

LANDSCAPE WITH BUILDINGS
A North Staffordshire study based
on the medieval parish of Leek

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SUMMARY

Leek, with 53,102 acres and nineteen townships, was the largest of Staffordshire's medieval parishes, and one for which an earlier origin has been suggested. Set in the foothills of the Pennines it formed part of the Leek and Macclesfield Forest where, in the early thirteenth century, Ranulph, Earl of Chester, established both the market town of Leek and the Cistercian abbey of Dieulacres. Altitude, high rainfall and a short growing season made it a pastoral area with a settlement pattern of small hamlets and isolated farms. It was an 'open' parish with huge areas of waste, and population growth between 1563 and 1666 was well above the national average.

The absence of wealth is reflected in the survival rate of early houses. Only five pre-date 1500, and sixteenth century remains are small and generally fragmentary. In the seventeenth century national growth worked in favour of the pastoral farmer. Leek's cattle market became one of the most important in the county, and a newfound prosperity manifested itself in the rural areas in good quality stone housing. The houses of the gentry and yeoman farmers survive in considerable numbers from this period, and form a major element in this study. The houses of the poor have been more elusive.

Pastoral farming was increasingly supplemented by industry. Iron smelting had been present from the Middle Ages, but faded away in the eighteenth century. The making of buttons and silk goods were established in the seventeenth century, and the eighteenth century saw a modest expansion of urban wealth, and a new generation of houses built for dyers, button-men, 'mohair' merchants and lawyers. The button industry dwindled in the face of competition from Birmingham, but the silk industry survived to become industrialized in the nineteenth century, when the market town was engulfed in a sea of mill buildings and workers housing.

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KEY TO FIGURE REFERENCES

- [000] Reference number for Appendix 6.1.
- (Fig.) Figure within a chapter.
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PREFACE

Parish studies are legion. At their best they give insight into far more than the few hundred acres they purport to cover. They are as variable as the communities they describe and the interests of their authors. Hoskins' (1957) classic study of Wigston Magna concentrates on the history of a nucleated village in the heart of open-field England. Produced as a research project involving large teams of people, Dyer's study of settlement and society in the parish of Hanbury (1991) combines archaeological fieldwork with historical research to provide a picture of changing land use in a woodland area of Worcestershire. Levine and Wrightson's study of Whickham (1991) provides a detailed insight into early industrialization in a rural parish on Tyneside. From Warwickshire comes Alcock's study of Stoneleigh (1993), concentrating on vernacular housing between 1500 and 1800. Spufford's study of poverty in the parish of Eccleshall (1995) covers a smaller time-span, but allows detailed coverage of her chosen subject.

The parishes concerned range in size from approximately 3,000 acres at Wigston to 21,738 acres at Eccleshall. The medieval parish of Leek is still larger, with 53,102 acres. The earlier chapters seek to establish the general character of the area, its geology, topography, and the settlement patterns that evolved from the Middle Ages. Central to the theme is an attempt to integrate housing into a study of the local economy as it can be seen through population growth, farming, rural industry, and the developing importance of the town between 1500 and 1750. The size of the parish makes this a realistic proposal: it is small enough to know all the major buildings, while large enough to provide a crosscut of the smaller house types.

In this respect the studies mentioned above are variable. Hoskins, always aware of housing as an issue, includes an 'excursus' as a postscript to the main text, and relies on documentary sources for his discussion. The scale of the Hanbury study is small, precluding the inclusion of additional topics, while that of Whickham, though much larger, has its own issues to address. By contrast, Alcock's study of Stoneleigh is substantially absorbed with the physical and documentary details of the housing to the exclusion of other topics. Balanced between the two, Spufford is aware of the housing, but like Hoskins relies substantially on exploration through documentation.

To marry the needs of the different disciplines is problematic. Archaeology is immensely time-consuming, whether it is field walking or building survey. However desirable, the latter may require skills lying outside the experience of the historian, just as medieval latin may lie outside the experience of the archaeologist.

Here a compromise has been attempted. Time has precluded field walking, severely limiting any discussion of pre-Conquest Leek. Field archaeology for the succeeding periods has been confined to a broad-brush approach, aiming to isolate the main elements of landscape development and industry up to 1750, and including only a cursory look at settlement form. Documentary work for the medieval period has been confined to printed sources, and in the absence of translated transcriptions, the manor records for Horton have been used on a very selective basis. Few domestic buildings survive before 1500, thus the remainder of the study concentrates on the period between 1500 and 1750, when vernacular buildings become increasingly common, and which includes Hoskins' period of 'the great rebuilding' from 1580 to 1640 (1953). Here as elsewhere in England this is a discussion point, not a definitive date range, and the local economy produces its own twists to the tale both before and after these dates.

Considerable time has been spent on documents that relate directly to the surviving houses, as the combination of building, descriptive inventory, deeds and Hearth Tax figures is far more illuminating than the component parts. The question of how building form and the Hearth Tax returns relate has been a key point in the enquiry, as has the relative rarity of descriptive inventories. For the buildings themselves, a key point has been their position in the landscape. When was the farm first established, what was the status of its owner, and why should the present farmhouse be what it is.

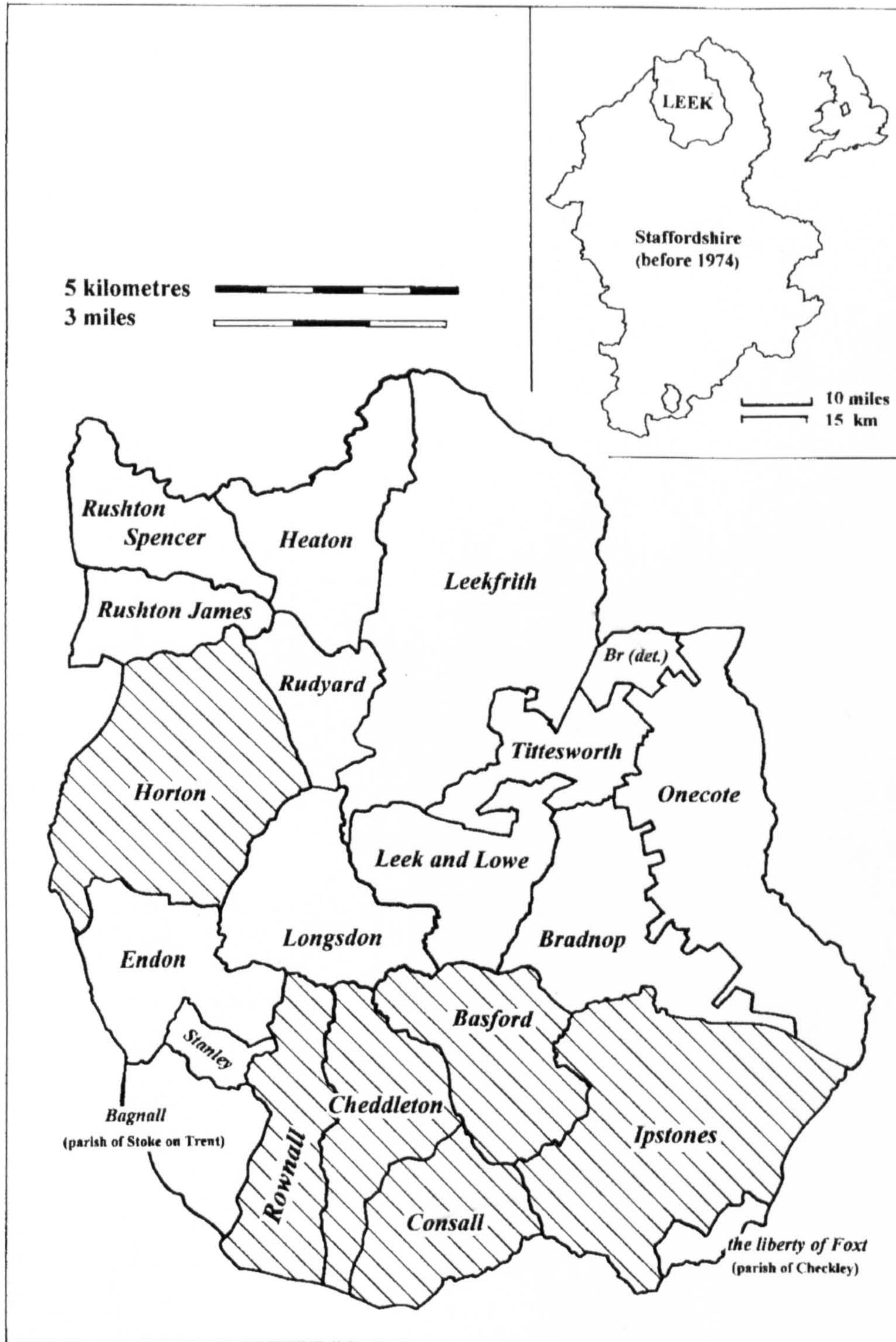


Fig. 1.1 Location map: Leek and its townships.

The shaded areas belonged to separate parishes by the end of the sixteenth century

INTRODUCTION

The medieval parish of Leek lies on the northern border of Staffordshire and covers 53,102 acres (Fig. 1.1). The nineteen townships which made up the parish remained together throughout the Middle Ages, but by the end of the sixteenth century Cheddleton (with the townships of Basford, Consall and Rownall), Horton, and

Ipstones (with part of Foxt) had become separate parishes. The remaining 33,254 acres, containing the townships of Leek and Lowe, Bradnop, Endon, Heaton, Leekfrith, Longsdon, Onecote, Rudyard, Rushton James, Rushton Spencer, Stanley, and Tittesworth still formed a single parish in the nineteenth century.¹

The ‘Liberty of Foxt’, which formed the eastern part of Foxt township, belonged to the parish of Checkley; and the township of Bagnall belonged to Stoke-on-Trent. Both were linked manorially to townships within the parish of Leek and form an integral part of the study area. The archaeology and history of the resultant 55,160 acres reflects the importance of Leek as the centre of an early estate, as an ecclesiastical centre, as a market town, and finally as a centre of industrial development.

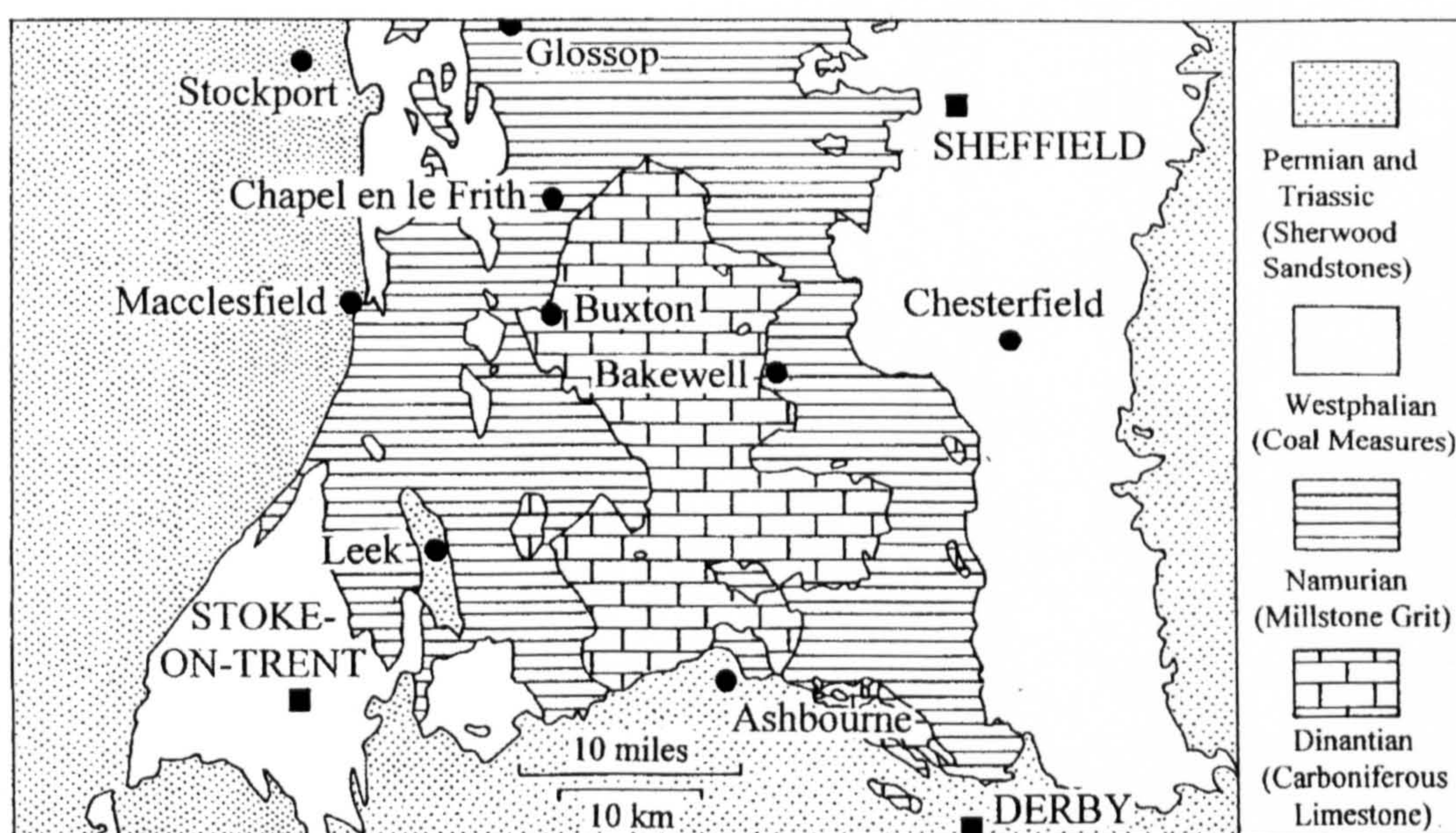


Fig. 1.2 *The geological setting.* Based on Aitkenhead et al (1985), Fig. 1.

THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

(i) *Geology*

Leek lies at the south western end of the Pennines where deeply dissected foothills are formed largely of the folded sandstones and mudstones of the Millstone Grit Series (Fig. 1.2). The lowest land lies around 150 metres/500 feet, rising frequently above 300 metres/1000 feet in the moorland areas, with occasional peaks as high as 450 metres/1500 feet. To the east are the Carboniferous Limestones of the White Peak; to the west is the Cheshire Plain where younger sandstones are overlain by boulder clay. To the immediate south and south west lie the Coal Measures with their accompanying

¹ PRO SC6/3353. *VCH Staffs*, I, 327-29; VII, 78.

ironstones.² Each major contrast has produced a distinctive pattern of development, governed by the topography, and the presence or absence of good soils for cultivation. On the gritstones around Leek, the steep hillsides are difficult to cultivate, and the soils are generally thin except where drift deposits occur.³ As a result it has remained an area of scattered hamlets and isolated farms, with stock-rearing as the central feature of a farming economy that discovered the necessity of diversification many centuries ago.

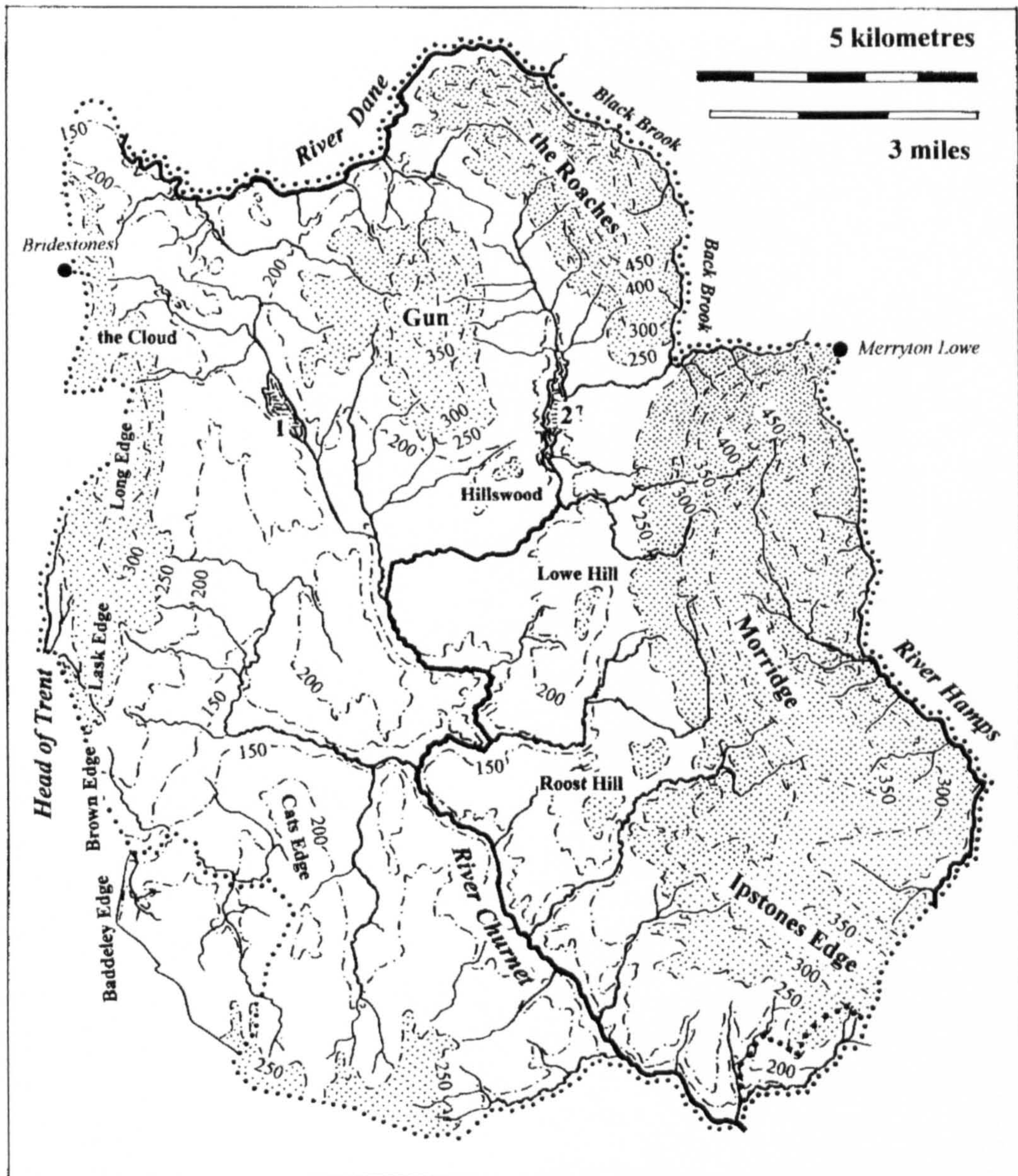


Fig. 1.3 *Physical features.* (1 Rudyard Lake; 2 Tittesworth reservoir)

The parish is an area of fast flowing streams, and lies across the country's main watershed (Fig. 1.3).⁴ The extreme north is drained by the River Dane, which, with its tributaries, belongs to the westward catchment area. The rest of the parish is drained by

² Chisholm et al, 1988, Fig. 1.

³ Evans et al, 1986, 1-2.

⁴ Evans et al, 1986, 2.

the Head of Trent, the River Churnet, the River Hamps and their tributaries, which belong to the eastward flowing system.

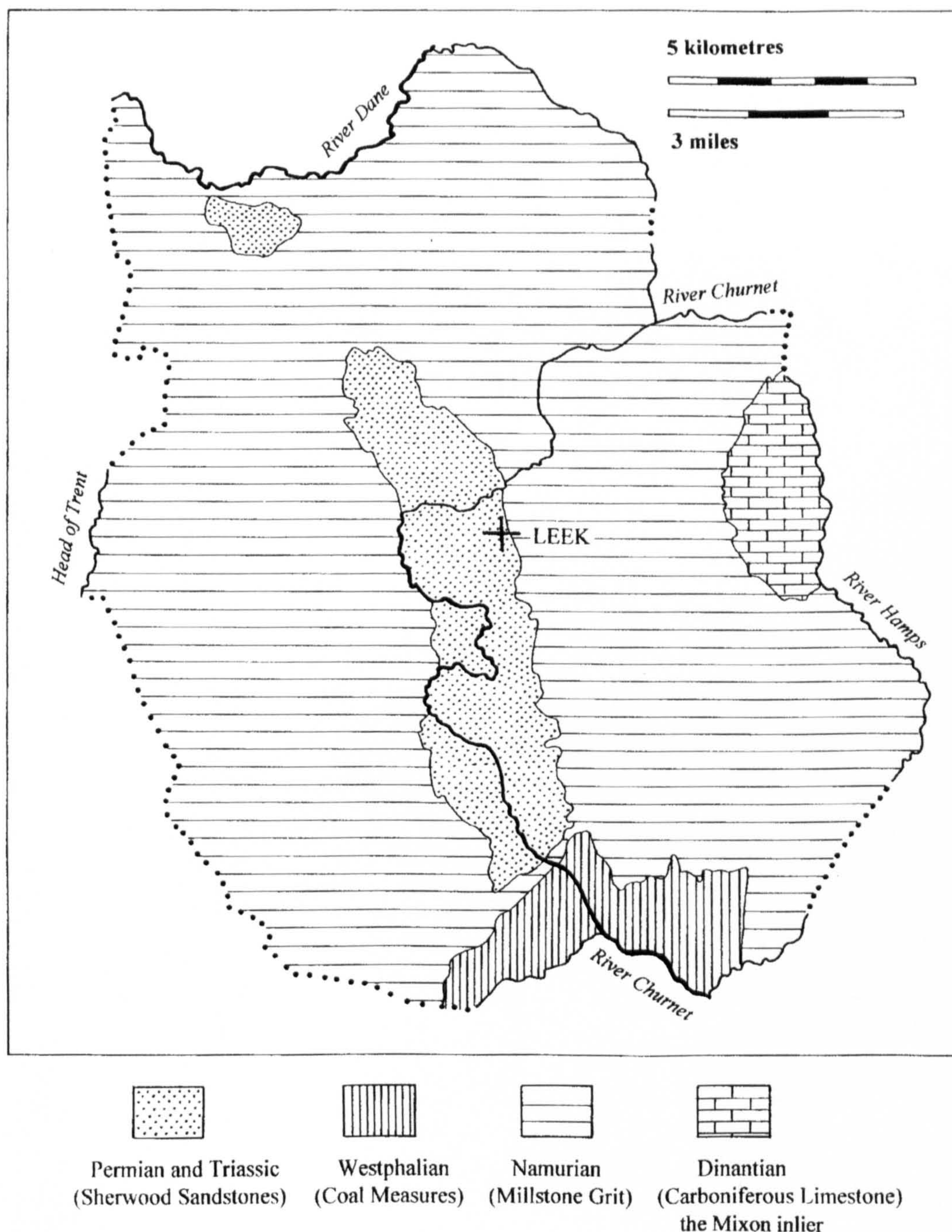


Fig. 1.4 *The solid geology indicating the four main rock types*⁵

The area lies west of the Dinantian rocks, mainly marine limestones traditionally known as Carboniferous Limestone which form the White Peak (Fig. 1.2), but an inlier forms a large hump-backed hill on the eastern boundary of the parish, and consists mainly of Mixon limestone-shales (Fig. 1.4).⁶ High rainfall over the Pennines ensures

⁵ Based on the British Geological Survey for Macclesfield (110), for Buxton (111), for Stoke-on-Trent (123), and for Ashbourne (124)

⁶ Aitkenhead et al 1985, Figs. 1, 3 and 21; 4, 51, 53-4.

that the soils are acid even on the limestone, and this area provided the parish with its nearest source of raw materials for the production of lime, for soil improvement, as a building material, and as a potential flux for iron smelting.

The majority of the area lies on a Namurian outcrop known as the Millstone Grit Series, mainly sandstones, siltstones and mudstones. The coarse-grained sandstones which gave rise to the name are found only in the upper half of the series.⁷ These are sometimes used for quoins and other detailing in local buildings, while the main walls reflect the nearest available stone suitable for rubble walling. No evidence has been found for the production of millstones, the nearest sources being either Mow Cop, or a series of sites on the eastern side of the Peak District, near Hathersage.⁸

Despite the proximity of Stoke-on-Trent, where the presence of coal has been of major significance, the Westphalian rocks on which it is found are only evident within the parish in the townships of Ipstones and Cheddleton, which lie to the north of the Cheadle coal fields. A series of bloomeries scattered across the parish indicate iron smelting of medieval and early post-medieval date, and the present state of Ipstones village owes more to the mid-late eighteenth century development of the coal and ironstone industries⁹ than it does to its earlier agricultural history.

The nearest outcrops to serve the north of the parish lie just outside its present boundaries. The western boundary of Horton lies along the divide between the gritstone and the coal measures, and to the east coal outcrops at Goyt's Moss and Goldsitch Moss, where extensive lines of bell pits lie near the River Goyt.¹⁰ It was the exploitation of these resources that was responsible for the development of the high moorland to the east of the Roaches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The town of Leek lies on an elongated outlier of red pebbly Sherwood sandstone belonging to the Hawkstone formation which lies several kilometres north of the main Staffordshire outcrop, and is presumed to be of Triassic age. The sandstone provides an excellent water source,¹¹ which may have influenced the siting of the town, but is too poorly cemented to make good building stone. Elsewhere in North Staffordshire, particularly at Hollington, the Sherwood sandstones provide excellent

⁷ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 66.

⁸ Polak, 1987, 58; Radley, 1963-4, 165.

⁹ Chisholm et al, 1988, 55-67.

¹⁰ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 93-5.

¹¹ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 99.

building stone,¹² and for better quality buildings this was a likely source.

Although the nature of the rocks has a direct bearing on soil types and their use as building materials, their structure, as imposed by the stresses of the Hercynian earth-movements in late Carboniferous times, is also a vital factor, since it determined the current watersheds and the extremes of altitude. In the gritstone areas a phase of east-west compression followed by a period of tension resulted in strong linear folds with vertical axes and mainly north-south trends. Although the adjacent limestone areas of the White Peak were little affected by these movements, the gritstone areas were relatively mobile.¹³ Translated into local topography (Fig. 1.3) this produces an area bounded to the west by a long ridge running from the Cloud to Baddeley Edge, and on the north east by the Roaches. Between lie a series of north-south trending ridges, which include Morridge, Ipstones Edge and Cats Edge.

Head deposits play a relatively small part in this landscape (Fig. 1.6),¹⁴ although many of the valley sides and valley bottoms are covered with quarternary deposits of boulder clay, which were generally avoided in the siting the hamlets. Elsewhere small deposits of sand and gravel have a positive effect on land use, providing well-drained land that was attractive for early settlement.

Mineralisation had a major impact within and around the Dinantian limestones. This was of great importance in terms of lead production throughout the White Peak, though it played only a minor role in the parish of Leek since minerals only outcrop in any quantity in the area around Mixon. This shared with Ecton the distinction of having sulphide ores containing copper. The Ecton Copper Mines were worked intermittently from the seventeenth century until the late nineteenth century, while Mixon Copper Mine was in operation by the 1730s, and finally abandoned in 1858.¹⁵

The contrasts in altitude to be found across the parish relate directly to the geological sequence. The upper part of the Millstone Grit series includes hard coarse-grained sandstones including the Roaches Grit, which outcrop dramatically in the north west of the parish at the Roaches, Hen Cloud and the Ramshaw Rocks (Fig. 2.18), as does the Rough Rock at Wetley Rocks in the south west (Fig. 2.28).¹⁶ The lower half of the succession is generally softer, and commonly produces a series of whale-backed

¹² Chisholm et al, 1988, 131.

¹³ Chisholm et al, 1988, 177.

¹⁴ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 133,136.

¹⁵ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 117,121.

¹⁶ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 66.

hills of which Gun and Lask Edge are examples.¹⁷ The area around the town of Leek, and stretching southwards through much of Cheddleton, is formed of Sherwood Sandstone, which is both younger and softer in geological terms,¹⁸ giving a further contrast, since its undulating surfaces lack the extremes of altitude to be found in the north and east of the parish.

(ii) *Boundaries and topography*

The parish, in its broadest sense, is bounded by natural features, which include the River Dane, the River Hamps, the River Churnet, and the headwaters of the River Trent (Fig. 1.3). These have cut deeply into the underlying rock leaving the area dominated by gritstone edges. With the exception of the Roaches, these are less dramatic than those on the eastern side of the Peak District, but are none the less a major influence on farming and settlement patterns.

Central to the northern part of the parish is the great mass of Gun, flanked on the north east by the Roaches and on the west by a long ridge running from Lask Edge to the Cloud. To the south east lie the ridges of Morridge and Ipstones Edge, while Cheddleton's townships align to a gentler series of ridges including Cat's Edge. The abrupt termination of the western boundary of Bagnall at Baddeley Edge, and the inclusion of Bagnall within the manor of Horton, suggest that this represents an earlier, and more logical boundary, continuing southwards the line formed by the Cloud, Long Edge, Lask Edge and Brown Edge along which the western boundary of the parish is broadly aligned.

To the north the River Dane forms both county and parish boundary, after which the parish boundary follows the Black and Back Brooks along the east side of the Roaches. From there it turns eastwards along the Churnet and its tributaries before rising over the shoulder of Morridge to Merryton Lowe, then southwards to join the course of the River Hamps. The next section runs over the northern slopes of Ipstones Edge, before falling to join the Shirley Brook on its way to Froghall, and taking in the whole of the township of Foxt. At the River Churnet it changes direction to meander north west along the valley bottom before following a small tributary to the southwest. The last section follows an indefinite route across Wetley Moor before turning northwards to align with Baddeley Edge.

¹⁷ Evans et al, 1986, 16.

¹⁸ Aitkenhead et al, 1985, 99-101.

THE EVIDENCE FOR PRE-CONQUEST SETTLEMENT

(i) *The earliest evidence*

The area is now a pastoral one. The occasional field is ploughed prior to reseedling, but in general the land remains undisturbed, unavailable for field walking, and without crop marks. As a result Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation is represented by a series of individual finds and a handful of barrows, and not by plough-scatters.¹⁹ Barrows survive on or near the existing boundaries at the Bridestones, and Merryton Lowe (Figs. 1.3 and 1.6), but others like Cocklowe have vanished, leaving only the records of the nineteenth century barrow diggers.²⁰ A scatter of -lowe names may indicate the site of further prehistoric barrows, although the Saxon word *hlaw*, from which it derives, is among a series of place-names that may also mean a natural hill.²¹ The use of Lowe as part of the name for the central township refers to Lowe Hill, a long ridge lying to the east of Leek where Bone Farm existed in the late nineteenth century,²² but neither barrow nor finds have been recorded.

Medieval ploughing was on a modest scale, and no subsequent period has seen a major increase. The 1801 Crop Returns show 6.2% under the plough,²³ and while the 1940s may well have seen more land ploughed than at any previous period, the frequency of the narrow ridges formed by nineteenth century drainage suggests that its impact was negligible. If substantial damage has been done to prehistoric earthworks, drainage is likely to be the largest single cause. Only a long-term programme of field walking, carried out over many decades, is likely to make headway on the siting of prehistoric and Romano-British settlements.

Despite the proximity of Buxton (*Aquae Arnemetiae*), evidence for occupation during the Roman period is equally elusive. Opinions have differed as to the origin of the Leek to Buxton road. Both Greenslade and Palliser have referred to it as a Roman road,²⁴ but recent research by Greenslade indicates that it dates from 1765-6 when the road was turnpiked,²⁵ and it is omitted by Gelling from her map of Roman roads in the West Midlands.²⁶

¹⁹ Gunstone, 1964, 11-45; 1965, 20-63.

²⁰ Bateman, 1861, 183, 246.

²¹ Gelling, 1992, 49.

²² 6 inch Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition, 1900.

²³ *SHC* 1950-1, 231-42.

²⁴ Yates Map of Staffordshire, 1775; Greenslade, 1965, 20; Palliser, 1976, 40.

²⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 99.

²⁶ Gelling, 1992, 18.

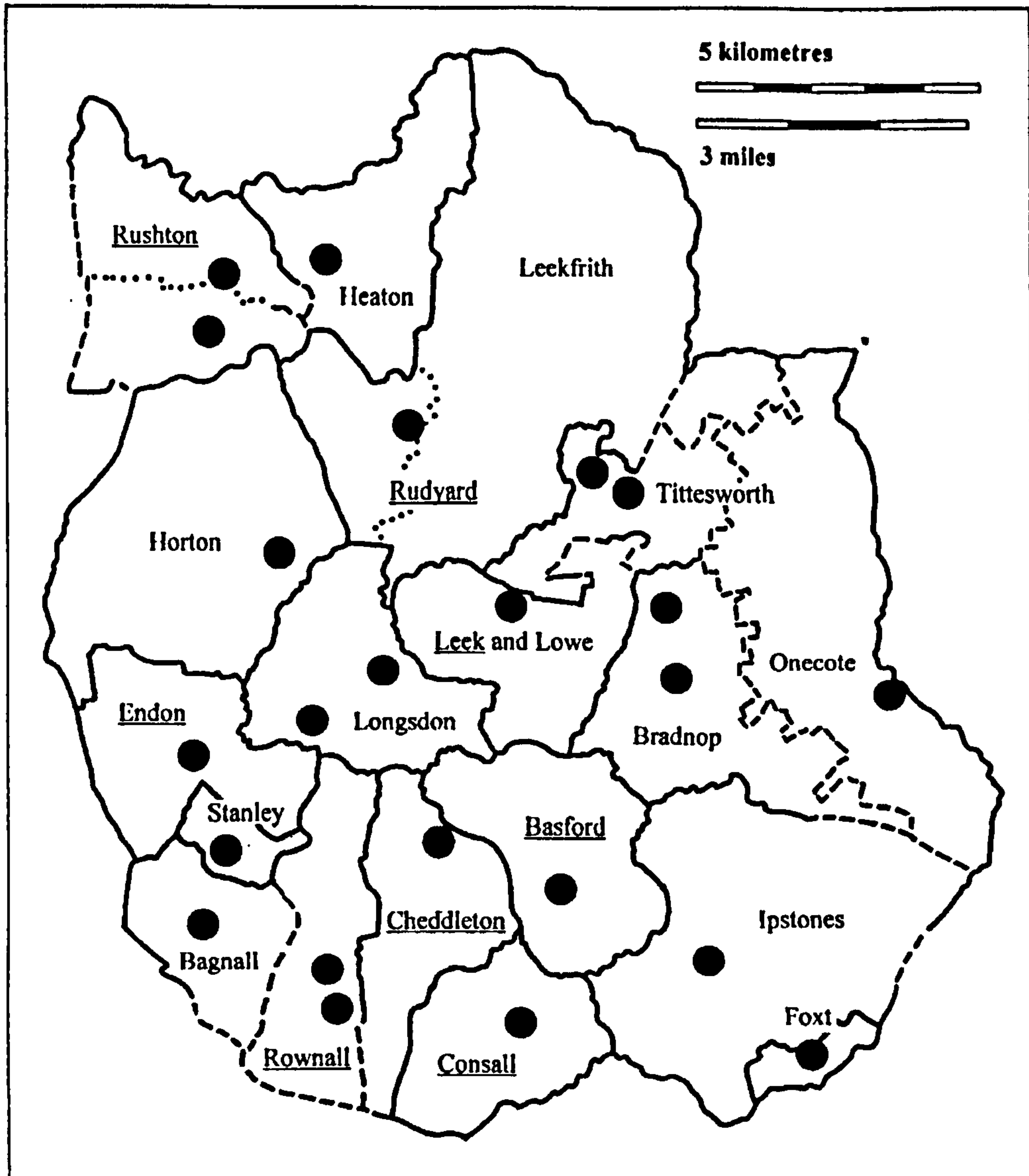


Fig. 1.5 *The development of the township boundaries*²⁷

- Post-Conquest boundary established by the thirteenth century
- - - - Boundary defined across moorland by Parliamentary Enclosure Award
- Hamlets bearing township names
- Settlements mentioned in Domesday are underlined

(ii) *The early estate and its components*

The layout of the parish (Fig. 1.5), with the township of Leek and Lowe encircled by a ring of townships, is strikingly regular, both in its use of natural boundary features, and in the overall distances from the town to the outer edges of the parish. The grouping together of so many townships in such a coherent form, suggests that it originated as a multiple estate, a coherence that is increased by the inclusion of the Liberty of Foxt, and the township of Bagnall. If so, like other similar estates, it had already fragmented by 1086,²⁸ but was to survive as a parish until the sixteenth century.

Evidence for pre-Conquest settlement is largely limited to place-names, the

²⁷ 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey maps; Enclosure Maps; *VCH Staffs*, VII, 234 (for Tittesworth); Robert Milner (pers. com. for Cheddleton); SRO D(W)1909/E/9/1.

²⁸ Stafford, P., 1985, 32.

majority of which are Anglo-Saxon. The only British survivals are the river-names Churnet ('winding') and Hamps ('summer dry'). Anglo-Saxon pagan burials are rare in North Staffordshire, and are peripheral to a major group of barrow burials in North Derbyshire.²⁹ Ozanne gives these a seventh-century date, a period when the English population was beginning to expand away from its earliest settlements on to more marginal land.³⁰ Since Leek lies beyond the range of these pagan burials,³¹ its OE place-names are likely to post-date the Peak District material.

The majority of the early names are those of the townships and their hamlets. While the naming or renaming of settlements with OE place-name indicates an Anglo-Saxon presence, this cannot be taken to indicate the foundation date of any given settlement, or that the township boundaries had been fully defined when they received their present names (Fig. 1.5). When Randolph Brereton 'rode the bownds and meyr(es) of the comen(s)' of Ipstones in 1548 he included land as far north as Pethills Pool, which was subsequently part of Bradnop;³² the later boundary follows the Earl's Way further to the south. Parts of the eastern boundary were still in dispute in the 1680s when the men of Alton also claimed the right to enclose there.³³ In the higher and bleaker areas forming the north-western fringes of the 'estate', definition awaited the Parliamentary Enclosure Awards if no clear-cut natural feature provided a boundary, though it is clear from the occasional dispute that, despite the lack of formal evidence, the local population felt the limits of their grazing rights were well known centuries before this event.³⁴ Substantial areas of moorland might provide common for several townships, as on Wetley Moor where Rownall, Cheddleton, Consall and Bagnall all had grazing rights, or on Morridge where grazing rights were shared by Bradnop and Onecote.³⁵ Nor were the boundaries formed by rivers and streams as clear-cut as they might seem. On both the Hamps and the Dane the parish boundary wanders across the river at regular intervals, a pattern to be seen on some of the township boundaries, and one which allowed access for water and fishing from both sides.

The names for the townships fall into two groups. The first contains names that refer to natural features, sometimes qualified by a personal name, and lacking any

²⁹ Jones, 1978, Fig. 3.1.

³⁰ Ozanne, 1964, 47; Gelling, 1992, 29.

³¹ Jones, 1978, 47.

³² SA 9/2/2.

³³ SA 12/1/1.

³⁴ *SHC* IV, 1883, 109.

³⁵ SRO, Q/RDc 29 and 69; 5116/1.

reference to settlement. This group includes Bagnall (Bedeca's wood), Basford (Beorcol's ford), Bradnop (broad valley), Consall (-nook, from *hahl*, perhaps used in the sense of a remote place, with an obscure first element)³⁶, Endon (Eanna's hill), Foxt (foxes' burrow), Leek (either OE or ON for a brook), Leekfrith (scrub on the edge of forest), Lowe (hill or mound), Longsdon (a hill called Long), Ipstones (Ippa's stone), Rudyard (rue and enclosure), Rownall (rough *halh*), and Stanley (a stony clearing). The second contains place-name elements referring directly to settlement, either *tün*, *cot*, or *worth*, and includes Cheddleton (*tün* in a narrow valley), Heaton (the high *tün*), Horton (*tün* on muddy ground), Rushton (the rush *tün*), Onecote (a remote cottage), and Tittesworth (the enclosed settlement of Tet).³⁷ Gelling indicates that compounds including these elements most commonly arose after AD 700, confirming the broad dating evidence supplied by the absence of pagan burials.³⁸

The first group, with the exception of the northern part of Leekfrith, lie in the centre and south of the area (Fig. 1.5). The southern part of Leekfrith was the 'land in Rudyard' given to Dieulacres Abbey at its founding in the mid-thirteenth century,³⁹ and formed part of Rudyard township. These townships, by virtue of their position, appear to be earlier settlements within the estate.

Of the second group, all except Cheddleton are sited round the fringes of the estate. Horton, Rushton, and Heaton, the muddy, rushy, and high *tüns* are all to the north west, Onecote, 'the remote cottage' is on high ground to the east. Tittesworth, although it forms part of the inner ring of townships, lies largely on high and unrewarding ground to the north east. The layout of the townships of Rownall and Cheddleton suggests they may once have formed a single unit that was divided after the successful establishment of Cheddleton near the north-western boundary. The name of Ballington, preserved only as a name for woodland, suggests a less successful settlement existed in the township of Leek and Lowe, thus completing the picture of the *tün*, *cot*, or *worth* settlements as outliers on less desirable land, and possibly of later date than the majority of the central and southern townships.

This interpretation is confirmed by the relationship of the township hamlets to the geology (Fig. 1.6). The most favourable sites lay on the Permian rocks (the Sherwood Sandstone Group), which runs in a broad band down the centre of the estate. Leek occupies a slight ridge on the eastern edge of the Sherwood Sandstone, while

³⁶ Pers. com. Margaret Gelling.

³⁷ For sources see Appendix 1.1.

³⁸ Gelling, 1992, 55.

³⁹ Tringham, 1993, 4.

lower land to the south west catered for its fields. Rudyard lies to the north west of Leek, and Cheddleton and Basford to the south. The old town of Endon lies on a small outlier of the same rock formation, while the later parts of the hamlet straggle on to low ground to the east. Further areas of Sherwood Sandstone lie to the north of Rushton but are low lying, partially masked by boulder clay, and were not chosen for either of the township hamlets.

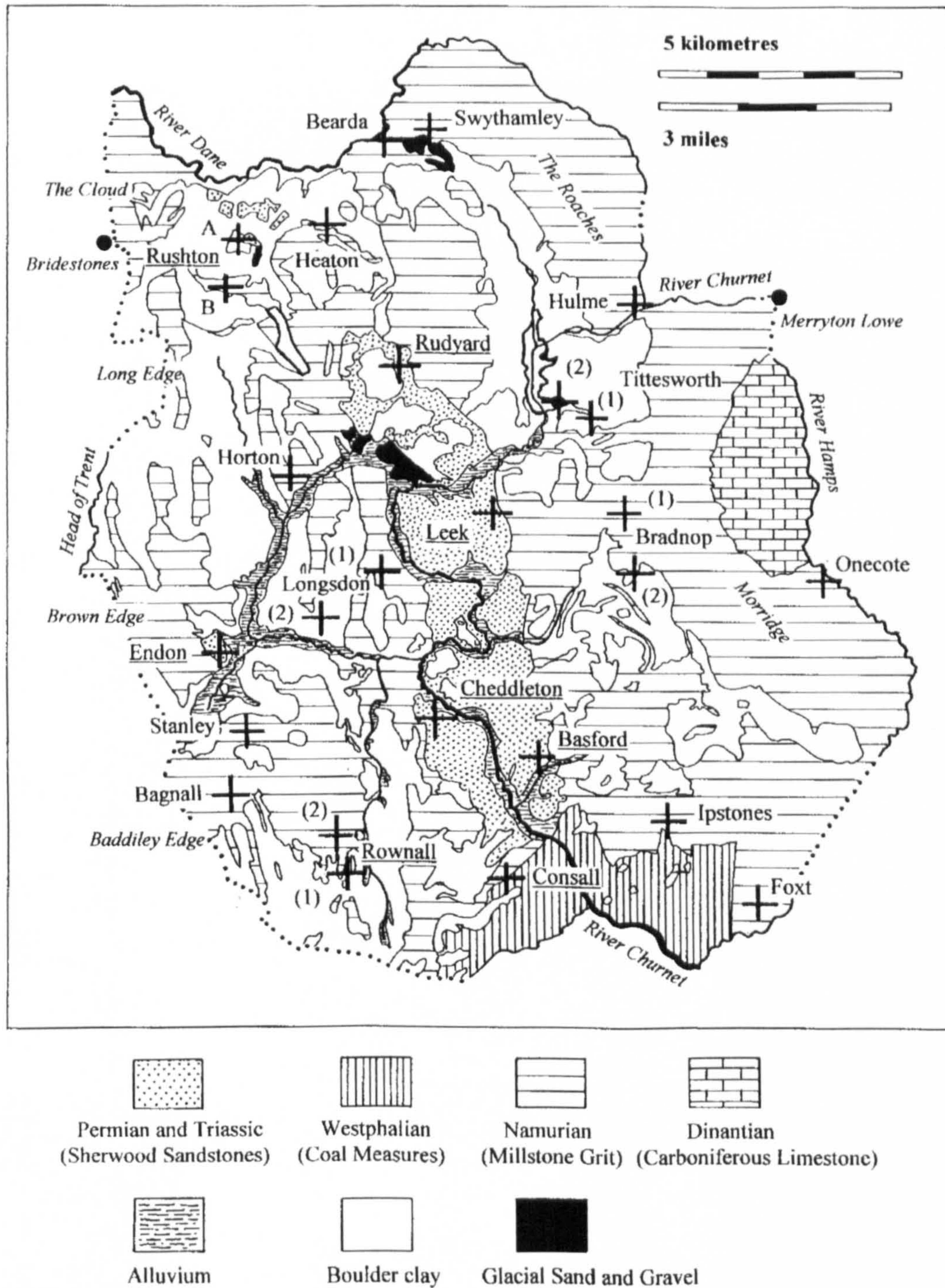


Fig. 1.6 *The township hamlets in relationship to the solid and drift geology.* All hamlets bearing a township name have been included, as have the ‘secondary’ Danish settlements of Bearda, Swythamley and Hulme. Names appearing in Domesday have been underlined.

KEY: A - Rushton Spencer; B - Rushton James; 1 - Lower/Nether; 2 - Upper/Over

The least favoured areas were those where the boulder clay is most in evidence, as in Tittesworth, Horton, Rushton and Heaton, and the centre of Leekfrith adjacent to the Meer Brook. Elsewhere the township hamlets lie either on the gritstone or on the coal measures. In three cases, Bradnop, Rownall and Longsdon, where two hamlets bear the township name, one lies well clear of boulder clay, and the other occupies a position on or at the boundary with the clay. In the case of Longsdon this goes some way to confirming the place-name evidence in suggesting that the 'upper' or 'over' settlement on the 'long hill' was the primary settlement. At Horton (the muddy *tün*), the opposite is true. The planned nature of the present village (Fig. 2.27), set well clear of the boulder clay masking the eastern part of the township, suggests its present position is not that of the original settlement.

(iii) *The coming of the Vikings*

At the end of the seventh century Leek lay near the western boundary of North Mercia.⁴⁰ The arrival of the Vikings in the 860s led to the partition of Mercia in 876.⁴¹ A treaty drawn up in 877 recorded parts of the agreed boundary, but once it reached Watling Street the line was not defined, and its position remains a matter of controversy. The conventional interpretation that it followed Watling Street into Shropshire has been challenged. Gelling considers that it may have turned northwards from the tip of Warwickshire and followed what later became the eastern boundaries of Staffordshire and Cheshire,⁴² thus omitting the western part of North Mercia, while Sidebottom argues for its inclusion.⁴³ In 918 the West Saxons were gaining control in North Mercia, and in 920, under King Edward, they established a fortress near Bakewell as part of a successful offensive against the Vikings of the North.⁴⁴

Six cross fragments survive in or around the medieval church of St. Edward. Recent research on 'Anglo-Saxon' stone monuments in the north Midlands has demonstrated that 'the selection of design elements' of these monuments links them with 'secular land units', and that there is strong evidence to suggest they are of Viking origin. If so they represent evidence for Viking control throughout North Mercia.⁴⁵ Certainly the place-names for Leek (*lec* a brook) and Hulme (from *holmr* 'island, inland promontory, raised ground in a marsh'), are included by Gelling with three other

⁴⁰ Hart, 1971, 137-138.

⁴¹ Gelling, 1992, 123.

⁴² Gelling, 1992, 127-128.

⁴³ Sidebottom, 1996, 9-12.

⁴⁴ Sidebottom, 1999, 206.

⁴⁵ Sidebottom, 1994; Sidebottom 1999, 206, 210, 213.

Norse place-names in North Staffordshire.⁴⁶ It is not clear which of the three Hulmes was the original settlement. Although Newgrange (formerly Nether Hulme) might just have qualified as 'raised ground in a marsh', it seems the least likely to be the primary settlement in an area where low, marshy sites were deliberately avoided by other settlers. Upper Hulme, with its prominent south facing slopes seems a better candidate, fitting well with Gelling's definition of 'inland promontory' and provided with an unusually generous quantity of south-west facing land suitable for arable (Figs. 2.3 and 2.18).⁴⁷

The survival in the sixteenth century of the names Windygate and Port Wey Yate (both including OE *geat* influenced by ON pronunciation) for trackways near Upper Hulme and Swythamley⁴⁸ strengthens the evidence. Swythamley itself (Swytholme in 1291) is a further settlement name deriving from the Norse *holmr*, as is the adjacent Bearda (Beardholme in 1340).⁴⁹ A scatter of *-gate* names appear elsewhere in the parish; all are now attached to farms or hamlets.

Gelling's suggestion that Leek is a Danish place-name has not gone unchallenged. Tringham, in defining the parish as an early estate, argues that since, with the exception of Leek, the Norse names relate only to minor settlements, the use of names based on *holmr* represents words that have been borrowed from Old Norse rather than a physical presence.⁵⁰ However Sidebottom's evidence points to the presence around Leek of not one but two distinct groups of Viking settlers. His analysis of the distribution of 'Anglo Saxon' stone sculptures in the North Midlands⁵¹ suggests they may be divided into two groups. His primary groups are sculptures located within specific territories such as Viking Mercia or Elmet. These are larger and more elaborate in character than his secondary or 'Norse' group, whose distribution overlaps the primary groups, but is confined to marginal areas rather than to known Viking territories.

