, a working knowledge of price and market trends and so on.[47] More and more, however, the responsibilities of the 19th century land-agent transcended the traditional sphere of agriculture. Increasingly he moved in the world of the mining engineer, the railway contractor, the builder and the financier. He was involved in the evaluation of non-agricultural ventures and in a continuing redefinition of the estate's needs all of which suggested "a step forward in the development of an estate consciousness and of a more professional function for the agent."[48]

By and large, the estates which fall within the scope of this study were administered by men of impressive ability. No more so than the Clifton estate which was fortunate to have at the helm men of the calibre of James and Thomas Fair. A number of impressive developments took place under their agency. They brought sweeping changes to the agricultural property. The village of Lytham was transformed into a select residential resort. The expansion of Blackpool was also bound up with the Cliftons' territorial interests. The estate inspired the planning and building of a new resort at St. Annes. Further, the construction of the Fylde railway network and schemes to dredge the Ribble and enlarge the Port of Preston were ventures which had strong connections with the Clifton family. It is an impressive scene of economic activity such as could have been found on many large estates during the 19th century; and yet such a bald statement of achievement leaves a number of important questions unanswered. How were such undertakings managed? Who determined the timing and direction of these developments? What form did the decision-making process take? In short, is it possible to lay bare the respective managerial contributions of landowner and agent? Professor Thompson has already pointed out how difficult it is "to generalise about the division of managerial function between landowners and their agents."[49] Nevertheless, it seems vital to an understanding of the nature and mechanism of change on landed estates that some attempt should be made.

There can be no doubt that the truly entrepreneurial phase in the transformation of the Clifton estate stemmed from the partnership between Thomas Clifton who inherited the property in 1832 and James Fair who was appointed agent in 1836. Unfortunately little is known about Fair's background. What evidence there is suggests that he had established a certain local reputation for himself before his appointment to the estate office at Lytham. He had served his apprenticeship with Lord Derby and was eventually placed in charge of the Earl's Weeton property on the Fylde, where he probably came to Clifton's attention.[50] Clifton could not have been more fortunate in his choice of agent. Fair brought with him qualities of character, resourcefulness and technical ability which were evident from the outset. First and foremost, his reputation was built on his abilities as an agricultural improver. As early correspondence and a series of estate surveys suggests, Fair threw himself into the detail of reorganising farming throughout the estate. When he was not in the estate office his time seems to have taken up with the newly founded Lytham Agricultural Improvement Society, keeping abreast of the latest scientific treatises or exchanging views and ideas with other agriculturalists.(51) His expertise did not go unnoticed. Neighbouring farmers and landowners made frequent demand on Fair's time. Typical was John Cunliffe of Myerscough Hall who pleaded that he could "scarcely move a spadeful of earth from the place where it lies until you have seen it."(52) William Garnett wanted Fair's advice on whether to purchase Ashton Hall estate when it came onto the market in 1840.(53) Edward Dawson of Aldcliffe Hall wanted a tour of inspection of Lytham estate before he started draining his own property.(54) Estate work dominated Fair's life virtually to the exclusion of all else. Even the frequent and at times lengthy letters between Fair and his brother Thomas, who was agent to the Earl of Lonsdale in Cumbria, were almost totally confined to business transactions and exchanges of views on current agricultural matters.(55) But Fair's efforts did not go unrewarded. His £800 p.a. salary in 1865 compares exactly with what the Duke of Bedford paid his chief agent in 1861. In fact, by 1875, Thomas Fair was judged to be worth the princely sum of £1,400 p.a. with a further £100 allowance on his house. This was tribute indeed to an agent's qualities, personal sacrifices and what appeared to be the indispensability of his position.(56)

James Fair was probably not untypical in terms of the energy and resilience that were needed to oversee a number of concurrent undertakings. William Shakeshaft, agent to the Hesketh estate at Rufford for twenty five years, was of the same mould. He rose from very humble beginnings to become an assistant to a Preston land surveyor. He was then employed by Preston's leading cotton manufacturer and one-time M.P., John Horrocks, to manage his property in the town, which enabled him to set himself up as an independent land surveyor. Finally, in 1809, the Hesketh appointed him as their full-time agent. Like Fair he found himself faced with wide-ranging responsibilties. Initially he was employed to survey the whole of the estate, make valuations, engage workmen and instigate improvements. But, in due course, he supervised the longer-term reclamation projects on Tarleton Moss, Martin Mere and Longton and Croston marshes, he surveyed sections of the Liverpool to Preston turnpike and he managed coalmines at Great Harwood, Wrightington and Shevington. One letter of July 1833 describes the pace of his working life though admittedly at one of the busiest times of the year: "Since I have begun (the harvest) I have mounted my horse at seven and continued upon in trotting and galloping about the park til twelve, mounted again at one and continued til seven or eight at night and sometimes nine, and on Saturday til ten. I have twenty one mowers and one hundred haymakers besides the men whom we employed before." This at the age of sixty two. It is not altogether surprising that Shakeshaft died eight months later.[57]

Moreover, the relationship between landowner and agent was not necessarily distant and formal. In the case of Clifton and Fair, their relationship was one of mutual respect and intimacy between friends rather than one of employer and employee. Thomas Clifton was genuinely concerned about his agent's health as the rigours of estate work began to take their toll. "I fear your late indisposition has been brought on by over-extension through want of requisite assistance....Having myself found some benefits by a change of air.....I venture to recommend the same medicine to you and during your absence forget all business."(58) Regularly Clifton implored him to take a break at the family's country retreat at Oakham and have medical treatment in London.(59) But rarely was Clifton's advice taken up. However, from 1843 onwards, Fair occasionally took the spa waters at Harrogate, though this did not mean any loss of control over affairs in the estate office at Lytham. At his own request he was pursued by a constant stream of letters which kept him fully informed about progress with the drainage schemes, building works, lease agreements, the sale of farmers' crops and so on.(60) For his part, Clifton shared the intimacies of a friend reporting family gossip - the health of his family, the social details of sporting occasions, family marriages, recent property purchases by leading county families.(61)

Given this personal intimacy between landowner and agent it should be possible to make a closer examination of their respective contributions in shaping business policy on the estate. In his attitude and interests

Thomas Clifton cuts a very conventional figure. Indeed, Broderick's anachronistic caricature of the English landowner, penned in 1881, defined an ideal to which Clifton aspired but never attained. "A great English landlord of the best type," he wrote, "brings to bear, not only on agriculture but on the whole rural economy of his neighbourhood, a higher intelligence, larger views of estate management, a more enlightened spirit, a deeper sense of responsibility, than could be expected of even yeomen....He spends money on agricultural improvements which professional farmers could ill-afford."(62) Thomas Clifton would have recognised the spirit in which that was written. Like any other landowner he was desperately anxious that his estate should provide him with all the visible trappings of high social station and ample means of providing for his dependents. At the same time he embodied the notion that he was entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the estate for the benefit of future owners and occupiers of the soil. Indeed he made every effort to reconcile what were clearly conflicting obligations. For instance, this was apparent in 1849 when he pursued ways of raising his son's allowance without prejudicing investment in the estate. At his own suggestion Clifton put his London house on the market which he anticipated would realise £10,000 and save interest payments of £500 p.a. This way, he pointed out to Fair, the allowance "might now be afforded without diminishing the improvements which are going on and, I hope for the benefit of those who succeed me, will continue to go on upon the property."(63)

Clifton's concern for the well-being of the estate is evident. Yet his area of interest and the level of his active participation were very narrow. His was essentially the world of the agriculturalist. In this respect he insisted on being kept fully informed as to what farming developments were taking place. Though he was mostly absent from the estate a constant flow of information found its way to Clifton. More important matters calling for immediate attention usually occasioned meetings with his agent and, with fastidious regularity, Clifton journied to Lytham from his London or Rutland homes to attend rent days or meetings of the local agricultural society, and he usually used such opportunities to make an inspection of farms on the estate. He was certainly well acquainted with individual tenants and their farming capabilities. He took an active interest in appointments to vacant farms and he made his own recommendations when there were several applications for the same tenancy.(64) Even during the last year of his life, when racked by illness, Clifton's appetite for information remained as keen as ever. "Nor have I heard anything of Mr. Lauder's sale," he impatiently wrote to Fair, "and what is going on at Salwick? How is planting getting on? And have you let the building of the lodges?"(65) Nor had he lost a life-time's habit of making detailed scrutiny of reports and accounts: "I do not perceive in the drainage account of Westby that you have done anything for J.Ward. Does he still object to deep drainage or the men going on his property?"(66) Moreover, Clifton did not restrict himself solely to the agricultural concerns of his own estate. His passionate defence of protectionism brings into sharper focus the behaviour of a traditional landowner who saw protection as a pillar of both the agricultural and landed interest which, on that basis, had to be defended to the last. He spent the last months of his life in an abortive attempt to rally the landowners of north Lancashire behind a series of petitions against what he always regarded as the "free trade experiment."(67)

Yet, What of Clifton's managerial role in such ventures as urban development and railway promotion - undertakings which have a far greater entrepreneurial ring about them? Important decisions were involved in the non-agricultural sphere. For, as time wore on, it became increasingly apparent that the future prosperity of the estate would come to rest more and more on the profitability of land speculation in Blackpool, the promotion of an efficient railway network throughout the region and the encouragement of residential building in Lytham and neighbouring coastal areas. It is worth recalling that, although agricultural rents remained the financial life-blood of the estate until in fact the end of the century, non-agricultural income was nevertheless of some importance. For instance, the Lytham investment of the early 1840s was producing a valuable £5,000 p.a. by 1867 from ground and property rents. This sum amounted to a welcome 20% of the income derived from all the estate farms and obviously went some way towards servicing the debts which were inevitably incurred in carrying out the improvement work in the agricultural sector.(68)

There is no doubt that Thomas Clifton recognised the potential of his Blackpool and Lytham properties. Equally, he no doubt wished to increase his income from the estate; but it seems unlikely that he actually suggested and directed how this could be done. When to invest and where, a nd when to sell, or what terms to agree with developers, and how to safeguard the wider interests of the estate. Clifton's attitude could not actually be described as hostile to crucial developments of this kind but nor was it always helpful. The fact was that Thomas Clifton found it difficult to identify with and fully understand business ventures outside the world of agriculture he knew best. Indeed, on occasion, he carried a sense of caution and suspicion to the point of inhibiting positive decision-making. This is made very clear in the estate's dealings with the railway companies. Railway development involved the Cliftons from the outset. The construction of an integrated railway network across the Fylde, thus linking the region with the industrialised south and east of the county, was central to the prosperity of the Clifton estate. A main spine was built between Preston and Fleetwood and opened in 1840. By 1846, two branch lines had been constructed which connected Blackpool and Lytham with the main line.(69) Yet it is apparent that the initiative and policy in dealing with the railway companies stemmed from the agent and not the landowner. It was James Fair who forged connections with the pioneering companies. In September 1836 he was elected as a director of the Preston and Longridge Railway Company. On his initiative the estate invested in two share issues of the North Union Railway Company in 1837.

And it was Fair who stage-managed the complex and trying negotiations with the Preston and Wyre Railway Company concerning the sale of land in Clifton-with-Salwick and Kirkham required for the building of the main Fylde line.(70)

However, the Cliftons, like many other landowners, became more actively and directly involved in railways during the period of hectic branch-line construction from the 1840s onwards.(71) Their first major investment was in the Lytham-Kirkham line which had been projected in the original Preston and Wyre Railway Bill.(72) Yet it was built not because of Thomas Clifton's personal commitment to the project, but despite his thinly disguised reservations about it. The energy behind the scheme came from James Fair, and he devised the terms on which an agreement with the railway company was reached. He handled the complex matters of raising capital, determining the size of the estate's own financial stake, planning the route of the new line, negotiating compensation for damage and severance and asserting his right to a place on the board of directors. Even the family's lawyers confessed a certain inadequacy and inexperience in negotiating contracts with railway companies and methods of raising the necessary capital.(73) It was Fair who obtained what proved to be very advantageous terms. Thomas Clifton advanced £25,000 which was secured by a mortgage to the railway company at 4% interest but with the option of converting the sum into stock over a seven year period. Furthermore, he and his successors were reserved the right of nominating one director to the company. Moreover, the route of the track, skirting the boundaries of Clifton and meandering through Westby, Warton and Lytham, ensured that no part of the estate went unserved by the railway.(74)

However, at one stage, it looked as if the scheme would never get off the drawing board. The reason was Thomas Clifton's vacillating attitude. Of course everything depended on the sanction of the landowners and a point was in fact reached when the promoters began having doubts about finding terms which would fully meet with Clifton's approval. Speculation about the line's future was deliberately leaked to the local newspapers in order to pressure Clifton into making a firm decision. "I was not sorry to see the latter village (Lytham) named," the estate's solicitor wrote to Fair, "for, as agreed to at the meeting, it will give Mr. Clifton an opportunity of deciding whether or not he will have a railway at Lytham."(75) Once Clifton had finally consented he left the whole matter entirely in Fair's hands as the following instructions make clear: "With respect to the railroad," Clifton informed his agent, "if you are of the opinion that the terms which you proposed, should they be conceded by the directors at the intended meeting.....are such as to be advantageous to the property, of course, I most willingly assent to them." The landowner's main concern was limited to obtaining an assurance that physical damage to the land would be kept to a minimum and adequate compensation would be paid to tenant farmers.(76)

Financial dealings with the railway company were then left to Fair. In effect he went on to present his employer with a series of "faits accomplis". For instance, it was the agent who made the decisions regarding the estate's share-holding in the company. In August 1845 he put a number of shares onto the open market in order to capitalise on their rising value. He also knew that Thomas Clifton would be far from unenthusiastic about limiting the estate's connection with the railway companies. As expected, a few days later, Fair's decision was fully endorsed. "I am not fond of railway shares and I never was," Clifton wrote, "and I therefore heartily concur with you in the propriety of selling such portion as you think fit....and, if it can be affected, I am most willing to part with any portion of mine and, though throwing so many into the market at once might not be politic, I hope you will get rid of them as soon as possible."(77)

Thomas Clifton's role, then, was a titular one. It consisted largely of endorsing the managerial decisions of his agent. However, on occasion, it extended to using the weight of the family name and influence as a lever against the railway company. In March 1845, for instance, the company threatened to withdraw from the original agreement, which had clearly been entirely generous towards the Clifton interest. But the estate had the whip-hand. John Talbot Clifton, who at the time was M.P. for North Lancashire, countered with the warning that his parliamentary support for a proposed Lytham and Blackpool Railway Bill would be withdrawn and the estate would continue the line to Blackpool for themselves unless the original agreement was adhered to.(78) Similarly, the following month and again at Fair's bidding, Clifton issued the same warning unless a new share issue was offered to existing investors at what they considered to be more advantageous terms.(79) Otherwise Clifton preferred to remain at a distance. He grudgingly filled up the subscription list of shareholders and, thereafter, rubber-stamped his agent's decisions.(80)

Again, Thomas Clifton could be persuaded to see the advantages of commercial investment, although that did not necessarily make him any the more enthusiastic. This was evident in the estate's dealings with the Ribble Navigation Company. Briefly, a new company had been established in 1836 with the object of developing a port at Preston which would have the cspacity to cater for large sea-going vessels. The operation involved dredging the River Ribble and its estuary and the construction of a lighthouse, embankments and dock facilities at an estimated cost of £36,000.(81) At the outset the Cliftons were approached to participate in the venture. But, once more, it was James Fair who defined the estate's objectives. "I have never had any faith in the scheme itself." he wrote to Thomas Clifton in 1840. "Our task must be to make certain claim to the land along the foreshore."(82) Indeed, dredging work and deepening the river made several thousand acres available for reclamation along both banks of the Ribble. Securing the land along the foreshore in Clifton-with-Salwick basically lay behind Fair's acceptance of a directorship in the company. Moreover, at first this aim seemed to have been met by the terms of the company's original prospectus which declared that "all lands gained or reclaimed by any future alterations in the channel and bed of the river.....(should) become the property of the owners of the lands adjoining thereto."[83] In addition, Fair negotiated a highly lucrative arrangements whereby the estate agreed to lease Lytham docks to the company for the purpose of unloading cargo until the dredging work had been completed. Improvements to the harbour at Lytham involved the estate in considerable expense yet the rental promised a return of over 6%.[84]

As events turned out Fair's carefully laid plans backfired on him. Firstly, the directors of the Navigation Company came round to Fair's steadfast view that the land was in fact a better commercial proposition than the port itself. By 1847 it was clear to all concerned that the market value of 2,000 acres of reclaimed land would more than offset the losses which had been incurred in attempting to launch Preston as a major port. Despite the improvement work which had taken place, the channel providing access to the docks was too shallow to accommodate increasingly larger vessels.[85] The export trade in coal from Preston did not materialise and there was no significant increase in foreign trade generally. With Lytham docks already running up annual losses, the Irish famine and a sharp drop in the grain trade came as a final blow. Not surprisingly, the directors' report to company shareholders in July 1847 concentrated on land reclamation.[86] Moreover, it was in any case legally questionable whether the navigation company had the powers to make a grant of any reclaimed land in the first place. The Duchy of Lancaster, as it came to quickly appreciate, probably had the strongest legal claim to land which lay below the original high-water mark. What then followed was a protracted court battle between the interested parties. In the end the Cliftons emerged from the fray with a certain amount of bruised pride and unanticipated expense. Their share-holding in the Ribble Navigation Company was virtually valueless and the reclaimed land along the foreshore of Clifton-with-Salwick had been purchased, with the proceeds divided between the company and the Duchy. On top of that there were the costs of five years expensive litigation.(87) The whole experience reinforced Clifton's prejudice against commercial speculation. "I left these affairs in your hands," he acidly remarked to James Fair in 1850, "but I have always been of the opinion that we should not involve ourselves with a class of men who are little better than scoundrels."(88)

The third and undoubtedly the most crucial area of non-agricultural investment concerned urban development on the estate. Thomas Clifton's obituarist saw the emergence of a residential resort at Lytham as a monument to the landowner's greatest achievement: "Those who remember what the village of Lytham was thirty to forty years ago and contrast its present appearances, will be ready to award to the late lamented gentleman the praise bestowed upon a Roman Emperor; that he found the city composed of brick and left it in marble. Nothing can be more striking than the difference betwixt what Lytham was and what it is now."(89) The reality, however, was somewhat different. Not only is the scale of Lytham's development exaggerated but Thomas Clifton is portrayed in a somewhat flattering role. The truth is that, left to the landowner, it is unlikely that what amounted to a humble beginning to the estate's urban policy would have been made. When a local antiquarian, Edward Baines, pointed out that Lytham "was greatly improved under the agency of Mr. Fair" his remarks amounted to something more than a simple statement of chronological fact.(90) Inspiration came from the agent rather than the landowner.

Plans to invest in property development appeared shortly after Fair's appointment to the Clifton estate. But he was initially attracted towards Blackpool rather than Lytham for the good reason that Blackpool at the time showed more promise as "a favourite, salubrious and fashionable resort for respectable families."(91) It was Fair who made the enquiries after property along the sea-front in central Blackpool when it came onto the market in 1837. On that occasion he failed to buy but when the property again came up for sale in 1843 it finally came into Clifton's ownership.(92)

Basically there were two related aspects involved in the estate's policy towards its Blackpool properties. Firstly, investment in residential building around the central location of what was to become Talbot Square and, secondly, the consolidation of landholdings based on the Clifton's Layton Hall estate which was situated about one mile directly inland from the town. The notion of laying out and developing select residential housing on the newly acquired property in central Blackpool stemmed from Fair or, to be more precise, from an exchange of ideas with a fellow land-agent, Jonathan Ashworth, of Turton, near Bolton. In fact it was Ashworth who suggested certain improvements to the resort including the construction of crescents around Talbot Square.(93) The estate's involvement in Blackpool is examined in more detail in a later chapter(94) but suffice to say at this stage that plans to develop the area for high-class marine villas were never put into effect. The plots along Clifton Street leading to the sea-front were put up for auction and sold off in 1850.(95)

A second feature of estate policy involved the purchase of small properties to consolidate holdings in the immediate hinterland of Blackpool and, in effect, create a ring-fence which stretched from the village of Great Marton to the south-east of the resort through Layton Hall to meet with the corridor of land extending from the sea-front which had been purchased in 1843. In all, thirteen properties were acquired in Layton and Marton between 1840 and 1851 ranging from the 367 acres purchased from Hesketh-Fleetwood in 1841/2 to plots as small as 1½ acres.(96) Clifton's attitude was basically one of ambivalence. He approved all his agent's transactions, he could recognise the lucrative potential of the investment and yet a nagging fear of costs and having to pay "extravagant prices" suggests that Clifton, by himself, would not have entertained dealing in the property market on the same scale as James Fair.(97)

As interest in Blackpool began to wane, Lytham became the focus of attention. The coming of the railways in 1846 reinforced the decision to divert funds, previously ear-marked for residential building at Blackpool, into the construction of a promenade and show-piece villas at Lytham.(98) Building land was opened up at the west end of the village with a view to leasing out plots to individual builders. The instrument of control was, of course, the lease system with built-in covenants to govern type and function of buildings. In this respect it was the agent who formulated the leases and assigned them. All that was asked of the landowner was to give his assent and add his signature.(99) Clifton himself clearly had mixed feelings on the matter of Lytham's transformation into a residential resort. In his own mind the prospect of an increased rental had to be weighed against the possibility that attracting a new residential clientele might also threaten his own social and political authority in the locality. Furthermore, he had reservations about the aesthetic attractions of even planned urban development. For instance, the sale of land for a station to the Preston and Wyre Railway Company compounded his anxiety. A long letter to his agent in September, 1845 expressed an air of resignation rather than unequivocal approval. It also makes clear the locus of managerial control. "I hope you will not give up more land at Lytham for the terminus than is actually necessary," Clifton wrote, "for, however profitable it may be and I admit it to be so, I feel regret at parting with every rood or rather piece of ground in that parish."(100)

Nevertheless, whatever the points of difference between landowner and agent, Thomas Clifton and his heir were the first to admit the indispensability of James Fair to the management of their estates. The financially trying months of 1848 provided a sharp reminder of that fact. With the prospect of a stagnating if not a falling rent-roll, the expense of construction work at Lytham, a mounting overdraft at the bank and the difficulty of raising money elsewhere, Fair left his employer in no doubt that economies would have to be made and in an area which would do least damage to the estate - namely personal spending. Unfortunately, individual family members did not share Fair's set of priorities. With personal debts running to £3,000 John Talbot's most pressing concern was to be rescued from the clutches of his creditors. Thomas Clifton seemed unable to cure his son's extravagant habits and he despairingly resigned the whole matter to Fair. "I am certainly not ignorant that our present embarrassment has caused you as much distress and discomfort as it has done me," he went on, "but I have hitherto the consolation that my affairs were entirely directed by you and that time and such measures as you might deem right to adopt would eventually extricate us from the existing difficulties." In that case Fair decided on a firm stand. After all it had been he who had been making the personal sacrifices by foregoing his own salary. The impasse called for a test of his employer's loyalty and his own authority. He simply threatened to resign his own position and it had an immediate effect. John Talbot's reaction is worth quoting in full in that it demonstrated the degree of dependency on the agent's central role in the management of the estate. "All I hope," Clifton promptly replied "is that, on account of all this, you will not leave us.....I would much rather owe £10,000 than you should go away from the Lytham property....I consider your services would be a great loss to us and very much so in my father's case who has no inclination for business. I need not say that if I am spared to succeed to my father I would endeavour and with a might good will to make things as comfortable for you as I can."(101)

Thomas Clifton's death in 1851 marked the end of a highly successful and productive relationship between landowner and agent. There can be no doubting Clifton's genuine concern to exercise his trusteeship in a manner likely to improve the estate. He was naturally interested in increasing the rent-roll and augmenting his own disposable income. But he did not show how this was to be done and it is unlikely that the estate's involvement in a widening range of non-agricultural ventures was initiated by him. Thomas Clifton did not adapt easily and readily to the more complex managerial demands which running an estate like his own was bound to produce. In the decision-making process he did not instruct as much as receive instruction.

III

The 1850s brought changes to the central characters involved in the management of the Clifton estate. Thomas Clifton may have suffered from a myopic view of economic development on the estate but he had compensating qualities which were not apparent in his successor. In particular, a strong sense of duty and responsibility. By contrast, his son, John Talbot Clifton, had showed signs of a pragmatic, business outlook which had escaped his father. As M.P. for North Lancashire between 1844 and 1847 he played an active part in numerous parliamentary committees examining railway bills and was in fact instrumental in steering through the Lytham railway bill. He was adaptable to change. He acknowledged the irreversibility of the repeal of the Corn Laws and he had a sound grasp of free trade in terms of its implications for the future of agriculture.(102) However, he failed to live up to this early promise. He was too easily distracted by the social whirl and had little time or interest in the detailed business of estate management. For him an estate was to be enjoyed not endured. He preferred to build his life as far away from Lytham as possible, pursuing a military career, enjoying London's high society, hunting among socially fashionable circles and indulging his consuming passion for travel. Throughout his later years his appetite for consumer spending became insatiable and his financial embarrassments a perennial problem to the estate office.

However, while the process of primogeniture could have unfortunate consequences in one respect, the dynasty of the Fairs continued to good effect in another. The change of personnel in the estate office was less dramatic. James Fair soldiered on until his death in 1873 but, from the late 1850s onwards, the managerial burden had been shifting gradually on to the capable shoulders of his son Thomas. No-one could have been better schooled for his vocation. Tactful and diplomatic in manner yet strong in opinion, he had a flair for administration, a diligent concern for detail, a sure grasp of financial affairs and a keen sense of foresight in his planning. And like most successful agents, Thomas Fair had the prodigious energy needed to oversee a multitude of tasks. On what was for him a typical day he began by attending to routine administrative matters in the morning, and then went on to a local husting, attending a meeting of the Warton school trustees in the afternoon, where he was "detained until late", and still found time to write an apology to his employer for the delay in replying to letters. It made no difference that it happened to be Christmas Eve 1869.(103) Colonel Clifton had no doubts himself about his own good fortune in having an agent of such stature, as he made clear on his departure overseas in 1855. "My sincere wish," he wrote, "is that you will continue to conduct the affairs of the property, feeling confident that they could not be in better hands and knowing that, from your high sense of honour, as a man of business and from your own personal friendliness to me, I may go with my regiment abroad with a feeling of security. I could not have done so if my affairs were looked upon as a mere matter of business.'[104] Thomas Fair could not have expressed a view of his own position any better. In other words, he did not think purely and simply in terms of being well-paid for a job well-done. He embodied a keen sense of tradition, duty and pride in his personal commitment to sustain the esteem of the family name and the integrity of the estate.

Economic progress on the estate after 1850 can best be described as one of consolidation. Plans to remodel farm units and extend the drainage system were intensified.[105] A long-standing aim to construct a direct rail link between Blackpool and Lytham was finally undertaken in 1863.[106] In turn this addition to the railway network synchronised with a policy to encourage select, residential building at the western end of Lytham. Similarly, laying the foundation stone to the new resort at St. Annes in 1875 was the logical extension to plans for converting the barren coastal sands into building land.[107]

Considering the circumstances under which the agent had to work, it was a remarkable managerial achievement that the momentum of earlier years was sustained. As a glance at the account books after 1862 will confirm, the administration of the estate ticked over with meticulous efficiency. These sources as well as correspondence of the period convey the picture of an agent who drew on an impressive technical knowledge and business astuteness in dealing with a wide range of subjects. He was an administrator, developer, agricultural manager and legal adviser rolled into one. But allied to his business acumen was Fair's considerable ability as an accountant and there lies the key to his successful management of the estate. Throughout his long years of service Fair had to walk a precarious financial tight-rope in an effort to balance family expenditure with the capital requirements of investment in the estate. It was never an easy task and Fair often found himself in an invidious position. On the one hand he had to satisfy his employer's demands for an increased allowance and yet, on the other, he felt compelled by a conflicting sense of obligation to ensure that this did not threaten financial resources which were needed elsewhere. As it was, balancing estate income with regular outgoing and increasing capital spending was, in itself, a major problem without the added complication of having to fund excessive family expenditure. Indeed, the high level of investment in the agricultural estate or in such projects as Lytham's parks, baths, piped water supply and the railway link with Blackpool meant accumulating annual deficits in the account over the 1860s and 70s.[108]

This conflict of interest was apparent from the start. Correspondence from the 1850s onwards was characterised by Fair's often out-spoken defence of his investment plans against the extravagant spending habits of

John Talbot Clifton and his son. Yet his warnings went unheeded. No amount of remonstrating by Fair or Lady Clifton could persuade the landowner and his heir to live within their means. Clearing the £16,000 worth of debt which John Talbot had run up at his London bankers, Scott's, by 1866, was no isolated occurrence. The same pattern repeated itself time and time again.(109) However, Fair proved to be just as stubborn in his defence of the wider interests of the estate. He refused to use current income to bale Clifton out of his financial problems. Instead he preferred to sell stock and shares. "I do not see any possibility of £2,000 being advanced out of the rents," he explained on one occasion, "if improvements are to go on and justice done to many of the farm tenants many of whose houses and buildings....are deplorable and who have been put off this year on the understanding that something will be done for them next year, which would not be the case if this office was called upon.....This will be a most serious loss and I am sure you will see the importance of it and the necessity in the meantime, to the most urgent wants of the property."(110)

Under these circumstances it was perhaps just as well that John Talbot Clifton gradually abdicated his own managerial responsibilities. In fact the 1850s were really the only years in which, relatively speaking, Clifton was closely involved in estate affairs. Even so his role amounted to little more than rubber-stamping the decisions of his agent. It was Fair, for instance, who retained full control over the process of property disposal in Blackpool despite Clifton's anticipation that "the whole of the Layton Hall estate could be disposed of at once."(111) Instead Fair pursued a plan to sell off land in Blackpool in a slow, piecemeal but highly lucrative fashion throughout the 1860s, 70s and 80s.(112) In the same way it is apparent that the urban development of Lytham remained under the agent's firm supervision. Nothing was asked of Clifton other than signing the leases.(113)

To choose a more detailed example, there is no better measure of the agent's commercial outlook, his business aggression and his managerial control than his investigation into the possibilities of finding coal on the estate. There were serious doubts about the feasibility of the project from the outset, yet events give an indication of the excitement which surrounded the project of striking mineral wealth.

The search for coal on the Fylde was started by Thomas Fair. He brought the matter to Clifton's attention in 1867 and invited a Wigan engineer to carry out a survey in Salwick. The resulting report disappointingly suggested that the deposits of coal were small and, at a depth of 1,500 to 1,800 feet, would be unprofitable to mine.(114) However, in 1872, Edward Young, a Sheffield engineer, published a survey which argued that a rich coal-seam did in fact exist traversing the Fylde from Garstang in the north-east corner down to the Clifton estate in the south-west, and having a possible market value of at least

£25 million.(115) It was enough to revive dreams of a mineral fortune. Fair was galvanised into exploring the idea a little further. He proposed organising a meeting of interested landowners to which Young would be invited to support his claims. In the meantime Fair researched the costs of exploratory boring and even drew up a draft contract, setting out lease terms and royalty payments, which he anticipated other landowners might want to adopt should mining actually take place on their estates.(116) The landowners' meeting took place on 26 October and Fair brought along Wilson-Patten M.P. to support his case that work should go ahead by sinking an exploratory bore-hole at Garstang. However, initial euphoria soon gave way to a more realistic assessment of the whole scheme and plans to start drilling were dropped. But Fair did not let the matter rest there. Acting on the assumption that speculators would be prepared to finance their own operations if they confidently expected to find coal he kept negotiations open with Young.(117) Moreover, Clifton was deliberately left in the dark as to Fair's intentions. His agent thought of enlightening him only when terms had been agreed with the mining company and if the test borings proved successful. Fair did not want Lady Clifton's environmental objections getting in the way of what might have turned out to be a profitable venture.(118)

As events turned out plans to explore for coal on the Clifton estate never got beyond the negotiating stage. Young wanted no restrictions on his drilling, a period of two years for the exploratory work and a royalty of 1d. per ton plus a personal "gift" of £2,000 from Colonel Clifton if coal was discovered.[119] Such high demands were unacceptable while doubts persisted about finding coal in any commercial quantity. Other geologists were far from confident that sufficient reserves of coal would be found to make extraction worthwhile. By 1873 Fair was prepared to let negotiations die a natural death. Once he had made known Lady Clifton's insistence on restrictive clauses and on reserving the right to veto over boring operations, Young withdrew from further talks. The fact that the episode came to nothing is of little importance; what it does show is an agent's business skill and, more especially, his complete control over managerial affairs.

By 1870 Clifton had virtually bowed out of any involvement in estate business. His self-imposed exile abroad, in London or at his hunting lodge in Northamptonshire had created a vacuum in the managerial hierarchy which, to his credit, he at least attempted to fill. Accordingly, responsibility for supervising the management of the estate was handed over to his son Thomas Henry.[12] Unfortunately he was of much the same mould as his father and had no intention of taking an active and constructive part in estate affairs. As he flatly pointed out to Fair, he did "not care much for the responsibility."[121] He also was too easily distracted by the widening social horizons which an increased personal allowance had opened up.[122]

As a matter of course, Thomas Clifton was still kept informed of business developments, yet he merely echoed decisions which had already been taken in the estate office. Fair, for instance, negotiated the sale of the Blackpool/Lytham line to the London and North-Western in 1871 and he also determined how the proceeds were to be spent. Clifton was given very little choice in the matter. "There is a certain sum to receive next year from the railway company and, as I have no doubt it will be your wish that this sum should be devoted exclusively to improvements on the property, I think a portion of it might be expended with advantage on Warton." The rest Fair set aside for the purpose of buying young Clifton an influential seat on the directors' board of the L. & N.W.[123]

In face of John Talbot's and his son's detachment from the business affairs of the estate, for the most part Fair addressed himself to Clifton's wife, Lady Eleanor. She was the one family member to emerge with any distinction. She had a passionate interest in the well-being of the estate and its community and she fought a relentless battle against the financial recklessness of her husband and son. Understandably her principal interests embraced matters of a largely social nature - cottage provision, the welfare of the poor, education, the endowment of churches.[124] However, Thomas Henry's death in 1880 threw an even greater burden of responsibility on to her shoulders. In his own absence Clifton instructed his wife to liaise with Thomas Fair in the management of the estate though he insisted that "all great changes" should first be submitted to him for approval.(125) Yet, in reality, no significant alterations were made to existing managerial arrangements. Questions of finance and policy lay outside the reach of Lady Clifton's capabilities and, in any case, "it was difficult to write and understand and give advice at a distance."(126) Even so, on the occasions when she did venture an opinion, Fair left her in no doubt that she should not interfere in the financial affairs of the estate.(127) Responsibilities of a social kind she was able to discharge; but a whole host of decisions concerning tax problems, appointments to vacant tenancies, land sales and investment on the estate remained the exclusive preserve of the agent.(128)

The participation of Thomas and John Talbot Clifton in the complex business affairs of their estate sheds an interesting light on landowning attitudes as well as on the way in which a large estate was managed. Administrative arrangements on the Clifton estate also remind us that there was no single pattern of managerial organisation throughout the estates in Lancashire. At one extreme there were landowners who, like Charles Scarisbrick, were the major source of initiative behind business decisions and who had a well developed attitude towards risk-taking. But possibly Scarisbrick was exceptional. Extensive non-agricultural interests did not necessarily make shrewd businessmen out of landowning figures. Both Lilford and Hesketh demonstrated that their intervention in managerial decisions were not always dictated by sound business judgements. Furthermore, it is likely that the increasing complexity of affairs called for close contact with the estate, informed decision-making and a range of professional skills which a landowner himself was unable to provide in full.

All these factors influenced management on the Clifton estate where, as the 19th century wore on, the agents assumed greater and greater responsibility over business decisions. For all his devotion to the property placed in his trust, Thomas Clifton was unable to come to terms with the wider business dimensions of his estate. He could cope with the grand design for agriculture, but the world of railway speculator or property developer simply left him cold. In these crucial areas of expansion it was the agent who made all the running. By contrast Thomas Clifton's son, John Talbot, showed signs of a considerable business acumen, but turned out to be less than enthusiastic in applying it to the estate's advantage. His truly was the decorative role. To a large extent, then, the Cliftons were more than adequately compensated by the dedication, resourcefulness and ability of the men who served them. For better or worse their agents shaped the destiny of the Clifton estate and, but for their efforts, the dismemberment of this ancestral estate would have begun much earlier than it actually did.

REFERENCES

(1) H. Perkin, Origins of Modern English Society. (1969), p.71

(2) J.T. Ward and R.G. Wilson, Land and Industry. (1971), p.13

(3) J.D. Marshall, Great Landowner Leadership and Industrial Development in Cumbria.and Furness. Unpublished paper presented to the C.O.R.A.L. Conference on "Landownership and Power in the Regions", Himley Hall, Wolverhamton, 1978.

(4) See Chapter I, p.8.

(5) Thompson, Op.cit. pp.176-177

(6) Marshall, Op.cit., Cannadine, Thesis, Op.cit. p.156

(7) L.R.O. DDSc. Trunk 2. C. Scarisbrick to H. Talbot, 30 September and 29 December 1855; H. Talbot to C. Scarisbrick, 25 December 1866; DDSc. 127/15 Estate Memoranda Book, 1846.

(8) L.R.O. Annual Report 1964.

(9) L.R.O. DDHc 107/45; 107/19. T.D. Hesketh to W. Shakeshaft, 22 May and 10 June 1833.

(10) Ibid. T.D. Hesketh to W. Shakeshaft, 15 January 1852, 10 June and 30th July 1833.

(11) Ibid. 16/1 and 68/2. R. Fletcher to T.D. Hesketh, 18 October 1818 and 14 September 1820; 77/40. W.Rawstorne to T.D. Hesketh, 12 and 22 June 1841.

(12) Ibid. 68/7. T.D. Hesketh to W. Ingram, 18 March and 26 April 1816.

(13) Ibid. W. Ingram to T.D. Hesketh, 3 May 1816.

(14) Ibid. W. Ingram to T.D. Hesketh, 13 May 1816; T.D.Hesketh to W. Ingram, 15 May, 15 and 19 June 1816.

(15) Ibid. T.D. Hesketh to W. Ingram, 10 July 1816; W. Ingram to T.D. Hesketh, 5 December 1816.

(16) Ibid. 100/16.

(17) Ibid. 100/3. R. Pilkington to T.D. Hesketh, 13 October 1829. DDCl. 1185. Presentation of Ribble Improvement Bill to Parliament, 1837.

(18) Ibid. 100/11.

(19) L.R.O. DDIn. 14/64. C. Blundell to J. Fletcher, 21 May, 26 June and 1 July 1816; 20 June 1823; 21 May 1825.

References (contd.)

(20) Ibid. C. Blundell to J. Fletcher, 14 June 1825

(21) The Garnett Diaries leave no doubt that William Garnett and his successors kept a tight personal grip on financial and business arrangements of their estates.

(22) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., p.174

(23) L.R.O. DDTw/34.

(24) IBID. DDEg. Box 6.

(25) See Chapter I.

(26) L.R.O. DDLi. Box 11. Lord Lilford to Richard Hodgkinson, 15 October 1821.

(27) Ibid. Box 7. R. Hodgkinson to W. Birchall, 13 June 1836.

(28) Ibid. Box 98; Sturgess, Landowners and coal in County Durham 1850-60, unpublished Paper presented at the C.O.R.A.L. Conference, Himley Hall, Wolverhampton, 1978.

(29) T.R. Raybould, Systems of Management and Administration of the Dudley Estates 1774-1833, Business History,X,1, 1968.

(30) Ibid. Box 6, T. Birchall to R. Hodgkinson, 9 October 1834. Atherton Building Leases.

(31) Ibid. Box 7, R. Hodgkinson to Lord Lilford, 21 March 1836.

(32) Ibid. Lord Lilford to R. Hodgkinson, 25 March 1836.

(33) Ibid. R. Hodgkinson to Lord Lilford, 30th March,1836.

(34) Ibid. Atherton Building Leases.

(35) G.O. Holt, A Regional History of the Railways - The North West (1978), p.22.

(36) L.R.O. DDLi. Box 6, W. Gorst to R. Hodgkinson, 28 January 1825; R. Hodgkinson to W. Gorst, 2 February 1825; R. Hodgkinson to Lord Lilford, 7 March 1825; W. Sinclair to R. Hodgkinson, 21 June 1831.

(37) Ibid. Box 7. F. Hulton to Lord Lilford, 8 December 1845; Lord Lilford to R. Selby, 1 and 8 December 1845.

(38) Ibid. J. Fletcher to Lord Lilford, 28 November 1845.

(39) Ibid. Acc.No. 2831. Box 4. Marton Deeds and Papers.

References (Contd.)

(40) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Wilson Deacon to T. Fair, May 1876. Devising Leases which themselves shaped broader planning policy, was a co-operative exercise involving agent and solicitors. However, decisive legal advice was usually acted on.

(41) L.R.O. J. Liddle, The Southport Foreshore Dispute of 1883. Unpublished Howson Prize Essay.

(42) See Chapter I.

(43) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 11. Wilson & Deacon to J.Fair 18 July 1850.

(44) Ibid. 1960 Deposit. Wilson & Deacon to J.W. Fair, May 1894.

(45) Spring, The English Landed Estate in the 19th Century, (1963), pp.78-80; 90.

(46) Thompson, Op.cit., p.158

(47) Ibid. The Second Agricultural Revolution, 1815-1880, Economic History Review, XXI,i, 1968.

(48) T.W. Beastall, A North Country Estate (1975),p.216.

(49) Thompson, Op.cit., p.177

(50) J. Binns, Notes on the Agriculture of Lancashire with suggestions for its Improvement. (1851) p.21., Preston Herald, 10 March 1866.

(51) L.R.O. DDCl. 1186. J. Webb Hall to J. Fair, September 1839; DDCl. 1195. E. Ashworth to J. Fair, 30 October 1843.

(52) Ibid. 1190. J. Cunliffe to J. Fair, February 1841.

(53) Ibid. 1188. W. Garnett to J. Fair, May 1840.

(54) Ibid. 1191. E. Dawson to J. Fair, November 1841.

(55) Ibid. 1199. T. Fair to J. Fair, 19 August 1845.

(56) Spring, Op.cit., pp.184-186; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1 and 2.

(57) L.R.O. Annual Report 1964.

(58) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 9, T. Clifton to J. Fair, 12 June 1845.

(59) Ibid. Box 13, 8 July 1850.

References (contd.)

(60) DDCl. 1199 R. Dobson to J. Fair, 17 and 19 August 1845.

(61) DDCl. 1325. Box 9. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 18 August 1845.

(62) G.C. Broderick, English Land and English Landowners, 1881, pp.366-69.

(63) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 13. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 22 December 1849.

(64) Ibid. 1204. 25 March 1845.

(65) Ibid. 1325. Box 13. 23 February 1850.

(66) Ibid. 28 July 1850.

(67) Ibid. Box 11. J. Fair to W. Saunders, 1850; W. Saunders to J. Fair, 19 March 1850; Box 13 T. Clifton to J. Fair, 1 May 1850.

(68) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Book 1; P.P. Op.cit., 1882, Coleman's Report.

(69) The Preston and Wyre Railway Act, July 1835, 5 and 6 William IV; 8 and 9 Victoria, July 1845; see J.Marshall, The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, Vol.I., 1970.

(70) L.R.O. DDCl. 1183.

(71) Thompson, Op.cit., p.257

(72) Preston and Wyre Railway Act, Op.cit.

(73) L.R.O. DDCl. 1198. Wilson and Deacon to J. Fair,1845; see S. Broadbridge, Studies in Railway Expansion and the Capital Market in England, 1825-1873. (1970)

(74) Preston and Wyre Railway Act, op.cit., July 1845; L.R.O. DDCl. 1198. Wilson and Deacon to J. Fair, 10 February 1845; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. W.Wilson to J. Fair, 4 September 1844.

(75) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Wilson to Fair, Ibid.

(76) Ibid. 1325. Box 9. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 16 January 1845.

(77) Ibid. 18 August 1845; Box 13. J. Fair to T. Clifton, August 1845.

References (contd.)

(78) Ibid. 1184. Wilson and Deacon to J. Fair, 11 March 1845.

(79) Ibid. 1325. Box 9. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 15 April 1845.

(80) Ibid. 10 March 1845.

(81) Ibid. 1184. Report of the Ribble Navigation Company to the Borough Council, August 1837; 1185. Ribble Navigation Company Improvement Bill, 1837.

(82) Ibid. 1183. J. Harrison to T. Clifton, 7 June 1836; 1966 Deposit. J. Fair to T. Clifton, 25 September 1840.

(83) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Report and Prospectus of the Ribble Navigation Company, 1837.

(84) Ibid. J. Fair to T. Clifton, 1841.

(85) Ibid. Notes of Mr. Veeves, 1883.

(86) Ibid. P. Haydock to J. Fair, 24 May 1847; Statement of the Tolls received by the Ribble Navigation Company, 1834-1882; 1201. Half-yearly Report of the Ribble Navigation Company, 23 January 1847; J. Barrow, <u>A History of the Ribble Navigation</u> (Preston 1938) p.337

(87) Ibid. Series of letters from the Duchy of Lancaster to J. Fair, April - December 1851; T. Part to J.T.Clifton, 17 January 1853; J. Fair to Wilson and Deacon, August 1851; Wilson and Deacon to J. Fair, 22 April 1852; J. Fair to unidentifiable recipient, 20 August 1850.

(88) Ibid. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 14 July 1850.

(89) <u>Preston Pilot</u>, 8 February 1851.

(90) E. Baines, <u>A History of Lancashire</u> (1893), p.387

(91) E. Baines, <u>History and Gazateer of Lancashire</u> (1825) p.53

(92) L.R.O. DDCl. 1184.

(93) Ibid. 1195. J. Ashworth to J. Fair, 1843

(94) See Chapter VI

(95) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831 Box 5. Auction of Blackpool Property, 1850.

(96) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Land Bought under Mr. Fair's Agency; 1325 Box 18, Marton Deeds.

References (contd.)

(97) Ibid. 1325. Box 9. T. Clifton to J. Fair,16 January 1845.

(98) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Estate Accounts 1845-48.

(99) Ibid. 1325. Box 9. Lytham Leases; 1966 Deposit. J. Fair to T. Clifton, February 1848. "In conjunction with Mr. Wilson" Fair wrote, "I have outlined certain terms regarding building leases which I am sure will meet with your approval."

(100) Ibid. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 8 September 1845.

(101) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. T. Clifton to J. Fair, series of letters, April 1848.

(102) Ibid. 1325. Box 11. J.T. Clifton to T.Fair, N.D.

(103) Ibid. 1235. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 24 December 1869.

(104) Ibid. 1205. J.T. Clifton to T. Fair, 1855.

(105) See Chapter IV.

(106) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 11. Blackpool and Lytham Railway Bill, 24 and 25 Victoria, May 1861; Lytham-Blackpool Railway, List of Shareholders; Minutes of the meeting of the Directors of the Blackpool-Lytham Railway, 3 June 1861.

(107) See Chapter VI.

(108) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1 and 2.

(109) Ibid. Ledger Book 1; 1205. J.T. Clifton to T.Fair, Letters April and May 1854.

(110) Ibid. 1325. T. Fair to Lady Clifton, 8 September 1868.

(111) Ibid. 1205. J.T. Clifton to T. Fair, 1854.

(112) See Chapter VI.

(113) L.R.O. DDCl. 1235. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 9 March 1869.

(114) Ibid. 1325. Box 1. Hewlett to T. Fair, June 1867.

(115) Ibid. Box 1.

(116) Ibid.

(117) Ibid. G. Hale to T. Fair, 15 October 1872.

(118) Ibid. T.H. Clifton to T. Fair, 25 and 29 January 1873.

References (contd.)

(119) Ibid. E. Young to T. Fair, 19 April 1873.

(120) Ibid. 1227 T.H. Clifton to T. Fair, 4 March 1870 and 5 April 1871.

(121) Ibid.

(122) Ibid. 1207. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 1866.

(123) Ibid. 1325. Box 11 E.C. Milne to T. Fair, 29 June 1864; Box 12. E.C. Milne to T.B. Foster, 7 April 1863; R. Allen to E.C. Miln, 13 August 1862; E.C. Milne to T. Fair, 6 April 1864; T. Fair to T.H. Clifton, 5 November and 18 December 1871; Agreement for the sale of the Blackpool-Lytham Railway, 25 March 1870; T. Fair to J.T. Clifton 20 September 1870; T. Fair to T.H. Clifton, 12 January 1871.

(124) Ibid. T. Fair's Letter Books, 1868-71.

(125) Ibid. 1221. J.T. Clifton to Lady Clifton, 11 May 1880.

(126) Ibid. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 20 May 1880.

(127) Ibid. 1325. Box 9. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, N.D.

(128) Ibid. 1221. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 2 July 1880.

CHAPTER IV

LANDOWNERS AND AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT

The key to economic policy on the Clifton estate, at least until the late 1870s, was the way in which both landowner and agent gave priority to improving the agricultural property. At the same time the Cliftons' agents, James and Thomas Fair, clearly recognised the potential of investing in ventures of a non-agricultural nature - building, railways, commerce, even mining - but not at the expense of running down the agricultural sector. There were various reasons involved. No doubt sentiment, a sense of tradition, landed obligation, all played their part in influencing broader decisions and ought not to be under-estimated. Yet, from a purely business point of view, both also worked on the confident assumption that agriculture had a bright future, that farm rents would continue as the main financial prop to the estate and, therefore, that farming prosperity would generate the means to undertake any additional investment in other areas.

I

Admittedly, contemporary views of Lancashire agriculture in the early 19th century were none too promising. The attitudes of these commentators no doubt were coloured by their own models of ideal farming practice but, nevertheless, there was an unmistakeable consensus about the backward state of Lancashire agriculture, at least in the early decades of the century which did not augur too well for the future.