Sidebottom argues that the sculptures, with their frequent use of Anglo-Scandinavian motifs, and their specifically Christian character, belong to the period following the capture of North Mercia by the West-Saxons, when a condition of

⁴⁶ Gelling, 1992, 136.

⁴⁷ Gelling, 1992, 136-7; Gelling, 1984, 50-52.

⁴⁸ PRO SC6.3353; C66/697 3493.

⁴⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 186-7.

⁵⁰ Tringham, 1999, 7.

⁵¹ Sidebottom 1999, 206, 210, 213, Sidebottom, 2000, 213-236.



Fig. 1.7 *Crosses in Leek churchyard*

(above) a cross from the 'Norse' group.

(below) a cross from the Mercian Viking group. This carries a runic inscription.

continued land tenure would almost certainly have included the acceptance of Christianity, the religion of the new overlord.⁵² Both primary and secondary sculptures are represented at Leek (Fig. 1.7), including the only example in the region to have a Scandinavian runic inscription. Their presence suggests that there were two distinct groups of Danish settlers active in the area shortly after 918. This fits well with Gelling's suggestion of a Danish place-name for Leek, the centre of the estate, and small clutch of Danish names on marginal land on its northern fringes (Fig. 1.6).

By *circa* 1004 there is direct evidence for the fragmentation of the estate since Rudyard was in the hands of Wulfric Spott, and a charter indicates that it was intended as part of his endowment of Burton Abbey.⁵³ His family can be traced back to the 920s and 930s, and played a key role in the consolidation of southern control over the north Midlands, where it seems that they deliberately obtained land in an effort to dilute Scandinavian control.⁵⁴

The dissolution of the early estates was a long-drawn-out affair, occurring mainly between the eighth and eleventh centuries, a process hastened by the endowment in the tenth century of numerous religious houses with estates which would formerly have been considered family property and inalienable. This led to a new pattern in which the great estates were made up of individual villages and settlements, often spread across several shires.⁵⁵ Such were the estates of Wulfric Spott,⁵⁶ and the vast estates of the Leofric family⁵⁷ that by 1066 included Leek.⁵⁸

For Leek, as elsewhere, the pattern of fragmentation is reflected in Domesday. Here seven of the townships were named, Lec, Enedun, Rugehala, Rudierd, Risetone, Celtetone, and Bechesword (Leek, Endon, Rownall, Rudyard, Rushton, Cheddleton, and Basford).⁵⁹ Since the Domesday survey was compiled to record the potential yield from estates, large and small, the absence of all but a handful of the township names is of little significance, since the record seems to have required only the estate centre to be named, not its dependencies.⁶⁰

There is little evidence in the Staffordshire Domesday for the network of clientage that had built up elsewhere, and the division between the greater and the

⁵² Sidebottom 1999, 206-219.

⁵³ Sawyer, 1978b, xxxi, 55.

⁵⁴ Sidebottom, 1999, 207; Stafford, 1985, 126-7.

⁵⁵ Stafford, 1985, 32-3.

⁵⁶ Whitelock, 1930, 47-51.

⁵⁷ Stafford, 1985, Fig. 13.

⁵⁸ Slade, 1985, 6-7, 22.

⁵⁹ Slade, 1985, 22, 62, 63, 64, 65, 144.

⁶⁰ Sawyer, 1979: 3.

lesser holders is almost unbroken. Of the former, the most important was Earl Aelfgar who, as Leofric's son, was the nominal holder of Leek itself;⁶¹ no-one is named for Cheddleton and Basford, while the remainder were held by Ulfag, Dunning, Wlmar and Uluiet, of whom nothing is known but their names.

(iv) *Church and parish*

The presence of a major parish church, sited on a spot from which a 'double sunset' can be seen at the summer solstice, has raised local speculation about the antiquity of the site. The setting of the sun behind the Cloud and its subsequent reappearance exercises an annual fascination, but can be seen from a number of places other than the churchyard. Plot took a refreshingly pragmatic view about this 'pretty rural observation', exhorting his friends to study it for purely scientific reasons.⁶²

Little can be argued on the basis of archaeology. The churchyard bears no relationship to the curvilinear churchyards believed to be the earliest in adjacent Cheshire,⁶³ and associated elsewhere with minster sites.⁶⁴ Its present high and level surface results from extensive make up in the mid-to-late eighteenth century,⁶⁵ which masks what earlier features may have survived.

It seems probable that the creation of the parish and the building of its first church may, like the cross-fragments, be linked to the period when the West Saxons were regaining control of the area. Tringham finds no evidence to suggest that Leek was an early minster, and argues that the dedication to St. Edward refers to Edward the Martyr (d.978 or 979), a saint known to have been revered by Wulfric Spott.⁶⁶ Franklin notes that the Re-conquest in Northamptonshire seems to have been marked by the founding of new hundred churches, and that as with Leek, these had no claim to the early forms of dues such as church-scot that were paid to the minsters.⁶⁷ If the establishment of a church at Leek occurred at a similar time then, like the erection of the crosses, it too may have served a political as well as a religious function.

⁶¹ Slade, 1985, 6-7, 22.

⁶² Plot, 1686, 2; *Gentleman's Magazine*, viii, 1738, 368; Miller, 1891, 52-57.

⁶³ Gelling, 1992, 89.

⁶⁴ Blair, 1992, 231-235 and Fig. 10.2.

⁶⁵ Cleverdon, 1999. Unpublished notes on a watching brief, November 1999.

⁶⁶ Tringham, 1999, 9.

⁶⁷ Franklin, 1982, 12.

CHAPTER TWO

Settlement and topography Part 2: Post-Conquest Leek

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES AND THE PRESENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE

Evidence for settlement in the medieval and post-medieval periods relies on documentary sources, the relict evidence of field systems and settlement patterns reflected in maps, and on the archaeology of shrunken settlements and standing buildings.

There are no pre-Conquest charters, making Domesday the earliest documentary source. *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (1291) provides the starting place for the monastic sites, and the Lay Subsidy Returns of 1327 for secular sites. Material amassed for the Court of Augmentations provides a comprehensive view of monastic property at the dissolution. Parish registers for Leek survive from 1636. These and other sources were used by the authors of *The Victoria History of the County of Staffordshire* vol. VII (1995). Where possible their references have been checked. In some cases additional material has been found, or fieldwork has led to re-interpretation.¹

Maps have been used as a primary source and as a means of collecting and interpreting information. Early estate maps are limited both in number and coverage. A map of Wall Grange in 1714 covers only a single large farm; one for Rudyard in 1731 is incomplete,² and the earliest map for Ashenhurst dates to 1775 when the estate had already been divided.³ Yates's map of Staffordshire dates to the same year and provides an overview of the main farms and hamlets, besides indicating major and minor roads in a largely pre-turnpike era.⁴ Enclosure maps outline the areas of ancient enclosure, and define areas of late settlement; none pre-dates 1735.⁵ The Swythamley estate was mapped in 1806,⁶ and the manor of Horton in 1816.⁷ Elsewhere coverage is patchy, and found only in sales catalogues and individual sets of deeds. First and second edition six-inch Ordnance Survey maps have been used for fieldwork. These give the earliest detailed record of township boundaries, field systems, and farm names

¹ Slade, 1958; Subsidy Rolls of 1327, *SHC* 1886; *Tax. Eccl.*, (Rec. Com.); *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995.

² SRO D1176/A/11, Rudyard (1731); D593/H/3/380, Wall Grange (1714).

³ SRO D1176/A/2/26 and 3, Ashenhurst (1775); Swythamley 18/658.

⁴ Yates, Map of Staffordshire, 1775.

⁵ SRO Enclosure maps and awards: Basford Mf 1 (1810); Bradnop 5116/1 (1766); Cheddleton Q/RDc 29 (1738); Heaton Q/RDc 84 (1820); Horton Q/RDc 69 (1815); Leek Q/RDc 65 (1811); Ipstones Q/RDc 41 (1780); Rushton James 5116/3 (1772); Rushton Spencer Q/RDc 39 (1777).

⁶ SRO 4974/B/7/1 and 4974/8/3, Swythamley estate (1806).

⁷ SRO D(W)1909/E/9/1 and D(W)1535/1, the manor of Horton (1816).

for all areas except Horton.

Tithe maps cover a single farm in Rushton Spencer, and a few acres of parliamentary enclosure land,⁸ also the Liberty of Foxt where Checkley continued to exact a modus until 1849.⁹ In an area of dispersed settlement tithe collection was a major undertaking. Dieulacres Abbey facilitated it by having a tithe barn in each township, and later by farming out the tithes. After the dissolution their collection was increasingly seen as unprofitable. By the middle of the sixteenth century men were leasing their tithes, and by the end of the century they were being sold piecemeal, either to the individuals concerned or to major landowners.¹⁰ Most had been extinguished long before the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836,¹¹ having been merged with the individual properties, or subsumed into a higher rent charge.

The evidence for medieval and post-medieval settlement is presented through a series of maps, which endeavour to place each settlement in its context (Figs. 2.2 - 2.17). Most cover a single township, but Bradnop and Onecote formed a single manor and are mapped together (Fig. 2.13), as are Rushton Spencer and Rushton James (Fig. 2.6).¹² The joint boundary between Cheddleton and Rownall is uncertain and they too have been mapped together (Fig. 2.14). Townships in the manors of Leek and Horton are drawn separately, as the manors are too large to provide detailed coverage on a single map.

Settlement sites first documented between 1086 and 1499, or with evidence of open-field systems, are shown as medieval. Sites first documented in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been differentiated. The former appear more plentiful in the townships under monastic control because they were exceptionally well documented at the dissolution. Few can be confirmed elsewhere unless there is architectural evidence. Areas of moorland affected by Parliamentary Enclosure are also shown. Since the first edition 6-inch Ordnance survey maps formed the basis of the maps, contours are shown in feet.

Documentary and map sources are uneven, affecting the nature and balance of the information presented. Bradnop, for example, has a cluster of medieval settlements, as the township was well represented in the fourteenth century Lay Subsidy Returns.

⁸ LRO B/A/15 Tithe map and award for Leek; Tithe map and award for Checkley.

⁹ D4044/1 Tithe map (1849).

¹⁰ SA 4/2/1-12; SRO D3359 Toft Chorley (uncatalogued); SRO D3359/29/3; SRO D3359/29/3; Woldale deeds (Mrs. C. Chester).

¹¹ Kain and Prince, 1985, 32.

¹² *VCH Staffs*, VII, 225.

Absence of evidence elsewhere is inconclusive, since the Subsidy Returns represent only the wealthier members of the community.

Attempts to establish which settlements had common fields have also had limited success. Traces of ridge and furrow are rare, and with the exception of Upper Hulme, add little to the map evidence. Areas of arable were small, and the intermingled holdings held by the early farms may represent the division of shared pasture rather than open field arable. The presence of early field systems may therefore go undetected unless documentary evidence is available. For shrunken hamlets, like the Longsdons and Tittesworths, the earliest maps post-date their engrossment, and contain no information about the earlier field systems. Even if the farms survived, the purchase of an entire hamlet by the owner of a large estate could have a similar result, as rationalisation tended to follow. Only for the manor of Horton, a substantial strip of land running from Rushton James southwards to Bagnall, is there full early-nineteenth-century map coverage, allowing an in-depth view of farm and hamlet against the background of tenure which tended to perpetuate farm boundaries.

MANOR AND TOWNSHIP

(i) *The historical background*

Staffordshire in 1086 has been described as 'poor, backward, and largely unsettled' and had little in the way of urban development. Tutbury and Stafford were the only boroughs to be listed in Domesday, although Tamworth had four burgesses indicating that it too had been granted borough status. Leek, with 'land for 6 ploughs', 15 villeins and 13 bordars, was still far from urban in character.¹³

A market charter was granted in 1207 to Ranulph III, Earl of Chester, for his manor of Leek. Between 1207 and 1215 Ranulph granted borough status to Leek,¹⁴ which was confirmed by the abbot of Dieulacres¹⁵ when the manor was granted to the abbey in 1232.¹⁶ In the early thirteenth rents were paid for 80½ burgages¹⁷ at twelve pence rent per annum. Each burgess had half an acre of land at his house, one acre in the fields, timber from the Earl's forest for building, and 'common of pasture for all

¹³ *VCH Staffs*, IV, 1, 20, 22, 147.

¹⁴ Barraclough, 1988, 347-348.

¹⁵ Palliser, 1972, 68; Barraclough, 1988, 387-88.

¹⁶ Tringham, 1993, 1.

¹⁷ Tringham, 1993, 9.

kinds of cattle'.¹⁸ This was a generous provision, suggesting the earl had a realistic view of the area, and contrasts sharply with the provision made for towns with a greater commercial potential, such as Stratford-upon-Avon, where the same rent was paid for a single burgage plot of a quarter of an acre, with no additional rights to land in the town-fields or to grazing.¹⁹

Evidence for the town's subsequent development is sparse.²⁰ The Lay Subsidy Returns for 1332-3 provide an indication of the size of midland towns. Only ten places in Staffordshire had more than twenty-five taxpayers.²¹ 'Leek cum membris' is shown with thirty-three names, but comparison with the returns for 1327 shows that many belonged in the dependencies, so it cannot be included among the larger towns.²²

Whatever the fluctuations of fortune in the intervening years, the borough of Leek emerged into the sixteenth century substantially the same size as at its founding. In 1538, William Davenport, bailiff for Dieulacres, wrote 'Firste, ye towne or burrowe off Leeke, co(n)teyning lxxxiiij burgages w(ith) certayn townefildes & landes to ye same belonging w(ith) twoe water-milles.'²³ In relative terms this places Leek amongst the many small market towns whose spheres of influence at the start of the sixteenth century were confined to a few square miles of neighbouring countryside, contrasting with the county's larger market towns, like Burton, Stafford or Lichfield with perhaps six hundred to a thousand inhabitants.²⁴

(ii) *The ownership of the manors*

In 1086 Leek with its appendages was one of a major group of former royal or comital estates held by the King. All were of above-average value for Staffordshire, and their value had increased over the previous twenty years. Cheddleton and Basford were held by Earl Roger of Shrewsbury, but were tenanted by one of his barons, William de Malbanc. The remainder, Consall, Endon, Rownall, Rudyard and Rushton, were among 32 small estates in Staffordshire described as 'waste' and still in the King's hands. No lands were held, either here or elsewhere in Staffordshire, by either the Earls of Chester, the Verdons, or the Audleys, who were shortly to become the dominant

¹⁸ Sleight, 1862, 11-12.

¹⁹ Carus Wilson, 1965, 50.

²⁰ Pinnock, 1974.

²¹ Rowlands, 1987, 42

²² *SHC* 1886, 1889.

²³ Sleight, 1862, 14.

²⁴ Everitt, 1967, 478-9.

families in northern Staffordshire.²⁵

By 1093 Hugh I, earl of Chester, had been granted the manor of Leek,²⁶ and in addition to the Domesday appendages the grant probably included many of the areas described as 'waste' in 1086. Lying in a strategic position on the Earl's Way, the road linking Chester with the Earl's holdings in the East Midlands, the manor was of sufficient importance to be kept in demesne in the late twelfth century. Charters were issued from Leek in the 1170s and Earl Hugh II died there in 1181. Ranulph III issued a charter at Leek circa 1210 and the manor remained in demesne until it was granted to the abbey of Dieulacres in 1232.²⁷ Ranulph's personal involvement in this grant is confirmed by his instructions that, wherever his body was to be interred, his heart was to be buried at Dieulacres.²⁸

The grant to the abbey included a substantial ring-fenced estate carved out of Rudyard.²⁹ How much of Leekfrith came under this heading is not clear; certainly the estate granted to Dieulacres stretched as far as Meerbrook,³⁰ suggesting the brook itself formed the eastern boundary of Rudyard. The thirteenth century saw numerous changes, and the manor of Leek came to consist of the tithings of Heaton, Leekfrith, Lowe, Rushton Spencer, and Tittesworth,³¹ the form in which it was held by the abbey at the dissolution.³²

From the middle of the twelfth century the earls of Chester granted a number of small manors to the Verduns of Alton, who either held them directly or as an intermediate lordship. Rushton was in the hands of Norman de Verdun by the middle of the twelfth century, and by the early thirteenth century Nicholas de Verdun held the southern part of Rushton, together with Longsdon and Ipstones.³³ Rudyard too had been granted to the Verduns in the mid-twelfth century, who granted it to Ranulph de Tittesworth *circa* 1200,³⁴ and the portion gained by Dieulacres in 1232 must have considerably curtailed their holding.

²⁵ Slade, 1958, 26, 29 and nos. 22,57,62-65 and 144.

²⁶ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 100.

²⁷ Tringham, 1993, 2-3.

²⁸ Barraclough, 1988, charters 392 and 393.

²⁹ Tringham, 1993, 4; Barraclough, 1988, 378.

³⁰ Fisher, 1984, 13-15.

³¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 79-80.

³² PRO SC6 Hen.VIII, 3353.

³³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 221; Tringham, 1993, 2.

³⁴ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 217.



Fig. 2.1 *Leek and its manors*

- Manor boundary
 Township boundary within a manor

Despite the apparent dominance of the Verduns in the areas that were outside monastic control, the most significant family were the Audleys. The core of the Audley estates lay at Heighley, and the family came to hold much of north-western Staffordshire.³⁵ By the twelfth century the manor of Horton was held by Robert de Stafford. His grant to Stone priory in 1140 was ultimately ineffective, and the Staffords remained overlords of Horton until at least 1408, although Adam de Audley was styled lord of the manor of Horton in *circa* 1200 when he granted an estate at Stanley to

³⁵ Slade, 1958, 25.

William de Stanley.³⁶ The Audleys continued to hold the manor, first as tenants and then as owners until 1535, when their share passed to the Crown.³⁷ In its final form the manor consisted of Horton, Bagnall, Endon, Longsdon, Rushton James and Stanley,³⁸ which, apart from Horton, were all initially held from the Verduns.³⁹ Bradnop and Onecote, lying to the east of Leek, are likely to have been among the Domesday appendages of Leek. In 1223 they were granted to the abbey of Hulton by its founder, Henry de Audley, presumably with the consent of Earl Ranulph III, who is described as Henry's lord in a confirmatory charter of 1232.⁴⁰

Elsewhere, smaller units stood alone as single tenancies. The rump of Rudyard was held continuously by the descendants of Ranulph de Tittesworth until it was sold to the Earl of Macclesfield in 1723.⁴¹ A similar pattern obtained for the manor of Ipstones, which had been granted away from the Verduns' holdings in Alton in the early thirteenth century and included the township of Foxt.⁴² Rushton Spencer had been detached from the Verduns' holdings by the early thirteenth century, when it was held from the earl of Chester by Hugh le Despenser, and known as Hugebrug (Hugbridge). Later, as Rushton Spencer, it became part of the manor of Leek, and was held by the abbey of Dieulacres. A chief rent was still being paid to the abbey at the dissolution.⁴³

Prior to the seventeenth century the manor of Cheddleton included the townships of Cheddleton, Basford and Consall, although mining rights and undisturbed access to woodland in Consall were granted to Richard Draycott early in the thirteenth century, and the Draycott family maintained their hold there until 1698. Rownall was granted to the Verdun family in the thirteenth century, and remained part of the honour of Alton until the seventeenth century when it was united with the manor of Cheddleton.⁴⁴

In wood-pasture areas such as Leek, where the population was scattered and the farming pattern largely pastoral, manorial control was exercised lightly,⁴⁵ often by a bailiff who was himself one of the local yeomen farmers, and whose principal

³⁶ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 230.

³⁷ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 69-70.

³⁸ SRO D(W) 1490/17; D(W)109/E/9/1 and D(W)1535/1.

³⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 181, 205, 221, 225, 230.

⁴⁰ Tringham 1993, 3-4.

⁴¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 217.

⁴² Brighton, 1937, 19-36.

⁴³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 225.

⁴⁴ Milner, 1983, 69-73.

⁴⁵ Zell, 1994, 3.

responsibility was rent collecting.⁴⁶ William Davenport, tenant of the Sheepphouse, otherwise known as the King's Fould,⁴⁷ was bailiff for the abbey of Dieulacres in its final years. As such he was thoroughly versed in the properties he then managed for the King's steward, the Earl of Derby, and strongly lamented the fragmentation of the manor when parts were sold to William Trafford and Robert Thorley in the 1540s.⁴⁸

Such sales, both of single properties and of whole manors, were to become a regular pattern. In 1596 the manor of Rushton Spencer was conveyed to trustees, prior to the conversion of its copyhold properties into freehold.⁴⁹ Twelve people, mainly residents and major tenants, subsequently acquired 31 properties, which with their grazing rights on the unenclosed commons represented the entire manor.⁵⁰ By 1620 five of the freeholders had become the joint lords.⁵¹ The position in the townships of Leek and Lowe, Leekfrith, and Tittesworth was similar. As part of the manor of Leek, they belonged to Dieulacres at the dissolution,⁵² and as the manor of Leek and Frith were granted to Sir Ralph Bagnall in 1552.⁵³ He is reported to have 'sold the land, to the tenants for the most part, to every man his own'⁵⁴ sometime prior to 1580 when his nephew succeeded him.⁵⁵ The occasional set of deeds belies this statement, and indicates the break-up took longer to achieve,⁵⁶ and it is doubtful if Sir Ralph's motives were any more altruistic than those of the other vendors.

The manor of Heaton remained in Crown hands until it was sold in 1614, changing hands again in 1629, 1631, and 1654.⁵⁷ The purchasers, yeomen farmers or minor gentry, capitalised on the situation by gaining the freehold of desirable properties or selling to others. Deeds held at Swythamley Hall reflect the resultant pattern of small freehold farms.⁵⁸ The last of the major conversions took place at Ipstones. Here again the entire manor was conveyed to trustees in 1649, and properties held by copyhold of inheritance were then converted to freehold.⁵⁹

⁴⁶ Hainsworth, 1992, 17.

⁴⁷ PRO, SC6/3353, PRO SC 2/202/65.

⁴⁸ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 126: Sleigh, 1862, 14-15.

⁴⁹ SRO D(W) 1761/A/4/149.

⁵⁰ SRO D(W) 1761/A/4/149.

⁵¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 225 quoting *SHC* NS vii. 212; NS x (1), 66.

⁵² PRO SC6/3353.

⁵³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 196.

⁵⁴ Sleigh, 1883, 19.

⁵⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 101.

⁵⁶ Deeds for Buxton Brow. An abstract indicates sale in 1588. Privately owned.

⁵⁷ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 187.

⁵⁸ Deeds at Swythamley Hall in the possession of Mr. R. Naylor. An abstract is held at SRO.

⁵⁹ SA, 12/1/3.

By contrast, properties within the manors of Cheddleton, Horton, Rushton James, and Stanley, remained under direct manorial control, or the control of comparatively major landholders, some of whom were multiple copyholders rather than freeholders. Some properties undoubtedly reached the freehold market, but a number of farms remained as copyhold in the nineteenth century including Hollin House (Fig. 2.30) [58].

The reasons for this wholesale conversion are not difficult to find. Inflation had severely diminished the value of fixed rents, and since many properties were held by copyhold of inheritance their value as a long-term source of income had diminished accordingly. The decision to sell meant capital became available, which could be re-invested when freehold properties reached the market. These could then become leasehold tenancies subject to rack rents. This pattern occurred piecemeal at Bradnop, where the lordship was held by the members of the Aston family from 1547. Many of the tenant properties held by the Astons in 1547 have deeds indicating that they had been sold by the seventeenth century, only to be re-purchased by later members of the family, and listed amongst their property in 1770.⁶⁰

SETTLEMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

(i) *The siting of the settlements*

Settlement on the gritstone areas of North Staffordshire tended to be diffuse, and to consist of the small hamlets and scattered farms common to other areas of wood-pasture, and whose medieval archaeology is by no means self-evident. This contrasts sharply with the nucleated villages on the neighbouring limestone, which despite their small size had the regular pattern of village centre, open field arable, small areas of enclosed pasture and woodland, and large areas of unenclosed grazing.

A further contrast lies in the presence of numerous parks, hays and large enclosed pastures. Like the monastic granges, these were gradually split into smaller units and divided among tenant farmers. In some cases this had already occurred by the end of the Middle Ages, while in others it was an on-going process that continued well into the eighteenth century. The gradual enclosure of the moorlands was a major factor in the later settlement history. It might occur at will on a major estate, form a logical step in the dying days of a manorial tenancy, or be hotly contested in a series of events before finally succumbing to Parliamentary Enclosure.

⁶⁰ SA, 3/1/1, deed of 5 May 1770; deed of 5 May 1770, (held at Longshaw Farm, Bradnop).

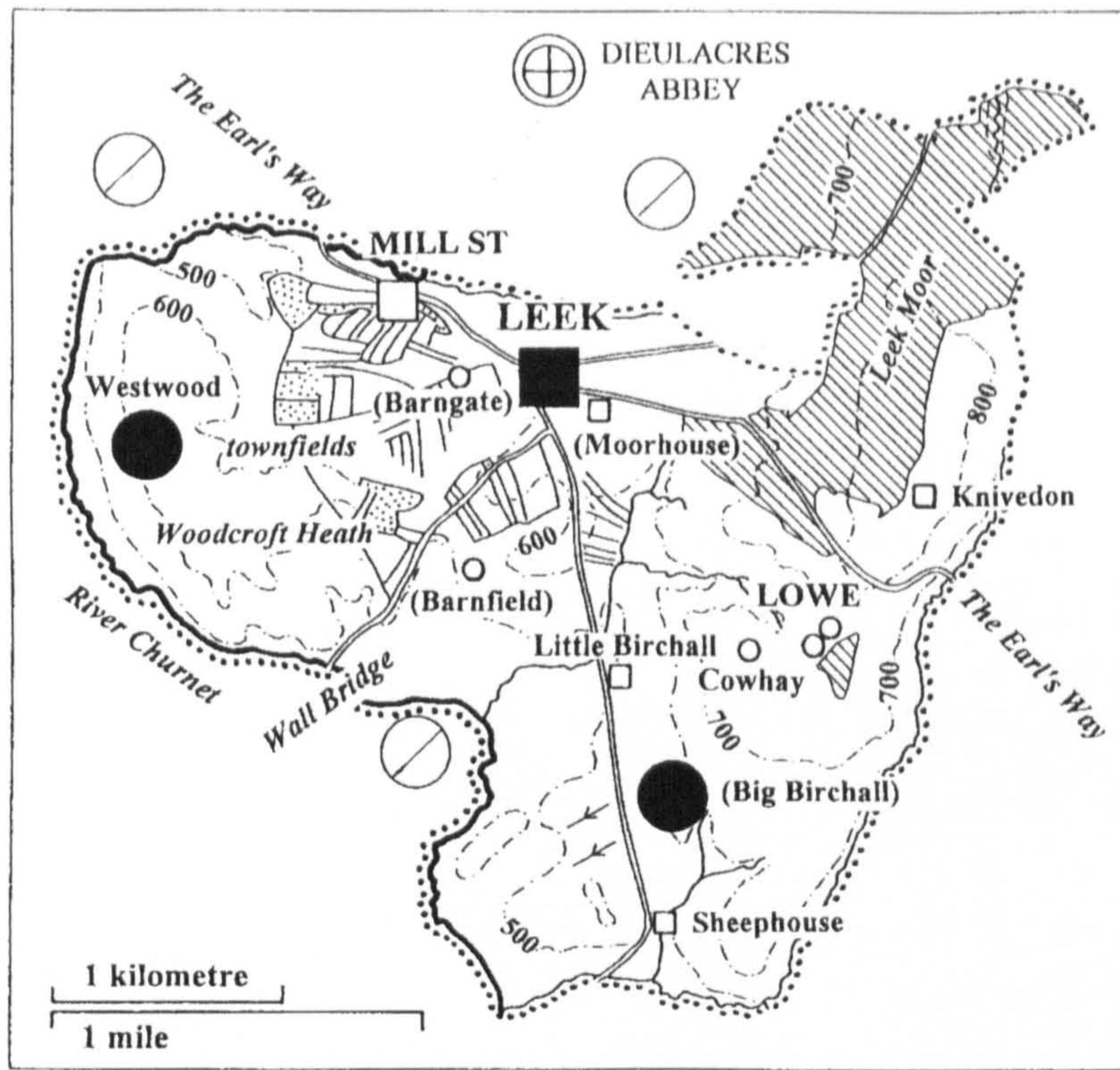


Fig. 2.2 The manor of Leek: the township of Leek and Lowe. Leek represented the central core of the town and Lowe the outlying areas. No documentation has been found for a medieval hamlet of Lowe, but seventeenth century houses to the south-west of Knivedon suggest a likely position.

KEY TO FIGURES 2.2 – 2.17 (see 2.1 for the relative positions of the manors)

Settlements	medieval	16th century	17th century	18th century
Hamlet	■	□	○	▽
Single farm	■	□	○	△
Grange	●	[	⊗	granges in other townships]
Major estate	△	△	△	△
<u>Other details</u>				
Estate with known boundaries		▬▬▬	Park names	P
Pre-enclosure moorland		▨▨▨	Bloomery	B
Ridge and furrow		→ →	Water course	→
Leek town lands		▨▨▨		
Roads in 1775	a) major	══	b) minor	⋯⋯⋯

Site of - (names in brackets)

Selected field systems are shown if they are referred to in the text.

Hamlets are defined here as groups of three or more houses.

Post 1750 features shown if they impinge on earlier archaeology.

SOURCES FOR FIGS. 2.2- 2.17 a) cf. pages 19-20 for source maps.

b) cf. pages 23-28 for manorial history. c) cf. page 19 for the dating of individual sites.

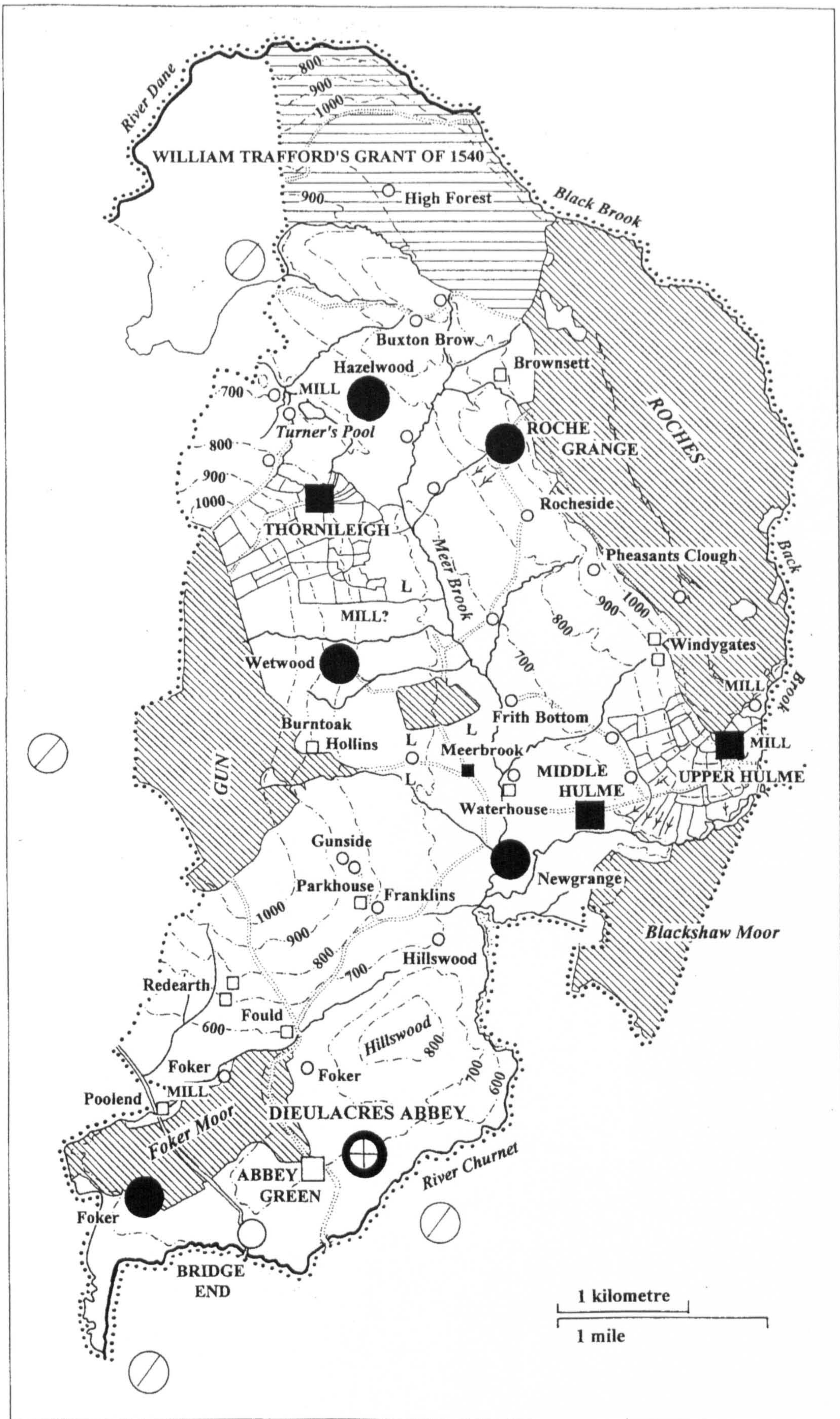


Fig. 2.3 The manor of Leek: the township of Leekfrith

The impact of Dieulacres Abbey was at its greatest in Leekfrith, where former woodland gave way to grange and pasture. The largest of the secular settlements, Upper Hulme, occupies an apron of land below the southern end of the Roches, with Middle Hulme lying beyond its open fields, and the former Nether Hulme (New Grange) in the valley below. By the sixteenth century, the granges had been leased to tenants, although a large part of their pasture was retained by Dieulacres, and ran with Swythamley. A cluster of seventeenth-century farms represents the later division of those pastures. L indicates eighteenth and nineteenth century farms with Lee names in an area of former woodland.

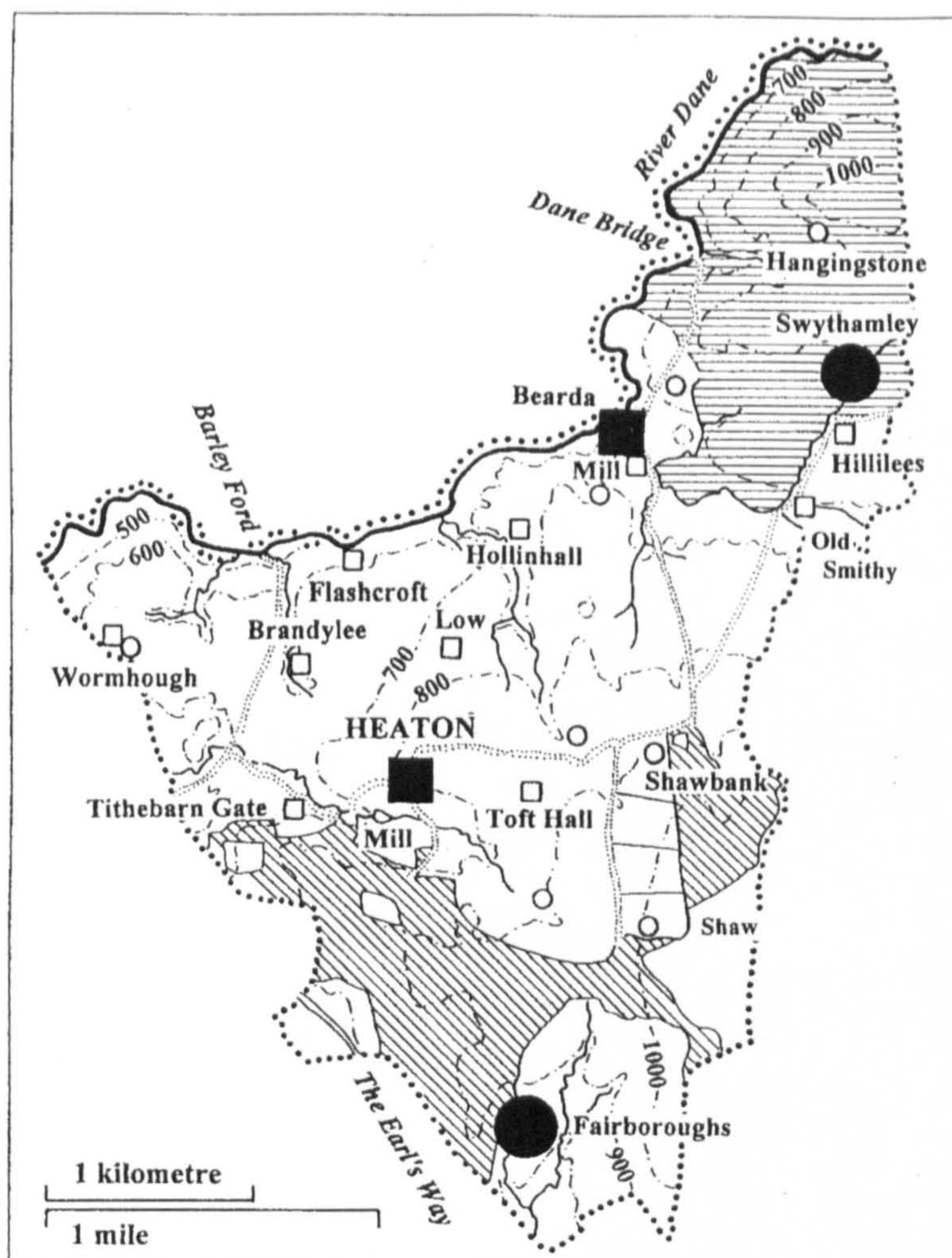


Fig. 2.4 The manor of Leek: the township of Heaton

The township hamlet and its fields occupy the centre of the township, with the two granges on the periphery. An extent gives the boundary of Swythamley Grange as it was sold to William Trafford in 1540. Fairboroughs is shown at its maximum extent in the eighteenth century, prior to the enclosure of the remaining waste. Heaton Shaw had been cleared and divided by 1538; the farms of Shawbank and Shaw occupied the northern and southern quarters by the late seventeenth century.

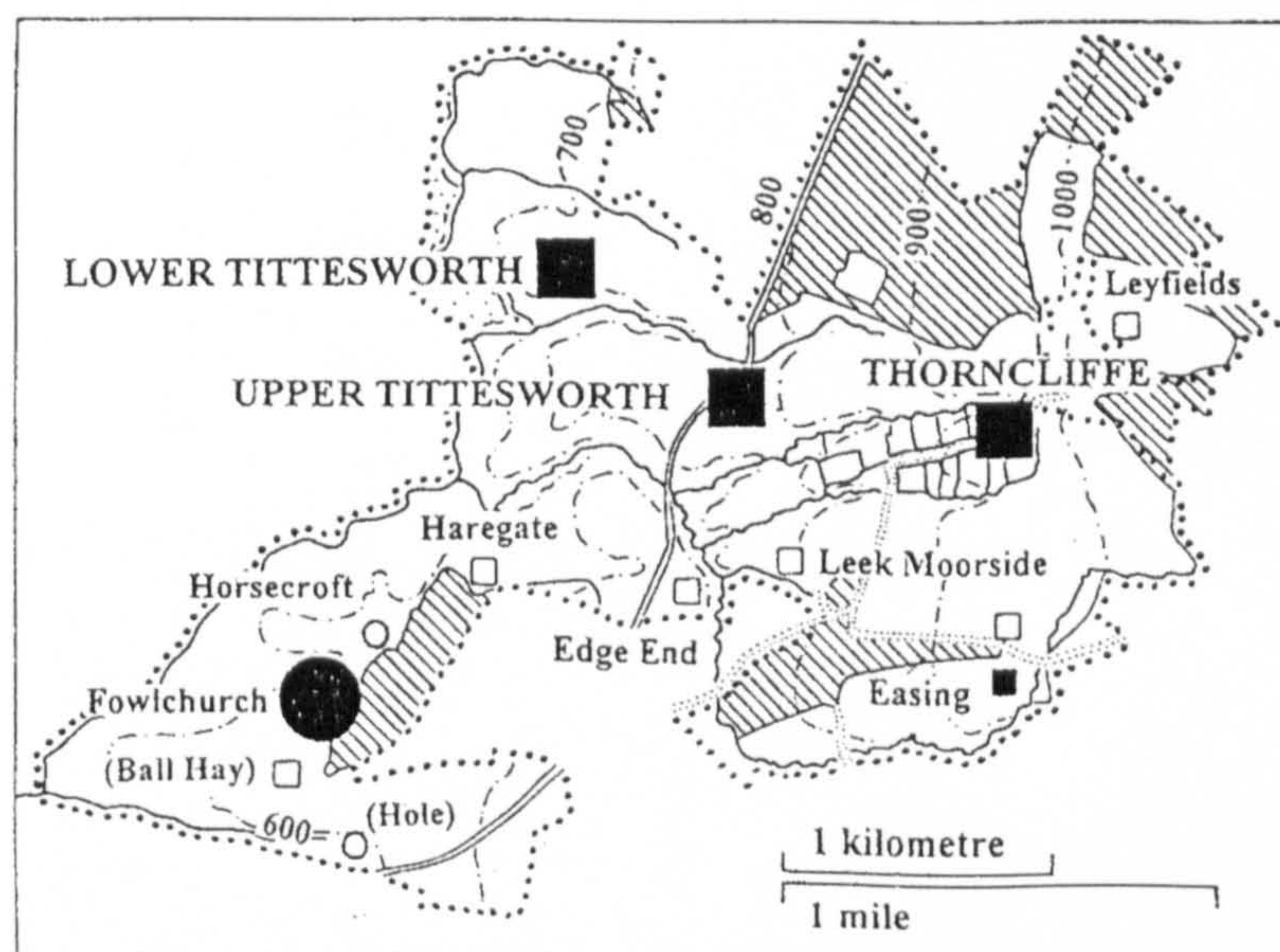


Fig. 2.5 The manor of Leek: the township of Tittesworth

Tittesworth's irregular boundaries result from the enclosure of the former wastes early in the nineteenth century. Ball Hay brook forms part of the southern boundary near Fowlchurch. Upper and Lower Tittesworth are now single farms.

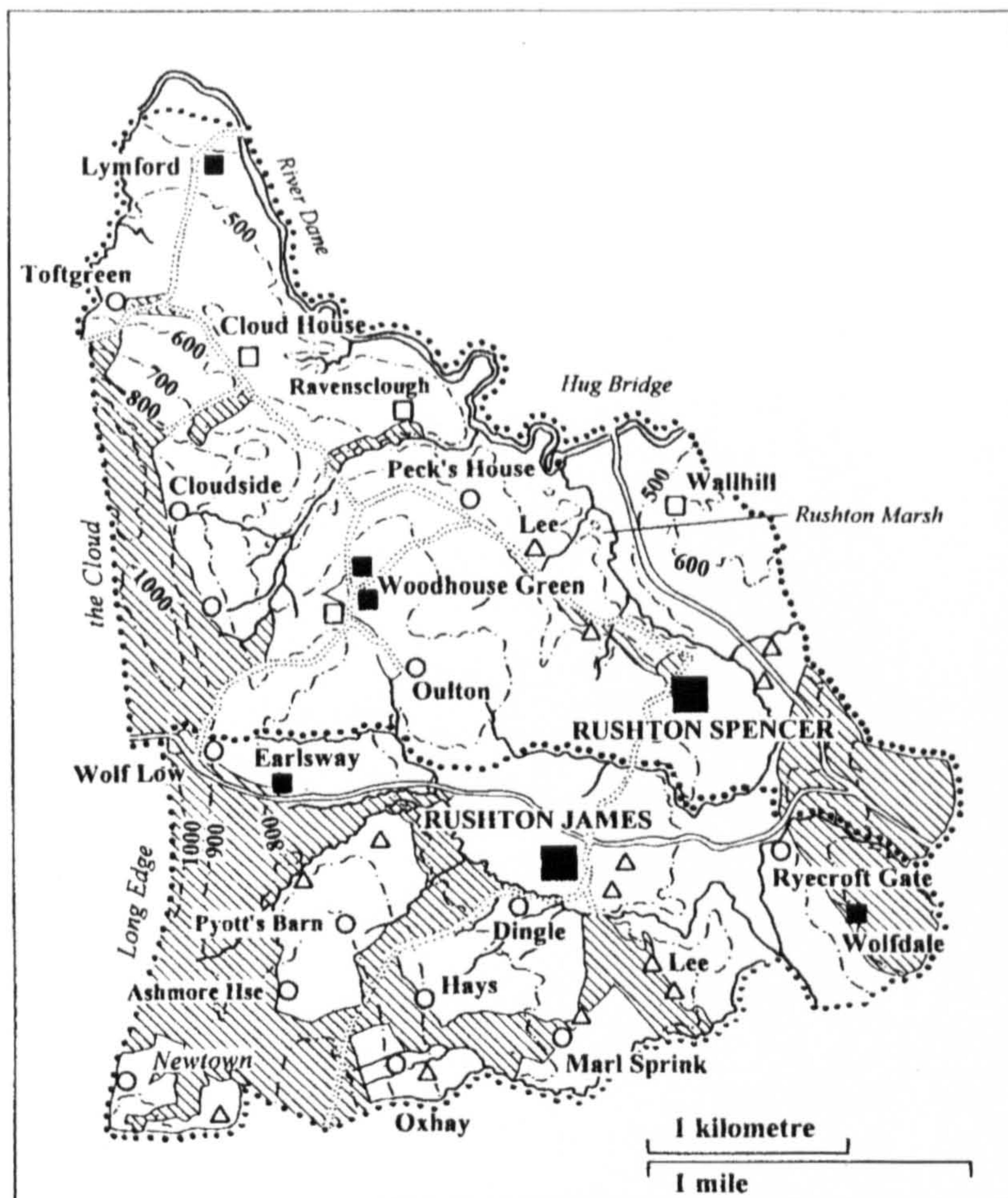


Fig. 2.6 The manor of Leek: the township of Rushton Spencer

The manor of Horton: the township of Rushton James

Before the Conquest, Rushton formed a single unit. Rushton Spencer was a separate manor by the early thirteenth century, while Rushton James was linked to the Audleys' manor of Horton. Rushton James was the second township to be fully enclosed, and mirrors the pattern glimpsed elsewhere, with islands of enclosure set in vast acreages of waste.

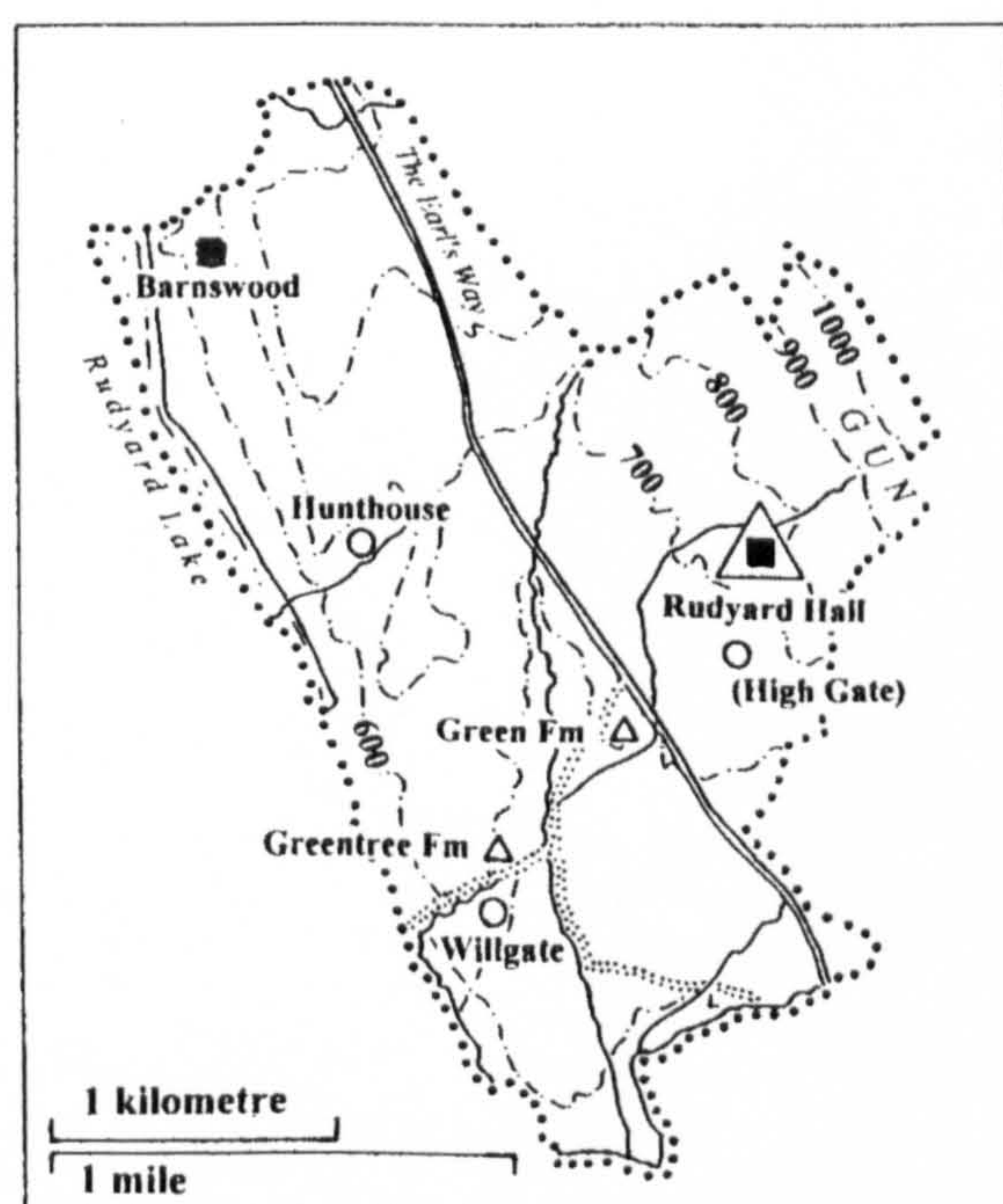


Fig. 2.7 The manor of Rudyard: the township of Rudyard

The Rudyard family were established in the township by the thirteenth century, and retained the manor until it was sold to Thomas Parker in 1723. The siting of Rudyard Hall, in a prime position on the south-western slopes of Gun, suggests it may be the site of the former township hamlet.