According to one observer, writing in 1810, Lancashire farmers were "lamentably behind whose of other counties in agricultural knowledge and practice."(1) R.W. Dickson's survey of 1715 leaves much the same general impression. Apart from occasional pockets of enterprising farming most farmers struggled along with the seemingly intractable problems of dealing with the clay loams which characterised soil types over a large part of Lancashire. Generally the clay was wet and poorly drained; fallowing was still very much the order of the day; cropping systems everywhere and particularly on the lighter soils on the south-eastern corner of the county were "glaringly severe and exhausting." Much of the grassland was badly laid down and of an inferior quality; and most farms had "no order, method or design" to them. Farmers were largely dependent on marl as their only fertilizer and, apart from the threshing machine, they made little use of new technology. Moreover, despite the extension of cultivation on to a part of Lancashire's large acreage of mossland, vast areas of the region still awaited agricultural reclamation. Dickson calculated that the county's wasteland extended to 82,000 acres of moor and common and a further 26,500 acres of moss and fen.(2)

In many respects Dickson could have been describing the Clifton estate. Prolonged absenteeism by the landowner, mismanagement by the agent, exhaustive land-use, inadequate drainage and an archaic leasing policy had all left their mark. Surveys of the 1820s and 30s leave a strong impression of poorly maintained ditches and hedges, of fields "lying wet and cold" and neglected farm buildings situated among large tracts of unreclaimed moss and marsh land.(3) Farms were generally very small, ten to thirty acres typifying the pattern of landholding across the estate. Only Westby-with-Plumpton boasted farms of any substantial size with thirty units of between fifty and one hundred acres each. By contrast Lytham and Clifton-with-Salwick between them contained only five farms which fell into that category. There is evidence that seven and nine year leases were in use but nothing in the way of farming agreements specifically designed to safeguard the condition of the land. But, more often than not, land was let without a lease or agreement of any kind. Moreover, many of the small farms on the Clifton estate were governed by life-leases which, in total, affected about 1,300 acres in 1827. And, judging from the number of life-tenants the Cliftons inherited when they bought land from Lord Derby and Hesketh-Fleetwood in the early 1840s, the amount of land held under this tenancy arrangement might well have been greater on other estates.(4)

So, when James Fair was appointed the Cliftons' agent in 1826, he found "a property (which) had long been neglected."(5) And yet he was far from being pessimistic about future prospects. "With good farmers on the land, guidance and good husbandry," he told Thomas Clifton, "there is every reason to believe that the estate can look forward to times of increasing prosperity."(6) There was more to Fair's confident outlook than just wishful thinking. By the mid-1830s there were signs that agriculture generally was entering a more prosperous period after the sharp recessions which had plagued English farming from 1815 onwards. Moreover, Lancashire farmers were fortunate in having access to the rapidly expanding markets of the county's industrial towns. It was presumably this steady growth in demand which in fact shielded landowners and farmers against the worst effects of the depression in the early 1820s. Rent arrears which had built up between 1821 and 1823 quickly subsided thereafter. There was generally no difficulty in finding tenants and, indeed, over the twenty years after 1815 most estates recorded a healthy enough increase in farm rentals.(7)

Nevertheless, there were problems which had to be tackled if farmers and landowners were to exploit Lancashire's market potential to maximum advantage. In this respect the future lay with expanding dairy production and reducing the cultivation of cereal crops, and wheat in particular. However, in the wake of high corn prices during the Napoleonic wars and in the immediate post-war years, wheat acreage and production had increased in Lancashire as much as anywhere else. In fact there is evidence of wasteland being brought into cultivation and pasture land being broken up for the purpose of growing corn.(8) The end result was over-production. Moreover, farmers in Lancashire and Cheshire, and especially those in the vicinity of Liverpool, had to compete with the threat of Irish imports which drove down cereal prices in the local markets still further. Eventually many farmers must have found themselves trapped in a system from which it was difficult to escape. They needed to continue growing wheat, even though prices were falling, simply in order to pay the rent. Other cereal crops - oats and barley - suffered from equally depressed prices and, in any case, produced smaller yields per acre. And the more radical alternative - a shift in productive capacity from arable into livestock and dairying - was not a practical proposition for many because of the time delay in converting land to grass and because of the heavy capital costs involved.(9)

Despite these problems, as James Fair recognised, grass held the key to agricultural prosperity in Lancashire. Indeed, as early as 1815, landowners and farmers were being urged to reduce their arable acreage and cut back on wheat production. In many parts the soil had been exhausted by severe cropping. Furthermore, the arable farm was more labour intensive and therefore profit margins were likely to be put under more pressure in a region where comparatively higher industrial wages were having the effect of pushing up the wage rates in the agricultural sector.(10) Above all, the expansive demands of the industrial towns had already been reflected in the increased prices of milk and butter. The value of grass-land to both the landowner and farmer had risen accordingly. In 1833 the most profitable farms were said to be the milk farms within easy striking distance of Liverpool and

Manchester which were letting for as much as £4 per acre. According to one authority grassland in the vicinity of Lancaster was fetching the still higher price of £7-10-0 an acre. Even the smaller manufacturing outposts seemed to have had a dramatic effect on local land values. In the neighbourhood of Garstang and Catterall on the east Fylde, for instance, "the printing works and other manufacturers established there" had pushed up rents for dairy farms to £3-4 per customary acre. But, even well away from urban and industrial locations, rents for grassland averaged 24-25/- per acre, and this figure held steady during the periods of recession.(11)

II

By the mid-1830s there were signs of a change in attitude. Exceptionally low prices brought a tailing off in wheat production and finally forced farmers into looking for alternatives. Of course this did not apply everywhere. In general wheat continued to be grown on the lighter soils of the south and east where it was best suited. Over much of the north and west, however, attention turned increasingly to livestock as the staple product.(12)

Contemporaries complimented James Fair and other local agents and landowners on recognising that "their neighbourhood was not a wheat-growing district but one specially adapted for the growing of grass."(13) In fact James Fair did not have to look very far for proof of this basic truth. In 1838 wheat yields in the locality were substantially lower than the national averages.[14] He therefore set about reviewing land-use and farming practice throughout the estate. His plans envisaged a shift in emphasis towards pastoral production in what was basically a "mixed" farming system. This involved making complementary use of crops and livestock and specifically encouraging the expansion of dairy farming within the system. Such a policy clearly had far reaching implications for agricultural management. It called for the reorganisation of farm units, the implementation of new husbandry techniques, the re-education of tenant farmers and a heavy and long-term programme of capital investment. At its fullest Fair's strategy embodied the principles of "high farming", a term more generally used to define a broadly held agricultural policy which increasingly dominated British farming from the early Victorian years to the onset of the "Great Depression". "High Farming", as expressed by its high priest James Caird, meant high productivity, his efficiency and high investment.[15]

Fair's first line of attack was to tackle the problem of farming standards and husbandry practice on the estate. His major weapon was the use of far more sophisticated farm leases. However, by no means have either contemporaries or later historians been universally sympathetic towards the lease system as an instrument of agricultural change. But, to begin with, some authorities of the day clearly regarded improvement as being synonomous with the adoption of the long lease. To James Caird in the mid-19th century long leases ensured at least basically good farming for they provided the tenant farmer with a measure of security which ill-defined custom-right could not possibly provide.[16] By 1878 he saw no reason to change his opinion. He continued to associate yearly tenancies with insecurity and consequently claimed that it was "vain to look for enterprise and progress where there is no real security."[17] Criticial as he was of the land system Broderick himself had no doubt in 1881 that "the best agriculture (was) found on farms whose tenants are protected by leases."[18] At Netherby, Sir James Graham's agent, Yule, expressed a Scottish dislike for annual leases in describing them as "a complete bar to all improvement and no good tenant would work under it."[19] But, it has also been established that in some counties long leases were the exception rather than the rule. In Staffordshire, for example, annual leases prevailed throughout the 19th century. Landlord-tenant relations were generally good, there were no fears of dismissal and, in reality, tenants enjoyed what amounted to fixity of tenure.[20] The same was true of Lindsey where an elaborate system of tenant-right embodied in local custom gave a substantial measure of protection to tenants' interests. Consequently, commendable agricultural improvements were carried out by farmers without the security which was said to stem from long-term leases.[21] In fact, custom-right, providing compensation to the out-going tenant both for capital improvements and crops left on the land, was "so well defined and understood" throughout Lincolnshire that most farmers operated without either lease or agreement.[22]

The lease system was not without its critics among Lancashire agriculturalists either. According to one observer leases imposed conditions which were far too restrictive, were sometimes absurd and impracticable and resulted in "a check to energy and enterprise."[(23)] Recent scholarship has treated 19th century farm leases with little more sympathy. Though specifically concerned with tenure and tenant-right in Lincolnshire, J.A. Perkins has argued that leases generally did not produce the benefits anticipated by the landowners and agents who imposed them. His conclusions were that "the long lease was both inapplicable and unnecessary in the conditions of farming that obtained in the later 18th and 19th centuries." It impeded rational adjustment and re-arrangement of farm units and rents; the lease system made the assumption that land would be brought back into condition at the end of the term, a condition which was seldom implemented; contrary to popular belief, leases were not a prerequisite for agricultural improvement and at least comparable progress had been made in those districts where leases were the exception rather than the rule. In short, leases were only relevant in a static but unreal world of fixed prices, costs and techniques.[(24)]

However, these criticisms were not applicable to the conditions which prevailed in Lancashire agriculture at least throughout the first half of the 19th century. True, there were places where a policy of offering leases for a specific term was never standard practice. On the Devonshire's Furness estate, for instance, leases were neither asked for nor granted. Nevertheless, tenant farmers were required to observe a code of farming practice, and arrangements existed to pay compensation, on a sliding-scale basis, to those tenants who carried out "unexhausted improvements". But no doubt the lighter limestone soils in the extreme north of the county had always acted as a natural inducement to good, efficient farming. Similarly, arable farmers on the extensive Scarisbrick estate in the south-eastern quarter of the county worked the light moss-lands on annual agreements.[25] Elsewhere, however, particularly on Lancashire's predominant clays, landowners preferred to operate a lease system. Terms and conditions varied from one estate to the next especially in the early part of the century. Yet, broadly speaking, leases of one kind or another prevailed on the aristocratic properties of Lords Derby, Wilton, Sefton and Lilford as well as on the lands of the substantial squires - the Cliftons, Hesketh and Hornbys. According to Dickson, writing in 1815, leases usually ran for terms of seven to nine years. Much longer leases were uncommon but occasionally granted on "improveable land" and to tenants with capital to invest. Farming covenants usually made specific reference to the maintenance of the property and cropping arrangements at the end of the term in order to protect the landlord's interests as well as those of the in-coming tenant. However, conditions which bound tenant farmers to certain modes of cropping throughout the lease term were not quite so frequent.[26]

The available estate papers show that the long lease with built-in farming agreements was an established feature of management policy on many Lancashire estates until at least mid-century. This contrasts with a broad movement in English agriculture in favour of annual leases evident in many regions from the early decades of the century. No doubt the serious decline in prices in the post-Napoleonic period will largely explain quite radical modifications to tenurial arrangements whereby long leases were changed to annual agreements. Tenants were reluctant in times of uncertainty and price fluctuations to tie themselves to long term leases and long term rents.(27) However, severely adverse market conditions were not applicable to Lancashire. Only for brief periods (i.e. the early 1820s) was it necessary to grant reductions in rent. Hence it is unlikely that tenants would have been under the same pressure as elsewhere to secure annual tenancies. Of course, it is impossible to determine whether or not tenant farmers were entirely sympathetic to a system of long leases but, whatever the attitudes among the tenantry, it is clear that improving landlords and agents were insistent on long term leases especially on the larger farms and recently reclaimed land. The long lease system, despite all its drawbacks of which contemporaries were fully aware, was generally regarded as providing a firm basis on which to build greater agricultural prosperity. Neither life-leases not annual agreements were looked upon as being suited to the immediate and crucial task of providing stability and continuity in improvement work.

These conditions fitted the Clifton estate exactly. As Fair himself recognised, the precondition of an increased rental was more efficient farming and improved productivity. In this respect the immediate problem facing him was organisational. The arable needed to be reduced, the quality of grassland improved and a system of husbandry implemented which would maximize the productivity of both. By contrast, customary practice among tenants on the estate in 1836 involved an exhaustive succession of white crops, the extensive use of unproductive fallowing and insufficient manuring.[28] This picture was apparently typical of the mode of farming throughout the Fylde region. Stringent measures were needed to re-educate a body of farmers who were entrenched in their old ways, and this entailed a long up-hill struggle. In 1841 a neighbouring landowner complained to James Fair that his tenants still persevered with successive white crops and kept half their land under the plough.[29] Lord Derby, whose estates embraced the township of Weeton as well as parts of adjacent parishes in the central Fylde, had been faced with a similar kind of problem. Formal leases were a means of counteracting the effects of formerly leaving farms on life-leases and "in the hands of men without capital or will to improve."[30]

Leases, then, governing the larger and more compact farm units and imposing prescribed forms of husbandry were the instrument of improvement. Admittedly, Beesley indicated in 1849 that only a fraction of farmers had in fact an agreement of any kind. Yet it is also important to point out that a small number of substantial farmers controlled by far the largest proportion of the land on the Clifton estate at least and it was on their farms that leases and covenants were applied. Gradually, during the course of the 1830s, 40s and 50s, more fields were laid together, larger field units came into being and more compact and engrossed farms created. True, the small holding of under 50 acres continued to characterise farms not only on the Clifton estate but elsewhere in Lancashire down through the 19th century. In 1894 50% of farms on the Fylde, for instance, were under 50 acres.(31) Nevertheless, substantial inroads had been made into the numbers of the smallest farms in the pursuit of more efficient land management. For example, according to a survey of Lytham carried out in 1812 only eight farms registered above 50 acres. By the time of the tithe survey in 1839 the figure stood at seventeen and, in 1894, it had reached twenty-three. Much the same pattern can be discerned on other parts of the Clifton estate. Further, and more crucially, the larger units, though few in number, accounted for an increasing proportion of farmland. Indeed, by 1866/7, 93% of farmland in Westby-with-Plumpton belonged to twenty-three farms ranging from 52 to 380 acres in size. In Warton the proportion amounted to 79%.(32)

That agricultural improvement in other parts of the country was possible without leases is not in question. But in Lancashire the long lease seems to have been a reasonable policy for landowners and agents to have adopted. A leasing policy, after all, had to be considered not only in relation to prevailing farming conditions but existing tenurial relations. The facts were that, on the Clifton estate, systematic restoration and a re-orientation in land use were needed and this called for farmers of ability and substance. For his part, the tenant who invested his capital in the larger farm unit required a measure of security other than the good will of the landowner. Farming covenants applicable to the reorganised farms invariably committed tenants to making considerable outlays. This was certainly the case during the first half of the century when the respective roles of landlord and tenant in the matter of capital investment were ill-defined and much was asked of the farmer's own resources. Demands on the tenant's own capital obviously varied from farm to farm and individual to individual; but, in general, stock farmers needed greater financial resources than their arable counterparts.[33] It has been estimated that even in the early years of the century the cost of stocking farms in most districts of Lancashire ran to £7-8 per acre.[34] Indeed, tenants on the Clifton estate were required to keep a certain head of cattle in relation to the size of their farms. Further, most were compelled to purchase a prescribed amount of manure on an annual basis, to clear old fences and to provide grass seed for new pasture land. In addition, several tenants were called upon to carry out the reconstruction of farm buildings and to see to drainage on their land.[35] It was an expensive business and, not surprisingly, landowners were keen to attract on to their estates not only farmers familiar with up-to-date farming techniques but also those with sufficient capital behind them. Thomas Clifton, for instance, introduced a number of Scottish tenants on to farms of 3-400 acres during the late 1830s and early 40s. They adapted their farms to what in the locality was an experimental system of husbandry which made little use of permanent grass land but instead extended the growth of artificial grasses and turnips as fodder for sheep and cattle stock. Clearly reorganisation on this scale involved heavy investment by the landowner in new purpose-built farm buildings. Nevertheless, the outlay by individual tenants was impressive. They tile-drained their own land, removed hedgerows, filled ditches, created new enlarged enclosures and invested in the new technology of steam engines and threshing machines.(36)

A system of longer leases, then, basically reconciled the interests of the landlord and tenant in a county that lacked the well established and well defined tenant-right customs which were evident in other parts of the country.(37) Land agents wanted to attract tenants with capital and they reasonably assumed that leases gave the tenant the incentive to invest where the added safeguard of tenant-right did not exist.(38) The lease gave the landowner a measure of control over the way in which his land was farmed and the tenant had the satisfaction of a fixed rent and the prospect of a return on his own capital over the term. But where tenant-right was most contracted, one agent argued - as was the case in Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Cheshire - and where the alternative of a long lease was absent, then farming was at its worst.(39) An agent from the East Riding took a similar view, arguing that any shift towards high farming and greater productivity depended on making improvements to the land. And yet it was unlikely, he went on, that tenants would be willing to take the initiative when customary tenant-right to compensation did not usually extend to drainage, manuring and other improvement work carried out by the tenant himself.(40) Therefore on the Clifton estate it was anticipated that enterprise would be rewarded by the offer of medium and long-term leases. In 1847 one Westby tenant had his eleven year lease extended by a further three years in return for modernising a number of farm buildings. Similarly, the bait held out to another Salwick tenant was a nine year lease "if the improvements go on satisfactorily." And Warton tenants were given trial periods before being offered medium term leases on their farms.(41)

Most leases on estates in Lancashire involved 7,9 or 11 year terms. Occasionally the longer leases of 14,19 and even 21 years were granted but usually to tenants of proven ability and substance taking on large farms in need of extensive improvement. Hence the appearance of the long lease on the Clifton estate in the early 1840s following the reclamation and laying-out of the moss-land covering a part of Lytham and Westby-with-Plumpton, or the 14 year terms granted to certain Quernmore tenants involved in improving heathland on William Garnett's estate during the same period.(42) Leases were invariably accompanied by farming covenants which became increasingly specific and detailed as agents standardized husbandry practice and land-use arrangements. In 1822 farming agreements on Lord Lilford's Atherton estate made only loose reference to the land being "farmed according to the best modes of husbandry used in the township." By the 1830s more precise instructions were being issued and adjusted to meet the conditions on individual farms. Covenants on the Sefton, Hesketh, Garnett and Clifton estates evolved along similar lines. They formed an integral part of a policy to enlarge the grasslands, protect and improve the fertility of the soil and devise cropping arrangements capable of supporting larger stocks.(43)

By the 1840s standard farm assignments were in use on the Clifton estate specifying husbandry arrangements on individual farms throughout the term of the lease. Generally, two-thirds to three-quarters of the farm was kept under permanent grass or meadow and the remainder made subject to a fairly stringent arable rotation which interspersed corn with fodder crops on a four to seven year cycle, depending on the size of the farm and soil conditions. Otherwise, farmers on smaller holdings or whose land was in poor heart due to intensive cropping were instructed to grass the whole of their properties. At the same time various clauses were gradually built into agreements to encourage larger yields of grass and fodder crops. They included the usual restrictions on taking successive white crops and the excessive cutting of meadow, the preservation of specified grassland, the consumption of all hay, turnips, straw and other fodder crops on the farm and the rate at which the fields were to be manured.(44) Farming agreements also responded to changing agricultural orthodoxies. Turnip husbandry, for instance, was said to have dramatic effects on productivity and profitability. Indeed several enterprising farmers on the Fylde claimed that turnip cultivation had produced greater crops than ever before and that their land was capable of supporting three times more cattle than had formerly been the case. James Fair was sufficiently impressed to embark on his own turnip experiment and, by 1840, a large acreage in Lytham and Westby had been put under an extended rotation of grasses and turnips covering the farms on which the estate had installed its new Scottish tenantry. But it turned out to be a short-lived experiment. By 1843 a certain disillusionment had set in at least with turnip farming on this scale, although the turnip culture remained an essential component of many farm covenants.(45) Fair was more impressed with clover and artificial grasses and this new emphasis eventually found its way into the detailed farming agreements which were part of the standardised assignments of the late 1840s. And again, after carrying out satisfactory trials with various kinds of guano, Fair later specified its use in a number of tenancy agreements.(46) (See Appendix I).

But improving farming practice throughout the estate was a long, painstaking business. It involved a blend of coercion and persuasion. The Clifton leases, along with those operating on other Lancashire estates, contained the usual penalties for serious breaches of the conditions laid down in the farming covenants. There is no evidence that these penalties were actually exacted, yet every reason to suppose that they were taken seriously by landlord snd tenant alike. Detailed inspection of every farm on the Hesketh estate by landowner and agent ensured that the stage was rarely reached when tenants were penalised for default.(47) Similarly, Clifton tenants were left in no doubt as to who determined farming policy on the estate. Since Fair was personally opposed to the use of broad beans in crop rotations, broad beans were not sown despite the reasonable claim by one tenant that beans would pay his labout bill and leave the soil in better condition.(48) Moreover, whereas tenants with arreas of rent were often treated with paternalistic leniency agents were far less tolerant towards farmers found doubly guilty of financial mismanagement and bad farming practice and particularly those who compounded their sins by seemingly demonstrating an unwillingness to adopt recommended husbandy techniques. Lord Sefton's agent was instructed "to draw a fair and honest line of demarcation between the truly industrious and all grades below." Eight farmers were singled out for dismissal in 1845. All had arrears of rent but, more seriously in the management's view, all were either described as lacking in capital or deemed inadequate in farming ability.(49) Likewise, Thomas Clifton approved the dismissal of one tenant on the grounds that "the old system cannot be tolerated (and) if he will not change, he must go elsewhere."(50)

In the main, however, agricultural improvement on the Clifton estate, as on so many others, lay through a process of education and emulation. Stringent leases constituted only one line of attack. Another of Fair's early measures was to establish a local agricultural society in Lytham which was designed to disseminate the agent's own ideologies. Certainly James Fair set great store by its effectiveness. No less a figure than the eminent agriculturalist and founder of the Agricultural Association, George Webb Hall, opened and addressed the first meeting of the Lytham society.(51) All the tenants on the estate were required to be members and take part in the society's annual award scheme which covered all areas of farming activity.(52) Premiums reflected Fair's own emphasis on those aspects which he considered needed developing and improving. In the same vein he advised the larger North Lancashire Agricultural Society that they too should include a premium for green crops in order "to encourage modern animal husbandry."(53)

Furthermore, a home farm of 450 acres served as an experimental station and as a model of good farming to the tenants at large. It was regarded as a means of improving breeding and as a distribution centre for the whole estate rather than as a purely profit-making concern. In fact, in the post-1860 period for which full farm records are available, the home farm often operated at a loss. Nevertheless, in so far as it was Fair's primary objective to improve stocking and expand dairying, the venture was a success. On an annual basis large numbers of West Highland heifers, short-horned cattle and Leicester ewes were bought in for the purpose of building up stocks on farms throughout the estate, and as the grassland improved and dairying intensified in the 1860s and 70s, so the turnover of stock on the home farm increased accordingly. In addition the farm served as a distribution centre for steam engines and threshing machines together with chemical fertilisers, guano and new grasses all of which invariably underwent careful trials before being offered to the estate tenantry.(54)

How much had been achieved by Lancashire landowners during the first half of the 19th century? Certainly there were some solid achievements to record. Dickson talked about "a spirit of agricultural pursuits" running through the county in 1815 and about landowners taking a more active role in the management of their estates and "in promoting their improvement."(55) How far this really extended is difficult to say, but the Cliftons can be included among a small, pioneering group of landowners such as Hesketh of Rufford, Wilson-Ffrance of Rawcliffe, Garnett of Quernmore and Bankes of Winstanley, all of whom had commenced extensive improvement work on their estates by the mid-1830s. Yet Lancashire farming as a whole in mid-century seems to have been characterised more by confused practice, haphazard and piecemeal development, ignorance and indifference than by any systematic and evenly spread adoptiong of improvement policies. This was certainly William Garnett's firm conclusion in 1849 when he described Lancashire as an "ill-drained, badly cultivated and neglected district" where the standard of farming fell well below that in the southern counties. Even on the Fylde, which Dickson incidentally thought worthy of a word of praise in 1815, "there was little improvement on the old system and the dislike to alteration prevails here as elsewhere. The fields in many parts for whole districts bear the appearance of being ploughed till they could produce nothing, and the miserable hedgerows with long rushes in the farrows show for plainly the want of draining and management in the occupier." At the same time Beesley echoed Garnett's view that the clays, particularly north of Preston, were the least productive and worst cultivated land in the county.(56)

Yet there were still grounds for optimism. A start had been made and all that Lancashire agriculture suffered from, as Beesley remarked, was "the insufficient working of the system."(57) What he meant was that a system of mixed farming with a strong pastoral emphasis was suffering from a lack of investment, especially in underdrainage.

II

In terms of the expansion in pastoral farming, the more widespread adoption of new farming techniques and, above all, the level of capital investment, Lancashire farming underwent its major transformation during the third quarter of the 19th century. But it is difficult to be more precise than that about the chronological pattern of investment across estates or the exact size of landowners' investment.

Firstly, investment decisions by individual landowners were influenced by various factors such as the accident of personality, the current level of estate maintenance, problems of inheritance and the financial resources of the landowner himself.(58) A further difficulty lies in the nature of the evidence itself. A continuous series of estate accounts is a rare find. Accounts which also provide data on separate items of capital expenditure are rarer still. Only the very large and expertly managed estates, such as Lord Sefton's seem to fall into that category.(59) Otherwise many estate accounts offer a statistically confusing picture. The major problem if the lack of standard accounting procedure. In this respect James Fair may have been a keen and gifted agriculturalist but his qualities did not extend to keeping clear, informative accounts. Itemized ledger books eventually made their appearance on the Clifton estate when Thomas Fair assumed full managerial responsibility in the early 1860s. Even so, Fair's categorisation of expenditure does not provide a clear statement of capital formation on the estate. Very often, for instance, it is impossible to distinguish between annual costs of repairs and the investment in new buildings. (see Appendix II).

There is the additional problem of deciding which sums should or should not be included in any estimate of capital expenditure on estate improvements. Spending on such estate embellishments as houses and parks should reasonably be excluded from calculations of investment in the agricultural estate yet these sums were often merged with other accounts. The outlay on cottages, however, is a different matter. Contemporaries themselves tended to regard a well-housed labour force as being conducive to improve productivity.(60) There is an even stronger case, though, for the inclusion of sums spent on plantations, an area of notable expansion on Lancashire estates as it was elsewhere. Timber was an important source of income in its own right, as well as catering for the demands of building work and the need to fence rearranged farm units.

Furthermore, a number of Lancashire's great landowners were involved in urban development and business ventures of various kinds. It is not always possible to distinguish clearly between the sums the Cliftons, for example, spent on their property in the Fylde resorts and their investment in their purely agricultural estates. The same was also true of the Hesketh and Lilfords. One final area of difficulty remains. A landowner's capital provision will not account for the total investment in agriculture. Whilst it is true that the financial burden shifted increasingly on to the shoulders of the landlord, tenant farmers continued to make their own contribution to such capital items as drainage and building work. And it is this changing relationship between landlord and tenant, regarding their respective contributions towards capital equipment, which is one of the most difficult aspects to determine.

Nevertheless, despite all the deficiences in the evidence, it is clear that the county's major landowners assumed a much greater responsibility for capital investment after 1850. Moreover, they were generally far more enthusiastic about agricultural improvement. In part this was no doubt a defensive reaction by some to the temporary recession which followed in the wake of the Corn Law repeal and to the widespread anticipation that the domestic producer would be swamped by foreign competition unless he improved his efficiency and productivity. James Caird put it this way: "In this country", he wrote, "the agricultural improver cannot stand still. If he tries to do so, he will soon fall into the list of obsolete men being passed by eager competitors willing to seize the current of events and turn them to their advantage."(61) But landowners were put under more immediate pressure. Low prices inevitably triggered farmers' demands for rent reductions in face of which landowners were confronted with two alternatives, either to make abatements or to carry out improvements.(62) Many opted for the latter. John Talbot Clifton, for instance, was firmly opposed to any general reduction in rents on the Lytham estate "in view of the money that has been and is being spent on it." Both the landlord's and tenants' interests, he pointed out, "rested in the future of economic management and high productivity."(63) Similarly, William Garnett informed his Quernmore tenantry that improvement work - particularly drainage - would be carried out rather than a reduction in rents.(64)

But it would probably be misleading to describe the hectic improvement work which took place after

1850 simply as a "rescue operation."(65) The events of the late 1840s had the effect of persuading early improvers like the Cliftons to intensify their efforts as opposed to impelling them into a new and desperate survival plan. It is worth recalling that important developments had also taken place by mid-century which actively encouraged improvement and cultivated a widely held assumption that investment would actually pay.

Firstly, landowners had access to widening sources of capital specifically intended for agricultural improvements. The Drainage Bills of 1846 and 1850 made public money available on a limited basis. Alternatively, the Private Money Drainage Act made it possible for the owners of settled estates to borrow from various private improvement companies and, at one time or another, most of the landowners mentioned in this study took advantage of this facility.(66) Secondly, cheaper materials and technical advances in drainage methods, in fertilizers and in the quality of seed now made the improvement of heavy land much more of a practical proposition.(67)

But the greatest stimulus came from the railway. Agricultural improvement and, more importantly, the expansion in the dairy industry after mid-century, marched in step with the completion of the regional and national railway networks. In short, the railway age was the age of railway milk.(68) An efficient transport system solved production and marketing problems which had long restricted Lancashire farmers in the more remote districts of the county. Railways gave direct access to

Lancashire's industrial towns whose markets could absorb "an unlimited supply of milk."(69) And, as a survey of the Clifton estate recognised in 1890, the coming of the railways enabled almost every tenant farmer to convert to dairy farming.(70) Moreover, the railway made it possible for the farmer to take advantage of fertilizers and such cheaper feedstuffs as oil-cake and grain. Indeed, these benefits will partly explain why more and more landowners, including the Cliftons, encouraged the construction of branch lines across their estates and why the 1863 improvement of Land Act specifically empowered life-tenants to borrow money for the purpose of investing in new lines.(71)

Landowners' investment focused primarily on improving the drainage of the heavier land. Drainage, after all, lay at the basis of what has been justifiably called the "revolution on the English clays."(72) For, as Beesley pointed out, it overcame the major obstacle in the way of an efficient mixed farming system.(73) Well-drained clay land made it possible to produce higher yields of fodder crops on a reduced arable acreage; meadow land, hitherto fiercely protected, could then be released for pasture enabling farmers to keep a larger stock on more extensive and better quality summer grazing. This ideal, however, was not easily achieved. Early efforts to improve drainage were bedevilled by scepticism, an inadequate technology and the lack of a systematic approach to the problem.

Draining the heavier soils on any extensive basis was not effectively tacked until at least the 1840s.

Instead, improving landowners tended to concentrate their earlier efforts on the reclamation of Lancashire's vast acreage of waste land.(74) The draining of Trafford and Chat mosses near Manchester in the 1790s and first decade of the 19th century set the pace. The expense of bringing one customary acre of marshland into cultivation amounted to £11-10-0 which included the costs of draining, ploughing, marling and seeding. But an impressively high return was anticipated in that rents were expected to rise from 2/- to 30/- per acre.(75) Not surprisingly the first decades of the 19th century recorded a number of reclamation works throughout the county. By a private act of 1800 the major landowners south of the Ribble in Croston, Bretherton, Mawdesley, Rufford and Tarleton undertook the draining of 2,800 acres which had been subject to heavy flooding by the River Douglas. A further 430 acres were privately drained on the Rufford Hall estate of Sir Thomas Hesketh at a cost of £7 per acre.(76) Similarly, in 1820, Edmund Dawson of Aldcliffe Hall, Lancaster, reclaimed 166 acres near the mouth of the River Lune. He had a few personal doubts that such investment paid. After allowing an interest charge of 5% on the capital expended, each acre returned 25/- as opposed to a former 2/6d. On the Fylde, Wilson-Ffrance of Rawcliffe Hall outlayed £7,000 draining 736 acres of Rawcliffe Moss and expected a return of 10%.(77) Close by at Lytham Hall, the newly appointed James Fair made a close study of the methods, costs, and benefits of major local drainage works, notably the draining of Martin Mere which commenced in 1836. Thereafter, much of his own experience stemmed from supervising similar reclamation schemes in his own locality in the late 1830s and early 40s, namely on Lytham and Weeton mosses and Kirkham Carrs.[78]

To some extent reclamation work on the lighter moss lands contributed to an expansion in dairying within the mixed farming system envisaged by agents like James Fair. In fact he established several 3-4,000 acre mixed dairy farms on the extensive tracts of mossland to the north-east of Lytham in the early 1840s. Nevertheless, any substantial improvement to the mixed farming system ultimately depended on finding a cheap and effective solution to the seemingly intractable problem of draining the clays. In this important respect Lancashire farming had to wait until mid-century before a breakthrough was made. For, as one observer pointed out in 1843, draining was still "in the early stages and (had) scarcely yet been applied to the ploughed land."[79] That so little had been achieved was no doubt partly a matter of attitude - apathy, indifference, perhaps abject surrender in face of what might have been regarded as a problem of unsurmountable proportions. Indeed, John Cunliffe of Myerscough Hall sceptically dismissed a newly proposed drainage bill of 1843 as a "totally useless measure so far as this county is concerned." He much preferred to see stricter and more immediate legal recourse available to landowners in the event of poor drainage maintenance by one causing damage to the property of another.[80]

In the main, however, effective drainage was a problem of technological means, organisation and financial resources. True, earlier years had seen one or two notable efforts to undertake comprehensive drainage schemes. The Bankes family of Winstanley Hall had been one of the first to carry out drainage work in the Newton district. 2,600 acres belonging to the Jacsons' Barton Hall estate, seven miles north of Preston, were largely drained in the late 1830s and early 40s, and 2,000 acres on the Claughton Hall estate, near Garstang, were drained between 1821 and 1849.(81) Nevertheless, drainage schemes in the early decades of the 19th century enjoyed limited success. They invariably suffered from the lack of an adequate technology and expertise, poor planning and a confusion of contradictory theory. Enterprising as these landlords were, their drainage projects were regarded as highly experimental. In effect they groped towards a proven system of land drainage arguing and debating the merits of various techniques - turf against a cobblestone composition, a triangular as opposed to a square-cut design, deep or shallow drains.(82) The subject dominated discussions at local agricultural society meetings and a keen debate continued in the correspondence between county landowners and agents. James Fair had his own firmly held views which he strenuously attempted to impress on others. He claimed to have drained every type of soil. He had used a wide variety of materials and was strongly opposed to the use of "wedge" turves which was a preference shared by William Garnett of Quernmore, Hesketh of Rufford and Wilson-Ffrance of Rawcliffe Hall. Fair cut drains varying from two to three feet in depth. Thomas Hesketh preferred a minimum of four feet. Just as open a question was whether to cut parallel drains or to turn them across the slope of a field.[83] Needless to say, failure stalked some of these early efforts. For instance, Fitzherbert-Brockholes of Claughton drained his own 2,000 acres by a system of shallow drains filled with stone but was later forced to redrain his land using the much more effective drainage tile.[84] Doubtless this was not an untypical experience regionally or nationally. A similar ignorance of technique, poor execution and inadequate materials brought little success to the drainage schemes carried out on the Staffordshire clays during the first half of the 19th century.[85]

Furthermore, part of the problem lay with the lack of central control and direction. Comprehensive drainage schemes conducted by the estate office and carried out by professional teams of drainage engineers belonged to the future. It was far too often the case that drainage was carried out by individual tenants on a piecemeal, haphazard basis which led one local agricultural society to recommend in 1848 that landlords should do the draining themselves simply because tenants did it badly.[86] Indeed, even under the enlightened management of James Fair, tenants on the Cliftons' Warton estate in the 1830s were required to carry out their own improvements and, in the case of drainage work, a 12½% reduction in rent was allowed. As late as 1845, by which time tile drains were being extensively used on the estate, turves were still being sent out to numerous tenants so that they could undertake their own drainage.[87] Nor did it always follow that professional standards should follow in the wake of improved techniques and materials. In 1856 it was customary practice on the Scarisbrick estate to provide tenants with draining tiles and allow them to carry out their own work.[88]

Nevertheless, despite all the imperfections of these early improvement schemes, a marked feature of changing agricultural attitudes during the second quarter of the century was a growing confidence in the profitability of effective drainage. It was shared by landlord and tenant alike. Poor crop returns, the inability of tenants to pay full rents and mounting arrears convinced at least one local landowner that only drainage would arrest the complaints of local farmers. Moreover, he estimated that drained land could be let at twice the former value. Equally, a tenant farmer maintained that the costs of improvements had been well worthwhile. Seed could be planted early and "a good and early crop (was) always more certain."[89] In stressing the central importance of drainage, the Ashton Agricultural Society echoed the sentiments of a growing majority of landowners and tenants. "Thirteen years ago," it reported in 1848, "the propriety of thoroughly draining the land was much doubted. Now it was generally admitted that draining was the foundation of good farming."[90] No doubt the costs of draining appeared a daunting obstacle to some tenants, yet the same farmers complained of losing £3-£4 per acre on their crops at harvest time in the event of a wet spring.[91]

The main thurst in drainage.work, then, took place from mid-century onwards rather than before. Moreover, it involved landowners in unprecedented levels of expenditure.[92] This shift of financial responsibility on to the shoulders of the landowner was in part due to the general acceptance of the fact that the competitive conditions which a free-trade market was expected to produce demanded an urgent and positive response by agriculturalists. Well-drained land and good buildings were also essential in encouraging tenant farmers to put capital into stocking their farms.[93] How much land was actually drained during the period of "high farming" is impossible to determine with any precision,as is the full geographical extent of landowners' undertakings or the effect on agricultural productivity. The nature of the data will not allow for that. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence from a variety of sources does highlight the intensity of drainage schemes particularly from the 1840s onwards.[94]

James Fair instigated a long-term project for the comprehensive drainage of the Clifton estate in 1839. The central feature of his scheme was the construction of a main drain to serve the properties concentrated in the south-west corner of the Fylde. It was designed to bisect the estate on a line running from Marton down through Westby and Lytham to an outlet on the Ribble estuary. The main drain and the branch system, altogether extending over ten miles in length, provided the basis for underdraining some 6,000 acres half of which had previously been liable to severe flooding.[95] The other distinguishing feature of Fair's scheme was that it was as costly as it was impressive. Despite the availability of mass-produced and cheaper tiles and pipes by the 1840s, drainage was still an expensive business - about £5 an acre in mid-century and considerably more than that by the 1870s.(96) The Cliftons' main drain in itself cost £3,000 and a further £3-£5 per acre was spent on extending the subsidiary drainage system, even though the estate was producing its own tiles and pipes after 1843. The costs were eventually absorbed by the £10,000 loan arranged with the Inclosure Commissioners in 1847.(97)

In due course drainage on the remainder of the estate was systematically tackled. The Lands Improvement Company provided a total of £14,456 between 1859 and 1880 and a further £15,500 over the period 1881-1911 to enable the major construction works to be carried out - the principal spinal drains, bridges, culverts, dikes and outlet spanners. Individual farms were drained as required, though in the 1860s and 70s operations were especially concentrated on the newly acquired properties in Warton and on the heavier clays in Westby and Salwick. The practice of farmers carrying out their own drainage clearly did not die away completely, but, in most cases, the work was undertaken by teams of engineers appointed by the estate office itself. For their part tenants were required to contribute a proportion of the cost, though their respective contributions depended on individual circumstances and location. Generally speaking, tenants were contracted to cart materials and provide some of the labour as well as pay an interest charge of 5% once the work had been completed. Nevertheless each tenant and his requirements were dealt with on their merits. For instance, when Richard Dingle took out a new lease on his Salwick farm in 1851 he was charged the usual 5% of the outlay on drainage carried out by the estate. Yet two fields were drained entirely at the landowner's expense and the tenant supplied with liberal amounts of guano to improve the fertility of the land.(98)

Newspaper reports and the descriptions of interested agriculturalists make it clear that extensive drainage work was being carried out elsewhere in the county at about the same time. Certainly progress reports on current drainage operations, engineering techniques and methods of laying down land to grass seemed to have been the topical and dominant themes at the meetings of the county's numerous agricultural societies, which lends credence to William Garnett's claim in 1848 that "works of drainage (had) been carried out throughout north Lancashire to a greater extent than had been known for years." In fact Garnett himself, on his own Quernmore estate, had set a standard for others to follow. The 1840s and 50s were a period of intense activity at both Bleasedale and Quernmore during which under-drainage was carried out on virtually every farm on the estate.(99) Close by on the Duke of Hamilton's Axhton estate, near Lancaster, the construction of a tile-kiln in 1845 resulted in 62 miles of pipe-drains being laid in the following three years.(100) On the Fylde itself, Fitzherbert-Brockholes looked to rectifying the inadequacies of the early stone-filled drains at Claughton, whilst on the neighbouring Hornby and Derby estates, comprehensive schemes were implemented in the 1850s.(101) Down at Penwortham, outside Preston, William Rawstorne's drainage works got underway in 1854 and were finally completed eighteen years later. In the Blackburn area, local landowners had completed the underdraining of 3,000 acres in 1848, making it possible for a "turnip culture" to be adopted "on a large scale." And at Parbold Hall, near Standish, 55 acres of stony marl were drained between 1845 and 1847.(102) Similarly, a few miles away at Rufford, Sir Thomas Hesketh's estate was receiving the same systematic treatment. During the early part of the century there is no evidence to suggest that the estate office attended to drainage work apart from what was required on the Home Farm. By contrast, by mid-century, operations on an impressive scale were being financed and supervised by landowner and agent. Between 1848 and 1860, for instance, over £16,000 was expended on underdraining ancestral property in Rufford, Mawdesley and Wrightington, though this sum was eventually dwarfed by the amount needed to drain and reclaim land from the Hesketh and Becconsall marshes between 1860 and 1885.(103)

But drainage by itself could not have produced any dramatic improvement in agricultural productivity. The productive capacity of the soil is tied to its fertility which in turn depends on revitalizing inputs as well as balanced land-use. But the possibility that heavy land could be properly drained coincided by mid-century with the availability of new and more effective fertilizers.

However, until the 1840s, the efforts of agents and farmers in tackling the problem of soil deficiences had met with limited success. Marl was by far the most common method of manuring despite its limited recuperative value. Liming was also a well-established practice particularly for restoring meadow land but, again, transport costs restricted its use. The success enjoyed by Cheshire farmers in restoring exhausted pasture through the use of bone was widely recognised and, to a limited extent, tenants on the Clifton estate resorted to the same method. Nevertheless, its wider application suffered from the same constraints of transport costs as did lime and other materials.(104) Equally, the lack of yards and stacks meant that farmers only had limited amounts of manure to put back on to the land, which was why leases usually imposed such heavy restrictions on the removal of dung from farm premises. And very few had access to readily transportable town manure. To some extent James Fair got round this particular problem by having a depot built on the Lancaster canal which at least enabled the tenants from Clifton-with-Salwick to boat manure up from Preston.(105) So clearly guano and the chemical fertilizers, both of which were being extensively used on the Clifton estate and elsewhere by the late 1840s, filled a vital role until the cycle of organic manuring had become firmly established on well equipped dairy farms.(106)

Moreover, essential as drainage was, drained fields were not enough to support large increases in stock. In its report of 1845 the Parliamentary Select Committee, which examined the legality and financial viability of landowners raising money to carry out improvement work on their estates, concluded that "the full advantage to be derived from thorough draining (could) not be obtained without the erection of farm buildings suitable to the improved state of the land drained"; and they reinforced the view of several witnesses who stressed that existing building provision was insufficient to cater for an anticipated increased production of root-crops, straw and stock.(107) In short, the full value of a well-drained field-system could ultimately only be realised through the provision of adequate farm accommodation. This was the second major area of landowners' investment. Again, the level and timing of such investment depended on the foresight of the individual landowner, the particular conditions of his estate and the financial resources avsilable to him, but, generally speaking, most building activity was concentrated in the third quarter of the century even on those improving estates which had set the pace in earlier years. Widening price differentials from 1850 onwards, expanding livestock production on farms and a wider acceptance by landowners and agents as a matter of estate policy that buildings should be provided when required injected a greater urgency into building and improvement programmes.(108)

Studies in recent years have identified a similar pattern of expenditure on estates scattered throughout Britain's pastoral district. For instance, a more consistent and higher level of investment by landowners in farm accommodation is evident on many of the Staffordshire estates during the second half of the century. A commensurate level of spending on repairs and new buildings was equally a marked feature on a number of predominantly livestock estates in Cheshire, Northumberland, Yorkshire and Gloucestershire, particularly during the 1870s. Likewise, although it was apparently not until the 1860s that the Earl of Scarbrough embarked on his own energetic investment scheme, he then proceeded to lay out over £110,000 on repairs and permanent improvements over a period of sixteen yesrs. There is evidence of extensive repair work and improvements being carried out on the larger Welsh estates from the 1820s onwards, but clearly the stimulus of certain factors after 1850 - the rise in the price of livestock products and the opening up of remote areas by the railways - spurred landowners on to greater efforts. On Lord Bute's Glamorgan estate large sums were being spent on buildings and repairs after 1814 simply in order to rescue the estate from its extremely ruinous condition, yet this item of expenditure reached even greater heights in the years after 1850 and was consistent with a similar heavy outlay on a comprehensive drainage scheme.(109)

Renovation and new building work on the Lancashire estates would appear to fall into a similar chronological pattern. There were, of course, instances of early endeavour - notably Charles Scarisbrick who financed the construction of numerous farmhouses and outbuildings throughout his estates between 1835 and 1843, and the Earl of Sefton who, it was reported in 1845, had already "expended large sums on the repair of buildings."(110) On the Fylde the standard had been set by the Jacsons' Barton Hall estate where larger and more efficient farm units had been created, involving an outlay of £27,000 on farm buildings between 1833-49.(111) However, as regards the county as a whole, farm buildings were generally considered to be in a very dilapidated state in 1845.(112) But the evidence of available estate accounts suggests that activity reached a peak in the third quarter of the century, both to correct past neglect and to equip farmers to meet changing market demands. Between 1838 and 1894 the Cliftons, for instance, spent over £236,000 on farm buildings, an average annual outlay of £4,577. In fact, their agent claimed that all the farms, buildings and cottages had been "practically rebuilt" over the period.(113) Admittedly, there are problems with outlining the scale and timing of landowners' investment. On the Clifton estate there is the absence of continuous accounts until after 1862. Furthermore, as has already been indicated, the accounting methods of the Cliftons' agents lumped together expenditure on both the urban and agricultural estates. Approximately £20,000 was spent on building work in Lytham. However, since most of this spending was concentrated in the mid-1840s and again in the early 1870s, it is possible to measure investment in agricultural property with a certain amount of accuracy. Finally, it is also worth stressing that the landowner's investment did not represent total expenditure. Although the financial burden shifted emphatically on to the shoulders of the landowner during the second half of the century, nevertheless, tenants continued to sink some of their own capital into drainage systems and new farm buildings and they therefore made a significant contribution to the overall outlay on agricultural improvements.(114)

On the Clifton estate the injection of substantial amounts of capital into farm property coincided with the major drainage scheme of the early 1840s which made it possible to create the 3-400 acre farms on the Lytham and Westby mosses. That involved the landowner in the construction of "commodious and extensive farm buildings....at a cost, in some cases, of £2,000 to £3,000 and in others exceeding £4,000." They were architecturally designed and purpose-built dairy farms incorporating the principle of covered yards, adequate stacks and storage facilities.(115) Predictably, spending on repairs and new buildings dropped away during the financially difficult years of the early 1850s. However, the high point of the 1840s was matched by a longer period of equally intensive investment in the 1860s and 70s. Between 1838 and 1863 approximately £105,000 was spent on estate buildings. By contrast, over the course of the following fifteen years, a further £75,000 was spent and, significantly, the rebuilding of farm houses and the provision of additional shippons and barns figured largely in the payments. So, whereas building expenditure averaged £4,227 p.a. in the 40s and 50s, the annual outlay averaged £5,111 between 1863-70 and climbed still further to £5,598 between 1870-78.(116)

Likewise, though the data are far from

complete, it is nonetheless evident that building expenditure on the Hesketh estate was consistent with the very heavy outlays on drainage schemes. In the 1820s and early 30s surviving building accounts suggest concentrated spending on improvements to the family residences at Rufford. Later accounts reflect an increasing outlay on a variety of repairs and new buildings, including shippons, pig-sties and cottages. Clearly much of this spending was bound up with the estate's ambitious reclamation work on the Croston and Hesketh marshes. A further 2,000 acres of Croston Moss were drained in 1843 and, in 1849, reclamation of another 800 acres of Martin Mere began.(117) Improvement work in this area of the estate progressed continuously from the mid-1840s onwards but was characterised by two periods of intense activity, 1862-8 and 1879-84. New farms had to be built and others expanded as individual holdings were doubled and trebled in size. Drainage, embanking and enclosure accounted for a large proportion of the total capital investment. Yet, the costs of new farm accommodation and laying new roads were by no means small and, for instance, ran to £11,000 over the last period of reclamation work.(118)

The details of building expenditure elsewhere in Lancashire are patchy but nevertheless support the view that both large and, to a lesser extent, small landowners embarked on substantial investment programmes from the 1850s onwards. John Binns, writing in 1851, applauded the efforts of two other substantial Fylde landowners, Wilson-Ffrance and Wilson-Patten (Lord Winmarleigh), together with the Rothwells of Foxholes, near Lancaster, and the Saunders family of Wennington.(119) At Quernmore, William Garnett spent £1,400 on new buildings on one farm alone, which was not untypical of the scale of capital investment throughout the estate during the 1850s in particular.(120) The same period was significant for permanent improvements on the Devonshire estate in Furness. General accounts and the pattern of expenditure on individual farms would indicate that spending on new farm buildings began to assume a larger proportion of total outlay on permanent improvements from the mid-1850s. In fact, it has been suggested that, for much of the 19th century, new work on the large estates accounted for between 10-20% of the total expenditure on farm buildings nationwide.(121) Spending on the Devonshire estate would appear to confirm this general view of capital investment. Fortunately, account books in this case do supply details of new work as distinct from regular outgoings on maintenance and repairs. Spending on new farm buildings reached 23% of total building expenditure by 1860 which was consistent with intensive drainage work undertaken throughout the estate during the 1850s. Investment fell back to c.13% in 1870 but, by 1880, had returned to its former level.(122)

Furthermore, there is an indication that the spirit of improvement did not confine itself to the great landowners. On occasion it reached down to the lower levels of landed society. The estate spending of the Chavannes family, owners of the small Myerscough Hall estate in the east Fylde, serves to illustrate this point.