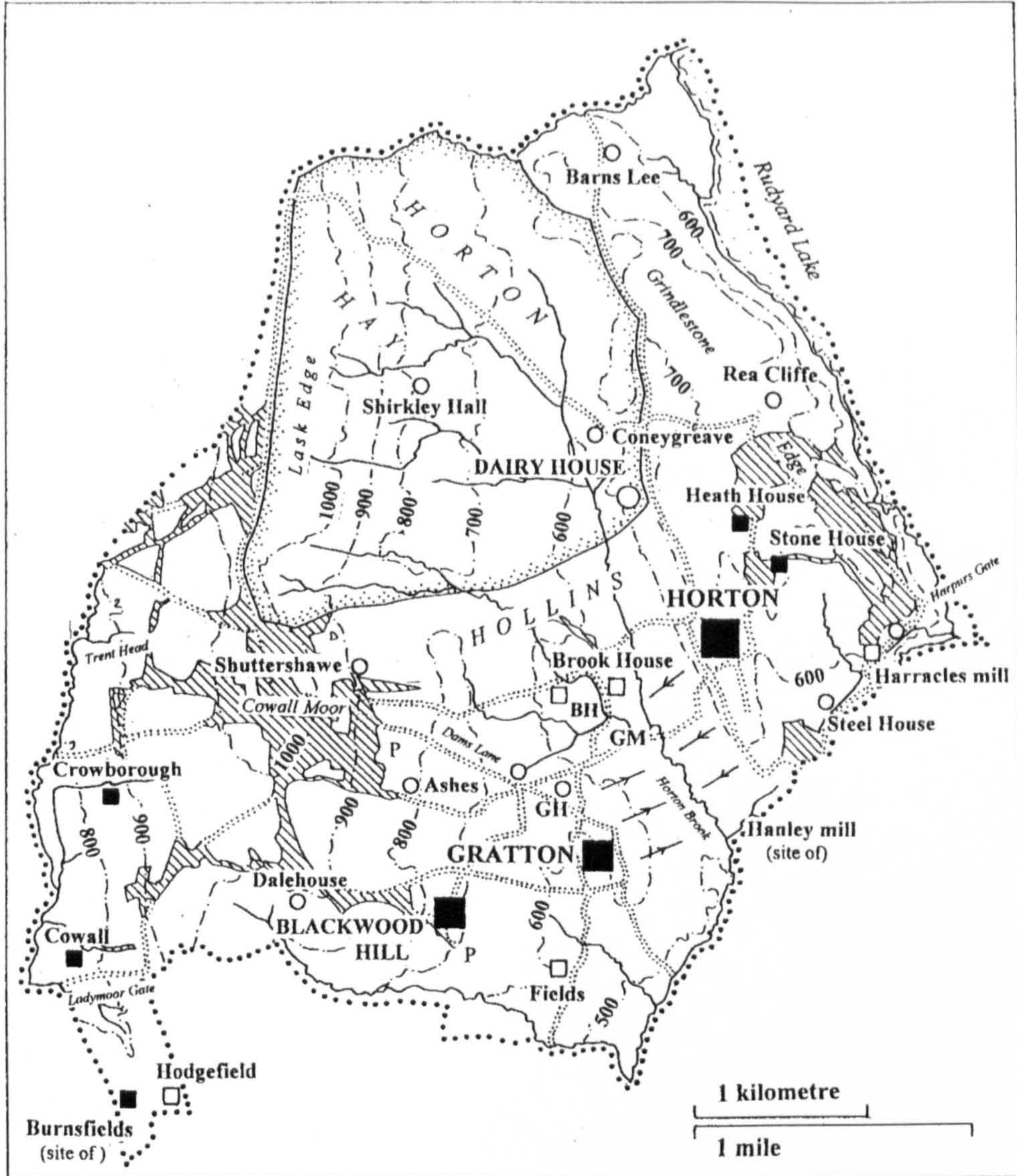


Fig. 2.8 The manor of Horton: the township of Horton

The manor of Horton, comprising Horton, Bagnall, Endon, Longsdon, Rushton James, and Stanley, was formed from a series of manors whose overlords in the thirteenth century were either the Staffords or the Verduns of Alton. By the end of the thirteenth century the Audleys held the intermediate lordship of all except Bagnall, which they acquired in the fourteenth century.

The township divides naturally at the Horton Brook, which separates the open-fields belonging to the hamlets of Gratton and Horton, which may represent former townships. To the north west lie the 1000 acres of Horton Hay. Fields to the west of Dairy House have hall names suggesting it originated as an adjunct to the manor house. Winter fodder was available from the Hollins, an area lying to the south of Horton Hay. Park names (P) attached to fields or farmhouses suggest that Horton Park lay to the west of Gratton.

KEY: BH = Bond House GH = Gratton Hayes GM = the site of Gratton Mill

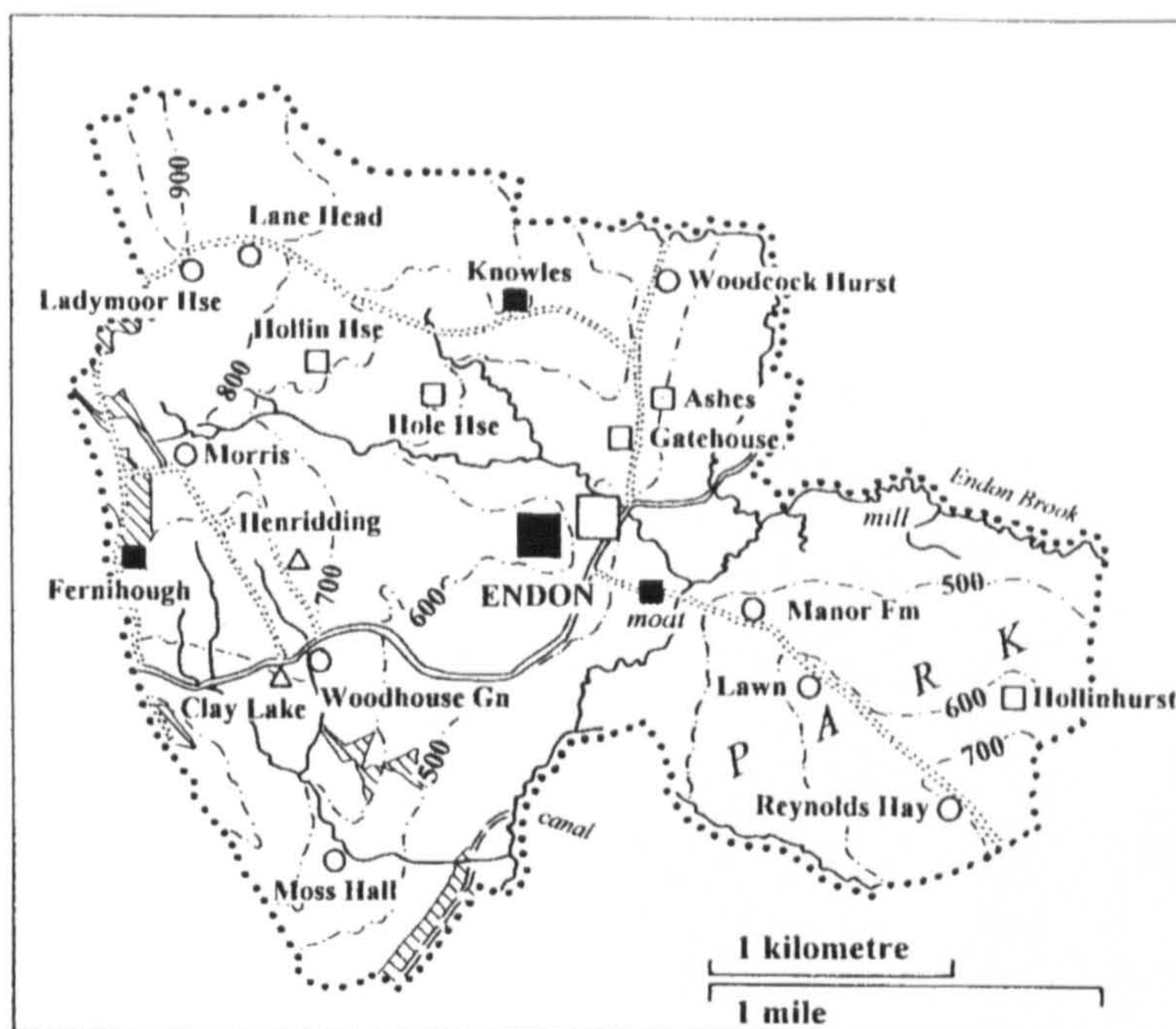


Fig. 2.9 The manor of Horton: the township of Endon

To the south east is Endon Park which contains the sites of the Audleys' moated manor house and the manor mill. A hollins on high ground in the eastern part of the park provided winter fodder, and is represented by the farm-name Hollinhurst. Park Hay field names to the north of Lane Head and the Knowles, indicate where Horton Park impinged on the township. Intermingled holdings to the west of Endon Bank indicate the position of the early hamlet, where there were three farms in 1816 (see Figs. 2.22 and 2.30). The lower hamlet, to the north west of original site, had developed by the sixteenth century, and has no share in the township field.

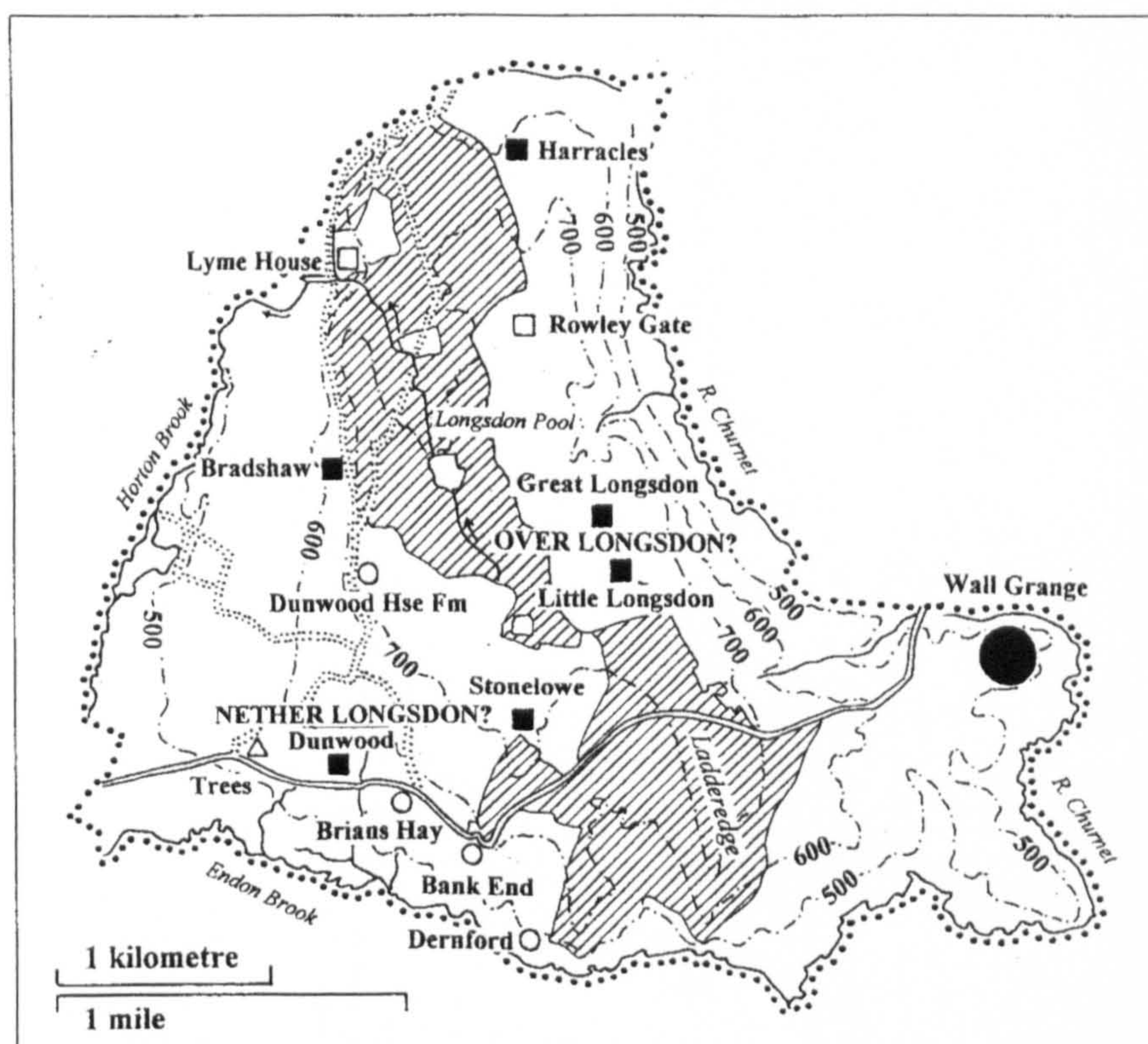


Fig. 2.10 The manor of Horton: the township of Longsdon

Neither of the township hamlets survive in a nucleated form. Over Longsdon is represented by the farms of Great Longsdon and Little Longsdon, while Nether Longsdon lay near Dunwood, where intermingled holdings still characterised a series of small farms in the early nineteenth century. Wallgrange occupied the south-eastern portion of the township, where field names indicate the presence of another major hollins.

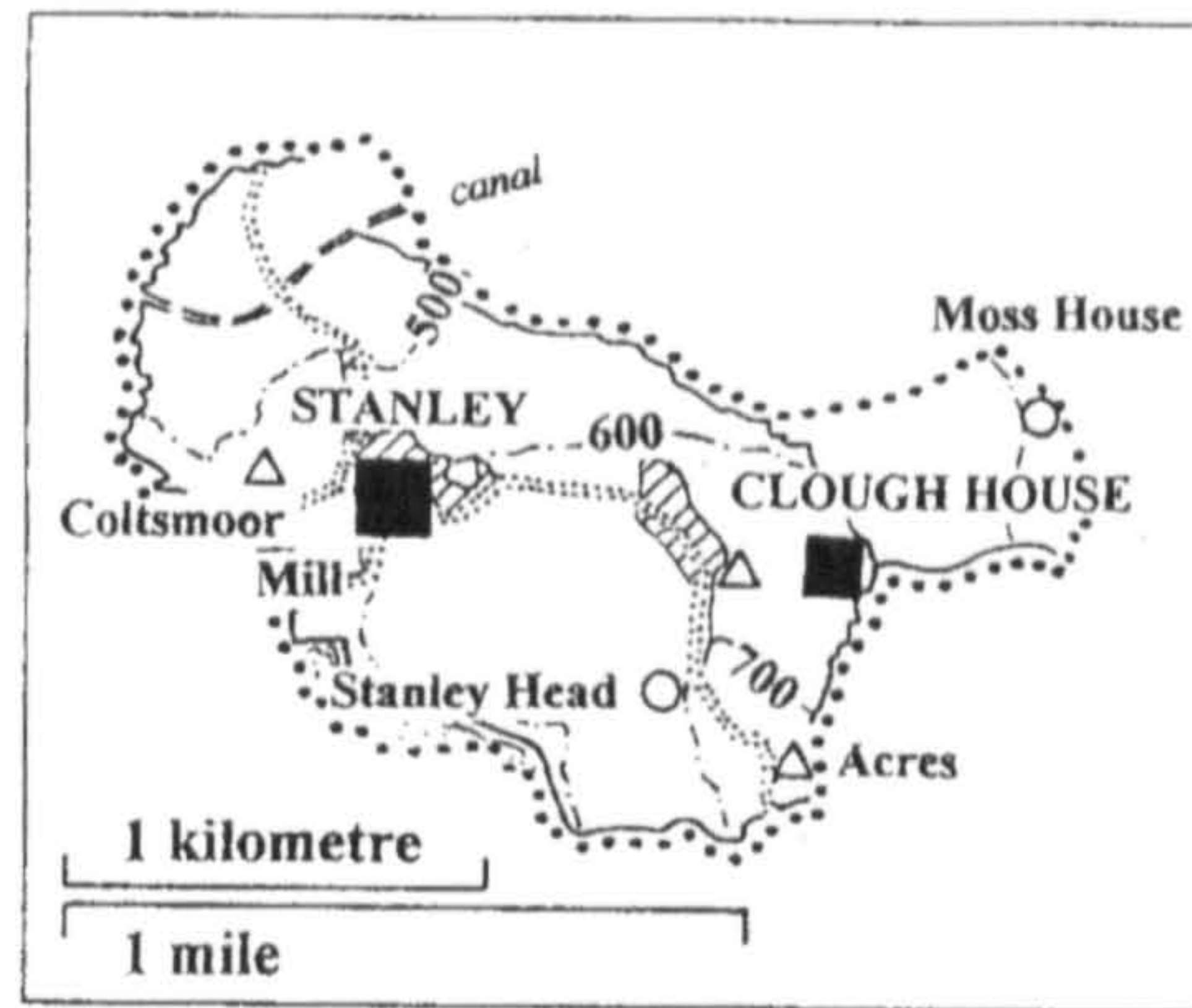


Fig. 2 11 The manor of Horton: the township of Stanley

A member of the Stanley family held an estate from the Audleys as early as *circa* 1200. It was styled a manor by 1359, and remained in the family until it was sold in 1660. A relatively large hamlet survives at Stanley, but the tiny hamlet at Clough House had dispersed by 1816.

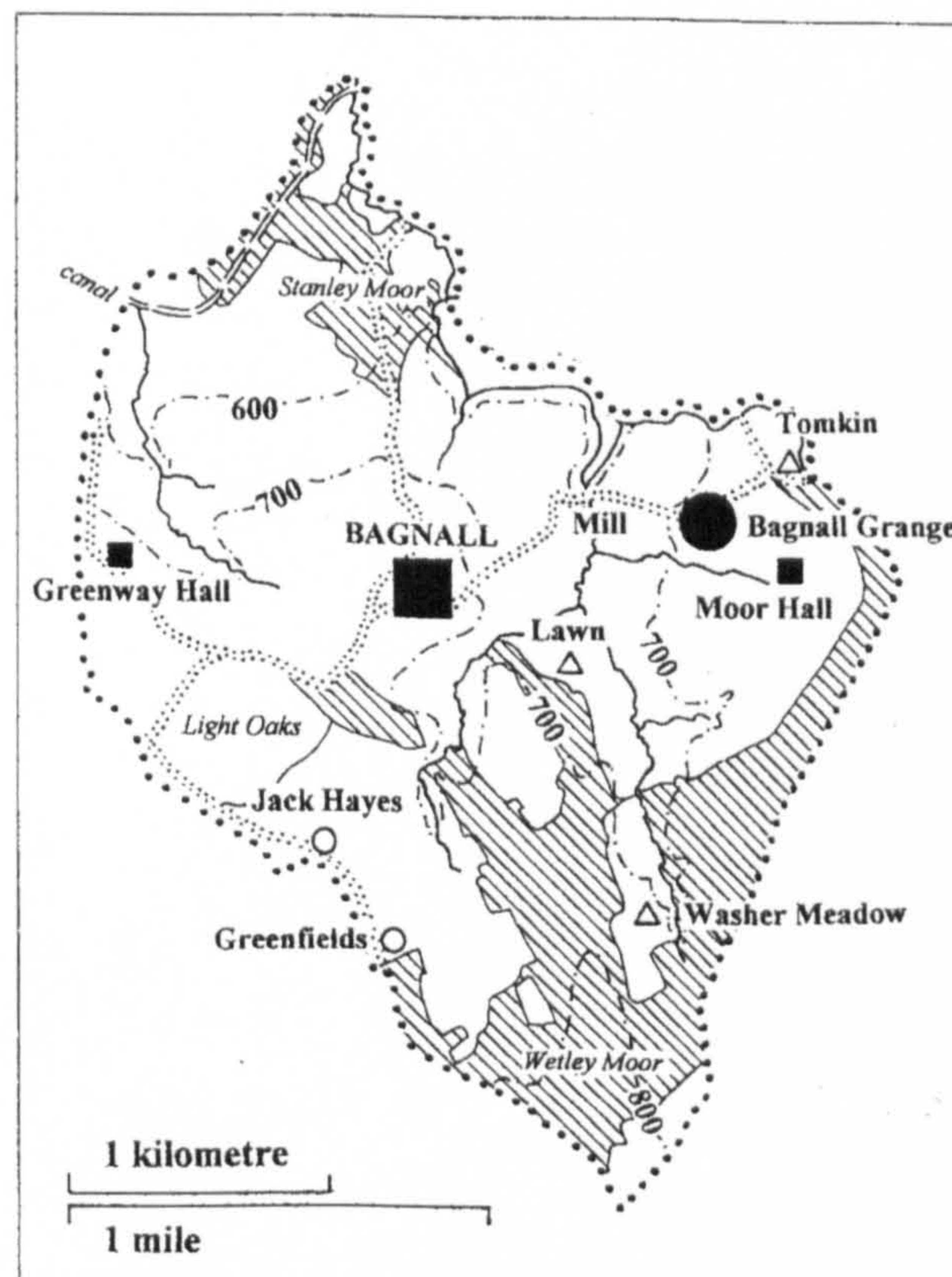


Fig. 2.12 The manor of Horton: the township of Bagnall

Bagnall was sparsely populated at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when most of its tenants were substantial freeholders. Woodland filled large areas to the north west and south west of the township hamlet, and substantial areas of moorland grazing survived until the nineteenth century.

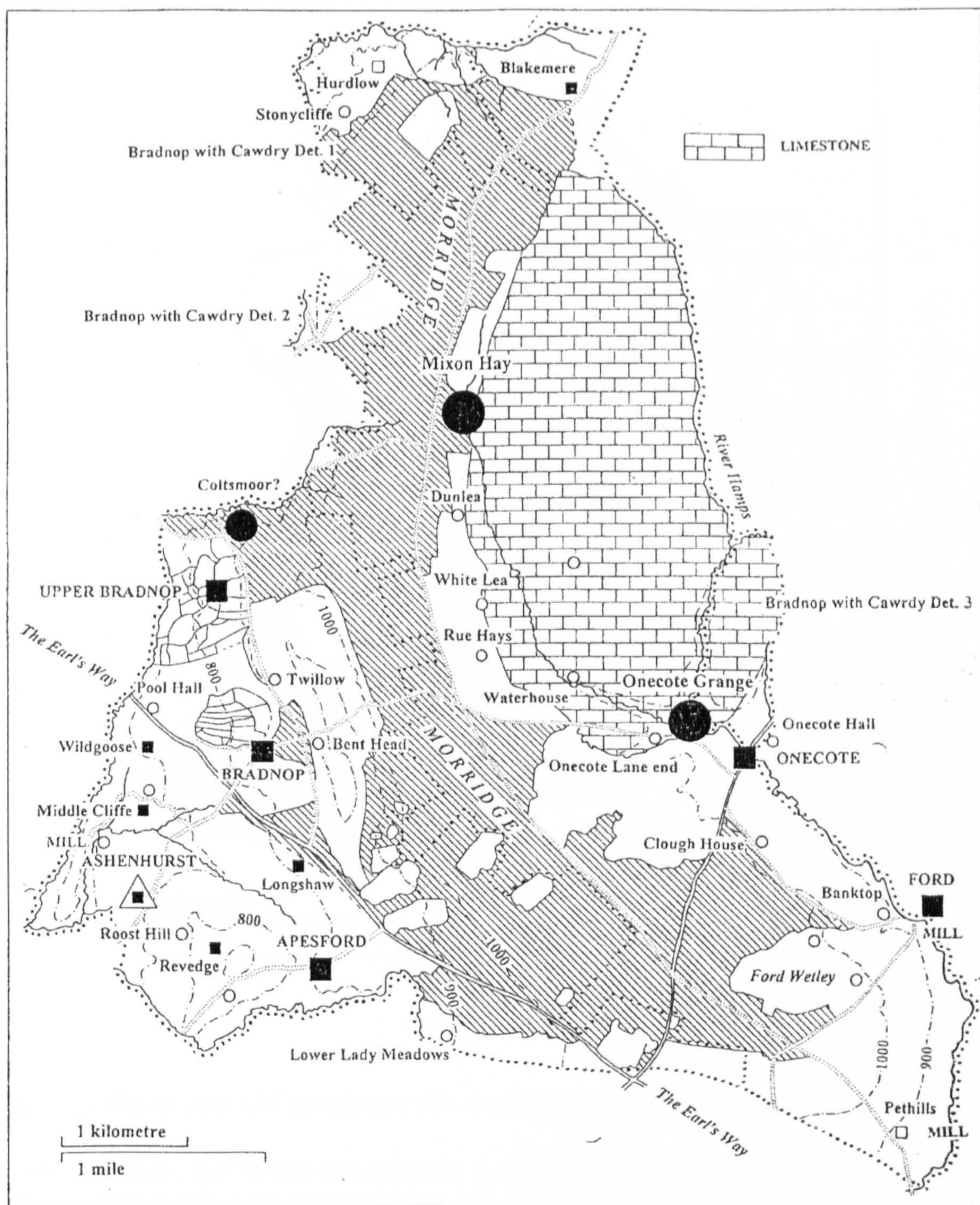


Fig. 2.13 The manor of Bradnop: the townships of Bradnop and Onecote

From 1223 until the dissolution in 1538 the manor was held by Hulton Abbey. Known in the thirteenth century as the manor Bradnop and Mixon it is divided in two by the great hump of Morrige. To the east lay a large oval hill of limestone lying entirely above 1000 feet where, in the thirteenth century, rival Cistercian monasteries established substantial property and grazing rights. The pattern of settlement suggests that the lower and more desirable land to the south west of Bradnop had already attracted secular attention.

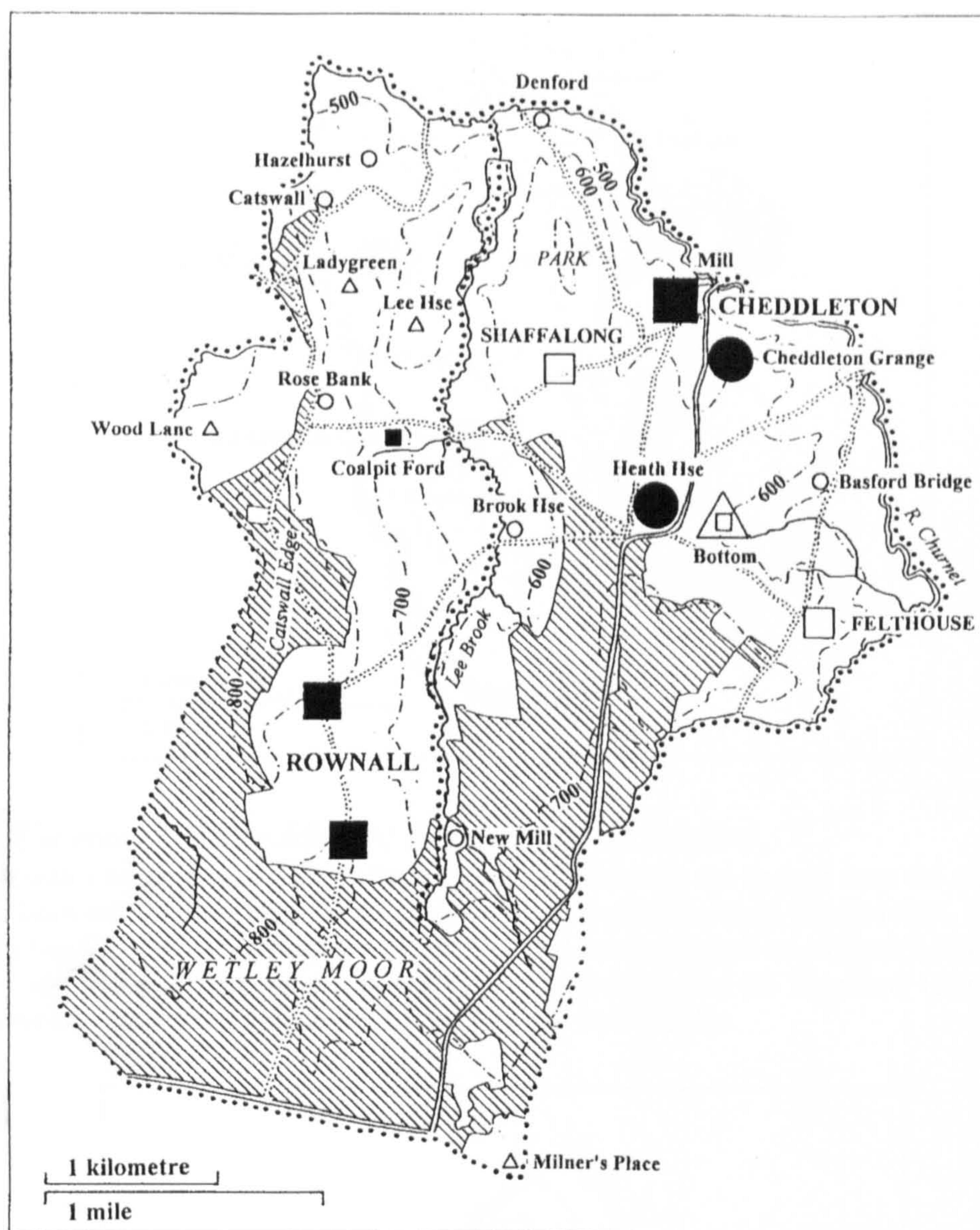


Fig. 2.14 The manor of Cheddleton: the townships of Cheddleton and Rownall

In 1086 Cheddleton and Basford were described as being in the same manor, while Consall and Rownall remained in the King's hands as 'waste' (Figs. 2.14 -16). As with Rushton James (Fig. 2.6), the striking feature of the map is the way the areas of early enclosure stand out, particularly in Rownall where the former town fields are specifically mentioned in the 1735 award. Cheddleton's name and its peripheral position suggest the townships of Rownall and Cheddleton were originally one, and were divided to provide land for what was once a secondary settlement at Cheddleton. The post-medieval roadside settlement of Wetley Rocks was created to the south east of Wetley Moor.

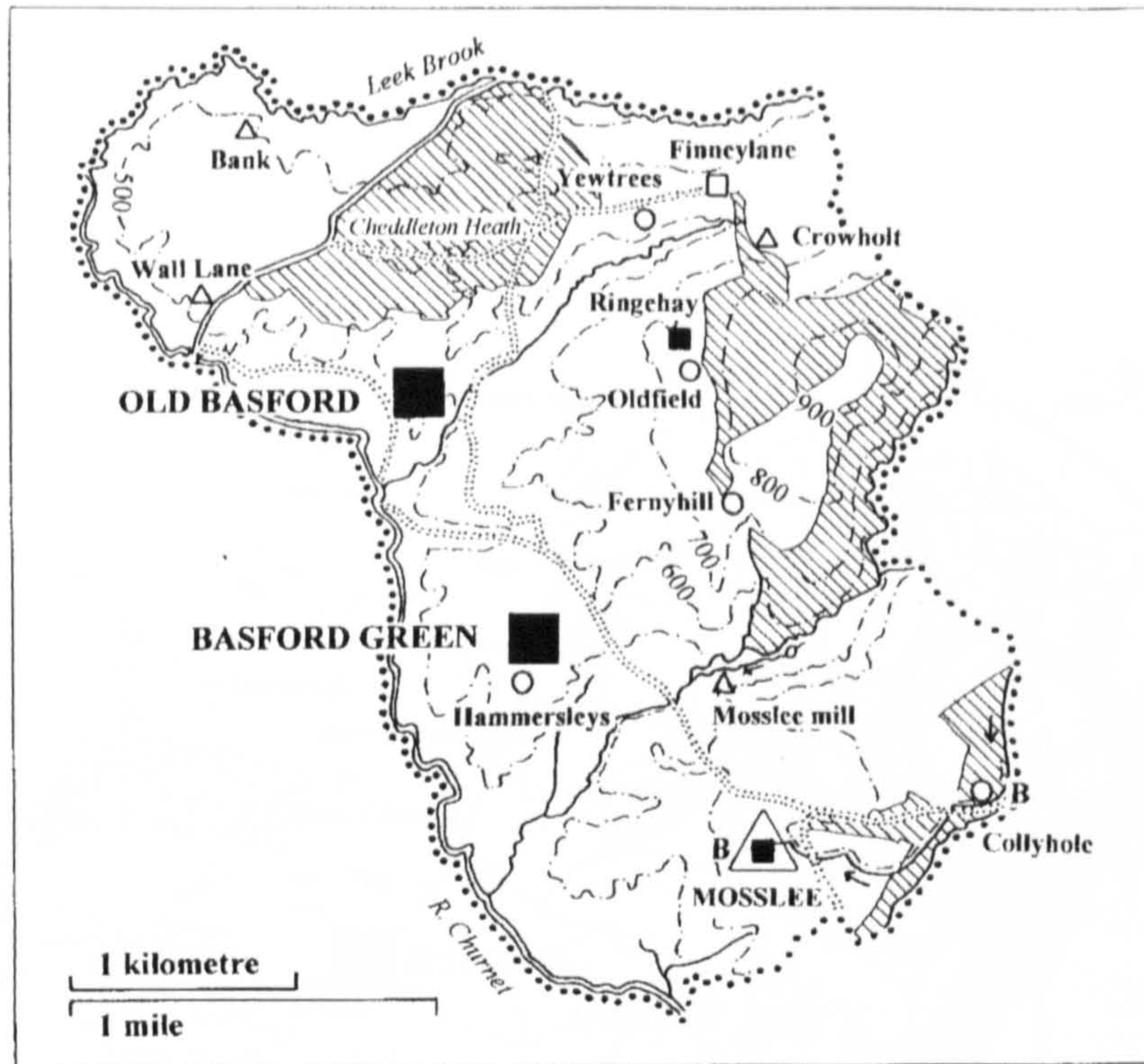


Fig. 2.15 The manor of Cheddleton: the township of Basford

Old Basford was a single farm by 1738. Basford Green, owned by the Sneyds from the early nineteenth century, has been substantially altered with the extension of grounds round Basford Hall. To the south of the township lies Mosslee, where eighteenth century field-names suggest an adjacent hamlet. A carefully engineered water course brings water from a spring in Ipstones named the Thunderer (Fig. 2.17) past its adjacent bloomery, and on to bloomeries (B) at Collyhole and Mosslee.

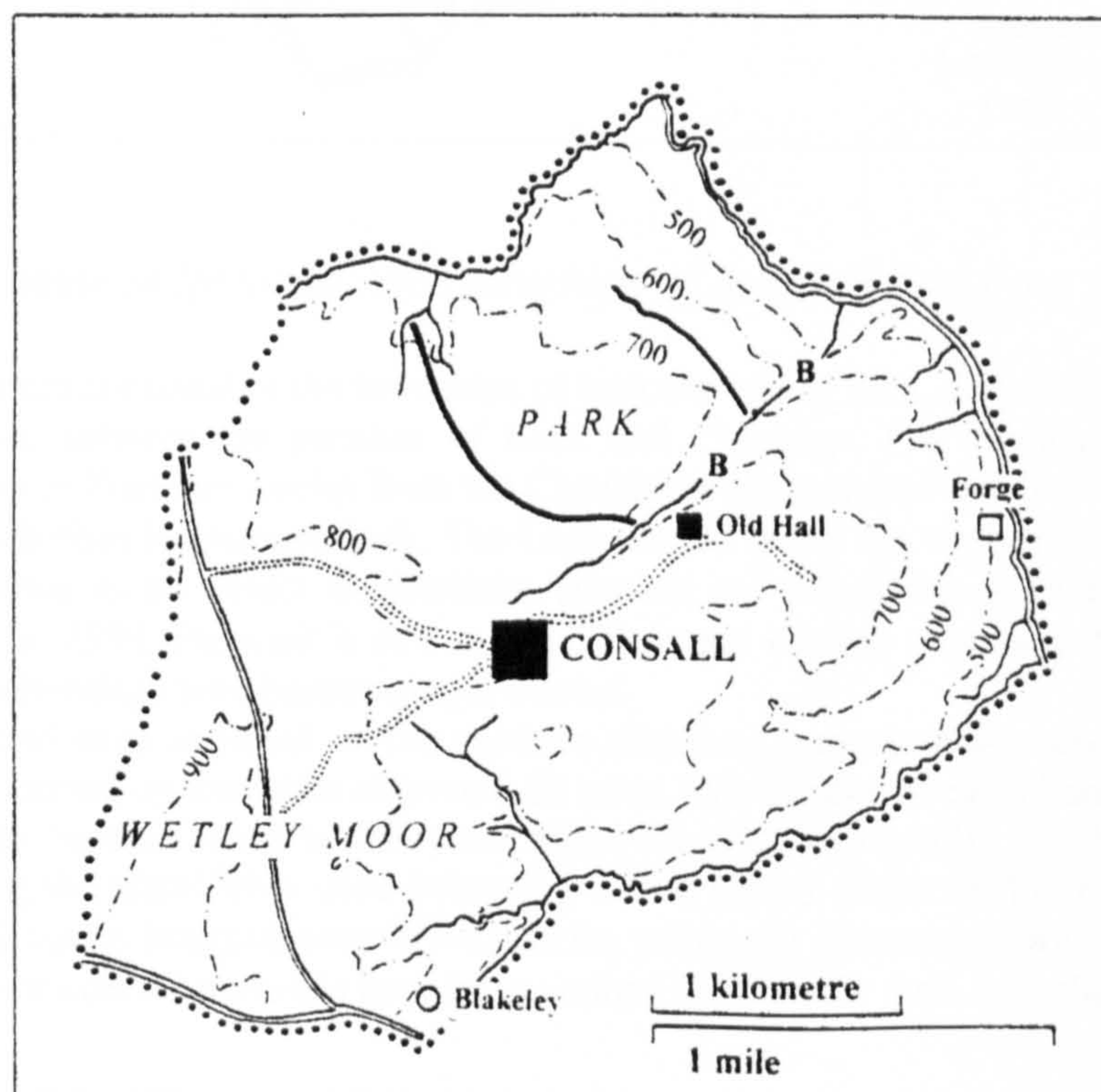


Fig. 2.16 The manor of Cheddleton: the township of Consall

A large section of Wetley Moor is shown as unenclosed on Yates's map of 1755. As the adjacent areas were enclosed earlier in the century this must have lain in Consall. Field names for Consall indicate the position of the park to the north-west of the Old Hall, and lawn names to its south east suggest further areas of stock management. The Draycott bloomeries (B) were sited in the valley to the north of the Hall.

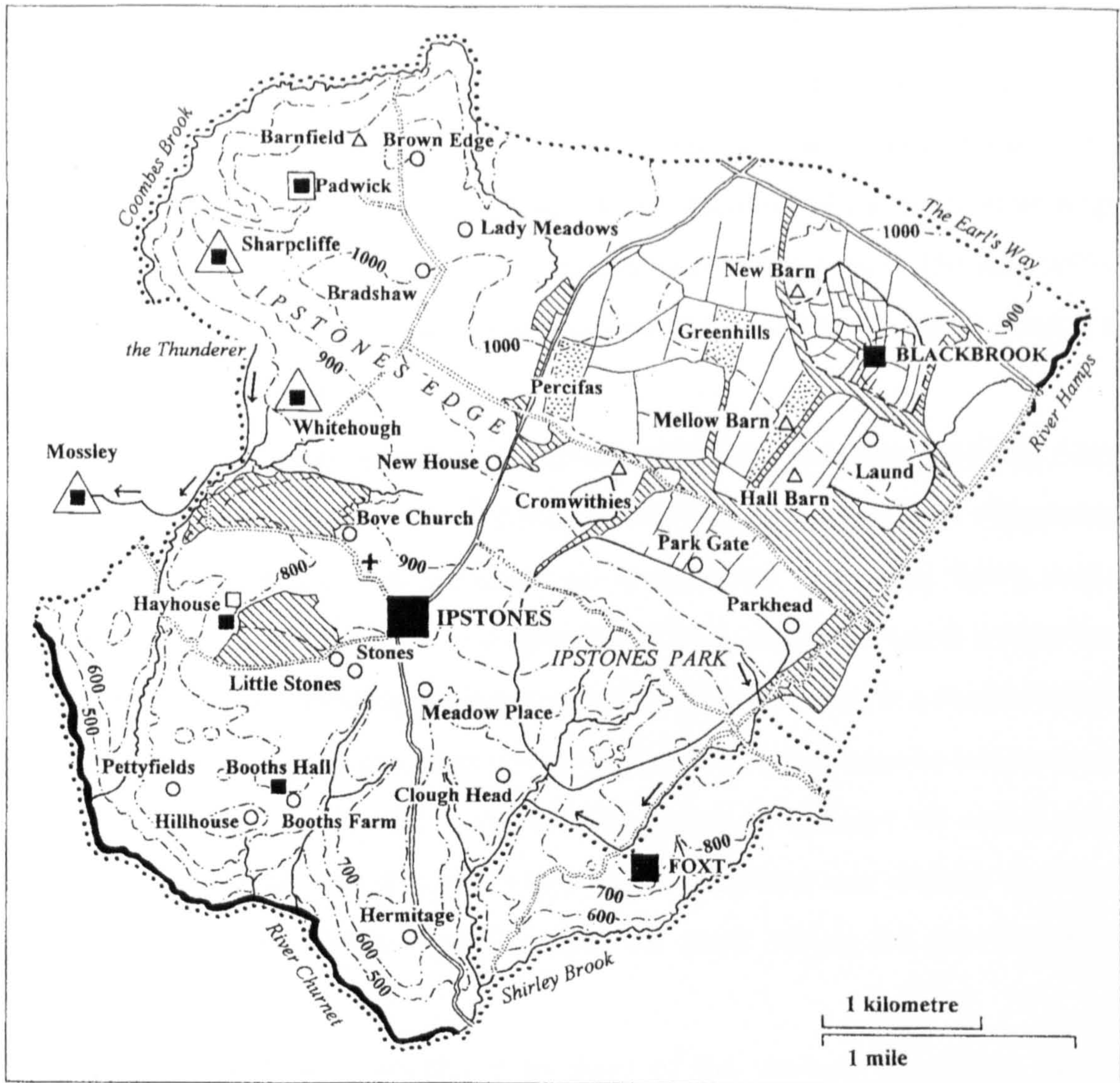


Fig. 2.17 The manor of Ipstones: the townships of Ipstones and Foxt

The manor of Ipstones consisted of the townships of Ipstones and of Foxt, despite the division of Foxt, in ecclesiastical terms, between the parishes of Leek and Checkley. The boundaries of the Checkley holding, the Liberty of Foxt, are known from the Checkley Tithe map and much of the boundary follows a watercourse which rises in Ipstones Park. The Leek section lay to the west of the watercourse, but no boundaries are shown as its extent is uncertain. Hamlets are mentioned at Sharpcliffe, Whitehough, Padwick and Foxt in 1597. Padwick is now a single farm and became a tenant property of Sharpcliffe. Sharpcliffe and Whitehough both became major estates.

1500 acres of land were enclosed on the northern slopes of Ipstones Edge between 1649 and 1680, when the area was carved up into units of around 20 acres. In a number of cases barns were built on them which subsequently became farms in their own right. Percifas, Greenhills, and Mellow Barn (shown stippled) are among the identifiable units belonging to this period. Older enclosures such as Laund and Cromwithies stand out as irregular curved boundaries within the geometric outlines of the seventeenth century units. (Minor internal divisions have been omitted to allow the main boundaries to stand out).

The town of Leek occupied a small hill on a spur of land in a loop of the River Churnet, and lay at the extreme north of its township (Fig. 2.2). Even a modest town

required a sizeable area of arable and, as the monastery's grip on the upland pastures tightened, specific areas of common grazing. The former lay to the south and west of the town, in a broad col linking the town and Westwood. The arable land, known as Leek townfield, was rimmed and interspersed by the Leek townlands, areas of rough grazing that were unsuitable for ploughing. What remained of the latter were mapped in 1811 when an enquiry into their disappearance was in progress.⁶¹ The map serves to delineate an area within which nineteenth-century maps show the characteristic field boundaries of consolidation.

While a central position was essential to an arable community requiring constant access to large areas of open field, for the pastoral farmer operating in a landscape of extremes, their avoidance was of paramount importance. Individual farms might be placed at the junction of enclosed and unenclosed land, and therefore at a considerable altitude, but the preferred siting for the nucleated settlements was at a modest height on one of the lower hills. Here the short growing season would at least be longer than that of the high moorland, allowing a reasonable chance of success for small areas of arable, while the distance to the outer edges of the moorland was of little significance, since it was used for summer grazing, and for stock which did not require daily attention.

The situation is well illustrated by three of the western townships. The ridge formed by Long Edge and the Cloud lies to the west of the two Rushtons and Horton (Figs. 2.6 and 2.8). All three township hamlets lie well below the ridge, and are offset to the east to overlook a valley floor. Similarly in Cheddleton, Wetley Moor fills the southern end of the township, while the hamlet lies to the extreme north on a gentle ridge above the Churnet (Fig. 2.14). In Ipstones and Foxt the main early settlements are on the south facing slopes below Ipstones Edge, in some cases far out on spurs of land as at Booth and Foxt (Fig. 2.17). Even when the township hamlet lies centrally, the logic imposed by the topography is still of prime importance. The position of Bradnop on the southern slopes of Morridge is a clear example (Fig. 2.13), as is Consall, where the outer edges of the township drop precipitously to the east and south, while the central area is relatively level (Fig. 2.16). Heaton, 'the high settlement'⁶² also avoids the extremes of altitude, and is midway between the top of Gun and the valley of the River Dane (Fig. 2.4).

⁶¹ *TNSFC* lviii, 81, and plate facing 71.

⁶² Ekwall, 1960.

The waterlogged state of the valley bottoms prior to drainage is emphasised by place-names such as Rushton and Hulme. The hamlets of Rushton James and Rushton Spencer with the Chapel of St. Lawrence are positioned on small hillocks or spurs overlooking the former marshland from which the townships derived their name. Hulme names in Leekfrith carry the same implication, that the low ground, often covered with boulder clay, was ill-drained and to be avoided. Of the hamlets with intermingled fields to testify to their medieval origins, only Ford straddles a river. There the advantages of a mill site, and the steep south-facing slope to the north of the hamlet suitable for arable land, outweighed the disadvantages of the valley floor, and avoided settlement at a still greater altitude (Fig. 2.13).



Fig. 2.18 Arable land at Upper Hulme (photographed under light snow) optimising a south-western slope below the Roaches and Hen Cloud.

Although the size of the open fields, and therefore the quantity of grain grown, was small, it was none-the-less essential, and many of the settlements have adjacent arable that demonstrates a preference for land sloping towards the sun to counter-balance the effects of altitude. This is seen at its clearest at Upper Hulme (Leekfrith). Tucked high up on a shelf of land below Hen Cloud, it has an apron of land falling below it that catches every last lingering ray of sun. South or south-west facing slopes can be seen to have been favoured over flat ground, as they provided both drainage and warmth.

Single farms also tend to be on well-drained sites at a modest elevation, although additional factors might influence their siting, such as a preference for land near the

junction of enclosed fields and open moorland. Farms, granges and hamlets encircle Gun (Figs. 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7). All had access to local drove roads leading up to the open grazing. A string of farms occupy a similar position below the Roaches in Leekfrith (Fig. 2.3), and a further line lies at the junction of the limestone and the gritstone to the north of Morridge (Fig. 2.13). Exceptionally, the site of Endon manor is on low ground with a tendency to flood (Figs. 2.9 and 2.30).

If a waterlogged site was undesirable, a good water supply was essential. Leek town, sited on the Sherwood Sandstone, was well situated for a regular supply of running water. Its name, meaning brook,⁶³ probably refers to the stream that ran down Spout Street to the south of the church. The search for water can rarely have been a major issue, for with numerous small springs and rivulets many sites would have provided adequate access to water. There is however evidence on two of the early sites for the construction of a lengthy watercourse to serve a settlement.

At Foxt the 'old town' is set at the extreme tip of a spur of land. This slopes gradually upwards before rising sharply onto Ipstones Edge. The 'old town' would therefore be waterless in its natural state, as the slopes drain to east and west of a mile-long spur. A watercourse was therefore constructed to carry water from Ipstones Park on the lower slopes of Ipstones Edge to a point near the end of the spur (Fig. 2.17). Great skill was exercised in its construction as it weaves its way with no visible fall for over a mile. That it is medieval in date, and part of the arrangements for a planted hamlet seems certain, as the township is divided on the line of the watercourse. The land to the east formed the Liberty of Foxt and was part of Checkley parish, and the land to the west (whose western boundary has been lost) was part of Leek parish. This ensured the payment of half the tithes to Checkley, presumably part of an arrangement to finance either the setting up of the settlement or the construction of the watercourse.

Also beginning in Ipstones is a watercourse running from a spring called the Thunderer near Whitehough, along the contours to Mosslee Hall (Figs. 2.15 and 2.17). It forms part of the Ipstones/Cheddleton parish boundary, but may only have done so from 1736.⁶⁴ Mosslee, Sharpcliffe, Whitehough, Colyhole and the two Intake farms all had rights to water from this source until the mains reached the majority of them in twentieth century.⁶⁵ Whether the watercourse was designed primarily to serve a line of bloomeries at the Thunderer, Colyhole, and Mosslee, or whether it was designed

⁶³ Gelling, 1992 137.