In a despairing letter written to the Cliftons' agent, James Fair in 1865, Mrs. Chavannes complained that, over the previous ten years "rents had been increasing everywhere except on (their) property." The Fairs were invited to make an inspection of the estate and they subsequently implemented what amounted to an over-ambitious and very expensive programme of improvement work. In 1869 a loan of £300 was raised for drainage work. The following year James Fair received further instructions to carry out repairs, drainage and other improvements. In fact the work had to be scaled down in face of the not altogether unsurprising opposition on the part of the heir to the estate to the amount of borrowed capital required. However, it would appear that the restraint on expenditure was short-lived. In 1873/4 another £355 had been spent on drainage and repairs, a sum dwarfed by the amount expended on a new weir and embankments - £930 in 1877 and £1,276 in 1878/9. For a small estate of 535 acres producing a rental of £1,249 in 1878/9 this level of spending suggests something of the reckless confidence expressed by many landowners, big and small, in the benefits of agricultural investment.(123)

The scale of investment by individual Lancashire landowners in their estates compares favourably with what is already known about landowning enterprise outside the county. Unfortunately, precise correlations are impossible to make because of the nature of the data. Comparisons can be made on the basis of the proportion of gross incomes spent by individual landowners on capital improvements, but it is worth bearing in mind that the extent to which gross incomes were inflated by non-agricultural sources varied from one landowner to the next. At the same time, there were many Lancashire landowners who were almost totally dependent on farm rentals and this fact must have shaped their ability and willingness to invest. Furthermore, investment policy was closely related to the prevailing condition of the individual property and intended land-use. There are also problems of a methodological kind which have already been mentioned.[124] Estate accounts are far from being complete financial statements and sometimes fail to make specific reference to large-scale and expensive undertakings for which loans usually had to be raised. However, another line of investigation exists which is worth mentioning. Since rents were often derived from a wide range of sources and since they were subject to even wider fluctuations, equating the amount that was laid out per acre across estates might be more useful as a comparative measure. There again, as an approach it has its own inherent drawbacks. The reclamation of waste - such a pronounced feature of the agricultural scene in 19th century Lancashire - together with the buying and selling of land, obviously meant that the size of most estates was constantly changing. Nevertheless, where detailed accounts are unavailable, this method sometimes makes it possible to generalise about landowners' investments at particular times.[125]

Accepting all these reservations, the outlay of Lancashire's great landowners compares with that of their national counterparts. F.M.L. Thompson has estimated that capital investment by landlords averaged 27% of gross rentals by the early 1870s. On estates in the livestock counties investigated by Perren, spending on land and buildings rarely fell below 20% in the same period. These estimates are broadly in keeping with those of R.J. Thompson who calculated that the average annual outlay on repairs and improvements on various 19th century estates stood at 25% of gross rents.(126) Those landowners whose incomes were well buttressed by non-agricultural wealth could well afford to be even more generous in the outlay of money on their agricultural properties. W.E. Hale, Lord Derby's agent, reported that 30-35% of the gross rental was "the average amount spent annually on the agricultural tenants." The Earl of Sefton's spending on his estate in the 1870s ranged between 18 and 59% of gross income. Indeed, an outlay of £25,000 in just two years - 1873 and 1874 - was impressive by any landowner's standards.(127) The Devonshire estates tell a similar story. During the 1870s it was commonplace for between 30% and 46% of gross income from the largely agricultural properties of Kirby and Cartmel to be reinvested in improvement work. At that time, the burgeoning iron-ore royalties from Furness permitted a large measure of generosity in recycling revenue from the agricultural estate.(128)

Clearly most gentry families were not in the position of such aristocratic figures as Lord Derby or the Duke of Devonshire in being able to subsidise agriculture out of other sources. Yet, in terms of the proportion of their total incomes which was channelled into agricultural improvements, it would appear that the lesser landowners were not necessarily any less generous.[129] Indeed, the evidence suggests that their collective contribution was as significant as that of their aristocratic counterparts. For instance, in 1848 the Standish family commissioned a survey of their 3,000 acre estate in central Lancashire. It concluded that the whole of the property was in urgent need of draining, which would add 50% to the annual value of the estate. On the strength of this estimate a loan of £130,000 was taken up for drainage and other improvement work as well as clearing existing debts. Repayments on a loan of this size subsequently absorbed no less than 63% of a gross income which came not only from farm property but also coal royalties and the leasehold rents of a number of factories and public houses.[130] Equally there can be little doubt about the commitment of the Garnetts to the cause of agricultural improvement nor about the extent of the financial sacrifice they had to make in the process. By 1870 almost £207,000 had been spent acquiring and improving an estate of approximately 4,000 acres. Considerable industrial and commercial interests had to be sold off to make this possible, to the extent that an income averaging over £10,000 p.a. in the 1840s had fallen to c. £7,000 p.a. in the following decade. Restoring the poor condition of the Bleasedale estate during the 1850s absorbed an average of 28% of gross rentals from the property and in the 1860s and 70s repairs, new work and improvements continued to draw off a steady 12% of estate income.[131] Similarly, Lawrence Rawstorne's spending on his Penwortham and Hutton estates totalled over £50,000 between 1852 and 1881. Assuming an investment of approximately 8/- per acre per annum over the 29 year period, between 20-25% of estate income must have been channelled back into maintenance and improvement work.(132)

The accounts of the Clifton estate demonstrate a remarkably consistent pattern of investment. Excluding the years 1870 and 1871 when exceptionally large sums are known to have been spent on the urban estate between 20-22% of gross income was regularly reinvested in building work, drainage, plantations and fences, roads, allowances to tenants and on the repayment of capital sums borrowed from government sources and the Lands Improvement Company. (see Appendix III). The percentage of income from purely agricultural sources reinvested in the land was, of course, higher still. In 1866, when accounts make a clear distinction between agricultural and urban income, improvements and maintenance absorbed 28% of farm rentals.(133) Yet even these estimates must be considered on the low side. For, as the agent himself made clear, once fixed outgoings had been taken care of (that is family payments, annuities, current interest charges, agency expenses, insurance, taxes) the residue was rarely sufficient to cover the costs of repairs and improvements on the estate.(134) The deficits were usually carried by the bank for a time and eventually converted into a mortgage. It is impossible to put a figure on the sum involved but growing interest payments must have included considerable amounts which in fact serviced annual capital spending on the estate.(135) To what extent this situation applied to other landowners is difficult to say, but it seems probable that some of the most heavily indebted individuals could have found themselves financing regular estate outgoings on borrowed money. Given their level of indebtedness and estate spending in the 1860s and 70s the Hesketh of Rufford Hall immediately spring to mind.

At all levels, then, investment in agriculture by Lancashire landowners was high. By contrast, the return on their investment was not. It certainly fell well short of the confident expectations which many agents and landowners shared when first embarking on their improvement schemes. "By keeping the land in good heart", Thomas Fair wrote to Colonel Clifton in 1866, "it is my belief that you can look forward to a steady and improving income."(136) His view was clearly based on the assumption that the recovery of improvement costs would be met by substantial rises in rent levels over an admittedly long-term period. However, the years of rising rents were all too brief. The £6,000 increase in the annual rentals on the Clifton estate between 1836 and 1850 can be put down to the £24,500 laid out on the purchase of additional agricultural land, the revision of life-leases and a steady increase in urban ground rents, as much as the return on improvement work. From 1850 until 1866 farm rents barely moved. The only significant rise in agricultural rents was concentrated in the years 1866-79 when an overall increase of 13% took place. Nevertheless, this figure conceals sharp differences across the estate. For instance, rents from the Lytham farms, having the advantage of being located within easy reach of the Fylde railway network and the urban markets of the Fylde coast, increased by 24½% which amounted to no less than half of the total increase in the estate's income from agricultural rents. The upward movement in farm rentals elsewhere on the estate was far more modest. The properties of Westby-with-Plumpton and Clifton-with-Salwick, comparable in size to Lytham's farm acreage, produced only 5-6% increases in rental over the same period. In fact, in both places, rents were actually stagnating from 1876 onwards.(137) (see Appendix IV).

On other Lancashire estates rent increases were on a similar unremarkable scale. The Clayton farms belonging to the Trappes-Lomax family showed increases ranging from 6% to 26% over the period 1849-89, depending on the amount of capital which was invested in individual farms. The expensive improvement work on the Myerscough Hall estate, which Thomas Fair so enthusiastically impressed upon its owner, resulted in a disappointing 4% increase in rentals. The Hesketh of Rufford lavished the same amounts of money on an estate similar in size to the Cliftons' and their efforts produced an increased rental of 13% over the period 1859-76. On the Cartmel and Kirkby Ireleth properties belonging to the Devonshire estate increases in farm rents between 1846 and 1885 again ranged between 13½ and 15%. Rents on Lord Lilford's Bank Hall estate, situated between Preston and Southport, increased by 16% over a 20 year period 1860-80. Only on the Quernmore and Bleasedale estates belonging to William Garnett did the heavy investment of the early 1850s produce at least a commensurate increase in farm rentals - in the order of 40% between 1858 and 1879.[138]

Modest increases in rentals, of course, meant an even more modest return on the landlord's investment. By the mid-1870s the over-confident assumptions of the early 1850s had given way to a more sobering appraisal. In its report of 1873 the special committee of the House of Lords concluded that "the improvement of land....as an investment is not sufficiently lucrative to offer much attraction to capital."[139] Indeed, even the most generous improvers in the mould of the Dukes of Cleveland, Northumberland and Bedford realised only 2-2½% on their investments at a time when the commercial world could comfortably reckon on a net return of twice that amount.[140] The actual return on agricultural investment was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, much depended on the landowner's own objectives. In the case of Lord Bute's Glamorgan estate, for instance, income from non-agricultural sources allowed him to subsidise the agricultural sector and leave farm rents basically unchanged. Consequently, "over the nineteenth century as a whole.....the estate's return on investment through increased rents must have been negligible."[141] The Devonshires were sufficiently well-endowed with lucrative industrial and commercial interests to adopt a similarly generous policy towards farm rents. The valuation of much of their Lancashire farmland remained unchanged throughout the century which meant that some large farms continued to pay rents in 1894 based on a valuation of 1826.[142]

But clearly the prevailing condition of the property not only determined the amount of capital needed to improve it but the size of the resulting profit. Garnett may have increased his income from farm rentals by an impressive 40%, yet, set against the massive expenditure needed to modernise the Bleasedale estate in particular, the return on his investment peaked at just over 3½% by the early 1870s.(143) But Garnett was singularly fortunate. Few landowners can have realised a return that would in any way have done justice to the size of their investment; and certainly fewer still would have shared the views of Bailey Denton, engineer to the General Land Drainage and Improvement Company, who claimed in his report to the Parliamentary Select Committee of 1874 that "land which had been drained twenty years ago paid double the charge that was first put on the land for improvements."(144) The return on a landowner's investment was in fact governed by various restrictive conditions. Firstly, where the costs of any improvements could be passed on to the tenant by way of an increased rent, this could rarely be done immediately. Any rent adjustment had to wait for a change of tenancy, a new valuation or the expiry of a lease.(145) And, up to at least mid-century, medium and long-term leases were a strong feature on the Clifton and other Lancashire estates. Hence, any really significant increase in farm rents only occurred on the Clifton estate between the mid-1860s and mid-1870s and that followed the revaluation of 1867 and the marked shift towards a policy of granting annual leases.(146)

In any case, it did not always follow that a landowner would be in a position to pass on the full costs. For, as one land agent explained, "the increased rent would depend on how the farm had been let before not on the amount expended on improvements." And an inspector for the Inclosure Commissioners made very much the same kind of point in explaining that some landowners would have found it difficult to increase their rents "where improvements amounted to nothing more than urgently required maintenance on run-down estates." (147) However, on Lancashire estates it was usual to pass on a 5% charge for drainage work and, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that investment in this area was likely to show a profit, though only in the long-term and always provided that it had been undertaken early enough. But the same could not be said for expenditure on farm buildings and cottages. In fact, in some cases, tenants were not charged any additional rent for building work.(148) For, as one agent pointed out, the tenant could not be expected to pay "for restoring what he could not do without."(149) Indeed the Cliftons themselves spent over £236,000 on farm buildings and cottages between 1838 and 1894, virtually 75% of their total expenditure on improvements, and yet no percentage charge was made on the tenant farmers.(150)

The inescapable conclusion is that many of the improving estates in Lancashire were overcapitalised in the sense that most landowners undertook their heaviest investment from mid-century onwards and consequently had little hope of securing a return before agricultural prices started to fall and rents to stagnate by the early 1880s.[151] Nor did it always follow that the improvement pioneers of the earlier decades should have benefitted substantially more from their foresight than those who embarked on their improvement schemes after 1850. Some were unable to raise their rents, others had to put right defects in what had been largely experimental drainage systems and, in any case, most waited until the 1860s and 70s before committing themselves to their heaviest spending. Furthermore, it is worth bearing in mind that the costs of improving agricultural land were increasing at the time when many Lancashire landowners were at their most active and, therefore, this was bound to diminish the prospects of an adequate return in the foreseeable future. In 1874 it was claimed that "in the last few years" drainage costs had risen from £5-10-0 to between £6-10-0 and £7-0-0 an acre and this excluded an additional £4-£5 per acre on fertilizers which was thought essential if "considerable increases in rent (were to) be asked for." Worse still, by then, a high annual rate of inflation was said to be pushing up the costs of building materials still further.[152]

In summary, everything pointed to a disappointing return on investment. Even landowners who commenced their improvement work in the early decades of the century were rewarded by little more than 4% at best, when interest rates ranged between 3½ and 4% and when commercial investment was expected to show a profit of 8 to 9%. And for those who started later the return was very much worse.[153] Indeed some would have been fortunate to break even. The

Cliftons, for instance, had been generous investors by any standards, having laid out about £22 per acre on improvements between 1832 and 1880. Yet, taking this period as a whole, the return on ,their investment could not have been more than 1½%.[154] And the limited evidence that is available tends to suggest that landowners elsewhere in the county fared little better. The investment in farms and land undertaken by the Standish family in mid-century showed a profit of 1½-2%. On the Devonshire estate in Furness individual farms produced a return of between 1% and 3½% depending on the kind of improvement work which had been carried out. By comparison, Garnett of Quernmore enjoyed slightly greater success. His investment in the purchase and improvement of the Quernmore and Bleasedale estates returned 2.8% in the mid-1850s rising to 3.8% by the early 1870s.[155]

In general, even by their own unambitious standards, landowners did not reap anything like a satisfactory financial reward from their frantic investment during the middle decades of the century. Furthermore, a substantial part of the improvement work which took place could only have been financed by borrowing in many cases. Still, as long as rents actually held up and, more especially, as long as land values were maintained, the position of most landowners would not have been unduly threatened. The agricultural depression in the last quarter of the 19th century exposed their vulnerability by removing both these defences.

REFERENCES

(1) Foster, Thesis, Op.cit. p.66.

(2) R.W. Dickson, General view of the Agriculture of Lancashire, (1815), pp.96, 155, 251-267, 392-421 451, 498-9.

(3) L.R.O. DDCl. 534; 535; 549; 551.

(4) Ibid. DDCl. 522. Lytham Survey 1812; 523 Westby-with-Plumpton Survey 1809; 524 Clifton-with-Salwick Survey 1816; Acc.No. 1325. Box 26. Life Leases on the Clifton Estate 1827; Acc.No. 2831. Boxes 1 and 2. Property purchased from Sir Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood in Marton, 1842. Dickson, Op.cit., pp.136-142.

(5) L. Rawstorne, Lancashire Farming, (1843), p.107.

(6) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. J. Fair to Thomas Clifton, 4 September 1838.

(7) See p. 15 P.P. Select Committee on Agriculture (1833) Evidence of William Reed, Lancashire Land Agent and Surveyor, pp.182-3.

(8) Ibid.

(9) For a wider discussion of farming strategies in the post-1815 period see A.R. Wilkes, Adjustments in Arable Farming after the Napoleonic Wars, Agricultural History Review, Vol.28, II. 1980.

(10) See pp.354-5

(11) Dickson, Op.cit., pp.120-124; 393-410; 549-562; P.P., 1833 Op.cit., pp.182-83.

(12) S. Fairlie, The Corn Laws and British Wheat Production 1829-76, Economic History Review, XXII, 1969; Wilkes, Op.cit., p.103.

(13) Preston Guardian, 7 April 1883.

(14) L.R.O. DDCl. 1185. The Wheat Yield in one Fylde Township was about 19 bushels per acre compared to a national average of 23 bushels.

(15) Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, p.503; Thompson, The Second Agricultural Revolution, 1815-1880, Economic History Review, XXI, I, 1968, pp.64-5; J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880 (1966), pp.168-179.

(16) Caird, Op.cit., pp.505-7.

(17) Quoted from J.A. Perkins, Tenure, Tenant Right and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, Agricultural History Review, 23, 1975, p.2.

References (contd.)

(18) Broderick, Op.cit., p.378.

(19) Spring, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, 1955,p.78

(20) Sturgess, Thesis, Op.cit., pp.458-461.

(21) Perkins, Op.cit.,

(22) P.P. Report of the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs, VII, 1847-8. pp.30-31.

(23) Beesley, Op.cit., pp.42-46; 65-68.

(24) Perkins, Op.cit.,

(25) Garnett, Op.cit., pp.33-35; L.R.O. DDSc. 127/8. Lease Agreements.

(26) Dickson, Op.cit., pp.136-142.

(27) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., p.230; D.H. Howell, Land and People in 19th century Wages (1977), p.58

(28) L.R.O. DDCl. 525. Clifton-with-Salwick Survey 1826-31; 534/5. Lytham Survey 1834-36; 545. Little Marton Survey 1833-4; 551 Westby-with-Plumpton Survey 1839-44; Dickson, Op.cit., p.251.

(29) Ibid. 1191. W. Hutton to J. Fair, September 1841.

(30) Garnett, Op.cit., p.14.

(31) P.P., Op.cit., 1894, Appendix A, p.33.

(32) L.R.O. DDCl. 522, 523, 524, 550, 552; Acc.No. 1325, Box 4. Warton Surveys 1829-37; 2831, Box 1. Warton and Westby-with-Plumpton Rent Rolls 1866-7.

(33) Caird, Op.cit., p.414.

(34) Dickson, Op.cit., pp.146-147.

(35) L.R.O. DDCl. 528, 530, 550, 551. 1966 Deposit. Farm Leases.

(36) Garnett, Op.cit., pp.22-23; Beesley, Op.cit., pp.24-30

(37) P.P. op.cit., 1847-8, p.60

(38) Ibid.

(39) Ibid.

(40) Ibid. pp.145-6.

(41) L.R.O. DDCl. 552, 558; Acc.No. 1325. Box 4, Farm Agreements.

References (contd.)

(42) Ibid. DDQ. Quernmore Farm Leases.

(43) Ibid. DDm. 46/238; DDL; Box 7. Farm Leases; DDCl.525, 528, 530, 531, 534, 535, 538, 539, 541, 543, 544, 545, 547, 549, 550, 551, 552, 554; Acc.No. 1325 Boxes 4 and 5. Clifton Leases; 1966 Deposit. Westby Leases.

(44) Ibid.

(45) Ibid. 1191. W. Hutton to J. Fair, September 1841; 1195. E. Ashworth to J. Fair 8 October 1843; Preston Pilot, 27 September 1851.

(46) Ibid. 550, 528; 1966 Deposit. Westby Farm Leases; 1195. Liverpool Merchant to J. Fair, 26 and 29 January 1843; 1196. Ibid. 1 March 1844.

(47) Ibid. DDHc/107/19. T.D. Hesketh to W.S. Shakeshaft, 30 July 1833; DDm. 46/238 Sefton Farm Leases; DDLi Box 7. Lilford Farm Leases; DDQ. Quernmore Farm Leases; DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Boxes 4 and 5, Clifton Farm Leases.

(48) Ibid. DDCl. 1199. W. Scott to J. Fair, 10 March 1845.

(49) Ibid. DDm. 6/80. Hall to Lord Sefton, 13 April 1843; 6/140. R. Ledger to Lord Sefton, 29 July 1845.

(50) Ibid. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 7. T. Clifton to J. Fair, N.D.

(51) Ibid. 1186. G. Webb Hall to J. Fair, September 1839.

(52) Ibid. 1202. J. Fair to W. Garnett, 21 October 1840.

(53) Preston Guardian, 11 March 1848

(54) L.R.O. DDCl. 1193, 1191, 1192. T. Fair to J. Fair, July 1841, June and 3 and 5 October 1842; 1186. J. Fair to T. Fair, October 1839; 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-3; Report on the Clifton Estate 1890. Rawstorne, Op.cit., p.108.

(55) Dickson, Op.cit., pp.91-2.

(56) Ibid. Garnett, Op.cit., PP.3,18. Beesley, Op.cit., pp.49-50.

(57) Beesley, Op.cit., p.56.

(58) B.A. Holderness, Landlords' Capital Formation in East Anglia 1750-1870. Economic History Review, XXV, 1972, p.436.

(59) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, Appendix B.4(b). p.56.

References (contd.)

(60) G. Nicholls, "on the condition of the agricultural labourer with suggestions for its improvement," Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Vol.II., 1846, pp.16-20; "The Agricultural Labourer; His condition and his requirements as considered at recent agricultural meetings," Farmers' Magazine, Vol. X, 3rd series, 1856. pp.497-504.

(61) Caird, Op.cit., p.503.

(62) P.P. Op.cit., 1836, p.61.

(63) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 11. J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 1850.

(64) Ibid. DDQ. Quernmore Rent Day Report, 1850.

(65) Thompson, quoted in Mingay, The Gentry (1976), p.169.

(66) Foster, Thesis. Op.cit., p.68. Chambers and Mingay, Op.cit., pp.174-175; A.D.M. Phillips, Underdraining the English Clay Lands, 1850-1880, Agricultural History Review, 17, 1969, pp.48-49.

(67) This issue has been widely discussed by Phillips, Op.cit., Sturgess, The Agricultural Revolution on the English Clays, Agricultural History Review, XIV, 1966, and, The Agricultural Revolution on the English Clays; A Rejoinder, Ibid., XV. 1967; E.J.T. Collins and E.L. Jones, Sectoral Advance in English Agriculture, Ibid. XV, 1967. C.S. Orwin and E.H. Whetham, History of British Agriculture 1846-1914 (1964); Chambers and Mingay, Op.cit.,

(68) See D. Taylor, The English Dairy Industry 1860-1930; The need for a re-assessment, Agricultural History Review, Vol.22. 1974; Fletcher, Ibid. Vol.9. 1961; J. Blackman, The Cattle Trade and Agrarian Change on the eve of the Railway Age, Ibid. Vol.23, 1975.

(69) P.P. Op.cit., 1894., Report by G. Wilson-Fox, p.7.

(70) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Depsoit. Report on the Clifton Estate 1890.

(71) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., p.257.

(72) Sturges, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, XIV, 1966.

(73) See p.166

(74) Dickson, Op.cit., p.461.

(75) Ibid. pp.456-473.

(76) L.R.O. DDjc. 1/2/3.

References (contd.)

(77) Garnett, Op.cit., pp.26-27; 41.

(78) L.R.O. DDCl. 1183, 1184, 1187, 1199.

(79) Rawstorne, Op.cit., p.56.

(80) L.R.O. DDCl. 1194. J. Cunliffe to J. Fair, 24 April 1843.

(81) Garnett, Op.cit., pp.11, 19-20.

(82) Dickson, Op.cit., pp.478-479.

(83) L.R.O. DDCl. 1202. J. Fair to unknown recipient, 21 October 1840; J. Fair to E. Dawson, 19 November 1841; DDHe. 77/99.

(84) Garnett, Op.cit., p.19

(85) Sturgess, Thesis, Op.cit., p.454.

(86) Preston Guardian, 14 October 1848.

(87) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Box 4. Warton Survey 1837; Box 19. Office Memoranda Book, 21 July 1845.

(88) Ibid. DDSc. Trunk 2. H. Talbot to C. Scarisbrick, 28 April 1856.

(89) Ibid. DDx 322/5 and 7. J. Kenyon to J. Arminson, 10 December 1837.

(90) Preston Guardian, 30 September 1848.

(91) Ibid. 23 September 1848.

(92) Phillipps, Op.cit.,

(93) L.R.O. DDCl. 1202. J. Fair to R.U. Johnson, 16 August 1842; Chambers and Mingay, Op.cit., p.174; Sturgess, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, Vol.14, 1966.

(94) Phillipps, Op.cit.,

(95) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 2831; 1954 Deposit. Government Drainage Loan 1847; 1202. J. FAir to H. Handley, January 1841; 1195. A Begbie to J. Fair, 16 December 1843; M. Scott to J. Fair, 20 December 1843; J.Binns, Notes on the Agriculture of Lancashire with suggestions for its Improvement (1951), p.22; Garnett, Op.cit., pp.22-23. Rawstorne, Op.cit., p.109.

(96) Phillipps, Op.cit.,

References (contd.)

(97) L.R.O. DDCl. Op.cit. Government Drainage Loan.

(98) Ibid. DDCl. 530. Clifton-with-Salwick Leases,1844-52; 550. Warton Leases 1846-54; DDCl. Acc.No. 1325. Boxes 4 and 5 Farm Leases; 1966 Deposit. Layton Hall Lease, 1873; Ledger Books 1-3.

(99) Preston Pilot, 8 February 1851; L.R.O. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Accounts.

(100) Preston Guardian, 30 September 1848; Garnett, Op.cit., p.30.

(101) Ibid. 10 February 1894; Garnett, Op.cit., p.19.

(102) Ibid. 14 October,1848; 31 January 1883.

(103) Ibid. 10 November 1894; L.R.O. DDHe 62/119; 78/13/22-25; 79/105. Drainage Accounts; 62/22 Hesketh Cash Books.

(104) Sturgess, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, XIV, 1966, p.109.

(105) L.R.O. DDCl. 1202. J. Fair to Preston Police Commissioners, 16 August 1842.

(106) Ibid. 1196. J. Fair to Liverpool Merchants, 1 March, 22 April and 13 May 1844; Garnett, Op.cit., p.59.

(107) P.P. Report of the Select Committee (House of Lords) to enable possessors of entailed estates to charge for the purpose of draining, XII, 1345, pp. i, 27,37.

(108) Sturgess, Thesis, Op.cit., p.466.

(109) Ibid, p.479; P. Perren, The Landlord and Agricultural Transformation 1870-1900, Agricultural History Review, Vol.18, 1970; Beastall, Op.cit., pp.146-149; Davies, Thesis, Op.cit., pp.405-6, 411, 414.

(110) L.R.O. DDSc. 127/7. Details of new farm buildings 1835-43; P.P. op.cit., 1845, p.65.

(111) Garnett, Op.cit., p.19.

(112) P.P. Op.cit., p.66.

(113) P.P. Op.cit., 1894. Appendix B6. Evidence of Land-owners and Agents, p.54.

(114) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Statement of Accounts 1845-48; Ledger Books 1-2; Acc.No. 1235. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 6 January 1869.

(115) Beesley, Op.cit., p.40.

References (contd.)

(116) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Depsoit. Statement of Accounts 1845-48; Accounts 1850, 1853 and 1857; Ledger Books 1-2.

(117) Binns, Op.cit., pp.18-19.

(118) L.R.O. DDHe. 62/6-10; 78/1-4, 22-25; 79/51, 105.

(119) Binns, Op.cit., p.27

(120) L.R.O. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Accounts.

(121) Holderness, Op.cit., p.435.

(122) L.R.O. DDCa. 1/343. General Statement of Rents; 1/344. Movement of Farm Rents 1846-1885; 1/169-242. Rents of Lancashire Estates.

(123) Ibid. DDRf. 8/1 Mrs. Chevannes to J. Fair, 2 December 1867, 15 October 1869, 24 April 1870; 8/2. Estate Accounts and Rentals.

(124) See pp.167-8.

(125) For a full discussion of the methodological problems in measuring landowners' capital investment, see Holderness, op.cit., Economic History Review, XXV,1972.

(126) Perren, Op.cit., p.40. Perry, Op.cit., p.90; R.J. Thompson, An Enquiry into the Rents of Agricultural Land in England and Wales in the 19th Century, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXX, 1907, pp.602-5.

(127) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, pp.53, 56; Bateman, Op.cit.,

(128) L.R.O. DDCa. op.cit.

(129) Mingay, Gentry, Op.cit., p.169.

(130) L.R.O., DDRf. 11/77.

(131) Ibid. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Accounts.

(132) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, p.54.

(133) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-2; P.P. Op.cit., 1882, Coleman's Report.

(134) see p.34.

(135) Ibid.

(136) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 12 May 1866.

References (contd.)

(137) Ibid. Acc.No. 2831. Box 2. Rentals 1860, 1870 and 1880; Purchases made during Mr. Fair's Agency 1836-1851; Ledger Books 1-2; P.P. Op.cit., 1882, Coleman's Report.

(138) Ibid. DDLx. 1-1/3; DDRf. 8/2; DDHe 99/59-70; DDCa.1/344; DDLi. DDQ Estate Accounts.

(139) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., p.251.

(140) Ibid. pp. 249-251; Spring, The English Landed Estate, Op.cit., pp.48-49; Chambers and Mingay, Op.cit., p.177.

(141) Davies, Thesis, Op.cit., pp.401, 416-417.

(142) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, p.55.

(143) L.R.O. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Accounts.

(144) P.P. Op.cit., 1873, p.65.

(145) Ibid. pp. 152.

(146) See p. 43-44

(147) P.P. Op.cit., 1873. pp.129-135.

(148) Ibid. pp.114-115, 146, 271-272.

(149) Ibid. p.151.

(150) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, p.54.

(151) Perry, Op.cit., p.90.

(152) P.P. Op.cit., 1874, pp.162-296.

(153) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., pp.246-252.

(154) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-4, P.P. op.cit., 1894, p.54.

(155) Ibid. DDCa. 1/344; DDRf. DDQ Estate Accounts.

CHAPTER V

LAND IN CRISIS

It is now part of historical orthodoxy that the "great agricultural depression" was not quite as drastic nor as universal in its effect as was once assumed. Briefly, the prices of agricultural produce, farm rents and land values fell much more sharply in the southern counties than in the north. Lancashire, being predominantly a livestock district, did not suffer to the same extent as the arable south and east because dairy produce did not experience the same long-term, calamitous drop in price as cereals. The easily accessible, expanding markets of the industrial towns, a sustained improvement in the real wages of labouring people and a consumer preference for local dairy produce ensured that Lancashire farmers continued to enjoy respectably high prices for their products. Milk, for instance, which accounted for three-quarters of dairy output, maintained a constant price level throughout the years of the depression. Pig and poultry farmers, together with market gardeners, also reaped the benefit both of growing demand and relatively stable prices.(1)

Generally rent levels tend to act as a mirror of farming prosperity and, clearly, Lancashire landowners did not suffer the same drop in income as their southern counterparts. For some it might have been reassuring to know that rentals in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Somerset were said to have dropped by 27% between 1875 and 1892. In parts of Essex, Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire the picture was even worse with reports of a 50% reduction.[2] By contrast, so the argument goes, sharp movements in rents did not take place in Lancashire. Fairly frequent abatements in rent were made on a number of estates but permanent reductions were few and far between. Indeed it is claimed that Lord Derby's rents on his Fylde and Bowland estates acutally increased by 25% between 1884 and 1904 and the same was also true of the Trappes-Lomax estate in east Lancashire. Moreover, rarely did landowners find themselves with large amounts of land on their hands, rents continued to be well paid and it is evident that a high level of investment in repairs and improvements was sustained.[3]

At first sight it would appear that Lancashire was an oasis of reassuring stability for landowners and farmers alike. But if this was really the case, then why was so much land sold off over the three decades following the onset of the depression in 1879? Why were large ancestral estates such as the Hesketh's' broken up completely and others, like the Cliftons', reduced to shadows of their former selves? Why Thomas Fair's despondent remark in 1889 that "land will no longer provide as it has in the past?"[4]

In part the movement in land speaks for itself. The closing two decades of the 19th century and the opening years of the 20th witnessed a reduction in the size of numerous Lancashire estates, and total dismemberment in some cases. Of course, a certain amount of land came on to the market for much the same reasons as it had done in the past. The lack of a direct heir brought about the sale of the Townley estate, near Burnley, the ancestral seat of one of Lancashire's oldest landed dynasties.[5] Equally, the introduction of death duties no doubt compounded the problem of settlements and gave a further boost to the land market after 1914 and in the immediate post-war years. So, 3,000 acres belonging to Captain Charles Gerard, who owned land in Wrightington and in adjacent parishes to the west of Wigan, had to be sold off in 1919/20 in order to meet succession duties and clear considerable family settlements.[6]

Nevertheless, it is clear that a large amount of land was coming on to the market after 1880 because landowners were being forced to contract. Even then, disposing of property was never easy. The newspaper coverage of auctions strongly suggests that landowners experienced considerable difficulties in finding an immediate buyer prepared to pay a reasonable price. For instance, part of the De Tabley estate near Ribchester came on to the market in 1894 and, interestingly, it was put up for auction on the instructions of mortgagees. But only 601 out of an advertised 2,658 acres of farmland were actually sold and then at the low proce of c.£36 per acre. Similarly, the Samesbury Hall estate belonging to James Harrison, purchased from the Braddyll family in 1862, was auctioned in 1883 but bids did not reach the reserve price apart from one farm of 33 acres.[7]

Yet, irrespective of whether they were successful or not, it is apparent that an increasing number of landowners sought a reduction in their holdings. In particular, those landowners who had scrambled to invest in land in the second and third quarters of the 19th century, and who therefore had invariably bought at high prices, were the ones who were most impatient to part with it in the last quarter. The Jacsons' Barton Hall estate on the east side of the Fylde was acquired in 1834 and put back on the market in 1899. Between 1854 and 1866 the Starkie family purchased the Ashton Hall estate, formerly the residence of the Dukes of Hamilton, only to put it up for auction in 1884. Lord Cardwell bought the Ellerbeck estate, situated between Wigan and Chorley, in 1860 but disposed of it thirty six years later. The Alison family of Park Hall, near Chorley, made considerable additions to their estate in the 1870s yet had parted with the same property in 1909 and, in fact, all of their land by 1919.(8) After a period of expansion and consolidation in the 1870s, the process of breaking up the large Hesketh estate commenced in the early 1880s with the sale of land in Tarleton and was virtually complete by 1915. The ancestral seat at Rufford came under the auctioneer's hammer in 1906 and it is an interesting reflection on the times that the property was advertised, not as a financially rewarding investment, but principally as a "sporting estate". There could be no mistaking the market at which the auction was aimed: "The estate....possess an exceptional value to any gentleman who, whilst engaged in commercial pursuits, is nevertheless desirable of acquiring a place of residence surrounded by scenery of a rural and delightfully picturesque character and the possession of which must necessarily carry considerable influence in the neighbourhood."(9)

Several factors prompted Lancashire landowners to carry out a reduction in the size of their estates: a growing awareness that the recession in agriculture was not a temporary phenomenon, driven home by the impact of stagnating rentals and falling land values particularly on those who were already heavily in debt. Lord Derby went to the heart of the problem in a speech he delivered to the Lancashire Agricultural Society in 1883. He ascribed the marked increase in land sales in the county not only to the deepening recession, but also to the need felt by many landowners to reduce the "encumbrances on their property." Contributory factors he pointed out, may also have been fears about future land legislation, combined with changes in the laws of settlement and entail which made it easier to dispose of settled estates.(10)

Initially, however, many landowners responded to the depression in much the same was as they had responded to recessions of the past. Their confidence in the ultimate prosperity of agriculture remained basically undiminished and it was assumed that recovery could be purchased through further injections of capital.(11) Consequently, on top of the debt accumulating improvements of the 1860s and 70s, landowners launched themselves into still more expensive, debt-financed undertakings in the

1880s with the object of combatting falling cereal prices and the exceptionally wet conditions of 1879-81. True, Lancashire farmers were fortunate enough in having access to large urban markets where a growing demand for dairy products - milk in particular and, to a lesser extent, for lamb, poultry and eggs - had the effect of stabilising prices.(12) Nevertheless, farmers had to be equipped to meet changing market conditions, and this called for increased capital outlays on the part of landowners.

Landowners' investment in Lancashire was closely in line with the high levels of spending on drainage, land-use conversion and buildings evident in other livestock areas during the 1880s and early 90s.(13) In their common efforts to keep tenants on the land and at least maintain existing rents landowners in the county demonstrated a remarkably consistent level of response to the depression, in spite of the inevitable variations from one landowner to the next arising from different personal priorities, resources and the condition of the land itself. At one end of the spectrum the Earl of Sefton, who drew an income of £43,000 from his agricultural property alone in 1876, could presumably well afford to spend the equivalent of £10.50 per acre between 1879 and 1892.(14) At the other, Charles Cavendish's outlay of c.£1 per acre reflected the fact that his tenants had long enjoyed well-drained, highly productive grassland and arable and had been able to capitalise on the swelling market demands of neighbouring Barrow.(15) But the great majority of landowners can be found midway between the two extremes. It would also appear that the smaller landowners were not necessarily more cautious in their spending when compared with the greater gentry of the region. In terms of expenditure per acre their respective outlays were very similar. For their part the Cliftons expended roughly £7 per acre between 1879 and 1892. Lawrence Rawstorne spent approximately £6/£7 per acre over the same period on his 3-4,000 acre estate at Hutton outside Preston. A similar amount was invested by Fitzherbert-Brockholes in his 3,800 acres surrounding Claughton Hall on the Fylde. Expenditure on the Scarisbrick estate was of the same order whilst at Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley, the Kay-Shuttleworth family spent just over £6 per acre on their modest 300 acre property.(16)

Much of this spending was concentrated in the early 1880s. These years, for example, represented the high point of investment on the Clifton estate and focused on an expansion in dairy farming. During the 1870s grassland in the county had been gradually increasing, partly through a long-standing process of reclaiming and enclosing wasteland.(17) But, by the 1880s, the increase in meadowland, necessary to support more stock, was taking place on the basis of a much more radical shift in existing land-use arrangements. In the townships making up the Clifton estate permanent meadow increased by between 21 and 56% from 1874/6 to 1894/6 at the expense of the arable used for crop rotations. On the arable which remained wheat gave way to such fodder and cash crops as barley, and vegetables. And these changes were by no means untypical of the pattern across the whole Fylde. If, as Fletcher has claimed, Lord Derby was fortunate enough to enjoy a marked improvement in rentals on his Weeton property then this could only have been made possible by an expensive programme of laying a considerable acreage down to permanent grass.(18) (see Appendix V).

Evidence from the Clifton account books suggests that the intensive efforts to expand and improve dairy farming throughout the estate were far from cheap. From 1878 to 1894 annual sums, as high as £527 in 1884, were being spent on grass seeds and fertilizers which were made available to individual tenants on demand. The drainage bill averaged £330 per annum throughout the 1860s and had risen to an average of £915 per annum during the 1870s. But a loan from the Lands Improvement Company, specially advanced for drainage purposes, drove average annual spending in this area up to £1,228 between 1879 and 1886. Similarly, expenditure on farm buildings moved sharply ahead in the same period. An average of £3,900 p.a. was being spent on repairs and new constructions between 1872 and 1881. From 1882 to 1887 an additional £2,000 p.a. was laid out.(19)

South of the Ribble, Hesketh reorganised farm units and accelerated his own investment in new farm buildings. Close by, the trustees of the Scarisbrick estate embarked on what amounted to a rescue operation during the early 1880s. Their problem, however, was partly of their own making. The agricultural property to North

Meols had been largely neglected during the 1860s and 70s on the strength of the fact that farm rentals had held steady. In any case, the estate was cushioned by the flow of ground rents stemming from Southport's development. Yearly expenditure on repairs, improvements and drainage amounted to an average of only £4-500 p.a. between 1861 and 1869, which represented a small fraction of the total Scarisbrick income. However, the changing tide in agriculture brought a sharp reminder that, despite their urban connections, the Scarisbricks were still dependent on farm rents as the mainstay of their income. Only the prompt injection of large capital sums prevented substantial parts of the estate falling on to the hands of the trustees. So, in just over four years after 1879, £59,000 was spent on a comprehensive range of much needed improvements.[20]

The hoped-for recovery did not materialise. Admittedly, rents on Lancashire estates did not go into rapid decline as clearly was the case elsewhere. There were few permanent reductions in rent. Nevertheless, recurrent abatements and mounting arrears amounted to substantial shortfalls in income, which many landowners could ill-afford. For instance, the Hesketh rent-roll fell from £20,223 in 1880 to £17,981 by 1896. It was an alarming drop in view of the expensive reclamation schemes carried out on the Hesketh-with-Becconsall estate during the 1870s which it was expected would boost gross annual rentals by £3,000. Land in Tarleton was sold during the early 1880s but this does not fully explain the shortfall. The fact was that arrears of 20-25% were commonplace by 1896.[21] The pattern of persistent arrears and annual abatements was repeated elsewhere and together they amounted to virtually permanent reductions in rent. Lord Lilford's rental from his Bank Hall estate at Bretherton ostensibly grew from £8,743 to £10,580 between 1880 and 1885, yet this increase was due almost entirely to the purchase of Hesketh's adjacent property in 1883. In fact income from farm rents was down by £1,000 per year by the end of the 1880s and only returned to the level of 1880 in 1892/3.[22] The position on William Garnett's Quernmore estate was very similar in that rents dropped by almost 20% between 1879 and 1899.[23] The rise in agricultural rents on the Clifton estate began to tail off from 1877 onwards and only a slow maturing of ground rents in Lytham and St. Annes prevented a still more serious deterioration in the estate's financial health. Even so, using 1882 as a base, gross rentals were down by an average of £1,500 p.a. over the following twelve years and did not fully recover until 1898 when urban rents assumed a healtheir growth rate.[24] With the exception of 1890 and 1891, 10% abatements in rent were made even on the Devonshires' Furness estate every year from 1886 to 1893. On the Earl of Bective's Barnacre estate there was a consistent rise in rent abatements starting at 3½% in 1882 and reaching 21½% by 1893. Tenants on the Fylde estate belonging to Lord Winmarleigh received periodic abatements of 10% prior to a permanent reduction of the same proportion in 1893.[25] (see Appendix VI).

Moreover, it appears that the losses were most severe on those farms where most money had been spent. In an effort to persuade tenants to remain on the land and hopefully maintain their rent payments, capital outlays tended to be concentrated on the larger units. It was a gamble which failed on both counts. The Hesketh estate is a case in point. On their Hesketh-with-Becconsall property, farms had been doubled and trebled in size and additional farms created out of the marsh reclamation scheme undertaken during the 1870s and early 80s. Significantly, it was these very large holdings which carried the highest arrears - as high as 33% - and in which the greatest investment had been made.(26) The situation deterioriated still further in the first half of the 1890s - by far the worst phase of the depression in Lancashire agriculture. Wheat prices reached a record low in 1894, store cattle and wool prices fell and a series of droughts compounded the problems facing the grazier and dairy farmer.(27) By then, the Hesketh estate had neither the will nor the resources to face inevitable demands for further rent reductions, abatements and improvements. True, Sir Thomas Fermor-Hesketh undertook the construction of new farm buildings at his own expense but the ambitious drainage schemes of former years never reached completion. Neither landlord nor tenantry were in a position to find another £2,000 needed for the Hesketh-with-Becconsall drainage work.(28)

In the closing years of the century the Cliftons found themselves faced with the same difficulties as the Hesketh. It was said of Fylde landowners in 1882 that "the effects of the depression (had) not reached landlords' pockets."(29) Solely in terms of the impact on nominal rents, this may have been the case; but that does not take account of the financial realities confronting many landowners, which called for a steady if not increasing income to meet rising expenditure. The Cliftons were forced to borrow still further and invest capital in their agricultural estate which they could ill-afford, and on which there was no prospect, as events turned out, of any return. Again, the heaviest losses were tied to the larger farms in which their investment had been greatest not only in the 1860s and 70s but during the depression years as well. It was, therefore, a matter of small consolation that there was no difficulty in letting the smaller farms. They had not consumed most of the estate's capital spending. Hence the twist of despairing irony to Thomas Fair's reflection in 1894 that he "would split up farms now if it was not for the expense of making buildings."(30) As it was, money was borrowed from the Lands Improvement Company to extend grass acreages, improve under-drainage and remedy deficiencies in building accommodation on existing farms. So, during the course of the 1890s, drainage work was carried out and new buildings erected (appropriately shippons, dairies and pig-styes) on all the twenty-five farms making up the Clifton-with-Salwick estate. The ten largest units absorbed a high proportion of the total expenditure. Yet, virtually in every case, not even the pre-1894 rent levels could be maintained and reductions of between 20 and 25% were allowed on most. By the time the estate was sold in 1916 none had recovered their former rentals. Worse still, despite all the landowner's efforts, larger farms did fall on to the estate's hands at a cost of almost £20,000 in lost income between 1894 and 1904. Thereafter the Cliftons continued to plough what money they could afford into the green acres of Clifton-with-Salwick; but this was essentially for the purpose of dressing it up for the property auctions.(31)

By itself the downward movement in net farm rentals was hardly a development of dramatic proportions. Nevertheless, the stagnation in agricultural incomes dealt a serious financial and psychological blow to those landowners already overburdened by debt. For the numerous landowners who were not in the fortunate position of the Derbys, Seftons and Devonshires in having large assets and diverse sources of non-agricultural income, the financial problems generated by the depression threatened to assume critical proportions. In their case even a marginal drop in agricultural rentals could have serious implications in that it threatened an already precarious balance between income and expenditure. And, as has been indicated, Lancashire landowners so far studied were inclined in varying degrees to high levels of debt accumulating expenditure throughout the 19th century. The persistent and unavoidable costs of family settlements, the heavy outlays of land purchases, estate improvements, housebuilding and, in some cases, the expense of an extravagant life-style, all contributed to a mounting burden of debt on top of which was piled the capital borrowed to counter the effects of the depression.

Consequently, a major item of fixed expenditure was the servicing of interest charges.

Such borrowing habits had been reinforced by the over-confident assumption of the 1860s and 70s that rents would continue to rise, however modestly. If a landowner had further resources with which to meet debt repayments so much the better. Yet, when the depression came, few landowners below the level of the great magnates had the means to shield themselves fully against its worst effects. With net incomes beginning to stagnate from the 1880s onwards many like the Cliftons, Garnetts, Hesketh and the host of lesser landowners, with incomes of a few thousand pounds which were almost totally dependent on farm rents, must have found themselves facing grave problems. At best, the view that rents in Lancashire in the 1890s, even when allowance has been made for reductions and remissions, may have fallen no lower than the levels of 1867-71 was hardly a cause for celebration. If the Scarisbrick trustees were given an uncomfortable shock by the recession of the 1880s, what of the prospects for the smaller landowner with a modest income, limited assets and the problem of meeting interest charges on his property? Fletcher's conclusions that "an impoverished landowner was unlikely to be found in Lancashire....largely through a diversity of economic activity" will not do.(32) It is inconsistent with the harsher reality facing many landowners. For them it was not enough that rents in Lancashire did not collapse as dramatically as elsewhere. It has been imperative that they continued to rise.

Nowhere was this more apparent than on the Clifton estate. With current income being squeezed from all directions an indebted estate like the Cliftons' found that additional debts, however small, could assume ominous proportions. Thomas Henry Clifton's death in 1880, with the consequent settlement charges on the estate was a twist of fate which stretched current income to its limits. In fact the estate had to recourse to the desperate strategy of trimming various accounts to persuade the probate court of its sound financial health and to justify the size of the allowance settled on Clifton's widow, Madeleine.(33) Yet no amount of manipulating the figures could alter the fact that land, burdened down with mortgages and producing a shrinking income, was becoming more of a liability than an asset. In the optimistic projections of 1866 it was confidently assumed that Madeleine Clifton would be comfortably provided for in the event of her husband's death. Her marriage settlement secured a jointure of £1,000, her childrens' portions amounted to £1,600 p.a. and the interest on the value of furniture and plate was estimated to be worth a further £340 p.a. In addition it was intended that her income would be supplemented by the rents from the Layton Hall estate, disentailed in 1866 and transferred to Thomas Henry in fee, and from the Warton and Bryning properties purchased during the lifetime of John Talbot Clifton. In 1882, the rents from these estates amount to £1,862 but maintenance costs and, more especially, interest payments on mortgages absorbed all but £252.[34] Layton Hall itself was by far the most heavily encumbered property. It was gradually sold off during the 1890s, enabling the mortgages to be cleared and leaving a capital profit of £16,000.[35] Property in Warton presented much the same kind of intractable problem. The net income it generated was small yet it was difficult to sell off. Some was in fact sold between 1887 and 1890 but the greater part remained on the estate's hands at the end of the century. And the prospects of an adequate return from the land were as dim as ever. It was valued at almost £13,500, which if invested at the current commercial rate of 3½% would have realised c.£430 p.a. Instead, when allowance was made for management and maintenance costs, Mrs. Clifton's income from her Warton property averaged out at £390 p.a. between 1899 and 1901 and that excluded interest payments on mortgages of £3,500. There was little hope that this poor return would be improved on in the future. On the contrary, it was felt that rents were already too high in Warton and could not have been held at their existing level in the event of farms being relet.[36]

The unsatisfactory nature of the return on Mrs. Clifton's land was not exceptional. By the mid-1880s the profitability of the whole Clifton estate was coming under much closer scrutiny. The confidence of earlier decades had all but evaporated. Income was virtually static. The prospect of reaping a bonus from building development in Lytham and St. Annes was at best long-term.