⁶⁴ SRO Q/RDc29.

principally for a hamlet at Mosslee, is a question only answerable by excavation.

(ii) *The impact of the monasteries*

The Cistercian monasteries of North Staffordshire were late foundations, Croxden (c.1176-9), Dieulacres (1214) and Hulton (1219).⁶⁶ All held land in Leek parish, as did Lilleshall abbey and Trentham priory.

The Cistercian ideal required withdrawal from the world and the choice of 'places remote from human habitation'.⁶⁷ The site chosen for Dieulacres, a mile to the north of Leek town may therefore seem strange, but a deep valley and a substantial ridge lay between the two, ensuring they are not inter-visible, and a large area of untamed landscape lay to the north.⁶⁸

In practice the monks were following the familiar Cistercian pattern. The abbey was to be built in a valley adjacent to the River Churnet where drainage problems were considerable. In its natural state the river would have meandered across a broad and marshy flood plain, so the major work consisted of re-routing the Churnet behind an embankment on the south side of the valley (Fig. 2.3), and laying a network of drains to carry surplus water to an outlet well downstream. Little survives of the monastic buildings, but other Cistercian abbeys provide plentiful evidence of the order's ability to provide its houses with fresh water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene, and they no doubt achieved it here.

The northern part of their holdings presented a major challenge. Domesday describes woodland that was 'four leagues in length and as many in breadth',⁶⁹ and the evidence suggests that this lay predominantly in Leekfrith. To the north of the township lay the High and Middle Forests, part of the forest of Leek and Macclesfield over which Richard Davenport was made master-forester by Earl Hugh *circa* 1165-1170,⁷⁰ and where the abbots of Dieulacres were to exercise forest rights.⁷¹ Lying adjacent to the Macclesfield Forest these formed the northern part of 'the Frith', which stretched from the River Dane to the River Churnet immediately to the north of the town, an area of 7,542 acres (Fig. 2.3).

⁶⁵ Sale catalogue of 1919. Privately owned.

⁶⁶ Fisher, 1984, 4.

⁶⁷ Dickinson, 1961, 73.

⁶⁸ Tringham, 1993, 2-3.

⁶⁹ Slade, 1958, 22.

⁷⁰ Barraclough, 1988, charter 176.

⁷¹ Sleight, 1862, 17.

The name Frith was shared with adjacent areas of Alstonfield and is defined by Ekwall as woodland.⁷² Gelling, with her intensive exploration of the relationship of place-names and landscape, defines it as 'scrub at the edge of forest'.⁷³ Despite this, place-names in Leekfrith suggest denser areas of woodland. Farms to the north of the township were regularly referred to as being in Hasselwood.⁷⁴ A broad swathe of farm names lying on relatively low land in the centre of the township have -lee as an element (OE *lēah*, an open place in a wood),⁷⁵ while to the south of the township is Hillswood, whose lower flanks are still substantially wooded (Fig. 2.3). Thus the creation of granges required systematic clearance on a major scale.

By 1291 Dieulacres had substantial properties at Nova Grangia (New Grange, former Nether Hulme),⁷⁶ Rupen (Roche), Hastewode (Hasselwood) and Wetwode, also at 'Fenacre' and 'Hulyn' (possibly Foker and Middle Hulme),⁷⁷ all in Leekfrith (Fig. 2.3). Together they contained eleven out of the nineteen carucates of land that the abbey held in Staffordshire, or approximately 1,800 acres.⁷⁸ Switholme (Swythamley) and Feyreybrowes (Fairboroughs), in Heaton, gave three hectares more. Poucher, presumably Foucher/Fowlchurch (Tittesworth), and Westwood (Leek and Lowe), each added two more, though the number of acres must be taken as no more than a broad indication of relative size. A grange existed at Cheddleton by 1240,⁷⁹ and at Birchall by 1246,⁸⁰ though neither was mentioned in 1291.

Given their even spacing across Leekfrith, where they lie between two and two and a half miles apart, their placing seems far from random. The secular settlements which, with the exception of Nether Hulme, continued to exist side by side with the granges, add to the impression of a controlled settlement pattern, since they too are carefully spaced in relationship to each other, and to the monastic properties. The precise extent of grange land is a matter of speculation. In a relatively empty landscape unenclosed grazing was an important factor, and it is likely, as with the Derbyshire granges,⁸¹ that central enclosures existed for stock management, contained farm

⁷² Ekwall, 1960.

⁷³ Gelling, 1984, 191.

⁷⁴ LRO Robert Allen 1591/2; Deeds of Buxton Brow (privately owned).

⁷⁵ Ekwall, 1960.

⁷⁶ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 193-4.

⁷⁷ *Tax. Eccl.*, (Rec. Com).

⁷⁸ Fisher, 1984, 24.

⁷⁹ Fisher, 1984, 22.

⁸⁰ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 101.

⁸¹ Hart, 1981, 155-159.

buildings, and were roughly in the position of the present farm names. (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1 *The major monastic properties in the parish of Leek*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Names in 1291⁸²</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Grid Ref.</i>	<i>Abbey</i>
Dieulacres Abbey		Leekfrith	SJ983578	Dieulacres
Birchall		Leek and Lowe	SJ988546	Dieulacres
Cheddleton		Cheddleton	SJ973522	Dieulacres
Coltsmoor		Bradnop	SK009571	Hulton
Fairboroughs	Fayreybrowes	Heaton	SJ957608	Dieulacres
Foker	Fenacre	Leekfrith	SJ965576	Dieulacres
Fowlchurch	Poucher	Tittesworth	SJ987573	Dieulacres
Hasselwood	Hastwoode	Leekfrith	SJ983638	Dieulacres
Heath House		Cheddleton	SJ968513	Lilleshall
Middle Hulme ?	Hulyn	Leekfrith	SJ999604	Dieulacres
Mixon	Mixne	Onecote	SK028579	Hulton
New Grange	Nova' Grangia	Leekfrith	SJ993602	Dieulacres
Onecote Grange		Onecote	SK046555	Croxden
Roche	Rupen	Leekfrith	SJ992633	Dieulacres
Swythamley	Switholme	Heaton	SJ973647	Dieulacres
Wall Grange	Wal'	Longsdon	SJ978549	Trentham
Westwood	Westwoode	Leek and Lowe	SJ965562	Dieulacres
Wetwood	Wetwode	Leekfrith	SJ980616	Dieulacres

Over the manor as a whole, the needs of the abbey took second place to those of the established settlements. In Leek and Lowe, by late in the thirteenth century, the township was divided broadly into four areas (Fig. 2.2). To the north and centre lay the town and its field, to the east was the hamlet of Lowe with a scatter of small farms and a large area of moorland, while to the south and west were the granges of Westwood and Birchall, in areas of former woodland. The granges established in Heaton at Fairboroughs and Swythamley also lie in secondary positions near a township boundary (Fig. 2.4),, as did Fowlchurch in Tittesworth (Fig. 2.5). Only one of the local granges lay outside the manor of Leek. This was at Cheddleton (Fig. 2.14), where a small hillock in sight of the village centre gave 'sufficient pasture to graze the oxen which drew the waggons to the tithe-barn at harvest time'.⁸³

The consideration that appears to have been exercised by Dieulacres in the neighbourhood of its abbey, is in sharp contrast to the high-handed behaviour of the Cistercians elsewhere, though even Dieulacres enforced the movement of villeins to its land at Rossal in Thornton, Lancashire *circa* 1216. Of the Yorkshire houses, Byland, Mieux and Kirkstall were all responsible for displacing whole communities in the interests of achieving seclusion for themselves, as were Pipewell (Northamptonshire), Revesby (Lincolnshire) and Stoneleigh (Warwickshire). However, much of the

⁸² Tax. Eccl. (Rec. Com.).

⁸³ Fisher, 1984, 22.

displacement took place before 1160,⁸⁴ and by the thirteenth century customary tenants had greater security of tenure, a factor likely to influence the later foundations like Dieulacres.⁸⁵

The impact of other monasteries was relatively slight. The priory of Trentham owned a single grange at Wall on the edge of Longsdon,⁸⁶ occupying a classic site on high ground above the River Churnet (Figs. 2.10 and 2.19), while Lilleshall had a grange at Heath House⁸⁷ on the edge of the moorland to the south of Cheddleton village (Fig. 2.14).



Fig. 2.19 Wall Grange sited on a promontory of land in a bend of the River Churnet

This leaves Bradnop, where various interests were to meet and conflict.⁸⁸ The manor consisted of Onecote and Bradnop, lying either side of Morridge, which present sharp contrasts in their geology, their overall altitude, and their patterns of settlement (Fig. 2.13). Bradnop, lying partly on Morridge, was bisected by the Earl's Way, and contained the highest number of known medieval settlements of any of the rural townships. These lay between Morridge and Ipstones Edge in the broad valley of the place-name⁸⁹ Onecote, to the north east, included not only the gritstone ridge of

⁸⁴ Donkin, 1960, 143-9, 152-6.

⁸⁵ Britnell, 1993, 143.

⁸⁶ *Tax. Eccl.*, (Rec. Com).

⁸⁷ PRO Cal. Pat. Rolls, Roll 861 m.32. C66/861m32.

⁸⁸ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 171.

⁸⁹ Ekwall, 1960.

Morrige, but also a large hump-backed area of Mixon limestone, lying for the most part above 1,000 feet. As its name implies, Onecote was sparsely settled, perhaps with a hamlet in the present position, although no evidence for an early field system survives.

Croxden's grange at Onecote was already established when Hulton received the manor in 1223, and occupied a position on the edge of the limestone near the junction of the Onecote Brook and the River Hamps. In 1291 it was one of the more substantial granges, with three carucates of land. Grazing land on limestone had its attractions, and by 1237 Hulton was in dispute over the establishment of a grange at Mixon, where Dieulacres also claimed grazing rights. The dispute was settled to the satisfaction of both: Hulton was allowed a sheepfold around which it could enclose 240 acres, and agreed to pay tithes to Dieulacres. The grange was presumably sited at, or near, Mixon Hay,⁹⁰ and had a single carucate of land in 1291.⁹¹

The final grange to be added to the manor was Coltsmoor. In 1331 Croxden purchased 90 acres of wasteland in Bradnop. This was presumably in Upper Bradnop, where the abbey had a grange in 1343, and gave permission to build in 1345.⁹² If so this may have been unprofitable, for the area reverted to moorland, and was subject to Parliamentary Enclosure after 1769.

(iii) *The secular lordships: the siting of the hall houses*

This is not an area of nucleated settlement.⁹³ The regular pattern of manor house, church and village, clustering within two or three open fields, prevalent in more populous parts of the Midlands, is absent here, and shadowed only at Cheddleton, Horton and the town of Leek. Evidence for manorial involvement in the middle ages can be inferred in the organisation of land use, but in building terms it is conspicuously absent. Substantial manor houses are unknown, but modest properties known as hall houses can be identified in most of the secular manors, and also in Leek town. Where these represent manorial sites they are known either as 'the hall house' or as 'hallhouse' linked with the township name. At Rushton, for example, each of the townships has its hall house set in a small hamlet, (Fig.2.6), but the pattern of a hall house set in a hamlet is by no means consistent.

⁹⁰ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 143, 211-213.

⁹¹ *Tax. Eccl. (Rec. Com.)*.

⁹² *VCH Staffs*, III, 228,170; SRO 5116/1.

⁹³ Lewis, et al, 1997.

In 1246 Endon's manor house⁹⁴ appears to have been the moated site on low ground to the south of the hamlet (Figs. 2.9 and 2.30), reached by a causewayed section of Park Lane running between a lane known as Hallwater in 1495,⁹⁵ and Manor Farm. The latter is almost certainly the farm tenanted by John Tomkinson known as Hall Banks in 1607.⁹⁶ Winter flooding isolates the site, and the surrounding moat is barely visible. It is doubtful if its siting was ever an asset, and it is locally unique as an important medieval settlement site which is not set on well-drained ground. Presumably its relationship to the medieval deer-park was the reason for its position.

A similar juxtaposition of demesne enclosure and isolated hall house occurs in other townships. In Horton, the site of the house occupied by Adam de la Halle in 1308,⁹⁷ seems likely to be represented by a series of 'hall' field names adjacent to the Dairy House at the eastern end of Horton Hay, and half a mile north of Horton village (Figs. 2.8 and 2.31). Since two 'old' houses stood adjacent to the present house in 1664⁹⁸ the medieval house may still have been above ground. The present Horton Hall received its name in the nineteenth century.⁹⁹ In Consall (Fig. 2.16), the 'old hall' lies to the north east of the township hamlet, between an area of parkland and another with 'lawn' field and farm names.¹⁰⁰

(iv) *Parks, pastures, hayes and hollins*

While the monasteries created granges, the secular lords enclosed parks and hayes with hollins to feed their livestock, and used their tenants to maintain their boundaries. Thus sixteenth century Staffordshire could be described as 'for the most part barren, one fourth being heath and waste, and another fourth being chases and parks'.¹⁰¹

The medieval hamlets made little impact on the landscape. The scale of their activities is reflected in the size of the consolidated holdings around Upper Hulme, and Thorncliffe (Figs. 2.3 and 2.5), both of which represent former arable farming. Outside these enclosures were vast areas covered with either woodland or unimproved grasslands, the latter being the 'bents' of the later farm names. The number of animals

⁹⁴ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 181.

⁹⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 177.

⁹⁶ SRO D(W) 1490/17.

⁹⁷ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 70.

⁹⁸ LRO Richard Yardley, 1664.

⁹⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 71.

¹⁰⁰ SRO D1176/A/3/114, Consall estate map (1910).

that could be kept there, and then wintered on the central enclosures was small, and as the population expanded there was considerable incentive to enclose and improve.

Medieval enclosure took several forms, including the deer-parks and hays of the demesne lands, with their associated hollins, and the smaller hays enclosed by individuals or small groups. Cantor's work on the deer-parks of North Staffordshire underlines their frequency and summarises their characteristics. None were recorded in Domesday, and documentary references are most numerous in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They had little in common with the later ornamental parks, being simple enclosures with a variety of uses in addition to the keeping of deer. Included in Cantor's list are parks in Ipstones (1225), Endon (1273), Cheddleton (1379), and Horton (1411).¹⁰² None is listed in the monastic holdings, though field and farm names indicate a deer park on the southeastern slopes of Gun, where Ranulph III retained hunting rights in 1230 (Fig. 2.3).¹⁰³

Place-names indicate widely separated areas of parkland in Endon, confirming the inference of the name 'Old Park' used in 1308.¹⁰⁴ To the southeast a roughly circular area containing park and lawn names is bisected by Park Lane (Fig. 2.9 and 2.30). To the north, Parkhaye field and farm names lie either side of the Endon/Horton boundary. These are too scattered to define a specific area but presumably represent Horton park. Deer farming has been suggested in Horton at Buckstall, near Crowborough, and near Dams Lane, which could be the Damsgate referred to in 1445.¹⁰⁵ While the former seems likely, Dams Lane leads directly to the massive dam of Gratton Mill, suggesting an alternative derivation.

The extent of Cheddleton deer park is uncertain. It probably occupied the ridge bisected by Park Lane between the River Churnet and the Lee Brook, where land rises sharply from 150 to 213 metres (Fig. 2.14). In Consall the position is clearer. To the north of the Old Hall the park boundaries can be identified with reasonable certainty on the basis of field boundaries and field names. To the south lies Lawn farm, suggesting a further area used for deer management (Fig. 2.16).¹⁰⁶ Both occupy areas which were not initially inviting in farming terms, and typify the siting of the early parks.

Only at Ipstones can the park boundary be defined with certainty over its entire

¹⁰¹ Thirsk, 1967, xxix.

¹⁰² Cantor, 1962, 1964.

¹⁰³ SRO 4974/B/7/34; *VCH Staffs.* VII, 197.

¹⁰⁴ *VCH Staffs.* VII, 181.

¹⁰⁵ *VCH Staffs.* VII, 72-3.

length (Fig. 2.17). Here the park occupied a substantial area of rough grazing and woodland set on the steep southern slopes of Ipstones Edge. A footpath, the former Park Gate, marks the upper boundary, and a farm of that name was sold to its 'ancient tenant' in 1651.¹⁰⁷ The deeds of Cockintake confirm the boundary, as its farmlands are described as 'shooting up to the Ipstones Parkhead southwards'.¹⁰⁸ Further to the east, the farmhouse of Park Head was also one of the 'ancient tenancies'. Elsewhere the evidence is archaeological, and takes the form of a continuous boundary, often of large holly trees, sometimes of stone, broken only by a short stretch of nineteenth century landscaping by a former owner of Crowgutter.

Although parks were used for cattle as well as deer, the main stock enclosures were hays. These are found scattered across all the townships, but are less in evidence in Leek, where the 'great pastures' fulfilled the same function for the abbey of Dieulacres. Hulton Abbey owned a major example containing 240 acres near Mixon Hay in Onecote (Fig. 2.13),¹⁰⁹ and another, of unknown extent, lay near the Hayhouse in Ipstones (Fig. 2.17).

The largest of the hays was Horton Hay which contained at least 1000 acres (Figs. 2.8 and 2.31). The enclosure stretched for 1½ miles from north to south and 1¼ miles from east to west, dropping from over 1000 feet on Lask Edge to 500 feet to the Horton Brook before rising gently on to the lower slopes of Grindlestone Edge.¹¹⁰ In 1273 it produced nearly a third of the income of the manor of Horton in the form of payments from the surrounding townships for the privilege of grazing cattle in the hay.¹¹¹ Clustered on its fringes, in both Rushton James and in Horton are a series of lesser hays, which eventually developed into a series of small ring fenced farms.

Significantly the name 'hollins' makes a regular appearance near the larger medieval holdings. A substantial area south of Horton Hay is known as the Hollins (Fig. 2.8), a part of Endon park is called Hollinhurst (Fig. 2.9), a substantial stand of ancient hollies survive near the moated site at Moor Hall in Bagnall (Fig. 2.12), and the name 'Old Hag' survives on Gun. These reflect the use of holly for winter fodder in an area where haymaking was an uncertain activity, a practice well documented on the eastern side of the Peak District, where the cutting of 'hags' of holly continued well

¹⁰⁶ SRO D1176/A/3/114.

¹⁰⁷ SRO D239/M5.

¹⁰⁸ Deeds for Cockintake (privately owned).

¹⁰⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 213.

¹¹⁰ SRO D(W)1761/B/3/142.

into the eighteenth century.¹¹² In 1714 a large area of woodland and 130 acres of meadow in Longsdon were still known as Hollinhay,¹¹³ after the former hunting ground for the Earls of Chester, which served the dual purposes of providing a 'setting' ground for the hunt and a source of fodder for the adjacent grange at Wall. In the early thirteenth century men from various parts of the fee of Leek, including Wall, Ipstones, Rushton and Endon were required to maintain its boundaries, and help with the 'setting' of the stags, hunting services which were usually confined to royal estates, and are found elsewhere in England at the time of Domesday.¹¹⁴

(v) *The town of Leek*

The Earl of Chester's charter and its subsequent confirmation ensured Leek's place among the forty new towns which sprang up in the West Midlands between 1100 and 1300. Leek was on a modest scale compared, for example, with the immediately successful Stratford on Avon where 250 burgages were occupied by 1251-2¹¹⁵, or Tutbury where there were over 200 plots by 1300.¹¹⁶ Set in the least densely populated part of Staffordshire even the provision of 80½ burgage plots may have proved unrealistic in the later Middle Ages as there are signs of retraction on the southern edge of the town.

A reconstruction of the early town based on nineteenth-century maps identifies many of the burgage plots (Fig. 2.20), and the general outlines of the post-medieval town.¹¹⁷ To the north was the parish church of St Edward's. South of the church lay the Market Place, possibly the site of the earlier settlement, since the laying out of the burgage plots took place against the background of previously-established features including the church, where a Norman arcade survived in 1816.¹¹⁸ The reverse S-shaped curves of Spout Street (St Edwards Street) and Stockwell Street suggest they were laid out along the line of former furlongs, as do the combined length of Derby Street and Custard Street (Stanley Street). The evidence is reinforced by the sudden twist taken by the plots to the south of Derby Street.

The western side of Spout Street, with sunny plots to the rear of the houses and

¹¹¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 72.

¹¹² Spray and Smith, 1977, 239-251. Unpublished notes made by David Hey.

¹¹³ SRO D539/H/3/380, map of Wallgrange in 1714.

¹¹⁴ Tringham, 1993, 7-9.

¹¹⁵ Carus-Wilson, 1965, 51-52; Hilton, 1966, 190-2.

¹¹⁶ Rowlands, 1987, 37.

¹¹⁷ Miller, 1900, map of 1838; 6-inch Ordnance Survey maps, 1879, 1880.

unimpeded access to the town field, must always have been a desirable position. A number of the larger eighteenth and nineteenth century houses now line that side of the street, occupying a series of wide plots that suggest consolidation. Here, as elsewhere in the town, a toft tail line marks the back of the burgage plots, surviving as a more or less continuous boundary until the late nineteenth century. On the eastern side of Spout Street the pattern is less clear. At its northern end the general absence of continuous property boundaries suggest the blocks to the north and south of the Sheep Market represent encroachment on to the Market Square. To the south of Custard Street the fragments of a toft tail line and the occasional continuous east-west plot boundary suggest a regular pattern of burgage plots survived until the late-nineteenth century, when much of the back land was purchased by a single owner, and a substantial garden laid out.

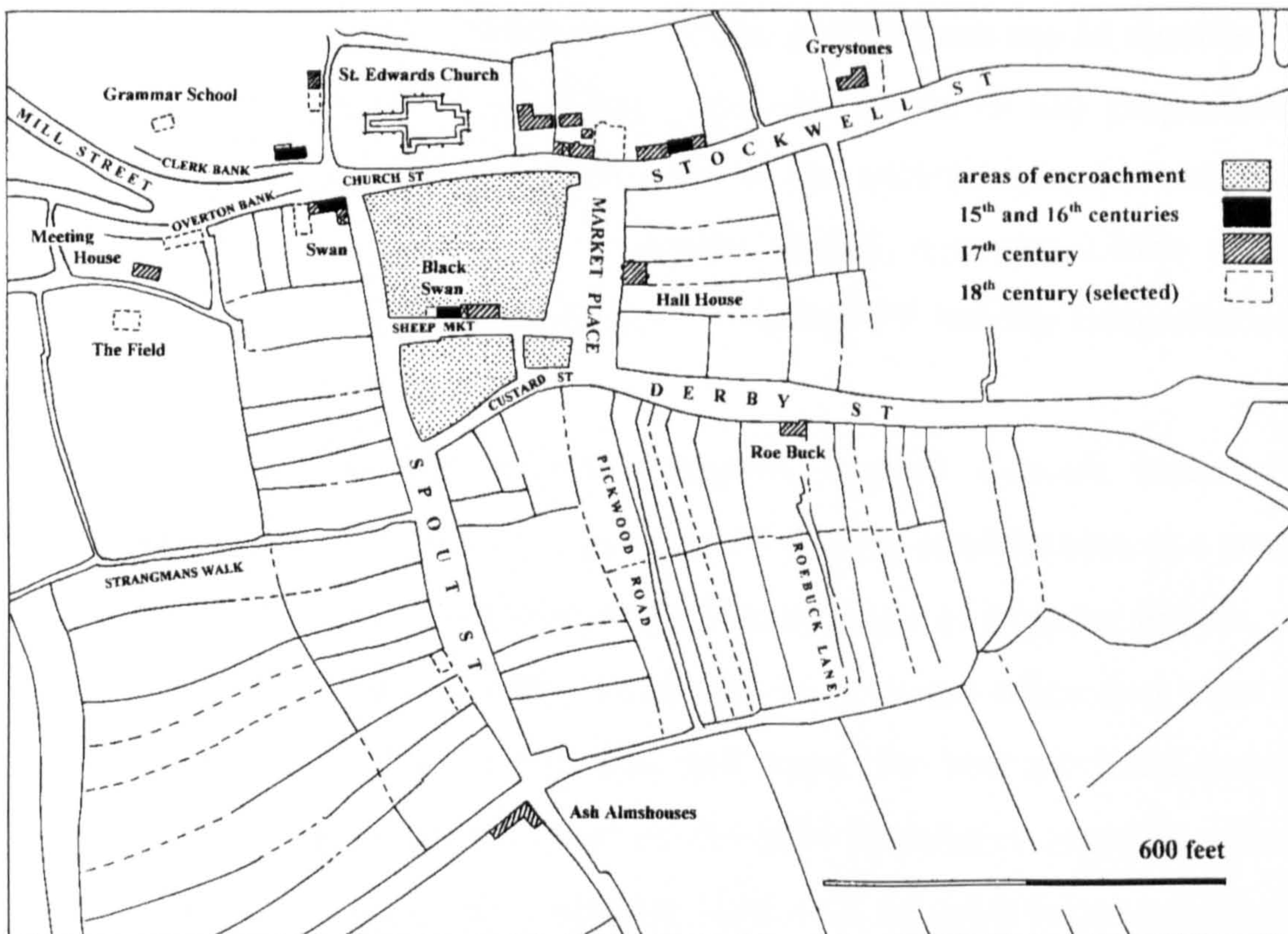


Fig. 2.20 Leek town with burgage plots reconstructed from nineteenth century maps

All standing buildings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are shown, together with selected examples from the eighteenth century. The market place occupied the whole of the shaded area, with specialisation near the Sheep Market and Custard Street. The southern plots below Derby Street may represent a retraction of settlement.

To the south of Derby Street a relatively dense series of plots survived with long access lanes called Pickwood Road and Roebuck Lane. Halfway down the slope is a toft tail line, beyond which lay a further series of burgage plots none of which carry

¹¹⁸ Meeson, undated and unpublished notes.

early buildings.

In 1838 fragments of plot boundaries and back boundaries survived behind the Hall House on the Market Place, and behind early housing to the north of Stockwell Street. Part of the former have recently been confirmed by excavation, and contained medieval pottery,¹¹⁹ but extensive mid-late nineteenth century rebuilding, which predates the earliest detailed Ordnance Survey map, leaves their original extent uncertain. To the north of the town the outer limits of the medieval settlement are indicated by the Grammar School and Greystones, while to the south the Ash Almshouses were built on the edge of the open fields.

(vi) *The hamlets*

If the presence of church/chapel and hall/manor house are seen as indispensable marks of village status then only Cheddleton, Horton, and Ipstones can be dignified with the title, with the two Rushtons providing a split-site variant of tiny proportions with a chapel lying mid-way between them. Most of the settlements were extremely small and, as they emerged into the early modern period, represented little more than a 'blurring [of] the hamlet-single farmstead boundary',¹²⁰ leaving categorisation at any period a major problem.

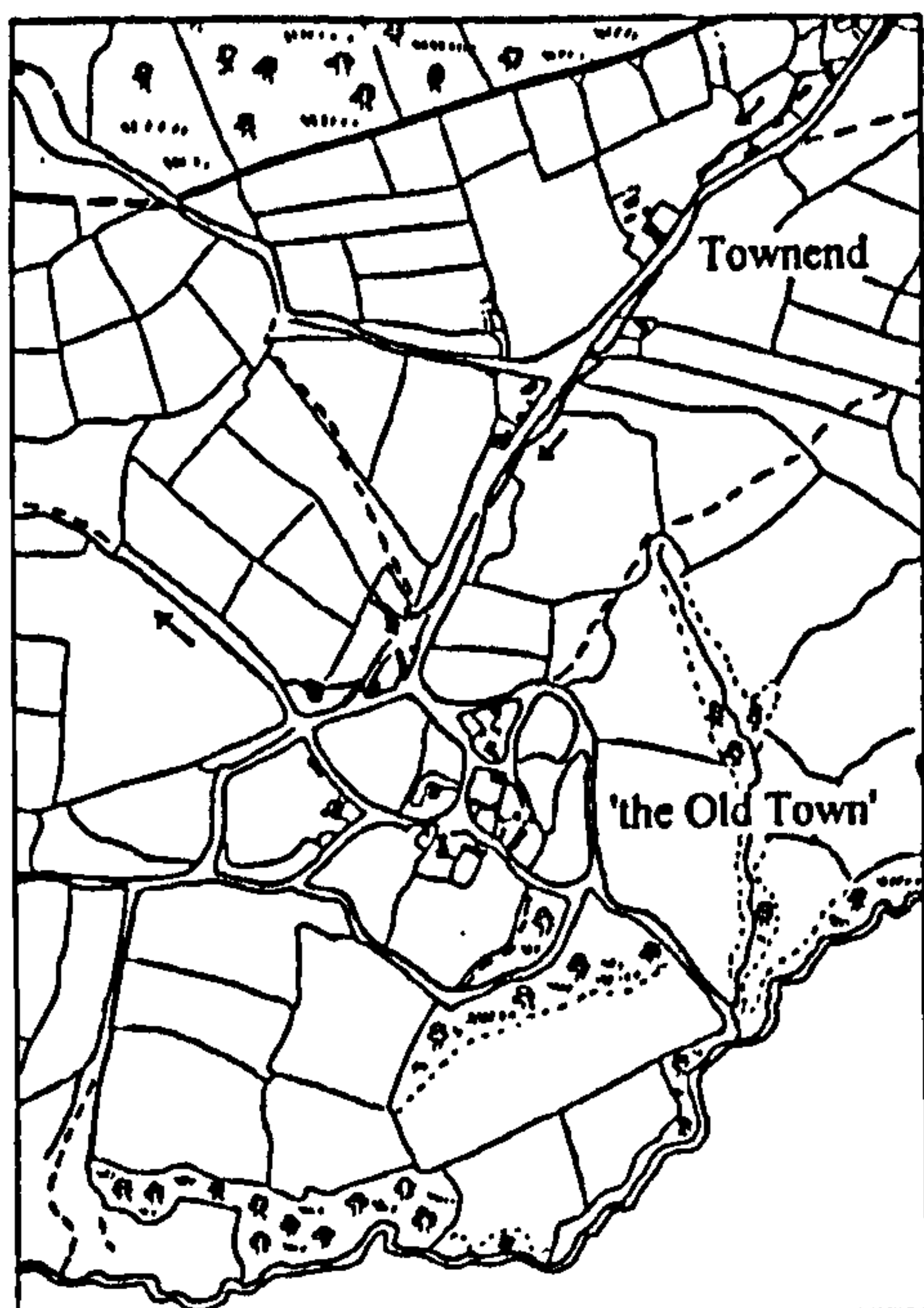
A number of hamlets, including Bagnall, Basford, Consall, Endon, Foxt and Rushton Spencer have features in common and deserve consideration as a group (Figs. 2.21 - 2.26). All appear on the nineteenth-century maps as irregular in plan, with two or more irregular leaf-shaped tofts, which may be truncated where they meet the town fields, and which are outlined by broad drift ways. The best surviving example is at Foxt (Fig. 2.21) where the structure of the field boundaries suggests primary land clearance in which large, and occasionally earth-fast, boulders became the footings for walling similar to that found by Wildgoose at Roystone Grange in Derbyshire.¹²¹

At Endon intermingled holdings indicate the position of the old town on a hilltop where two tofts and three farms survived in 1816 (Fig. 2.22, A, B and C). Basford Green showed a similar form in 1810 (Fig. 2.24), and Bagnall still preserves much of its original shape (Fig. 2.23), though the tofts have largely lost their original function as the

¹¹⁹ Crowe and Porter, 2001, 6.2 and Fig. 8.

¹²⁰ Roberts, 1985, 7.

¹²¹ Wildgoose, 1991, 214-5 (Type 4),



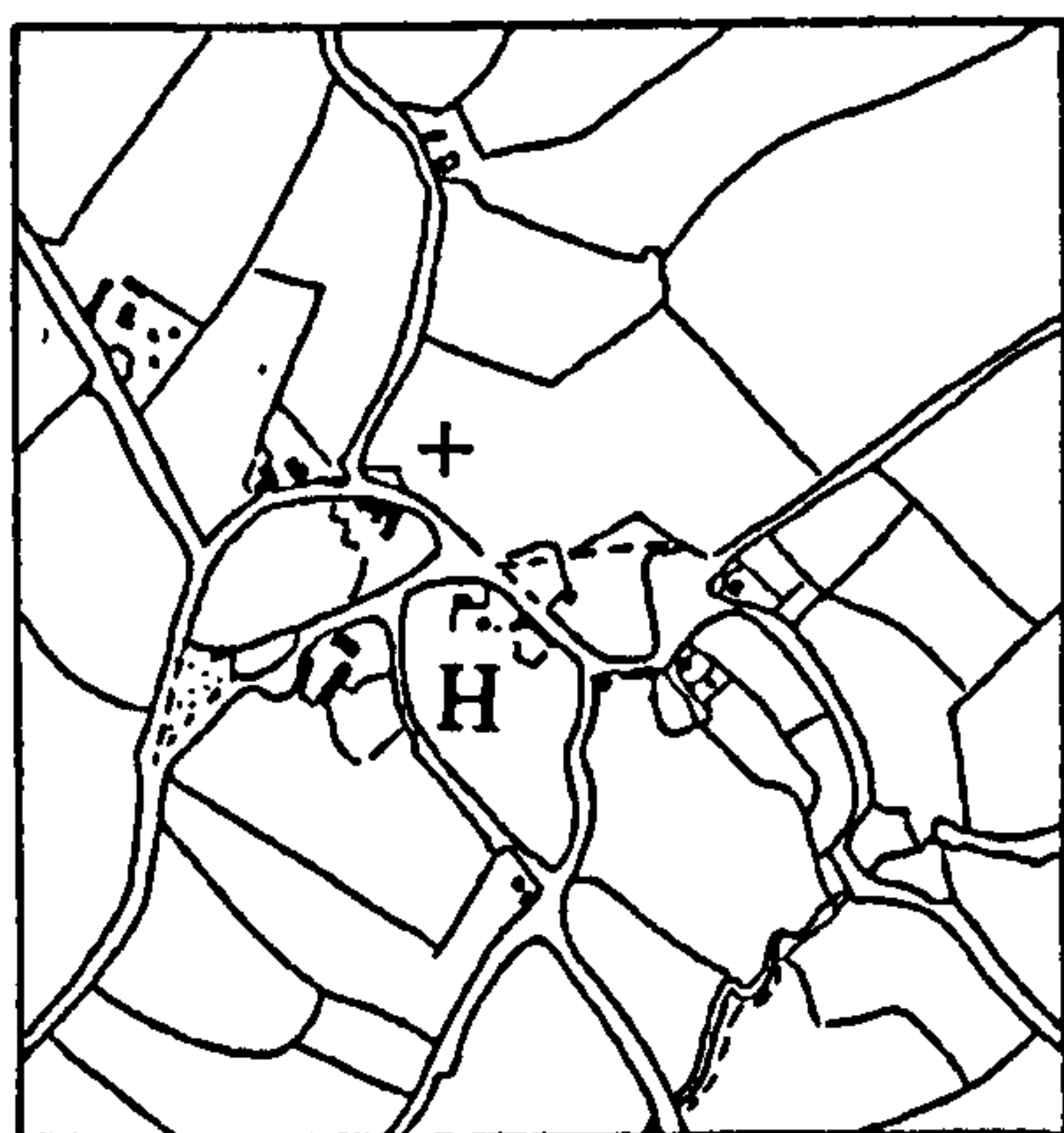
2.21 *The hamlet of Foxt showing the 'Old Town' and its watercourse.*

2.22 (below) *The hamlet of Endon with its three farmhouses (A-C) and the moated site (M). See Fig. 2.29.*

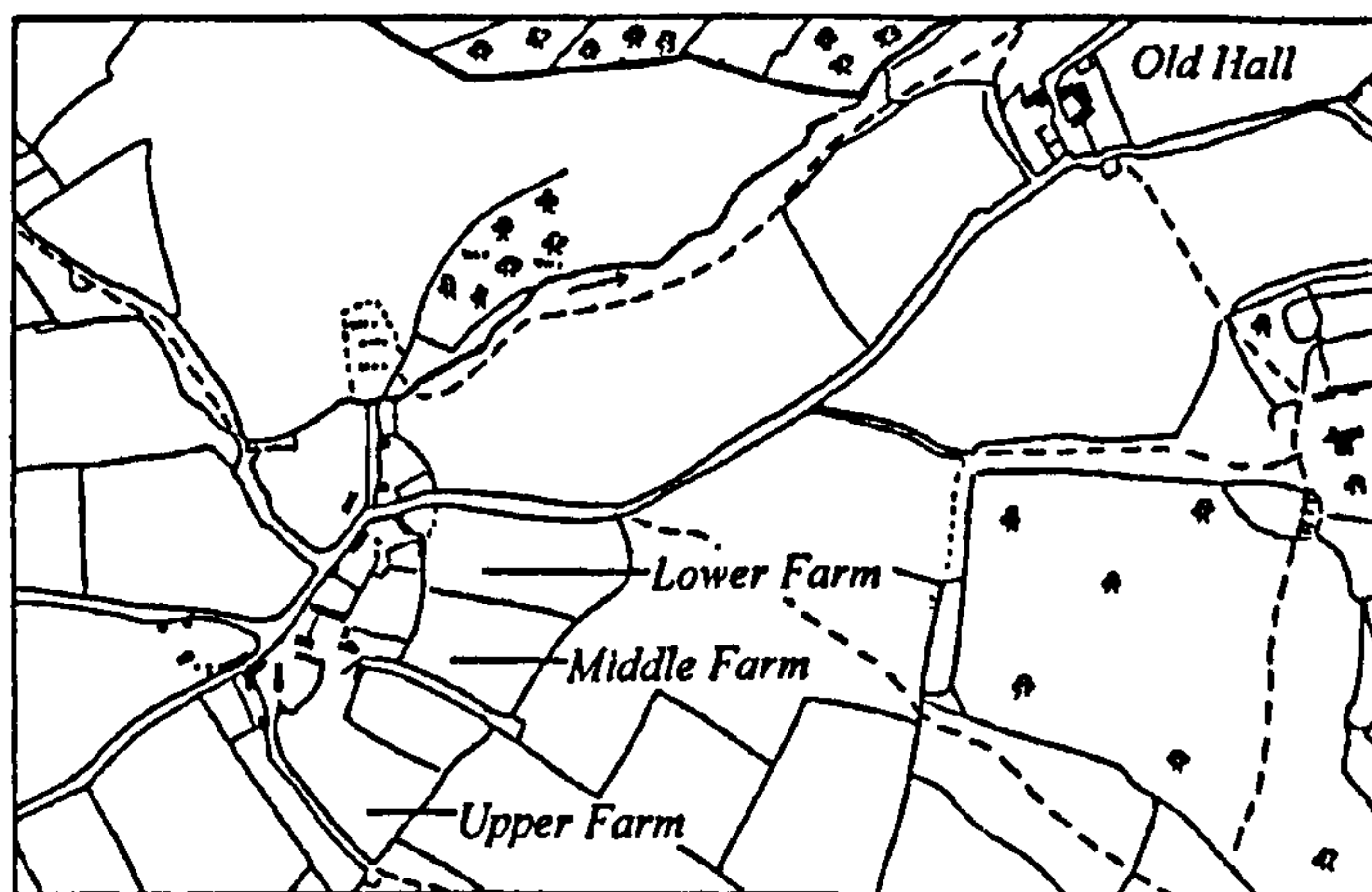


2.23 (below, left) *The hamlet of Bagnall with Bagnall Hall (H) lying in one of the main enclosures*

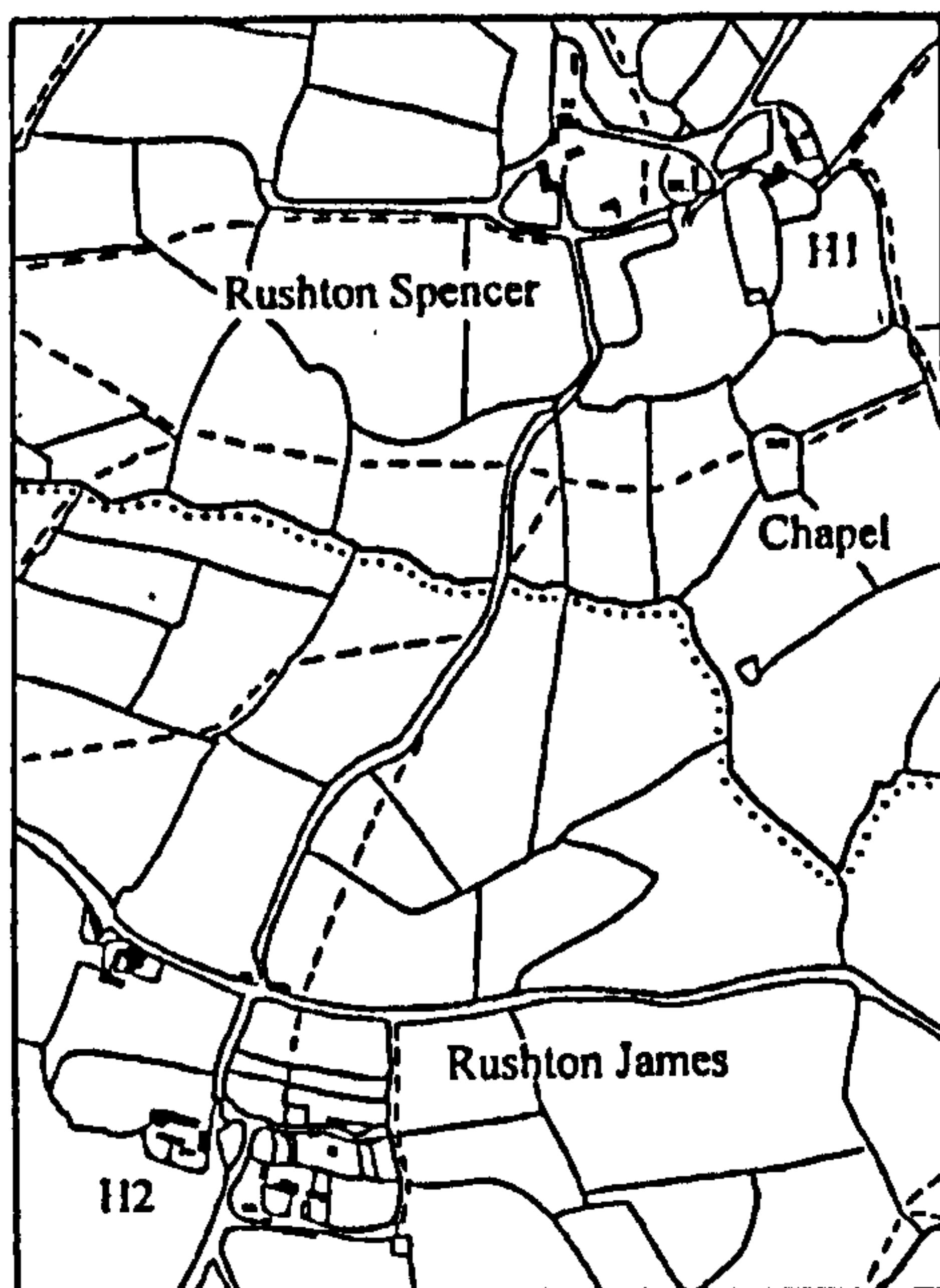
2.24 (below, right) *The hamlet of Basford Green with the present Basford Hall to the south*



1 mile

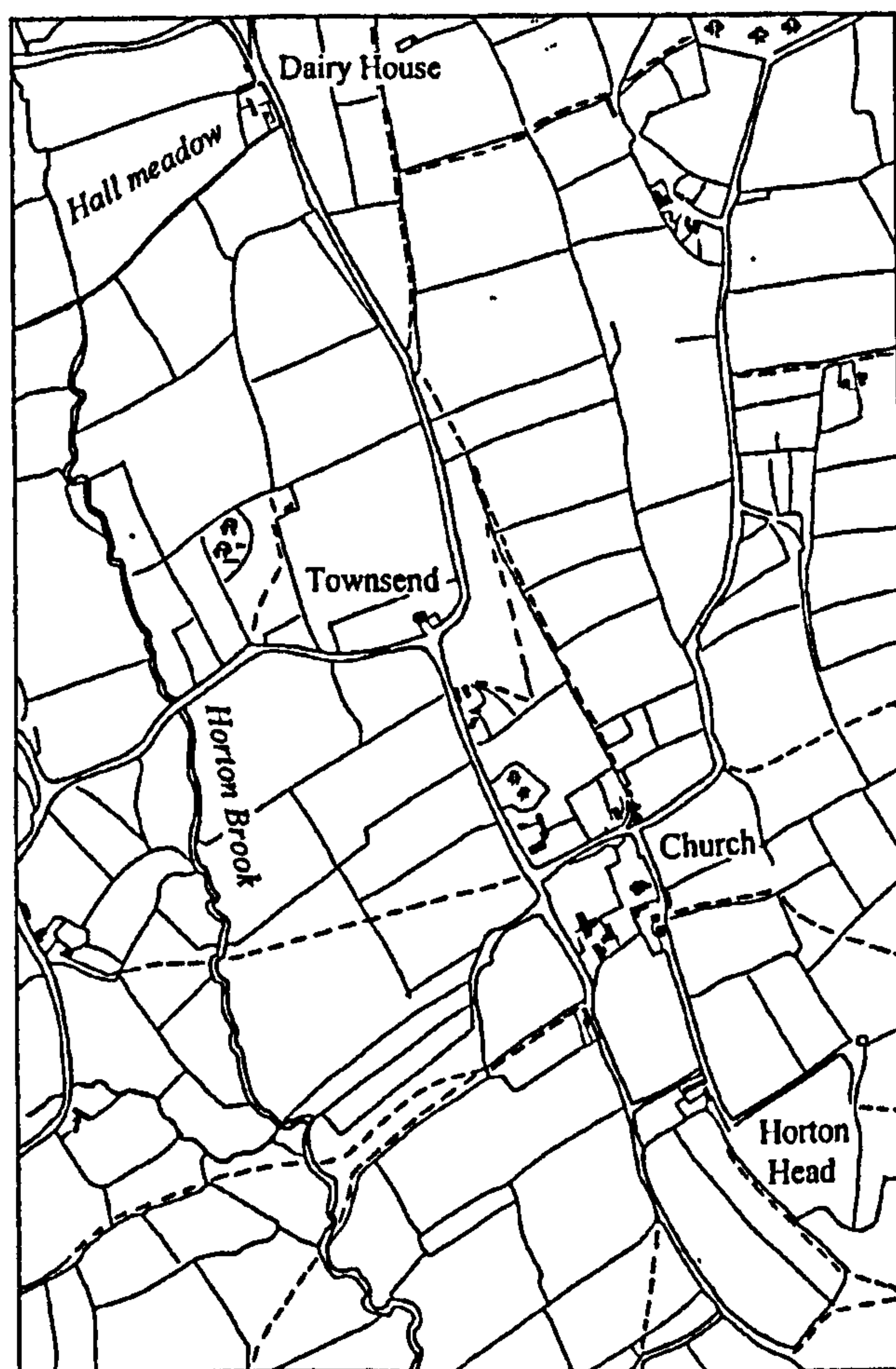


2.25 (left) *The hamlet of Consall with the Old Hall to the north-west.*



2.26 *The hamlets of Rushton Spencer and Rushton James*

1 mile



2.27 *The village of Horton with Dairy House and Hall meadow to the north-west.*

home-field of a single farm, and are subdivided. At Consall (Fig. 2.25) three main farms survive, carrying the names Upper, Middle and Lower, the norm for the area where farms within hamlets rarely carried distinctive names until the twentieth century. The least well-preserved example is that of Rushton Spencer (Fig. 2.26), where by 1777 considerable engrossment had taken place.¹²²

While the spacing of some farms suggests an element of overall planning, formal planning within a settlement is visible only at Rushton James (Fig. 2.26) and Horton (Fig. 2.27). The village of Horton occupies a restricted site between Grindlestone Edge and Horton Brook, and by the nineteenth century consisted of a string of properties flanked at either end by the farms of Townsend and Horton Head. Behind the main farms and linked to Horton Head by a back lane are the church, the vicarage, and a cluster of cottages. The former open field lies on sloping ground to the south-west of the hamlet where the land falls to Horton Brook and the site of Gratton Mill (Fig. 2.8). Is this perhaps a resiting to take advantage of a better site, and avoid the mud/boulder clay of the township name?

The existence of a small planned settlement at Rushton James (Fig. 2.26), relates to the division of the manor of Rushton, which had taken place by early in the thirteenth century.¹²³ Its form contrasts sharply with that of Rushton Spencer which has traces of the leaf-shaped enclosures associated elsewhere only with hamlets having descriptive place-names, and which are arguably the earlier settlements.

The medieval hamlets rarely saw substantial growth. Even in Leek, the positioning of sixteenth and seventeenth century houses broadside to the road suggests space was plentiful, and there is only minimal evidence for either back building or expansion before the nineteenth century. At Endon the early settlement was on a hilltop adjacent to its open fields (Figs. 2.22 and 2.30, A, B and C), but to the east are a series of properties whose architecture and lack of relationship to the open fields argues for sixteenth century expansion. The largest is Sutton House [63] where a cruck framed crosswing probably dates to the early sixteenth century. Houses in the hamlet below include Brook Cottage [55], also cruck framed, and a number of properties have single storey stonework raised in brick suggesting a similar form. At Foxt (Fig. 2.21) the 'old town' is linked to the open-fields, while extensions on the Leek side of the watercourse ending at Town Head, are not. Endon and Foxt are atypical, paralleled only by Ipstones

¹²² SRO Q/RDc39.