Meanwhile, interest payments were absorbing 41% of the gross rental by 1886. Current income was also under the additional pressure of financing the costs of maintenance and improvement work on the agricultural estate which, far from being cut back, significantly increased during the early 1880s. In fact, by 1886, estate expenditure accounted for a further 47% of a slightly reduced gross rental.(37) It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the agent and the family solicitors should have begun to seriously consider selling off part of the estate. Their choice immediately fell on Great Marton. It was heavily mortgaged, there were no strong family ties with the district and it could be safely detached from the main body of the estate. As soon as Thomas Henry's son, John Talbot, attained his majority in 1889 the way would be open to putting the property on the market.(38)

However, their decision to sell was influenced not just by the pressure on current income and the problem of servicing crushing interest charges. The depression had the equally serious effect of actually undermining the basis of a landowner's capacity to borrow.(39) Just as it had been assumed during the halcyon days of the 1860s and 70s that rents would continue to rise, it was similarly felt that land values would appreciate at the same rate. In turn, climbing rents and land values clearly offered the kind of security which potential investors found attractive. On this basis the Cliftons, along with innumerable other landed families, had experienced little difficulty in raising all the money they needed in the years before 1879.

This situation, however, had changed dramatically by the mid-1880s. If anything, land values fell more spectacularly than rents and the depression effectively wiped out the gains that had been made during the third-quarter of the century.(40) In this respect parts of the north-west did not fare much better than elsewhere. A drop of 30% in land values was apparently fairly universal.(41) For instance Lord Lilford was buying up rich agricultural land around Bretherton and Much Hoole in the 1860s and 70s for as much as £105 and never less than £78 per acre. By 1883 he was able to buy Sir Thomas Fermor-Hesketh's 167 acres in Bretherton for an average price of £66 per acre. And the downward spiral continued. In 1904 land in Tarleton, Bretherton and Much Hoole, at the heart of Lancashire's fertile coastal plain, ranged in value from £81 at the top end to £59 per acre at the lowest.(42) And, as was evident on the Clifton estate, the fall on the heavier clays which typified soil types away from the coastal belt was in excess of that.(43)

The financial repercussions were serious and fairly immediate. At a time when any reduction in fixed outgoing would have come as a blessing to an indebted estate like the Cliftons', the chances of finding more favourable terms in the money market were virtually negligible. Nevertheless, desperate attempts were made to reduce interest costs. In 1886 Clifton's solicitors pursued the possibility of transferring loans and paying off debts totalling £174,000 on which interest rates of 4-4½% were being charged. By obtaining a lower rate of 3½%, which was currently operating in the market, here was an opportunity for making a considerable saving. The problem, however, was that agricultural land was no longer considered to be the "first class security" which any shrewd investor would want. Not only were new mortgages harder to come by but Thomas Fair was less than confident that mortgagees would be entirely sympathetic towards the estate's existing arrangements. As he pointed out to the estate's solicitors: "The Royal will have to be carefully approached, for although the present is a favourable time as regards the value of money, they are fully alive to the drop in the value of agricultural estates."(44) They were indeed and, with £125,000 invested in the Clifton estate, the Royal Insurance Company was none too happy about the current agreement, let alone prepared to extend reduced terms. Before long the Company realised Fair's worst fears by reviewing outstanding loans. In the autumn of 1886, as a test of the estate's solvency, the Royal demanded an immediate repayment of £5,000 out of the £65,000 loan secured by the rents from Clifton-with-Salwick. The Royal felt it was "being moderate (in) asking no more" but to the estate it came as a serious blow. The episode clearly demonstrated how a drop in rentals and, more especially, a concomitant decline in land values could expose the vulnerability of a heavily indebted landowner. "Of course," Wilson and Deacon instructed Fair, "you will send them a cheque by the first post....on no account let it be supposed that the Cliftons cannot pay £5,000 at a moment's notice. If you do you will find it utterly impossible to borrow money on favourable terms."[45] That might have been the case but there was no hope of paying the £5,000 out of the rents nor of increasing the security on existing loans to pacify the estate's creditors. Ultimately the family solicitors saved the day and came up with the £5,000 themselves.[46]

Stagnating rentals, falling land values and the decision to sell off land were not the only effects of the depression. Just as important was the fact that the depression brought into sharper focus strategic alternatives for the future development of the estate. Agriculture was no longer the solidly dependable bed-rock it has once seemed. In truth, the estate's financial salvation lay with bricks and mortar not green pastures. Even so, it took some time to convince Thomas Fair that the cross-roads had finally been reached. The Duke of Bedford later reflected that it was "strange that a catastrophe which was no longer impending but had actually taken place should have been regarded by those best able to judge as a passing cloud."[47] Yet Bedford was speaking with the benefit of hindsight. At the time Fair, like so many others, viewed the onset of the depression as a temporary phenomenon, the result of freakish climatic conditions. Landed sentiment may also have played a part in obscuring an objective assessment of the situation. Indeed Lord Derby's impassioned comments of 1883 reflected a desperate attempt to cling on to the past and shore up confidence among the county's landowners. A decline of 15-20% in national land values, he argued, should not detract from the fact "that land was still a good investment returning 2½% to the shrewd investor. It is not quite certain," he went on, "that the funds will give him more. New wealth should be poured on to the land rather than it should be squandered upon a needy and greedy foreign state or invested in speculative undertakings of which perhaps half are swindles."(48)

Lord Derby could well afford to preach what amounted to a conventional gospel. But, as the depression deepened, his words came to have a hollow ring. Many Lancashire landowners with more limited means were in no position to take him seriously. In fact, by 1886, Thomas Fair himself had fully jettisoned the idea that an agricultural recovery was just round the corner. Of course he continued to argue to the contrary with the Royal Insurance but, there again, he really had little alternative. As for the Royal it was far from being impressed with Mr. Fair's "sanguine view.....that the depression in agriculture is only temporary." However, Fair and the Royal Insurance were much closer in their thinking than their formal correspondence actually suggests. Fair's true feelings were reflected in a letter he wrote to Wilson and Deacon about the same time in which he referred to "gloomy days ahead in agriculture." There were few quibbles about lending money on town property, he pointed out, and added that "were it in my power I would have Lytham stretch to Blackpool."[49] The numerous surveys and valuations undertaken from 1887 onwards pointed to the estate's much more earnest determination to expand building development on the property. There were projections of the future rents which new building land was likely to produce. Potentially, vacant land in Lytham and St. Annes would bring in another £22,000 per year, a 60% improvement on existing rentals. Indeed the freehold interest in the 1,200 acres lying along the coast between Lytham and Blackpool was thought to be worth £600,000 in 1896.[50] But clearly the Cliftons were one amongst many landed families who saw the advantages of transferring their money and attention to the lucrative pastures of business and industry.[51]

The agricultural depression, then, put the Clifton estate under financial pressures of threatening proportions, but there were reassuring indications that a solution could be found by selling off land, reducing the level of mortgage indebtedness and, above all, developing more lucrative sources of income. Unfortunately the salvage operation suffered a devastating set-back. Once more the incidence of personality disrupted well-laid plans. Having come of age in 1889, John Talbot Clifton, like his grandfather before him, wasted no time in using his inheritance to pursue a taste for expensive adventure. Action, exploration, big-game hunting were his enduring passions in life. In a seemingly endless series of expeditions he charted new routes in Africa and South America, he made several excursions to the Arctic, and made claim to being the first Englishman to trek to the Lana River in Siberia. He bought shooting lodges in Scotland and the tranquil retreat of Kildalton Castle with its 1,000 acres on the Isle of Islay.[52] The scale of his travels was matched only by the scale of the expenses he inflicted on the estate. Indeed the first ten years of the young Clifton's tenancy were nothing short of a disaster in that, between 1889 and 1898, family and estate expenditure exceeded income by £230,000 and, as has already been made clear, Clifton's spending over and above his personal allowance accounted for at least £150,000 of that figure. So, instead of the £54,000, which was realised by the sale of Great Marton property and land to the railway companies being used to reduce the mortgage burden, it only acted as a slight brake on an accelerating rate of indebtedness through the 1890s.[53]

In May 1891 Fair and his legal associates came forward with a scheme to rescue the situation. For the next twenty-one years the estate would be managed by a body of trustees who would take responsibility for paying all outgoings, but with a special brief to bring down annual costs and interest payments. They had full authority to grant leases, spend money on improvements, rearrange mortgages and raise additional sums as they saw fit. Above all, they had the power to sell as much land as was necessary to reduce the mortgage burden. "We think 1,500 to 2,000 acres must go to do any good," came the solicitors' advice, "but even this may very well be done without breaking into really old family properties."[54]

Selling land was the only effective remedy for the estate's financial ills, but it was a course of action which both Fair and Lady Clifton emotionally rejected and an alternative they therefore tended to shy away from. "I think it would be a bad plan to sell much land at once," Lady Clifton told her agent. "It would be better to keep rather a tight hand on the present owner."(55) In effect this meant that no positive steps were taken to deal with the debt problem. Once again landed sentiment got the better of more rational considerations. Consequently the estate struggled on from one year to the next. Net income from the farms fell to its lowest level in the early 1890s. Deficits accumulated in the current account and were obligingly supported by the local banks until mortgages could eventually be arranged. As a result, the estate office was having to pay out an extra £5,000 per year in interest charges alone by 1893. Moreover, there were no compensatory cut-backs in estate spending. Improvements alone took an average of 30% of the gross rental and additional sums were needed to set out building land in Lytham and St. Annes.(56)

Inevitably the day of reckoning had to come. Management, solicitors and accountants made another thorough review of the estate's finances in 1900. By then the need to trim the family's agricultural property was even more imperative. Little Marton, Westby-with-Plumpton and Clifton-with-Salwick together produced a rental of £18,828. After interest had been paid on the mortgages with which these properties were charged, all that was left was £6,404; and repairs and maintenance would comfortably have swallowed up the greater part of this residual amount. By contrast, Lytham and St. Annes (including the agricultural districts within their boundaries) carried more than half of the estate's total debts of £590,000 yet still showed a net income of £15,000.(57)

The Clifton settlement of 1906 finally recognised that a considerable part of the estate would have to be sold in order to reduce the debt burden by any significant amount. The settled estates of Lytham, Warton, Westby and a part of Little Marton which protected outlets to the main water-courses would form a compact property. Clifton-with-Salwick, most of Little Marton and what was left of Great Marton were to be sold off.(58) Nevertheless, it was no easy matter marketing such large properties and so, for the next ten years, the Cliftons continued to shoulder what was an increasingly embarrassing liability, with no significant improvement in farm rents, and the added pressure of mortgages demanding still further security for their loans.

In 1913 the family solicitors put the diminished attractions of an agricultural estate into concise perceptive. "A very important question," they wrote, "is whether a purchaser of land today would be satisfied with the same income return from it as he would have been formerly. If you compare the market price of Consols and other gilt edged securities of 1894 with the price of the same securities today.....you will find the question sufficiently answered. On top of this you have the unfavourable effect of recent and possible future legislation."[59] However, the war and the improvement in farm rents gave a boost to the land market and eased the sale of Clifton-with-Salwick. "Enquiries from wealthy and commercial men in the county looking for a residential and sporting estate" were made especially welcome by the estate office as no doubt had been the case at Rufford Hall ten year earlier.[60] Commercial wealth was no longer regarded with the same contempt shown by previous generations of Cliftons. Industrial fortunes now held the key to a landowner's financial salvation. One prospective buyer was informed that the estate was being sold because of "the heavy increased burdens due to the war."[61] The real reason why Clifton-with-Salwick was being sold in 1916 was because the land market had picked up, and because creditors were calling in their loans from most parts of the agricultural estate. The break-up of one of Lancashire's largest and oldest estates had begun in earnest.[62]

The effects of the "great depression" on landed society in Lancashire were real enough and drawing comparison with their southern counterparts does not adequately express how individual landowners took stock of their own situation. If they drew any comparisons at all it was with their own immediate past. In this respect, a sense of tradition and obligation may have persuaded some to postpone the clearly painful decision to sell off ancestral property. In the past the ownership of land seemed to justify itself. It underpinned the social and political as well as the financial pre-eminence of the county's landed elite. It had made them socially secure and reasonably affluent. Similarly, the ownership of land had given landowers the assurance and the means to borrow money in order to increase the visible trapping of status.

However, the lengthening depression gradually sapped away the confidence of earlier years. Many landowners, particularly those who were heavily dependent on their agricultural estates and who were faced with the problem of servicing heavy debts, could not have seen any significant improvement in their net incomes. Some actually saw their income shrink. All must have been aware of the fact that land could no longer support their traditionally dominant social and economic role vis-a-vis other and wealthier groups in society. Accordingly, not a few must have been sorely tempted to sell up in the years before and after the Great War. On balance, the depression in British agriculture did not occasion a dramatic collapse in landed fortunes in Lancashire nor a sudden decimation of the established landed ranks. But it did lead to a more thorough reappraisal of the financial and social advantages which were once thought to stem from the ownership of broad acres. The depression exercised a formative influence in reshaping attitudes towards business, investment and social relationships - aspects which the final chapters take up in more detail.

REFERENCES

(1) Fletcher, Op.cit., Economic History Review, Xii 1962. and Agricultural History Review, IX, 1961; Thompson, Op.cit., pp.310-311; P.J. Perry, British Farming in the Great Depression 1870-1914, (1974), pp.69-76.

(2) Preston Guardian, 27 February 1892.

(3) Fletcher, Op.cit., Economic History Review, Xiii, 1962, pp.97-99.

(4) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to Wilson and Wright, 22 May 1889.

(5) Preston Guardian, 17 March 1883; 25 April 1896.

(6) L.R.O. DDx. 1063.

(7) Preston Guardian, 23 June 1883; 11 August 1894.

(8) L.R.O. DDx. 1063.

(9) Ibid.

(10) Preston Guardian, 8 September 1883.

(11) Mingay, Op.cit., p.170

(12) Fletcher, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, IX, 1961, pp.87-91.

(13) Perren, Op.cit., p.41; Orwin and Whetham, Op.cit., p.271.

(14) Bateman, Op.cit., (1881); P.P. Op.cit., 1894, Appendix B6, pp.54-55.

(15) P.P. op.cit., 1882, p.42.

(16) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 3 and 4; P.P. Op.cit., 1894, pp.54-55.

(17) P.P., Op.cit., 1882, p.29

(18) Fletcher, Op.cit., Economic History Review, Xiii, 1962; Abstracts of Parish Crop Returns.

(19) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1-4.

(20) Ibid. DDSc. 118/1. Trustees' Balance Sheets; 122/41-42. General Rentals 1849-70; 1871-76; 122/44 Farm Rentals; 127/18 Farm Reports Re: Proposed Rent Reductions.

(21) Ibid. DDHe. 99/97-104.

References (contd.)

(22) Ibid. DDLi. Bank Hall Estate Accounts.

(23) Ibid. DDQ. Quernmore Estate Rentals.

(24) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 3 and 4.

(25) P.P. Op.cit., 1894, Appendix B6, pp.53-55.

(26) L.R.O. DDHe. 78/13, 51, 105; <u>Preston Guardian</u> 10 November 1894.

(27) Perry, Op.cit., p.

(28) <u>Preston Guardian</u>, 14 May 1892; 3 November 1894.

(29) P.P., op.cit., 1882, p.78

(30) Ibid. 1894, p.11.

(31) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 4 and 5; Post-1892 expenditure on farms in Clifton-with-Salwick; Accounts of new buildings and drainage since 1892; DDx/103. Wilson, Wright and Ashcroft Deeds. Report and valuation of Clifton-with-Salwick, 1894 and 1916.

(32) Fletcher, Op.cit., <u>Economic History Review</u>, Xiii, 1962, pp.98-99.

(33) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 3. Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 14 August 1882.

(34) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Estimate of Lady Drummond's income 1889; Accounts of the unsettled estates; Clifton Settlement 1866.

(35) Ibid. Valuation of Layton Hall Estate 1890; Plans and Deeds of Conveyance.

(36) Ibid. Valuation of Lady Drummond's Warton Property 1901; J. Parkinson to T. Fair, 1 February 1902.

(37) Ibid. Ledger 3.

(38) Ibid. Wilson and Wright to T. Fair, 6 February 1886; T. Fair to Wilson and Wright, 27 February 1886.

(39) Cannadine, Op.cit., <u>Economic History Review</u>, 1977, p.646.

(40) Perry, <u>Op.cit.</u>, pp.76-78.

(41) Thompson, <u>Op.cit.</u>, pp.317-18.

References (contd.)

(42) L.R.O. DDLi. Box 51. Property Purchased 1869-1904. For instance, a fifteen acre farm, purchased in 1872 for £1,400, was bought by the Lilford estate for £1,200 in 1893. The purchase price in 1893 also took account of a new farmhouse built on the property some time after 1872.

(43) Ibid. DDCl. 1966 Deposit, Westby-with-Plumpton and Clifton-with-Salwick Surveys, 1882, 1886, 1901.

(44) Ibid. Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 5 April,1886; T. Faire to Wilson and Deacon, 10 April 1886. The records of insurance companies are an extremely valuable source with which to examine the whole matter of changing land values and landed indebtedness in the later 19th century; but, as yet, they appear to be a much under-used source.

(45) Ibid. Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 15 November 1886.

(46) Ibid. T. Fair to Wilson and Deacon, 12 November 1886.

(47) Quoted from R. Perren, The Landlord and Agricultural Transformation, 1870-1900. *Agricultural History Review*, XVIII, 1970, p.49

(48) *Preston Guardian*, 8 September 1883.

(49) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to Royal Insurance Company, 31 August 1886; Royal Insurance Company to Wilson and Deacon, 4 September 1886; T. Fair to Wilson and Deason, 10 April and 17 December 1886.

(50) Ibid. Estimates of building land yet to be leased 1887 and 1890; Surveyors Report on the value of the freehold interest on land between Lytham and Blackpool.

(51) Thompson, *Op.cit.*, pp.303-308.

(52) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 8; *Who Was Who*, (1929); V. Clifton,*The Book of Talbot*.

(53) Ibid. 1966 Depsoit. Statement of Accounts 1893 and 1898; Ledger Books 4 and 5; H. Banner to T. Fair, 30 October 1898.

(54) Ibid. Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 11 May 1891.

(55) Ibid. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 17 May 1891.

(56) Ibid. Ledger Books 4 and 5.

(57) Ibid. 1325, Box 17. Mortgage Account 1900.

References (contd.)

(48) Ibid. 1966 Deposit. Clifton Settlement 1906.

(59) Ibid. Wilson and Deacon to J.A.S. Fair, 1 October 1913.

(60) Ibid. J.A.S. Fair to F.S. Ingle, 21 August 1916.

(61) Ibid. J.A.S. Fair to P. Dearden, 25 May 1916.

(62) Ibid. H.F. Wilson to H.L. Wilson, 14 June 1916.

CHAPTER VI

THE LANDOWNER AS URBAN DEVELOPER

For much of the period encompassed by this study the Cliftons, as owners primarily of a large prestigious agricultural estate, reflected in their behaviour all the assumptions of the narrow landed elite to which they belonged. Land generated the greater part of their wealth and it confirmed their social and political status.(1) Yet, towards the end of the 19th century, the estate's growing commitment towards furthering urban development along the Fylde coast became more pronounced. This shift in emphasis - from country to town - is significant for several reasons. Above all, their far more vigorous attention to urban development, strongly evident in the last quarter of the century, reflected a significant change in managerial priorities. Whereas ground and property rents had formerly been looked upon as an additional and potentially very useful income, by the 1890s, they were essentially regarded as a financial life-line.

However, the hope that residential building would improve current income had a paradoxical twist to it. A growing urban community on the estate involved the landowner in social relationships which challenged the once easy assumption of authority and control. In short, what he stood to gain on the financial roundabout he threatened to lose on the social swings.

Thirdly, the Cliftons' urban connection is of more general historiographical interest. In recent years the links between landed estates and urban development have been the focus of detailed and long-overdue attention. Conventional wisdom was assumed that high standards of planning, evident in many 19th century "new towns", flowed naturally from the presence of one or two locally dominant landowners and, therefore, from the strict controls which they were likely to impose. Moreover, it is also accepted that this relationship was particularly pronounced in the spas and "watering places" of 18th and 19th century England. The ordered spaciousness of such resorts as Eastbourne, Skegness and Bexhill dominated respectively by the Dukes of Devonshire, the Earls of Scarbrough and the De La Warrs spring to mind.(2)

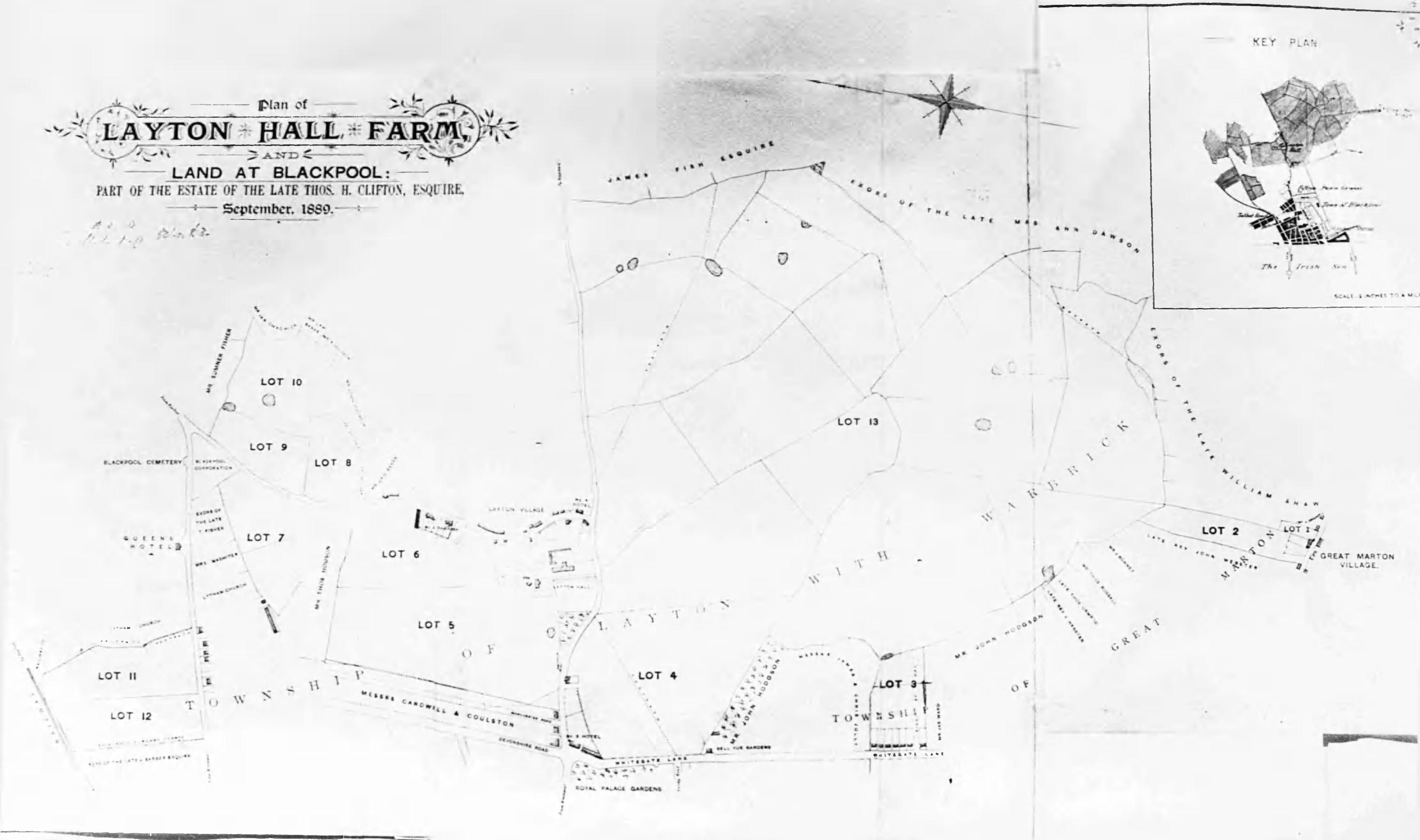
More recent research, however, has questioned the easy conclusion that a town's social and physical character was moulded in automatic response to a landowner's territorial prominence. In fact, to return to a theme which runs through this particular study, the extent of a landowner's involvement and the impression he made on his local community depended primarily on his own motives and purpose. Some, no doubt, had purely entrepreneurial ambitions being intent only on squeezing the maximum return from their urban estate at minimal personal expense. The ordered ground plan of Southport, for example, the scale of its public amenities and the presence of two dominant landowning families should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the town's imposing facade probably owed more to the initiative of the resort's leading citizenry than it did to any inspired leadership on the part of the major landowners.(3) But, for others, reasons of a social and aesthetic nature pressed as heavily as financial considerations. Where it was thought important to shape developments which were fully in keeping with a landowner's own aspirations and interests there was no alternative to his active participation. In this sense Eastbourne, under the close control of the Devonshires, is the archetypal aristocratic creation.

Furthermore, it is worth bearing in mind that a landowner's motives could change over time. We are not dealing with a static situation. Many of the landed families connected with urban development were also the owners of expansive estates. Therefore, a landowner's policy towards the urban domain could and did change in relation to an unfolding strategy for his estate as a whole. It is no accident, for instance, that the Earl of Scarbrough injected a greater urgency into the promotion of Scarborough in the early 1880s when the cold winds of recession started blowing across his agricultural property.(4) Similarly, the role of the Cliftons as urban developers is of interest not only in the sense that their territorial power had an obvious physical impact on the towns with which they were associated. Their experience casts an important light on the way in which a landowner's attitude, policy and function could vary quite sharply in space and time.

I

The Cliftons were the major landed participants in resort development along the Fylde coast They were closely involved in the early stages of Blackpool's expansion into a bustling sea-side resort and they maintained a territorial connection with the town until 1920. They were the moving force behind the entirely new creation of St. Anne's whose foundation stone was laid in 1875. Finally, over the course of the 19th century, a relatively small but socially exclusive resort gradually took shape around their ancestral home, Lytham Hall. Yet their role in each of these resorts was markedly different.

It was in fact Blackpool rather than Lytham which staged the Cliftons' first real foray into urban development. They already had a substantial landed stake in the locality, owning a 480 acre estate around Layton Hall situated about half a mile inland from the coast. Moreover, Blackpool had other attractions to a landowner seriously interested in promoting select residential building. In contrast to its later reputation. the Blackpool of 1835 was described as "a favourite, salubrious and fashionable resort for respectable families",(5) and by the time the Cliftons started taking a keen interest in the resort the basis already existed on which to launch their own socially selective building operations. The estate's plans for central Blackpool have



Plan of
LAYTON HALL FARM,
AND
LAND AT BLACKPOOL:
PART OF THE ESTATE OF THE LATE THOS. H. CLIFTON, ESQUIRE.
September, 1889.
KEY PLAN
The Irish Sea
JAMES FISH ESQUIRE
EXORS OF THE LATE MRS ANN DAWSON
EXORS OF THE LATE WILLIAM SHAW
MR SUMNER FISHER
LOT 10
LOT 9
LOT 8
LOT 7
LOT 6
LOT 5
LOT 4
LOT 3
LOT 2
LOT 1
LOT 11
LOT 12
LOT 13
BLACKPOOL CEMETERY
BLACKPOOL CORPORATION
QUEENS HOTEL
EXORS OF THE LATE T FISHER
MRS WEBSTER
LYTHAM CHURCH
MR THOS HODSON
LAYTON VILLAGE
LAYTON HALL
TOWNSHIP OF LAYTON WITH WARBRICK
TOWNSHIP OF GREAT MARTON
MESSRS CARDWELL & COULSTON
DEVONSHIRE ROAD
WHITEGATE LANE
ROYAL PALACE GARDENS
BELL VUE GARDENS
MR JOHN HODGSON
GREAT MARTON VILLAGE.

been chronicled elsewhere.(6) But, to summarise, the Cliftons began pursuing the idea of expanding their Layton Hall estate into the town from the mid-1830s onwards. An abortive attempt was made to purchase certain centrally located properties in 1837 and 1838; but it was not until 1843 that the Cliftons finally secured title to land which included part of the sea-front at Talbot Square and a corridor extending inland from the promenade along what eventually became Talbot Road, connecting up with the northern extremity of the Layton Hall estate.(7)

At this stage it is clear that long term plans to create a residential area with a high-class social tone took precedence over thoughts of making an immediate profit.(8) The capital laid out on preliminary work speaks for itself. As has already been pointed out, almost £3,000 was spent between 1843 and 1847 on building plans, the re-arrangement of properties, new roads and modernising the Clifton Arms Hotel.(9) Charles Reed, a Liverpool architect, who had in fact carried out work at Lytham Hall, was called in to produce ground plans for building development on land adjacent to Talbot Square. He put forward two schemes, the first of which was grandiose indeed, envisaging a crescent of double villas which would express "style and ornament" and have an open aspect towards the sea. Even so, warnings were being sounded at an early stage. Inferior building on neighbouring properties crowded in one an area of intended high-class housing to threaten the viability of the whole exercise. So, by 1846, grand schemes had given way to more modest proposals and, by 1847, the venture had been abandoned altogether.[10] No doubt other factors lay beind the decision to withdraw from direct investment in Blackpool. It was generally felt that land values had reached a peak by 1847 following the railway boom. It may also be the case that, not having the same landed stake in Blackpool as they had in Lytham, the Cliftons did not have the same personal identification with the town.[11] But, not least among their c onsiderations, was the fact that the sale of property in Blackpool would realise capital urgently needed to ease the financial problems with which they were faced in 1847.[12] That, indeed, determined the tone of the Cliftons' policy for their Blackpool and Layton properties thereafter. In effect they exchanged the role of urban planners for that of land speculators. At first every effort was made to dispose of all the Blackpool and Layton property in one fell swoop. The land was put up for auction in 1848, 1850, 1852 and again in 1856 but only small parcels in Talbot Square and along the south side of Talbot Road as far as the railway station were sold off.[13] Nevertheless, that left a substantial amount of land, particularly along Talbot Road which was strategically well-situated for future development.

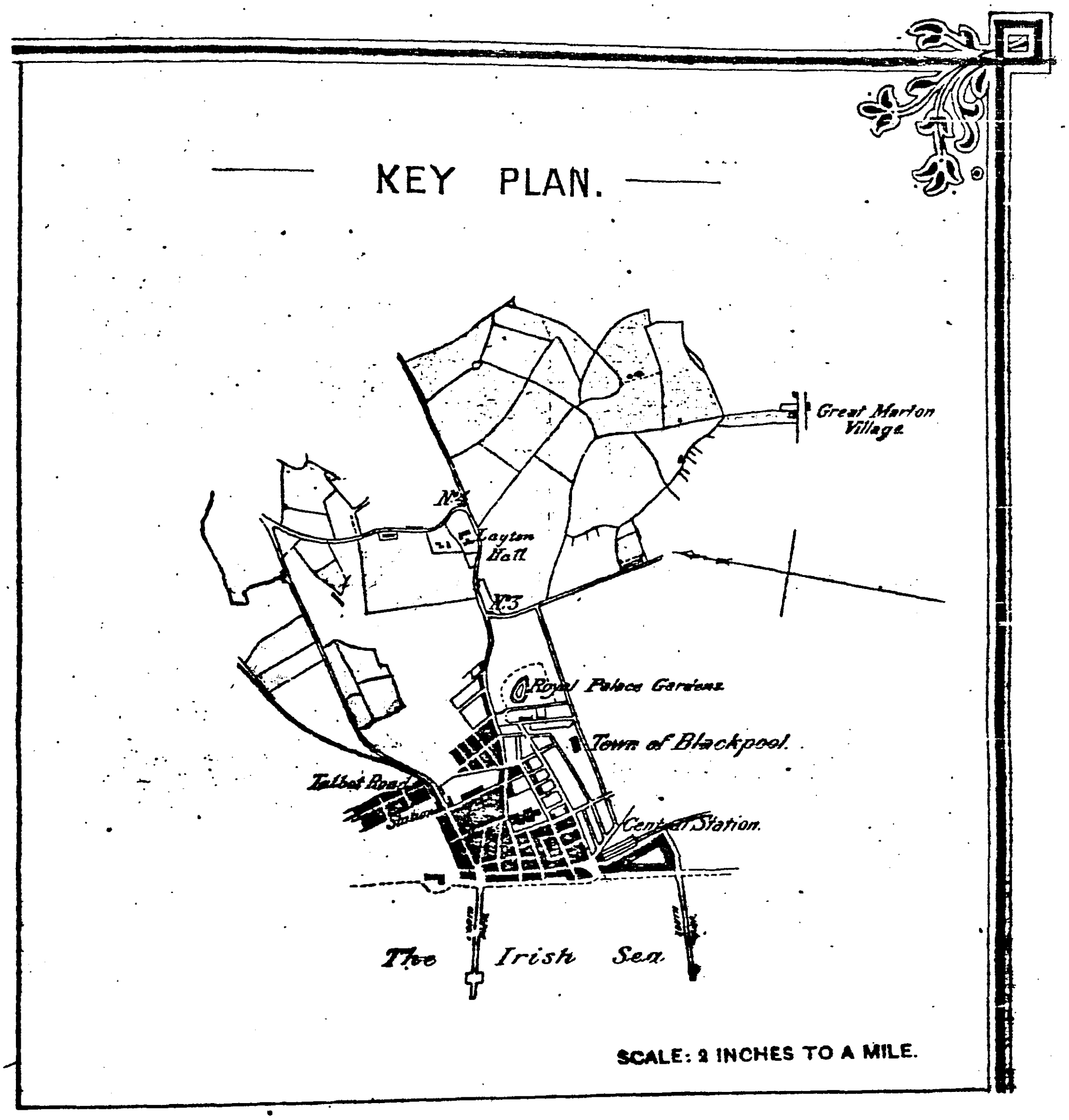
With the return of economic confidence in the 1850s the estate no longer felt the same urgency to dispose of land in Layton wholesale. In 1854 John Talbot Clifton took the view himself that the "Blackpool property has had its day", but it was a somewhat hasty judgement.[14]

Instead, under the agent's control, the whole tenor of the estate's policy towards the Blackpool and Layton property became more calculating in design and more ruthlessly business-like in execution. In fact, in many respects the Cliftons were hardly distinguishable from the town's innumerable small landowners whose paramount objective was to extract the maximum profit from their holdings. Consequently, any consideration of an ordered plan of development or acceptable standards of building construction and sanitation was relegated to secondary importance. In short the estate no longer had any direct interest in influencing the pace or quality of development in Blackpool. It could have offered land at a more attractive marketable price in order to induce building expansion or it could have invested in housing itself, if even on a limited basis, to encourage builders to take up land. But it pursued neither of these options. Clifton land in Blackpool was basically left to lie dormant in the anticipation that later year would bring a higher profit as surrounding development pushed up the value of property. Interestingly, the Lytham Charities, whose board of trustees included both Clifton and his agent, demonstrated how quickly land could be developed. Their Lark Hill estate, one of a number of plots they owned along Talbot Road and adjacent to Clifton's holdings, took shape in the 1850s and became entirely built up during the course of the 1860s. In fact, by 1876, very little of their property in the town was left unoccupied. At 2d. per square yard the Charities' land was attractive enough to small builders interested in constructing the type of low status "cottage" accommodation which typified the area around the railway station and sidings. And not even their efforts to enforce minimum house values, standards of construction and usage deterred prospective developers in a town where a flagrant disregard for building regulations was commonplace.(15)

By contrast the Clifton estate preferred to engage in longer term speculation. Very little of its remaining Blackpool property was sold in the 1860s and 70s, and not because there was an absence of potential buyers. Thomas Fair's passive approach to the Blackpool property reflected his confidence in the future of what was still largely an agricultural estate, and his consequent assumption that the Cliftons could afford to wait and reap a richer harvest at some later date. As he explained to his employer, Blackpool land sold very well and at high prices "if offered in small lots of an acre or two" and if "others on adjoining properties are put to the task of carrying out the expense of building."(16) So he felt able to turn down the offer of £240 per acre made by the new Winter Gardens Company for a twenty-four acre site north of the railway station.(17) Again, 2d. per square yard offered by a Blackpool estate agent in 1876 for a large plot in one of the town's less fashionable districts, suffering from "bad approaches" and in need of "laying out and all the streets making" was not, on the face of it, unreasonable. Yet Fair would not go any lower than 3½d. per square yard and the plot remained undeveloped until 1886.[18] Admittedly, it is plausible to suppose that an estate like the Cliftons' would be basically uninterested in taking a financial stake in artisan housing. Even so, when the opportunity presented itself to initiate equally lucrative but more socially select housing, the estate was seemingly no more enthusiastic. Such might have been the prospects for land around Layton Hall which, in the late 1870s, lay at the eastern extremity of a steadily expanding town. In 1878 there were moves in the Corporation to promote an improvement bill for the purpose of building new roads and opening up building land. Included in the scheme were plans to widen Whitegate Lane which in fact defined the seaward boundary to Layton Hall farm. However, the proposal was defeated by the town's ratepayers. The Clifton estate could have stepped into the breach. It could have initiated improvements and developments had it been willing. Instead there was no significant building in the area for another twenty years.[19]

Thomas Fair was more inclined to take a long-term view and cultivate an appreciating asset by less direct methods. No opportunity was missed in tightening up the ring-fence of estate properties around the town. This involved a process of buying up rights of way or small plots strategically located along the main thoroughfare into the resort.[20] At the same time the estate office organised exchanges of property and occasionally sold off rights of way with the intention of encouraging neighbouring proprietors to assume the initial costs of opening

<u>The Layton Hall Estate</u>



up land for building purposes. For example, in 1876 adjustments were made to the western boundaries of Layton Hall farm on the condition that the Cliftons were given rights of way over intended new streets on the adjoining property.[21] Similarly another builder spent £100 on the right of way along a track giving access to a railway crossing and into land suitable for development purposes on the north side of Talbot Road. Further he was also bound to pave the road and grant the Cliftons the facility to connect with a proposed street system from their adjacent plot.[22] Others were prepared to pay a still higher price for rights across the Clifton ring-fence. In 1878 the estate was offered land valued at £500 in the more outlying areas of Layton or Marton in exchange for rights of way over Clifton property.[23]

The estate office looked upon the policy of attaching building conditions to land transactions in the same speculative manner. Controls were never applied with the same consistency as was evident on the Cliftons' other urban estates at Lytham and St. Anne's. In Blackpool such a policy was determined by the commercial requirements of the particular locality. In 1859, for instance, the estate sold one of its last remaining plots on Clifton Street. Since it no longer had any vital interest in this central area freehold possession was made immediately available and no conditions were imposed on the purchaser other than he observed a building line consistent with neighbouring property.[24] Elsewhere controls were applied where the estate had interests to protect on adjoining land. When the Banks Street site, again situated close to the railway station, was sold in 1878 the estate insisted that houses fronting the street should compare in quality with those on neighbouring plots and therefore have an annual value of not less than £20. But the value of back property was "of little consequence" to Thomas Fair.(25) Conditions of a similar kind applied when the land bordering Exchange Street was finally sold in 1886.(26) Admittedly, it is possible to identify areas in Blackpool where the estate influenced the emergence of better quality artisan housing than might otherwise have been the case in a town dominated by small landowners and developers who had a generally low regard for regulations.(27) At the same time it must be said that the exercise of controls by the Clifton estate did not stem primarily from any consistent, high-minded pursuit of quality. Controls were selectively applied and governed by the overriding need to secure the maximum return from residual property.

In its thinly disguised, parasitic attitude towards property in Blackpool the estate could hardly have endeared itself to the town's civic leadership. There is no direct evidence of open and prolonged animosity between the two. Yet that was hardly likely given the fact that the estate's territorial stake in the town was limited and largely confined to the outer perimeters of the resort. Moreover, the Cliftons had no proprietory claims to such vital areas as the foreshore which tended to focus much more intensive rivalries elsewhere.[28] Nevertheless, several factors converged to trigger feelings of ill-will and suspicion. By the 1890s the inexorable expansion of the resort brought its boundaries up against the Clifton ring-rence. Equally, land on the outskirts of the town attracted the municipal interest of a Corporation determined on imposing its own management over the physical dimensions of the borough and on making a wider provision of public amenities.[29] At the same time, a sharp deterioration in its financial position inclined the estate towards a policy of disposing of its Blackpool land as quickly as possible and at the highest possible price. Hence a situation which brought together a town council which was ambitious to acquire land at the lowest possible cost to its ratepayers and an estate bent solely on profit-taking was bound to place a certain strain on relationships. What ensued was a battle of wits; and nowhere was this more apparent than in the lengthy and sometimes devious efforts of the Corporation to purchase land from the estate in 1890 for the site of a new slaughter house next to the railway sidings along Talbot Road. Thomas Fair's asking price of £400 per acre was met by a firm refusal from the Sanitary Committee who put a valuation of no more than £300 per acre on the land. The impasse was broken by a private buyer, also a town councillor, who purchased a much larger plot at a proportionately lower price per acre and proceeded to resell a part to the Corporation. The town had reason to celebrate. It had done more than save a considerable sum in the transaction. What was just as important in some quarters was that "a radical triumph" had been scored against the local landowner. Yet, interestingly, such feelings of triumph were not universally shared. The image of the landowner as benevolent benefactor still lived on and there was the fear that to offend carried the risk of repercussions. "The representatives of the Cliftons will....probably be found to be less amenable to the Blackpool Corporation....remembering that only a few months ago Mr. Fair offered the Borough of Blackpool about 50 acres of land as a free gift for the purpose of a park."(30)

This image, however, had little foundation in reality. The offer of free land had not been the result of a sudden burst of generosity as might have been imagined by some. The idea of creating a public park on Clifton land off Whitegate Lane certainly did interest the Corporation. And their interest could not have come at a more opportune time for the estate. In 1888 and 1889 the Layton Hall property had already been up for auction. On the first occasion the land had been advertised in small parcels in the by now well-established pattern. In all 49 plots were offered, each "excellently situated for the erection of villas and other residences." But there was one significant departure from the norm. The estate proposed to build a road connecting Layton Hall with Marton village in the hope of encouraging immediate building on the back plots. Its readiness to invest capital itself relfected the estate's mounting desperation to accelerate the disposal of its Blackpool property. The response, however, was disappointing. The auction held in the following year suggested a return to the even more desperate strategy of the late 1840s.(31) This time the property was put on the market in just twelve large plots, with no projected street plans, no attached building covenants and, also, with no more success. As one prospective builder pointed out to Thomas Fair, "with houses standing empty in almost every street in the town not even excepting such streets as Clifton Street, Queen Street, also the promenade....the prospects for building operations are the reverse of brilliant."(32) It is not surprising, then, that Fair nursed the Corporation's interest in the land. A public park was precisely the kind of amenity most likely to attract developers and enhance the value of surrounding property. Working along these lines Fair inquired into the conditions which Charles Hesketh had imposed when making his own "presentation of land" for park to Southport Corporation in 1865.(33) He then adopted a strikingly similar strategy in his dealings with Blackpool's Council. And there was nothing benevolent or altruistic in his motives. Fair's initial demand was £200 per acre for a fifty acre site. It was a ludicrously high price and one which he clearly intended should be rejected. It made his second proposal appear all the more attractive and reasonable in that he offered thirty acres at just £66 per acre. But he attached some very important conditions. The park had to be laid out in three years and the Corporation was bound to construct and sewer a road sixty feet wide and running around the perimeter of the park. The most important stipulation of all was that the estate would have the right to connect with the new road and sewerage system from its adjoining land. Perhaps Fair played his hand too quickly. Certainly the Corporation moved much more cautiously. It made its own careful enquiries into how public parks had been planned in other towns and it refused to be railroaded into a premature and hasty agreement by Fair's threat that he had another application for the land.(34) In fact the Borough's interest in the site began to cool rapidly and it was at this stage that the estate offered the land as a "free gift" to the Corporation in the hope of keeping negotiations alive. But to no avail. No doubt the whole episode taught some useful lessons. Not unreasonably the Corporation approached its future dealings with the estate with a due sense of caution. The estate, no longer being in a position to leave its Blackpool assets to appreciate in value, set about selling up at any price it could get. In fact buyers were found for the Layton Hall and Blackpool properties by 1892. All told, the sale of 296 acres realised over £25,100 which made it possible to clear the heavy charges on that part of the estate. Even so, the final outcome must have been a source of considerable disappointment. This figure fell well short of the £43,000 which Fair had hitherto anticipated on the basis that land could be disposed of gradually as building development progressively raised property values.(35)

II

By contrast Lytham was, in certain crucial respects, a world apart from Blackpool. Lytham was essentially the Squire's town; and, though the estate was obviously interested in securing an improving income from its urban property, wherever it was situated, other considerations coloured the landowner's attitude towards the resort taking shape around the ancestral family seat. He was concerned to maintain controls over the town's size, its aesthetic and physical qualities and its social and political character almost to the extent, it could be argued, of actually stifling growth.