¹²³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 221.

where coal and ironstone mining ensured mid-to-late eighteenth-century expansion.

Middle and Upper Hulme typify the tiny hamlets of the northern part of the parish. Sixteenth century Middle Hulme consisted of three messuages, and earthworks to the south of the western farm suggest there may have been others. As two were rented by John Burgh, whose family still farmed at Middle Hulme in the nineteenth century, engrossment and the loss of the medieval field pattern was inevitable. At Upper Hulme there were three farms and a mill in 1538.¹²⁴ All three survived into the nineteenth century with interspersed holdings in the former open field (Fig. 4.1).¹²⁵ Additional houses at Upper Hulme relate largely to the industrial hamlet that developed in the late-eighteenth century near the site of the corn mill.

Elsewhere, since the early hamlets consisted of no more than a handful of properties, they were easy targets for engrossment, leaving former hamlets like Mosslee (Cheddleton), Upper and Lower Tittesworth (Tittesworth), Whitehough and Sharpcliffe (Ipstones) and Old Basford as single farms. At Ashenhurst and Harracles the existence in the sixteenth century of minor-gentry estates argues for the same process even if it is unsupported by documentation. With plentiful room for expansion such engrossment has left no trace of dispute or anxiety.

Occasionally, as at Wetley Rocks, new hamlets developed after Parliamentary Enclosure in the mid-eighteenth century, in this case along a main road on the fringes of one of the township quarries (Fig. 2.28). Much of Rushton Marsh is of a similar date, particularly where cottages straggle up the hillside towards Heaton.¹²⁶



Fig. 2.28 Wetley Rocks circa 1905. Courtesy of Mr. William Tatton.

¹²⁴ PRO SC6 3353.

¹²⁵ Sales catalogue of 1859, own copy.

¹²⁶ SRO D4974/B/8/3 and D4974/B/7/1, map and schedule (1806).

POST-MEDIEVAL EXPANSION

In national terms population figures seem to have reached their lowest point in the fifteenth century, recovering and showing a sharp increase in the sixteenth century.¹²⁷ In pastoral areas like Leek this expansion could be accommodated without stress, either within the existing enclosures or by expansion into the wastes. At the end of the medieval period there were still huge areas of moorland, and despite heavy inroads in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries nearly 12,000 acres remained to be enclosed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Fig. 2.29 and Table. 2.2).

The creation of new holdings took three main forms: the division of former demesne lands, the taking in of new areas to be improved for pasture and subsequent settlement, and encroachment by squatters.

The need to accommodate an ever-increasing number of households was initially catered for within the demesne lands. In the areas held by Dieulacres, the breakdown of the larger demesne properties was well under way before the dissolution. The practice of renting these out became increasingly common after the Black Death, when a lack of man-power meant retraction from the more intensive forms of farming.¹²⁸ Rents paid in 1538 for the granges of Birchall (£4 13s 4d), Fairboroughs (53s 4d), and Westwood (£6) indicate that they remained substantially undivided, but New Grange had been divided into two (23s 3d and 11s), and only the rump of Roche Grange (13s 4d) is visible in the rentals. However, much of the Abbey's pasture was administered from Swythamley, and it is from the 'six great ... pastures of Leekfrith' that many of Leekfrith's later farms were derived.¹²⁹

In Tittesworth Elizabeth Sapston held the former demesne lands in 1538 (*firman dominus terra*). By 1542 she was dead. No comparable rent appears in the 1542 rental but the number of tenants in the township increased from three to eight suggesting that here too demesne lands were being subdivided.¹³⁰

Sometimes the division occurred as a single managed event. The great sweep of Endon Park fills a roughly circular area to the east of the township. Here a series of curved boundaries slice the park into units, some of which still related to individual farms on the map of 1816 (Fig. 2.30). Low land to the west of the park, near the site of

¹²⁷ Clay, 1984, 3.

¹²⁸ Campbell et al, 1996, 132.

¹²⁹ PRO SC6.3353; WSL M540; SW 5/89.

¹³⁰ PRO SC6.3353; WSL M540.

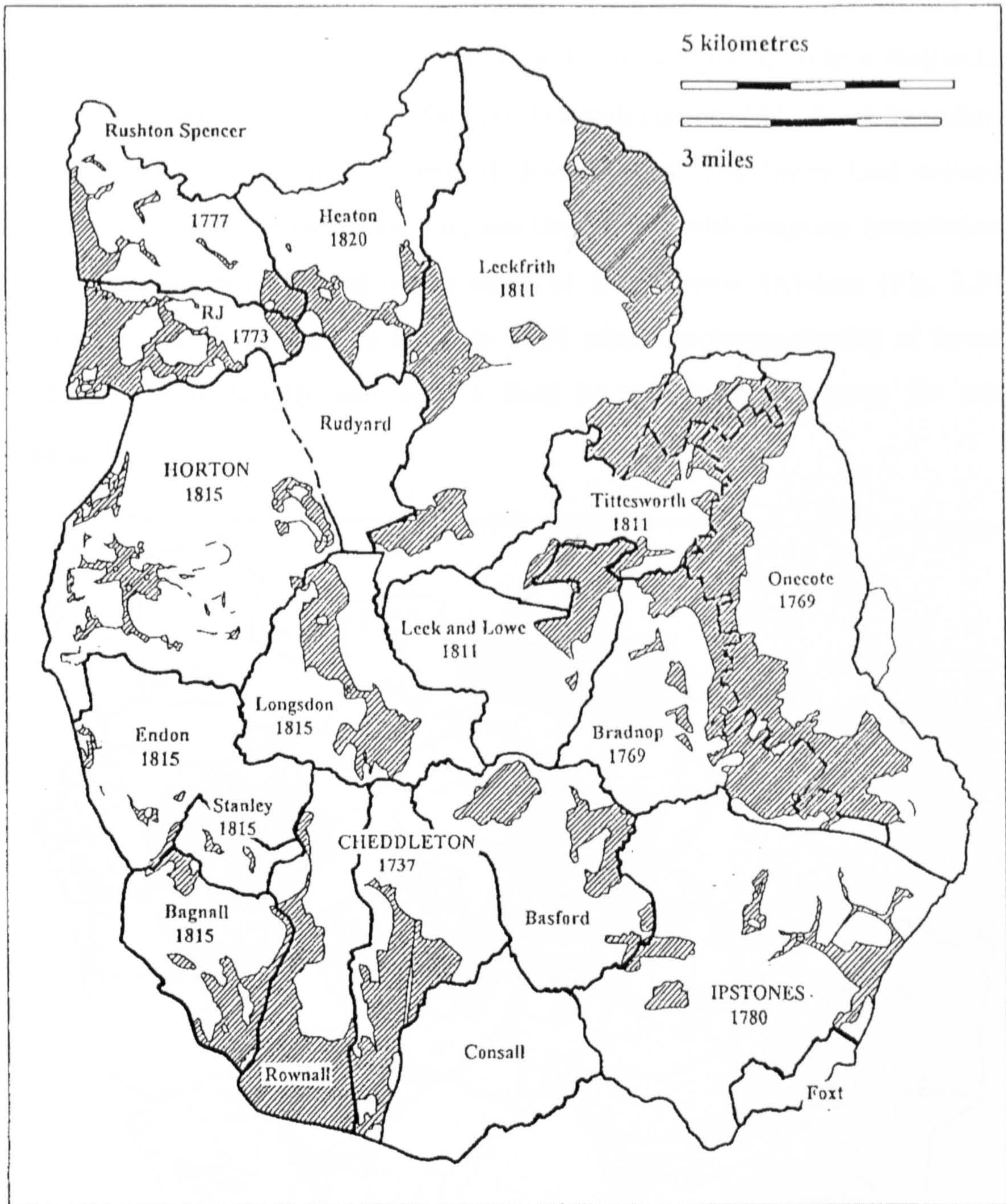


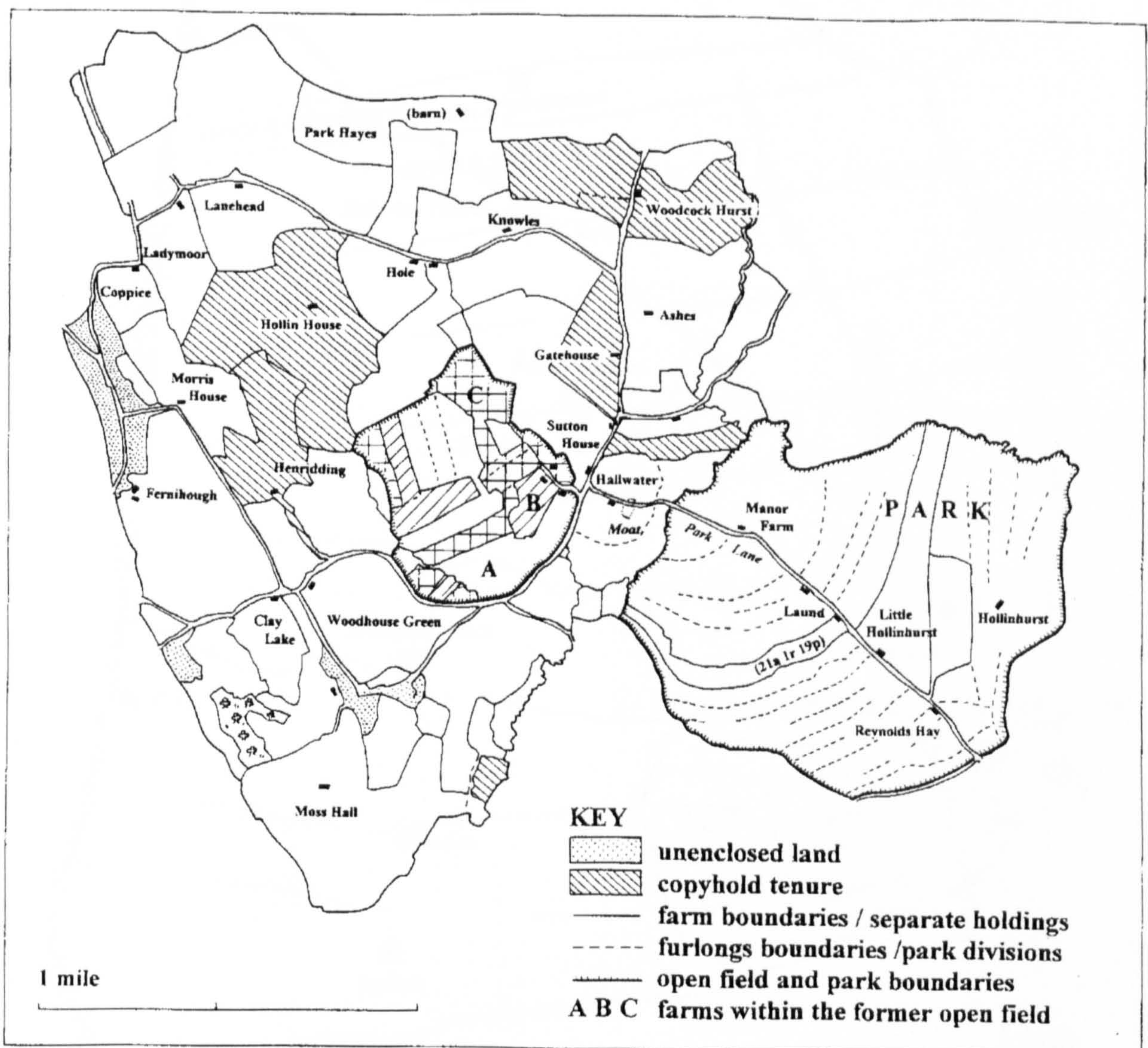
Fig. 2.29 Areas of open moorland enclosed by Parliamentary Act, and the Award date.

TABLE 2.2 *Land remaining to be enclosed by Parliamentary Award*¹³¹

<i>The area affected by the award</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Total acreage</i>	<i>Acreage unenclosed</i>	<i>%</i>
Cheddleton (with Basford & Rownall)	1737	7,017	2,112	30
Bradnop (with Onecote)	1769	8,504	3,139	37
Rushton James	1773	1,390	544	39
Rushton Spencer	1777	1,860	310	17
Ipstones (with part of Foxt)	1780	5,697	529	9
Leek (with Leekfrith and Tittesworth)	1811	11,923	2,921	25
Horton (with Bagnall, Endon, Longsdon, and Stanley)	1815	12,093	1,929	15
Heaton	1820	2,689	477	18
Consall	none	2,159		0
Rudyard	none	1,435		0
Foxt (the Liberty)	none	393		0
TOTALS		55,160	11,961	22

¹³¹ SRO Q/RDc 29, 39, 41, 65, 69, 84; 5115/1 and 3.

the manor, is divided in a less regular fashion. This suggests random enclosure on the low ground, followed by organised division of the higher ground, where Hollinshurst's cruck-framed farmhouse existed by the late sixteenth century [59]. Field boundaries in Horton Hay suggest a similar pattern of development. The lower land around the Dairyhouse, near the former manor site, has large fields with irregular boundaries, but elsewhere the Hay was divided into a series of long narrow divisions (Fig. 2.31).¹³² Two of these still functioned as farms in 1806 when the impracticality of farming a unit of 'a Mile in length, and only a field in width' was a matter for adverse comment.¹³³



*Fig. 2.30 The township of Endon in 1816 showing the Park, the town field, the site of Endon manor and its enclosure, and the properties that were still held copyhold. Field boundaries have been omitted with the exception of consolidated selions in the town field, and the main linear boundaries in Endon Park. Farmhouses are those shown on the 1816 map.*¹³⁴

¹³² SRO D1490/33 (1792); DRO D216B/ES1/2/67, (1885).

¹³³ SRO D(W)1761/B/3/141.

¹³⁴ SRO D(W)1909/E/9/1.

In Ipstones maintenance of the park boundary remained a condition of tenancy in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the park was still in demesne when the manor was sold in 1649. Date stones on houses within the park indicate that division into farms had taken place by the mid-eighteenth century.¹³⁵ Cheddleton's park had also been divided by 1736.¹³⁶

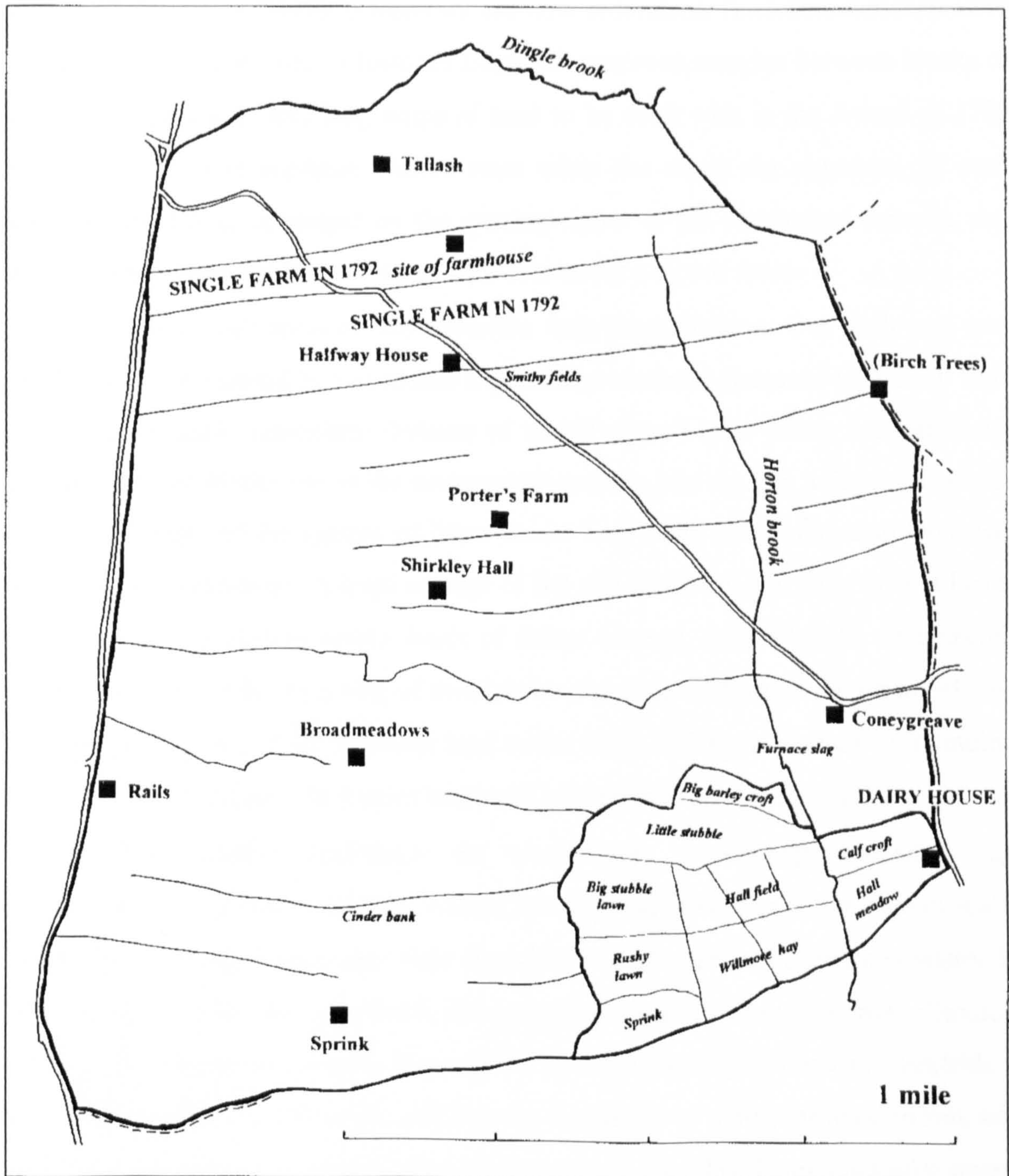


Fig. 2.31 Horton Hay: the fields of Dairyhouse and the main linear field boundaries

There was sound logic behind the early or late enclosure of specific areas. Land

¹³⁵ SRO D239/M1; Keele, SA12/1/3.

¹³⁶ SRO Q/RDc 29.

lying at high altitude was the last to be enclosed, although aspect might counter altitude on south and south-west facing slopes. Low lying land could be marshy, which delayed enclosure near Rushton Marsh.¹³⁷ Small areas of open land were often left alongside roadways, particularly where these climbed steeply, as space was needed for traffic to bypass the muddiest sections. With enclosure came road improvement, and the older hedgerows can often be seen running parallel with the newer ones, or fossilised in the form of banks whose former hedgerows are now redundant. Enclosure between 1649 and 1680 on the north side of Ipstones Edge left generous margins between blocks of newly enclosed fields, and long strips of land to be dealt with in the Award of 1780 (Fig. 2.17).¹³⁸ These roadside wastes were often the target for squatters, as such encroachment barely impinged on the grazing rights of the established farmers, and may even have been welcome if it provided homes for a labour force.

Elsewhere small areas of late enclosure defy generalisation. One such area near Meerbrook is surrounded by Lee names suggesting woodland clearance (Fig. 2.3). Here field shapes suggest systematic division of newly cleared land which was otherwise fully apportioned by the end of the seventeenth century, and the key to its survival was the grazing rights of the curates of Meerbrook. Two other areas may also have had ecclesiastical connections. A large acreage of flat and relatively low lying land at Foker Moor may be the elusive arable lands of Foker Grange, which by the seventeenth century was surrounded by a ring of small farms for which it formed the principal area of rough grazing (Fig. 2.3). Similarly land to the north of Upper Bradnop surrounding Coltsmoor may represent the former lands of Coltsmoor Grange (Fig. 2.13).

In this pastoral backwater the controversy concerning enclosure and engrossment¹³⁹ had little relevance. Arable farming had always been on a small scale, and the enclosure of a single open field shared by a small number of men was relatively easy to achieve. Thus the open fields disappeared early and without recorded disputes, although the sharing of pastures lingered on. In 1538 the High Forest in Leekfrith, a major pasture of some 300 acres, still had the remainder of a 40-year lease to run, and was shared by three local men.¹⁴⁰ Two centuries later the Cheddleton enclosure award still allocated a single area of land to two farms at Fernyhill.¹⁴¹ The 1810 Enclosure

¹³⁷ SRO D(W)1702/219.

¹³⁸ Keele SA12/1/3; SA 12/1/1.

¹³⁹ Thirsk, 1990, 54-110.

¹⁴⁰ PRO C66/679; Swythamley 1/12.

¹⁴¹ SRO Q/RDc 29.

award for Basford, dealing with the central core of a township, referred to 'several open fields undivided inclosed lands or Grounds and open pastures', areas of shared pasture into which the former arable had long since been subsumed.¹⁴²

While a part of the increased population was catered for within the former demesne lands the largest number of new farms were created outside the areas of ancient enclosure. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw considerable expansion into the wastes leaving a steadily decreasing amount to be dealt with by Parliamentary Act (Table. 2.2). This and the removal of woodland, were on-going processes, and might range from piecemeal nibbling adjacent to existing farms, to substantial enclosures involving hundreds of acres. In some cases these resulted from individual actions, with or without permission, and in others they were carried out with the agreement of the whole township. More rarely there was outside pressure to enclose and battles ensued.

TABLE 2.3 *Open moorland in Bradnop, Ipstones, and Rushton James*

<i>Township</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Total acreage</i>	<i>Acreage unenclosed</i>	<i>%</i>
Bradnop and Onecote	1653	8,508	3,979	48
Ipstones	1649	5,197	2,389	46
Rushton James	1753	1,390	678	49

The 37% of Bradnop still open in 1769 was the total left after persistent attempts by successive Lords Aston to persuade their tenants of the benefits of enclosure, a total that was at least 48% in the 1653 (Table. 2.3).¹⁴³ Rushton James's 39% post-dates the enclosure of 134 acres in 1753, bringing its total before that date to 49%.¹⁴⁴ The figures for Ipstones post-date the enclosure of 1500 acres on Ipstones Edge between 1649 and 1680, when a further 360 acres were in dispute with Alton, bringing the total to 46% in 1649.¹⁴⁵ Consall, though not represented in the Parliamentary enclosure awards included large areas of Wetley Moor, which are shown unenclosed on Yates map in 1775, while Rudyard presumably shared grazing rights on Gun. Both were in the hands of a single owner who could enclose at will, as were the northern parts of Heaton, and Leekfrith, which lay within the Swythamley Estate. Given the rate of intake in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it seems likely that at least 50% of the land in each township was unenclosed in 1500, and far more if Cheshire measure was employed in

¹⁴² PRO K.B.122-859 vol.456.

¹⁴³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 174.

¹⁴⁴ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 222.

¹⁴⁵ Keele SA12/1/3; SA 12/1/1.

the contemporary acreages (cf. page 121).¹⁴⁶

Organised expansion in the form of small ring-fenced farms is evident where farms are known as 'Intake'. Such farms existed in both Heaton and Cheddleton by the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁷ New farms also developed wherever isolated areas of pasture were enclosed. By 1538 woodland known as Heaton Shaw had been cleared, enclosed, and divided into four quarters, each rented as either pasture or meadow. By the end of the seventeenth century the northern and southern quarters were separate farms, while the middle pair became extensions of Hawksley and Toft Hall farms (Fig. 2.4).¹⁴⁸ The curving lines of isolated pastures and early settlements are detectable in various places in Ipstones where they contrast with the lines of the late seventeenth century enclosures (Fig. 2.17). Of these, the Laund has evidence for sixteenth century occupation, and Cromwithies, enclosed by the mid-seventeenth century, was part of a separate farm by the early eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ In Rushton James substantial areas of high ground were enclosed to the west of the township some time before 1753. Within this area lies Ashmore House, on the site of a house called Ashmore Hay in 1688 (Fig. 2.6).¹⁵⁰ Lying within the same area, Pyott's Barn farm reflects the same sequence of development that is evident in Ipstones, where barns built on land newly enclosed late in the seventeenth century were being converted into farmhouses early in the eighteenth century.¹⁵¹

At Churl's Knowl in Rushton James, roadside squatting occurred in the decades leading up to Parliamentary enclosure (Fig. 2.6).¹⁵² Scattered farms on the southern slopes of Morridge are of a different order. Sited away from through roads, their lands formed small islands of enclosure in vast seas of waste (Fig. 2.13). A number of these housed cottagers in 1655 when they were awarded a minimum holding of four acres,¹⁵³ but two of them, Astonsitch and Garstones, were listed in 1652 as fields belonging to Apesford. Astonsitch with its barn had become a separate smallholding by 1675,¹⁵⁴ and Garstones in 1692.¹⁵⁵ Did they too originate as squatters' cottages only to become holdings of one of the larger farms, or were they small outposts from which to manage

¹⁴⁶ Thirsk, 1985, Appendix II, 826.

¹⁴⁷ Structural evidence on site.

¹⁴⁸ PRO SC6.3353; structural evidence, LRO Wm Hulme 1698; Swythamley 16/489; 23/188.

¹⁴⁹ SRO D239/M3934; DRO 231M/T739.

¹⁵⁰ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 222, 220.

¹⁵¹ DRO 231M/T739.

¹⁵² SRO 5116/3.

¹⁵³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 174.

¹⁵⁴ Keele SA/2/3 1652.

¹⁵⁵ LRO Samson Bulkley 1818.

the roaming livestock of farms in the valley below, the equivalent of 'the coate on the more syde' in Longsden, where Joyce Malkin had hay in 1611?¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ LRO Joyce Malkin 1610.

CHAPTER THREE The expanding population 1563-1811

INTRODUCTION

Staffordshire was sparsely populated in 1086, when 62 of its villas were described as 'waste'.¹ Seventeen were in the hundred of Totmonslow, including five in Leek.² These have been attributed to the after-effects of the 'harrying of the north' in 1069-70³, but given the time-lag, the resilience of small rural communities, and the likely scale of the force used in William's winter campaign other explanations have been sought. Many settlements lay on high ground where they were under-developed or lacking in arable. Some resulted from afforestation,⁴ twice explicitly linked to 'waste' by the commissioners for Staffordshire.⁵ All are plausible suggestions for Leek which was part of the Leek and Macclesfield forest by the mid-twelfth century.⁶ Leek's recorded population was twenty-eight men. A further nine were to be found in Celteton and Bechesword (Cheddleton and Basford),⁷ for here as elsewhere in Staffordshire, low levels of population coincided with substantial areas of woodland.⁸

A number of sources shed an oblique light on population levels in the early thirteenth century. The founding of the Cistercian abbey of Dieulacres⁹ within a mile of the town was a statement in itself, since Cistercian houses, to conform with their own principles, were sited away from the centres of population.¹⁰ Other late foundations, the Cistercian abbeys of Croxden and Hulton, lay within thirteen miles, yet all found ample space to develop local granges. The Augustinian priory of Trentham was granted land in the parish,¹¹ and Combermere's grange at Wincle in Cheshire,¹² lay within a mile of the Dieulacres grange at Swythamley, a timely reminder that space was not confined to Leek, or indeed to North Staffordshire.

If the town of Leek was close to the Abbey, it was also small. Established in the early thirteenth century it was one of many new towns to develop in the period of

¹ Darby, 1977, 248-252.

² Slade, 1958, 41.

³ Darby, 1977, 248-252; Studd, 2000, 123-4, quotes others with similar views.

⁴ Wightman, 1975, 55-6, 63; Studd, 2000, 125-9.

⁵ Studd, 2000, 125-9.

⁶ Barraclough, 1988, charter 176.

⁷ Slade, 1958, 22, 144.

⁸ Slade, 1958, 22; Wheatley, 1977, Fig. 67.

⁹ Fisher, 1984, 6.

¹⁰ Butler and Given-Wilson, 1979, 34-5.

¹¹ PRO, SC6/HenVIII/3352; L & P Hen VIII, C66/691.

¹² Fisher, 1984, 6.

population expansion between the Norman Conquest and the Great Pestilence of 1348-50.¹³ Beresford identified 172. Leek, he suggested, was 'probably burghal development at an existing settlement',¹⁴ a statement confirmed by the former existence of a Norman church.¹⁵ *Circa* 1220 it had 80½ burgages,¹⁶ and was one of 22 new towns in the county of Staffordshire, where the population seems to have been expanding rapidly.¹⁷

If the evidence for the early Middle Ages points to expansion, events in the fourteenth century must surely have led to decline. A major famine hit northern Europe in 1315-17. Recorded locally by a lament over high prices, famine and death,¹⁸ it formed a grim preface to the arrival of the Black Death, which reached the Midlands in the spring of 1349.¹⁹

Attempts to provide definitive population figures at either local or national level before the middle of the sixteenth century are hampered by the nature of the sources. The majority were made for fiscal reasons, and taxation returns designed to take only from the rich, are an indifferent guide to the presence or absence of the poor. Thus Pinnock's argument that the 1377 Poll Tax figures reflect a greater growth of population 'in some of the remoter uplands' of Staffordshire than elsewhere in Staffordshire,²⁰ is dogged by the fact that he is not comparing like with like. The lay subsidies of 1327 and 1527 represent only the financially elite, while the poll tax of 1377 was intended to cover the entire adult population, rich and poor alike. The change in the relative position of Leek in the poll tax returns therefore suggests the presence of a substantial number who were too poor to be represented in the lay subsidy returns. By contrast, Ipstones, which emerges in the Post-Medieval period with a small but relatively wealthy population, remained in Pinnock's lower octile in the poll tax figures, suggesting that the opposite was already true.²¹ These are conclusions borne out by Sheail's comparisons of the muster rolls of 1522 with the lay subsidy returns of 1524 and 1525, where discrepancies ranged between 10% and 54%, a fact that he related primarily to differences in wealth.²²

¹³ Palliser, 1972, 63-73.

¹⁴ Beresford, 1967, 487.

¹⁵ Meeson, undated, unpublished notes.

¹⁶ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 84.

¹⁷ Palliser, 1972, 64, Fig.1.

¹⁸ Lynam, 1911, vii.

¹⁹ Rowlands, 1987, 59.

²⁰ Pinnock, 1971, 133.

²¹ Pinnock, 1971, Fig. 24.

²² Sheail, 1972, 114-5.

A summary of material for Staffordshire between 1086 and 1535 suggests that numerous sources should be available for local studies, but few give adequate coverage for the county as a whole,²³ and still less are useful for population studies. For the ensuing centuries, given the lack of early registers for Leek and its chapelries, and the state of the surviving volumes, the best sources are the Bishop's census of 1563 and the Hearth Tax returns of 1666, both of which provide detailed coverage for the north of the county. These, coupled with the later sections of the registers, and the Census returns of 1811, considered marginally more reliable than those of 1801,²⁴ allow some glimpse of population development from the mid-sixteenth century until the start of the census returns.

POST-MEDIEVAL EXPANSION

(i) *The townships and their registers*

The medieval parish of Leek included Cheddleton, Horton, Ipstones and Rushton as dependent chapelries.²⁵ By 1563, with the exception of Rushton, they were largely independent and described as churches 'with a cure, but without institution' and in 1604 as 'annexed to Leek'.²⁶ Only as the population grew was there justification for a separate chapelry, and in the absence of wealthy sponsorship, only substantial growth led to the creation of a parish. The process could be a long-drawn-out affair, taking centuries to complete, and materially affecting the contents and form of the parish registers.

Registers became mandatory in 1538,²⁷ but the only sixteenth century register to survive is that for Ipstones beginning in 1561. For the post-medieval parish^{of} Leek the earliest volume is known only from a handful of extracts,²⁸ while the first surviving volume begins in 1634. Registers for Horton and Cheddleton survive from 1653 and 1696, but there are Bishop's transcripts for Cheddleton dating from 1676, indicating the loss of an earlier volume. Horton too had an earlier register as it is barely represented in those for Leek. Neither is the north west of the parish where the Bishop's transcripts for Rushton chapelry date from 1693, seven years before the first surviving register. Entries for the remaining townships are with Leek until the inception of their own records. For

²³ Pinnock, 1974.

²⁴ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 122-124.

²⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 78.

²⁶ Landor, 1915, 60, 130, 133.

²⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 15.

²⁸ *Leek Parish Register*, part 1, 1919. Staffs. Parish Register Society, v-viii.

Endon with Stanley these begin in 1731, in 1738 for Meerbrook, and in 1755 for Onecote with Bradnop.

This reflects neither the antiquity of the chapelries, nor that of their surviving buildings. Ipstones church contains a Norman tympanum;²⁹ Cheddleton and Horton had churches by the early thirteenth century;³⁰ Rushton has a fine timber-framed chapel dating from the early fourteenth century;³¹ a chapel existed at Meerbrook by 1537; Onecote had a chapel by 1524, and Endon church was built between 1719 and 1721.³² Only Longsdon's St. Chad, built in 1903-5,³³ had no predecessor and no separate register before the twentieth century.

(ii) *The hundred of Totmonslow in the mid-sixteenth century*

A list made in 1532-3 of families in the Archdeaconry of Stafford, and covering the whole parish of Leek is, despite its apparent completeness, a flawed tool, whose shortcomings have been discussed by Kettle.³⁴ Thus there is no comprehensive list for Staffordshire of either households or individuals before the Bishops' Census of 1563,³⁵ when the returns for the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry are considered to be amongst the most reliable.³⁶ These represent households, as do the Hearth Tax returns.³⁷ Both sources are substantially complete for Totmonslow, providing a localised context in which to place a more detailed study of the parish. The Bishop's visitations of 1751³⁸ also record households, but are too fragmentary to provide similar coverage for the mid-eighteenth century.

Riden, using the returns for Derbyshire,³⁹ explored the conclusions to be drawn from mapping the ratio of households to acres. He divided his data into three broad bands, areas with under 40 acres per household, areas with 41 to 60 acres per household, and those with over 60 acres. Given that Totmonslow lies on the western boundary of Derbyshire, logic suggested adhering to his scheme to allow comparability.

²⁹ Pevsner, 1974, 157.

³⁰ Milner, 1983, 23; *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 113.

³¹ Nottingham University tree-ring dating laboratory, Report 96/20.

³² *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 199, 215, 183.

³³ Pevsner, 1974, 229.

³⁴ Kettle, 1976.

³⁵ *SHC*, 1915, lxxix - lxxiii.

³⁶ Dyer, 1992, 19-37.

³⁷ 1666 in *SHC* 1925, 157-242; 1662 transcribed from PRO E179/179/331.

³⁸ LRO, Bishop's visitation B/V/5 1751.

³⁹ Riden, 1978, 61-71.

However, Totmonslow proved to be so sparsely populated that all except three parishes had over 60 acres per family, and an additional band of 61 to 100 acres has been used.

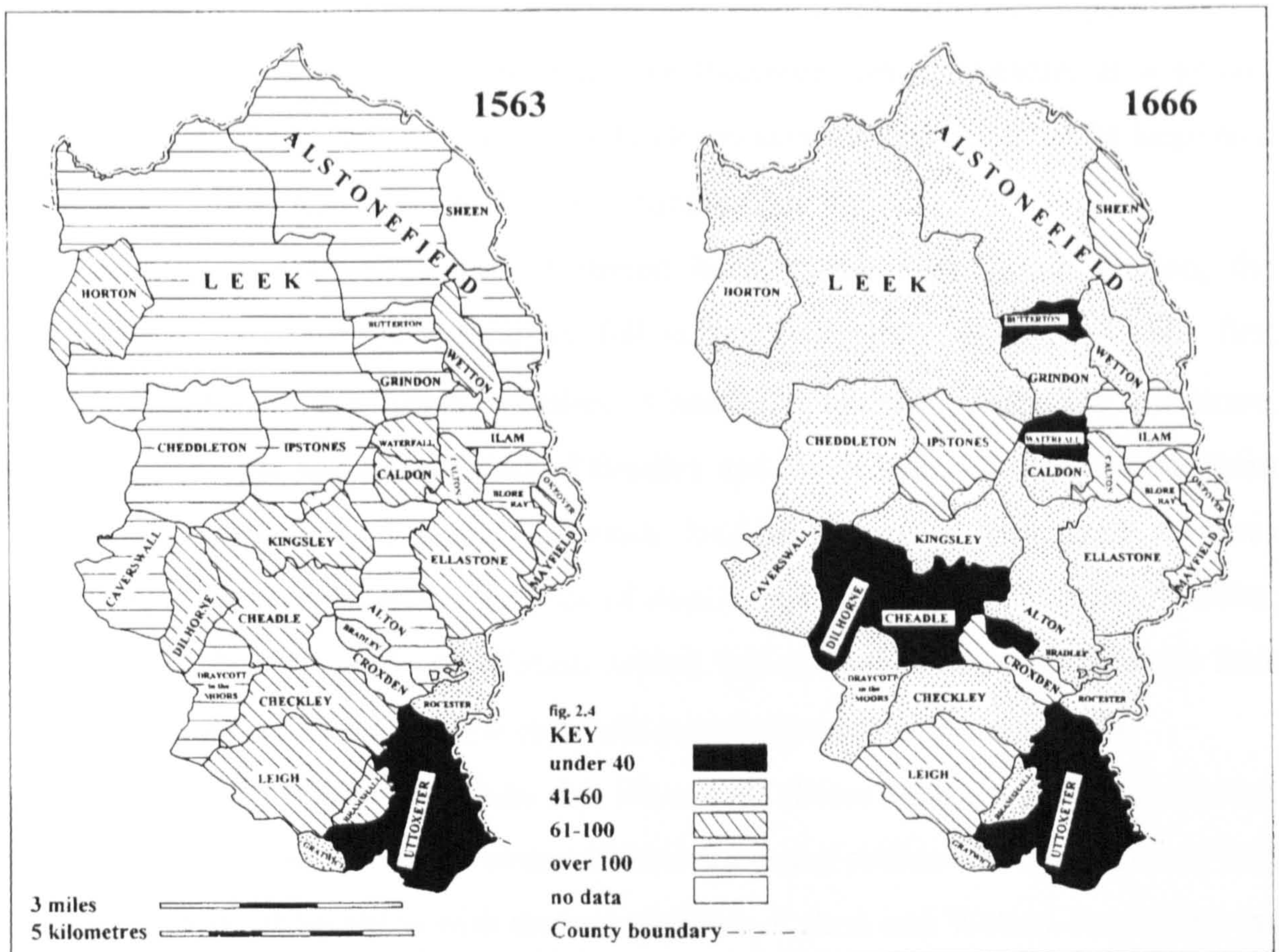


Fig. 3.1 Acres per family in the hundred of Totmonslow in 1563 and 1666

The resultant diagram (Fig. 3.1) shows much that is of interest, but fails to do justice to the larger northern parishes, where division by township becomes essential. Seen at its broadest the population increases steadily from south to north, the upland parishes on both gritstone and limestone having the lowest density. The parishes to the extreme south west along the Dove valley, an area of good lowland pasture, are the most densely populated. Between is a series of parishes, largely running from south west to north east with a density that lies between the two extremes. Horton, apparently in the same bracket, will be discussed later, since its figures are misleading.

The high concentration around Uttoxeter reflects the presence of a market town. Many had vanished by 1500,⁴⁰ but Uttoxeter was thriving, and its population growth can be seen spilling over into the parishes of Gratwich and Rocester. The remaining markets are not immediately apparent. Charters had been granted to Leek, Chedale, Uttoxeter, Rocester and possibly Draycott in the Moors, with prescriptive markets at

⁴⁰ Everitt, 1967, 467-8.

Alton and Alstonfield.⁴¹ Everett lists only Cheadle, Leek and Uttoxeter as having markets that survived into the sixteenth century,⁴² although Palliser and Pinnock include Rocester.⁴³ The concentration of population around Uttoxeter suggests it had flourished at the expense of Alton and later Rocester, while Cheadle, at a greater distance, was holding its own (Table 3.1). Leek too survived, justified by the large area that it served, rather than the size of the surrounding population.

The intermediate areas have a mixed background. Discounting Horton, the parishes with 61-100 acres per family fall substantially into two groups. The first includes several of the larger parishes, Cheadle, Checkley, Dilhome, Ellastone, Kingsley and Leigh, and the parishes of Bradley and Bramshall. All lie in the southern part of the hundred, and occupy a more hospitable terrain than their northern counterparts. The second group consists of smaller upland parishes including Caldon, Calton, Mayfield, Waterfall and Wetton, which had absentee land-owners in the later Middle Ages, and survived into the sixteenth century as nucleated settlements.

Adjacent to the latter are Ilam and Blore Ray (Blore with Swinscoe), including the townships of Throwley and Castern. If their nucleated settlements had survived they would have been comparable with their neighbours, Calton and Wetton. Instead by the mid-sixteenth century all except Swinscoe had resident owners, and like Okeover, were largely depopulated.⁴⁴ Had Riden used the same conventions,⁴⁵ a similar contrast would have emerged for the southern fringes of the Pennines, where, by the end of the Middle Ages, large areas had been converted to pasture, leaving a series of minor gentry estates in place of the earlier villages.⁴⁶

With the exception of Horton, the northern parishes fall into the lowest bracket, and contain some of the highest and most inhospitable land in the county. The central and western parishes lie on the acid soils of the gritstone, while the eastern group lie on limestone.

The population densities within groups show a fair consistency (Table 3.1). Group A with 37 to 58 acres per family are the cluster around the major market at Uttoxeter. Group B ranging from 60-91 consists of the small nucleated settlements in the Peak District. Group C ranging from 70-96 acres per family overlaps with B and

⁴¹ Palliser and Pinnock, 1971, 49-63, 50-51.

⁴² Everitt, 1967, 471.

⁴³ Palliser and Pinnock, 1971, 50-51.

⁴⁴ Cleverdon, 1995, 8, 25.

⁴⁵ Riden, 1978, Fig.1, 67.

⁴⁶ Wright, 1983, 14, 18-19.

TABLE 3.1 The Bishop's census of 1563: figures for the hundred of Totmonslow**a) Summary of acreage per family**

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Acres per family</i>
Uttoxeter	37
Rocester	46
Gratwich	58
.....	
Mayfield	(64)
Leigh	70
Bradley in the Moors	75
Cheadle	76
Waterfall	(77)
Bramshall	78
Caldon	79
Wetton	80
Kingsley	81
Dilhome	82
Calton	(87)
Checkley	88
Horton	89
Ellastone	96
.....	
Caverswall	103
Grindon	109
Draycott in the Moors	130
Blore Ray	(135)
Ipstones	142
Alstonfield	150
Ilam	158
Cheddleton	161
Leek	172
Alton	254
.....	
<u>No data</u>	<u>but low density likely</u>
Croxden	(former Cistercian demesne) (E)
Okeover	(minor gentry estate included) (E)
Sheen	(northern uplands) (D)

b) Discernible groupings

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Acres per family</i>
<u>A Development round Uttoxeter</u>	
Uttoxeter	37
Rocester	46
Gratwich	58
.....	
<u>B Nucleated villages</u>	
Mayfield	(64)
Waterfall	(77)
Caldon	79
Wetton	80
Calton	(87)
.....	
<u>C Larger southern parishes</u>	
Leigh	70
Bradley in the Moors	75
Cheadle	76
Bramshall	78
Kingsley	81
Dilhome	82
Checkley	88
Ellastone	96
.....	
<u>D Larger northern parishes</u>	
Grindon	109
Ipstones	142
Alstonfield	150
Cheddleton	161
Leek	172
.....	
<u>E With gentry estates</u>	
Caverswall	103
Draycott in the Moors	130
Blore Ray	(135)
Ilam	158
Alton	254
.....	

Areas unclassified

For Horton the picture is distorted by the figures being confined to too small an area (cf. page 74). Butterton's figures appear to be an under representation (Appendix 3.1), since it is unlikely that such a small population would warrant the existence of a chapelry, the same argument obtains for Onecote, included within Leek's figures, where only a single farm is indicated.

Bracketed figures

These include an element of calculation and are townships for which no separate figure is given. They have therefore been allocated a percentage of the population on the basis of acreage per township.

includes most of the larger parishes in the southern part of the hundred, excluding Alton and Uttoxeter. Group D with a range of 109-172 acres per family has no overlap with the earlier groups and includes all the larger moorland parishes to the north. Group E includes Blore, Draycott in the Moors and Ilam with 111, 130 and 188 acres per family. All include minor gentry estates, and with them must be linked Alton, containing a major estate belonging to the Earls of Shrewsbury, and Caverswall with a license to crenellate dating back to 1275.⁴⁷ None of this group was exclusively a single estate, but the existence of demesne lands within the parish, and in Alton's case substantial areas of steeply wooded land, markedly affected the area available for other settlement.

There remain the areas without data. Returns were not expected from extra-parochial areas, like Croxden. There is no obvious reason for a lack of returns for Okeover, although its relative position is not in doubt, for the Okeover family were residents. Only Sheen remains, formerly a part of Ilam,⁴⁸ its figures may be included with that parish, and are unlikely to have been greater than its neighbour, Alstonfield.

(iii) *Leek and its chapelries in 1563*

In the vast northern parishes the ratio of families to acreage gives an oversimplified picture if all townships are considered together. For Leek in particular it ignores the presence of the town, spreading figures that should be concentrated in one township across all nineteen. Any division of the figures must therefore take into account the number of burgage plots in the town, the farms and hamlets in Leek and Lowe, the extent of Rushton chapelry, and the possibility that the figures for Horton may relate to more than the township itself. This provides a more realistic total for Leek and Lowe, and a more even spread of figures in the remaining townships. The details (Table 3.2) are mapped in Fig. 3.2, first as raw data, and then in the light of external factors which are discussed below.

The number of burgage plots at the Dissolution was eighty-four.⁴⁹ Some may well have been unoccupied by 1563. Bad harvests in 1555 and 1556 were followed by nation-wide epidemic in 1557-59,⁵⁰ and the minimal evidence available for Leek suggests that the area had at least its share of the difficulties, with a sharp rise in the

⁴⁷ Pevsner, 1974, 95.

⁴⁸ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 246.

⁴⁹ Sleigh, 1862, 14.

⁵⁰ Fisher, 1965, 125-6; Palliser, 1974, 57.

number of wills proved in the year 1557, and above average totals until 1560.⁵¹ Here, as elsewhere,⁵² the deaths represented in the probate documents are those of the more prosperous members of the community, and epidemic disease, causing havoc in a population already weakened by malnutrition, would have hit hardest at the poor. Even if full occupation of the burgage plots cannot be guaranteed, broad banding employed within townships is still likely to be nearer the truth than averaging the figures across the whole of rural Leek.

TABLE 3.2 *The Bishops' Census of 1563: the figures for the Leek townships*

	<i>Families per unit (basic data)</i>	<i>Acreages</i>	<i>Acres per family (basic data)</i>	<i>Families per unit (adjusted data)</i>	<i>Acres per family (adjusted data)</i>
LEEK	119	22,379	188		
<i>Leek and Lowe</i>		2,722	)	84	32 acres
<i>Bradnop</i>		3,568)		
<i>Leekfrith</i>		7,542)		
<i>Rudyard</i>		1,435	)	35	561 acres
<i>Stanley, Endon, Longsdon</i>		5,453)		
<i>Tittesworth</i>		1,659)		
<i>Onecote</i>	1	4,936	)	1	(faulty data)
RUSHTON	46	3,250	71		
<i>Rushton James</i>		1,390)		
<i>Rushton Spencer</i>		1,860	)	46	129 acres
<i>Heaton</i>		2,689)		
HORTON	56	4,975	89)	56	89 acres
CHEDDLETON	57	9,176	161)	57	161 acres
IPSTONES	40	5,697	142)	40	142 acres

To alter the banding a drop of at least sixteen households would have been needed. This would have involved the death of 19% of the population, not an unreasonable total when compared with the overall national picture for the period. However, with both Alstonfield and Rocester included in the sample mapped by Wrigley

and Schofield as having no evidence of a mortality crisis,⁵³ it is possible that Leek too escaped relatively lightly. In any event recovery, in terms of the urban population, would have been swift as employment niches were opened up by the death of others.

⁵¹ LRO. Index of inventories.

⁵² Fisher, 1965, 127.

⁵³ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, Fig. A5.1, Fig. A10.2.