For Lytham it is possible to delineate quite clearly distinct phases of development. The first phase, roughly from the mid-1840s to the 1880s coincided with the emergence of other planned resorts - notably Torquay, Eastbourne, Bournemouth among others. And, as was the case in all these places, this period in Lytham's history was characterised by the unchallenged supremacy of the controlling landed family and the mainly docile subservience of the urban community. This was followed by a second phase, broadly the 1890s and the first decade of the new century, in which feelings of mutual dependency gave way to a separation of interest and, at times, open confrontation between the estate and the town's leaders. Again parallels can be drawn with the pattern of events in other resorts although the timing of developments was not simultaneous. In Southport, for instance, the Scarisbrick estate and the town's Corporation were locked in battle in the 1880s whereas it was not until the 1890s that Eastbourne attempted to throw off the aristocratic shackles of the Dukes of Devonshire.(36)

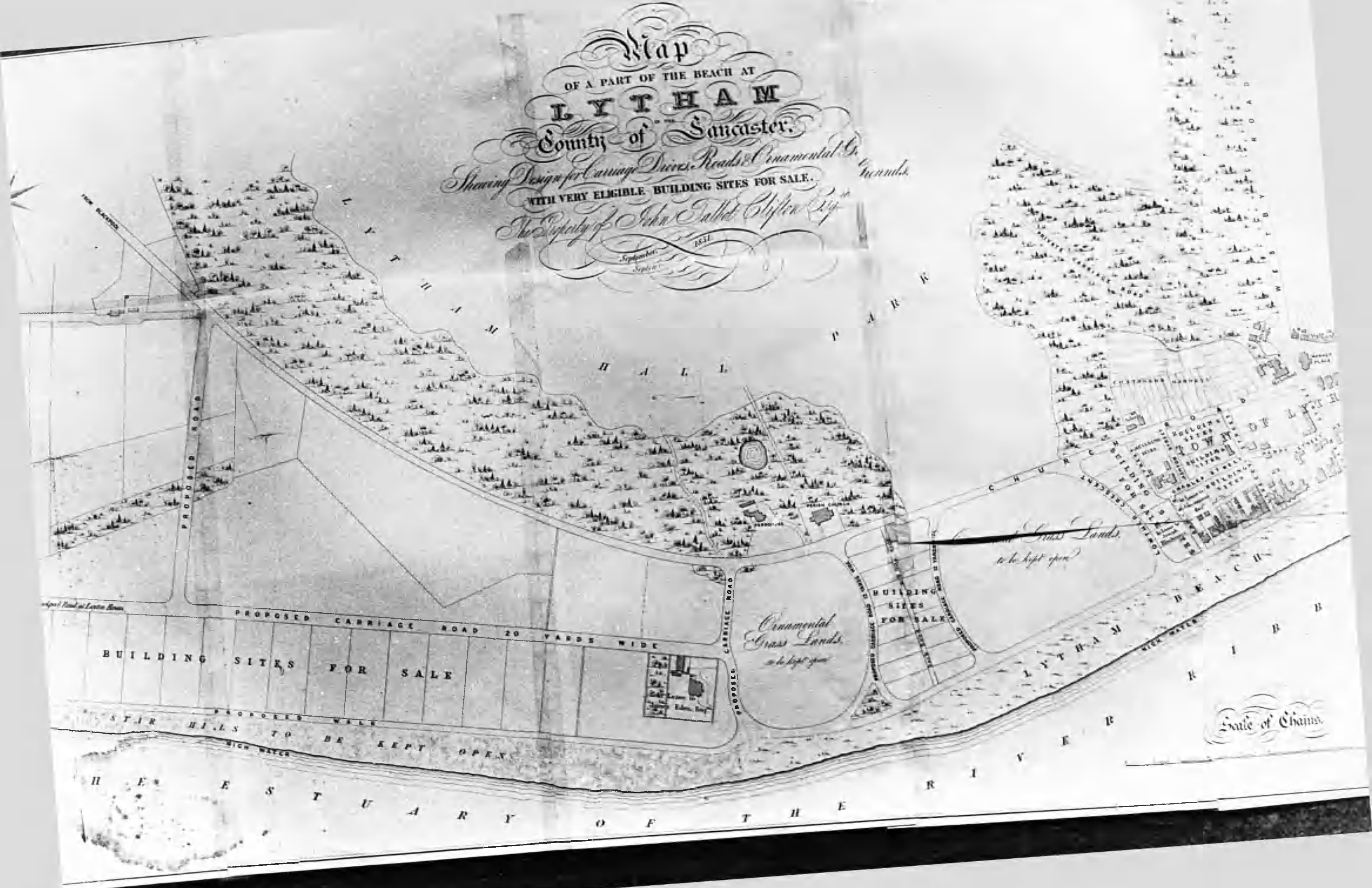
The Clifton estate reigned supreme in Lytham long after its modest beginnings as a select, middle-class resort in the late 1830s for principally two reasons. The landowner and agent were resolved to retain firm powers of control; and there was no effective alternative to their leadership. After all, in a place as small as Lytham, dominated as it was by a single landowner, there was no-one else capable of taking an initiative in defining and financing initial developments. However, until the late 1840s, the focus for investment was still decidely blurred. Indeed, as has been seen, it was Blackpool rather than Lytham which first attracted the estate's serious intentions to promote select residential building. By contrast, Lytham had certain disadvantages. Not least among these was the fact that its character and appearance were hardly conducive to encouraging middle-class families to invest in property and take up residence. In 1835 Lytham consisted largely of one street running east to west, lined by low thatched cottages and with a population chiefly engaged in fishing, various craft trades and agriculture. Any claim it might have had to being a resort rested on its popularity with the day-tripper. In this respect it probably attracted more visitors than neighbouring Blackpool since, in the pre-railway age, it was more accessible especially from Preston either by barge up the Ribble estuary or by the new toll road across Freckleton marsh.(37) However, soon after James Fair's appointment to the estate office, limited efforts had been made to improve the town's image. Some of the older property was demolished, new houses put up, part of the beach was levelled and a start made in constructing a promenade; and, in 1840, the new Clifton Arms Hotel was opened providing "the most perfect accommodation for families of the highest distinction."(38)

Once plans for Blackpool had finally been abandoned and a railway link made with the Preston and Wyre line, the estate embarked on a more energetic scheme to carry out improvements to Lytham. Across the Ribble estuary Southport was also staking its own claim to social exclusivity. It was dominated by two landed families but its early success as a resort can be explained in terms other than the financial spur provided by the local landowners. The town already had a well-established reputation as a popular "watering-place"; it had closer access to Liverpool and Manchester and enjoyed more favourable railway links. Above all, the readiness of wealthy middle-class residents to invest not only in houses but roads, drainage and other social amenities for themselves compensated for the obvious reluctance by the major landowners to supply the financial impetus. But Southport seems to have been exceptional.(39) Elsewhere a landowner's more positive role of leadership, sometimes over an extended period, was crucial. At Eastbourne, for instance, the Duke of Devonshire advanced local builders over £34,000 between 1834 and 1857. He also spent £7,500 on houses on his own behalf and almost £9,200 on laying out building land as well as investing £700 in the town's gas and water companies.(40) In 1840 the Tapps-Gervis-Meyrick family contributed £5,000 to furthering Bournemouth's expansion.(41) Later in the century the Earl of Scarbrough raised a consolidating mortgage of £120,000 of which £80,000 was ear-marked for the purpose of developing the new resort of Skegness from the mid-1870s onwards.(42) In the same way Lytham was just as dependent on its local squire. Of course other factors enhanced the resort's attraction. The locality's natural attributes undoubtedly helped. Even more important was the influence of the railways in that they made possible cheap and rapid transport for both the occasional visitor and the residential commuter. Moreover, railways could be made to channel specific groups of people in the direction of a specific locality and clearly, without them, resorts such as Lytham could not have prospered. But perhaps there is a danger of over-emphasising the impact of the railways on resort development. As regards the emergence of the north-west's sea-side towns it has been argued that railways "were a convenience rather than a cause of subsequent growth."(43) What probably mattered more, at least in the embryonic stages of urban expansion, was firstly the demand among middle-class families seeking a socially exclusive residential retreat, and secondly the willingness and ability of landowners and developers to respond to and cater for this demand. The success or failure of a new town might indeed rest on the particular terms of the landowner's leasing policy, his readiness to stimulate building operations and the provision of essential social amenities. This emphasis on the land-owner's role ties in with the view that, given the somewhat insensitive nature of the 19th century building industry, it was possible for a sufficiently determined and resourceful developer to induce a building boom on his own property in a way which does not necessarily synchronise with such factors as population mobility.(44)

Certainly there can be no doubt that the moving force behind Lytham's face-lift was the Clifton estate. It was the Cliftons who determined the ground plan for the resort, defined the type of house-building that was to take place and put up the capital for the initial improvements. As has already been indicated in an earlier chapter, the accumulation of debts which began to pile up during Thomas Clifton's life-tenancy can be partly explained by the money borrowed to finance construction work in Lytham during the 1840s, beginning with the reconstruction of the main thoroughfare, Clifton Street.(45) Old thatched cottages were town down and replaced by thirty new shops and "ornamental cottages" to produce a long street "with pretty dwellings shaded by trees...fronted with grass plots and (forming) a beautiful verdant vista." Beach Terrace was also improved by the erection of houses in "the old English style." In total about a hundred properties were built between 1846 and 1848 of which a substantial number were commissioned and financed by the estate itself in order to encourage private building development in specified localities.(46)

But the greater part of the £37,000 which was invested in Lytham during the 1840s and 50s went into laying out the promenade and constructing the show-piece residences along the sea-front and adjacent terraces. Five houses were built along Dicconson Terrace, another five in Bath Street and at least a further eleven on East and West Beach Parades. It was the last which were by far the most imposing and intended to set the high-class tone for future development along the promenade and in the direction of the west end of the town. They were designed as semi or detached marine villas for private occupation "by respectable tenants" or as lodging houses for those intending to spend the summer season in the resort. Even the smallest consisted of three reception rooms, six bedrooms, "good cellaring" and fruit and flower gardens and were valued at £1,000-£1,200 each in the late 19th century.(47)

Following Thomas Clifton's death in 1851 his son and agent produced a comprehensive ground-plan for Lytham's future expansion. It envisaged a district of exclusive residential building extending from the central and promenade areas of the town westwards over the sandhills in the general direction of Blackpool. The back plots inland from Clifton Street were intended for lower status cottages and lodging houses, whilst the labouring population was to be residentially segregated in the east end in the vicinity of the old harbour. Again the estate led the way in stimulating building. Between 1857 and 1865 £5,200 was spent levelling the sandhills to the west of the town, extending the beach, laying out building plots


Map
OF A PART OF THE BEACH AT
LYTHAM
in the County of Lancaster,
Shewing Design for Carriage Drives, Roads & Ornamental Grounds,
WITH VERY ELIGIBLE BUILDING SITES FOR SALE.
The Property of John Talbot Clifton Esq.
September 1851
LYTHAM HALL PARK
FROM BLACKPOOL
PROPOSED ROAD
PROPOSED CARRIAGE ROAD 20 YARDS WIDE
BUILDING SITES FOR SALE
PROPOSED WALK
STAR HILLS TO BE KEPT OPEN
HIGH WATER
PROPOSED CARRIAGE ROAD
Ornamental Grass Lands, to be kept open
BUILDING SITES FOR SALE
CHURCH
LOWTHER CRESCENT
LYTHAM BEACH
WESTBY ROAD
TOWN OF LYTHAM
THE ESTUARY OF THE RIVER RIBBLE
Scale of Chains.

and forming a carriage drive.(48) Individual family members also made their separate contributions towards furthering the town's growth. Charles Clifton, for example, invested part of his portion in the building of Hastings Place at the entrance to Lytham Hall part and hence opened up an area between Church Street and the railway line for building purposes.(49) Equally, when the area behind Clifton Street towards the east end was being developed for lower-status accommodation and "company" or lodging houses during the late 1860s and early 70s the pace was once more set by the estate, which had blocks of cottages built along Westby Street, East and West Cliffe and Freckleton Street.(50) Furthermore, one of the problems of Lytham's development was the fact that the modern resort was largely built alongside the dilapidations of the old village. And, since many of the middle-class residents had moved to this sea-side haven presumably an anticipation of avoiding residential contagion with those they regarded as their social inferiors, it was the estate which, in the interests of selectness, assumed the responsibility for clearing away some of the old, squalid properties scattered throughout the back streets of the central and west end districts.(51)

However, the estate's investment in the resort's early growth did not stop at funding building work and road construction. Given the discriminating residential tastes of middle-class families, "it paid those who catered for them to satisfy their requirements beyond the provision of elegant and spacious housing."(52)

Attention to such environmental considerations as landscaping and parks, the provision of certain amenities such as churches and assembly rooms, and the maintenance of acceptable sanitary standards, all were essential prerequisites in the created of middle-class suburbia; and, in the case of Lytham, they were met by the landowning family. Over the third quarter of the century they provided the site and endowed the new church of St. John's appropriately located among the marine villas springing up along East Beach. They were the financial mainstay beind the town's gas company established in 1847. The initiative for a water-works company also emanated from the estate office in 1853 and when it was finally established in 1861 Clifton's 1130 shares, worth £5,630, made him by far the largest single investor. The shares in fact returned a loss but profit was a secondary motive. The main aim was to bring pure water to Lytham's middle-class residents. When public subscription failed to produce the sum needed to build public baths in the town in the late 1860s Clifton money, this time £6,650, again saved the scheme. They were the major financial force behind the Pier Company, formed in 1865; they bailed out the Masonic Hall in 1870 and, in the following year, contributed £600 towards the cost of urgent repairs to the fabric of the parish church. But the family's patronage was crowned by Lowther Gardens, a park of thirteen acres created by the estate at the west end of the town during the early 1870s at a cost of £12,000. No doubt it was an aesthetically pleasing feature, but it was also intended to cultivate greater interest among prospective builders in sites as yet undeveloped along the western carriageway.(53)

Yet the Cliftons were faced with conflicting emotions. Opening up building land and inviting middle-class families to settle in the resort was one thing. But retaining control over the town's physical and social character was another. Power, in effect, belonged to those who owned the land and who spent the most money. And the Cliftons jealously guarded their privileged position. It could be argued, in fact, that this lay at the root of Lytham's unspectacular expansion between the 1840s and 1880s when landed influence over the town's affairs was at its height. At times it appeared that the compelling concern to preserve tone, selectness and, above all else, habits of social and political deference towards the landowner transcended purely financial considerations.

Indeed Thomas Clifton was not too sure about what he was paying for. He hardly greeted the costly improvements going on in the town during the 1840s with unreserved enthusiasm. His own undisguised social and political prejudices warned against inviting "hordes of Manchester men" to descend on the place.(54) And he had similar fears about Lytham's physical transformation. He in fact objected to Fair's proposals to extend building operations to the west end of the town because views from the Hall might be obstructed. He recognised the importance of inducing people to build but he did "not feel justified in sanctioning anything which might be deemed a nuisance to those who might hereafter possess the property and might wish to inhabit the Hall."[55] And this is why an extended scheme for Lytham's development did not materialise until after Clifton's death in 1851.

Clearly the estate office and Clifton's successor were more ambitious in their efforts to establish Lytham's reputation as a residential resort. Yet this did not imply a diminished concern for exercising strict control. Their omnipotence was secured by several related devices. Firstly, by virtue of a territorial dominance and a carefully contrived leasehold policy, the estate was able to be very selective in <u>how</u> and <u>by whom</u> land was to be utilised. Until the late 1870s land was never leased to large-scale developers. Only one area in the town - West Beach - was dominated by one individual and even he spread his building operations over a twenty-five year period.[56] Instead, the much more typical leaseholder was the widower, the spinster, the retired businessman, clergyman or solicitor, along with individuals already known to the estate - local tradesmen and some of the larger, prosperous tenant farmers. They invariably took small plots for the purpose of having their own houses built as well as perhaps one or two other properties which were basically intended to provide a small income for the future. Indeed the majority of those who, in the census enumerator's returns described themselves as "annuitants" and "proprietors of houses" fall into this category of locally based property investors.(57)

Moreover, ground rents were comparatively high, covenants incorporated into leases were strict and the estate was uncompromisingly severe in its term and conditions when it might have paid to have been more flexible. Ground rents, for instance, were set at a deliberately high level. Normally, the best plots along the central promenade, adjoining terraces and in the west end district were valued at 2d. per square yard. On back plots 1½d. was usual and nowhere was land leased for less than 1d. per square yard.(58) By contrast Southport landowners followed a policy of leasing building land at a fraction of a penny per square yard in the interests of encouraging speculation and persuading wealthy new-comers to finance improvements themselves.(59)

By 1850 building leases had been completely revised. Gone were many of the obsolete clauses which in the past had acted as a virtual barrier to investment. The term over which leases were granted was extended from forty to sixty and then ninety-nine years and the condit-ion which prevented lessees from selling or even sub-letting their property without the prior consent of the landowner was removed.(60) Yet, if leases had been updated, they were still nevertheless restrictive. The estate office placed minimum values on proposed buildings and they laid down a strict timetable for construction. In particular the function of buildings was carefully guarded: premises were not to be used "as a factory, soapery, smithy, brew-house or alehouse, or for any other purpose whatsoever which shall, in the landowner's opinion, be considered offensive or disagreeable to any adjoining premises or likely to deteriorate or diminish the value thereof." The location of all shops was determined by the estate. Public houses were actively discouraged. Measures had also been taken to protect the future in that plans for additional building or alterations on sites already leased had to be submitted to the estate office for approval. In addition, a detailed set of building regulations had appeared by 1850 which were subsequently enlarged and amended in the mid-1860s. They dealt with building lines, heights of chimneys, thickness of cavities, damp coursing, room sizes, gardens, walling, sewering, the strength of joists, lintels, roof principles and every conceivable aspect of construction.(61)

Beyond question, the estate used every means in its power to ensure that these covenants were adhered to. Solicitors were employed to uncover and correct ambiguities in standard leases, powers of inspection were regularly used and lessees were harrassed over any infringement of their lease terms.(62) Such stringent conditions and vigilance were no doubt essential in preserving residential selectness but, at the same time, an over-zealous attitude, when taken to extreme lengths and when coupled with high ground rents, could have the effect of driving potential developers away. Nevertheless, the estate steadfastly refused to modify its terms under any circumstances. But its inflexibility deterred much-needed investment. In 1865, for instance, one builder returned unsigned a contract for a valuable plot on Lowther Terrace and not solely because of the high ground rent that was being asked. His principal objection was to the many restrictions inserted in the agreement, particularly the redrafted building regulations and the landowner's powers of re-entry, which he considered "objectionable and unusual."(63) Similarly, in 1873, a Preston solicitor offered 1½d. per square yard for a large site behind Church Street. Moreover, the fact that he had a colleague also interested in building land, argued in favour of a sympathetic response to his offer. Instead Fair declined to lower the ground rent. "A transaction of this sort ought to be quite mutual", came the reply, "some prospect or otherwise should be held out to purchasers who, at any rate, have all the risk and are tied to build under conditions sufficiently stringent."(64) At least in the early years of Lytham's development the estate did not always practice business expediency.

The estate was just as demonstrative in exerting its will over the town's social and political affairs. No public event took place without the family's influence making itself felt. Though her husband and son displayed a waning interest in the estate, very little escaped Lady Clifton's attention. She ensured that the family headed subscriptions to every local charity and organisation - the Lytham Life-boat Society, Ship-wrecked Mariners, the Pier, the Promenade Band, the Recreation

Fund and so on.(65) She insisted that poor relief, the central core of landed benevolence, remained the exclusive preserve of the Squire rather than a responsibility for the local churches and their parishioners. As she explained to Thomas Fair: "I think now that it is a fashion for them to like to manage the poor themselves with no interference from the owner of the estate, except as regards subscriptions for beautifying the churches - this is in my opinion a mistake, particularly on an estate like the Colonel's at Lytham."(66) Again, when a convalescent hospital was being talked about in 1876 the dominant concern was that "proper procedure" should be followed and deference paid to the wishes of the estate. For, "if once it is permitted that residents are to have a voice in the matter of buildings...great difficulties would ensue."(67) Thomas Henry Clifton went so far as to censure Fair for even consulting Lytham's citizens on the matter.(68)

Political controls went hand-in-hand with social controls. The promotion of Lytham as a residential resort was financially attractive, but it was a consideration which had to be weighed against the danger of inviting the incursion of political and religious subversives. After all, the Cliftons took their political responsibilities seriously. Thomas Clifton devoted much of his time and energy to the Conservative cause in the North Lancashire constituency and no-one preached the doctrine of high Toryism louder than he. His son won the North Lancashire by-election of 1844 as a Protectionist and he was himself the passionately committed chairman of the local Agricultural Protectionist Association.(69) Clifton's defence of the Established Church was no less fervent. His son's growing Peelite sympathies were undoubtedly a source of some embarrassment, but John Talbot's support for the Maynooth Grant came as a bitter, personal blow. This would certainly explain his behaviour towards Catholic and non-Conformist groups in Lytham in the closing years of his life. Traditionally the landowner made token contributions to all denominational churches in the town. There was therefore more than a strong suspicion of victimization when the estate suddenly withheld the salary which it had formerly paid the minister of the Catholic Chapel whilst, at the same time, funding the appointment of an additional Anglican minister and extra places in Anglican schools. Clifton's aim was clear enough. He wanted to "combat the spreading influence of dissenting opinion and Romanism in the parish."(70)

The family's political role showed no signs of diminishing following Thomas Clifton's death. His son's mild flirtation with moderate reform in the late 1840s reflected his impulsive nature rather than a fundamental departure from his family's Tory allegiance. In his later years he campaigned as vigorously against the Liberals as his father had done against the Whigs. Indeed, the greater part of his correspondence to his agent was concerned with local political issues. Lytham, in fact, saw more of its squire in the run-up to a general election than at any other time. As landowner and agent seemed to have been acutely aware, an expanding town always courted the danger of attracting elements who were not sympathetically disposed towards either the landowner or his politics. Election time invariably saw determined efforts to counter the opposition as it surfaced; and a contested parliamentary election could certainly be relied upon to inject more than the usual vigour into the estate's political attentions to the town. In the elections of 1868, for instance, every effort was made to protect Lytham's political impregnability. Thomas Fair was instructed to draw up a blacklist of persons, particularly tradesmen and retailers suspected of even harbouring Liberal sympathies. He further promised to "root out" political offenders who actively solicited support in Lytham. Indeed the accusations made by the Preston Guardian that the estate office used "unfair practices" may not have been entirely without foundation.(71)

At the local level there was very little danger that Lytham would go the way of Southport and become a spawning ground for radical opinion.(72) The agent was far too attentive to allow that to happen. He was the leading figure on every local body, including the town's Board of Improvement Commissioners, and he rarely missed an opportunity to impress on Lytham's citizenry the benefits which had flowed from the landowner's patronage. Dissenting voices were regarded as a personal attack and seen as an act of betrayal against the landowner himself. "As Lytham increases so much", Lady Clifton complained, "and so much is done for the Independent yet they will form themselves into a strong class against the proprietor of the estate."(73) Furthermore, the estate's preoccupation with political controls made itself felt outside the confines of Lytham. It extended as far as Blackpool where Fair worked enthusiastically on behalf of "good conservatives", in elections to the Local Board, especially if they happened to be tenants of the estate.(74) But, for Lady Clifton, non-conformity was the major threat. It was radicalism in a religious guise. She welcomed the idea of a Local Board being set up in the new resort of St. Anne's so long as it was "not composed of radical elements". And the danger could be averted if "Church people could be encouraged to come to St. Anne's as there was already so many dissenters."(75) In the same vein her wish to see St. Anne's provided with two new schools was not totally inspired by philanthropic motives. "It will be advisable to push on the matter as fast as you can", she told Fair, "for I feel convinced that this is the time for us to make all the efforts we can at St. Anne's - or the Dissenters will swamp us."(76)

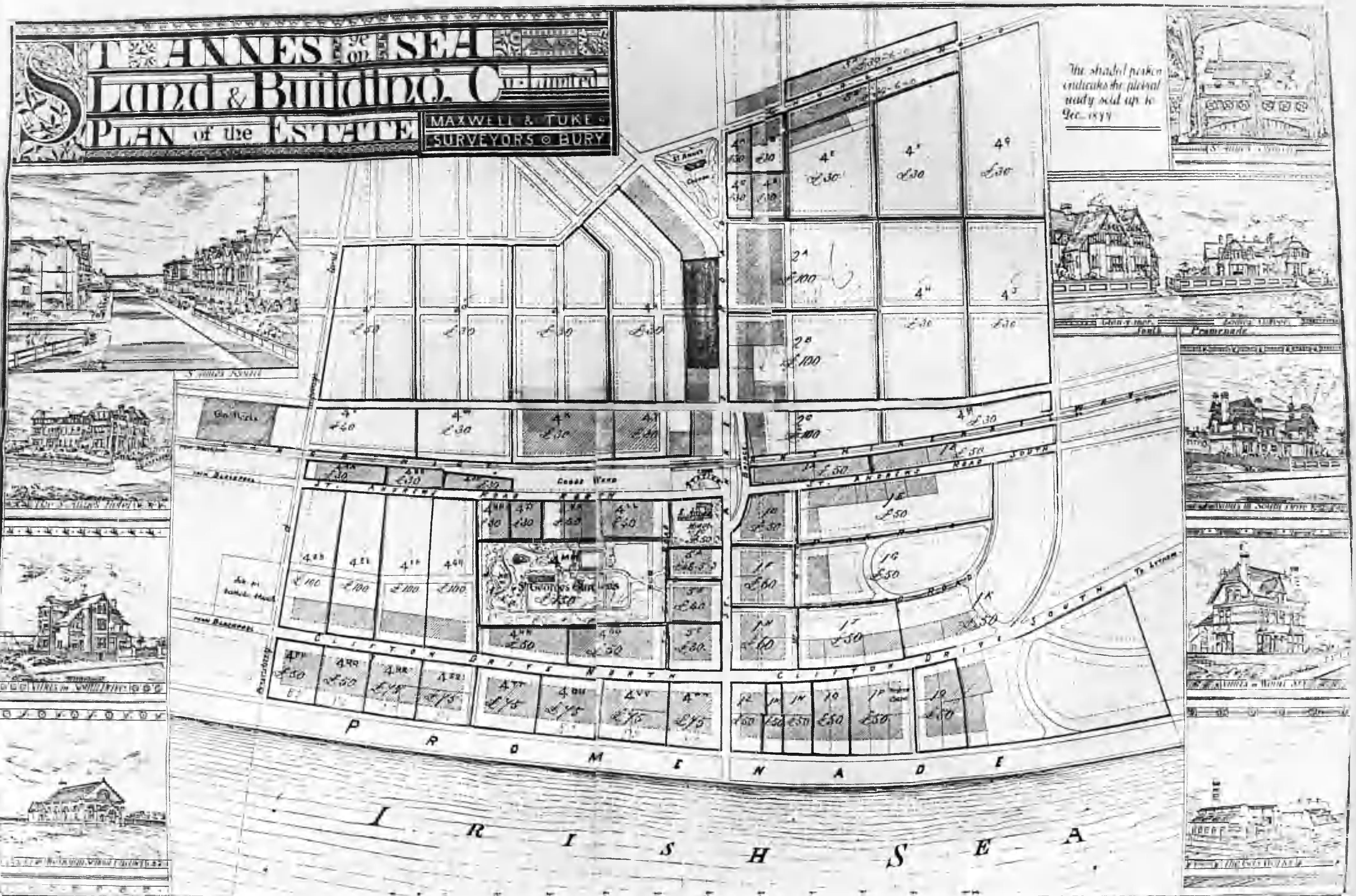
For a long time, Lytham's middle-class residents acquiesced in a situation in which the controls exercised by the estate remained the dominant influence shaping the resort's early character. This, in effect, reinforced the landowner's hegemony over the town's affairs. The fact of the matter was that the residents needed the landowner. They were dependent on his patronage and his regulatory powers to give their town the kind of physical and social climate which was as much in keeping with their own interests as it was the landowner's. Firstly, Lytham's Board of Improvement Commissioners, set up by the Improvement Act of 1847, did not have the will or the financial resources to steer an independent course in shaping the town's development. It was initially empowered to borrow £10,000 on the strength of the rates for the purpose of building a market hall, paving, lighting, sewering, beach improvements and the construction of a gas works.(77) By 1850 the Board's borrowing powers were virtually exhausted and, to the consternation of its members, the unexpected expense of the gas works scheme had absorbed by far the lion's share of the original loan.(78) Nevertheless, the money had been borrowed, it had now been spent and there was a general resistance to borrowing more. At least this was the prevailing view among the commissioners who saw it as their brief to campaign for "economy" and, as far as possible, minimise the burden on the ratepayers. The Board itself was a self-perpetuating oligarchy but, at the same time, it was broadly representative of the social type whom the estate had actively encouraged to take up building land in the town - retired "gentlemen", widows, spinsters, mostly small property owners, conservative in every sense and sharing a vested interest in keeping the rates down. There was certainly no shortage of commissioners who saw it as their compelling duty to stringently monitor public spending. Typical was Thomas Cross, a long-established resident of Lytham,a member of the Board of Commissioners from 1852 until an elected Local Board came into being in 1879 and an individual who acted on the simple principle of opposing "anything that had a tendency to increase the rates."(79) In any event, given the low level of the rates and the town's lethatgic growth, the Board could not have generated sufficient income to assume any initiative of its own. Even by 1879 the rates brought in less than £3,000 a year and more than half went towards interest payments and the reserve fund leaving barely £1,300 for general and administrative purposes.(80)

Secondly, the town's financial position lent weight to a strongly held view that improvements were basically a matter of landed obligation. It was not a question even of shared responsibility. Rather it was clearly anticipated that the estate would provide. Indeed, whenever there was any danger that the Board might become involved with the estate in any expensive improvement scheme involving increases in the rates, commissioners (and ratepayers) quickly retreated behind the argument that not everything undertaken by the landowner was necessarily to the advantage of the town.(81) Examples are too numerous to mention. But typical, for example, was the protracted dispute over responsibility for the western promenade which dragged tortuously on for some twenty-five years after its completion in 1851.(82) Again, Thomas Fair's efforts to persuade the Board to connect the western promenade with the newly constructed Clifton Drive, the coastal road to Blackpool, focused by now familiar arguments. It was largely in the estate's interests that the promenade and carriageway had been built in the first place - namely to encourage building and swell the landowner's ground rents.(83) In 1871 the estate proposed that further loans should be raised to extend the town's sewerage scheme and build a treatment plant. The immediate reaction of the commissioners was that not only was the scheme premature and too expensive, but it was essentially for the landowner's benefit and primarily his responsibility.(84)

A word of caution is needed here. It must be stressed that these disputes never became politicized. Points of conflict between town and estate never gave way to open confrontation. In fact, on the occasions when the estate stood its ground firmly enough, the opposition invariably relented. For instance, having finally decided to settle the niggling problem of road adoption, Fair "pressured" enough members of the Board into attending specially convened meetings at which his proposals were simply railroaded through.(85) And, in 1874, the Board also gave way over the matter of raising an additional loan for gas and drainage improvements.(86) But it could not have escaped anyone's attention that, in its early years of development, Lytham needed the landowner's patronage and therefore it did not pay to offend unduly. So, a proposal made in 1860 that building plans should be deposited with a "requisite authority" as well as with the estate office was publicly denounced by Fair as "a great piece of impertinence" and subsequently dropped.(87) When challenged on its rights of ownership to Lowther Gardens in 1878 the estate, at considerable expense to itself and in the full glare of local publicity, successfully hauled the case through Liverpool Crown Court. "A lesson in gratitude for the residents of Lytham", was how Thomas Fair described the incident.(88) Yet these were isolated occurrences. More usual were the displays of gratitude and deference which greeted the landowner's gifts of land and money. It was no less than the squire and his agent felt entitled to expect. Clifton had provided virtually all the town's social amenities, its park, its churches, its promenade; his stature and landowning influence were essential in preserving Lytham's social tone and residential selectness. In return for services rendered it was indeed assumed that the town would defer to the landowner's proprietory rights and privileges - to order the resort's physical appearance, to determine uses and access to the foreshore and to guide the religious, cultural and political life of the community.

III

The mid-1870s marked something of a watershed in the estate's financial position. This in turn brought changes in the estate's attitude towards its urban property and in its relations with the urban communities. By then, the quiet confidence of the 1850s and 60s had begun to give way to a troubled uneasiness. Current income failed to keep pace with spiralling expenditure



St Annes on Sea Land & Building Co. Limited
Plan of the Estate
Maxwell & Tuke
Surveyors Bury
The shaded portion indicates the plots already sold up to Dec. 1877
St. Andrews Road North
St. Andrews Road South
Clifton Drive North
Clifton Drive South
St. Georges Gardens
Promenade
South Promenade
Irish Sea

driven relentlessly upwards by mounting debts. Farm rents had virtually levelled out and the deepening agricultural depression wiped out any prospect of an immediate improvement.(89) But injecting a greater impetus into building development without, at the same time, incurring heavy capital costs, seemed to offer a way out of the problem.

This was clearly what was in mind when the scheme for a new resort at St. Anne's was launched in 1875. Situated halfway between Blackpool and Lytham, St. Anne's promised to open up building land along the coastline between the two established resorts. It aimed at the same clientele as Lytham as its promoters announced in their prospectus: "Of late years Blackpool has become so much the resort of the excursionist that a decided want is felt for a watering place which, while possessing the same bracing atmosphere and commanding position on the coast as Blackpool, shall secure a more select and better class of visitors."(90) In its physical lay-out St. Anne's was designed to attract the middle-class resident in search of a socially exclusive, residential haven. In contrast to the "dreary wilderness of bricks and mortar of the modern type which stamps most of our modern streets", architectural plans for St. Anne's envisaged pseudo-gothic villas neatly arranged in picturesque groups, along spacious drives and separated from blocks of "artisans' cottages" to be built on the outskirts of the district. But a claim to having advantages over all other resorts was based on the assertion that "being all new and built in these days of sanitary reform, the greatest facilities (were) afforded for making it the first sanitary town in the Kingdom."(91)

Yet, so far as the estate was concerned, there were crucial differences between the development of Lytham and their promotion of St. Anne's. Firstly, the landowner did not take responsibility for the major items of expenditure involved in the creation of St.Anne's as was the case at Lytham. Secondly, the actual day-to-day development of the town was left in the hands of a large building company. As a matter of increasing urgency the estate wanted to see building taking place as rapidly as possible. Yet, at the same time, it also wanted to maintain a level of control sufficient to protect its interests outside the area actually leased by the building company; but without any financial risk to itself. In other words the estate now wanted the best of all possible worlds and, in the medium term at least, it got neither. The estate would not, could not assist with making financial provision essential to the resort's successful take-off. But, in abandoning its former role of direct participation, it consequently sacrificed the kinds of controls which it had formerly and uncompromisingly imposed on Lytham.

No doubt plans to open up building land were being toyed with as soon as the Blackpool-Lytham railway line had been built in 1863. In fact, it has been suggested that the estate's initial intention was to gradually lease small plots and this would have been in keeping with normal estate policy.[92] Yet it is also clear that, by the 1870s, this approach had been dropped in favour of a more ambitious undertaking. In 1873 ideas for an entirely new town were being drawn up. But why the delay between the opening of the railway and the actual start of building operations? Again, taking management policy for the estate as a whole, it is plausible that agricultural investment as well as making provision for Lytham absorbed both the agent's attention and available resources during the 1850s and 60s. More important, as the estate looked more and more towards the urban sector for its financial salvation, Fair's primary objective was to find developers prepared to shoulder the capital costs of financing building expansion. Interestingly, Fair had already been approached by a company in 1873 with a proposal for leasing two and a half miles of coastline. Yet they expected the landowner to share the risks by demanding no more than a "peppercorn" rent for the first fifteen years, spending £20,000 on new roads and contributing to the costs of any further road construction.[93] That was not the kind of arrangement Thomas Fair has in mind.

The agreement he finally negotiated with the St. Anne's Building Company between 1874 and 1876 virtually removed the risk factor as far as the estate was concerned. The building company, a consortium of East Lancashire businessmen, initially agreed to take up a lease on eighty acres with a reserved option on further plots. They were no doubt highly confident about the success of their venture for, by 1876, they had taken up leases on a total of 318 acres with the intention of eventually developing one square mile. The estate could not have secured better terms. It was guaranteed a steadily increasing income projected over a twenty year period, and the building company was legally bound to provide most of the capital involved. Conditions governed minimum property values along Clifton Drive, St. Anne's Road and, proportionately, within the adjoining plots. The main arterial roads were to be constructed by the company, but reserved the landowner's right to tie into the road and sewerage system. No apportionment of rent would take place "until buildings of at least three times the annual value of the rent to be apportioned" in respect of each plot had been built and surveyed. Above all, the company was covenanted to spend at least £70,000 on roads, houses and hotels as well as a public market, town hall, baths, wash-houses and pier. Further, the agreement also contained the provision that £50,000 of the capital should be laid out during the first four years. Against this level of spending the estate's contribution in making Clifton Drive and St. Anne's Road pales into insignificance.(94)

St. Anne's, however, was beset by problems from the very outset. But it is the way in which the problems emerged and the failure to deal with them which is of particular interest here, in that the resort's troubled beginnings play a light on the estate's changing attitude towards its urban property. Admittedly there were difficulties which could not be entirely anticipated. The site itself presented natural problems which had to be overcome, not least among these being the effect of blown sand drifting to depths of five feet in places and estimated to have caused £200 of damage by March 1876.[95] But much more serious was the fact that potential investors did not share the same confidence as the company's directors in the resort's future prospects. Few were willing to take the first plunge. Typical, for instance, was the Bolton contractor who hoped to take ten to twelve acres depending on whether he could interest one or two associates in forming a company. Yet they were unwilling to invest their money until they saw the St. Anne's Company in active operation.[96] The warning bells were in fact being sounded as early as 1874 when a Blackpool developer found that three building societies would not support his plans to build in St. Anne's "as the place is not founded."[97] Indeed he advised Thomas Fair that builders would need convincing that "St. Anne's would be developed and shown to (their) entire satisfaction that the development would be certain and sure."[98] Unfortunately, the mortgage companies proved to be no more enthusiastic when construction hesitantly got under way after 1876.

Nevertheless, at the root of the many problems which plagued the new resort during the remaining years of the century was the inability of the major vested groups - the Land and Building Company, the Local

Board and the landowner - to accommodate their own objectives with the greater good of the town. Indeed, the early history of St. Anne's is a sorry saga of charge and counter-charge, claim and counter-claim by the parties concerned. Firstly, the matter of lease-hold controls soured relations between the building company and the estate from the very beginning. Thomas Fair did not want to see development unduly impeded. At the same time he was customarily anxious that high standards of construction and planning should be observed. In their ebullient mood of 1874 the directors of the building company were probably easy to bring to terms. But, given the grim reality of actually having to persuade builders to invest in the town, their emphasis shifted noticeably towards reducing constraints to a minimum. The first angry exchange between the two centred on Fair's insistence in 1876 that not only were all plans and specifications to be submitted to the estate office for approval but also that covenants incorporating the estate's building rules should be included in all sub-leases.(99) The quality of construction in St. Anne's had not come up to Fair's expectations. His surveyors reported that "commonly accepted standards regarding thickness of walls (and) strength of timbers" had not been complied with and that "the workmanship in many points (was) most unsatisfactory."(100) More than a year later matters were apparently no better. "Numerous properties....are very badly built in almost every respect", Fair was informed, and "considering the building at St. Anne's generally, we cannot say there is much improvement from our former survey...The majority of them, even when they do not greatly transgress the building rules, are so defective in quality of materials and putting together that any benefit the observance of the rules might insure is lost". And, in November 1877, the same surveyors reported finding "such buildings...that walls could be pushed down with one hand." What was even more galling to Fair was that he had actually asked the surveyors not to be too strict in interpreting the regulations "in comparatively unimportant points."(101) However, the estate's demand that building rules should be inserted in leases came up against stern resistance. The building company protested on the grounds that other landowners among the county's resorts - notably the Hesketh, Scarisbricks and Weld-Blundells in Southport and Birkdale - did not impose the same conditions on their lessees. But equality of treatment was not their main concern. They could not afford "to impoverish and harrass" the few lessees they had managed to acquire. In a sense their hands were tied.(102)

Despite these initial differences of opinion, in due course, the estate and the building company came to occupy roughly the same ground on the matter of building controls. The truth was that the landowner could no more afford to parade stringent standards than the building company could. High ideals had to bow to financial exigencies. In the end the estate office did not force the issue and accepted the argument that it was far more expedient to let the company regulate its own affairs. Indeed it later went on to make significant concessions.[103] In 1878 some of the stricter clauses were removed from the building regulations. And, in 1880, certain plots were subdivided and street plans and building lines modified to enable such as the Oldham Land and Building Company to attract investors and raise mortgages.[104]

However, financial problems proved much more significant than the difficulties which stemmed from lease conditions. Indeed the early years of St.Anne's development were littered with casualties. Between 1875 and 1889 no less than forty-five investors filed bankruptcy petitions.[105] In hindsight it seems nothing short of a miracle that the St. Anne's Building Company did not figure in the list. By 1879 it was itself in serious financial trouble. The euphoria of 1874 had given way to an acute sense of desperation. Houses stood empty, prospective builders had taken flight, income was falling sharply away and debts had started to pile up. In 1877 virtually all the eighty-six cottages along Church Road and Nelson Street were tenanted. By 1881 fifty-one were empty. Their evacuation reflected the fact that building had almost ground to a halt. With sixty-three houses and villas standing unoccupied and property values stagnating it is not surprising that most of the company's leased plots remained undeveloped. But that was by no means the sum total of the resort's problems. Other associated companies, formed to manage the town's amenities - the Hotel, Pier, Gas and Public Gardens Companies - inevitably ran into the same difficulties. One by one they had to be rescued from imminent bankruptcy by the parent company. It was only the determination and commitment of individual directors, backed by substantial amounts of their own capital, that enabled St. Anne's to survive these years. By 1890 almost £74,400 had been sunk into construction work which included c.£8,000 for roads and the promenade, c.£6,000 invested in St. George's Gardens and £17,800 put into the Pier Company. In addition, another £25,000 was found to keep the Gas, Hotel and Brick companies afloat.(106)

But what of the role of the landowner? In short, he came out of these events with a tarnished reputation, at least in the eyes of the building company and St. Anne's residents. Indeed it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, left to the devices of the estate, the resort would almost certainly have crumbled back into the sandhills from which it had struggled to emerge. From the outset the approach of the estate office was deliberately exploitative. It was both unwilling and, to a lesser extent, unable to come to the building company's assistance. On the contrary, it preferred to distance itself from the company's financial problems.

Moreover, at one stage, it appeared that the estate had itself been instrumental in compounding the building company's basic problem of persuading builders to take up land. In 1877 Thomas Fair entered into a private agreement with another company (which incidentally included two directors of the St. Anne's

Building Company) to lease an initial twenty-one acres along the shore. This new consortium was offered land at a ground rent of £17-10-0 per acre which was substantially lower than the terms on which St. Anne's Building Company leased their own adjoining plots.(107) Much more to the point, this arrangement directly contravened St. Anne's Building Company's original agreement with the estate according to which land within one and a half miles of the resort was not to be leased at rents lower than they themselves were paying.(108) This new development provoked angry scenes of recrimination among the board of directors. An emergency meeting of shareholders was called by James Maxwell, architect, director and major contractor to the company, at which he launched into a fierce attack on the purely speculative practices of some of his fellow directors and the estate - men "who breached covenants and (who) had no intention of developing the property but to sell at a later date, when small developers elsewhere in the town had through their efforts attracted other investors into the town."(109) In the event he was proved right. No building took place and, when eventually faced with the prospect of having to lay out money on streets and a promenade, the estate's new lessees surrended their deeds.(110) But by then the damage had been done. Open conflict among the directors could not have happened at a worse time. It prejudiced the image of the building company and the town and scared away potential investors.(111)

Furthermore, the estate was hardly more

supportive as St. Anne's struggled through the 1880s. It did virtually nothing to cushion the building company against a situation in which income declined and expenditure increased. With yearly losses running as high as £700 the building company pursued means of cutting its costs. At the same time it was also anxious to cultivate an impression of continuing activity in the resort. So in 1887, for instance, eight "first class houses" were started in St. Anne's Road. The estate was asked to supply shingle and marl for the foundations of these houses since the company took the not unreasonable view that a total halt to construction work would damage the estate's interests as much as anyone else's. Thomas Fair, however, would not make a free gift of any materials.[112]

Yet reducing permanent overheads was the company's main objective and, from 1879 onwards, the estate office came under unrelenting pressure to rearrange the terms by which ground rents were to be paid. The company was understandably anxious to alter the existing system whereby the payment of rents was based on a pre-determined time-scale. Instead they proposed that the rental on undeveloped plots should be left in abeyance. The estate did in fact concede an aggregate lower rental on these plots but would not surrender the condition that the ground rents on all seven leases taken out by the company should come into operation within the specified time period.[113] With annual losses mounting through the 1880s and no prospect of a dividend being paid, shareholders petitioned the estate to make a permanent reduction in ground rents. They achieved a 10% abatement in 1884 but for a limited period of five years only and with the provision that part of the saving would be expended on improving the streets in the town.(114) Finally, as building prospects began to show signs of improvement in 1890, the company proposed developing the remaining two hundred acres of their large fourth lease. They therefore asked for £500 to be cut from the maximum rental and a nominal ground rent to apply, with arrears and interest to be paid off at a later date. But, once more, the estate refused to depart from what was described as its "hard and fast line."(115)

In summary, the idea of a new resort at St. Anne's was kept financially alive, not by the estate, but by a small and determined body of men who were not prepared to let it die; men like Joseph Whitehead, the first chairman of the board, who tore up his personal guarantee for £10,000 when the company started running into difficulties in 1878; above all, William J. Porritt, the owner of some of the largest quarries and cotton mills in east Lancashire, who contributed more than anyone to the resort's survival. He is said to have ploughed more than £½ million of his own money into house construction in the town. He was a long-serving member of the Local Board, Chairman of the Land and Gas companies, an ardent Liberal and the benefactor of the Congregational Church; and his last act was to purchase St. George's Gardens for the building company.(116)

Finance - or lack of it - underpinned the third major barrier to the progress of St. Anne's; the need for good roads and adequate sewerage arrangements. It was, after all, on the strength of its claim to a healthy environment that the resort was first launched. No-one was more aware of this prerequisite than the directors of the building company, but they did not see themselves as being responsible either for maintaining the roads or for financing a modern sewerage system. In fact, in their negotiations with the landowner in 1875, a clause requiring them to build a sewage farm and build a drainage system was deleted from their agreement.(117) Both the estate and the company arrived at the easy assumption that, once a Local Board had been established in the town, the rates would gradually take care of improvements of this kind as the need arose.(118) So, a Local Board was hastily established in 1878. Yet its sttitude was markedly different to the one anticipated by the estate and the building company. This became immediately clear as soon as a deputation from the company held a first meeting with the Board to discuss plans for sewering the town. Most of the Board's members had no intention of authorising expensive improvements and they therefore rejected the proposal that a permanent joint committee should be set up to investigate possible sewerage schemes.(119) The root of the problem, from the point of view of the building company, was that the cumulative voting procedure, based as it was on property qualifications, had returned a Board comprised largely of farmers from the outlying districts. They had no stake in the town themselves and therefore were primarily concerned about keeping the rates down to a bare minimum.(120) In any case, with only two hundred ratepayers, an average levy of fifteen shillings on each and the expenses of salaried officials to the Board amounting to £150 p.a. in 1878, there was not much scope for action.(121) Continuing efforts were made to produce a more amenable Local Board but came to little. Property owners in the town petitioned the Local Government Board to reduce the geographical extent of the St. Anne's district on the basis that a small body of ratepayers could not support the cost of maintaining over twenty miles of roads in the outlying areas as well as undertaking urgently needed sewerage works. But there was clearly an ulterior motive, and that was to undermine the farmers' representation on the Local Board. The petition failed. It came up against an earlier agreement between St. Anne's, Lytham and Blackpool that their respective boundaries should be co-extensive. Furthermore Thomas Fair had not been prepared to throw the landowner's unreserved support behind the petition. Eager as he was to have a more energetic Board in St.Anne's he was also under an obligation to protect the interests of the estate's tenant farmers.(122)

Fair's equivocation over the matter of St. Anne's boundary limits also reflected his own stubborn refusal to depart from the view that financial responsibility for major improvement works in the town lay primarily with the Land and Building Company. For their part the company wanted to see a Local Board elected which was sympathetic to rate-supported intervention and prepared to shoulder part of the expense of sewering and road construction. At the same time, securing a co-operative Local Board had to be balanced against a real danger that high rates could scare off potential investors. Consequently, the company's directors were inclined to pass responsibility back to the estate as far as the most expensive undertakings were concerned. As for the Local Board, its dominant voice remained that of the farming community rather than the town's residents. In short they did not mind who paid, so long as it was not them.

For the most part this state of affairs continued throughout the 1880s. Meanwhile the resort suffered. With the estate, Land and Building Company and Local Board locked in battle and each refusing to give ground, nothing was effectively done to tackle the urgent problems of road repairs, lighting and sanitation. Until the 1890s St. Anne's had no road system worthy of the name.(123) The newly elected Local Board quickly defined strict limits to their own liability by declaring in 1878 that they were not responsible for the repair of any road other than the old Lytham-Blackpool highway which passed through the St. Anne's district.(124) Road maintenance was basically left to the voluntary efforts of individuals though they were unlikely to agree an apportionment of the costs. Even where roads were put in order by frontagers, they had no assurance that the Local Board would adopt them.(125) This impasse between the Board and the property owners effectively neutralised any attempts to improve the major thoroughfare of the town. Even the condition of the promenade and coastal road, an amenity essential to the attractiveness of any resort, went sadly neglected as estate, Local Board and building company each denied responsibility. Only after repeated petitioning by residents did the Board finally relent and agree to adoption in 1887.[126]

However, the woeful condition of the town's roads was not entirely due to the miserly attitude of Local Board members or the building company's lack of resources. The Board's stubborn policy on road adoption was strongly influenced by its lengthy battle with the estate office over rights to take shingle from the foreshore for the purpose of road repair. Access to cheap and plentiful materials might have made the Board more accommodating in the matter of road adoption. However the estate was unflinching in its refusal to grant the Board unlimited access. And more was at stake than Fair's claim that the removal of shingle threatened the sea defences. His uncompromising stand was part of the estate's long-running campaign to assert full proprietory rights to the foreshore along its coastal boundaries. In this case the rights of landownership took precedence over the immediate needs of a struggling resort, to the extent of dragging an impoverished Local Board into expensive litigation in 1882.[127]

But the sanitary condition of the town was by far the most pressing problem. In 1889 St. Anne's sewerage system had barely improved on the primitive arrangements which had existed at the resort's inception in 1875. Its claim to a healthy environment amounted to nothing more than a surface drain which carried waste from the township south of the railway into the sea, and an open ditch which drained the northern part into Lytham's surrounding watercourses, eventually discharging into the Ribble estuary.(128) In effect, a drain first constructed by the Clifton estate in 1871-2 and running the length of St. Anne's Road constituted the resort's sewerage system. Individual residents were required to make their own ad hoc arrangements for removing "nuisances". In fact it was not until 1884 that the Local Board engaged a contractor to clear the town's privies and ashpits; and even he was driven to resign within six months.(129)

Thomas Fair was very much aware that a lack of adequate sewerage facilities was the major barrier in the way of the resort's expansion. He was impatient for progress but just as determined that the Local Board and especially the Land and Building Company should shoulder the costs of improvement work. He demanded that the Local Government Board set up an inquiry into the failure of St. Anne's authorities to implement a drainage scheme.(130) But the pressures he put on the building company were of a more subtle kind. When William Porritt advised Fair to get himself elected to the Local Board in 1879 he supposed that Fair would act in the common interests of both the company and the estate by neutralising the obstructive measures of the farmers' representatives.[131] Porritt's assumptions were wrong. Instead Fair placed the problem of St. Anne's stagnation fairly and squarely at the company's door and specifically blamed their lack of investment in a sewerage system. He was prepared to use his influence with the farmers only when the building company gave a positive undertaking to give financial endorsement to a sewerage scheme.[132] However, the town's principal developers were no less adamant that the initiative should come from the estate. As James Maxwell, builder and one-time director of the Land and Building Company, explained; there was no private capital available and the Local Board was totally unresponsive to the idea of improvement work. "I have been struggling for months", he went on, "to get a sewerage scheme but I am simply single-handed against not only the Board but the whole community of farmers and nothing but a generous proposal from the estate can help much." Furthermore, revitalizing building development in the resort depended on expanding drainage facilities well beyond the existing limits of habitation, which the Local Board would never contemplate doing.[133]

With the building company and estate each expecting the other to lead the way the Local Board was able to procrastinate throughout the 1880s. Two sewerage schemes, in 1881 and 1883, were rejected and, by 1887, the Board had not even committed itself to the principle that improvement work was necessary.[134] The real casualties in this tripartite struggle were St. Anne's residents themselves - small builders, property owners, shopkeepers, individuals who had invested their all in the resort and who felt cheated by the ineptitude and apathy of the Local Board, dominated by a coterie of farmers, and the obduracy of the building company and estate. From 1878 onwards an increasingly vitriolic Rate-payers Association railed against the deceit of the Local Board, the narrow concerns of the building company directors and what appeared to be the lethargy of the landowner, all of whom seemed intent on letting the resort die. With roads made inaccessible by drifting sand, maintenance left to the haphazard efforts of individuals, virtually non-existent lighting and no sewerage system to speak of, property owners could hardly complain of high rate demands but neither were they getting any rents. "Improvements" rather than "economy" became the battle-cry of the besieged citizenry of St. Anne's. Comparisons were drawn with the spending habits of other resorts. St. Anne's had not taken out a single loan whereas by 1880 Blackpool had borrowed some £130,000 which worked out at £13 per head. Given this rate it was assumed that even the small St. Anne's community could afford at least £13,000 of debt capital.[135] In short, there was a growing ground swell of opinion that the residents by them-selves could resolve the town's major problems through rateable intervention.

In the early 1890s they got their chance. As a result of a marked improvement in the building trade generally, rising demand inland and the spirited efforts of individual residents who had kept the resort alive out of their own pockets, St. Anne's experienced a sharp up-turn in fortune.[136] In 1892 the town was at last attracting a level of investment which promised to secure its future. "Each week", it was reported, "sees new houses roofed in and others commenced in this growing sea-side resort. New streets are being laid out and houses are being erected with the utmost possible speed, the demand being great."[137] A sudden surge in development was reflected in an increase in the town's rateable value from £8,409 in 1878 to £13,368 in 1890 and then a dramatic leap to £21,000 by 1893.[138] Even the St. Anne's Land and Building Company was showing a profit by 1896.[139]

Importantly, expansion brought changes in the composition of the Local Board. The farmers' monopoly was gradually whittled away so that by 1894 their representation had been reduced to one member. Control passed into the hands of property owners, retailers and contractors.[140] Moreover the town found that it could now generate the financial means of independently determining its own future. It no longer needed to pullon the tight purse strings of either the building company or the estate. Indeed the Board began to assert its independent spirit and its independent means. In 1893 the wheels were set in motion to submit a parliamentary improvement bill "to improve the health and good government of the district." Several public works were contemplated but priority was given to taking over the promenade and implementing a comprehensive sewerage scheme.[141] £10,000 was allocated for the purpose of providing a main sewer for each of the three drainage districts into which the town was divided. A further £7,000 was ear-marked for taking over the south promenade from the Land and Building Company, laying out pleasure gardens and widening the resort's principal thoroughfare, St. Anne's Road. Moreover, despite stern opposition from the estate, the new Urban District Council as it became in 1894 equipped itself with the powers to regulate building development in the town including control over street plans, elevations, building lines, conversions, fencing and so on.[142] Indeed, within the space of a few years, virtually every amenity in the resort had fallen under the control of a Council which clearly had a bold vision of its municipal role. In 1895 the Council combined with other coastal authorities in the joint purchase of the Fylde Waterworks Company. The following year it entered negotiations to purchase the local gas company. In 1897 an application for loan capital was made under the Electric Lighting Act. However, the Council's major preoccupation remained the public ownership of the foreshore, The Duchy of Lancaster was persuaded to part with further land along the shore which= enabled the Council to press forward with plans to improve the promenade. Indeed in its impatience to see the work completed the Council took out a £2,500 loan with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank in 1898 because of the administrative delays involved in applying to the Public Works Loans Commissioners. But this sum was only a small part of the £40,000 which the Council had endorsed for its total improvement programme.[143]

The energetic spending of the District Council clearly contrasts with the parsimonious attitudes of the Local Board of the 1880s. Nevertheless, Council members were far from being carefree with the ratepayers money. Enterprising as St. Anne's Council was, its belief in the value of municipal intervention was kept firmly in check by "the perennial Victorian impulse to economy". In the case of St. Anne's ratepayers this impulse seems to have been at its strongest when the interests of the town and those of the estate overlapped.(144) In view of the way in which the estate had distanced itself from the problems which had plagued the resort in its early years, it is not altogether surprising that subsequent relationships operated on a largely cold and formal level. What is strongly evident is the obvious reluctant to spend public money which would be in any way advantageous to the estate. For instance, an acrimonious dispute blew up over the Council's decision to reduce the geographical reach of its sewerage scheme in 1900. It was originally envisaged that the system would be extended into the north-western area of the township but that also promised to open up building land on Clifton property. Since the enlarged sçheme placed "an unfair burden on the ratepayers" the Council opted for a more limited undertaking and successfully defended their decision in a court action brought by the estate.(145)

Again in 1902 the Council did not regard the landowner's "gift" of thirteen acres for a public park as the benevolent gesture it might have appeared. The

Council rejected the offer because of the attached condition that it would not only have to finance the laying out of the park, to which it had no objection, but the provision of a surrounding road and sewerage system into which any further housing would be allowed to connect.[146] Equally, while it remained the Council's paramount objective to secure possession of the whole promenade running throughout its district, it was only prepared to do so if guaranteed absolute powers of control. Consequently, it refused to take over the northern portinn of the foreshore from the estate because "the Lord of the Manor wished to impose such onerous conditions."[147] In the past the estate had always vigorously guarded its right to determine the uses to which the promenade was put. "Joy wheels, Aunt Sallys, cheap Jacks, stalls and pleasure fairs" had always been strictly prohibited on the grounds that such unseemly activities would deter building development on adjoining land. By contrast the Council took a less puritanical view. Not only was the principal of municipal self-determination at stake here but envious glances were being cast in the direction of Southport where promenade amusements had made a significant contribution to the municipal coffers. Ultimately their improvement bill of 1914 equipped the Council with the means for removing the last vestiges of estate control over the town's affairs. In face of the landowner's petition against the bill the Council secured powers of compulsory purchase; and it then went ahead with plans for not only ornamental gardens and marine lakes but "pavillions, booths, stands and stalls."[148] This episode was in effect a final snub to an estate whose attitude towards St. Anne's had been one of remorseless profit-taking - "privilege without responsibility" as one St. Anne's resident acidly remarked.[149] In the end St. Anne's survived and prospered and its survival served to rescue the landowner's ailing financial fortune. Yet a price of a different kind had to be paid, and that was a shattered public image.

IV

In terms of the relationship between town and estate there are interesting similarities between Lytham and St. Anne's in the last quarter of the century. In Lytham the relationship again turned on a shift in emphasis in the way in which the estate managed its urban property. The benevolent paternalism of earlier years, the accent on social controls as much as one financial return, gave way to much more basic considerations. If the town could be encouraged to expand, the prospect of steadily increasing ground rents offered a possibility of shoring up the estate's crumbling solvency. In effect the estate concentrated on a policy of maximising the return from its urban property at minimum cost to itself. At the same time, such a policy eventually placed the family in an altogether new light in their relations with the town. Increasingly Lytham's leading citizenry were prompted into asking the basic question whether the interests of the town and the estate were necessarily identical.

However, injecting new vigour into the resort would not be easy. Lytham's development from the 1840s had been far from impressive. With a population of about 3,200 in 1871, the town was still little more than a large village.(150) The estate tackled the problem of stagnation in several ways, all of which pointed towards a relaxation of direct controls. The first large-scale developers were invited on to the estate, in a departure from the customary practice of leasing small building plots to private individuals. In 1879 a consortium of East Lancashire businessmen formed the Lytham Land and Building Company and took out an initial lease on thirty acres in the Ansdell district lying between St.Anne's and Lytham.(151) They were joined in 1892 by a Fleetwood based company who took out a lease on 260 acres again in the district to the west of the town and began work on what became the exclusive residential suburb of Fairhaven. Their plans envisaged building a string of villas which would eventually link St. Anne's and Lytham. By 1896 they had successfully developed twenty-one acres, investing over £12,500 in carriage drives, a promenade, marine lake and golf course.(152) It also followed that some revision to Lytham's leases was needed to bring them into line with those operating in St. Anne's. In 1886 the Trustees to the Clifton estate granted Lytham's first 999 year lease and, from 1890 onwards, expired leases were renewed for the longer term but at considerably higher ground rents.(153) Yet, as was the case at St. Anne's, any prospects for future growth in Lytham rested largely on providing a standard of amenity and quality of environment likely to attract new investors and residents. For the estate, the cheapest solution lay in reorganising the town's local government and bringing to the fore men who were sympathetic to the notion of municipally financed improvements. Moreover, by the late 1870s, there was a rising ground swell of opinion in Lytham which was highly critical of the town's shortcomings as a residential resort, which not even the most "economy minded" citizen could afford to ignore.

Typically, the focus of attention was the town's "sanitary condition". Behind an imposing facade of villa residences, promenade, hotels and assembly rooms lay an uninviting world of filth and squalor, a throw back to Lytham's agricultural past. In 1866 it was reported that "in nearly every cottage back-yard along Clifton Street may be found ashpits full, pigs kept, dung heaps" and a virtual absence of any kind of drainage. Similarly, in 1868, the nuisance inspector received complaints from the respectable inhabitants of Clifton Street and Market Square about the odour emanating from the yards in Henry Street, where large numbers of pigs were kept and "manure allowed to remain until thirty to forty tons had accumulated giving way to a stench that could be felt sixty or a hundred yards away."(154) The medical officer's report of 1874 indicated that no improvements had taken place. The primitive sewerage system was faulty, the beach was contaminated by animal and vegetable waste, filth continued to accumulate in the back streets and the sanitary inspection was still inadequate. "The cleaner the town is kept", he continued,"the healthier it will become and the more resorted to", but the remedy lay with the residents.(155)

Lytham's sanitary record was not the only deficiency under attack. Residents contributed seemingly endless items to a catalogue of shortcomings compiled by the local press from the mid-1870s onwards. Railway links were inadequate with no direct service from Preston. Mud and haphazard maintenance left the major thoroughfares of the town impassable in winter, and the streets were in such poor condition because no-one would accept responsibility for them. The oligarchic body of Improvement Commissioners imposed stringent conditions on road adoption and the landowner's building regulations insisted that houses had first to be built before the work and costs of properly forming the roads and footpaths could be apportioned. It was also felt that "hundreds of people were prepared to take houses at £20-£50 p.a. rent" but accommodation in the town was too limited. Yet who was prepared to take on building plots along unformed roads with no access to adequate drainage? Why was the town so poorly advertised? Would it help to provide more amenities for winter amusements? Could a packet-boat service to Southport boost the town's fortunes? And the most burning question of all - who was to pay?(156)

Rate-supported municipal enterprise was the solution advanced by recent newcomers to the town, especially those whose vested interests were most affected by the resort's lethargic growth - the more extensive property owners, lodging house keepers and the building trade. They inevitably drew comparisons between the energetic efforts of other seaside authorities and the "penny-pinching" attitude of their own. Lytham Tradesmen's Association paraded the example of Southport whose transformation into a bustling resort was put down "to the united effort of its inhabitants....in laying out a Winter Gardens, Aquarium and Cambridge Hall". Another critic scathingly commented that £10,000 had been spent on one promenade alone at Llandudno and added that it was "enough to drive some folk mad to see what can be done at other places and what stagnation there is at Lytham". £60,000 was reputed to have been spent on public amenities in Rhyl, a resort no larger than Lytham. But the most telling contrast was made with neighbouring Blackpool: "In one thing Blackpool and Lytham are exactly alike; they wish to get as much as they can of the money made in the manufacturing districts, but there is a very great difference in the way they respectively adopt to attain their end. They long for the same cake, but whilst Blackpool is willing to pay and does pay pretty dearly for its bite, Lytham neither does nor will pay anything worth talking about.....Blackpool lavishes thousands of pounds to catch the public; Lytham haggles over sixpence."(157)

By 1878 there were mounting pressures to replace the Improvement Commissioners by an elected Local Board drawn from "men of enterprise, of enlarged views and aims (and) who will fearlessly adopt measures for the further development of this town of which it is capable to a much greater extent than hitherto."(158) This was precisely the kind of positive action which Thomas Fair did everything to encourage. Changes to the town's local government formed a crucial part of the agent's plans as the urban property began to assume a greater importance in his financial arrangements for the estate. Attracting potential builders depended largely on providing amenities which the estate could ill-afford to finance intself. It was estimated, for instance, that extending a sewerage system westwards to connect with the building operations underway at Fairhaven would cost £3,000. And Fair anticipated that a more enterprising Local Board would be more likely to lend financial support than the obstructive body of Commissioners.(159)

However, not everyone shared Fair's views that changing the structure of local government would be a change for the better. In the opinion of the heir to the estate it meant a dangerous political departure. "It is a great thing to steer clear of elections", Clifton advised Fair. "It has a tendency to engender parties which is not very desirable."(160) Clifton's warning proved to have some foundation to it. The more "progressive" of the town's citizenry were not suddenly swept into power in the elections of 1878. Instead the new Local Board was made up of improvers and the old guard, divided into almost equal factions.(161) Consequently, the impulse towards economy still had to be reckoned with.

In the Board elections of 1880 the call for improvements was countered by equally vocal complainants who argued that the Board was acting under pressure and ratepayers "saddled with an outlay which ought to fall on the owner of the land." In 1882 a decision to appropriate half the profits from the gas works to reduce the rates was clearly popular with a section of Lytham residents. Furthermore, the adoption of several major roads, including Clifton Drive, was successfully resisted, as were Fair's persistent demands that the Lytham Land and Building company should be allowed to connect their residential estate with the main sewers.(162) There was, however, some progress. In 1882 work started on a £5,800 project to build new sewerage and gas works,(163) and a private Act of 1888 provided the Board with £10,000 for extensions to the gasworks, £500 for modest street improvements and powers to introduce new by-laws governing the beach and promenade.(164)

This tug-of-war between the two factions characterised Lytham's local government into the 1890s. The "progressives", as they were known locally, scored a number of small victories under Thomas Fair's and his son's leadership; notably the Board's final adoption of the western promenade from Fairhaven to Ansdell in 1889, and modest increases in the rates to cover the adoption of some of the town's notoriously squalid back-streets and roads.(165) However, several factors conspired to build up resistance to Fair's plans to drive more impressive improvement schemes through the Local Board. Groups tended to realign over every issue of public spending, and any project which threatened to have a dramatic effect on the rates was likely to drive wavering supporters into the ranks of the opposition. Secondly, the suggestion that the landowner was taking advantage of the ratepayers had much the same effect. In mid-century few would have wished and even fewer would have dared to cast aspersions on the estate's motives. By contrast, there was much more public debate in the 1890s about the estate's role in the town, and a greater readiness to criticise and censure. Where public comment on the estate's affairs and the behaviour of the landowner and agent had, in the past, been discreet and usually deferential, a growing body of residents and Board members were now unashamedly unrestrained in their reference to the estate. Moreover, a further element had crept into the picture. Some of Fair's most vociferous critics had a political axe to grind, confirming the Cliftons' long-standing fear that a more open system of government would provide a stage for the politically antipathetic elements in the town. "Some", Fair remarked, "are more inclined to put their party scruples before the good of Lytham."(166) Indeed, it was no coincidence that the hard core of Board members who doggedly resisted Fair's comprehensive improvement schemes were also the leading figures in Lytham's infant Liberal Association.(167) Their favourite line of attack was to impugn the integrity of the estate in an effort to drive a wedge between the landowner and the town. Typical were their highly personalised accusations that the estate had broken previous "understandings" and "agreements" and was ducking its responsibilities. Their opposition, they declared, was based on the view that "Mr. Clifton was trying to force expensive.....schemes on to the Board." By 1894, the estate's political critics had become more daringly outspoken. The town's tradesmen, it was claimed, were unable to voice an opinion because of fears of reprisals. The Board, they continued, was Tory dominated and manipulated in the interests of the landowner. "In Lytham they had not grown out of the old order of things. In the old days every cottage was owned by the estate and they thought by that means to control all of a labouring character and that the whole place would be exceedingly respectable." True, the argument ran, the town needed more enterprising and energetic government but provided "it was free and divorced from the interests of the estate."(168)

Nevertheless, as events turned out, Fair's "progressives" swept to victory in the local elections of 1894. Their success was due to a combination of circumstances. Measures to improve Lytham's poor image were more urgently needed than ever. It was a matter of some alarm that, by comparison, St. Anne's was attracting more building activity. Whereas Lytham's population had crept up to almost 5,300 by 1896 St. Anne's was not far behind, having increased from 2,588 in 1891 to 4,250 five years later.(169) But the formation of an Urban District Council and the division of the town into electoral wards tipped the balance of power in favour of the manufacturing and professional families based in the west end district, who were largely sympathetic to the principle of rateable intervention. At the same time, the political influence of the estate office played its part. Never before had it made such efforts to canvass support and to cultivate an acceptable impression of the landowner's role in the affairs of the town.[17] Fair made an impassioned defence of the landowner's position. Since building operations had started south of Clifton Drive the Local Board had taken over £5,000 in rates he argued. The landowner had "left open" more than a third of the land for "recreational purposes" and he had made "gifts of land" whose value was estimated to be £31,000. But now there was an urgent need to encourage more builders into the town, and that depended on "a yearly programme of improvements with particular regard to sewerage and road repair."[171] Fair got the Council he wanted. It confirmed its sense of enhanced status and purpose by raising £3,500 for new council offices and it endorsed Fair's plans for the town's new sewerage system.[172]

Outwardly it appeared that the ties between estate and town had been mutually reinforced. In fact, the alliance between the town's "progressive" leaders and the estate was based on temporary convenience. For the moment differences were buried out of a recognition of the fact that the resort's needs were more immediate and only public self-help could bring about any speedy improvement. But the honeymoon was brief. In committing the town to more expensive public works programmes the "progressive" group became more critical of the landowner's contributory role rather than less so. In a sense Fair made a rod for his own back. He helped to bring to the fore men who were prepared to carry out the kind of improvements which the estate itself could ill-afford but he had also brought about a situation in which the town's civic leaders and most ratepayers would not be satisfied with less than full control over their own affairs. On this basis they drew a clear distinction between the town's interests and those of the estate.

So, the concerted action of 1894 soon gave way to a more searching analysis of the landowner's contribution to the town's welfare. Pressing to consolidate their control over the Council in the elections of 1896 on the promise of still further improvements, "progressives" portrayed the landowner not as the benevolent force of the past but as the beneficiary of their own success and that of the town. They attacked the squire's continued absences. They complained about the poor condition of the unadopted roads and they accused the estate office of deliberately abandoning the building standards of the past in favour of speculative profit-making. Referring to the recently built "company houses" in the east end of the town one councillor remarked that "there was no seaside town where there was more jerry-building than at Lytham." Another made no bones about that he saw as a separation of interests and, on that basis, challenged the agent's ability to carry out his duties as a town councillor or in an impartial manner.(173)

Of course contested elections have the effect of heightening emotions and giving rise to somewhat exaggerated claims. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Councillors expressed a strong current of popular feeling. Criticism stemming from various interest groups in the town was no less unrestrained. The Lytham Tradesmen's Association in 1904 no longer felt the same common cause with the estate as had been the case ten years previous. Their resentment was unmistakeable. The landowner became their scapegoat for the town's unspectacular progress: "Perhaps if the Squire were to settle here and reside at Lytham Hall it would give impetus to trade. It was the duty of the Squire to come and help the town..... It was as little as Mr. Clifton could do to come and spend some of his money here." The Ratepayers' Association voiced similar complaints, and public comment at a meeting called to discuss relief measures for the poor and unemployed of the town went further. The landowner's past record of benevolence came under scathing attack. Nothing could be asked or expected of a landowner, the platform asserted, whose previous acts of generosity had been inspired by ulterior motives. "He gave a park to St.Anne's which they did not want and made over Lowther Gardens to avoid the expense of maintenance." A reduction in the estate's income from the town seemed to be the panacea for all social ills. If ground rent values were appropriately rated then the burden on the town as a whole could be reduced, and more cottages would be built and leased at lower rents.(174) Not surprisingly, the tarnished reputation of the local landowner was seized upon by Liberals in search of political capital. The parliamentary elections of 1910 fuelled further accusations against the estate's leasing policy. Old scars were reopened as the local press enjoyed a field-day investigating "Mr. Clifton's alleged misdeed in respect of the renewal of expiring leases." In particular it was claimed that the estate office had trapped the District Council into paying an unjustifiably high price for a new lease on its offices and for the purchase of the public baths and assembly rooms. Similarly the landowner, in his capacity as one of the trustees, was accused of pressing otherwise useless land on to the Lytham Charities Trust at an exorbitant price when a site was being chosen for the town's new grammar school.(175) Whether there was any basis to these claims really did not matter. These issues became a matter of public concern and added to growing suspicions of the estate's motives.

By the turn of the century the town council had virtually severed the estate's controls over what it considered to be the most important areas of municipal responsibility. In this respect, no single issue generated more public controversy than the question of who controlled the town's schools. For the previous two hundred years education in the parish had come under the aegis of a combination of trusts collectively known as the Lytham Charities. Ostensibly, the purpose of the Charities was to provide a basic education for the children of poor families in the parish on a non-denominational basis. However, a number of vacancies on the Board of Trustees in

1845 brought about significant changes in the Charities' management and policy. Thomas Clifton had served as a trustee for two of the four charitable bodies involved but, in 1846, the number of trustees was increased to thirteen and came to include not only Clifton but his agent, solicitor, five of the major tenants on his estate as well as several rectors and patrons of local Anglican churches. In effect the Lytham Charities and their schools came to be dominated by an oligarchy of estate and establishment which was to last until 1903.(176) For the landowning family the Charities provided a valuable instrument of social control - a means of keeping the influence of non-conformist and Catholic groups in check. It proved to be a highly effective weapon. With some justification local Catholics complained about the denominational prejudices of the trustees and the "bitter persecution" which had forced Catholic children out of the parish school.(177) Backed by a steadily mounting income from their small but highly lucrative plots of land in central Blackpool the Charities maintained a dominant influence over primary education in Lytham.(178)

The educational provision of the Lytham Charities was no less discriminatory in the 1880s. By then the trustees maintained two schools - one in St.Anne's and a second, St. Cuthbert's, in Lytham. In 1880 they had been approached to lend support to St. John's National Schools, which had been established in the growing east end of the town. At first there was a marked reluctance to dilute the Charities' spending by taking on additional obligations. However, a sharp reversal in attitude had taken place in 1883. St. John's did not have the resources to cater for a rising school population but far more persuasive in forcing the trustees hand to come to the schools' assistance was the fact that a newly opened Wesleyan school had drawn twenty-four pupils away from the Charities' own establishments.(179)

Against this background the 1880s witnessed growing demands for the complete reorganisation of the town's education system. The trustees found themselves coming under pressure from a number of directions. The non-conformist and Catholic groups were incensed by the Charities' denominational bias, and claimed entitlement to a share of the trust fund under the terms of the original foundation. The Catholic Church, it was claimed, catered equally for the poor of the east end in much the same manner as the Anglican establishment, yet their appeals for financial assistance from the Trust had been repeatedly rejected.(18) By 1896 a third interest group was pressing its own claim. Under the Local Government Act, Lytham U.D.C. asserted its right to appoint to the board of trustees and in fact proposed nominating a number equal to the existing membership. Their immediate concern was to implement the recommendation of the Charity Commissioners that the Lytham Charities should set aside a specific sum of money for higher education in the town.(181)

In face of pressure from all sides the trustees made minor concessions. In 1891 they made the meagre grant of £75 to the Catholic and Wesleyan elementary schools and £200 p.a. was allocated to secondary education in Lytham, whilst St. John's received a £500 grant to build a new school. But any moves to break their control over the Charities' funds were strongly resisted. Scheme after scheme foundered on the trustees' stubborn refusal to relinquish power so that, in 1898, the Charity Commissioners set up a public enquiry into Lytham's educational provision. The Commissioners in effect acted as arbitrators between the two main factions - the existing trustees and a loose alliance of town councillors and non-Anglicans determined on breaking what they saw as a remaining vestige of estate/establishment control over an important area of the town's life; and that could only be achieved, as one Baptist councillor put it, by terminating the "perpetual succession of Fairs." In fact their regime was brought to an end in 1903 by the Board of Education which enforced a sweeping revision of Lytham's school system. From a board of fourteen the number of existing life-trustees was reduced to just two and controls over the Trust's funds became firmly vested in representatives from the local authorities. The sectarian character of the Charities' work was finally erased and much of its money used for the purpose of establishing two grammar schools in the town.(182)

The Lytham Improvement Bill of 1904 occasioned the final confrontation between town and estate. With an average of 115 houses per year being built between 1890 and 1905 and the rateable value climbing to almost

£64,000, the Council had sufficient independent means to sever all remaining ties. The most important aspect of the Bill was not the Council's new borrowing powers but its claim, embodied in a comprehensive list of by-laws, to proprietory rights over the streets, parks, beach and promenade. In face of loud protestations from the estate the Act overturned an arrangement whereby by-laws had formerly been subject to the landowner's consent. The point had been reached when municipal pride could no longer be satisfied with a situation in which any future plans for the town would depend on the approval or otherwise of the estate.(183) The landowner's control over the affairs of the community had been finally broken. The Cliftons still had a role to play but it was little more than that of property developers. Their former role - as the politicial and social overlords of the town - had been extinguished for good and their retreat into oblivion had begun.

REFERENCES

(1) See Chapter VII for a more detailed examination of the Cliftons' social and political role.

(2) C.W. Chalklin, The Provincial Towns of Georgian England. (1974); M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd (eds.) Middle Class Housing in 19th Century Britain, (1977); Cannadine, Patricians, Power and Politics in 19th Century Towns (to be published in 1981); Ibid, Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1910. (1979); Perkin, The 'Social Tone' of Victorian Sea-side Resorts in the North-West, Northern History, 1975; J.K. Walton, "The Social Development of Blackpool 1788-1914" University of Lancaster Ph.D., 1974, pp.2, 11-12.

(3) See J.D. Liddle, "Estate management and Land Reform Politics in Southport 1852-1910", in Cannadine, Ibid, Patricians, Power and Politics.

(4) Beastall, Op.cit., p.191

(5) E. Baines, History and Gazateer of Lancashire (1835), p.53.

(6) Walton, Op.cit., pp.24-26; W.J. Smith, "Blackpool - A Sketch of its Growth 1740-1851", Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society. Vol. LXIX, 1959, pp.95-97.

(7) L.R.O. DDCl. 1184; Walton, Ibid. p.24.

(8) Walton, Ibid. p.26.

(9) Ibid. p.29.

(10) L.R.O. DDCl. 1195; 1199. C. Reid to J. Fair, 11 November 1845; 25 and 30 April 1846; DDCl.Acc.No. 1325. Box 7.

(11) Walton, Op.cit., p.26.

(12) Ibid. p.30.

(13) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325, Box 7, Layton Hall Sale, Plan and Particulars; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Plans 1848-1852.

(14) L.R.O. DDCl. 1205. J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 1854.

(15) L.R.O. DDx/103. Lytham Charities Records; Walton, Op.cit., pp.31-34, 41-43. Restrictive Covenants had not prevented Lark Hill Estate from developing, by the 1880s, into one of Blackpool's more unsavoury districts - ill-planned, over-crowded and insanitary.

References (cond.)

(16) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, July 1848; DDCl. 1966 Deposit, 14 March 1869.

(17) Ibid. Box 3. R. Rushton to T. Fair, 23 and 28th April and 9 June 1870.

(18) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 2. Blackpool Estate Agents to T. Fair, 13 October 1876; Sale of land by auction in Blackpool, 1886.

(19) Walton, Op.cit., p.65.

(20) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Boxes 6 and 8. In 1852, for instance, the Cliftons secured the vital right of way to a lane connecting Talbot Road and Layton Road and defining an area later to be developed as the Queenstown Area of Blackpool. Numerous small holdings were bought up in both Layton and Marton. One, a four acre plot adjoining the Blackpool-Layton road, was purchased for £625 in 1857. The same property had been sold for £182 in 1824 giving some indication of rising land values in the immediate vicinity of Blackpool.

(21) Ibid. Box. 7.

(22) Ibid. Box 2.

(23) Ibid.

(24) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831. Box 4.

(25) Ibid. Box 3. T. Fair to Mr. Eaves, 1878.

(26) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325 Box 2; Sale of land by auction in Blackpool, 1886.

(27) Walton, Op.cit., p.77.

(28) Most dramatically, competing claims to the foreshore focused intense rivalry between Southport Corporation and the Scarisbrick estate. See Liddle, Op.cit.,

(29) Walton, Op.cit., pp.195-197.

(30) Blackpool and Fleetwood Gazette, 10 October 1890; DDCl. 1966 Deposit.

(31) See p.41

(32) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. J. Fielding to T. Fair, August 1889; DDCl. Acc.No. 1325 Box 18. Auction of building land in Blackpool, Layton and Marton,1888-89.

References (contd.)

(33) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 8. T. Fair to E. Gregson, 12 August 1890; see Liddle, Op.cit.,

(34) Ibid. T. Fair to T. Loftus, 27 June, 19 and 12 September 1890; T. Loftus to T. Fair, 2 and 16 September, 14 October 1890.

(35) DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Book No.4; Blackppol and Layton Hall Deeds.

(36) Cannadine, Op.cit.,

(37) Baines, Op.cit., E. Baines, History of Lancashire (1893); L.R.O. DDCl. 1193 and 1195.

(38) L.R.O. DDCl. 1183.

(39) Liddle, Op.cit.,

(40) L.R.O. DDCa 1/342. Statement of debt contracted and paid off land purchased and sold and other investments, 1834-37; General statement of estate investments in Eastbourne 1849/50-1856/7.

(41) D.S. Young, A History of Bournemouth, p.62.

(42) Beastall, Op.cit., pp.183-186.

(43) This point has been more fully developed in an unpublished paper by J.K. Walton, "Railways and Resort Development in North-west England, 1830-1914" and presented at the C.O.R.A.L. Conference, Hull,1980.

(44) S.B. Saul, "House building in England 18901914", Economic History Review, Vol.15, 1962/3. However, the general depression and a decline in the demand for houses hit resorts everywhere after 1879.

(45) See p.75.

(46) Preston Guardian, 1 July 1848.

(47) Preston Pilot, 27 September 1851; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Lytham Deeds; Insurance valuation 1890; Mortgage Deed, 1891.

(48) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 1. Plan of development sites in Lytham, September 1851; Box 2. Statement of payments made by Col.Clifton for beach improvements.

(49) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Charles Clifton to J. Fair, 1855.

(50) Ibid. Mortgage Deeds on property in Lytham, 1891.

References (contd.)

(51) Ibid; Purchase of cottages, barns and shippons in Bath Street, 1856; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 12 May 1880. The last of the Handloom weavers' cottages in Henry Street were not finally demolished until 1880. It was in fact very unusual to develop a resort out of the existing village rather than build on the fringe.

(52) Simpson and Lloyd, Op.cit., p.10.

(53) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 1 and 2; C. Arthur, A History of the Fylde Waterworks, 1861-1911. pp.5-6; 11-19; 26-30; Preston Pilot, 6 February 1847; DDCl. 1325 Box 1; A.J. Price, Municipal Works at Lytham, (1914), p.2.

(54) See p. 33.

(55) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Clifton to J.Fair. N.D.

(56) Unless otherwise stated, evidence for Lytham's topographical development and the estate's leasing policy can be found in the virtually complete set of 19th century Lytham Deeds which comprise part of the very large 1966 Deposit of Clifton muniments.

(57) Lytham census enumerators' returns, 1851 and 1871.

(58) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831. Box 2; T. Fair to Wright and Wilson, 8 January 1913.

(59) I am grateful to J. Liddle for this point.

(60) Baines (1825), Op.cit., p.34; Manney, Directory of Lancashire, 1856, p.264.

(61) A collection of Lytham Deeds and Leases can also be found in the 1954 Clifton Deposit and in DDCl. 2831, Box 2.

(62) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 6 October 1848; Wilson and Wright to T. Fair, 10 November 1864 and 20 July 1887; DDCl. 2831, Box 2. Clifton v. Brown, 1896. Closing loopholes in existing leases was a difficult and protracted business. The vagaries of a lease issued in 1851, for instance, involved the estate in recurring legal action against the business activities of a Stone-mason in Warton Street.

(63) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831. Box 2. W. Chew to T. Fair, May 1865.

(64) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. J. Andrew to T. Fair, 22 October 1873.

References (contd.)

(65) L.R.O. DDCl. 1207 and 1217. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, August 1866 and 8 May 1876.

(66) L.R.O. DDCl. 1208. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 30 November 1867.

(67) L.R.O. DDCl. 1217. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 11 May 1876.

(68) L.R.O. DDCl. 1229. T.H. Clifton to T. Fair, 10 May 1876.

(69) Foster, "The Politics of uncontested elections: North Lancashire 1832-65". Northern History, 1977.

(70) L.R.O. DDCl. 1203. J.T. Clifton to J. Fair, 2 April 1845; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Rev.J. Walmsley to J. Fair, 4 June 1848; Rev. Robinson to J.Fair 22 February 1848.

(71) L.R.O. DDCl. 1209. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 17 November 1868; DDCl. 1235. T. Fair to Lady Clifton, 16 November 1868; T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 24 October and 24 November 1868.

(72) Liddle, Op.cit.,

(73) L.R.O. DDCl. 1209. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 17 November 1868.

(74) L.R.O. DDCl. 1235. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 18 March 1870.

(75) L.R.O. DDCl. 1224 and 1225. Letters from Lady Clifton to T. Fair. N.D.

(76) Ibid.

(77) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Lytham Improvement Act, 1847; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 18 September 1878.

(78) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 11. J.W. Wilson to J.Fair, 23 January 1850.

(79) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 21 August 1900; see E.P. Hennock, "Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900"; Historical Journal, VI, 2, 1963. Where it is possible to identify the occupational background of individual commissioners it is clear that small property owners and "Retired Gentlemen" dominated the Board throughout its duration.

(80) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 3 September 1879.

References (contd.)

(81) Ibid. 16 June 1880.

(82) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 2; MBLS 2/3; 2/6. Minutes of the finance, general purpose and gas committee. In 1868 the commissioners claimed that they had no power to spend money on private property. "It is true that Col. Clifton has made thr new sea-fence at his own expense", they went on, "and extended the beach, but the benefit he contemplated to receive he has received in disposing of land otherwise unsaleable for building purposes and the rental for the same now amounts to a very handsome return upon his outlay."

(83) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/19; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 6 June 1877.

(84) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 2; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 5 and 19 July 1871.

(85) Ibid.

(86) Ibid; Local Government Board - Provisional Order. 38 and 38 Vict. CIii, 1874.

(87) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/3; DDCl. 1325 Box 11.

(88) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit.

(89) See p.193-4.

(90) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Prospectus of the St. Anne's Building Company, 1875.

(91) Blackpool Gazette, 2 April 1875; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 10 November 1875.

(92) Harrison, Op.cit., p.51.

(93) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831 Box 2. Charles Evans to T. Fair, December 1873.

(94) Ibid. Boxes 2 and 4. Agreements with St. Anne's Building Company 1874 and 1875; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Prospectus of St. Anne's Building Company, 1875; Lease No.4. July 1876; J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 6 April 1876; Harrison, Op.cit., pp.52;70.

(95) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 24 March 1876.

(96) Ibid. T. Kay to T. Fair, 18 January 1875.

(97) Ibid. J. Gregory to T. Fair, 16 May 1874.

References (contd.)

(98) Ibid. 1 May 1876.

(99) Ibid. J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 17 March 1876.

(100) Ibid. Aldridge and Deacon to T. Fair, 7 March 1876.

(101) Ibid. 5 July and 14 November 1877.

(102) Ibid. J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 20 March 1876; W. Porritt to T. Fair, 8 January 1880 and 6 October 1883.

(103) Ibid. J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 23 July 1877.

(104) Ibid. Woodcock and Sons to T. Fair, 1 August 1879; Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair re: Contracts between Lytham and St. Anne's Building Regulations, 1878; Additional Lease, No.4. to St. Anne's Building Company, 1880.

(105) Preston Guardian, 16 June 1894.

(106) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Report on house building in St. Anne's, 1879; Accounts of St. Anne's Building Company, 1890; Harrison, Op.cit., pp.73-77; 92-93.

(107) Ibid. T. Thomas to T. Fair, 8 June 1877; Wilson and Deacon to T. Fair, 21 March 1877.

(108) Ibid. Agreement between J.T. Clifton and St.Anne's Land and Building Company, 14 December 1874.

(109) Ibid. J. Maxwell's address to the sharehousers in St. Anne's Land and Building Company.

(110) Ibid. T. Thomas to T. Fair, 3 November 1879 and 9 April 1881.

(111) Ibid. W. Porritt to T. Fair, 3 October 1878.

(112) Ibid. Maxwell and Tuke to T. Fair, September 1887.

(113) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831. Box 4.

(114) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to W. Porritt, 14 January 1884; W. Nutter to T. Fair, 26 January 1886; T. Fair to W. Porritt, 24 February 1887. The Clifton Trustees, it should be pointed out, argued that they had no powers to grant a permanent reduction in rent.

(115) Ibid. Petition from St. Anne's Land and Building Company, 1890; Woodwock and Sons to T. Fair, 14 March 1890.

References (contd.)

(116) Preston Guardian, 31 October 1896; Harrison, Op.cit., pp.72-86.

(117) L.R.O. DDCl. 2831. Box 4.

(118) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair's notes on the petition by ratepayers and property owners of St. Anne's to the Local Government Board, 1877. Fair's major consideration was that "A considerable saving will, by this means, be affected to the lessees."

(119) L.R.O. MBLS. 4/1. St. Anne's Local Board Minutes, 17 August 1878.

(120) Ibid. Members of St. Anne's Local Board, 1 July 1878; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Elections to St.Anne's Local Board, 1878.

(121) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 18 September 1878.

(122) L.R.O. MBLS. 4/1. St. Anne's Local Board Minutes, 11 January 1879; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Petition to the Local Government Board, 12 January 1878; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 22 May 1878.

(123) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. W. Porritt to T. Fair, 11 December 1881.

(124) L.R.O. MBLS. 4/1. St. Anne's Local Board Minutes, 4 December 1878.

(125) Ibid. Highway Minutes, 26 July, 2 August and 1 November 1884; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. W. Porritt to T. Fair, 11 December 1881; MBLS. 5/5 Minutes of the Sanitary, Highways and Building Committee, 3 July 1880.

(126) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/23. St. Anne's Local Board Highway Minutes, 5 December 1885 and 10 January 1887; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 10 May 1882.

(127) L.R.O. MBLS. 4/1. St. Anne's Local Board Minutes, 3 September 1879 and 24 February 1882; DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Wilson and Deacon to Woodcock and Sons, 20 December 1878.

(128) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. St.Anne's Drainage Schemes.

(129) L.R.O. MBLS. 5/7. Nuisance and Lighting Committee Minutes, 25 October 1878, 13 August 1881, 1 March 1884, 3 January 1885.

References (contd.)

(130) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to the Local Government Board, 1 November 1881.

(131) Ibid. W. Porritt to T. Fair, 13 October 1879.

(132) Ibid. W. Porritt to T. Fair, 30 September 1882; T. Fair to J. Maxwell, 27 September 1883.

(133) Ibid. J. Maxwell to T. Fair, 2 May and 24 September 1883.

(134) Ibid. T. Fair to the Local Government Board, 2 January 1883; Local Government Board to T. Fair, April 1887.

(135) Lytham and Kirkham Times. 21 July 1880; 8 September 1880; 17 November 1880; 14 February 1883; 27 May 1885; 19 March 1887; 21 October 1887.

(136) Saul, Op.cit., p.130

(137) Preston Guardian, 26 March 1892.

(138) Ibid. 16 June 1894.

(139) Ibid. 4 April 1896.

(140) L.R.O. MBLS. 5/3. Membership of the General Purposes Committee, April 1894.

(141) Ibid. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 31 January 1893.

(142) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit; St. Anne's Improvement Act. 59 and 60 Vict. CCXLVii; Preston Guardian 20 August 1892.

(143) L.R.O. MBLS. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 25 March 1895; 19 July 1895; 31 August 1896; 5 July 1897; 31 August 1898; 3 October 1898; 30 November 1898.

(144) Walton, Thesis, op.cit., p.211

(145) L.R.O. MBLS. 5/3. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 16 May 1900; Preston Guardian 2 June 1900.

(146) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Memoranda - Clifton Park, St. Anne's, 21 June 1902.

(147) Blackpool Gazette, 24 April 1914. The Clifton Estate and the Duchy of Lancaster had disputed rights of ownership to the foreshore in Lytham and Marton throughout the 19th century.

References (contd.)

(148) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. St. Anne's Improvement Bill, 1914; J.S. Fair to Col.Drummond 28 July and 17 November 1913.

(149) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 25 May 1900.

(150) Victoria County History, Vol.1. p.333; Mannex, Op.cit., L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit, Lytham Survey 1867.

(151) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 16 April 1879.

(152) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Surveyor's Report on the Clifton Estate, 1890; Preston Guardian, 23 July 1892 and 4 April 1896.

(153) Ibid. Lytham Leases.

(154) L.R.O. MBLS. 3"2. Reports to the Lytham Nuisance Committee, August 1865 to August 1868.

(155) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/6. Report of the Medical Officer to the Sanitary Committee, 2 March 1874.

(156) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 17 February; 24 February; 10 November 1875; 6 May 1877; 15 September 1880.

(157) Ibid. 10 February; 17th February; 10 March; 29 September 1875; 6 February and 13 February 1878; 28 January and 15 December 1880.

(158) Ibid. 18 September 1878.

(159) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/19. Minutes of the Lytham Sanitary Committee, 21 May 1878; DDCl. 1325, Box 2.

(160) L.R.O. DDCl. 1229. T.H. Clifton to T. Fair, 16 June 1876.

(161) Lytham and Kirkham Times; 15 September 1880; Local Government Board Provision Order. 41 and 42 Vict. CiX. Lytham's Local Board took office in December 1878.

(162) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 15 December 1894; 11 February 1880; 29 March and 10 May 1882.

(163) Ibid. 11 January 1882; Local Government Provisional Order 45 and 46 Vict. LXiii.

(164) Local Government Board Provisional Order 51 and 52, Vict. CXXXiii.

(165) L.R.O. MBLS. 2/22. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. Elections to Lytham Local Board, 1890.

References (contd.)

(166) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit. T. Fair to J. Wilson, 4 March 1893.

(167) Preston Guardian, 31 March 1880 and 21 March 1883.

(168) Ibid. 5 November 1892; 4 February 1893; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 2 June 1894.

(169) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Deposit; Preston Guardian, 30 April 1892.

(170) Ibid. T. Fair to J.S. Fair, 15 July 1894; Lytham and Kirkham Times, 2 July 1894.

(171) Ibid. 7 July and 15 December 1894.

(172) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 2; Preston Guardian, 11 July 1896.

(173) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 21 March 1896; 9 March, 23 March and 30 March, 1900.

(174) Ibid. 12 February, 26 February and 16 December 1904.

(175) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box. 1.

(176) L.R.O. DDx/103. Lytham Charities Records. Trustees Minute Book, 1845-99; G.L. Wright, The History of the Lytham Charities, pp.22-23.

(177) L.R.O. DDRcly. 7/5. J. Walmsley to J. Fair, 1846.

(178) L.R.O. Ibid. 6/5. St. Peter's R.C. Records. Ironically, when the charities were first established the Cliftons had refused to sell the Trust any freehold land in Lytham. By 1903, sale of the Trust's Blackpool Property had realised almost £36,500 producing an annual income of over £2,000

(179) L.R.O. DDx/103. Lytham Charities Records.

(180) L.R.O. DDRcly. 6/4. Canon Taylor to the Charity Commissioners, 20 June 1894.

(181) L.R.O. DDx/103. Lytham Charities Records.

(182) Ibid. DDRcly.

(183) Lytham and Kirkham Times, 20 May 1894.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD ORDER IN RETREAT

19th Century Lancashire was a county of sharp contrasts. In the main it has conjured up images of industrial and urban sprawl. Yet it is sometimes forgotten that, even towards the end of the century, Lancashire was one of England's most important agricultural counties, at least in terms of the geographical extent of land under productinn and farming output.(1) Moreover this distinction has a spatial dimension to it. Whereas industry was heavily concentrated in the towns to the south and east of the county, the north and west for the most part retained a strongly agricultural character. Physically and economically distinctive these two regions also harboured two contrasting social worlds.

The industrial environment was the making of new men and new wealth and it also generated a powerful social rationale which, with its stress on individual achievement, challenged the assumption of inherited authority.(2) By contrast, the rural areas of the north and west of the county remained the bastion of an older landed order and it was from this position of territorial dominance that Lancashire's established families derived much of their wealth and the authority which they had traditionally commanded over the county's affairs. Lancashire had its great landowning figures like the Derbys, Seftons and Scarisbricks. In fact, in 1883, the great estates controlled 24% of the land. Yet, the number of these great estates, that is to say, in excess of 10,000 acres, came to just five and only two exceeded 20,000 acres. In this respect, Lancashire was not a county of aristocratic landowners; it was a county of squires. Again, on a statistical basis, 26% of all land was controlled by estates of between 1,000 and 10,000 acres and a further 18% by smaller landowners of 100 to 1,000 acres. This picture, however, is slightly misleading because the location of the larger estates was not evenly spread. In the main they were heavily concentrated in the agricultural heartland of the county, that is the coastal plain extending from Liverpool as far north as Morecambe Bay. For instance, a handful of families - Derby, Sefton, Lathom, Blundell, Dicconson, Scarisbrick, Hesketh and Lilford virtually had a landed monopoly over the south-west plain between Liverpool and Preston. But the "landed gentlemen", who collectively had the territorial advantage over the county's great magnates, were more numerous still in the Fylde and Lonsdale area of north Lancashire.(3)

This landed order continued to exercise real power well into the 19th century. Their influence was obviously most keenly felt within their own localities but, at the broader regional level, they imposed an authority over political and administrative life which they only slowly relinquished. The first part of this closing chapter therefore looks at the substance and dimensions of landed power in more detail. We shall see how the diminishing relevance of the landowners' social and political role in the later part of the century coincided with the eclipse of their financial pre-eminence.

I

Outside the industrialised districts the oligarchy of established landowners was still remarkably intact in the early decades of the 19th century. At the same time they had never been a closed case. Through marriage or the investment of commercial wealth in land new families had always been able to establish themselves in the ranks of the landed order and win acceptance. Yet it was a gradual process of assimilation which ensured that the established elite was strengthened rather than swamped. Sir Lawrence Rawstorne and William Garnett followed a well-trodden path in their pursuit of the trappings and status of landed gentlemen.(4) For example, they followed in the wake of Edward Wilbraham who in the late 18th century married into the titled Lathom family and later became a successful Tory M.P. Other earlier precursors also included James Pedder, a Preston-based linen merchant and founder of a banking fortune, Nicholas Ashton who purchased Woolton Hall in 1772 and another banker, Thomas Leyland of Liverpool, who bought the Walton Hall estate in 1802.(5)

An emphasis on their own social exclusiveness and on the claims of inherited authority is reflected in the way in which the established elite attempted to maintain their control over the administrative and political life in the county. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the conscious efforts of a governing clique of landed families to retain their grip over that vital organ of regional and local administration, the magistracy, by obstructing the appointment of industrialists to the Bench. And in this they were largely successful, at least until 1835, whereafter the pressures of an expanding urban population and the need to make political accommodation opened up increased magisterial recruitment from a wider social background. Nevertheless, even by 1851 the rural areas of the north and west were better provided for, in terms of resident J.P.s., than the urban districts. To some extent power had been transferred to men of successful business backgrounds but this applied more to specific urban localities than it did at the broad county level where the traditional elite was still very much in command and where a hard core of ancestral families continued to supply most of the recruits to the Bench.(6)

Similarly, party politics in north Lancashire, the geographical heartland of landed society, were shaped by the same determination of an established elite to maintain its power and influence. Again, the controlling hand of a few families is unmistakeable. Elections in the north Lancashire constituency went uncontested until after 1865. Election committees, composed almost exclusively of the local squirearchy, smoothly engineered the return of a succession of landed notables. But what, above all, provides striking evidence of the power base of leading landed families is the way in which political figures could change their political stance without materially endangering their support. Lord Stanley, for instance, was able to move across an admittedly narrow political spectrum from the Whig-Reformist position to the Toryism of his fellow constituency M.P. without disturbing the loyalty of his supporters. Stanley's leadership was quietly transferred to John Talbot Clifton, who was returned unopposed in the by-election of 1844. Elected as a protectionist, Clifton himself drifted towards the Peelites. Even so it is doubtful whether his support would have been undermined to the extent of endangering his re-election in 1847, had he been prepared to run to the expense of standing against the Manchester Liberal, James Heywood. In fact, Clifton's Tory colleague and neighbouring landowner Wilson-Patten (later Lord Winmarleigh), himself a supporter of Corn Law repeal, was comfortably re-adopted by his own constituents for the election of 1847. However, by 1859, the familiar pattern of a Tory landed gentleman partnered by an aristocratic Whig, this time Lord Cavendish, had re-established itself.(7)

Of course landed influence did not restrict itself to filling high office in the political and administrative life of the county. It was most keenly felt at the local level. The social reach of the Cliftons, for example, gives a measure of their influence within their own territorial sphere of the Fylde, and it also gives an indication of their position within the ranks of the region's landed order. Clearly, the Cliftons' patronage was regarded as indispensable to success by wide sections of the community. Candidates seeking election to posts in the Fylde Poor Law Union in 1836 scrambled to secure Clifton's support. Likewise, in 1842, the hopes and ambitions of two Colne men, whose names had been put forward for appointment to the Magistrate's Bench, rested largely on winning the support of such a major landowning figure.(8) Socially less well-placed families, wanting cadetships and commissions for younger sons, also found the Cliftons' military and political connections useful as did individuals after appointments to customs posts or positions in the Colonial Office.(9) A great landowner opened other doors as well. He provided access to the higher reaches of the landed order. The inhabitants of Weeton, part of Lord Derby's Fylde estates, recognised that their chances of obtaining his Lordship's financial support towards building a new village school would be immeasurably enhanced if Thomas Clifton first made approaches on their behalf. In much the same way local worthies pressed their qualifications on James Fair in the open knowledge that the Lytham estate office had been asked to find suitable men to fill positions on a board of trustees which was to take responsibility for managing Lord Derby's Inskip-with-Sowerby property.(10)

The prestige value of Clifton's name was pursued at all levels. His support was invariably solicited by parties involved in local civil disputes; he could be asked to vouch for individuals wanting to take out a loan; the absence or presence of the family name at the top of a subscription list for a local charity meant all the different between success and failure. Even urban based organisations tended to look outside their own social hierarchies when recruiting decorative figure-heads and instead looked towards members of notable landed families to lend social weight and status. Preston's Literary and Philosophical Society, for instance, unanimously elected John Talbot Clifton as their Patron in 1845 following the retirement of Lord Stanley.[11] These, then, were just a few of a leading family's channels of influence reaching up and down through the social tiers of a hierarchical society. Moreover, this web of patronage and influence was not unusual. Within their own domains other landowners were probably just as active.