Whatever the effects of the problem during 1557/9 the concentration of 84 families within Leek and Lowe is likely to be an under-estimate, since it makes no allowance for the hamlet of Mill Street, with at least nine households in 1548,⁵⁴ or the hamlet of

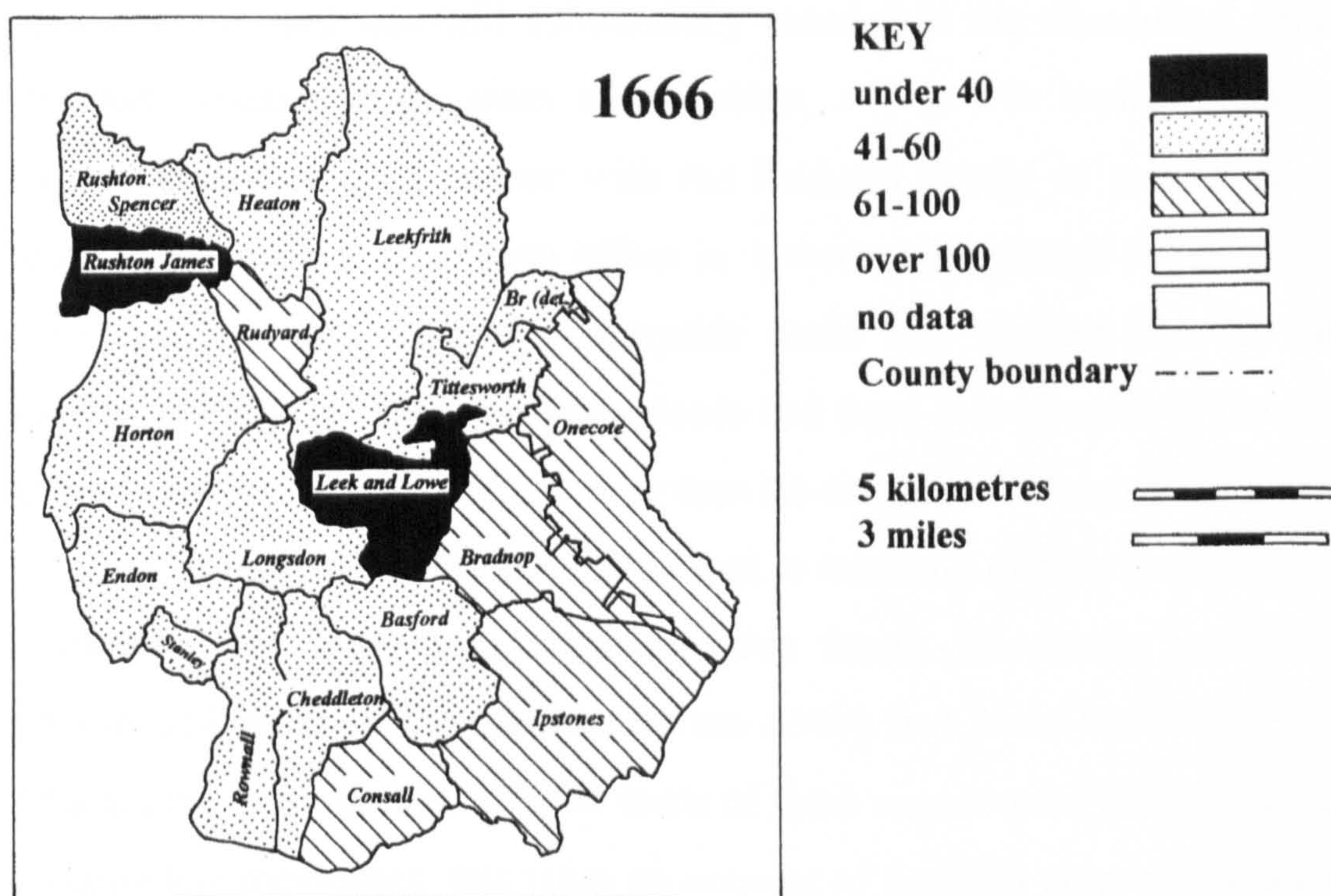
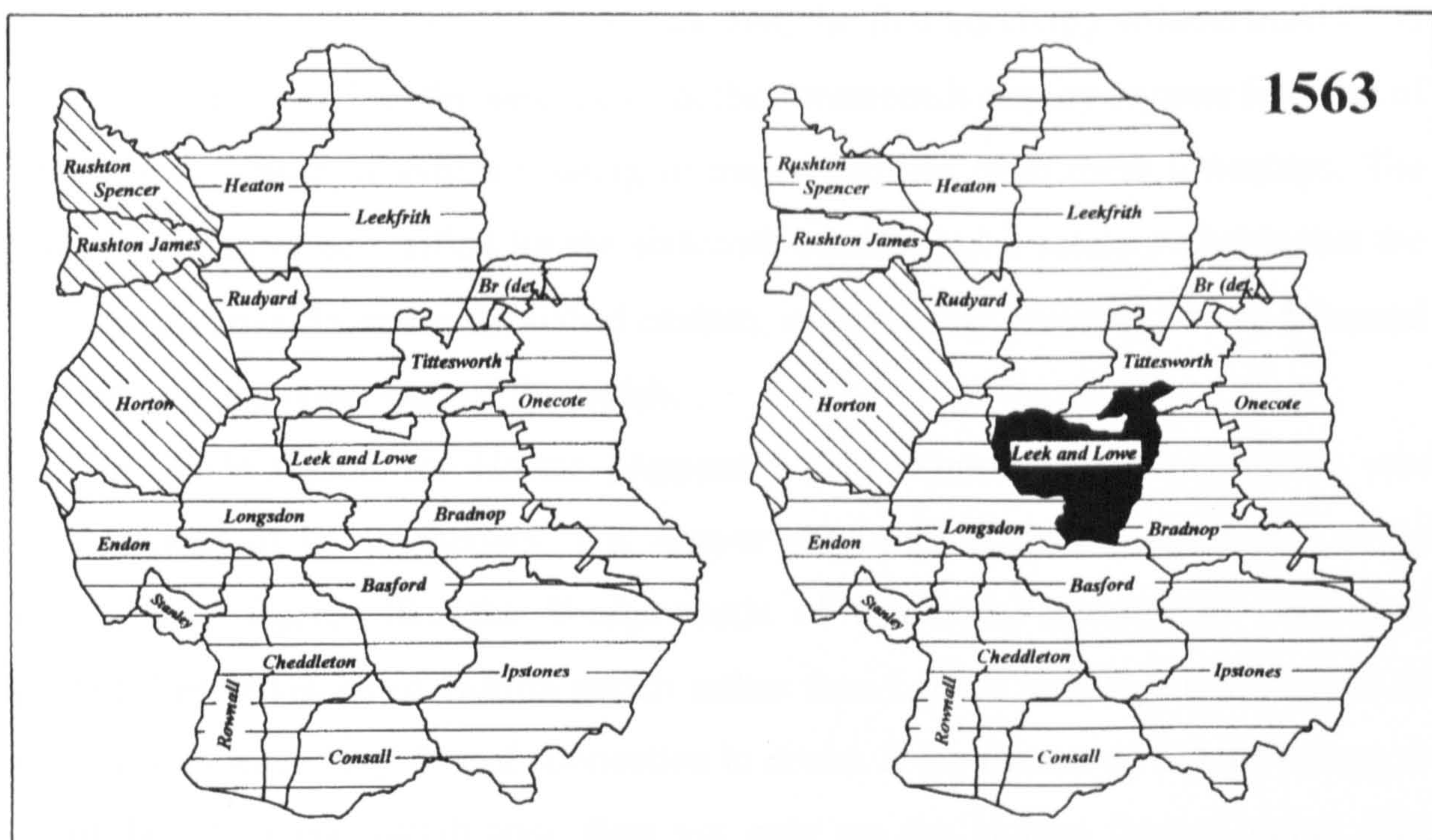


Fig. 3.2 Acres per family in the parish of Leek and its former chapelries in 1563 and 1666. For 1563 the unadjusted figures are to the left, and adjusted figures to the right.

⁵⁴ PRO SC2/202/65, Court roll for 20 April 2EVI (1548).

Lowe, or scattered farms at Birchall, Fowlchurch, Knivedon, Sheephouse and Westwood, all listed among the tenant properties of Dieulacres at the dissolution.⁵⁵

Adjustment is also needed for Rushton to spread the figures across the three townships that make up the chapelry (Heaton, Rushton James and Rushton Spencer). Although the early registers for Rushton are lost, the first surviving volume makes this arrangement clear, as does the absence from the seventeenth century register for Leek of all but a thin scatter of events relating to major families from these townships. The arrangement cannot be verified for the sixteenth century, but it seems probable that the form was governed by well-established custom, and certainly provides a more balanced distribution in the north west of the parish.

The crude figures for Horton (Appendix 3.1) suggest that its population was growing ahead of its neighbours. The answer may once again lie in the area of its ministry. Key figures like the Wedgewoods of Harracles, situated in Longsdon, regarded themselves as of Horton parish rather than Leek,⁵⁶ although the absence of early registers leaves any formal connection in doubt. If the figures do indeed belong to nothing but the basic parish area, then not only are the Horton figures higher than average for the area, but those for the remaining rural townships are particularly low.

Several factors could account for this. The northern part of Leekfrith was known as Hasselwood, and was still substantially wooded at the dissolution. Bradnop and Tittesworth include large areas of Morridge, which was mainly open moorland. Rudyard formed a single manor with the Rudyard family in residence, a situation already seen to have a decisive effect in lowering population levels. However the picture of an almost deserted countryside could also suggest that the problem of counting scattered hamlets and homesteads had been side-stepped in the returns, and that the Leek total represents little more than the town and its immediate environs.

Lists of individual holdings owing rent to monastic owners in the late 1530s go a considerable way towards substantiating this theory. Dieulacres had 23 tenants in Leekfrith and seven in Tittesworth, Hulton Abbey had 32 in Bradnop, and Trentham held a grange in Longsdon.⁵⁷ While some of these appear to be holdings of land rather than complete messuages, this takes no account of freehold property owned by others, and is well above the 1563 total for the rural townships once the burgage numbers have been subtracted. If Wrigley and Schofield's conclusions about population growth

⁵⁵ PRO SC6/Hen VIII/3353.

⁵⁶ SRO D(W) 1702/2/32.

between 1540 and 1560⁵⁸ holds true for this area, then despite any short term effects of the problems of the 1557-60 a substantial rise in population should have occurred by 1563, putting the low returns for Leek's rural townships outside the bounds of likelihood. In all probability the difficulty of knowing his parishioners in such a vast parish proved too great for the incumbent, and the figures are at best an estimate.

(iv) The seventeenth century and the Hearth Tax returns for Totmonslowe hundred

The registers are at best difficult to interpret, but there remains one good seventeenth century source, the Hearth Tax. Three returns survive substantially complete for the hundred of Totmonslow, those for 1662, 1666 and 1673.⁵⁹ Despite their condition, both the 1662 and the 1673 returns are unsatisfactory. The 1662 return lists no exemptions, and the 1673 return groups large areas under a single heading. Both have sections that are either illegible or missing. By contrast the return for 1666 is legible throughout, and accounts for each area at township level. In addition it post-dates Amendment Acts which required the exempt to be named and made tenants responsible for payment.⁶⁰ Thus, in theory, it should contain a full record of all households, even if doubt remains as to whether all categories of exemption were listed.⁶¹

Such an exemplary source would seem trouble free, particularly as it has been meticulously transcribed.⁶² But the returns are by constablewick, not by parish. In Alton constablewick, for example, twelve areas are named, they belong to nine different parishes and are not entirely contiguous. Since the exempt are listed en-masse at the end of each constablewick it is impossible to know whether the poor were evenly spread. Thirsk writing in general terms of Staffordshire noted that some parishes contained marked contrasts in their distribution of rich and poor.⁶³ In Eccleshall for example there were 21 places listed separately, three were the homes of the rich, eight were homes only of the poor, and in Needwood Forest there were five settlements without any wealthy people. Totmonslow has the same uneven distribution in the eleven areas where constablewick and parish/township coincide, with exemptions ranging from 13% in Bradnop to 66% in Field. So apportioning the exempt is a more

⁵⁷ PRO SC6/HenVIII/3353.

⁵⁸ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, Fig. A5.1.

⁵⁹ PRO E179/179/331, E179/256/31 and E179/179/328.

⁶⁰ Arkell, 1992, 40.

⁶¹ Husbards, 1983, 46.

⁶² SHC, 1925, 155-242.

⁶³ Thirsk, 1969, 3.

arbitrary matter than it would seem. While an attempt has been made to do so on the basis of the population total of each area, it is a formula which may not reflect reality (Appendix 3.2).

Some confirmation of the Hearth Tax figures might be expected from the Compton Census of 1676.⁶⁴ However, given uncertainties over the nature of the returns, whether they were for the complete population, for men and women over sixteen, or for men only, it seems best to allow the Hearth Tax returns to stand alone. Certainly the Compton Census includes none of the detailed breakdown into townships which characterises the 1666 Hearth Tax, and which makes it such a valuable tool at this purely local level.

Whatever the margin of error, certain trends emerge when the figures for 1563 and 1666 are compared, the overall pattern being one of substantial growth. Only Ilam and Okeover remain in the lowest band (Table 3.3). The three townships making up Ilam all had resident gentry, as did Okeover, with the consequent lack of nucleated settlement noted for 1563. At the other extreme, Cheadle and the neighbouring areas of Dilhome and Rocester had seen substantial expansion with the successful growth of Cheadle as a market town. Most areas move upwards by two bands, though Butterton and Waterfall, both with nucleated villages, make an unexpected appearance in the upper band.

The problem again hinges on the use of the parish as the unit when the composition of the townships is the more important factor. The parish of Ilam for example shows in the lowest bracket because all three of its townships contained a gentry estate. Other parishes of comparable acreage might contain similar areas of low density but show in a higher band if one or more townships contained a nucleated settlement. Blore with Swinscoe is a case in point. In 1631, when William Senior mapped Blore for the Earl of Newcastle⁶⁵ it was already a shrunken village with little beyond the main house and the church, while the township of Swinscoe held a nucleated village. Its representation in the 41-60 band therefore masks both a nucleated settlement and a gentry estate. Alton parish, also in the 41-60 bracket, included the estates of the Earls of Shrewsbury and the nucleated settlement of Alton. Conversely, the position of Butterton and Waterfall in the upper bracket represents a nucleated

⁶⁴ Whiteman, 1986, 88-9.

⁶⁵ Cleverdon, 1995, 37.

settlement within a small parish where the settlement size is not masked by a gentry estate or other substantial freehold properties.

A different set of circumstances producing a similar result obtained in Alstonfield parish. Second only in size to Leek, it contains diverse geology which determines major variations in its settlement patterns. The eastern side lies on the limestone, where Alstonfield and Longnor represent surviving nucleated settlements. The western side lies on gritstone, where altitude coupled with acid soils led to sparse settlement, and where large areas of open moorland still survive. Thus the parish bridges the contrast graphically mirrored in the modern 1:25,000 maps of the Peak District. To the east lies the limestone with its surviving nucleated settlements surrounded by consolidated field systems representing former open fields. To the west lies the gritstone where the random shape of the fields is largely governed by irregularities in the landscape and relates to small hamlets and farms, and where settlement and moorland tend to cancel each other out, putting most of the larger parishes a broad band of 43-75 acres per family.

(v) Leek and its former chapelries in 1666

Comparison of Figs. 3.1 and 3.2 indicates how much the picture changes if the data is broken down into townships. In the former the whole of the medieval parish of Leek, Ipstones excepted, falls into the 41-60 bracket, while the latter is a patchwork of contrasts falling broadly into the patterns discussed above.

Rudyard, Consall, Bradnop, Onecote and Ipstones all appear in the 61-100 bracket. The relatively low density for Rudyard reflects the presence of Rudyard Hall; its associated estate being worked from a handful of farms.⁶⁶ Bradnop and Onecote, with only small hamlets, including Upper and Lower Bradnop, Onecote, and part of Ford, had the hump-backed slopes of Morridge between them. This is an inhospitable terrain with a scatter of smallholdings on the bleaker slopes, farmhouses like the Waterhouse and White Lee tucked into the more sheltered spots, and large areas of moorland.⁶⁷ Bradnop also included the Ashenhurst estate, and although its full extent is unknown before the middle of the eighteenth century, the core of the property had been

⁶⁶ SRO D1176/A/11, earliest map, 1731.

⁶⁷ SRO 5116/1.

TABLE 3.3 The Hearth tax returns of 1666: acreages per family.

a) Summary of acreages per family

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Acre per family</i>
Uttoxeter	17
Leek & Lowe (township)	20
Butterton	28
Cheadle	33
Waterfall	36
Bradley	38
Dilhorne	38
.....	
Grindon	43
Bramshall	43
Rocester	43
Checkley	45
Horton	45
Kingsley	45
Gratwich	46
Leek (whole parish)	46
Caverswall	50
Alton	51
Alstonfield	52
Leek (rural townships)	52
(Ellastone)	(55)
Wetton	55
Draycott	55
Cauldon	55
Cheddleton	60
.....	
Leigh	61
Sheen	67
Mayfield	68
Blore	70
Ipstones	70
Calton	75
Musden	92
Croxden	92
.....	
Okeover	149
Ilam	149

b) Discernible groupings

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Acre per family</i>
A Market towns plus satellite areas	
Uttoxeter	17
Leek & Lowe (township)	20
Cheadle	33
Bradley	38
Dilhorne	38
B Small parishes with nucleated settlements	
Butterton	28
Waterfall	36
C Broad central band, mixed patterns	
Grindon	43
Bramshall	43
Rocester	43
Checkley	45
Horton	45
Kingsley	45
Gratwich	46
Leek (whole parish)	46
Caverswall	50
Alton	51
Alstonfield	52
Leek (rural townships)	52
(Ellastone)	(55)
Wetton	55
Draycott	55
Cauldon	55
Cheddleton	60
Leigh	61
Sheen	67
Mayfield	68
Blore	70
Ipstones	70
Calton	75
E Former monastic lands, no major settlement	
Musden Grange	92
Croxden	92
F Gentry estates with deserted villages	
Okeover	149
Ilam	149

For basis see Appendix 3.3.

amassed by the 1630s.⁶⁸ Substantial seventeenth century houses at Whitehough and Sharpcliffe point to the presence of minor gentry/major yeoman farmer holdings in Ipstones, which were coupled with the bleak expanses of Ipstones Edge. Here from 1649⁶⁹ the bulk of the land was held as a relatively small number of freehold properties.

Leek and Lowe, with the market town of Leek, and the hamlet of Millstreet are inevitably in the upper bracket. So too is Rushton James, where a planned hamlet (SJ929614) must still have been flourishing, producing a result similar to that for Butterton and Waterfall, where small parishes/townships were coupled with nucleated settlements.

Elsewhere the pattern masks few surprises. There is no evidence that the hamlet of Heaton was ever large, and in both Heaton and Leekfrith the Trafford holdings at Swythamley and the High Forest helped to dilute the effects of expansion elsewhere.⁷⁰ The remaining townships in Cheddleton contained a nucleated village in one, and relatively large yeoman/gentry farms and smaller hamlets in the others, with major areas of open moorland in all three.⁷¹ Horton too had its major landholders, including the Edge family of Horton Hall, producing an overall pattern of 41-60 acres per family.

(vi) *The evidence of the registers*

As a coherent source of material to establish population size and growth the Leek registers are at best a weak link, and their analysis serves mainly to provide a broad background for comparison with national trends, and a framework against which to set figures obtained from more reliable sources.

Palliser dismisses the earliest register for Leek as too badly kept to confirm the local tradition that plague hit Leek in 1646-7.⁷² He does not elaborate, but it is clear from a brief inspection that its overt shortcomings take a number of forms. Physical neglect had led to illegibility in some sections. This, coupled with a random order of rebinding for the first three years, makes their analysis both difficult and tedious, though dissection on a month-by-month basis eliminates most of the problems. Periods of poorly-kept records recur throughout the Civil War and Commonwealth, when gaps or minimal entries give a clear indication of under-registration, culminating at the Restoration with a total collapse for much of 1660 and 1661. The marked rise in totals,

⁶⁸ Swythamley, 18/658; SA1/2/6.

⁶⁹ Brighton, 1937, 35.

⁷⁰ PRO C66/697 3493.

⁷¹ SRO Q/RDc29.

following Parliamentary attempts in 1694 to improve the standard of registration,⁷³ leads to the conclusion that the level of entries in all the preceding decades is suspect. In addition registration tended to cease at precisely those moments when death rates were rising and local mortality crises appear to have been imminent. These are by no means unusual features and are clearly recognisable hazards.

Less obvious is a factor which only becomes apparent if a detailed breakdown is undertaken. From the early seventeenth century the parish had been divided into four quarters, Leek and Lowe, Bradnop (with Onecote), Leekfrith (with Heaton, Rudyard, Rushton Spencer, Rushton James and Tittesworth), and Endon (with Stanley and Longsdon), each quarter having its own meeting place for the passing of the warden's accounts.⁷⁴ For a period of five years or so from May 1661 the organisation seems to have broken down. Instead of systematic entries in date sequence the entries are in random order, as if those concerned met occasionally, and wrote what they could remember as it occurred to them. Prior to that, a set of conventions was in operation whose implications only become apparent when the entries are extracted and grouped by place of origin.

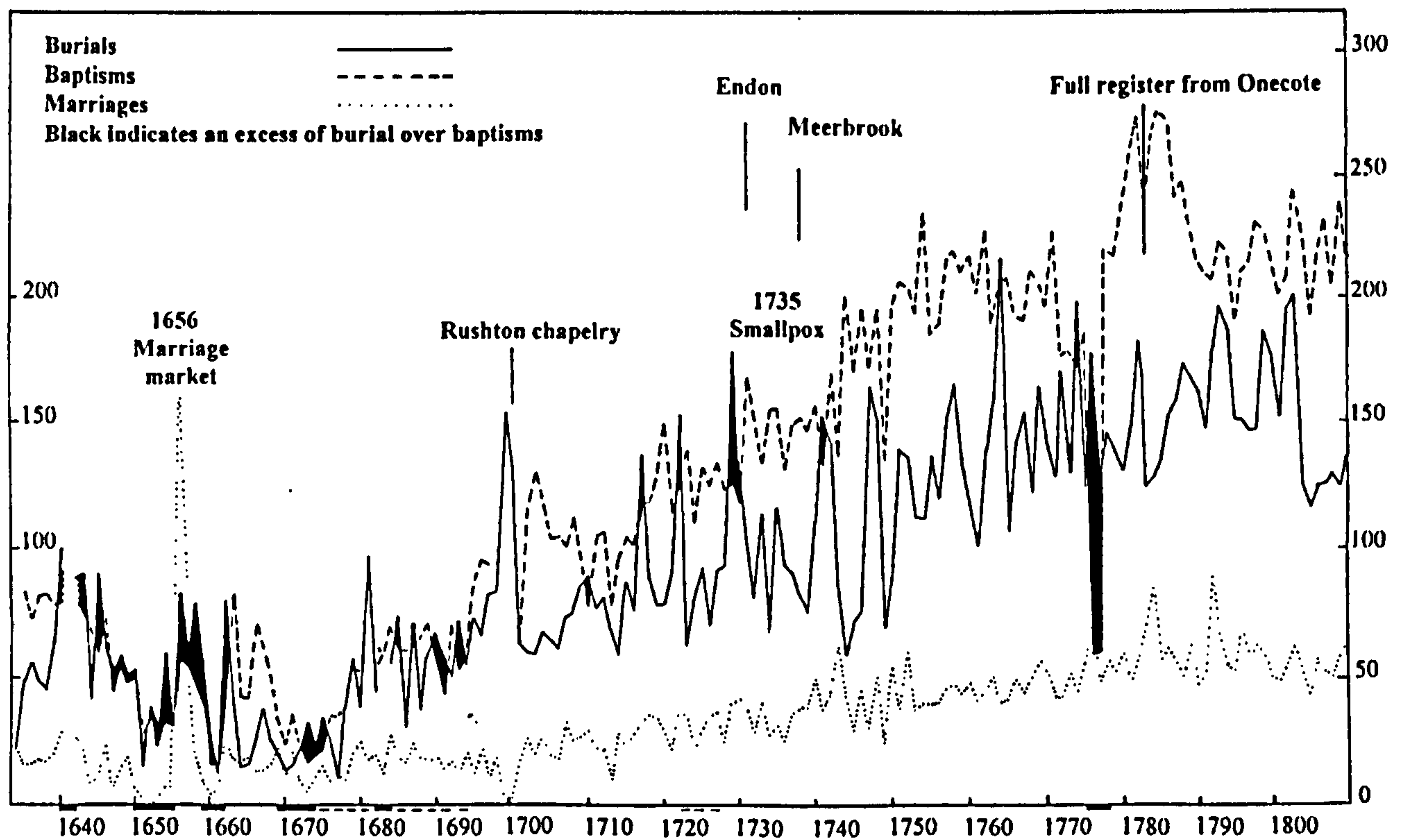
For those from the country areas, origin was normally stated at township, hamlet or farm level, depending on circumstances; for the gentry it was sometimes omitted as if self-evident. For those within the town no place of origin was given, nor was any given for marriages before 1656. Once the requirement for burial in wool appears in the August of 1678 the system fell apart. The over-wordy documentation required by this piece of legislation squeezed out all except mandatory information, and the resultant overload led to a breakdown. When the burial registers restart in April of 1684 the details given are minimal, as if lingering fatigue had left the clerk unwilling to write one word more than he must. The transformation in style is confirmed with the advent of George Walthall as vicar in November of 1695. His well-kept burial register is a model of consistency and continues to give place of origin, but lacks the details formerly given for children, which had included the names of their parents.

The major point to emerge is an anomaly in the entries for the Leekfrith quarter for the period up to 1650. For the townships of Rushton Spencer and Rushton James there is a serious shortfall of entries, which appear to represent the limited few who chose to be baptised or buried at St Edward's church, the rest using Rushton chapel and

⁷² Palliser, 1974, 66.

⁷³ Drake, 1962, 430.

registering there. For Heaton between 1634 and 1650 the entries consist, with one exception, entirely of burials. The numbers suggest that the total is complete, and that some convention unrelated to the normal practice was in operation. Few of the major farms have individual entries, although Fairboroughs and Hillilees, to name but two, were substantial farms by 1538.⁷⁵ It seems likely that a lingering convention from some previous administrative system required that all burials from the core of Leek manor, which excludes Rushton Spencer, should be recorded in the main parish register, regardless of where the individuals were actually buried. Only this would seem to account for the partial inclusion of Heaton, and the exclusion of the remainder of Rushton chapelry.



KEY TO PERIODS OF DEFECTIVE REGISTRATION (shown below the diagram)

A solid line - entries missing for two or more consecutive months.

A dotted line - under-registration is known or suspected for some other reason.

Fig. 3.3 The post-medieval parish of Leek: totals of baptisms, marriages and burials.

The Leek register is therefore a blunt-edged tool, at least during the seventeenth century, and not one on which precise figures for population totals could confidently be based. None-the-less, as a broad indicator of how the parish stands against national trends it has its uses, particularly as the neighbouring parish of Alstonfield is amongst

⁷⁴ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 82.

⁷⁵ PRO SC6/HenVIII/3353.

the 404 parishes included by Wrigley and Schofield in their sample ⁷⁶ and some direct comparisons are possible.

Fig. 3.3 represents the overall totals of baptisms, marriages and burials for Leek parish, including the chapelry registers as each begins. No attempt has been made to calculate the likely totals where there are missing months or years. Given the wild swings in the annual totals during the periods when total registration is not suspect, this would seem likely to confuse the issue still further. Instead the quality of the entries is indicated on the bottom axis of the diagram to show when information is at its least reliable. With less than half the entries unmarked before 1700 the source of Palliser's scepticism is instantly apparent. Separate figures are given for Ipstones, Horton and Cheddleton, all of which had achieved parish status before the inception of the registers (Fig. 3.7). Of these only Cheddleton provides a consistent source, the gaps being self-evident in the series for Horton and Ipstones.

In broad terms the national trends estimated by Wrigley and Schofield indicate a steady growth from 1551 until the late 1650s with a temporary set-back in 1561. A decline followed until the mid 1680s, followed by steady recovery to the early 1720s when the totals once again reached the level of the mid-seventeenth century. The growth rate between 1551 and 1656 almost doubled the population, the fall in the second half of the seventeenth century delaying the actual doubling until 1741.⁷⁷

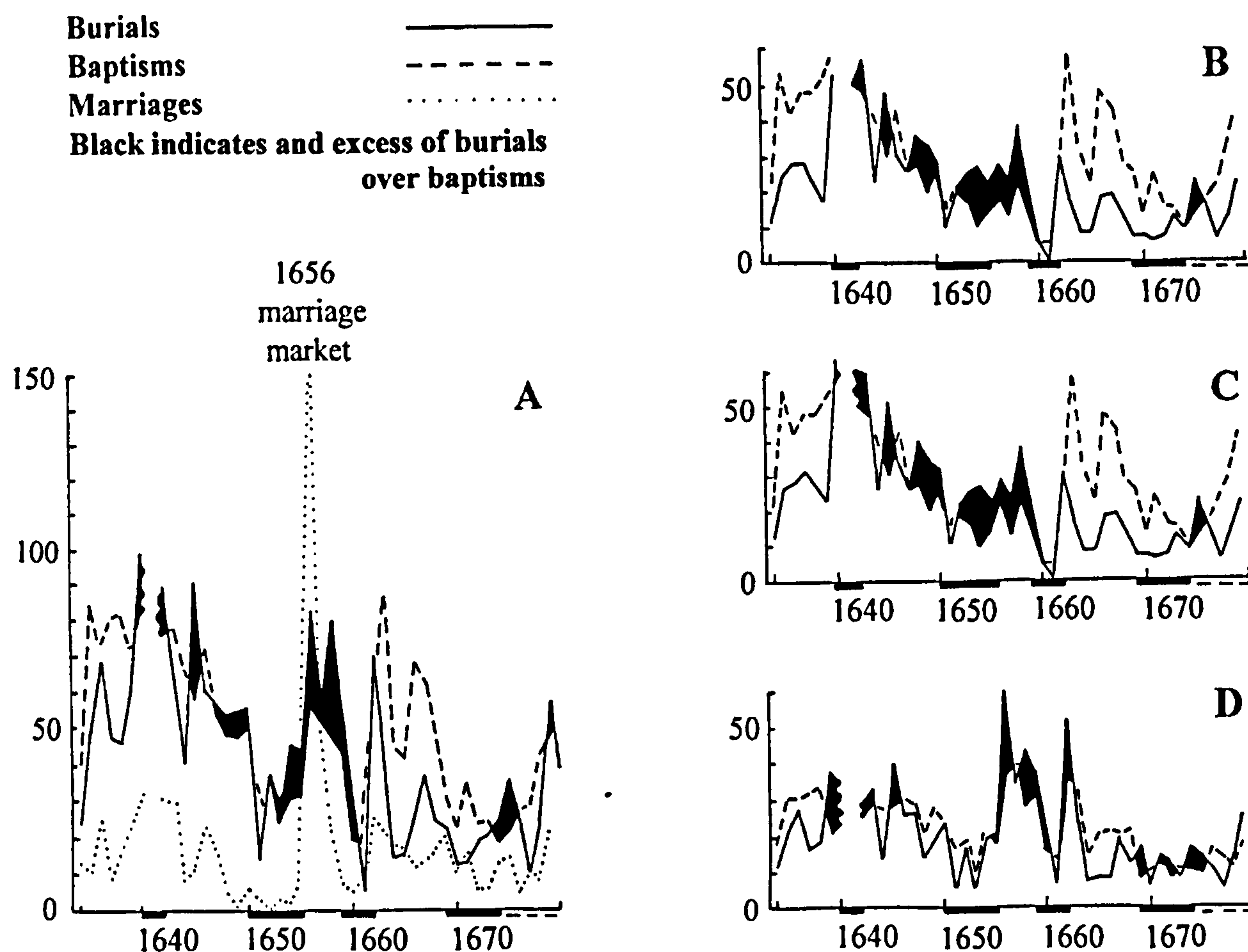
Insufficient material survives to justify any comment on the relationship of the local pattern to the national one before the 1630s. The register for Ipstones (Fig. 3.7) represents only a fragment of the population as a whole, is in a poor physical condition, and haphazard in its presentation.

Fig. 3.4 (A), giving the earlier totals for Leek, is only marginally more informative. The initial impression of the period from 1635-1662 is one of repeated difficulties, burials exceeding baptisms on a regular basis, suggesting a general decline as a result of local mortality crises. When the figures for baptisms and burials are broken down into those for town and country a different picture emerges. Except for 1641, when information totally ceases and a major crisis is suspected, the overall pattern for Leek town and Mill Street, Fig. 3.4 (D), is one of gently declining totals with a slight surplus of baptisms over burials in most years, and a major problem period in the mid 1650s. By contrast the country areas, with or without any bias caused by the

⁷⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 485-489.

⁷⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 207-11 including Fig. 7.1 and Table 7.8.

inclusion of the Heaton burials, Fig. 3.4 (B) and (C), show a similar decline accompanied by an almost constant pattern of burials exceeding baptisms. This suggests that the town together with the suburban settlement of Mill Street were better able to withstand the economic effects of the Civil War and its aftermath than the surrounding countryside, and that the usual accompaniment to economic hardship, poorer diet and consequent susceptibility to disease, were relevant factors for at least a proportion of the population.



KEY

A Totals for the whole of the post-medieval parish
 B Totals for the countryside without Rushton chapelry
 C Totals for the countryside including Rushton chapelry
 D Totals for Leek, Mill Street and people from other parishes

Defective registration is indicated below each diagram. A solid line indicates a lack of entries for two or more consecutive months. A dotted line indicates under-registration is known or suspected for some other reason.

Fig. 3.4 Baptisms, marriages and burials in the post-medieval parish of Leek: 1634-1680.

Nothing can remedy the missing year of 1641. 1640 shows a high series of winter burials both in February and April (Fig. 3.5) building up again in November and December. 1642 begins with a high series of winter burials peaking in April. This may well have been linked by an even higher series of burials if epidemic disease was

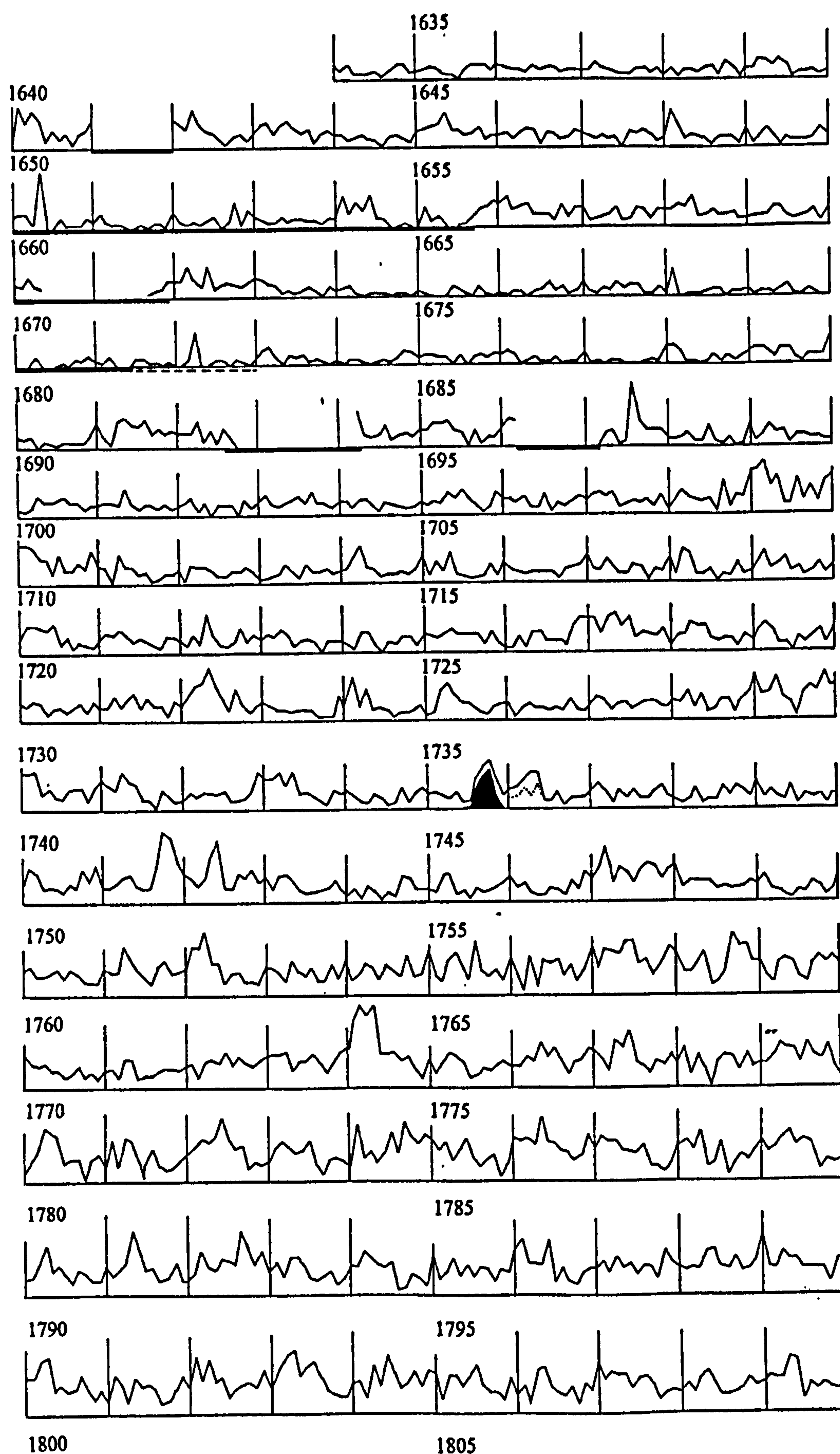


Fig. 3.5. The burial totals for Leek and its dependent chapelries
 Defective registration is indicated below each diagram. A solid line indicates a lack of entries for two or more consecutive months; a dotted line indicates under-registration is known or suspected for some other reason; black marks the smallpox outbreak of 1735.

present, since wisdom would suggest the undesirability of congregation, but speculation is not proof, and the timing is a year in advance of the series of epidemics recorded by Palliser for major towns elsewhere in Staffordshire.⁷⁸ Many registers show signs of dislocation during the Civil war and Commonwealth periods. 1641 falls into one of the periods most affected, the years following the calling of the Short Parliament in 1640.⁷⁹

Major problems arose in years from 1656 to 1658, though the cause is uncertain. There is no evidence for bubonic plague, a summer visitor with telltale effects on family groups.⁸⁰ Nothing more dramatic seems to have occurred than a higher-than-average series of winter burials across the period December to May in 1655-6, followed by a slightly increased total of burials in most months until registration temporarily collapsed in May 1660. A break down of the population into children and adults shows all age groups at risk but there were particularly high totals of children in 1656 and 1658. There is nothing to suggest that any one area was more affected than another. This is not a period of dearth, when North Staffordshire, being reliant on external grain supplies, often suffered heavily.⁸¹ In fact the years of 1654-6 were ones when the real value of wages was particularly high.⁸² This makes some form of infection the likely cause, with the constant comings and goings of the 'marriage shop' in 1656 ensuring no area of the parish was immune.

1656 saw 146 marriages, a number vastly in excess of the local norm, clear evidence that cut-rate fees were available in Leek that year, with totals taking two years to dwindle back to their normal levels. Although such 'marriage-shops' were acceptable practice throughout England prior to Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754, this is the only local example.⁸³ Here for the first time in the registration of marriages, with the exception of those from Leek town, the origin of each partner is given, producing a clear idea of the contact area from which marriage partners were drawn (Fig. 3.6), and the number of non-parishioners who were being married in Leek at the time. The spread of contacts is less surprising than it might seem, for Leek market served a wide area. In addition the majority of the yeoman farmers owned a number of widely scattered farms rather than ring fenced holdings, and contacts across the countryside abounded, as the lists of debtors attached to inventories often confirm.

⁷⁸ Palliser, 1974, 65.

⁷⁹ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 27.

⁸⁰ Palliser, 1974, 62.

⁸¹ Rowlands, 1987, 109.

⁸² Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 321, Table 8.8

⁸³ Tate, 1969, 49; Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 21 f.n. 12, 28, 65.

The fact that the 'marriage shop' was in operation at this particular point, and that so many were able to take advantage of it, suggests that despite political turmoil and civil war considerable prosperity remained for at least some of the rural population. The more so as local custom amongst the yeomen farmers and wealthier townfolk decreed that not only should a man provide his daughter with a jointure, but also that he should assist his sons to achieve financial independence.

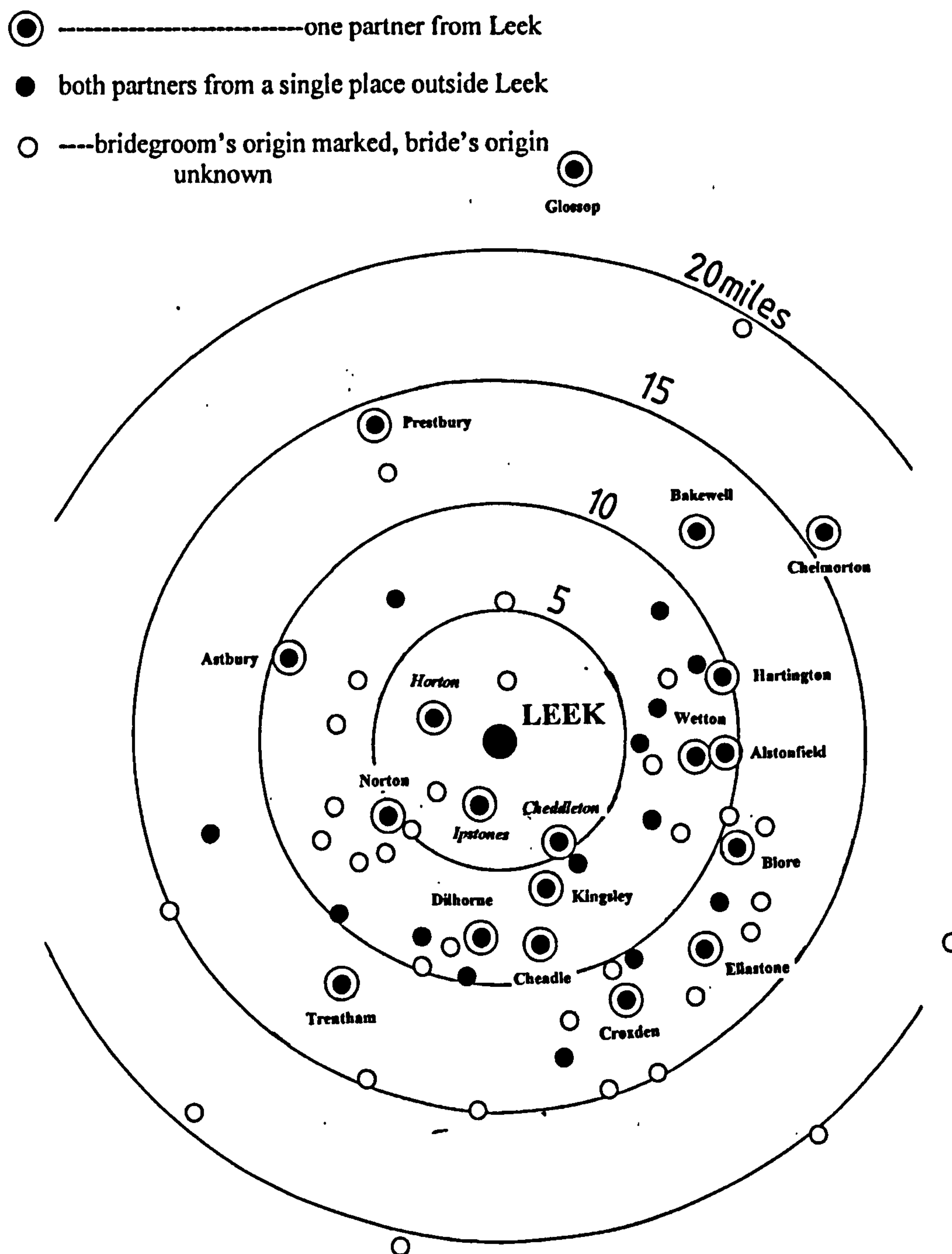


Fig. 3.6 The marriage shop of 1656: the contact area for partners

The national picture is of a fall in population in the middle of the century lasting till the middle of the 1680s. The numerous failings of the Leek register in its opening decades make comparisons unwise, although the general trend until the 1680s appears

to have been downward. How far the plateau of the 1680s represents a better level of registration is uncertain. That there was still room for improvement is shown by the sudden rise in the totals in the mid 1690s following Parliamentary measures designed to improve registration, and accelerated by the arrival of George Walthal as vicar in November 1695.⁸⁴

His style was brief and non-committal, so there is no verbal confirmation for the events that were to follow, and confirmation has yet to be looked for in the neighbouring towns. Baptism totals are unavailable for 1699 when mortality rates were high, but marriage rates dropped steeply thereafter, providing two of Laslett's criteria for a subsistence crisis.⁸⁵ In England, as over much of north-west Europe harvests were deficient and food prices high in several years in the 1690s. Despite this the annual death rate for England as a whole was 'remarkably unresponsive' even falling below trend in the years of the lowest real wages (1698 and 1699).⁸⁶

The burial rates for Leek in 1699, and the pattern of mortality leading up to the crisis year, suggest that this part of North Staffordshire was out of step with the country as a whole. The spectre which haunted the sixteenth century was back.⁸⁷ Poor harvests pushed up grain prices, bringing misery in their wake. The burial rates for Leek parish from 1695 onwards (Fig. 3.5) show the classic pattern of ever-increasing winter death rates, interspersed with signs of other diseases. A bad summer in 1698 led to a worse winter in 1699, with the grim pattern repeating itself into 1700 and beyond.

A steep rise in the birth rate brought rapid compensation for the setback at the turn of the century, and the picture until 1753 was one of steady growth. Of course setbacks occurred. Death rates were high in 1717, although not in 1719/20, contrary to the national pattern. Wrigley and Schofield write of 'three consecutive 3-star crisis years in the late 1720s'. Leek escaped lightly, with only one crisis year in 1729. Localised peaks and troughs, such as that caused by smallpox in 1735, diligently recorded by a new curate (Fig. 3.5), are more than compensated in overall totals by the continuing rise in birth rates. In the latter year the course of the disease is readily traceable from a single case in July, to nine in August, eighteen in September, falling away to seven in October, producing a steeply curving rise in figures, followed by a sharp fall (Fig. 3.5). Although unspecified, it seems the disease may then have spread to the north west of

⁸⁴ Drake, 1962, 430.

⁸⁵ Laslett, 1983, 127.

⁸⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 341.

⁸⁷ Rowlands, 1987, 109.

the parish early in 1736, for the same distinctive curve results from the addition of the Rushton chapelry figures to those of the main register. The national problems were again shared in the 1741/2.⁸⁸

If the aggregate for the parish in the first half of the eighteenth century is broadly in line with national trends, at a purely local level it has its variants. The totals for the chapelries of Rushton and Endon both appear to have an almost constant surplus of baptisms over burials, with little if any evidence for a rise in overall totals. The initial period of registration at Meerbrook is suspect, but a similar pattern is likely to have obtained, since in 1711 the influx to Leek from the rural townships was so high that each quarter was made responsible for its own poor, rather than burdening Leek and Lowe.⁸⁹ For Cheddleton, Ipstones and Horton the position is less constant, but growth rates appear to have been minimal despite a surplus of baptisms. In the case of Cheddleton the crisis points of the late 1690s and 1729 are clearly evident and the totals suggest a slight but steady growth. Horton's totals, such as survive, suggest a similar pattern to Rushton, and only Ipstones, with underlying coal seams and evidence of eighteenth-century housing expansion, shows marked growth towards the end of the period.

No detailed consideration has been given to the second half of the eighteenth century, which lies outside the main period of this study, although it has been included in Figs. 3.3 and 3.7 to form a link with the 1811 Census Returns. From the mid-1740s onwards there is evidence for substantial growth over the parish as a whole, with baptisms regularly in excess of burials apart from a period of deficient registration in the 1770s (Fig. 3.3). Growth is less obvious in the rural registers, suggesting continued pressure on the town. The poor were a continuing problem, suggesting a substantial level of under-employment, and surface briefly in the burial registers. 'John Dan of the Foundling Hospital, no. 1926, Ann Nightingale, no. 2968, George Collell, no. 4701, three of the 34 children recorded by name and number in the two year period from July 1756 to July 1758 and presenting a depressing picture for so small a town.

The consistency with which baptisms exceed burials in the post-medieval parish is not completely mirrored in the rural registers, where growth seems to have been on a smaller scale than the aggregate suggests (Fig. 3.7). Cheddleton's figures seem to reach

⁸⁸ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 341.

⁸⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 1995, 83.

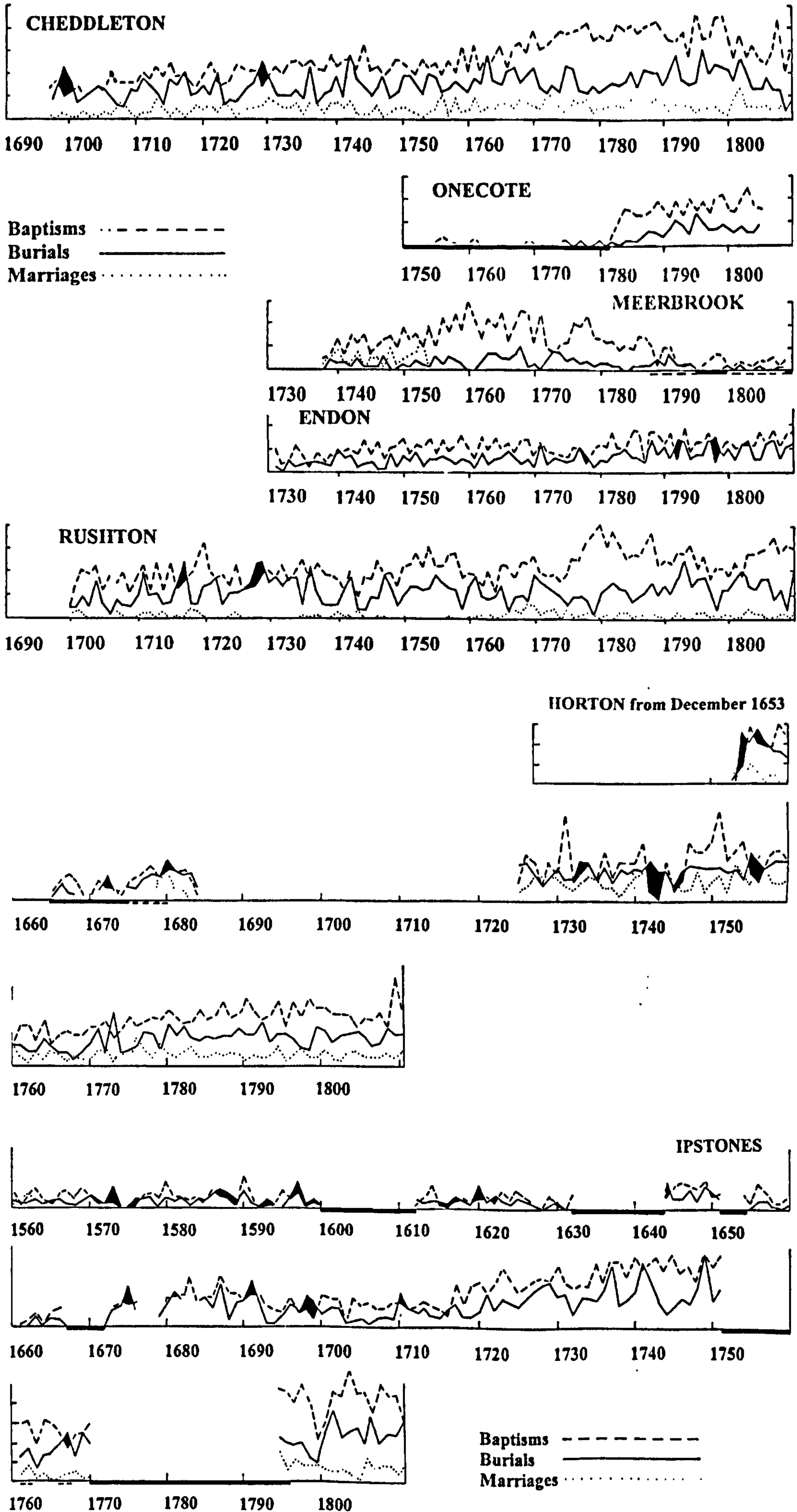


Fig. 3.7 Totals of baptisms, marriages and burials for the dependent chapelries and the parishes of Cheddleton, Ipstones and Horton

a plateau in the 1770s followed by a slight decline towards 1800; and Endon saw little if any growth between 1730 and 1810. Meerbrook seems to represent one extreme, with an apparent fall in population, though defective registration may be concealing the reality. On the other hand, defective registration at Ipstones between 1770 and 1795 conceals a period of growth fully evident in the village housing stock when the mining of coal and ironstone was becoming all important.

The 1811 census, chosen in place of the 1801 census for its greater reliability,⁹⁰ provides the final word. Overall growth in Totmonslow between 1666 and 1811 was some 96%, ranging from 204% in Ipstones to 0% ⁱⁿ Bramshall. Growth in the towns ranged from 195% in Rocester to 55% in Uttoxeter, with Leek mid-way at 102%. Those rural areas which retained a nucleated settlement in 1666 tended to grow fastest, as at Dilhorne (196%), Mayfield (170%) or Wetton (156%), and the growth of rural industry, or the proximity of a flourishing town suggest the means of support. For example, Alstonfield's total of 117% includes a substantial rise in the number of cottagers in the moorlands near Flash, where the principal livelihood was coal mining, while Wetton includes the copper mines at Ecton.

The post-medieval parish of Leek saw above average growth at 108%. The town grew by a massive 432%, a reflection of the changing economic balance between town and countryside on the eve of the major nineteenth century explosion that followed the setting up of a series of silk mills. By contrast most of the rural townships had below average growth, and Leekfrith, with minus 4%, showed a decline. The small planned settlement at Rushton James was presumably still thriving as the township's growth was 81%, while Cheddleton's 124% reflects the presence of coal measures. Iptones massive 204%, like those for Alstonfield and Wetton, relate to the development of an extractive industry, coal and ironstone, mirrored in the centre of the village by the number of mid-late eighteenth century houses relating to its latest wave of prosperity.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Staffordshire's position as one of the least populated areas of England appears to have remained unchanged between the late eleventh and early sixteenth centuries.⁹¹ Although a continuous sequence of events is not available, key sources from the middle of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries allow a comparative study of population

⁹⁰ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 122-124.

⁹¹ Darby, 1977, Figs. 34 and 35; Schofield, 1965; Sheail, 1972; Clay, 1984, 1.

growth in the north east of the county (Fig. 3.1). While poorly kept parish registers do little to substantiate the picture in the seventeenth century, they supply sufficient evidence to confirm the national pattern of steady growth in the eighteenth century, leading to the substantial increase reflected in the Census returns of 1811 (Table 3.4).

Between 1566 and 1666 the quinquennial totals for England indicate a population rise of some 62%.⁹² The increase for Totmonslow between the year 1563 and 1666 was 123% and 125% for the county as a whole.⁹³ Houston notes that 'open parishes with ample pasture and opportunities for industrial work tended to experience the fastest increases'.⁹⁴ Large areas of Leek lay unenclosed in the middle of the seventeenth century, with a total acreage of almost 50% in some townships (Table 2.3), and Alstonfield, with high, bleak moorland filling much of its western side, will have had at least as much.

Kusmaul classifies Alstonfield with those parishes where the time of year chosen for marriage was driven neither by the demands of harvest patterns, nor those of animal husbandry.⁹⁵ She argues that this implied a rural economy in which industry (which she does not define) played a major part. Visible at Alstonfield by the period 1561-1640, the pattern remained constant until the early nineteenth century, and probably related to the small-scale working of lead.⁹⁶ This was not the uniform pattern in Staffordshire as it was in Cheshire and Derbyshire, but given Leek's proximity to these counties, its tradition of iron-smelting in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, and the steadily developing button and silk industries, it is likely to have shared the same pattern as its neighbour, Alstonfield, just as it shared its massive population growth.

Smith, summarizing trends in internal migration between 1500 and 1730, indicates a high level of mobility in Tudor and early Stuart England, which seems to have been superseded by a more static state of affairs in Post-Restoration England.⁹⁷ The extent to which neighbouring parishes and townships were 'open' or 'closed' therefore seems to be a significant factor in understanding the huge variations in growth indicated in Table 3.4 (i),⁹⁸ and reflected in the overall population densities (Figs. 3.1 and 3.2).

⁹² Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 528.

⁹³ Palliser, 1974, 55.

⁹⁴ Houston, 1992, 19.

⁹⁵ Kusmaul, 1993.

⁹⁶ Ford and Rieuwerts, 1983, 17-24.

⁹⁷ Smith, 1978, 173.

⁹⁸ Laslett, 1983, 59-60.

TABLE 3.4 (i) Parishes and townships in Totmonslow: % increase in population

<i>Parish or township</i>	<i>1563 x 4.5 - 5.5</i>	<i>1666 X 4.5 - 5.5</i>	<i>% increase 1563 - 1666</i>	<i>1811 census</i>	<i>% increase 1666-1811</i>
Leek	563 - 655	3,290 - 4,021	484	7,368	102
Alton	135 - 165	675 - 825	400	1,898	153
Alstonfield	419 - 512	2,016 - 2,464	381	4,870	117
Cheddleton	257 - 314	693 - 847	169	1,392	81
Blore Ray	(50 - 61) ⁹⁹	122 - 149	(144)	164	21
Draycott	135 - 165	320 - 391	137	536	51
Cheadle	405 - 495	932 - 1,139	130	3,191	81
Uttoxeter	1,080 - 1,320	2,390 - 2,921	121	4,114	55
Dilhorne	207 - 253	450 - 550	117	1,184	196
Caverswall	230 - 281	473 - 578	105	900	71
Ipstones	180 - 220	365 - 446	102	1,235	204
Checkley	310 - 380	612 - 748	97	1,392	81
Mayfield	(135 - 165)	266 - 325	(97)	1,156	170
Horton	252 - 308	495 - 605	96	794	44
Bramshall	77 - 94	140 - 171	81	155	0
Kingsley	266 - 325	473 - 578	77	2,002	135
Ellastone	347 - 424	(612 - 748)	(78)	1,126	66
Waterfall	(117 - 143)	203 - 248	(73)	455	102
Wetton	149 - 182	216 - 264	44	593	156
Grindon	135 - 165	194 - 237	43	403	87
Caldon	86 - 105	122 - 149	41	317	61
Calton	(59 - 73)	81 - 99	(37)	220	144
Ilam	86 - 105	(117 - 143)	36	177	36
Gratwich	68 - 83	86 - 105	26	110	15
Leigh	454 - 567	531 - 649	17	937	59
Rocester	248 - 303	266 - 325	7	873	195

TABLE 3.4 (ii) Leek and its former dependencies: % increase in population

<i>Parish or township</i>	<i>1563</i>	<i>1666</i>	<i>% increase 1563 - 1666</i>	<i>1811 Census</i>	<i>% increase 1666 - 1811</i>
LEEK	536 - 655	3,290 - 4,021	614	7,368	102
<i>Leek</i>	-	504 - 616	-	3,703	432
<i>Lowe</i>	-	122 - 149	-	.	..
<i>Leekfrith</i>	-	666 - 814	-	710	-4
<i>Tittesworth</i>	-	189 - 231	-	273	30
<i>Bradnop</i>	-	603 - 737	-	420	32
<i>Onecote</i>	(5 - 6)	..	-	464	..
<i>Rushton chapelry</i>	207 - 253	617 - 820	224	-	-
<i>Rushton James</i>	-	180 - 220	-	362	81
<i>Rushton Spencer</i>	-	216 - 264	-	324	35
<i>Heaton</i>	-	275 - 336	-	346	13
<i>Rudyard</i>	-	99 - 121	-	115	5
<i>Wallgrange</i>	-	9 - 11	-	-	-
<i>Endon</i>	-	257 - 314	-	766	49
<i>Stanley</i>	-	45 - 55	-	..	-
<i>Longsdon</i>	-	162 - 198	-	..	-
CHEDDLETON	257 - 314	693 - 847	169	1,392	81
<i>Cheddleton</i>	-	212 - 259	-	952	124
<i>Rownall</i>	-	171 - 209	-	..	..
<i>Basford</i>	-	198 - 242	-	243	11
<i>Consall</i>	-	113 - 138	-	197	57
HORTON	252 - 308	495 - 605	96	794	44
IPSTONES	180 - 220	365 - 446	102	1,235	204

⁹⁹ See Table 3.1. Brackets indicate totals arrived at by an element of calculation.

These suggest that individual parishes or townships had their own approach to migration. Least likely to tolerate expansion of settlement and competition for resources were the major landowners. Townships like Consall emerge into the seventeenth century with a hall house, a single small hamlet, and a small number of isolated farms. Others, like Rudyard and Okeover, contained only a major demesne property and a small number of relatively large outlying farms.

Nucleated villages such as Calton had a relatively small territory and a relatively large population per square mile. These were the settlements most likely to exercise stunted grazing on their moorlands, a basic discouragement to immigrants and squatters, and an incentive for younger sons and daughters to seek employment elsewhere, although gradual enclosure of the former open fields allowed some new holdings to be made by the end of the seventeenth century, and squatting might occur on the periphery of a township.¹⁰⁰

In parishes like Horton and Ipstones, the steady development of commercial farming led to the presence of a substantial number of yeomen farmers whose commercial interests were at stake. Despite this, the emergence into the historical record of an increasing number of farms suggests that new settlement proceeded apace, often based within former hays or pastures, and only occasionally taking the form of new squatter settlements, or the building of wayside cottages on the broader driftways.

Growth was highest in the region of the market towns where it is impossible to differentiate between town and township. Growth rates for Leek (484%) and Alton (400%) were exceptional, as was that for the former market village of Alstonfield (381%), suggesting that all three were attracting a large number of immigrants, either from the surrounding townships or from outside the area.

In the rural areas the most dramatic growth took placeⁱⁿ the parishes of Leek and Alstonfield. Both were exceptionally large, included a cluster of townships, and had huge areas of open moorland. Here smallholdings and cottages could proliferate without detriment to others, and by-employment was available as a supplement to farming.

Table. 3.4 (ii) shows the position for Leek parish as a whole between 1563 and 1666, including its former chapelries. The most significant figures are those for the rural areas. Horton grew by 96%, Ipstones by 102%, Cheddleton by 169%, and Rushton

¹⁰⁰ Cleverdon, 1995, Fig. 20.

TABLE 3.5 *The origin of surnames present in Leek parish between 1532 and 1548.*

<i>Surnames</i> ¹	<i>Staffs</i>	<i>Other</i> ²	<i>Surnames</i>	<i>Staffs</i>	<i>Other</i>
Ashenhurst	BR		Jodrell		Ches
Assheworth		Lancs	Leke, Lach, Leak	LL	
Bagley**		Ches	Lonford, Lynford	RS*	
Bagenold, Bagnall**	BG		Meller, Mellor(s)**		Derbs/Lancs
Bedull [Biddulph]**	Staffs		Morall [Moorhall]	BG	
Benteley	Staffs*		Netam, Netham**		Derbys
Bradshaw	LG		Newnam		Beds*
Bradwall		Ches*	Newton		Beds*
Brasyngton**		Derbs	Pedley		Devon
Brereton		Ches*	Pyllisbere, Pilsbury**		Derbys
Brodok	LG		Redeyerd / Rudyard	RY	
Bromley	Staffs*		Ryston, Rushton	RR	
Brounley, Brindley**		Ches	Scordon, (Scorton?)		Lancs
Brount, Brunt**	Staffs		Shepulbothom**		Lancs
Burgh, Brough		Derb*	Stanlow	LG	
Carlyll		Cumbria	Stepleton		Various
Casey	IP		Sutton		Various
Clewlo, Clulowe**		Ches	Thorley ³	Essex, Herts, IOW	
Cowall	HO		Tatton**		Ches
Crozdon (Croxdon?)	Staffs		Trafford ⁴ **		Lancs
Cuntclyft, Conclyff		Lancs	Wardle**		Ches/Lancs
Damport, Davenport**		Ches	Wyncull		Ches
Darveser, Derbyshire**		Derbs	Wythagh, Whitall	IP	
Docsy, Docksey**	Staffs		Wasshynton, Washington		Staffs
Dreycott	Staffs				
Echels (Eccleshall?)	Staffs				
Fene, Fenny, Finney	CH				
Flixton		Lancs*			
Yendon [Endon]	EN				
Fernehache, Fernihalgh	EN				
Ford	ON				
Galymore))		Ches			
Grenehaghe		Lancs			
Grinley, Grindley	Staffs				
Hamond, Haughmond		Lancs*			
Hasylls, Hassell**		Lancs			
Heyton, Heaton	HE				
Hegenbothom, Higginbothom**		Lancs			
Hurdlowe	BR				
Hulme, Holme	LF				

KEY

Townships within the main study area are indicated by initials.

* the nearest location out of several alternatives.

** origin given by David Hey.

¹Kettle, 1976; PRO SC2/202/65; PRO SC6 Hen.VIII, 3353 ; WSL M540.

²Hey, 1998; Reaney and Wilson, 1997.

³ Robert Thorley of Cranbrook (Kent). Purchaser of Tittesworth 1543-4.

⁴ William Trafford of Wilmslow (Cheshire). Purchaser of Swythamley PRO L&P Hen. VIII, C66/697.

chapelry by a massive 224%, while the national average between 1566 and 1666 was a mere 62%.¹⁰¹

How far these figures reflect immigration and how far they result from natural growth is uncertain. Hey's study of Staffordshire surnames indicates numerous immigrants present by 1666, the majority originating in Cheshire, Derbyshire or Lancashire.¹⁰² Rentals for the manor of Leek dating to between 1532 and 1548¹⁰³ show sixteen of the names listed by Hey, plus a further eighteen out-of-county surnames (Table 3.5). In specific cases their arrival was well documented. William Trafford's name may derive from Lancashire, but his immediate origin was Wilmslow in Cheshire; while Robert Thorley, came from Cranbrook in Kent.¹⁰⁴ Both arrived in the 1540s as purchasers of former monastic land, but the majority arrived anonymously, leaving no direct evidence as to when or why, although the pull of land still to be cleared and settled is likely to have been a major factor.

The only material available for the period between 1666 and the nineteenth century census returns, is that of the parish registers, where study has been confined to Leek and its dependent chapelries. The evidence is not of good quality, but seems broadly to mirror the national trends established by Wrigley and Schofield. The Leek registers start late, but in time to suggest that the Hearth Tax figures were generated at a point when population growth was easing. With so many periods of defective registration it is difficult to be sure when a real upturn began, but the steady growth to be seen throughout the eighteenth century seems to have begun shortly before 1700 (Figs. 3.3 and 3.4).

Variations in growth between 1666 and 1811, both within and without the 'ancient parish' are considerable (Table 3.4), reflecting either urban growth or the growth in rural areas of the extractive industries. Thus the figures for Ipstones reflect the growth of coal and ironstone mining. Elsewhere, the picture for the rural townships is of minimum growth, or in the case of Leekfrith, a decline, resulting from the continuing process of engrossment which, despite the growth of smallholdings on much of the former waste, remained the dominant factor.

Much of the surplus population will have moved to the town, and if it failed to find employment in Leek, then further afield. Records covering the administration of the

¹⁰¹ Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 528.

¹⁰² Hey, 1998, 1-28.

¹⁰³ Kettle, 1976; PRO SC2/202/65; PRO L.&P. Hen. VIII, SC6 3353.

¹⁰⁴ PRO L.&P. Hen. VIII, C66/697(5); L&P Hen. VIII, Aug. Bk. 216, 5b.

poor law for Leek are missing, so it is impossible to gauge what proportion found apprenticeship within the town. Some will have looked elsewhere. Sheffield, for example, received a steady trickle of boys from Staffordshire. Only five in the seventeenth century, but eight in the 1750s, six in the 1760s, four in the 1770s, and eight in the 1780s. Among them were the orphaned sons of William Lightwood of Ipstones, described variously as nailor and husbandman. Both boys were apprenticed in 1750, Abraham to a scissor smith, and Charles to a cutler.¹⁰⁵

If the town had grown by 1811, it was still contained within its former area, a small market town, unencumbered by industrial buildings, without the long rows of worker houses that were to accompany the major silk mills, and still awaiting the great expansion of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰⁵ Joan Unwin (pers. com.).

CHAPTER FOUR

Agriculture and marketing

Introduction

'The tract of country to the north-east of Mole-cop, is the worst part of the Moorlands, and of Staffordshire, the surface of a considerable portion of it being too uneven for cultivation.' Thus wrote William Pitt in 1817 on the heels of the last enclosure awards, referring specifically to Morridge, Cloud-heath, High-forest and Leekfrith, all areas of high moorland in the parish of Leek.¹ Contributors to the 1801 Crop Returns were equally unimpressed. It has 'a late, cold Climate' making it an area 'ill calculated by Nature for the production of Grain, excepting oats, and those of an inferior sort, being chiefly black'. 'This is not corn country, it is too much among the Hills in the Moorlands of Staffordshire'.²

In this upland area, the green of well-kept fields has been hard won from acid, peaty soils, lying for the most part over gritstone (Fig. 1.4), where rights of turbary were regularly granted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³ In such circumstances the dominance of 'horn and thorn' was inevitable.⁴ Much has been written on the farming regions of England,⁵ and a detailed study of Leek confirms the area as one in which a largely subsistence economy was gradually replaced by one dominated by pastoral farming, which relied to a substantial extent on outside supplies of grain.⁶

The extent of arable farming

Ridge and furrow is rare in Leek, and there is only limited evidence for the arable lands of the early settlements. Where it survives, it confirms the impression of an under-populated landscape, with small areas of arable surrounded by pasture and vast areas of open moorland (Figs. 2.3, 2.13 and 2.30). Nowhere is there evidence for anything more complex than a single open field, and seventeenth-century management is mirrored in the presence of ley/lay field- and farm-names.

Only at Upper Hulme are there substantial traces of ridge and furrow, although both Cheddleton and Horton have field boundaries suggesting consolidation, and earthworks are visible to the west of Horton Hall (Fig. 2.8). Leek's arable land lay to the south west of the town, where the sinuous boundaries of consolidation survived

¹ Pitt, 1817, 39.

² Thirsk, 1967, 102; Pelham, 1950 and 1951, 237.

³ SRO D3359 Toft-Chorley; SA1/2/3; SA1/2/7.

⁴ Thirsk, 1969, 1.

⁵ Thirsk, 1969; Thirsk, 1967, 1-15, 99-104; Hey, 1985, 134-140; Campbell, 1990, 89-93.

⁶ Thirsk, 1969, 7-8; Campbell, 1990, 90-91.

into the nineteenth century (Fig. 2.2),⁷ including those of the vicar's croft where, in 1614, he was said to have 'two days worke of arable land'.⁸ Endon's arable can be reconstructed from the fragmented holdings of 1816 (Fig. 2.30),⁹ as can that for most of the hamlets in the manor of Horton. Similar holdings can be located at Upper Hulme, Thornleigh, and Upper and Lower Bradnop (Figs. 2.3. and 2.13).¹⁰ Arable still formed a substantial area around the hamlet of Rownall in 1736, when the enclosure award specifically states the nature of the 'old enclosures' (Fig. 2.14).¹¹ In 1810 the enclosure award for Basford was concerned with apportioning the large enclosed pastures surrounding the hamlet of Basford Green, at least some of which originated as arable.¹² Shared fields must have existed round all the early hamlets, although not all can be identified since, with the advent of larger estates in the eighteenth century, former freehold properties were engulfed, and rationalisation eradicated the evidence.

A typical situation is presented by Buttyfold farm at Upper Hulme. In 1855 its land was fragmented across what remains a pronounced area of ridge and furrow (Fig. 4.1). In 1542 the farm was held by Thomas Gent, and was one of four messuages at 'Overhulme'.¹³ A substantial part must still have been arable in the seventeenth century, for Richard Gent had £5 worth of 'corn growing' in 1637, and William Gent had corn valued at £10 in 1650.¹⁴

The remains at Upper Hulme form a marked contrast to those at Thornleigh. Here ridge and furrow is absent, the field boundaries suggest consolidation of the barest minimum of arable, and the remainder of the holdings result from the division of shared pasture (Fig. 4.2).¹⁵ The difference lies in the siting of the hamlets. The land at Upper Hulme, although lying between 700 and 1000 feet, occupies a pronounced promontory that slopes to the southwest. Thornleigh, at a similar altitude, occupies land sloping to the northeast. Repeatedly, where the field-shapes indicate consolidation of former selions, this use of south, or preferably south west-facing slopes is the key element. Where fragmented holdings occur without the characteristic field boundaries of consolidation, this element tends to be absent, suggesting that arable use

⁷ Miller, 1900, map of 1838; 1st edition 6" O.S. map, 1889; Map facing page 79, *TNSFC* lviii.

⁸ LJO B/V/6.

⁹ SRO D(W)190 9/E/9/1 and D(W)1535/1.

¹⁰ Sales catalogues: Upper Hulme (own copy); Thornleigh, WSL F/2/31; Upper Bradnop, SRO 538/B/2/3; Lower Bradnop, SRO D1176/A/2/26 and 33.

¹¹ SRO Q/RDc29. Cheddleton enclosure map and award.

¹² PRO K.B.122-859 vol. 456.

¹³ WSL M540.

¹⁴ LJO Richard Gent, March 9th 1636-7; William Gent, 1650.

¹⁵ Swythamley 12/543,554.

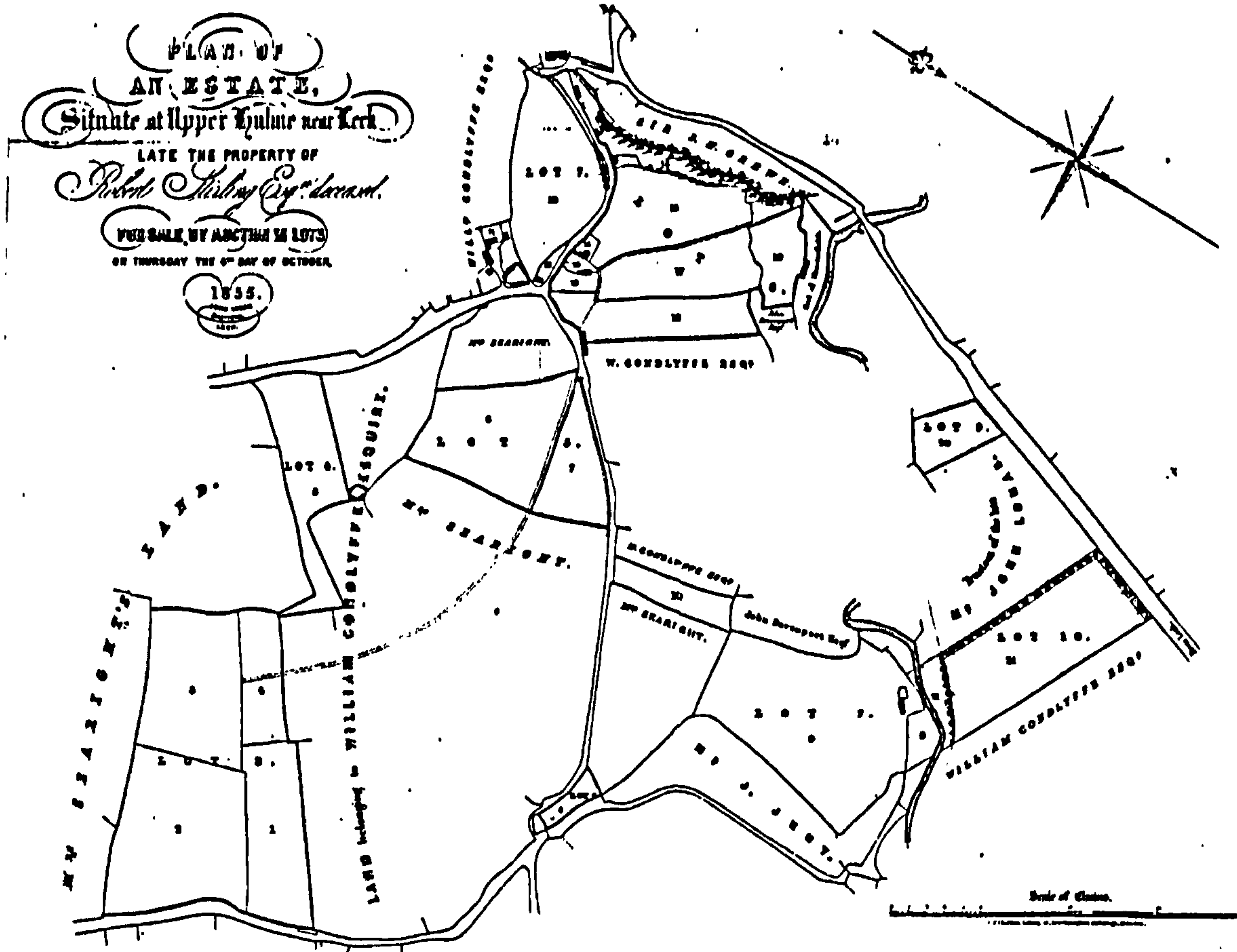


Fig. 4.1 Upper Hulme: the fragmented holdings at Buttyfold in 1855

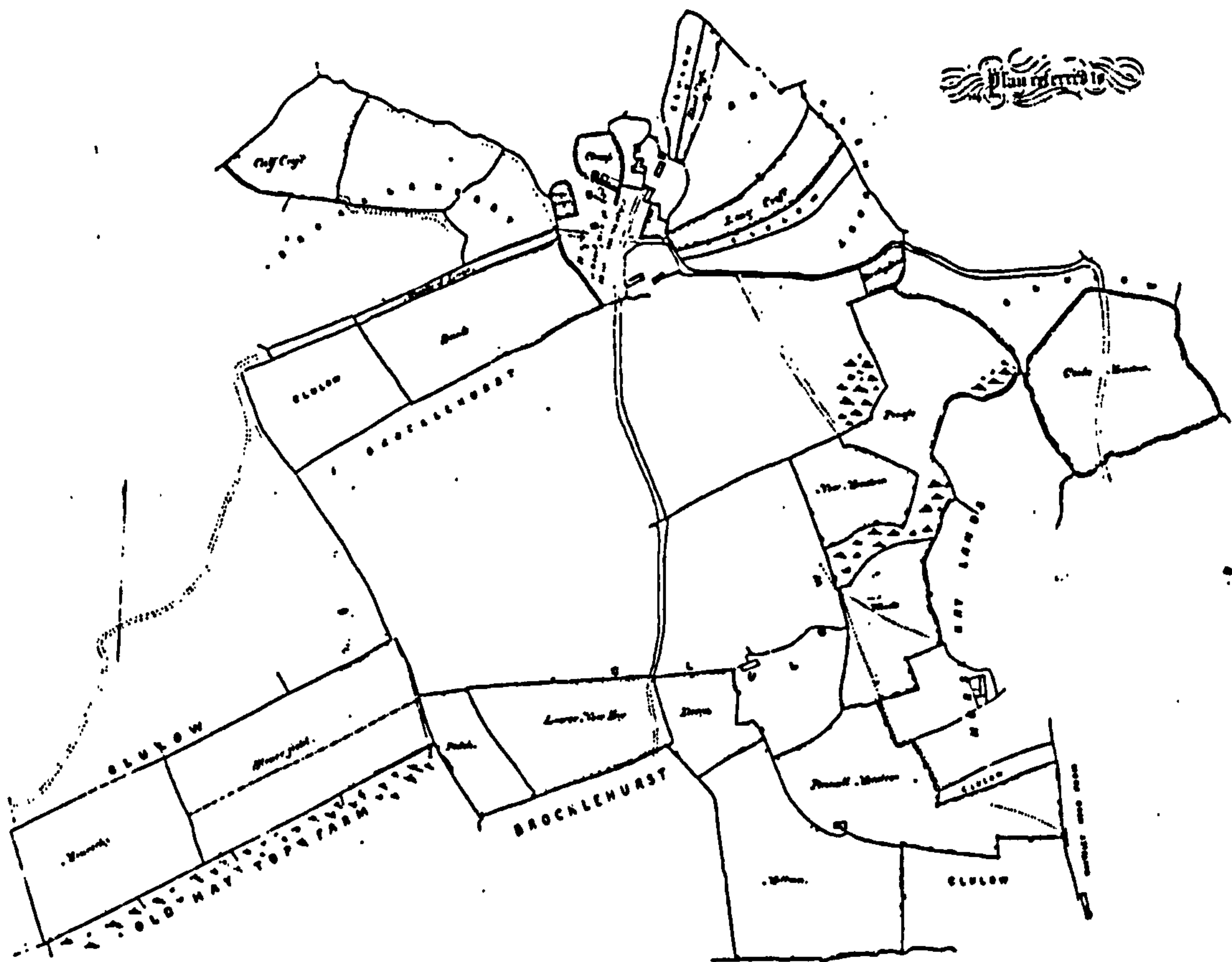


Fig. 4.2 Thornleigh in 1819 showing the fragmented holdings of a single farm and the former arable to the north and east.

ceased in the less favourable settings at an earlier date and that, as at Basford Green, the fair division of shared pasture was the key issue when enclosure finally occurred.

For the ring-fenced farms, evidence of former arable is generally confined to a single field name, indicating either a specific crop such as rye or flax, or more frequently the name butts, from butts and raynes (ridge and furrow). Only rarely is it possible to quantify the land-use for a single farm at a particular date, making the sixteenth-century evidence for Swythamley of particular interest.

Apart from the land immediately around Dieulacres Abbey, Swythamley was the only demesne property left in hand at the dissolution. Throughout England the period following the Black Death had seen changes in the way the former demesne properties were run. Shortage of labour and less mouths to feed meant a retraction from arable farming, and a tendency either to lease out demesne properties, or to turn them over to pastoral farming.¹⁶ A cluster of Dieulacres granges lay in Leekfrith, and here a mixed policy seems to have obtained. All appear to have been leased out at the dissolution, but shorn of their major pastures, which were run from Swythamley, resulting in two entries in the post-dissolution rentals.

Between 1534 and 1537 Abbot Whitney made serious efforts to retain property for members of his family. Nicholas Whitney received a 60 year lease for the abbey's estates at Rossal, Humphrey Whitney a salt-pit in Middlewich, Geoffrey Whitney an annuity from the revenues of the manor of Leek, and John Whitney a 60 year lease for Swythamley. Neither these, nor a series of back-dated leases were ultimately upheld,¹⁷ and in 1540, after only six years' tenure Swythamley was sold to William Trafford of Wilmslow and his wife Margery.¹⁸ The Trafford purchase consisted of the hub of the former grange, the ring-fenced farm in the township of Heaton which had been leased to John Whitney in 1534 at an annual rent of 26s 8d. The other and more valuable part of the grange consisted of the 'six several pastures' of Leekfrith, rented to Edward Logge for 94s 4d, and subsequently taken into the stewardship of the Earl of Derby with the rest of the Dieulacres' demesne lands.¹⁹

Trafford's purchase was defined in two ways, a detailed list of the enclosed land, and an extent. The former consisted of 91 acres of which fifteen were described as 'arable and wood', nine as 'land and pasture', and a further seventeen and a half as 'land'. If it is assumed that only fifteen acres were under the plough at the time of sale,

¹⁶ Campbell et al, 1996, 131-3, 136.

¹⁷ Fisher, 1984, 65-66.

¹⁸ PRO C66.697 3493.

¹⁹ PRO SC6.3353; SRO D3359/29/3.

then less than 16% of the enclosed land was arable. If the two areas described as 'land', with the unknown quantity of 'wood' are assumed to be ley, then the total sometimes ploughed might be as much as 46%. However the whole estate consisted of approximately 356 acres and included both woodland and open moorland, reducing the percentages to 4% certainly under the plough, and 11% in occasional use.

The picture is compounded by a second Trafford purchase, the High Forest, a major pasture with additional areas of woodland and high moorland, tenanted in 1538 by Ellen Fitton of Sydington for a rent of 66s 8d. This consisted of a further 609 acres lying to the east of the grange centre, enabling William Trafford to create a ring-fenced holding of approximately 1000 acres (Fig. 2.3). With the acquisition of the High Forest, the new estate included some of the best pasture in the area, putting beyond doubt the attitude of the moneyed purchaser to land-use in sixteenth-century Leek.

Draught animals and crops

Although stock rearing was undoubtedly the main preoccupation, draught animals feature regularly in the inventories made between 1550 and 1750 (Appendix 4.1 i-viii). Oxen were owned by three quarters of the testators represented in the 101 inventories available for the years 1551-1560. Of the 63 larger farms (those with ten or more cattle) only three were without oxen, seven had three pairs, while the majority had two pairs, or a single pair of oxen and a pair of steers. Among the smaller farms a scatter possessed a single beast or occasionally a pair. Although the larger farms were mainly held by men, four of the five women with large farms also owned oxen, indicating that they too could be involved in the full range of farming activities if circumstances demanded. Maud Knight was in a position to leave half her 'quick goods and beasts' to her daughter, a clear sign of independence since she also had adult sons. Margaret Pillsbury, with a herd of 25 cattle, had no draught animals, but her will shows that she shared the farm, perhaps with her eldest son, and had half of all the goods, including 'my parte of the corne and hay' and 'my parte of the waynes ploughes & harrowes'.

A total of 138 inventories for the years 1611-20 show change in progress. Among the major farmers, John Janney of Booths Hall, William Rode of Bradshaws, Arthur Bulkley of Stanlowe, and Joyce Malkin of Longsdon all had four pairs of oxen, more than anyone in the earlier period, but overall there is a fall in the number of those with two or even a single pair of oxen, which is not balanced by any marked increase in the number of horses. By the 1670s the proportion of farms with oxen had fallen still further, diminishing to a mere handful by the 1730s.

Throughout the period the lists of husbandry ware are minimal, but routinely include a plough and a harrow, indicating the continuing need for draught animals whose place came to be filled for most farmers by horses. No major evidence has been found for horse breeding beyond the regular presence of a mare and a foal. Where the number of horses is unusually high, this tends to indicate a carrier, such as Laurence Read, who in 1611 had 'nine horses and mares with their furniture' valued at £30, two mares and a colt at £7, and two yearling colts at £2 together with a 'Lodging of salt' valued at 1s. By contrast the ten mares owned by John Clowes of Rudyard in 1612 may, in the absence of oxen, mean a mixture of draught and riding animals, already the case at Rudyard Hall by 1573.²⁰

Oats appear to have been the basic crop grown for both animals and men, but barley, the basis for ale making, was also present. Catherine Hulme's inventory lists 'four score hoops of oats ... Corn unthreshen barley ... Oates unthreshen ... Foure houpes of barley ... meale & malte' together valued at £16 4d. 'Seven houpes of meal & eyght houpes of mault ... one houpe of barley, four houpes of otes ... wheat and wheat flour' were listed amongst indoor goods of Thomas Sutton of Ravensclough, but more significantly, listed immediately after his stock, were 'Rye, barley, otes & strawe' valued at £24 10s, suggesting that a number of 'Ryefields' were still have been in use in the early seventeenth century. Whether stocks of grain were always home grown, or whether they were bought in is less certain. A dispute with the lord of the manor over the erection of an independent horse-mill in the centre of Leek in 1635,²¹ suggests that the latter often obtained. Philip Kinder, writing of adjacent areas of Derbyshire in the 1650, indicates that the inhabitants of the Peak District had largely abandoned arable farming, and relied on Nottingham and Loughborough for their malt and barley.²² William Woolley, writing in 1713, also commented on supplies of malt from Derby being used in much of Cheshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire.²³

'Come' is the most frequent word used to cover grain. Lawrence Clowes appraisers mention 'three Stryke of Rye' worth five shillings, 'Wortgange'²⁴ (malt, probably barley for ale making) worth six shillings and eight pence, and 'other in the field' worth ten shillings.²⁵ Agnes Fowall had 'Otes growing', and John Pillsbury had 'a bushel of oats'. William Stodart's inventory with two 'bushells of rye' represents

²⁰ LRO Thomas Rudyard, 1573.

²¹ VCH VII, 104.

²² Philip Kinder, 1656, *History of Derbyshire*, in Gaukroger, (undated), 54.

²³ Hey, 1980, 177.

²⁴ Milward, R, 52.

²⁵ LRO Lawrence Clowes, 1560.

the only other departure from the standard wording,²⁶ and at Swythamley William Trafford's purchases included 'One close of land and pasture called the Ryefield'.²⁷

The continued use of the word 'corne' for the majority of grain effectively masks any later changes in cropping patterns. Since oatcakes have survived to be the local delicacy, and the local ale was highly extolled in 1673 and 1716,²⁸ the necessary grain supplies were readily available, a fact confirmed by Plot who wrote disparagingly in 1686 'The black moorish and gouty grounds of the Moorlands, with the best helps are fit only for Oates and Barley',²⁹ and of crop rotation on newly enclosed moorland where a four year rotation of barley, oats, rye and oats was followed by a four year break.³⁰ That the major farmers were moving with the times is shown by the inclusion of 'corn and vetches' valued at £30 amongst the fodder available for John Radford's herd at Bottom in 1736.³¹

The greatest variety and extent of cropping can be seen at Stanlowe in the summer of 1737, when William Wardle had 'five days work of wheat', 'one days work of barley', and 'nineteen days work of oats' in various fields, together with seven 'tun' of hay. He also had two roods of potatoes, an unspecified acreage of peas, and cabbage in his garden, all of which may have been for home consumption, since this was one of the larger farms, with accommodation specifically set aside for farm servants in 1697.³² The total value of his crops was shown as £40 18s, although a note indicates that they were overvalued, and could not be sold for the specified price.

Small quantities of flax and hemp formed profitable additions to most holdings. Hemp in particular required a rich soil and was labour intensive, and was eminently suitable as a supplementary crop for the larger farmers involved in stock rearing, and equally possible on a small plot, provided there was minimal livestock. Hemp butts were regularly listed in the seventeenth century, and were located close to the house, where they could be manured and weeded with ease. In Stanley, the Little House, sold by George Stanley in 1668, consisted simply of 'tenement barn and hempyard', with a further half acre elsewhere, providing a useful supplement to the income of a home-based finisher of cloth.³³ At Gate Farm, Foxt, Mary and John Wheildon were to have the 'House above the entry' and 'half the over hempbutt' as part of their marriage

²⁶ LRO Agnes Fowall 1551; John Pillsbury 1557; William Stoddart, 1558.

²⁷ PRO C66.697 3493.

²⁸ Sleigh, 1862, 4.

²⁹ Plot, 1686, 109.

³⁰ Plot, 1686, 344,

³¹ LRO John Radford, 1736.

³² LRO John Bulkeley, 1697.

³³ Deeds of the Little House and Well croft. Privately owned.

settlement in 1666.³⁴ Flax growing is more difficult to locate, with only occasional references as at Banktop, Ford, where there was a field known as Flax Lee in 1712,³⁵ and in Consall where the field-name Flaxheads survived in 1910.³⁶

The possibility of another 'alternative' crop appears in 1698 when William Hulme had 'Corn in ye oyl' valued at £1, and 'Profit in oyl' valued at £8,³⁷ raising the possibility that rape may have been grown in Heaton as it was at Whitwell in Derbyshire in the same year, and in highland Northumberland in 1709.³⁸

Land improvement

'Corn' growing was never easy in this area. High rainfall leads to acid soils even on limestone, hampering the effects of manuring,³⁹ a problem that can be addressed by spreading either lime or marl.⁴⁰ Land in Rushton James provided marl for John Biddulph's estate at Horton Hay in 1638, when the condition of its lease was access 'to make Marle pitt and pitts and from thence to digg get and take marle to sett and bestowe in and upon any other parte ... of the said estate'.⁴¹ Detailed conditions for a lease for Edge End in 1733 ensured that during his six year tenure David Hall spread 60 loads of lime on the fields designated for three years 'tillage', each to be 'ten horseloads apiece', to be laid 'while the lime is good' and 'by the last day of September',⁴² and lime receives an occasional reference from as early as 1613 in the inventories of the larger farmers.⁴³ No early limekilns are known in the area, although it is probable that the loads of limestone present at Mosslee in 1603 will have been processed close by.⁴⁴

Manure figures regularly in the inventories of the stock farmers but a stray reference to 'bridlyme' indicates that here, as elsewhere, less usual means of fertilisation were pressed into service if they were available.⁴⁵ In Ipstones, where 1500 acres were newly enclosed between 1649 and 1680,⁴⁶ Plot records that the local practice on 'heathy' ground was to plough the vegetation in, harrow it, sow, and then

³⁴ SRO D239/M7.

³⁵ SRO D694/11.

³⁶ SRO D1176/A/3/114.

³⁷ LRO William Hulme, 1698.

³⁸ Thirsk, 1997, 76.

³⁹ Havinden, 1974, 104-5.

⁴⁰ Matthew, 1993, 98; Thick, 1994, 156.

⁴¹ Deeds of Marl Sprink, lease of 1638. Privately owned (Mrs. Christine Chester).

⁴² SRO D3359 Toft Chorley deeds. Memorandum Book for Hareyate 1733.

⁴³ LJO John Fayrefield 1612/13; John Stoddart 1617/18; Richard Malkin 1625.

⁴⁴ LJO Philip Hollins, 1603.

⁴⁵ Thirsk, 1967, 167.

⁴⁶ Keele. SA 12/1/1.

harrow again; allowing the vegetation to rot *in situ*, a process repeated for a second year. He regarded this as unsatisfactory and states that 'in most men's opinions' the turf should be dug out and burned in place in May, after which the ash should be mixed with lime 'before Michaelmas', ploughed, and then sowed the following spring.⁴⁷

The corn mills in a period of transition

Given the vast scale of the parish and the scattered nature of the settlements, the provision of at least one corn-mill in the majority of the townships was the logical step (Fig. 5.1). Manorial control in pastoral areas was never strong, but the obligation to grind corn at one of the manor mills was simple enough to enforce while there were no alternatives. As long as freehold property formed a minority, the link between manor and mill remained clear-cut and undisputed, but with a stream of conversions from copyhold to freehold in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries manorial control was being steadily eroded, and the more substantial men came into conflict with the lords and their lessees as they began to build and run their own mills.

At Cheddleton, where the water corn mill (SJ972526) bears the traditional relationship to church and village, Elizabeth Egerton's lease of the Hall House to Samuel Bullock in 1632 included the standard clause instructing him to grind his corn at Elizabeth's 'water corne Milne'.⁴⁸ The mill, which became a flint mill towards the end of the eighteenth century,⁴⁹ may already have been a double mill in 1650 when the manor was divided between the Egerton heirs, as Edward Arblaster's tenant held Cheddleton Mills.⁵⁰ The plural was again used in the will of Joshua Finney in 1694.⁵¹ No mill is listed in Randall Egerton's share, though it included properties at Rownall⁵² where a 'New Mill' is said to have been built by 1628.⁵³ William Jolley held the 'New Mill' as joint lord of the manor in 1737,⁵⁴ and it was still working in 1775.⁵⁵

At Foxt, a lease made out to John Wheeldon in 1628 mirrors a slowly changing world. It is a lease for lives, but includes conditions reflecting the traditional elements of copyhold tenure 'dayes reaping, dayes mowing, dayes plowing and dayes carryinge'

⁴⁷ Plot, 1686, 344.

⁴⁸SRO D239/M 2975.

⁴⁹Copeland, 1972, 21.

⁵⁰SRO D239/M 2977.

⁵¹Copeland, 1972, 21.

⁵²SRO D2937/M/2977

⁵³Milner, 1983, 144.

⁵⁴SRO Q/RDc 29.

⁵⁵Yates, Map of Staffordshire, 1775.

and the grinding of corn at Ipstones Mill, which probably lay in the valley between Foxt and Ipstones (SK029489) on the site later occupied by Park Mill.⁵⁶ When the manor was sold to trustees 1649, the 'ancient tenants' were able to purchase their freeholds and the position changed,⁵⁷ although the corporate interest seems to have ensured the survival of the mill, as no immediate rivals appeared.

Elsewhere, matters were less clear-cut. The manor of Horton was in divided ownership from 1392.⁵⁸ By 1610 it was held by Timothy Egerton of Wallgrange, the Earl of Bath and John Wedgwood of Harracles, who were in dispute over the revenues from the manor mills. Wedgwood claimed to have an agreement dating from 1579 allowing him to take water from Lyme well to a newly established mill on copyhold land. The prosecution indicates that he had in fact 'diverted three water courses and Withdrawne the Sute from the ... ancient customarye mills unto his Owne Mill called Harracles Mill,' and that despite Wedgwood's protestations this adversely affected the water supply of Hanley mill, which lay down slope from Lyme House. The documentation shows a clearly-defined agreement as to which properties should be served by each of the three mills, a tacit indication that the trade of both manor mills had been affected. The outcome is not totally clear, but the Earl was awarded his appropriate share of the revenues from Hanley and Gratton mills, and the right to have the situation inspected by an independent overseer.⁵⁹

There are considerable archaeological remains for all three mills (Fig. 4.3). Harracles mill (SJ951574) was still working in the 1930s and its core may be part of the original mill which was substantially rebuilt in the nineteenth century when turbines were introduced.⁶⁰ Its former waterways can be traced for over a mile from a holding pond known as Longsdon Pool (SJ952557), lying on high ground to the south of Harracles Hall, from which a stream runs northwards to Lyme House, adjacent to the site of Lyme well. The disputed diversion was at the roadside to the south of Lyme House (SJ947567) where it is still possible to turn the water into its earlier course. A smaller spring rising by Lyme House drops westwards towards the site of Hanley Mill (SJ942566), whose tailrace forms part of the township boundary between Horton and Longsdon. Here a narrow strip of land between the tailrace and a small brook forms the focal point of a series of footpaths from Gratton, Horton and Lyme House. There may have been a small header pond in a field corner a few yards upstream (SJ943564).

⁵⁶SRO D239/M1.

⁵⁷Keele SA12/1/3.

⁵⁸*VCH Staffs* VII, 73.

⁵⁹*VCH Staffs* VII, 73; SRO, D(W)1702/2/19 and 32.

⁶⁰Major, 1986, 1-2.

At Lyme House the majority of the water is diverted towards Harracles Mill, running first in a leat by the roadside, then as a prominent feature across the fields to the west of Steel House (SJ947572) collecting another leated stream en route. A series of earthworks adjacent to Steel House suggest there may have been additional holding ponds there prior to the demise of Hanley Mill, which still existed in 1673.⁶¹

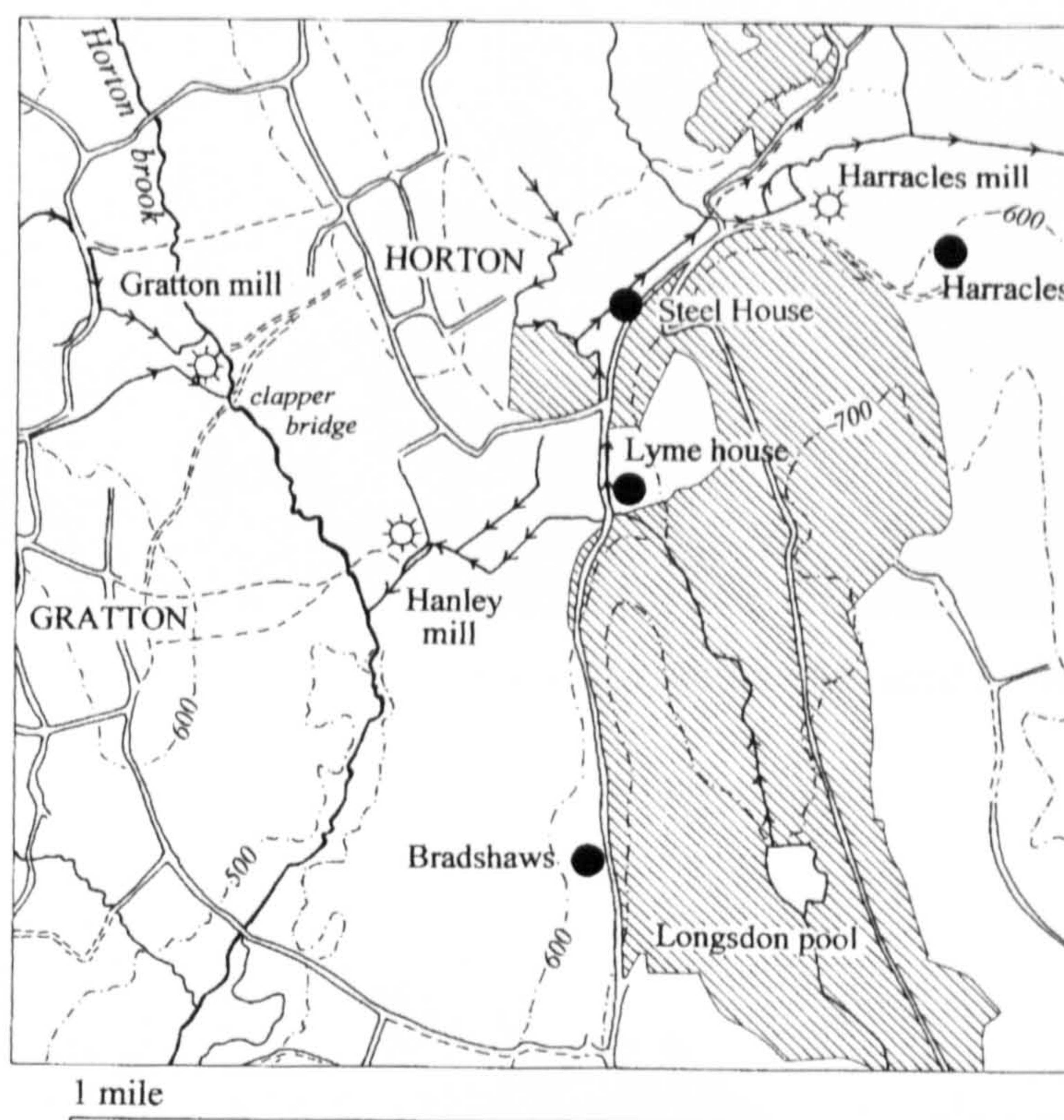


Fig. 4.3 Water-powered sites near Harracles

> > > = canalised streams

Evidence for Gratton mill consists of a dam in the valley bottom between Gratton and Horton (SJ937570), where streams leated from the Brook House (SJ932572) were used to supplement Horton brook. Again a series of footpaths meet in the area, one of which crosses Horton Brook by a small clapper bridge with a single cut-water for support (Fig. 4.4). The size and position of the dam would have resulted in a substantial pool. This, together with its position between the open fields of Horton and Gratton, gives some indication of its former significance to the local communities.