This position of broad power, so clearly enjoyed by landed society as a whole, stemmed from the authority they collectively exercised over their own local communities. There is no need here to reiterate the exhaustingly detailed arguments which both historians and sociologists have used to define what is meant by the term "the deferential society."[12] But the concept of a vertical, dependent relationship connecting those in authority with those below, especially in communities which fell under the territorial influence of an estate, has a measure of validity to it. In short, it was this dependency on landed paternalism which determined landed power. However, a word of caution is needed here. The extent of a landowner's control was shaped by a number of variable conditions - for instance, how a landowner chose to interpret his own role and responsibilities which, in turn, were governed by his financial means, his residential habits and, indeed, his own readiness to provide leadership. Moreover, in the absence of legislative and governmental provision, the level of dependency rested on the extent to which intervention by the landowner continued to meet the actual needs of the local community. To a greater or lesser degree, these conditions determined social life in many parts of rural Lancashire and especially those areas, particularly in the northern parts of the county, which were remote from the large towns and which fell within the territorial compass of local landed families.

The Clifton estate, at least during the first decades of the 19th century, was an example of this kind of society. Here Thomas Clifton's wealth and status and his central importance in providing for the material well-being of the community gave him an influence which extended beyond the immediate confines of his own estate. Like many of his peers in early Victorian England, Clifton felt secure enough to cultivate what was an idealised paternalistic community, shielded against outside influences and very much the landowner's undisputed domain.

Certainly a tradition of inherited authority must have played its part in enforcing social subordination. Yet the stability of what was essentially an authoritarian social order rested on the mutual recognition of rights and responsibilities by ruler and ruled alike.

In this respect the whole system of deferential relationships depended on the squire fulfilling a variety of paternalistic duties as well as enjoying the obvious privileges of landownership. Landlord-tenant relationships, for instance, were tempered as much by a sense of tradition and obligation as by purely business considerations. Anxious as Thomas Clifton and his agent were to reorganise farming practices throughout the estate, changes were made without unduly disturbing existing tenurial arrangements. As has already been explained, new faces were introduced but usually on to newly created farms and, at the same time, some of the most inept and stubbornly unresponsive tenants were persuaded to go.(13) Yet, all told, there was no wholesale displacement of sitting tenants. Indeed, continuity in farm occupancy from one generation to the next is the most striking feature of tenurial relationships on the Clifton estate.

Admittedly, practical considerations argued against any hasty dismissal of tenants, as landowners were only too well aware. Lord Lilford and his agent were in full agreement that dismissing a tenant, even where there was good cause, had to be avoided "unless absolutely necessary". The inconvenience of re-letting the farm, the costs of any possible litigation and the likely expense of carrying out immediate repairs and improvements before another tenant could be appointed, were all important factors which had to be taken into account and usually outweighed any advantages in seeking a change of tenancy.(14) The same reservations could be heard at the end of the century. Thomas Fair had a dread of changes because they involved "a considerable outlay to put the farm in proper tenable order."(15)

However, a farmer's ancestral connections with the estate and proven qualities of sobriety and industry were usually enough to almost guarantee him security of tenure, even in times of difficulty and financial embarrassment. Under these circumstances he could usually count on the landowner's or agent's leniency if not their positive assistance. For instance, James Scott's dealings with the Clifton estate office were typical. His family had farmed land in Clifton-with-Salwick for generations when, in 1849, he fell on hard times. He was heavily in arrears and his capital was exhausted. Nevertheless, impressed by Scott's personal qualities and by the family's record of service to the estate, James Fair himself put up part of the security for a £600 loan which Scott obtained from Pedder's Bank in Preston.(16) Much the same criteria governed relationships on the Sefton estate. Arrears of rent, however large, by themselves were never enough to warrant the dismissal of those tenants who were regarded as upright and industrious characters.(17) By the same token, farmers who did not match up to expected standards of conduct were shown less sympathy. One farmer was given time to reduce his arrears of rent because of the cattle losses he had suffered in the winter of 1843/4. Yet, in this case, the agent's tolerance was short-lived. Not many weeks later he was recommending his removal because "it is perfectly clear that he will always remain the same dirty, slovenly and disagreeable tenant."[18]

Dismissals of this kind were few and far between. On the Clifton estate managerial considerations combined with a sense of tradition and obligation to give most tenants what amounted to fixity of tenure. Relatives of a previous tenant were invariable given first preference on the farm. Failing that it was customary for it to be offered to a deserving tenant on a smaller holding.[19] Nor did the later trend towards annual agreements undermine the general feeling of security. Irrespective of the genuine trust in the landowner, the phasing out of the longer leases coincided with the halcyon period of agricultural prosperity in the third quarter of the century. In any case, tenant farmers on the larger estates in Lancashire did not have the same amount of capital at stake as their landlords.[20]

It is not surprising then that, given the generally favourable farming conditions and the landowner's benevolent support, changes to the Clifton tenantry were minimal. The average length of family occupancy among thirty five farmers interviewed in 1892 came to forty one years. On the larger properties alone the average was very much higher.[21] The families, for example, who farmed the largest holdings in the 1871 census were usually the ones who can be traced back to the earliest estate surveys of the century which were carried out between 1809 and 1816. Of the 18 families in Lytham occupying farms of over fifty acres in 1871 ten can be found in the Land Tax assessment of 1831. Similarly, in Clifton-with-Salwick, no fewer than six out of the seven families on farms of over fifty acres had survived from 1831. And, in almost every case, it was their holdings which had been gradually built up over the years.(22)

The ties which bound the estate and the lower orders of society together were equally evident. The paternalism of the landowner was not a last gesture to a by-gone feudal age. It was arbitrary, even eccentric, but it fulfilled a positive social need. Thomas Clifton certainly took a serious view of his social responsibilities. He saw himself as the guardian of the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of the labouring families in his charge. And he did not restrict himself to patronising local schools, churches, village halls and hospitals. He contributed significantly to softening the vicissitudes of daily life endured by countless labouring families. Employment is a case in point. His philanthropic intervention helped to neutralise the worst effects of the sharp seasonal fluctuations in the demand for agricultural labour. Matching labout supply with demand was as much a problem, particularly in the more remote parishes of north Lancashire, as it was elsewhere.(23) Taking the Fylde villages as an example, most increased in population at least until the 1830s and, moreover, had a rate of natural increase which far outstripped the drift into the industrial towns. There therefore existed a reservoir of surplus labour in many villages which, incidentally, may go some way towards explaining why only a light sprinkling from the flood of Irish immigrants who descended on the region in the 1840s settled outside the urban areas.[24]

There could not have been any significant expansion in labour demand until the period of extensive agricultural improvements after mid-century.[25] Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the winter months or spells of economic recession during the first half of the century resulted in large scale unemployment at least on the estates so far studied. Rather it seems to have been the deliberate policy of landowners to keep a solid core of labourers in regular employment as far as was possible.[26] Thomas Clifton, for instance, wrote to his agent in the bleak months of 1848: "I feel extreme satisfaction at finding the poor of the different townships on the property well supplied with work during the winter."[27] This was not unusual. Labouring families on the Rufford, Ince-Blundell and Trafford Park estates were kept in regular employment throughout the year.[28] Likewise, the Quernmore Labourers' account book of 1846 shows very little change in the monthly number of regular workers on the Garnett estate and the evidence for Lord Lilford's property tells a similar story.[29]

Despite paternalistic efforts to maintain employment levels there were inevitably sections of the community who fell back on some form of charitable help - and not just the old, infirm, the sick and the orphaned.

It has been estimated that few actually realised the potential earnings of a full year's work. Even the healthiest and most regular workers could expect to lose a few days or weeks work through illness or temporary underemployment in winter.[30] A fortunate few might have been able to afford subscriptions to a Friendly or other Benefit Society.[31] Most fell back on the formal relief measures of the Poor Law Union. However, private charity had a vital role to play. It formed an integral part of the relationship between the labourer and his social superiors and was built not only on the landowner's sense of obligation but his understanding and intimate contact with the problems of his community.[32] Charity was distributed on a regular basis. The Clifton estate ran a clothing scheme for the poor of Marton and, from 1832 onwards, £100 was allocated to a Christmas dole. Lady Lilford made a Christmas distribution of clothing and founded clothing clubs in the villages on the Bank Hall estate.[33] Celebratory dates or the incidence of severe recession also occasioned additional charitable gestures. Sir Thomas Hesketh marked his son's majority by distributing clothing among 549 poor men and women at Rufford.[34] But, more importantly, the charity of the benevolent landowner provided a valuable safety net in times of acute hardship. Lord Lilford, for instance, funded relief organisations to distribute food and find work for the unemployed of Atherton in 1826, and the Clifton estate came to the assistance of fifty-three labouring families in Lytham after their potato crops had been ravaged by the blight in the spring of 1847.[35] However, deferential relationships were best cemented by a landowner's attention to the predicament of individual families. Strictly speaking it was more of a matriarchal responsibility in that familiarity with individual needs usually fell within the province of the squire's wife. It was these small gestures of benevolent concern which essentially created the "sinews of attachment of a community to its lord" - the replacement of a labouring family's cow, gifts of food to the sick, payment of medical bills, the grant of a pension for long service to the household or estate. It is surprising how long such traditions survived. Lady Clifton continued to make charitable bequests up to her death in 1892 although, by then, they had become substantially reduced in scale.(36)

The landowner's material benevolence legitimised his right to exact subservience to his moral and political dictates at every social level. Standards of conduct were clear and, on the Clifton estate, enforced by both persuasive and coercive means. It is not difficult to imagine how the puritanical vigilance of the estate office gave way to feelings of social claustrophobia. Through the ballot box, at the work place, in the home or at leisure the community as a whole was expected to conform. The landowner himself may not always have been fully conversant with affairs on his estate but nothing seemed to escape the omniscience of his agent. James Fair, in particular, policed the Clifton estate with the same thoroughness with which he managed its business life. Whenever the position or expectations of the landowner came under threat the velvet glove quickly gave way to the iron hand. Innkeepers who kept an unruly house came under censure, drink-associated pastimes such as cock-fighting were stamped out and labourers suspected of over-indulgence were threatened with the forfeiture of their wages unless they mended their ways.(37) But the full fury of the landowner's punitive powers was reserved for those who offended against property rights. In their case appeals for clemency invariably fell on deaf ears and the full measure of the game laws was used against transgressors.(38)

Rural philanthropy was at best an arbitrary and patchy affair, yet this was in part a result of the mechanism of social control.(39) Selectivity and discriminatory practice were bound to follow. Two areas in which the landowner was heavily involved - education and housing - make this clear. The Cliftons' charitable spending on schools, for instance, was totally in keeping with one of the strongest of Victorian obsessions, the belief that providing for the education of the poor was the panacea for all social ills.(40) This same theme pervaded farmers' magazines and agricultural journals from the 1840s to the 1870s. "Good" schools under socially reliable supervision, so the argument went, would equip the poor with the moral strength to lift themselves out of their poverty. Furthermore, as that doyen of Victorian educationalists, Kay-Shuttleworth, never tired of saying, education taught the labourer "the nature of his domestic and social relations....his political position in society and the moral and religious duties appropriate to it."[41] Typically, by far the greater part of the Cliftons' charitable spending found its way into supporting not only schools on their own estate but Anglican establishments throughout the region. In 1871 gifts to numerous educational foundations absorbed c.75% of the Cliftons' total charitable donations. And they made every effort to see that their money did not go to waste by ensuring that the children of labouring families in Lytham attended school on a regular basis long before the introduction of compulsory schooling by law.[42] This pattern of charitable priorities is repeated elsewhere. Schools in the Atherton and Warrington districts exhausted most of the funds in Lady Lilford's charity. Similarly, provided a Sunday school in the village of Bretherton accounted for the lion's share of Lilford's charitable spending on his Bank Hall estate. And, again, provision of this kind was symptomatic of social engineering. The established church needed the squire's support "to withstand, if possible, those who have become dissenters who.....predominate in the parish."[43]

Nothing on the Clifton estate evidenced the discriminatory nature of social controls more than the allocation of cottages. A limited housing stock together with the fact that the landowner owned all cottages on the estate conspired to give the squire a social lever he used to some effect. The supply of cottages always fell well short of demand particularly during the first three decades of the 19th century when the rural population rose sharply.(44) No doubt the operation of the Poor Law was partly to blame. The fact that the landowners of the individual parish were held financially responsibility for their own poor until the Union Chargeability Act of 1867 must have actively discouraged cottage building.(45) Admittedly, there is no substantive evidence of direct harrassment by Lancashire landowners to rid their estates of poor cottages in order to reduce their rates. Nevertheless, it is also clear that there was a positive reluctance to expand the housing provision on their properties. The "open" village of Nateby, for instance, was said to have doubled its population "in face of demolitions" in neighbouring townships. Hornby, by contrast, boasted cottages which were "large, substantial and in good repair" but were too few to accommodate the number of men and their families who worked on the estate. In 1849 Thomas Clifton's agent evicted twenty-one families from their cottages in the Mythop and Commonside districts of Lytham. Perhaps the cottages were uninhabitable, or perhaps this was a deliberate attempt to reduce the poor rate. In either event very few of these families were immediately rehoused. Furthermore, the overcrowded, squalid conditions to be found in some of the "open" villages and market towns of the Fylde reflected the gross disparities in cottage accommodation which clearly existed between one township and the next. "Everywhere", a government report of 1865 concluded, "even here, is the same protestation that it is the want of cots that sends the hind to the abominable life of the towns. People do not desert the villages, villages nowadays desert the people."(46)

In time the gap between supply and demand narrowed but only very slowly. In part this came as a response to the mounting public concern about the inadequacy of rural housing as was evident in the reports of the Poor Law Commissioners and the agricultural organisations of the day.(47) In the interests of a healthier, more upright and industrious working population, landowners were encouraged to make greater investment in labourers' cottages. Yet, apart from such philanthropically inclined and well-endowed aristocratic figures as the Dukes of Bedford and Newcastle, landed families of more modest means could not afford to translate such high ideals into practice. Financially, cottages did not pay. They were comparatively expensive to build and there were narrow limits to the rent which a labouring family could be reasonably asked to pay. In the early Victorian years cottage rents ranged from between £2-10-0 and £3-15-0 in the northern parts of Lancashire to £5 p.a. in townships further south.(48) By the 1870s rents had not changed very much. On the Clifton estate in 1876 cottages fetched about £4 p.a. in the rural parishes and £5 in Lytham itself, which was in line with what was being generally asked in most places on the Fylde and on Lord Lilford's estate in south Lancashire.(49)

These rent levels represented a poor return on a landlord's invrstment. It was estimated in 1867 that a reasonable 6% return on an outlay of £125, the average price of one cottage, would have called for a rent of £7-10-0 p.a.(50) In fact, by the 1870s, the margin between building costs and current rent levels seems to have been widening further. Cottages which met the minimum standards of the Inclosure Commissioners were said to cost £300 a pair. Other authorities put the cost at nearer £400, and that was without any "ornamental fancies".[51] However, it was not unusual for the Victorian pre-occupation with aesthetic frills to add additional costs.[52] The price of each cottage incorporating the ornate detail which Lady Clifton wanted ran out at over £360.[53] In view of the low rate of return it is not altogether surprising that, by 1873, only about 2,500 cottages nationally had been built with loan capital made available by the Inclosure Commissioners.[54] New cottages built on the Clifton estate showed a return of little more than 1%, and not even that in the case of Lady Clifton's elaborate ventures. Moreover, cottage building and renovation seldom took place at a pace which was consistent with the needs of the labouring population. For instance, applications for twenty new labourers' cottages in Lytham were already oversubscribed before building work even started in 1870. With debts piling up year by year and investment in agricultural improvements reaching new heights, cottage building was bound to figure low down on the list of priorities.[55] This stark reality was confirmed in 1868 by the medical officer to the Fylde Sanitary Authority. He rarely closed a cottage even though it might have been unfit for habitation simply because "the chief landowners of the district are so backward in provising new cottages when the old ones are demolished."[56]

The perennial shortage of adequate accommodation strengthened the landowner's powers of social control. To acquire a suitable cottage on the Clifton estate a labouring family had not only to be deserving, but also respectable. It was Lady Clifton who wielded control over the allocation of cottages. She made her own personal recommendations to the estate office and she set down precise conditions by which labourers were to be offered new cottages. They had to be in the employment of the estate or its tenant farmers. They had to give proof of need but, above all, they had to demonstrate that they "have lived and (were) living respectable lives."[57]

Deferential habits also shaped political allegiances in the rural communities. And, as long as their political role continued to matter to them, landowners were anxious to see that political loyalties were observed in their own localities. There is no evidence to suggest that political coercion was openly practiced, but no-one was left in any doubt as to how the landowner expected his local clientele to vote, and that in itself was pressure enough. Before 1832 it had virtually become a tradition that the Derby interest controlled one of Lancashire's county seats. Even the suggestion that their seat might be challenged, as happened in 1818 and 1826, was met with both surprise and indignation.[58] The Reform Bill, however, increased the possibility of contested elections and the possibility of serious political challenge. Yet the Act also persuaded political leaders like Lord Derby to look to reinforcing the deferential chains of allegiance. Closer attention was given to the registration of votes and canvassing became more thoroughly organised. Crucially the landed gentlemen were asked to see that their influence was used to maximum effect within their own localities.[59] Lord Lilford informed his steward that he wanted to leave his tenants "free as to their votes." At the same time, whenever his tenantry were being canvassed - and this applied as much to railway surveyors as it did to political candidates - they were left in no doubt about the feelings of their landlord.[60] Surprisingly, Lord Sefton's agent did not share his employer's politics yet this did not necessarily disqualify him from carrying out his duties as the landowner's political agent. In the South Lancashire by-election of 1844 he faithfully promised "not to intrude (his) opinion on the tenants or express anything contrary to those well-known to be entertained by (his) lordship." And when the election was over he was able to report that every tenant had voted according to Sefton's wishes.[61] Similarly, whilst the Cliftons continued to play an active role in Tory politics in their North Lancashire constituency they had no reservations about turning the powers of landed influence to their own political advantage. The name of every tenant eligible to vote found its way on to the Conservative voting lists. Those with suspect loyalties received the personal attention of the agent for good measure. Applicants for vacant farms had a positive advantage if they had the right political credentials as well as farming ability. Moreover, James Fair was an important link in the chain of political command that reached down from the aristocratic leadership. He had no hesitation in reminding other landed notabled of their political obligations. For instance, in the contested election of 1868 he wrote to Lord Knowles stressing the need to take action against an industrialist from Calder Vale on the east Fylde who was suspected of "working to subvert the Barnacre tenantry" for the Liberal cause.(62)

II

The landed order clung to its political privileges long after its pull on the social reins had begun to slacken. Deferential habits survived a good deal longer than has been suggested but, it is also apparent that changes in social attitudes were gradually taking place. At the heart of this change lay the fact that, by the mid-Victorian period, the closely ordered dependent relationship between landowner and local community was losing any relevance it might once have had. It was being eroded from a number of directions.

Firstly, it is clear that landed families were becoming less and less inclined to fill the role in rural society they had firmly occupied in the past. What Professor Perkin has referred to as an abdication of responsibility has a strong measure of turth in it. Filial obedience was insisted on whilst paternal protection was withdrawn.(63) Like many other labdowners John Talbot Clifton and his successors were increasingly inclined to retire from the social as well as the business side of their affairs.[64] They looked upon their estate as a convenience, a source of income rather than the corner-stone of a particular social organism that was intrinsically worth preserving. In this respect they were the complete opposite of Thomas Clifton. He at least made the effort to live up to Broderick's idealistic portrait of the hereditary landowner as one who, "thoroughly instructed in all the manifold duties of property...and conscious that a large body of tenants and dependents look to him for guidance and example, enters upon the management of his estate in a spirit altogether superior to commercial self-interest."[65] By contrast his heir came closer to the absentee landlords Cobbett described as "foreign in their manners, distant and haughty in their behaviour, looking to the soil only for its rents, viewing it as a mere object of speculation, unacquainted with its cultivators, despising them and their pursuits."[66]

As soon as he inherited in 1851 John Talbot Clifton made it abundantly clear that he had little interest in the public duties that went with his new position. He immediately instructed his agent to scale down the costs of his own charitable subscriptions as far as was possible. It furthermore needed all the agent's powers of persuasion to get Clifton to carry out the honorific functions that inevitable came the way of one of the county's major landowners. "As far as I am personally concerned", he told Fair in 1852, "I do not wish to be High Sheriff except I know it must come." He finally agreed on the condition that the expense would be kept down to £700 and "not one cent more".[67] Apart from election times Clifton's visits to Lytham were rare. He became a stranger on his own estate, preferring to divide his time between a country retreat in Northamptonshire, his London homes and the fashionable high-spots of the Mediterranean. But Clifton was not alone in wishing to distance himself from his ancestral base. The Hesketh's, for instance, moved their family seat from Rufford Hall to Easton Neston in Northamptonshire. The same county was home for Lord Lilford as well. And the two branches of the Scarisbrick family resided on foreign soil in Spain and Germany respectively.[68]

Clearly the landowner's lack of personal contact with his estate was of some consequence. It was certainly a major source of concern to Clifton's wife and agent who both took a sterner view of landed responsibility. But there was little they could do to alter John Talbot's ways. Instead they contrived to cultivate a totally erroneous impression of the landowner's paternalistic involvement in the affairs of the community. For instance, they used the local press in an effort to correct rumour and gossip that the squire was putting an end to such traditions as the distribution of game during the shooting season.[69] But John Talbot Clifton was a lost cause and, therefore, more serious efforts went into grooming his heir, Thomas Henry, for his inheritance; but, with little more success. Thomas Henry took no more interest in the estate than his father. Nevertheless, his coming-of-age in 1866 signalled a campaign by Lady

Clifton and Thomas Fair to school him in the obligations of landownership. He needed to act and be seen to be acting in a socially worthwhile capacity.[(70)] Yet all to no avail. He showed no enthusiasm over his election to the Royal Agricultural Society. He declined to give more than the bare minimum to local charities because, as he told Fair, "I am so little at Lytham that I cannot feel the same interest." Not even the management of shooting arrangements on the estate held any appeal. Moreover, he side-stepped public duties in the same deliberate manner as his father and so his appointment to the magistracy was as decorative as it was unwanted.[(71)] Wearily Lady Clifton struggled to repair the damage to the family's public image. She tried to restrain the highly publicized extravagance of her husband and grandson and she tried to correct Thomas Henry's myopic view of landed privilege. For she was clearly aware of the social implications. "I fear in these radical days", she lamented, "that from one thing to another matters will be arranged and the Squire and his son will be forgotten."[(72)] Her warning proved correct. There was no shortage of middle-class philanthropists ready to step into the breach. "Considering the number of charitable people in Lytham", she wrote, "the poor are really looked after."[(73)]

Irrespective of personal idiosyncrasies, the economic climate of the mid and late Victorian period was bound to undermine the level of dependence which had characterised social relationships in Thomas Clifton's day.

Charitable intervention, so much the tangible part of a landowner's relationship with the broad base of labouring families, was no longer called for to the same extent as it once was. The decision on the Clifton estate to cut back on charitable spending seemed to be socially justifiable. For, as Lady Clifton pointed out in 1876 when reductions were made in the clothing lists, "certainly times are very different to what they were when the first gifts were bestowed."(74)

Comparatively speaking the labourer's lot improved substantially during the second half of the 19th century. He was more fully employed, better paid, better housed and better fed. In a large measure, the real improvement in the living standards of the Lancashire labourer can be linked to structural changes in the labour market. In contrast to the first half of the century the third quarter saw an expansion in the demand for agricultural labour which outstripped supply.(75) The steady outflow of migrants had the effect of draining off the labour surplus which had formerly existed. Given the accessibility of wider employment opportunities in the region's industrial towns, the rural exodus in Lancashire was predictably more pronounced than in any other part of the country. Compared with a drop of about 17% in the national agricultural labour force between 1861 and 1871, the number of farm workers in Lancashire declined by 26½% over the same period, and by a further 28% between 1871 and 1901.(76) For those who remained on the land their position was strengthened by the fact that, as the total agricultural labour force contracted, there was no proportional decrease in the demand for labour. In fact, just as the labour requirements in the industrial and manufacturing sectors continued to swell, agriculture was also generating a growing demand for labour.(77) Agricultural improvements, which so strongly charactersed Lancashire farming after 1850, had little to do with mechanisation. In themselves such improvement schemes as drainage, building work, road making, hedging, seeding and manuring were labour intensive. Moreover, the shift towards a husbandry system which coupled increased dairy production with supportive fodder-crop cultivation intensified the demand for regular labour rather than reduced it. (78) The labourer benefitted in several ways. Apart from the occasions when exceptionally bad weather or an outbreak of animal disease intervened, in general, he could look forward to full employment without the same marked seasonal trends.(79) Furthermore, he also enjoyed a significant improvement in earnings. Of course, agricultural labourers in the northern counties had long earned considerably more than their counterparts in the isolated rural areas of the south and east. Industrial wage rates had the effect of pulling up agricultural earnings above the national average. Understandably, in Lancashire, the highest wages were to be found in the districts closest to the industrial cities. However, the influence of commerce and industry reached out into even the most remote rural areas, so that agricultural earnings were remarkably uniform throughout the county. Allowing for local graduations 12/- to 15/- per week in the 1830s was as commonplace in the far reaches of north Lancashire as it was in the industrial heartland of the south.[80] But it was not until the second half of the century that the growing labour demands of both industry and agriculture combined to push up wage rates sharply. Average wage rates in Lancashire in 1850 were barely above the level of 1800 - roughly 13/6 per week. By 1882, 18/- per week was not an uncommon wage throughout the county. When payments in kind and harvest work are taken into account, average weekly earnings range between 19/- and 20/- per week by the 1900s. And, judging from the complaints among local farmers, the late 19th century depression had little effect on wage levels.[81]

Furthermore, the labouring family was better off in real as well as cash terms. Cottage rents in the 1890s were scarcely higher than they had been in mid-century. Substantial three bedroomed cottages on Lord Derby's Inskip estate cost c.1/9d per week in 1894. In Upper Rawcliffe, also on the Fylde, 1/10d per week was the average rent. But these were at the top end of the scale. Cottages were available on the Clifton, Hornby, Winmarleigh, Lilford and Garnett estates from as little as 1/1d. per week which compares favourably with a range of 1/0d. to 1/6d. over the whole county in 1867.[82] In addition, not only had the labourer's diet substantially improved by the end of the century, but in Lancashire, food accounted for a smaller proportion of a worker's earnings than anywhere else. Moreover, the price of most commodities - clothing, furniture, fuel as well as food -

fell in real terms between 1850 and 1900.[83]

Changes in the labour market and a real improvement in living standards made the agricultural labourer a more independent figure, but there is no hard evidence to suggest that a new found sense of status and independence gave way to feelings of class identity and interest.[84] The structure of agricultural employment, Lancashire's comparative prosperity and the safety valve of access to alternative sources of work are factors which largely explain why social change could take place without the trauma and antagonism which seems to have characterised relationships within rural communities elsewhere. Indeed, Wilson-Fox's comparative study for the Royal Commission on Labour in 1894 drew a sharp distinction between the social climates of the north-western and East Anglian counties. In the latter he pointed to a hardened commercialism governing employer-employee relationships and noted how "the familiar and quasi-patriarchial terms on which farmers used to live with their men are fast giving way to mere contractual relations."[85] And, whereas early trades unionism took root among East Anglian workers, there is no evidence for similar labout organisation in Lancashire or other northern counties.[86] At a basic level Lancashire labourers had little need for unionism. Those hired on both a short and long-term basis enjoyed regular work and much improved rates of pay. Moreover, hiring arrangements militated against notions of separateness. Large farms employing a large outside labour force were rare. Instead, small farms operated chiefly by family labour and the occasional hired hand were more typical. And there was probably a good deal of truth in the assertion that a very narrow social distinction separated the small farmer from the man he hired. Moreover, the still deep-rooted tradition of "in-service" employment whereby many unmarried labourers lived under the same roof as their employers made for closer working relationships and a blurring of distinctions.(87)

But this is not to imply that no social change at all was taking place. Labourers expressed their sense of enhanced status and greater independence in a variety of ways. Some did so in the manner they had always done, namely through migration. Greater mobility and a more certain knowledge of opportunities beyond the confines of the parish continued to uproot the young and the casual worker attracted by the prospect of higher wages, by a "more ambitious and sociable life in the towns" and by "more lesiure (time) in the mining districts, quarries and other works."(88) Labourers did not even need to look as far as the industrial towns to find alternatives to agricultural employment. There were, firstly, short-term influences on the local labour market. In mid-century railway construction on the Fylde created a severe shortage of labour, particularly at harvest time, which could only be filled by recruiting Irish immigrants.(89) Similarly, building the new town of Fleetwood drew heavily on labour from adjacent rural parishes.(90) Moreover, local employment opportunities tended to widen throughout the century. For instance, manufacturing concerns in

Garstang and in villages along the east Fylde, the salt works at Preesall, the coastal resorts, various quarries and turf-cutting businesses and the Thirlmere water scheme, all competed for native rural labour by offering potentially higher earnings.(91)

However, even the labourer who remained on the land had greater control over his own future and that of his family. His increased earnings made it possible for his wife and children to withdraw from field work. The vast majority of married men by the 1890s now belonged to a wide description of local benefit societies - Oddfellows, Foresters, Catholic Brethren and the like.(92) But, self-help extended further than subscribing to a benefit society. Improved earnings made "three acres and cow" a more realistic proposition for the individual wanting to graduate into the swelling ranks of the small tenant farmer. There were many examples of drainers and day-labourers investing part of their weekly earnings in a lease on a few acres on which to keep their own cattle. Landowners and agents themselves favoured a system of promotion into farm vacancies from among this group, and the sheer number of small farms made it possible for the frugal, hard-working labourer to better himself. Certainly evidence from the Clifton estate suggests considerable upward mobility by labouring men as vacancies appeared among the broad base of small farms.(93) Opportunities of this kind passed by the great majority of workers; but they demonstrated a growing awareness of their own rights vis-a-vis other labouring groups as was reflected in demands for shorter working hours, longer holidays, a reduction in Saturday work and parity in conditions with miners and other industrial workers. With some justification, then, contemporaries themselves spoke of the greater "independence" of the agricultural labourer. Yet "independence" was no longer used as a term of reproach and suspicion. It expressed a widely accepted view that labourers had the right to be "treated according to the more advanced ideas of the day, which have not only influenced their class, but all classes alike throughout society."(94)

Moving up the social order, how far landlord tenant relationships changed under the weight of new ideas, new legislation and the pressures of economic change is difficult to assess. Much has been written on the significance of tenant-right in focusing conflict between landowners and tenant farmers. For McQuiston the struggle over compulsory compensation for farmers' improvements destroyed deferential habits and signified the eruption of a social revolution that had never been far below the surface of Victorian rural England.(95) Newby, drawing largely from the body of conventional interpretation, saw land reform as the "burning issue" of the 1890s, the climax of efforts on the part of tenant farmers to assert their economic and political independence.(96)

It is clear that the deepening agricultural recession during the last two decades of the 19th century was a testing time for the tenant farmer in Lancashire not just financially but also in his relations with his landlord. Of course, no-one seriously disputes the view that Lancashire farmers came off better than their counterparts in the predominantly cereal growing areas of the south and east.(97) At the same time, farmers simply did not use such comparisons as a yardstick with which to measure their own predicament. If farmers in the 1890s drew any comparisons at all it was with the "money-making" period of the 1860s and 70s, years of high investment, high returns and "expensive habits."(98)

Admittedly, the first years of the depression made little impact except on the strongly arable districts in the south-east of the county. Apart from the steep but temporary fall in butter prices in 1879, generally dairy prices held up and farmers and landowners alike spoke of the passing effects of bad weather and poor trade rather than in terms of deep-seated economic problems.(99) However, farming confidence must have been shaken by the trade recession of 1883-6 which brought a drop in the price of both stock and arable produce. More serious, though, was the drop in the wholesale and retail price of milk, the mainstay of Lancashire's dairy industry.(100) No sooner had milk prices made a hesitant recovery after 1886 than they were pushed down again by the far more serious depression of 1892-4. Arable production in particular was badly hit. Wheat, which had been bringing 38/- a quarter at the Lancaster market in 1880 was being sold for just 15/- a quarter in 1894. The price of oat-meal dropped by more than a third over the same period. In 1894 potatoes were worth only a quarter of their 1880 value. Meat and dairy produce did not fare much better. Besides milk, the value of store cattle fell away by a third between 1891 and 1894 and sheep for breeding and fattening were down by 5/- to 15/- a head in the space of twelve months.(101)

In marked contrast to past prosperity such sharp and sudden reversals in fortunes were bound to create a sense of unease and uncertainty among farmers. Exaggerated or not, feelings were coloured by reflections on better days and by what farmers read and heard rather than by the cold evidence presented to the Royal Commission. The reality of the depression was in the "mind's eye" of the farmer.(102) His views would have been influenced by reports from the Blackburn district where farmers complained of having milk left on their hands. Farmers on the larger holdings grumbled that they "had made nothing over the past two or three years". In Tarleton and Hesketh Bank some were said to be losing £100 a year and most had exhausted their capital.(103) Moreover, claims that rents were "fairly well paid" and that no wholesale changes in tenancies had taken place can be misleading. Even Wilson-Fox, in his report to the Royal Commission, admitted that "punctual payment is no actual proof of the farmer's position being a satisfactory one."(104) One farmer put it another way. "It is only natural", he remarked, "that farmers will say that they are getting on, for if they didn't they would soon have their creditors down on them."(105) Many farmers, it was thought, might well have given up their farms but for the fact that all their capital was tied up in the land and the costs of claiming compensation from their landlords for the improvements they themselves had carried out would be prohibitive. On balance there was perhaps no alternative but to hang on.(106)

Cumulative experiences of this kind were bound to have an effect on landlord-tenant relationships. Yet to what extent did anxieties and resentments give way to support for measures aimed at a radical overhaul of the existing land system? To go further, did the deepening recession pose a real threat to the time-honoured political and social bonds between landowners and tenant farmers?(107) Interestingly, organisations whose primary objective was to expand the proprietory rights of tenant farmers made their presence felt in Lancashire. The Farmers' Alliance, for instance, the spear-head of a movement to reinforce tenants' claims to compensation for their own improvements, put in a brief appearance in 1880.(108) Similarly, the depression of the 1890s gave rise to further pressure groups - the Lancashire Farmers Association and the Lancashire Association of Tenant Farmers. The latter in particular resurrected the slogans of the earlier Alliance. It called for a united farmers' combination against landlords and Parliament as the most effective way of securing the "3Fs" - fair rents, fixity of tenure and the full value of improvements. It mounted a vociferous campaign against the level of rents in the county, but its major line of attack was reserved for the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 which, it was claimed, gave special advantage to the incoming tenant and the landlord in the matter of valuing improvements.(109)

However, it is doubtful whether the reform proposals of the Tenant Farmers Association had much widespread appeal. The strength of its support was exaggerated by the Liberal press, its leadership had close connections with local radicals and, therefore, criticism of the existing tenurial system tended to be mounted by those with a political interest in land reform. By itself land reform had virtually no practical relevance to the real problems faced by Lancashire farmers. There was strong opposition to the idea of institutional interference in rent fixing by way of a land court. Even the farmers' associations were divided on this issue.(110) Equally, it was almost unanimously held that the Agricultural Holdings Act was of little value. Apart from the Devonshire estate, where the agent kept an annual record of tenants' outlays, it was unusual for landlords and tenants to take out any written agreements regarding compensation for improvements. Admittedly, the costs of taking a claim to arbitration and the fear of a landlord's counterclaims for dilapidations weighed against a tenant resorting to the 1883 Act. But, on most estates, it was the landowner rather than the tenant who had carried the expense of such major improvement works as drainage and buildings. Moreover, to pursue the issue of land reform too fiercely ran the risk of undermining the landowner's willingness to finance further improvements.(111)

The root cause of farmers' problems was foreign competition coupled with poor seasons. Their most common complaint was the lack of tariff protection, not the lack of clearer and legally enforceable proprietory rights.(112) There were calls for land reform but usually from individuals on the smaller properties near the towns. Similar demands might also be heard on the larger estates where there had been a recent change in ownership, where the landlord was an institutional body or where there had been a past history of neglect.(113) Here, added feelings of insecurity made the lack of compensation and tenant right a real issue. Elsewhere, tenants' claims to having confidence in their landlords have some substance. On the ancestral estates, in particular, various factors combined to insulate relationships against severe strain - the degree of personal contact between landowner and tenant, the relatively undisturbed pattern of farms passing from one generation to the next and the readiness of the landowner, albeit on a diminishing scale, to allow arrears and abatements in rent and maintain a certain level of investment. So, with some justification, one Lytham farmer felt able to point out that "a good farmer has got fixity of tenure as long as he wants to stay."(114)

However, this is not to suggest that the economic climate of the late 19th century did not bring changes. Even so, change did not involve a wedge being driven between landlord and tenant over the issue of tenant right. Rather it took the form of a clearer separation of business roles. The estate's managerial controls were now something of the past. New market conditions made the tenant farmer a much more independent figure, fully in command of his own affairs. He was in a much stronger bargaining position with respect to the rent he paid and the conditions under which he farmed.(115) He held his farm on an annual lease and, generally, he was free from cropping and marketing restrictions even on the large estates. The successful farmer of the 1890s paid his rent on the basis of his ability to recognise shifts in the market, to make the best use of the natural attributes of his land, and to turn his farming into a finely-tuned commercial operation.(116) In effect, the farming interest had replaced the landed interest as the mainstay of rural society and economy.

III

On a broader social and administrative level changes were taking place which reflected the eclipse of landed influence and privilege at the local level. Even what was understood by the notion of "county society" had taken on a wider dimension by the turn of the century. For men of Thomas Clifton's generation it had meant a cohesive, closely-knit group of families. It had meant authority of an inherited kind which, with all its attendant rights and obligations, had permeated social and administrative life at both a local and regional level. This concept, however, was gradually losing its relevance in a number of ways.

As a term of social reference "county" was taking on a wider meaning. Any cursory glance at the lists of what observers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries regarded as "county families" will confirm that "county" as a label of social status embraced not only the owners of established estates but individuals drawn from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. The criteria by which Walford in 1874 and Bateman, using the 1873 Survey of Landownership, compiled their elite groups are far from being explicit. "Great Landowners", the title of Bateman's magnum opus, is in itself misleading. By his own definition his aristocracy would include men of great wealth owning comparatively few acres.(117) Walford's "County Families" is just as confusing.(118) 431 individuals merited inclusion in his 1874 lists for Lancashire. The peerage and baronage head the lists by virtue of their titled rank but the enormous tail is an assorted, randomly arranged collection of established landed families vastly outnumbered by the "new gentry" with distinctly professional, commercial and industrial backgrounds. In other words, there are blurred edges to both Bateman's and Walford's social elites; but perhaps that says something in itself.

W.T. Pike's biographical lists, published in his "New Century" series, probably provide a more useful in ight into changes in contemporary notions of status than either of the previous two sources.(119) Again it impresses by the sheer weight of numbers of contains and the varied backgrounds of individuals included. Yet Pike's social yardstick is somewhat clearer. His is more of a meritocracy. Not only did he include men of obvious wealth but essentially those who had made a contribution to the civic life of the county as local or county councillors, magistrates, M.P.s or holders of honorific posts. In his significantly titled sections, "Nobility, Gentry and Magistrates", only seven of the older landed families qualified for a place. Thomas Fair, a J.P. since 1875 and one of the first members of Lancashire County Council, gets a mention; the Clifton family do not. Nor, for that matter, did other landed notables of the past including the Hesketh of Rufford and the Earls of Derby, Sefton and Lilford. Their places were filled by a numerically larger and socially more active elite; men like Thomas Brooks whose wealth was based on the Rossendale textile industry. After his appointment to the Magistracy, he became a deputy-lieutenant of the county, received a baronetcy in 1891 and was finally elevated to the rank of Earl of Crawford in 1895; or Frederick Baynes who shared the same business background and urban roots and who served as a magistrate and mayor of Blackburn in 1897 before becoming High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1900.(120)

There was also a spatial dimension to this social shift. Geographical as well as social mobility transformed, even enhanced, patterns of "country living". Yet movement by the nouveaux riches did not take the form of acquiring great estates in the fashion of the Jacsons of Barton Hall, the Garnetts of Quernmore or the Millers of Singleton Hall earlier on in the century. There were one or two notable exceptions; William Foster, for instance, whose family owned woollen mills in the West Riding, bought Hornby Castle and its 10,841 acre estate; and Perceval Mayhew, with directorships in numerous Wigan-based manufacturing and insurance companies, purchased Duxbury Park and Anglezark and Heapey moors. But many preferred to establish themselves in the rapidly expanding urban outposts of Southport, Lytham-St.Annes and Grange-over-Sands, or transform former market towns, such as Poulton-le-Fylde, into middle-class retreats. Other "pseudo Gentry" acted out a more conventional role by buying or building mansions amidst rural surroundings. In this sense there is continuity of a kind. At the same time few now felt under the same social compulsion to equip their new found status with the full trappings of a landed estate. For most it was enough to buy land sufficient to lend an appearance of social exclusivity.

The more remote areas of north Lancashire, once the heartland of the county's old landed elite, seemed to be especially attractive to a wave of new settlers. Typical were Sir John Hibbert who had a long and distinguished record as Liberal M.P. for Oldham and as a

Privy Councillor. He served as the County Council's first chairman and retired to the large and imposing mansion of Hampsfield House, near Grange; Captain J.R. Prescott, J.P., who inherited Dalton Grange which was built by his father, a Liverpool businessman, in 1856; B.B. Gardner, J.P., also from a Liverpool background, who purchased Aldringham Hall, Ulverston; Captain Peter Ormrod, the founder of a large fishery company, who acquired Wyresdale Hall, Scorton. These were just a few among many. Moreover, some aped the leisure pursuits of the old order by becoming masters of local hunts. Still more took on charitable responsibilities which were often greater than those of the old established families - as trustees and patrons of hospitals, schools for the blind, new churches, village halls and as administrators of established charities.(121) The overall impression of "county society" by the beginning of the 20th century was that it no longer reflected the traditions and privileges of a narrow landed elite. The old and well-worn pattern of gradual absorption into the existing landed order had given way to the general acceptance of new social leaders who not only diluted the ranks of landed society, but actually gave a new and heightened expression to the meaning of "county" values and traditions.

The social submergence of the old landed elite was accompanied by an eclipse of their former political and administrative omnipotency. They relinquished political controls as their territorial influence contracted. The increasingly urbanised character of what were once rural divisions and the redrawing of constituency boundaries in favour of urban interests, substantially undermined the political role of the old landowning families in the belt of county divisions extending from north Lonsdale down to the west Lancashire plain to Liverpool. The break-up of many estates no doubt accelerated this trend. Some landed influence persisted as it had done in the past. For instance, it was felt that Arthur Stanley's electoral success in Ormskirk in 1905 was in part due to the town's connections with Lord Derby. Yet there is no evidence that pressure of any kind was used, that tenants were canvassed by land agents and political pledges extracted as had once been the case. Tradition, common interests, indeed conviction, informed voting habits rather than the landlord's sanctions. In fact Lord Derby was at pains to disclaim any powers of influence, and Liberals canvassed openly in former Tory enclaves. Similarly, events in Rufford in 1906 clearly indicated a change in the times. Not only was it "found possible to have a Liberal meeting there" but "it was found possible to fill it up". Interestingly, the only figure from an established landed family to enjoy any continued political success was the Liberal Lord Cavendish in North Lonsdale. By contrast, Conservative party organisations in the rural divisions of the county preferred to bring in political carpetbaggers.[122]

Administrative change at the level of local and regional government further diminished and the relevance of landed power. Traditional functions and responsibilities were gradually absorbed by institutional organisations established on a broad territorial basis - the police districts, poor law unions and rural sanitary authorities. Admittedly, their power was more apparent than real. The poor law unions for instance, became particularly enfeebled. The elected boards overseeing rural areas were heavily representative of the farming body and they were as interested as their landlords in checking governmental interference and minimizing the rateable burden. The Fylde Union was probably typical of many. In its responsibility for standards of health in the district it was as ineffectual as it was dilatory. Its adoptive powers were limited, its supervisory practices inadequate and its officials incompetent and, in some cases, corrupt. By and large it contented itself with matters of a general and undemanding nature, setting up registration, medical and relief districts, appointments and workhouse inspections.(123) Nevertheless, regardless of their practical impact, the intrusion of institutional bodies was resented. They were seen as the deadhand of centralised controls.(124) Accordingly it was the Poor Law Commissioners themselves who were especially singled out for attack. The leader-writer of the Preston Guardian probably expressed widespread feeling when he described the Commissioners, in 1848, as a "repository of power, despotic, vexatious, ridiculous and repugnant to the English character."(125)

James Fair felt much the same way about the Police Act of 1839; but he had even less patience for the poor law unions. "Arbitrary, expensive and meddlesome", was how he described them to Thomas Clifton.[126] The rural sanitary authorities, established in 1874, at first suggested little in the way of improvement on the deficiencies of the poor law unions. There was too much of an overlap in personnel and they had limited power in enforcing acceptable sanitary conditions. Yet, in time, new men detached from the vested interests of farmers, landowners and agents made their influence felt in their insistence on professional standards and the adoption of available powers of compulsion. This, for instance was strongly apparent in the Fylde where an urban presence was becoming increasingly more marked. Here the authority busied it producing a series of bye-laws to deal firstly with the effective removal of health hazards and later with building standards. It was one of the first rural authorities to adopt the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 which introduced compulsory powers to close buildings deemed unfit for habitation.[127] In what was a more effective role the sanitary authority exposed the glaring inadequacies in existing housing provision. Basic shelter and a clean well no longer satisfied. By 1878 the Medical Officer was able to report that virtually every cottage in the Fylde area was provided with "proper closet accommodation", where previously such basic provision had been exceptional. Landowners like the Derbys, Cliftons and Hornbys now found themselves being harried to bring property on their estates up to the required standards. To someone like Thomas Fair, brought up in the tradition of enjoying full authority over his master's domain, the new instruments of local government were regarded in much the same way as his father viewed the poor law unions. He complied with instructions to repair cottages, attend to defective drains and clear out cesspits but not without giving vent to his own feelings about what he regarded as "unwarranted interference in private matters."[128]

It might be thought, not unreasonably, that elective bodies such as the Guardians and Sanitary Authorities smoothed the way for the sweeping changes which took place in local government from 1888 onwards. In other words, the landed order was already accustomed to the notion of shared responsibility, at least. This may have been the case, but it is difficult to escape from the conclusion that the setting up of County Councils in 1888/9 marked something of a watershed, in that a radical shift now took place in the direction of statutory authority. Clearly landed control over the central administrative affairs of the county was irretrievably lost. Lancashire's first County Council still drew representatives from the old hierarchy but in a largely honorific capacity. Five aldermen came from established landed families - Assheton, Fitzherbert-Brockholes, Garnett, Hulton and Starkie. By 1910 their number had been reduced to three, and the aldermanry was a decorative role much in the same way as the old order had supplied High Sheriffs and Deputy-Lieutenants of the county. Real authority had passed into other hands.[129] But the setting up of local district and parish councils by 1894 probably came as an even greater psychological blow. They threatened to snap the remaining ties of assumed, inherited authority. "Hitherto matters had been greatly influenced by the squire and the parson", Thomas Fair complained with all the social prejudices of his class, "If parish councils were elected instead of having leading men on them they would be presided over by some liberal shoe-maker surrounded by all the pot-house ruffians."(130)

Yet Fair's remarks were an echo of a quickly receding past. The old landed elite was already a spent force. The Cliftons themselves were in full retreat. Their own eclipse by the end of the century was partly inescapable and partly self-inflicted. They were besieged by new social and economic realities which invited abdication of responsibility. They gave way to a colder, harsher world in which the traditions and values of the country gentleman were fast becoming redundant emotions and in which financial survival was of sole, paramount concern. And so the increasingly fragile image of a great landed elite, built upon a once deep-rooted sense of rights, obligations and privilege, was ultimately shattered. "We live in different times", Thomas Fair remarked to his son in 1892. "We must adapt with them or we shall be nothing."(131) His words held a prophetic truth for the whole of landed society.

REFERENCES

(1) Fletcher, Op.cit., p.77.

(2) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., pp.184-186.

(3) Bateman, Op.cit.,

(4) See pp. 24-31

(5) See Foster, Thesis and Knapp, Thesis, Op.cit.,

(6) Foster, Ibid. and unpublished paper presented at the C.O.R.A.L. Conference, 1979.

(7) Foster, Op.cit., Northern History, Vol.XIII, 1977.

(8) L.R.O. DDCl. 1183. A. Liddell to T. Clifton, 19 December 1836; T. Wilson to T. Clifton, 31 December 1836; DDCl. 1193. T. Shaw to J.Fair, 19 December 1842; W. Pollard to J. Fair, September 1842; DDCl. 1325. Box 13. G. Stansfield to J.T. Clifton, 4 October 1845.

(9) Ibid. DDCl. 1191. J. Cunliffe to T. Clifton, July 1841; DDCl. 1325. Box 13. G. Haigh to J.T. Clifton 5 May 1845; 13 letters to J.T. Clifton, M.P., 1845.

(10) Ibid. DDCl. 1194. J. Cunliffe to J. Fair, 5 February 1843.

(11) Ibid. J. Poole to J. Fair, 24 April 1843; J.Charnock to J. Fair, 23 April 1843; DDCl. 1198. Rev.Dean to J. Fair, 28 April 1844; St. Michael's Friendly Society to J. Fair, 17 June 1845; DDCl. 1325 Box 13. J. Pope to J.T. Clifton, 19 September 1845; DDCl. 1325. Rev. Kendall to T. Fair, 28 June 1875.

(12) See Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., pp.184-211; Mingay, The Gentry, Op.cit., H. Newby, The Deferential Worker (1977); Perkin, The making of modern English Society, Op.cit., M.A. Havinden, Estate Villages (1966); D.R. Mills, Lord and Peasant in 19th Century Britain, (1980); Holderness, Open and Closed Parishes in England in the 18th and 19th Centuries, Agricultural History Review, XX, 1972.

(13) See p.163.

(14) L.R.O. DDx. 211/7. Lord Lilford to R. Hodgkinson, 10 September 1834.

(15) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894, p.21.

(16) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 11. J. Fair to T. Clifton, 6 June 1849.

References (contd.)

(17) Ibid. DDm/6/80. E. Hall to Lord Sefton, 13 April 1843; DDm/6/146. R. Ledger to Lord Sefton, 29 July 1845.

(18) Ibid. DDm/6/128 and 137. R.Ledger to Lord Sefton, 22 April and 10 July 1845.

(19) P.P. Royal Commission, P.cit., 1894, p.20; "Colonel Clifton", The Preston Herald reported on 10th March 1866, "has pursued, as far as possible, the time-honoured practice, which has been previously followed on his estate, of allowing the same families to occupy the property and not seek new faces."

(20) See p.184-5 L.R.O.DDLi.Box 5. Meeting of Lancashire Land Agents re: The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1876.

(21) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894. p.12.

(22) L.R.O. DDCl. 522, 523, 524. Estate Surveys; DDCl. 2381. Box 1. Westby-with-Plumpton Rent Roll, 1866-7; QDL. 1831 Land Tax Assessments; Census enumerators schedules, 1841-71, Lytham, Westby-with-Plumpton, Clifton-with-Salwick.

(23) E.L. Jones, The Agricultural Labour Market in England 1793-1872, Economic History Review, XVII, 1964-6.

(24) J.D. Marshall, The Lancashire Rural Labourer in the early 19th Century, Transaction of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Vol.71, 1961, pp.113-115; Victoria County History of Lancashire, Vol.6, p.332; According to the census figures, Clifton-with Salwick's population rose by 10%, 1801-31; Westby-with-Plumpton's by 24%, 1801-21; Inskip's by 25% 1801-31; Singleton's by 54%, 1801-31; Claughton's by 8%, 1801-31.

(25) For instance, according to Binns, writing in 1851, drainage work on the Clifton estate in itself provided work for 160 labourers. See Binns, Op.cit., p.123.

(26) Preston Pilot, 1 November 1851.

(27) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 24 November 1848.

(28) Marshall, Op.cit., p.108.

(29) L.R.O. DDq. and DDLi. Box 97, Account Books.

(30) Marshall, Op.cit., pp.107-108.

(31) P. Horn, Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside, (1976), p.185.

References (contd.)

(32) Newby, Op.cit., pp.50-51.

(33) L.R.O. DDCl. Acc.No. 2831. Box 2; DDLi. Boxes 5 and 51. Lady Lilford's Charity.

(34) Marshall, Op.cit., p.118.

(35) Ibid. DDLi. Box 9. R. Hodgkinson to Rev.W. Fosley, 20 May 1826; DDCl. 1195. J. Fair to J. Cookson, 30 November 1843; DDCl. 1201. J. Burnet to J. Fair, 20 March 1847.

(36) Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., pp.21-211; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Ledger Books 1-4; DDCl. 1219 Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 22 May 1878.

(37) Ibid. DDCl. 1187, Vicar of Warton to J. Fair, May 1840; DDCl. 1201, Rev.Dean to J. Fair, 10 April 1847; DDCl. 1966 Ledger Book 1.

(38) Ibid. DDCl. 1189. L. Fenton to J. Fair, November 1840; DDCl. 1193. Rev. Rycroft to J. Fair, September 1843; Preston Guardian, 24 November 1848.

(39) The view that charitable work reinforced social controls is broadly discussed in B. Harrison, Philanthropy and the Victorians, Victorian Studies, IX, 1965-66.

(40) R. Johnson, Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England, in P. Stansky (Ed.) Victorian Revolution, Op.cit.,

(41) G. Nicholls, on the condition of the agricultural labourer with suggestions for its improvement, Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England 1846; The Agricultural Labourer: His Condition and Requirements as considered at recent Agricultural Meetings, Farmers Magazine, 1856; J. Dent, The Present conditonn of the English Agricultural Labourer, Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1871.

(42) L.R.O. DDCl. 1191, 1192, 1199, 1200, 1201; DDCl. 1325. Box 2; DDCl. 1966 Ledger Book 2.

(43) Ibid. DDLi. Box 6; Box 51, J.D. Selby to Lady Lilford, 17 December 1872.

(44) On the Clifton estate the number of cottages at best remained static between 1804-41 and, in some parts, actually decreased.

References (contd.)

(45) J. Burnet, A Social History of Housing, 1815-1970, (1980), pp.37-38. Holderness, Op.cit., Agricultural History Review, Vol.20, 1972.

(46) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. J. Fair to T. Clifton, 22 October and 26 November 1849; P.P. Seventh Report of the Medical Officer to the Privy Council, 1865, pp.215-219.

(47) E. Gauldie, Cruel Habitations (1974), pp.45-46.

(48) L.R.O. DDGr. Box A8. The Dawson-Green Estate, Lancaster; Marshall, Op.cit., p.120.

(49) Ibid. DDCl. 1966. Ledger 2; DDLi. Boxes 7 and 11; P.P., Op.cit., 1865, pp.128; 217-219.

(50) P.P. Report of the Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867-8. XVii, p.56.

(51) Ibid. Report of the Select Committee (House of Lords) on the Improvement of Land, 1873, XVi, pp.15; 19; 69; 114-5; 224; 296.

(52) Gauldie, Op.cit., p.33.

(53) L.R.O. DDCl. 1224. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, N.D., DDCl. 1212. Ibid, 25 July 1871; DDCl. 1217; Ibid. 27 August 1876.

(54) P.P. Improvement of Land, 1873, XVi, p.365.

(55) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Ledger Books 1-3; DDCl. 1235. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 4 May 1870.

(56) Ibid. DDCl. 1966. Annual Report of the Medical Officer to the Fylde Rural Sanitary Authority, 1878.

(57) Ibid. DDCl. 1215. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 7 May 1874; DDCl. 1216. Ibid. 12 January 1875; DDCl.1217. Ibid. 27 August 1876; P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, 1893-4, XXXV, Report by A. Wilson-Fox, p.334. It was usual in Lancashire for large estates to retain control over cottages.

(58) Ibid. DDk/1667. Lord Derby to R. Alty, 11 February and 26 April 1818; DDk/1676. Lord Derby to Slater, 2 May 1826.

(59) Ibid. DDBl. 12/161. Lord Egerton to W. Blundell, 15 December 1834; DDk/1681. Lord Derby to Slater, 15 April 1835.

References (contd.)

(60) Ibid. DDx.221/7. Lord Lilford to R. Hodgkinson, 26 December 1834; DDLi. Box 6. R. Hodgkinson to Lord Lilford, 5 February 1844; Box 7. S. Broadhurst to W. Selby, 10 March 1844.

(61) Ibid. DDm.6/101. R. Ledger to Lord Sefton, 11 May 1844; 6/103. Ibid. 21 May 1844; 6/104. Ibid. 25 May 1844; 6/105. Ibid. 1 June 1844.

(62) Ibid. DDCl. 1197. R. Moore to J. Fair, 5 July 1844; DDCl. 1325. T. Fair to J.T. Clifton, 9 January 1869; J. Fair to Lord Knowles, 20 October 1868.

(63) Perkin, Op.cit., p.182.

(64) Mingay, Gentry, Op.cit., p.173.

(65) Broderick, Op.cit., 1881, p.109.

(66) Quoted in Mingay, Gentry, Op.cit., pp.117-118.

(67) L.R.O. DDCl. 1204. Letters from J.T. Clifton to T. Fair, July 1846 to November 1853.

(68) Bateman, Op.cit.,

(69) L.R.O. DDCl. 1210. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 18 November 1869.

(70) Ibid. DDCl. 1207. August 1866.

(71) Ibid. DDCl. 1227. T. Clifton to T. Fair, 5 February 1870; 4 March 1870; 5 April 1871; 11 February 1875.

(72) Ibid. DDCl. 1217. Lady Clifton to T. Fair, 18 July 1876.

(73) Ibid. DDCl. 1225. N.D.

(74) Ibid. DDCl. 1217. December 1876.

(75) Jones, Op.cit., Economic History Review, XVII,1964-5.

(76) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894. Appendix A; Fletcher, Op.cit., p.92, B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (1962), pp. 20; 60; R. Lawton, Rural Depopulation in 19th Century England, in D. Mills (Ed.) English Rural Communities (1974).

(77) E.H. Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in England and Wales, 1850-1914. (1973). pp.164-167.

(78) R. Samuel, Village Life and Labour (1972), pp.17-21. E.L. Jones, Op.cit., p.328.

References (contd.)

(79) L.R.O. DDCl. 1235. T. Fair to W. Lowther, 12 November 1868. The cattle plague put many Fylde labourers on Poor Relief in 1868.

(80) Ibid. DDCl. 452. Labourers' Account Books, 1837-40; DDQ and DDLi. Account Books; Marshall, Op.cit., pp.100-103.

(81) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1882, pp.35-37, 40-42; 45; P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894, p.17; P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., p.340; 483-85; R.S. Thompson, An enquiry into the rent of agricultural land in England and Wales during the 19th century, Royal Statistical Society, 1907; Hunt, Op.cit., p.63; Ibid. Labour Productivity in English Agriculture, 1850-1914, Economic History Review, XX, 1967. p.280. Because of the local demand for labour, William Blundell of Crosby Hall paid 18/- per week to casual workers in the early 1880s. Much the same rates obtained at nearby Latham Hall where labour costs were said to have risen by 25% between 1862 and 1882. In the north of the county, a tenant farmer on the Duke of Devonshire's Furness estate claimed that ordinary farm wages averaged 20-21/- per week at the time of the 1894 Commission.

(82) P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., p.481; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Ledger Books 1-4; DDQ and DDLi Estate accounts; Hunt, Op.cit., p.80.

(83) Hunt, Ibid. p.38. R.J. Thompson, Op.cit., p.43 A. Wilson-Fox, Agricultural wages in England and Wales during the last 50 years, Royal Statistical Society, 1903. pp.140-141.

(84) Perkin, Op.cit., pp.181-182.

(85) P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., p.146. See also Thompson, Landed Society, Op.cit., Chapters IX and XI.

(86) J.P.D. Dunbabin, The Revolt of the Field - The Agricultural Labourers' Movement in the 1870s, Past and Present, 26, 1963.

(87) P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., pp.479, 483. According to the 1871 census "Indoor Farm Servants" accounted for between 30-38% of the total labour force employed by farmers in the townships comprising the Clifton estate. A sample of other townships on the Fylde and in north Lancashire produced very similar figures.
Dr. John Marshall has discovered that agricultural trades unionism put in a brief appearance in Cumbria, but curiously, among farm servants. See J.D. Marshall The Lake Counties (1981), pp.75-77.

References (contd.)

(88) Ibid.

(89) L.R.O. DDCl. 1325. Box 9. T. Clifton to J. Fair, 28 August 1845.

(90) Fleetwood Census 1851.

(91) P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., p.480.

(92) Ibid. pp.325,330.

(93) Ibid. pp.323, 337, 482, 487; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966 Ledger Books 1-5; Labourers' Account Books, 1881, 1887, 1895 and 1901; Census Abstracts 1851-71.

(94) P.P. Royal Commission on Labour, Op.cit., p.483.

(95) J.R. McQuiston, Tenant Right: Farmer against landlord in Victorian England, 1847-1883, Agricultural History, 1973. p.112.

(96) Newby, Op.cit., p.60.

(97) Fletcher, Op.cit.,

(98) Preston Guardian, 13 January 1894.

(99) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1882, pp.38-41; Fletcher, Op.cit., p.88.

(100) Fletcher, Ibid; L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Extracts from the Morning Post, 3 September 1885.

(101) Preston Guardian, 3 September 1892.

(102) Perry, Op.cit., p.140.

(103) Preston Guardian, 19 March and 10 September 1892; 9 June 1894; P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894, p.15.

(104) P.P. Ibid. p.14.

(105) Preston Guardian, 27 October 1894.

(106) Ibid. 10 September 1892.

(107) See W.E. Bear, Revolt of the Counties, Fortnightly Review, XXVII, May 1880.

(108) J.R. Fisher, The Farmers' Alliance: An Agricultural Protest Movement of the 1880s, Agricultural History Review, Vol.26. 1978.

References (contd.)

(109) Preston Guardian, 10 September and 3 December 1892; P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894, p.19.

(110) Ibid. 8 and 9 April 1892; 10 September 1892; 24 December 1892; 15 July 1893; 11 August 1894. See Perkin, Land Reform and Class Conflict in Victorian Britain in J. Butt and I.F. Clarke (Eds.) The Victorians and Social Protest (1973) pp.177-212. In evidence to the Royal Commission in 1894 the Lancashire tenant farmers association claimed a membership of 300. Much of the publicity they managed to acquire was generated by claims made jointly by Southport Liberals and Local Farmers' Associations that a tenant on the Scarisbrick estate had been evicted from his farm because he had attended farmers' meetings "where radical views had been expressed". Preston Guardian, 15 February and 7 October 1893; P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894. p.39.

(111) Ibid. 1894, pp.21-22; 36-43; Fisher, Op.cit., p.20-25. A farmer on Lord Winmarleigh's estate pointed out that "the effect (of a land court) would be to destroy the good relations between landlords and farmers and would make the landlords take no interest in their property."

(112) Ibid. 1894. pp.44-46.

(113) Ibid. Bateman, Op.cit.,

(114) Ibid, Appendix B.3

(115) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. Terms for letting Layton Farms, September 1891.

(116) P.P. Royal Commission, Op.cit., 1894. p.16.

(117) Bateman, Op.cit., for instance, the Starkie family of Huntroyde, Burnley, drew an "aristocratic" income of almost £19,500 p.a. (excluding mine rents) from their 8,355 acres, an estate of less than aristocratic proportions. See also p. 10.

(118) E. Walford, The County Families of the United Kingdom, 1874.

(119) W.T. Pike, "New Century Series", published in thirty two volumes between 1898 and 1911. Lancashire is covered by volume nine, published in 1903.

(120) Ibid.

(121) Ibid. Bateman. Op.cit., Windermere is another good example, like Poulton-Le-Fylde, of a middle class retreat. See O.Westall (ed.) Windermere in the nine-Century, The University of Lancaster, Centre for North-West Regional Studies (1976)

References (contd.)

(122) P.F. Clarke, Lancashire and the New Liberalism, (1971), pp.229; 249-252.

(123) L.R.O. PUF 1/1-9. Fylde Poor Law Union Minute Books 1848-1874; E.C. Midwinter, Social Administration in Lancashire, 1830-60. (1969) pp.14-58.

(124) R.M. Gutchem, Local Improvements and Centralisation in 19th Century England, Historical Journal, IV,1961.

(125) Preston Guardian, 15 January 1848.

(126) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. J. Fair to T. Clifton, 9 December 1847.

(127) L.R.O. SAF/1. Fylde Rural Sanitary Authority. Orwin and Whetham, Op.cit., p.328.

(128) Ibid. SAF/1. DDCl. 1966. T. Fair to the Fylde Rural Sanitary Authority, 23 April 1887.

(129) L.R.O. Slater's Directory, 1889; Kelly's Directory, 1910.

(130) Preston Guardian, 23 April 1892.

(131) L.R.O. DDCl. 1966. T. Fair to J.A.S. Fair, 15 May 1892.

APPENDIX I

EXTRACTS FROM 19TH CENTURY FARM LEASES ON THE CLIFTON ESTATE

A farm in Marton, October 1840 Term 9 years

"The 'best ground' formerly in three parts namely Gt. Field, Nearer Field and part of West Ground, now wheat stubble to be set over with manure and moss cropping in the Spring of 1841 and to be ploughed early the same Autumn, the following Spring to be fallowed and sown with barley and seeds for a pasture. The Little Low Hey to be set over in the Spring of 1842 with manure and moss cropping. Mr. Clifton (the landowner) making no charge for the latter. The Whittham Hills, now an oat stubble, to be cleaned and laid down for a meadow. The Great Holm to be cleaned and laid down for pasture. The Old Meadow may be broken up when more land is laid down. The moss ground to be green cropped and oats taken for fodder. Few oats should be grown in other parts of the farm. Quantity in tonnage not to exceed one-third. The Out-Whittam Hills to be drained with sods and tiles. The fences to be improved and new gates wanted - a milk house is required."

James Cartwell, Marton 1840 Term 9 years. 41 Acres

"Not to have more than 18 acres under the plough in any one year. To marl yearly two acres during the term, to have two roods of common yellow turnips, two roods of swedes, and not less than one rood of white globe turnips....and what potatoes he chooses to grow after the other green crops are properly manured and meadows attended to. Not to take two white crops in succession except it be barley with seed, well manured after a clean wheat stubble and then to be pastured two years at least."

Robert Johnston, Clifton, Feb. 1843. Term 19 years

Penalties for breach of farming covenants:

£5 per acre illegally ploughed and sown.

£1 per ton of compost and manure not used and required to be in the Agreement.

Landlord to put buildings in good repair at the beginning of the term. Lessee to see to the maintenance thereafter.

Materials and labour to be provided by the landlord for boundary fencing and for making of new fields.

The tenant "shall labour, manure and cultivate the said lands in regular order and in a uniformally good husbandlike and approved manner":

"Never to permit the orchard gardens and plantations to be pastured with cattle nor to take two successive white crops from any part of the said lands and, in no case, to sow wheat but after summer fallow or green crop both fully manured, and no grain to be taken after beans except that they shall have been fully manured, drilled and thoroughly cleaned; and, during the first fifteen years of the said term, to have in each year in regular order and in entire fields at least one fifth part of the said lands in grass, which shall have been sown after naked fallow or fallow crop well dunged, and during the last four years of the said term, to have in each year in regular order and in entire fields at least two-thirds of the said lands in grass."

During these last four years the tenant was required:

"To sow nine pounds of red clover and six pounds of white clover seeds and one furloe of the grass seed on each acre of the lands which may be in crop in the second last year of the term."

The tenant was required to use all turnips, potatoes, hay, straw and chaff on the farm. All compost and dung to be spread on the lands.

In the last year of the term fifteen tons of manure per acre were used where green crops had been grown and ten tons for naked fallow.

Richard Kirkham, Westby 1847. Term 14 Years. 78 Acres

"To keep a suficient stock of cattle upon the premises...and therewith eating up and consuming all the hay, straw and fodder (and) in case any straw shall be taken therefrom, for every ton so taken (to bring) upon the same premises in the same year at least two tons of horse or cow dung.

Not more than 26 acres to be under the plough. No more than 1 crop of corn to be reaped in succession....which shall have been marled and broken up without a green crop or summer fallow intervening; nor cut or mow any clover or grass twice in the same year, nor use any top dressing of soot, nor break up any old meadow lands, nor lay down any land to remain as meadow or pasture but shall be sown with white clover, cow grass, cocks-foot, trefoil and perennial rye grass."

Thomas Clifton would provide all materials for

"A good and substantial barn, stable for four horses, and sufficient shippon for fourteen cows.....tenant to provide carting and labour."

R. Dingle, Clifton-W-Salwick, 1852

"All draining to be done by Mr. Clifton charging 5% on the outlay except the two grass fields lying up to and on the west side of a young plantation which shall be done entirely at Mr. Clifton's expense.....Mr. Clifton to give the tenant guano for the same equal to 4 cwt per customary acre. Mr. Clifton's usual conditions of husbandry to be complied with. New buildings to be put up at Mr. Clifton's expense, the tenant carting the materials."

APPENDIX II

LANDOWNERS' INVESTMENT IN REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS : THE CLIFTON ESTATE

	Interest on Government & Land Improvement Co. loans £	Buildings £	Drainage £	Plantations & Fences £	Roads £	Total £
1863	1140	3832	554	726	163	6456
1864	1140	4098	444	824	182	6688
1865	1140	3272	476	876	226	5990
1866	1140	4352	340	859	191	6882
1867	1140	3322	247	801	176	5586
1868	1140	4287	292	884	207	6810
1869	1140	4119	286	893	183	6621
1870	722	8496	690	735	165	10,808
1871	722	7024	558	920	191	9415
1872	722	4412	344	935	568	6981
1873	722	4621	611	1014	266	7134
1874	722	5044	1343	816	374	8299
1875	722	4300	897	799	290	7008
1876	722	4142	1490	1076	376	7806
1877	722	4951	1413	685	307	8078
1878	722	4796	894	969	314	7781
1879	722	2652	1030	883	312	5709
1880	722	3614	927	861	290	6847
1881	560	3762	1290	900	296	7093
1882	560	5703	1435	954	454	9595

NOTES

1) Totals slightly distorted by expenditure on urban estate, i.e. Lytham & St. Annes though particularly prounounced for the years 1870 and 1871.

2) Additional sums spent on allowances to tenants for miscellaneous improvements i.e. grass seeds and fertilizers. viz. £693 between 1863 and 1867.

3) Government loan 1847 - £10,000. Land improvement company loan 1859 £14,456
" " " " 1881 £15,500

4) These figures also exclude the costs of servicing the accumulating deficits in the current account which in part resulted from continued expenditure on the Estate and which were later converted into mortgage debt.

APPENDIX III

THE CLIFTON ESTATE : AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF GROSS INCOME

	GROSS INCOME £	PERCENTAGE		GROSS INCOME £	PERCENTAGE
1863	29829	21.5	1874	33876	24.5
1864	30523	22.0	1875	34337	20.5
1865	30206	20.0	1876	35872	22.0
1866	32001	21.5	1877	36289	22.0
1867	31886	17.5	1878	37014	21.0
1868	32137	21.0	1879	36956	15.5
1869	32541	20.0	1880	37571	18.0
1870	32262	33.5	1881	37583	19.0
1871	32576	29.0	1882	38552	25.0
1872	34347	20.0	1883	36931	24.5
1873	32426	22.0	1884	36749	26.0
			1885	35905	26.5
			1886	36181	29.0

APPENDIX IV

THE CLIFTON ESTATE : AGRICULTURAL RENTALS

Property	Size (acres)	Rentals £ 1866-7	1876-7	1879-80
Lytham Farms	3448	5700	-	7100
Layton Hall Farms	314	614	660	663
Little Marton Farms	2563	3972	4460	4846
Great Marton Farms	296	600	950	975
Westby-W-Plumpton Farms	3340	6069	6307	6426
Clifton-W-Salwick Farms	3059	5618	5875	5947
Warton Farms	915	1797	-	2039
	13,935	24,370		27,996

APPENDIX V

SELECTED CROP RETURNS FOR A SAMPLE OF FYLDE TOWNSHIPS 1874/6-1894/6
PERCENTAGE CHANGE/ACRES

	WHEAT	BARLEY	OATS	POTATOES	TURNIPS SWEDES	BARE FALLOW	CLOVER SAINFOIN, RYE SEEDS	OTHER GRASSES UNDER ROTATION	PERMANENT MEADOW	PASTURE NOT IN ROTATION	COWS IN MILK/CALF	CATTLE OVER TWO YEARS	CATTLE UNDER TWO YEARS	SHEEP ONE YEAR AND ABOVE	SHEEP UNDER ONE YEAR	PIGS
Lytham	- 50	- 35	+ 43	+13.5	+ 3	- 75	- 2.5	- 19	+ 46	+ 21	+ 32	+ 27	- 12	+ 13	+ 76	+ 8
Westby	- 62	-71.5	+ 50	+58	-26	- 96	+112	- 71	+ 43	- 7	+ 38	- 13	+ 51	- 42	- 49	+ 86
Clifton	- 49	- 24	+ 30	+83	-25	- 82	+ 39	- 82	+ 21	+0.4	+42.5	+ 76	+ 14	- 42	- 39	+190
Gt. & Little Marton	- 72	- 79	+ 7	-19	-59	- 80	+ 14	- 32	+ 42	- 8	+ 11	+ 31	+7.5	- 63	- 62	+130
Weeton	- 39	+ 7	+ 44	+103	-23	-89	+95	- 98	+ 74	- 3	+ 38	+ 19	+ 8	- 60	- 48	+160
Great Eccleston	- 88	- 52	+ 28	+ 84	-13	-	- 19	- 46	+ 67	+ 9	+ 10	+ 53	+ 14	+ 99	+ 51	+112
Singleton	- 72	+ 5	+ 38	+ 45	+33	- 79	+ 98	- 57	+ 21	+ 13	+ 36	+ 83	+ 24	+ 33	+ 1	+206
Claughton	- 80	+350	+ 52	- 50	+193	- 64	+ 88	+ 10	+227	+ 6	+ 10	- 28	- 15	+ 58	+ 74	+ 24
Catterall	- 92	- 81	+ 11	- 48	+106	-	- 18	- 87	+ 9	- 13	+ 5	- 22	+ 18	- 41	+ 4	+ 54
Out Rawcliffe	- 81	+177	+ 29	- 36	+ 3	- 84	+ 62	+ 16	+ 44	+ 22	+ 22	+ 47	+ 29	+ 10	+100	+ 51
Garstang	-100	- 63	+ 1	+146	+ 75	- 78	+ 55	- 99	- 2	- 7	+ 25	- 3	+ 18	- 41	- 20	+ 40
Bilsborrow	- 47	-	- 29	- 49	- 36	-	- 30	-	+ 29	+ 1	+ 5	+ 31	+ 10	+ 87	+292	- 6

APPENDIX VI

ABATEMENT IN RENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RENTALS 1882-1894

	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	OUTLAY ON PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS 1882-1894
Derby Estate 43,217 Acres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%	-	-	10%	-	£199,000
Kay-Shuttleworth Estate 471 Acres				4.1%	0.9%	12.4%		3.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.9%	9.0%		£1900
Winmarleigh Estate 2500 Acres	10% at intervals;			permanent reduction of 10% made in 1893.										10% of rentals
Rawstorne Estate 3-4000 Acres	2	0%		10%	10%		10%	10%			10%	10%		£20,800
Clifton Estate 16,000 Acres	2.7%	0.3%	2.5%	1.4%	1.8%	4.9%	3.4%	4.0%	4.0%	5.2%	1.3%	4.1%		£90,000
Ormrod Estate 6000 Acres	Individual Abatements of 5-10%			General Reduction of 5-15%					5%		10%	20%		-
Fitzherbert Brockholes Estate 3800 Acres	30% plus 12½% for "Bad Harvests"			5%	10%	10%	7%			10%	10%			£26,000
Cavendish Estate 14,000 Acres					10%	10%	10%	10%			10%	10%		£13,240
Bective Estate 3,800 Acres	3½%	3%	3%	6%	11½%	12%	17½%	15%	11½%	12¾%	21¾%	21¾%		An average of 12½% of gross rental

Sources: First Report of the Royal Commission on the Agricultural Depression, XVI, 1894. Appendix B.6. pp.54-55.
L.R.O. DDX 1966 Deposit. Ledger Books 3-4.

NOTES:
1) The Derby Estate refers to the property in South-West Lancashire.
2) In addition to abatements Kay-Shuttleworth made permanent reductions totalling 15½% between 1885 and 1887.
3) 9½% of total reductions on the Clifton Estate were of a permanent nature.
4) Permanent reductions on the Fitzherbert-Brockholes Estate totalled 15% between 1885 and 1887.
5) On all of the Estates only a fraction of the total improvement costs were passed on to tenants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Estate Papers

(Deposited with the Lancashire Records Office unless otherwise stated.)

DDCl. The Clifton Estate. Deposited in four accessions, 1942, 1954, 1957 and 1966. The last deposit is by far the largest and most valuable but is totally uncalendared.

DDLi. The Lilford Estate. Only roughly calendared.

HHDe. The Hesketh Estate. (Rufford Hall)

The Hesketh Estate (North Meols). Meols Hall, Southport.

DDCa. The Cavendish (Devonshire) Estate.

DDK. The Derby Estate. Available up to the early 1840s only.

DDEg. The Wilton (Egerton) Estate. Only roughly calendared.

DDSc. The Scarisbrick Estate. A very large, recent deposit. Wigan Records Office also holds papers relating to the Scarisbrick Estate.

DDm. The Sefton (Molyneux) Estate.

DDBl. and DDLn. The Blundell Estate.

DDFa. The Ffarington Estate.

DDQ. The Garnett Estate. Roughly calendared. Other estate papers in the private possession of Major W. Garnett, Quernmore Park, Lancaster.

DDTr. The Trappes-Lomax Estate.

DDGr. The Dawson-Green Estate.

DDTy. The Townley Estate.

DDCo. The Cotham Estate.

DDCm. The Miller Estate.

DDRf. The Myerscough Hall Estate.

DDx. A large and valuable collection of uncalandered papers and accounts relating to estates at Samlesbury, Catterall, Winmarleigh and Stalmine. Also assorted correspondence, farmers' accounts and memoranda.

Legal Papers

DDPl. Plant, Abbott and Plant. Property Deeds.

DDx. Wilson, Wright and Ashcroft. Deeds, Accounts and correspondence.

Parish Records

PR. 2831 and 2926. Marton, Lund, Clifton and Warton Vestry Minutes, Overseers Accounts and School Records.

RC.Ly. St. Peter's Lytham. Sick Club Minutes and Accounts. Lytham Charities Correspondence.

Local Authorities

PUF. Fylde Poor Law Union. Minutes of the Board of Guardians.

SAF. Fylde Rural Sanitary Authority Minutes.

MBLS. Lytham Improvement Commissioners, Local Board and Urban District Council; St. Anne's Local Board and Urban District Council. Committee Minutes.

DDx 103 Lytham Charities Records.

DRB. Tithe Maps and Schedules; Lytham, Marton, Westby-with-Plumpton, Clifton-with-Salwick, Kirkham.

Q.DL. Land Tax Assessments. 1781-1831.

Census Enumerators Schedules, 1851-71.

Crop Returns for Fylde Townships 1874/6 - 1894/6

Newspapers

Selected issues from:

Preston Guardian

Preston Pilot

Preston Chronicle

Kirkham and Lytham Times.

Lytham Standard.

Parliamentary Papers

1833, v, Report of the Select Committee on the State of Agriculture.

1836, viii, Report of the Select Committee on the State of Agriculture.

1843, XII, Report of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissions on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture.

1845, XII Report of the Select Committee(House of Lords) to enable possessors of entailed estates to charge for the purpose of draining.

1847-8,Vii, Report of the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs.

1865, XXVi, Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council. Appendix Six on Agricultural Dwellings.

1867-8, Xiii, Report of the Select Committee on Agricultural Employment.

1868-9, Xiii, Second Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture.

1870, Xiii, Third and Fourth Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture.

1873, XVi, Report of the Select Committee (House of Lords) on the Improvement of Land.

1881-2, XV, XiV, XVii, Report of the Royal Commission on the Depressed Condition of the Agricultural Interests.

1893-4, XXXV, XXXVii, Royal Commission on Labour.

1894-6, Xvi, XVii, First and Second Reports of the Royal Commission on the Agricultural Depression.

Contemporary Sources

Baines Directory of Lancashire, 1825.

E. Baines, A History of Lancashire, Manchester, 1888.

J. Bateman, The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 1883.

J. Beasley, The Duties and Privileges of the Owners, Occupiers and Cultivators of the Soil, London, 1860.

G. Beesley, A Report on the State of Agriculture in Lancashire, Preston, 1849.

J. Binns, Notes on the Agriculture in Lancashire with suggestions for its improvement. Preston, 1851.

G.C. Broderick, English Land and English Landlords, London, 1881.

J. Burke, Landed Gentry, London, 1849 and 1898.

J. Burke, Peerage and Baronetage, London, 1900.

J. Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, London, 1968 edition.

J. Caird, The Landed interest and supply of Food, London, 1877.

J. Croston, The County Families of Lancashire and Cheshire, Manchester, 1877.

R.W. Dickson, General view of the Agriculture of Lancashire, London, 1851.

Lord Ernlie, English Farming; Past and Present, London, 1901.

J. Foster, The County Families of England. Vol.1. Lancashire, London, 1873.

W.J. Garnett, A Prize Report on the Farming of Lancashire, London, 1873.

F.G. Heath, The English Peasantry, London, 1874.

J. Holt, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster, London 1795.

T.E. Kebbel, The Agricultural Labourer, London, 1877.

Kelly's Directory of Lancashire, 1910 .

Mannex Directory of Lancashire, 1866

D.G.F. McDonald, Estate Management, London, 1868.

W.T. Pike, "New Century Series", published in thirty two volumes between 1898 and 1911. Lancashire is covered by volume nine, published in 1903.

L. Rawstorne, Lancashire Farming, Preston, 1843.

W. Rothwell, Report of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster, London, 1850.

Slater's Directory of Lancashire, 1889.

E. Walford, The County Families of the United Kingdom, London, 1875.

W. Bence-Jones, Landowning as a Business, _The Nineteenth Century_, ii, 1882.

W.E. Bear, Our Agricultural Population, _Economic Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society_, XiV, 1878.

F. Clifford, The Labour Bill in Farming, _Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society_, XI, 1875.

J. Dent, The Present Condition of the English Agricultural Labourer, _Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society_, Vii, 1871.

G. Nicholls, On the condition of the Agricultural Labourer with suggestions for its improvement, _Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society_, 1846.

A. Wilson-Fox, Agricultural Wages in England and Wales During the Last Fifty Years, _Journal of the Royal Statistical Society of England_, 1903.

The Agricultural Labourer: His Requirements as considered at recent Agricultural Meetings, _Farmers' Magazine_, 1856.

Secondary Works

M. Anderson, Family Structure in 19th Century Lancashire. Cambridge, 1971.

C. Arthur, A History of the Fylde Waterworks, Blackpool, 1911.

M.K. Ashby Joseph Ashby of Tysoe 1859-1919: A Study of English Village Life. London, 1961.

P.S. Bagwell, The Transport Revolution from 1770, London, 1974.

J. Barron,	A History of the Ribble Navigation, Preston, 1938.
T.W. Beastall,	North Country Estate; Lumleys and Sandersons 1600-1900, Chichester,1975.
G. Best,	Mid-Victorian Britain, London, 1971.
S. Broadbridge,	Studies in Railway Expansion and the Capital Market in England, 1825-1873, London, 1970.
W.L. Burn,	The Age of Equipoise, London, 1964.
J. Burnett,	Plenty of Want, Newton-Abbott, 1968.
J. Burnett,	A Social History of Housing 1815-1970, London, 1980.
J. Butt and I.F. Clarke,	The Victorians and Social Protect, Newton-Abbott, 1973.
D. Cannadine,	Patricians, Power and Politics in 19th Century Towns, Leicester, 1981, (Forthcoming).
D. Cannadine,	Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1910, Leicester, 1979.
C.W. Chalklin,	The Provincial Towns of Georgian England, Toronto, 1974.
J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay.	The Agricultural Revolution 1760-1880, London, 1966.
S.G. Checkland,	The Rise of Industrial Society in England 1815-1885, London, 1964.
R.A. Church,	The Great Victorian Boom 1850-73, London, 1975.
J.H. Clapham,	An Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol.II, Cambridge, 1932.
G.K. Clarke,	An Expanding Society, Cambridge, 1967.
P.F. Clarke,	Lancashire and the New Liberalism, Cambridge, 1971.
A.P. Donajgrodzski	(Ed.) Social Control in 19th Century Britain, London, 1977.
R. Douglas,	Land, People and Politics: A History of the Land Question in the United Kingdom 1878-1952, London, 1976.

H.J. Dyos (Ed.) The Study of Urban History, London, 1968.

E. Evans, The Contentions Tithe, London, 1976.

A. Everitt, The Pattern of Rural Dissent: The 19th Century, Leicester, 1972.

A. Everitt, Perspectives in English Urban History, London, 1973.

K. Eyre, Seven Golden Miles, Dalesman, 1975.

H.S.A. Fox and R. Butlin (Eds.) Change in the Countryside, Oxford, 1979.

D. Fraser (Ed.) The New Poor Law in the 19th Century, London, 1976.

G.E. Fussell, The English Dairy Farmer 1500-1900, London, 1966.

E. Gauldie, Cruel Habitations, London, 1974.

J.M. Goldstrom, Education: Elementary Education 1780-1900, Newton-Abbott, 1972.

W.L. Guttsman (Ed.) The English Ruling Class, London, 1969.

E.P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, Toronto, 1973.

P. Hollis, Class and Conflict in 19th Century England, 1815-50, London, 1973.

P. Horn, Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside, Dublin 1976.

D.H. Howell, Land and People in 19th Century Wales, London, 1977.

K. Hudson, Patriotism with Profit: Agricultural Societies in the 18th and 19th Centuries, London, 1972.

E.H. Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in England and Wales 1850-1914. Oxford, 1973.

J.S. Hurt, Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918, London, 1979.

G. Kitson-Clarke, The Making of Victorian England, London, 1962.

O. MacDonagh, Early Victorian Government 1830-70, London, 1977.

J. Marshall, The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, London, 1969.

J.D. Marshall, Furness and the Industrial Revolution, Barrow, 1958.

E. Midwinter, Law and Order in Early Victorian Lancashire, York, 1968.

E. Midwinter, Social Administration in Lancashire 1830-1860, Manchester, 1969.

D.R. Mills (Ed.) English Rural Communities, London, 1974.

D.R. Mills, Lord and Peasant in 19th Century Britain, London, 1980.

G.E. Mingay, English Landed Society in the 18th Century, Toronto, 1963.

G.E. Mingay, The Gentry, London, 1976.

B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, Cambridge, 1962.

H. Newby, The Deferential Worker, Wisconsin, 1977.

C.S. Orwin and E.H. Whetham, History of British Agriculture 1846-1914, London, 1964.

R.A.C. Parker, Coke of Norfolk: A Financial and Agricultural Survey 1707-1842, Oxford, 1975.

H.J. Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880, London, 1969.

P.J. Perry (Ed.) British Agriculture 1875-1914, London, 1973.

P.J. Perry, British Farming in the Great Depression 1870-1914, Newton-Abbott, 1974.

M.E. Rose, The Relief of Poverty, London, 1972.

R. Samuel (Ed.), Village Life and Labour, London,1972.

S.B. Saul, The Myth of the Great Depression, London, 1969.

J. Saville, Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1871, London, 1953.

M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd (Eds.) Middle Class Housing in 19th Century Britain, London, 1977

D. Spring, The English Landed Estate in the 19th Century: Its Administration, Massachusetts, 1963.

P. Stansky (Ed.) The Victorian Revolution - Government and Society in Victorian Britain, New York, 1973.

F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the 19th Century, London, 1963.

W. Thornhill (Ed.) The Growth and Reform of English Local Government, London, 1972.

J.T. Ward and R.G.Wilson (Eds.) Land and Industry, Newton-Abbott, 1971.

O. Westhall, Windermere in the 19th Century, Lancaster, 1976.

G.L. Wright, The History of the Lytham Charities, Preston, 1950.

Unpublished Theses

W. Bentley, A History of Elementary Education on the Fylde, M.A., Liverpool, 1961.

D. Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns in the 19th Century: A Case Study of the Calthorpe's and Birmingham 1810-1910, D.Phil., Oxford, 1975.

J. Davies, Glamorgan and the Bute Estate 1866-1947, Ph.D., Wales, 1969.

D. Foster, The Changing Social and Political Composition of the Lancashire County Magistracy 1821-51, Ph.D., Lancaster, 1971.

J.M. Howells, The Crosswood Estate: Its Growth and Economic Development 1683-1899, M.A., Wales, 1956.

R. Knapp, The Making of the Landed Elite: Social Mobility in Lancashire with Specific Reference to the Social Origins of Landowners in the Modern Domesday Return 1873-6, Ph.D., Lancaster, 1970.

C. Shrimpton, The Landed Society and Farming Community of Essex in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries, Ph.D., Cambridge, 1965.

R.W. Sturgess, The Response of Agriculture in Staffordshire to the Price Changes of the 19th Century, Ph.D., Manchester 1965.

J.K. Walton, The Social Development of Blackpool 1788-1914, Ph.D., Lancaster, 1974.

J.T. Ward, A Study of Capital and Rental Values of Agricultural Land in England and Wales 1858-1958, Ph.D., London, 1960.

Articles

A note on Abbreviations:

Agricultural History Review -	Ag.Hist. Rev.
English Historical Review -	E.H.R.
Economic History Review -	Ec. Hist. Rev.
Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society -	T.L.C.A.S.
Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society -	T.L.C.H.S.
Transactions of the Royal Historical Society -	T.R.H.S.

T.W. Beastall, A South Yorkshire Estate in the Late 19th Century, Ag.Hist.Rev. XIv, 1966.

J. Blackman, The Food Supply of an Industrial Town: A Study of Sheffield's Public Markets 1780-1900, Business History, 5, 1963.

J. Blackman, The Cattle Trade and Agrarian Change on the Eve of the Railway Age, Ag.Hist. Rev., XXiii, 1975.

A, Brundage, The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: A Re-Appraisal of the Revolution in Government, E.H.R. 87.

D. Cannadine, Victorian Cities: How Different? Social History, 4, 1977.

D. Cannadine, Aristocratic Indebtedness in the 19th Century: The Case Re-opened, Ec.Hist.Rev., 1977.

D. Cannadine, The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire c.1810-1920. Ag.Hist.Rev. XXV,1977.

E.J.T. Collins and E.J. Jones, Sectoral Advance in English Agriculture, Ag.Hist.Rev. XV, 1967.

J.T. Coppock, Agricultural Changes in the Chilterns 1875-1900, Ag.Hist.Rev., iX, 1961.

R.J. Cryer, Limitations to Agrarian Development in 19th Century Wales, Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, XXVii.

G. Kitson-Clarke, The Repeal of the Corn Laws and the Politics of the 1840s, E.H.R., 1951-2.

J. Davies, The End of the Great Estates and the Rise of Freehold Farming in Wales, Welsh History Review, Vii, 1974.

J.P.D. Dunbabin, The Revolt of the Field: The Agricultural Labourers' Movement in 1870, Past and Present, 1963.

J.P.D. Dunbabin, The Incidence and Organisation of Agricultural Trades Unionism, Ag.Hist.Rev., XVi, 1968.

H. Durant, The Development of Landownership, 1873-1925, with special reference to Bedfordshire, Sociological Review, XXViii, 1963.

S. Fairlie, The Corn Laws and British Wheat Production, Ec.Hist.Rev.,XXii, 1969.

S. Farrant, The Management of Four Estate in the Lower Ouse Valley (Sussex) and Agricultural Change 1840-1920, Southern History, Vol.1. 1979.

J.R. Fisher, The Farmers' Alliance: An Agricultural Protest Movement of the 1880s, Ag.Hist.Rev., XXVi, 1978.

T.W. Fletcher, The Great Depression in English Agriculture 1873-96, Ec.Hist.Rev.,Xiii, 1960-1.

T.W. Fletcher, Lancashire Livestock Farming During the Great Depression, Ag.Hist.Rev.,iX, 1961.

T.W. Fletcher, The Agrarian Revolution in Arable Lancashire, T.L.C.A.S., LXXii, 1962.

M.W. Flinn, Trends in Real Wages, *Ec.Hist.Rev.*, XXvii, 1974.

D. Foster, The Politics of Uncontested Elections: North Lancashire 1832-65, *Northern History*, 1977.

R.M. Gutchen, Local Improvements and Centralisation in 19th Century England, *Historical Journal*, iV, 1961.

H.J. Habakkuk, English Landownership 1680-1740, *Ec.Hist.Rev.*,X, 1940.

J.R. Harris, The Hughes Papers: Lancashire Social Life 1780-1825, *T.L.C.H.S.*, 103, 1951.

B. Harrison, Philanthropy and the Victorians, *Victorian Studies*, iX, 1965-6.

E.P. Hennock, Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government,1835-1900, *Historical Journal*, Vi, 1963.

B.A. Holderness, Open and Closed Parishes in England in the 18th and 19th Centuries, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, XX, 1972.

B.A. Holderness, Landlords' Capital Formation in East Anglia 1750-1870, *Ec.Hist.Rev.*,XXV,1972.

D.W. Howell, The Impact of Railways on Agricultural Development in 19th Century Wales, *Welsh History Review*, Vii, 1974.

E.H. Hunt, Labour Productivity in English Agriculture 1850-1914, *Ec.Hist.Rev.*,XX, 1967.

J.S. Hurt, Landowners, Farmers and Clergy and the Financing of Rural Education before 1870, *Journal of Educational Administrative History*, 1, 1968.

E.L. Jones, English Farming Before and During the 19th Century. *Ec.Hist.Rev.*,XV, 1962-3.

E.L. Jones, The Changing Basis of British Agricultural Prosperity 1853-73, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, X, 1962.

E.L. Jones, The Agricultural Labour Market in England 1793-1872, *Ec.Hist.Rev.* XVii, 1964-5.

W.Harwood-Long, The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*,Xi, 1963.

R.J.P. Kain, Tithe Surveys and Landownership, Journal of Historical Geography, 1, 1975.

R. Lambert, Central and Local Relations in Mid-Victorian England: The Local Government Act Offices 1858-71, Victorian Studies, Vi,

R. Lawton, Population Changes in England and Wales in the Later 19th Century: An Analysis of Trends by Registration Districts, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, XLiv, 1968.

O. MacDonagh, The 19th Century Revolution in Government: A Re-Appraisal, Historical Journal, i, 1958.

J.R. McQuiston, Tenant-Right: Farmer Against Landlord in Victorian England 1847-83, Agricultural History, XLVii, 1973.

J.D. Marshall, The Lancashire Rural Labourer in the Early 19th Century, T.L.C.A.S., LXXi, 1961.

J.D. Marshall and S. Pollard, The Furness Railway and the Growth of Barrow, Transport History, 1, 1952.

P.K. O'Brien, D.Heath, and C. Keyder, Agricultural Efficiency in Britain and France 1815-1914, Journal of European Economic History, Vi, 1977.

H. Perkin, The 'Social Tone' of Victorian Seaside Resorts in the North-West, Northern History, 1975.

J.A. Perkins, Tenure, Tenant Right and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey 1780-1850, Ag.Hist Rev., XXiii, 1975.

R. Perren, The Landlord and Agricultural Transformation 1870-1900, Ag.Hist.Rev., XViii, 1970.

P.J. Perry, High Farming in Victorian Britain, Agricultural History, Lii, 1978.

A.D.M. Phillips, Underdraining and the English Clay Lands 1850-80; A Review, Ag.Hist.Rev., XVii, 1969.

J.H. Plumb, Nobility and Gentry in the Early 18th Century, History Today, V, 1955.

R.E. Pumphrey, The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study in Adaptation of a Social Institution, American Historical Review, LXV, 1959.

T.R. Raybould, Systems of Management and Administration on the Dudley Estates 1774-1833, Business History, X, 1968.

D.A. Reeder, The Politics of Urban Leasehold in Late Victorian England, International Review of Social History, Vii, 1966.

F. Richards, The Industrial Face of a Great Estate: Trentham and Lilleshall 1780-1860, Ec.Hist.Rev., XXVii, 1974.

J. Roselli, An Indian Governor in the Norfolk Marshland: Lord William Bentinck as Improver, Ag.Hist.Rev., XIX, 1971.

S.B. Saul, House Building in England 1890-1914, Ec.Hist.Rev., XV, 1962-3.

J.A. Sheppard, East Yorkshire's Agricultural Labour Force in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, Ag.Hist.Rev., ix, 1961.

C.J. Smith, The Movement of Population in England and Wales in 1851 and 1861, Geographical Journal, CXVii, 1951.

W.J. Smith, Blackpool: A Sketch of its Growth. T.L.C.A.S., LXiX, 1959.

D. Spring, English Landed Estates in the Age of Coal and Iron 1830-80, Journal of Economic History, Xi, 1951.

D. Spring A Great Agricultural Estate: Netherby under Sir James Graham 1820-45, Agricultural History, XXiX, 1955.

D. Spring, English Landownership in the 19th Century: A Critical Note, Ec.Hist.Rev., ix, 1957.

D. Spring and T.L. Crosby, George Webb Hall and the Agricultural Association, Journal of British Studies, 1962.

R.W. Sturgess, The Agricultural Revolution on the English Clays, Ag.Hist.Rev., XiV, 1966.

D. Taylor, The English Dairy Industry 1860-1913: The Need for a Re-assessment, Ag.Hist. Rev., XXii, 1974.

H.M. Thomas, Margam Estate Management 1785-1860, *Glamorgan Historian*, 1969.

F.M.L. Thompson, The End of a Great Estate, *E.H.R.*, 1955.

F.M.L. Thompson, The Land Market in the 19th Century. *Oxford Economic Papers*, iX, 1957.

F.M.L. Thompson, Land and Politics in England in the 19th Century, *T.R.H.S.*, XV, 1965.

F.M.L. Thompson, The Social Distribution of Landed Property in England since the 16th Century, *E.H.R.*, XiX, 1966.

F.M.L. Thompson, The Second Agricultural Revolution 1815-80, *Ec.Hist.Rev.*, XXi, 1968.

R.J. Thompson, An Enquiry into the Rents of Agricultural Land in England and Wales in the 19th Century, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, LXX, 1907.

W. Vamplew, A Grain of Truth: The 19th Century Corn Averages, *Ag.Hist.,Rev.*, XXViii, 1980.

J.T. Ward, The Earls Fitzwilliam and the Wentworth-Woodhouse Estate in the 19th Century, *Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research*, March, 1960.

J.T. Ward, Ayrshire Landed Estates in the 19th Century, *Ayrshire Collection*, Viii, 1967-9.

E.A. Wasson, The Third Earl Spencer and Agriculture 1818-45, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, XXVi, 1979.

E.H. Whetham, Livestock Prices in Britain 1851-93, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, Xi, 1962.

E.H. Whetham, The Changing Cattle Enterprise in England and Wales 1870-1910, *Geographical Journal*, 1963.

E.H. Whetham, Sectoral Advance in English Agriculture, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, XVi, 1968.

A.R. Wilkes, Adjustments in Arable Farming after the Napoleonic Wars, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, XXViii, 1980.

J.A. Yelling, Changes in Crop Production in East Worcestershire 1840-1867, *Ag.Hist.Rev.*, XXi, 1973.

C.H.E. Zangeril, The Social Composition of the County Magistracy in England and Wales 1831-71, *Journal of British Studies*, 1971.