An important if localised result of the waterways around Harracles was their overall effect on drainage. Early farms are rarely situated on low ground and the current state of the valley bottom by Harracles mill explains why. Here the drainage provided by the mill leat along one side of the valley, and a water supply on the other side for cottages at Harpur's Gate has been allowed to lapse, and the valley bottom has returned to something approximating to its natural state (Fig. 4.5). The lengths

⁶¹PRO E179/179/128.



Fig. 4.4 The clapper bridge between Horton and Gratton

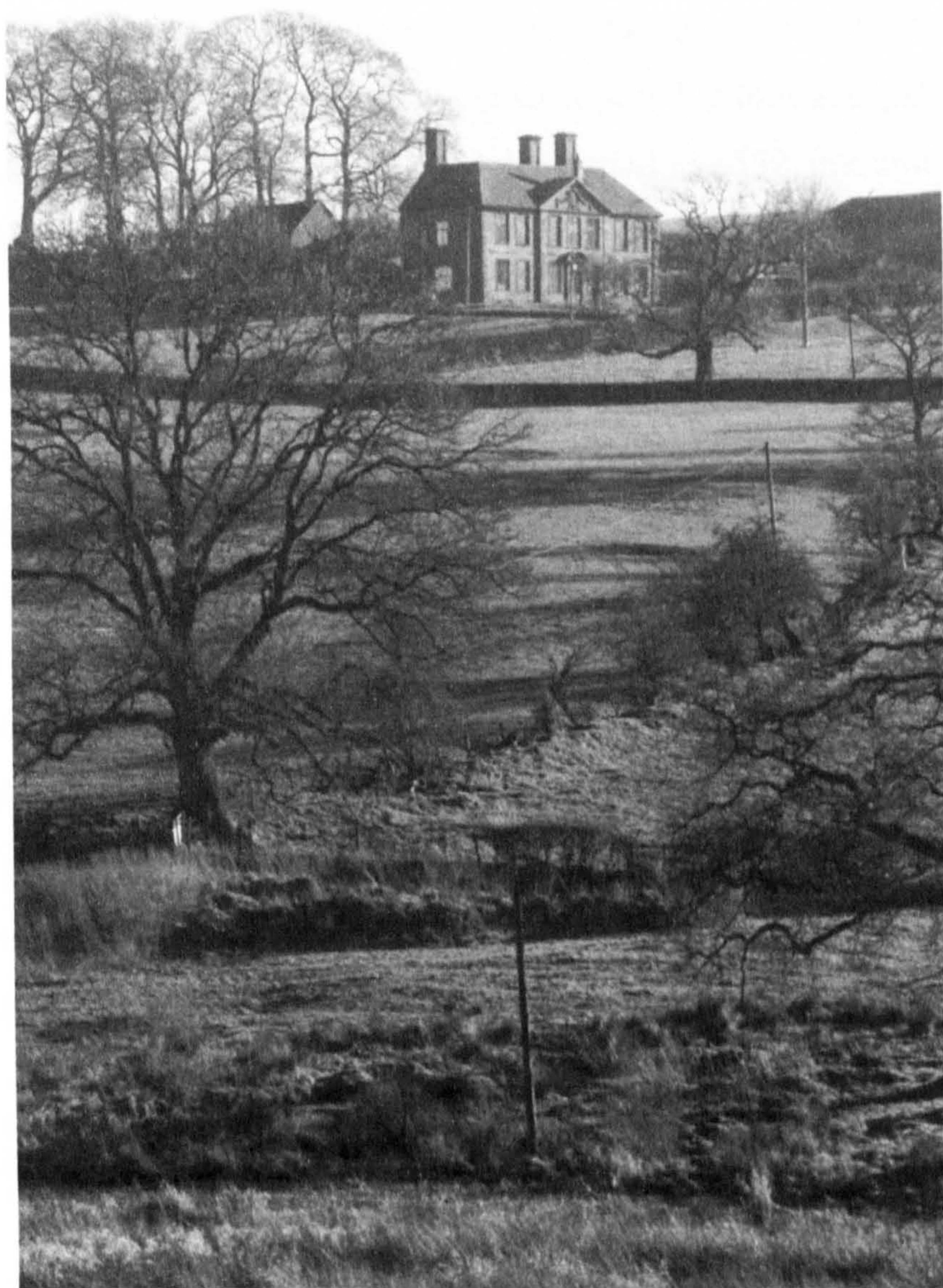


Fig. 4.5 Harracles Hall from the north east with the tailrace of the mill in the foreground. The gable of a detached kitchen is visible behind the hall to the left.

of waterway set on the slopes had the effect of catching and taking off surplus water before it reached the valley bottom, allowing for considerable land improvement around Steel House and the mill itself. A similar means of achieving this effect can be seen in Horton Hay to the west of Dairyhouse, where a stream leads down from Taylor's Barn towards Horton Brook and is held well up the contours by a substantial earthwork (SJ9358). Whether this also served a mill is uncertain.

John Wedgwood was not alone. By the sixteenth century there were persistent efforts by individuals or parts of the community to break with traditional ties. At the dissolution Dieulacres Abbey, as holder of the manors of Leek and Fryth, had two mills in Leek. Both were sublet on a 39-year lease to William Blakenden in September 1538.⁶² 'Leke mylne' is likely to have been on or near the site of the Brindley Mill (SJ973571) as Blakenden was at 'Mylne Street' in 1548 when he requested 'iiii gret tres for Wheles syls ladules & other necessarys'.⁶³ The second may have been at Birchall where the abbey had a mill in the thirteenth century.⁶⁴ If so, Leek had a third water-powered site by 1548 in the shape of Richard Joylle's 'walke mylne'.⁶⁵ Given the frequent re-use of redundant water powered sites, the presence in 1838 of a fish pond on the now culverted Ball Haye Brook suggests a possible location (SJ983568).⁶⁶ The Leek mills passed with the manor to Sir Ralph Bagnall in 1552, and in 1563 the manor court stated that the tenants might grind their corn where they pleased, a decision later disputed by the Rudyards.⁶⁷

The Rudyard family, lords of the manor of Leek and Frith from 1597, fought a vigorous rearguard action against the erosion of their privileges when further disputes arose from the erection of a horse mill at Birchall *circa* 1615 and another in Leek town in 1635.⁶⁸ It seems that the gentry were flexing their muscles at each other's expense. The offender in 1615 was Thomas Egerton of Wallgrange, already mentioned in connection with Harracles mill, and in 1632 it was Randle Ashenhurst whose horse mill lay in the town. The latter, with substantial holdings in Bradnop, was clearly no respecter of persons, and had already been in dispute in 1630 for non-payment of heriots and other manorial dues in Bradnop manor where the Aston claim was upheld.⁶⁹ John Ashenhurst sold the estate to his cousin Francis Hollinshead in 1667,

⁶²PRO, SC6/HenVIII/3353.

⁶³PRO, SC2/202/65.

⁶⁴*VCH Staffs* VII, 104.

⁶⁵PRO, SC2/202/65.

⁶⁶Miller, 1900. Reprint of a map of 1838.

⁶⁷*VCH Staffs* VII, 104.

⁶⁸*VCH Staffs* VII, 101, 104.

⁶⁹Keele, SA1/2/6.

and the disputes continued, the Hollinsheads having a horse mill on Derby Street, Leek in 1675, 1704 and 1721.⁷⁰ Here the issue may have been the milling of purchased corn since as early as the sixteenth century Fitzherbert had indicated this could be ground where the purchaser chose.⁷¹

Dieulacres also owned two mills in Leekfrith at the dissolution. One lay at Upper Hulme/Overhulme (SK012609), where a succession of waterpowered sites have left extensive traces, and here too disputes arose in the sixteenth century.⁷² In 1538 the tenancy of Hulme Mill had been divided in four,⁷³ a position which still obtained at the end of the century. Also a tenant at 'Overhulme' in 1542⁷⁴ was Thomas Gent. In the 1560s Gent bought not only his own farm of Buttyfold, but also three acres called Parkes Croft, lying between Buttyfold and the Back Brook, putting himself in an ideal position to erect his own mill.⁷⁵

The Gents were not a united family. William Gent of Ipstones, holder of one quarter of Hulme mill since 1546,⁷⁶ was among the foremost petitioners to Lord Burghley in the 1590s over the vexed problem of the rival mill. They claimed that Hugh and William Gent had 'tyme out of mynde ben ... Accustomed to grinde their corne ... at Holmes Myll' and that with James Beswycke, they not only withdrew their own custom 'butt also withdrewe others that ben suitors'. In addition the new mill drew water from the old so that 'Holmes Myll By reason whereof ... cannott grinde so much Corne ... as they were wonte to do ... so they are not able to pay their rents'. The defendants' answer indicates that Hugh's father had been responsible for having the mill erected 'for the better care and helpe of such his neighbours ... as were then at libertie and might as these defendants thinke grinde their Corne and graiayne at their pleasure at what Myll they wold'.⁷⁷ The nub of the matter was that the freeholders saw no reason to abide by the restrictions of their former tenancies if it was not in their interest to do so.

The end of the case is missing, but as William Gent leased the mill to John and William Hinde in 1602 the freeholders must have won their case. Certainly Gents' mill was the property of Sir John Harpur by 1610, when he leased it to Robert Deane, and it is ironic to find the lease included not only 5s rent, but also eight chickens at St

⁷⁰*VCH Staffs* VII, 172, 104.

⁷¹Fitzherbert, 1523, Folio X.

⁷²*VCH Staffs* VII, 197-8.

⁷³PRO, SC6/Hen VIII/3353; WSL M540.

⁷⁴WSL M540.

⁷⁵*VCH Staffs* VII, 197-8. DRO D2375/142/13 AND D2375/281/13.

⁷⁶PRO, L&P Hen VII/ Aug Bk 217 (47).

⁷⁷*VCH Staffs* VII, 197-8, DRO D2375/142/13 AND D2375/281/13.

Jamestide and 20s for a herriot. A later building known as Danes mill was working until 1946. Its ruins survive downstream from a pond and leat (SK012613).⁷⁸

The second Leekfrith mill, granted to Sir Ralph Bagnall with the manor in 1552, was 'in Dewlinces'.⁷⁹ This may have been on Hillswood where John Rothwell's moiety, purchased in 1588, excluded a croft 'adioynge to the Abbey Milne upon both parts of the milne stream' which was retained by Sir Henry Bagnall.⁸⁰ The property of Thomas Rudyard in 1635, it was still working in 1677,⁸¹ and given its proximity to the Abbey farm had presumably remained in demesne.

Only one other site is sufficiently well documented to allow a glimpse of its transition from tenant status to freehold commercial enterprise. In 1538 Richard Higginbotham held the copyhold of Bearda mill in Heaton. In 1544 he was described as husbandman when he took a lease on the mill, but in 1560 his probate documents show him as a prosperous yeoman farmer.⁸² From 1538 to 1614 the manor remained in crown hands, and the mill presumably ran traditionally, with tenants owing suit of mill. The sale of the manor in 1614 to William Tonnicliffe of Bearda and William Plant of Heaton, allowed them to cream off chosen properties as freehold, which in William Tonnicliffe's case certainly included the retention of both Bearda and Bearda mill. This and subsequent sales⁸³ helped to accelerate the pace at which individual farms became freehold, representing, from the independent miller's perspective, the likelihood of immediate commercial gain.

Pastoral farming and its products

Arable farming might operate under difficulties, but extensive pastoral farming was well suited to the area. There was space to develop new pastures, and vast open moorlands to supply additional grazing in summer, though by the seventeenth century there is evidence from some townships that moorland grazing was limited to the stock that could normally be maintained on a man's holding.⁸⁴

Throughout the period, farming wealth could be judged by the value of a man's livestock, in particular his cattle, which were invariably given pride of place in the inventories. All the inventories for the period 1551-60 indicate ownership of cattle,

⁷⁸ *VCH Staffs* VII, 198; DRO D2375M/106/27.

⁷⁹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 104; Sleight, 1883, 17 fn.

⁸⁰ SRO D3359 Toft-Chorley, 14 Jan 1588.

⁸¹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 198.

⁸² PRO, SC6/HenVIII/3353; LP Hen.VIII 1544 / Aug. Bk. 211 154b; LRO Richard Hyggenbotham 1560.

⁸³ *VCH Staffs* VII, 187; Swythamley 1/6.

⁸⁴ SA 1/2/3; SA 11/1-16.

ranging from James Bradshaw, with a herd of 53, to Agnes Fowall with a half share in a single beast. Even those who could not afford to purchase might have access to a beast through hire, perhaps from the stock of an elderly farmer who was happy to see his workload diminish in exchange for income. In 1579, debtors to Matthew Lowndes of Redearth included

Laurence Plant suretie for Rob(er)t dale ye youn(er) for kyne hyre	xvis
It(e)m the said Rob(er)t dale for kyne hyre	xiis
Wedowe Bullock of Congleton for a cowe hyre	viis
Item the same for the hyre of the said Cowe this yeare dewe	viis ⁸⁵

Between five and seven shillings a year appears to have been the usual rate, and may have included grazing, as it sometimes did in the late fourteenth century for those who made an income as dairymaids or cowmen.⁸⁶ Similar entries between 1558 and 1606, when the practice of detailing debts died out, present a passing glimpse of some who were too poor to be represented by their own probate documents.⁸⁷

Since only a handful of men kept a bull, those who did must have gained additional income from the servicing of cows on the surrounding farms. John Pyllesburye of Roche Grange, with one of the largest stock lists in the 1550s, had in addition to his bull, six oxen, four 'kye with calves', five more 'kye', three 'effers' four 'twynter effers' and four 'styrkes'.⁸⁸ That is, a range of stock of different ages, some to be sold for fattening, others to be kept for breeding, and to provide milk for household use or cheese making, a pattern which still obtained in the twentieth century.

Cheese and butter are found regularly among the household provisions at all periods, but there is evidence that cheese making became steadily more important by the middle of the seventeenth century, when falling prices were forcing conventional corn and livestock farmers to develop alternative forms of agriculture.⁸⁹ As early as 1601 the citizens of Sheffield were complaining of a lack of white meats, and petitioning the Earl of Shrewsbury to allow cheese and butter to be brought in from Ashbourne,⁹⁰ and similar shortages will have triggered increased production over a wide area. In 1636 William Hulme's farm at Hillilees contained a cheese press, 77

⁸⁵ LRO Matthew Lowndes, 1580.

⁸⁶ Farmer, 1991, 464-5.

⁸⁷ LRO Thomas Wood, 1558; Humphrey Brindley, 1578; Elizabeth Janney, 1604; John Clouse, 1606.

⁸⁸ LRO John Pyllesbury, 1557.

⁸⁹ Thirsk, 1985, 539.

⁹⁰ Gaukroger, undated, 54.

cheeses, and 19½ gallons of butter.⁹¹ There was a cheese chamber at the Dairyhouse in Horton by 1664,⁹² Simon Debank, farming Wallgrange in 1702, had ‘Twenty Eight hundred of Cheese’ in his cheese chamber valued at £22 8s,⁹³ William Wardle had ‘Eleven Hundred of Cheese at Stanlowe in 1737,⁹⁴ and John Finney was described as a cheesefactor at his death in 1740.⁹⁵ Some form of cheese storage was therefore essential, although its whereabouts may be difficult to assess. In 1671 William Gould had boards, shelves and a ‘Cheese ladder’ valued at 1s 6d suggesting the use of a convenient corner rather than a complete room.⁹⁶ ‘Cheese in the garret’ is a recurrent phrase,⁹⁷ and increasingly from the eighteenth century houses were built with deep attics designed specifically for cheese storage.

A ‘barkhouse and barkpitte’ existed at the Surje (SJ978577) in 1542,⁹⁸ and was being worked by John Crowther in the early seventeenth century, when he had leather and bark in his tanhouse valued at £12 and dry leather at his house valued at £1 14s.⁹⁹ Six shillings were owed to Humphrey Brundley for a cowhide in 1578.¹⁰⁰ Thomas Johnson was working leather in Leekfrith in 1595, and Lawrence Johnson was running a tannery in Heaton at his death in 1613, when he had bark valued at £10 and tanned leather and leather in the pits valued at £16 10s.¹⁰¹ There was still a tannery in Heaton in 1640,¹⁰² and *circa* 1700 Hugh Nickson’s goods included ‘Leather Wett and Drye’ valued at £33, while his brother Joshua was described as a skinner.¹⁰³ A farm at Overhulme was the home of Richard Pott in 1660 where, as a fellmonger, he was involved in the preparation of skins for tanning.¹⁰⁴ Sarah Hammersley, wife of Ralph Hammersley, owned a tanhouse and a tannery at her death in 1665.¹⁰⁵ A tanner called Daniel Nickson was living in Park Lane, Endon in 1721 and 1728, perhaps working the Sutton’s tanyard on a site adjacent to Hallwater where a

⁹¹ LRO William Hulme, 1635/6.

⁹² LRO Richard Yardley, 1664.

⁹³ LRO Simon Debank, 1702.

⁹⁴ LRO William Wardle, 1737.

⁹⁵ LRO John Finney, 1740.

⁹⁶ LRO William Gould, 1671.

⁹⁷ LRO James Tomkinson, 1701.

⁹⁸ WSL M540.

⁹⁹ LRO John Crowther, 1614.

¹⁰⁰ LRO Humphrey Brundley, 1578.

¹⁰¹ LRO Lawrence Johnson, 1613.

¹⁰² *VCH Staffs VII*, 190.

¹⁰³ LRO Hugh Nickson, 1699/1700; Deeds of Tithe Barn Gate (privately owned).

¹⁰⁴ LRO Richard Pott, 1660.

¹⁰⁵ LRO Sarah Hammersley, 1670.

tanyard existed in 1816 (SJ930536).¹⁰⁶ In 1750 James Beech appears to have been working for the luxury market, and had a shop in Leek where he made white leather.¹⁰⁷

Sheep were in evidence on most of the major farms, and were described by Plot as being small, with black noses and coarse wool.¹⁰⁸ The largest flock recorded between 1551 and 1560 belonged to James Turner of Padwick in Ipstones, who in July of 1557 had 110 sheep and 20 lambs. In 1618 John Janney of Ipstones had 360 sheep, although it is not clear whether this March total was made before or after lambing. A total of 138 for John Clewloe, leaseholder at Rudyard in 1672, included 102 old sheep and 36 lambs, while the highest total between 1731 and 1740 was that of Thomas Goodwin of Harracles with 96 sheep. All represent large farms and yeomen farmers of above-average wealth, like William Allen, tenant at the High Forest in 1698, whose farm contained the best of the pasture purchased by William Trafford in 1540.¹⁰⁹ His flock of 'Threescore sheep and nine couples' and 'fivescore and ten sheep more of several kinds' reflects the possibilities of a particular farm, set on high ground sheltered from the north by a flank of the Roaches, and with much of its land sloping southwards. For most people a small flock, barely reaching double figures, was the norm.

Both pigs and poultry are regularly documented from the sixteenth century and a pigsty with a hen-loft above was a commonplace in most farmyards. Positioned near the farmhouse to facilitate feeding and egg collecting, its products were primarily for home consumption, although surpluses must have been marketable.

Bee keeping was a more unusual activity, although as early as 1184-5 five shillings could be raised from the sale of honey in the manor of Leek.¹¹⁰ Two hives of bees were valued at 2s in 1548, and two stalls of bees at 3s 4d in 1553.¹¹¹ Most references are to hives, but Alice Washington had five stalls of bees at Hillswood in 1616 valued at £1 13s 4d, and in 1621 William Sherrard of Oldfield, Cheddleton, has three stalls of bees worth 10s and 30 and new hives for bees valued at 5s. In this case the word stall appears to mean the colony and the hive the empty container, though the words were sometimes used interchangeably.¹¹² Heather honey from the moorland on Gun was available to the Plant family at Redearth, where 'certain swarmes of bees'

¹⁰⁶ *VCH Staffs VII*, 182.

¹⁰⁷ LRO James Beech, 1750.

¹⁰⁸ Plot, 1686, 109.

¹⁰⁹ PRO C66/697 3493.

¹¹⁰ *VCH Staffs VII*, 103.

¹¹¹ LRO Robert Burgh, 1548; Henry Gronde, 1553.

¹¹² LRO Alice Washington, 1616; William Sherrard, 1621; *Oxford English Dictionary*.

were first valued in 1633, as it was for the occupants of Intakes in 1728.¹¹³

While the major magnates might purchase fish from a distance¹¹⁴ lesser folk relied on local supplies. No designated fishponds are known for the abbey of Dieulacres, but the presence of numerous ponds providing water for industrial purposes would have made this un-necessary. By the late sixteenth century the Arnett's of Thornleigh were tenants of the former abbey property at Turner's Pool. In 1694, when the pool was sold, William Allen gained control of the mill and William Arnett the fishing rights.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, the constant crossing and re-crossing of the larger waterways by parish, township and even estate boundaries suggests riparian rights were at issue, which would have included both access to water for stock and the right to fish. The listing of William Fyssher among the town's taxpayers in 1332-3 suggests a commercial element was already in place by the fourteenth century.¹¹⁶

Josiah Ford's inventory, dated to January 1732, sums up the mainstream farming of the area. His 28 cattle and 48 sheep were housed in three centres, his bull and his milking herd at Heath House, Horton, heifers, calves and sheep at Mellor Barn, and twinters at Horton Barn, where he had 60, 50 and 126 strikes of oats respectively, together with four strikes of wheat, and one of barley held at Heath House.¹¹⁷ This pattern of split-site farming is still readily recognisable in the Moorlands, where land to be 'set' is auctioned on an annual basis and stock may be run on land which is many miles from the main farm.

Marketing

The establishment of a network of markets in the middle ages reflects a steady change from a society geared principally to subsistence farming, to one in which there was an increasing need for money, and rising expectations about what it could purchase. Large areas of the England and Wales were better suited to either arable or pastoral farming, and specialisation, coupled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a sharp rise in the population, led to an ever increasing volume of commercial farming and to specialist markets.

A market charter for Leek was granted to the Earl of Chester in 1207.¹¹⁸ Forty-five places in Staffordshire are known to have had a market charter in the middle ages.

¹¹³ LRO Lawrence Plant, 1633-4; John Plant, 1637; Margery Plant, 1637; Mary Nickson, 1728.

¹¹⁴ Dyer, 1989, 307.

¹¹⁵ LJO William Arnett 1599-1600; Swythamley 8/105, 52, 409.

¹¹⁶ SHC, 1889, 115.

¹¹⁷ LRO Josiah Ford, 1732.

¹¹⁸ *VCH Staffs VII*, 105.

Most received them in a period of major economic expansion between 1150-1350. Many, unlike Leek, failed to survive the succeeding decline,¹¹⁹ and by 1500 the number in Staffordshire had fallen to nineteen. Amongst the casualties was Alstonfield, and Leek was left without rivals nearer than Ashbourne in Derbyshire, and Congleton and Macclesfield in Cheshire.¹²⁰

Specialisation was on the increase by the sixteenth century. In the Midland counties this tended to be in livestock, and Leek was one of 25 towns that concentrated on cattle.¹²¹ While local needs will have been catered for, the town was still, in modern terms, little more than a large village, and much of the livestock will have been destined for a wider market like cattle from the markets of Ashbourne and Newcastle-under-Lyme, which were driven to Essex.¹²² Writing in 1673 Blome commented of Leek that 'its market, which is on Wednesdays, is very considerable for cattle, sheep, oats and provisions, being esteemed the third market in the county.'¹²³ Despite this, other specialist markets existed within a reasonable range, and the ever-growing volume of cheese may have found its outlet at the major cheese market of Uttoxeter.¹²⁴

The grant of 1207 had included a seven-day fair, and both market and fair were granted to Sir Ralph Bagnall in 1552. By the seventeenth century the number of fairs had increased to three,¹²⁵ and by 1756 this had risen to seven,¹²⁶ including a great wether fair.¹²⁷

Lying to the south of the parish church, and with major roads defining three of its four sides, the market place retains a number of characteristic features (Fig. 2.20).¹²⁸ Prior to encroachment it formed a huge square with long-distance roads entering at all four corners. In 1671 a member of the Jolliffe family paid for the erection of a cross at the southern end of the market place,¹²⁹ presumably the re-erection of the fifteenth-century market cross which still survives.¹³⁰ Specialised marketing areas are suggested by the names Sheep Market, and Custard Street (now Stanley Street), a name that may derive from costard, a type of apple.¹³¹ Local orchards were to be found in the

¹¹⁹ Palliser and Pinnock, 1971, 49-63.

¹²⁰ Everitt, 1967, 470-1.

¹²¹ Everitt, 1967, 490-2.

¹²² Everitt, 1967, 509.

¹²³ Sleigh, 1862, 4.

¹²⁴ Hey, 1984, 133.

¹²⁵ *VCH Staffs* VII, 105.

¹²⁶ Chartres, 1985, 427, 434.

¹²⁷ Hey, 1985, 139.

¹²⁸ Everitt, 1967, 480-486.

¹²⁹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 106.

¹³⁰ Dept. of National Heritage, 1996, 69.

¹³¹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 72.

seventeenth century,¹³² though fines imposed in 1616 for damaging crab-apple trees suggest others relied on more basic products.¹³³

No early public buildings survive, but the Moot Hall still existed in 1677.¹³⁴ Fronting the northwest corner of the Market Place was the Green Dragon,¹³⁵ now the Swan, part of which dates to the end of the fifteenth century, and which was in use as an inn by the 1630s.¹³⁶ The Black Swan on Sheep Market dates to the sixteenth century, indicating that substantial encroachment had already occurred by this date.¹³⁷ Nothing survives of the early shops and shambles, but the continuing private ownership of a wide strip of land on both the east and west of the reduced Market Place indicates that private space existed which could be used for pentices (Fig. 4.6).



Fig. 4.6 The western side of the Market Place in 1890 with a surviving pentice.

Earl Ranulph's generous provision for land and grazing rights suggests a mixed economy was the initial expectation,¹³⁸ but the town must always have housed traders, many of whom both made and sold goods. Such specialists are elusive. A century and more after the foundation of the town the occupational surnames, so evident in the more successful towns,¹³⁹ are barely visible in the lay subsidy returns.¹⁴⁰ Instead, topographical names such as Heath, Lowe and Clough, and local place-names like

¹³² SRO D239/M2 and M7; deed of 1674 (privately owned).

¹³³ Glamorgan RO, Boothby Records, D/D F, Box 84, court roll for Ipstones, 1616.

¹³⁴ LJO B/V/5 1715; *VCH Staffs* VII, 125.

¹³⁵ SRO D(W)1702/1/13.

¹³⁶ LRO Thomas Bower, 18th June 1638.

¹³⁷ *VA* 29, 105.

¹³⁸ Sleight, 1862, 11.

¹³⁹ Carus Wilson, 1965, 55-6.

¹⁴⁰ SHC, 1886, 218-91889, 115

Wall and Easing predominate suggesting that the wealth for 'Leek cum membris' lay substantially in the countryside. Apart from innkeeper (del Hostel) brewer (brouster) and fisher (fyssher), occupational names were confined to smith (fabro) and miller (molendario), names to be found also in the surrounding countryside,¹⁴¹ and fail to record the twenty or so occupations found by Dyer in fourteenth century court rolls,¹⁴² suggesting a very limited level of commercial success.

Things become clearer by the end of the sixteenth century when licensed victuallers and alehouse keepers are much in evidence, though the appearance of John Rothwell's name as a victualler in 1584/5, suggests this was a part-time occupation. By this date brewing had been transformed from a small-scale domestic industry carried out by women, to a commercial venture largely controlled by men.¹⁴³ Twenty two alehouse keepers were licensed in the Leek area in 1593, and a similar number in 1599 and 1600.¹⁴⁴ The presence^{of} John Ban, working as a cooper in 1558, suggests the trade was already well established by the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁴⁵ A tradition of local brewing in both town and country continued throughout the seventeenth century, causing foreign visitors in 1673 and 1716 to comment on the excellence of the local ale.¹⁴⁶

The major men were mainly mercers. Principal among them were members of the Jolly/Jolliffe family. John Jollye was referred to as a mercer in 1550,¹⁴⁷ and Thomas Jollie in 1596.¹⁴⁸ The latter was presumably the Mr. Joly of Leek who purchased 93 tons of bar iron between 1593 and 1608. Pursuing a similar path was John Rothwell, whose shop contained an iron-cellar in 1623, from which he sold scythes.¹⁴⁹ Both men were property owners, although John Rothwell's holdings paled into insignificance beside the Jolliffes' estates. Sir Simon Degg, writing of William Jolliffe in 1662, commented that 'by country trades, in this late age, many are crept into handsome estates; as your neighbour Jolley (inferior to none), lord of Leek, half of Cheddleton, Carswal (Caverswall), Crestwood, Bothams, etc, and a pawn in Ashenhurst's estate'.¹⁵⁰ Although never 'lord of Leek', William Jolliffe had few serious rivals, and none in the immediate world of commerce.

¹⁴¹ SHC, 1889, 115.

¹⁴² Christopher Dyer (pers. com).

¹⁴³ Bennett, 1996, 9.

¹⁴⁴ SHC 1929, 98, 174; 1930, 326; 1932, 49; 1935, 137, 207, 252.

¹⁴⁵ LRO John Ban 1558; James Banne, 1618-19.

¹⁴⁶ Sleight, 1883, 4 (quoting Blome's *Britannia*, 1673, and Morei's *Historical Dictionary*, 1716).

¹⁴⁷ Sleight, 1883, 6.

¹⁴⁸ SR0 D3359/29/3

¹⁴⁹ LRO John Rothwell, 1623.

¹⁵⁰ Sleight, 1662, 29.

The Gent family were also among the leading traders. In 1631 Thomas Gent's shop contained a wide range of cloth, lace, silk buttons, spices, hops, whalebone, chalk, quicksilver, and numerous small items including two thousand hooks and eyes, leather and thread points. Timothy Gent was recorded as a mercer in 1640 and 1655,¹⁵¹ William Gent in 1650,¹⁵² and John Gent in 1668. At his death in 1685 William Gent was described as a grocer, and had both a shop and a warehouse,¹⁵³ while Jervase Gent owned several properties in Leek including three on Stockwell, and the land later used for the Friends Meeting House.¹⁵⁴

Continuity within a family was not unusual: Thomas Ensor, mercer, was alive *circa* 1550, and a mercer of the same name died in Leek in 1750.¹⁵⁵ Among those described as mercers in the 1680s and 1690s were Thomas Bentley, Joseph Thornbury, Thomas Sutton, John Wardle and Matthew Stubbs, whose shop stocked various types of cloth.¹⁵⁶ Some were men of substance, like Joseph Davison, who in 1722 left 'shop goods in the shop cellar' valued at £472, and good and bad debts of £395.

Lesser traders must have included a full range of food suppliers and basic craftsmen, and although shops are mentioned with regularity,¹⁵⁷ evidence for specialisation is absent from the inventories before the middle of the seventeenth century. George Vigars, whose house was later known as the Green Dragon, and was certainly an inn in his son-in-law's hands, may well have had a dual occupation, but his inventory of 1597 includes a full range of cattle, sheep, horses, geese and poultry, together with a sizeable dung-heap worthy of any well-run farm, and is therefore indistinguishable from that of the major farmers of the period.¹⁵⁸

Shoemakers active in Leek in the middle of the seventeenth century included Thomas Barker, Richard Toft, and Samuel Johnson. Was farming significant for these men? Not for Richard Toft, whose livestock consisted of a mare and her colt and three pigs, and possibly not for Samuel Johnson whose subsidiary income came from property.¹⁵⁹ Butchers begin to appear in the record at the end of the seventeenth century when Joseph Rankin was a tenant of Jervase Gent at Stockwell Street, and

¹⁵¹ LRO Thomas Gent, 1639/40; PRO PROB 11 248/299.

¹⁵² SRO D538/A/2.

¹⁵³ PRO PROB 11 381/108.

¹⁵⁴ Deeds to 6 Stockwell Street (privately owned); LRO Jervase Gent, 1690.

¹⁵⁵ Sleight, 1883, 6; LRO Thomas Ensor, 1750.

¹⁵⁶ LRO Joseph Thornbury, 1681; Matthew Stubbs, 1692; John Sutton, 1698; LRO Thomas Smith 1699.

¹⁵⁷ LRO John Jodrell, 1608; Thomas Jodrell, 1632; Elizabeth Mountford, 1700; Jane Cope, 1711

¹⁵⁸ LRO George Vigars, 1597/8; Thomas Bowers, 1639; SRO D(W) 1702/1/13.

¹⁵⁹ LRO Richard Toft, 1640; Thomas Barker, 1647; Samuel Johnson, 1654.

Thomas Smith was operating elsewhere in the town.¹⁶⁰ Specialist bakers appear in the first half of the eighteenth century, when Daniel Wardle and Samuel Morris were both working in Leek. The latter, with fourteen sacks of flour and two kneading troughs in his bake house, had a large and comfortably furnished house to witness to his prosperity.¹⁶¹

The evidence is slight, but the limited evidence for specialist traders before the mid-seventeenth century suggests that many of the townsfolk were emulating George Vigars, or operated a mixed economy in which no single element justified specialist designation. It seems therefore that this aspect of trade developed alongside the expansion of the silk, mohair and button trades which cannot be traced with any certainty before the second half of the seventeenth century.

Development and change

The pattern throughout the period was largely one of pastoral farming, but farming methods, the balance of the different forms of animal husbandry, and the proportion of people actively involved in farming varied over time. The gradual replacement of oxen by horses, the shift to greater cheese production, and the fluctuating proportion of people keeping sheep, appear to be the most significant changes. In addition, in the eighteenth century, there was a marked reduction in the size of the largest flocks (Appendix 4.1).

Table 4.1 The relative proportion of stock keepers as reflected in the inventories

	<i>Total number of testators</i>	<i>Without cattle</i>	<i>Without Stock</i>	<i>With 10 or more cattle</i>	<i>With sheep</i>	<i>Women without stock</i>	<i>Women with 10 or more cattle</i>
		%	%	%	%	%	
1551-1560	101	0	0	63	90	0	5
1611-1620	138	27	22	31	54	48	5
1671-1680	111	31	28	40	44	74	2
1731-1740	70	39	36	33	28	78	0

More radical were the changes to be seen in the structure of society as mirrored by the number of people involved in farming (Table 4.1). No-one in the 1551-60 lists was without stock. Even Agnes Fowall with her half-share of a cow had five sheep, and apart from Joan Draycott with a single cow, the rest had three or more cattle, or cattle and sheep; thus everyone had direct access to land and expected some proportion of their income or subsistence to come from it. By 1611-20 27% had no cattle, and

¹⁶⁰ LRO Jervase Gent, 1690; Thomas Smith, 1699.

¹⁶¹ LRO Daniel Wardle, 1737; Samuel Morris, 1744/5.

22% had no stock of any kind. The trend was to continue. In the 1670s 26% had no stock, rising to 36% by the 1730s, while the fall in the number of women with stock was even greater.

Farm size and the steady process of engrossment were among the controlling factors in the declining numbers directly involved in stock rearing. In the sixteenth century large ring-fenced holdings such as Swythamley, Wallgrange, Fairboroughs and Westwood Grange were a minority, and the dissolution rentals indicate that the majority of the granges, including Roche Grange and New Grange, had been divided into leasehold farms.¹⁶² A rental of 1607 for Horton manor provides the earliest detailed picture of farm sizes. The list includes seven cottages with 5-10 acres, seven tofts with 1-15 acres, and 51 messuages with between 3-40 acres each. Nine messuages had less than 10 acres, nineteen had 10-19 acres, and four had 30-45 acres, discounting those discussed below, where two messuages were charged a single rent.¹⁶³

Statistics can be misleading. There is an ever-present possibility that acreages were given in 'the Great Cheshire measure', particularly in the townships that lie on the county boundary. Certainly this was so in 1615 and 1652 when William Tonncliffe sold land at Heaton,¹⁶⁴ and in 1811 when land at Ravensclough, in Ruston Spencer, was variously described as 'Statute measure 150a 1r 37p' and 'Cheshire measure 71a 0r 20p'.¹⁶⁵

The picture is not as simple as one man, one messuage. John Wedgewood, lord of one-third of the manor of Horton, held eleven copyhold properties besides his major freehold farm at Harracles, and John Bentley held properties in Horton, Endon and Longsdon. Few men had only one holding, although it is not clear how many were let to sub-tenants and how many were used to graze store cattle. It is easy to see how careful purchase could lead to consolidation. Entries for William Fernihough, John Gibson and Christopher Malkin show each with two messuages given a single acreage and a single rent, producing properties of 45, 36 and 45 acres respectively.¹⁶⁶ Consolidation equals fewer farms but a greater prospect of income for the surviving farmers. Ipstones provides the clearest example with a below-average population by the mid-seventeenth century, and wealth reflected in an above-average early housing stock.

At the upper end of the social scale, larger farms meant that both men and

¹⁶² PRO SC6.3353.

¹⁶³ SRO D(W) 1490/17.

¹⁶⁴ SRO D3359/52/5/15; D322/M 14.

¹⁶⁵ Deeds at Ravensclough (privately owned).

¹⁶⁶ SRO D(W) 1490/17.

women stood to benefit in their later life from greater wealth and greater leisure. Marriage settlements and wills show that inheritance was usually by primogeniture, but local custom also decreed provision for younger sons and daughters. That being satisfactorily accomplished, income in later life could be secured through rent charges on their various properties, a useful method of providing supplementary income for a widow. Those with substantial properties could therefore afford to discharge their obligations and settle back, then as now, to enjoy retirement without the constant round of milking cattle, and hectic involvement in spring lambing.

Although the number of cases is small, this is most clearly evident when the position of the wealthier women is reviewed. A wife could expect to take a third of the moveable goods for life at her husband's death, in addition to whatever provision had been made by the marriage settlement. Since this applied to rich and poor alike, a woman's inherited stock would therefore be a third of that of her husband's. In the sixteenth century group, five women are seen to be among the top 25% in terms of numbers of cattle. Five women are again amongst the larger farmers in the early-seventeenth-century group, although there are only two in the 1670s, and none in the 1730s. While this might be seen as the result of the increasing dependence of women in a male-dominated society,¹⁶⁷ it can also be seen as reflecting greater prosperity, and better provision for the wealthier widows, who therefore had less need to seek income from stock rearing. With a town house in Leek to retire to early in the eighteenth century, Pheobe Mellor of Whitehough may have been an exception, but many others now had firm provision of both a roof and an income.¹⁶⁸

At the opposite end of the scale, with a marked excess of births over deaths in the rural areas by the eighteenth century (Fig. 3.7), it is inevitable that an increasing number of people should need to seek a livelihood which was independent of farming. This too helps to account for the growing proportion without livestock at death and the emergence of specialist traders in the town. But many who came to Leek were not successful. The Ash almshouses were in place by 1676 [1], but supported only a handful of 'poor widows', and by 1711 the pressure on the Leek quarter was so great that it became necessary for the quarters of Leekfrith, Bradnop and Endon to pay for their own poor, even if they were now resident in the town.

Other changes mirrored in the probate documents include a growing awareness of status (Appendix 4.1 i-viii). The absence of designation in the sixteenth century

¹⁶⁷ Wiesner, 1993, 30-35.

¹⁶⁸ LRO Pheobe Mellor, 1735; Ottnell Gardener, 1602; William Plant, 1670.

reflects the general involvement in subsistence farming and the absence of any need to differentiate. Men whose status was given were therefore likely to be exceptional. William Davenport, former bailiff of Dieulacres and the King's bailiff for the manors of Leek and Frith must have been a well-known figure.¹⁶⁹ Thomas Joyly, described as 'sheerman', was from a family who were already playing an important role in the town's commercial life, while John Pillesbury's description as 'husbandman' reflects the simple necessity of distinguishing between two men with identical names.

By early in the seventeenth century it had become the norm to indicate both place of origin and status. Six men were considered gentlemen, but most were called yeoman or husbandman, the women were designated as either widow or spinster. Trades are named or implied for a small minority, including the country trades of weaver, tanner and miller. Late in the century the situation was similar, but with fewer men involved in stock rearing, and with chapman added to the list of trades. By the eighteenth century, the list includes button merchant, mercer, cheesefactor, innholder and chapwoman, a small but highly significant shift in emphasis in which town dwellers were beginning to figure substantially among the wealthier members of the community.

¹⁶⁹ Sleight, 1862, 69.

CHAPTER FIVE Industry in town and countryside

INTRODUCTION

Although pastoral farming provided the staple background to the local economy, references from the twelfth century onwards, coupled with archaeological remains, indicate the presence of small-scale industry which frequently capitalised on the availability of waterpower (Fig. 5.1). Corn milling, iron smelting, textiles and button making, together with the extraction of iron, coal, copper and stone, were all essential to the local economy, as to a lesser extent were paper making and tanning. A concentration of water-powered industry existed in Leekfrith between Turners Pool and the River Dane, but small dams, with or without documentation or recognisable industrial waste, are scattered throughout the parish. Many of these sites fulfilled the basic needs of the community in providing water power to grind corn (cf. 105-111), but others powered walk mills (fulling mills), paper mills or iron working. Meredith's map and article on North-Staffordshire water mills gives some idea of their density and distribution,¹ but covers mainly those which survived long enough to be mapped by Yates in 1775, and those of more recent origin. Of numerous references to mill sites, many are medieval.² Some have left little trace beyond a field name whose date of origin is unknown, and where earthworks exist they cannot necessarily be linked to the documents, and could represent a variety of activities.

THE USE OF LOCAL RESOURCES

Iron

(i) The bloomery sites

The parish of Leek lies close to all four of North Staffordshire's coalfields, where both coal and the associated ironstone have long been exploited.³ While the largest of the four, the Potteries Coalfield, lies to the south-east of Leek, the Shaffalong coalfield extends into Cheddleton, the Cheadle coalfield underlies the southern parts of Ipstones and Cheddleton, and Goldsitch Moss lies just beyond the parish boundary to the north-west of the Roaches.⁴

In an outline of Staffordshire's iron industry Johnson indicates that prior to 1400 iron working was concentrated in the north of the county with expansion into mid-

¹Meredith, 1964, 1-10.

²VCH Staffs VII, 174, 182, 190, 197-8, 208, 214, 222, 226, and 231.

³VCH Staffs II, 72-74, 108-9.

Staffordshire in the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century it had spread throughout the county. Changes in technology in the mid-sixteenth century resulted in the bloomery process being replaced by that of the blast furnace, which required conversion of pig to wrought iron in finery and chafery forges.⁵

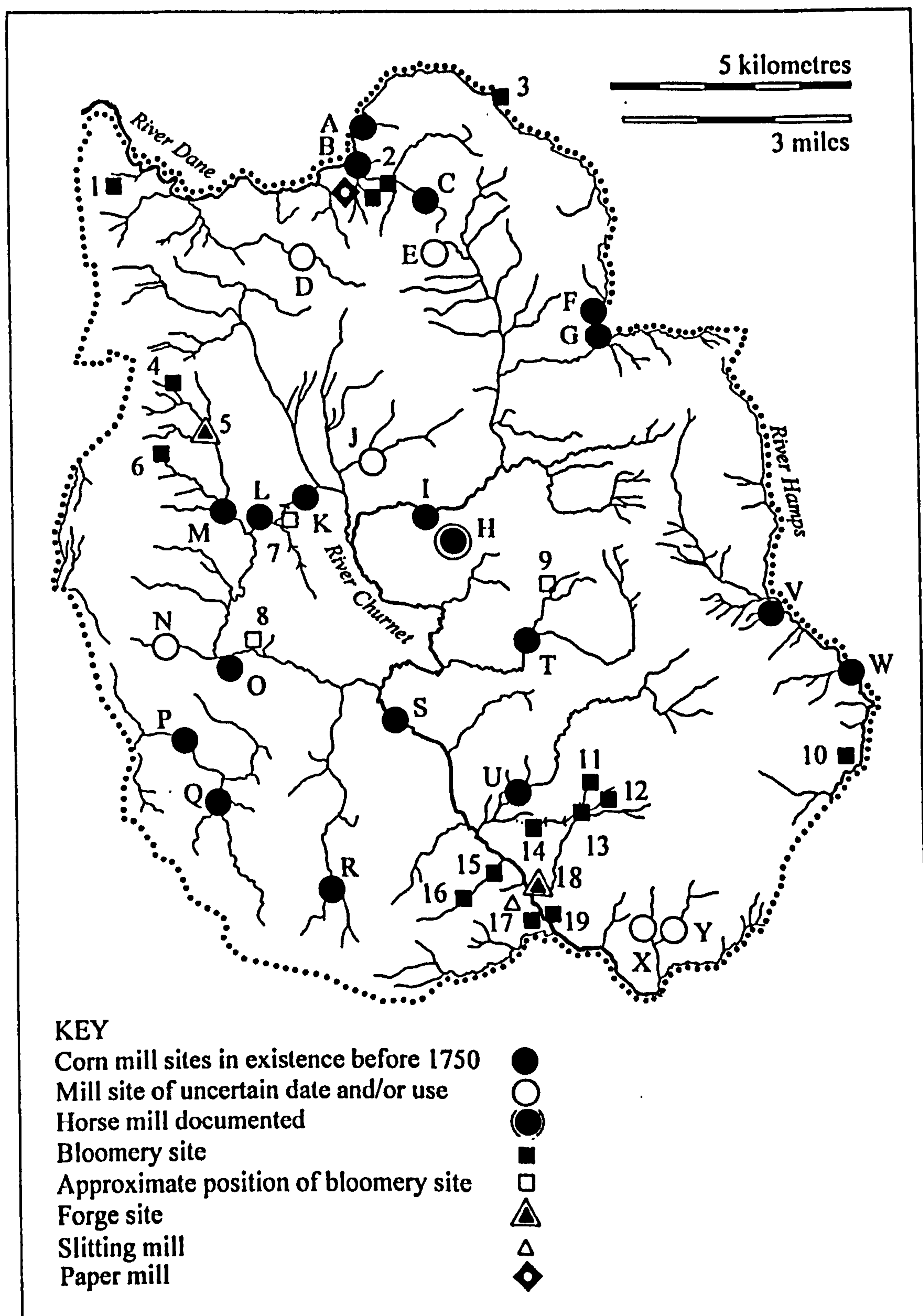


Fig. 5.1 Water-powered mills and other industrial sites

⁴Aitkenhead, 1985, 2, 93-95.

⁵VCH Staffs II, 108-9.

KEY TO FIGURE 5.1

Water mills

- A Dane Bridge
- B Bearda mill
- C Turner's Pool
- D Dam SW of Heaton
- E Field-name 'millhiron's'
- F Dane's mill
- G Hulme mill
- H Horsemill in Leek town
- I Mill Street
- J Dam at Poole End
- K Harracles mill
- L Hanley mill
- M Gratton mill
- N Dam NW of Endon
- O 'Mill field' SE of Endon
- P Stanley mill
- Q Bagnall mill
- R New Mill (Cheddleton)
- S Cheddleton mills
- T Ashenhurst mill
- U Mosslee mill
- V Onecote mill
- W Ford mill
- X Mill site near Cloughhead⁶
- Y Park mill (Ipstones mill?)

Iron working sites (see Appendix 5.1)

- 1 Cloudwood (Rushton Spencer)
- 2 Old Smithy (Heaton)
- 3 Castors' Bridge (NE of Leekfrith)
- 4 Halfway House (Horton Hay)
- 5 Conygreave (Horton Hay)
- 6 Cinderfield (Horton Hay)
- 7 Harracles (Longsdon)
- 8 S of the Trees (Longsdon)
- 9 Knivedon (Leek and Lowe)
- 10 Pethills (Onecote)
- 11 Whitehough 1 (Ipstones)
- 12 Whitehough 2 (Ipstones)
- 13 Colyhole (Ipstones)
- 14 Mosslee (Cheddleton)
- 15 Smithy pool 3 (Consall)
- 16 Smithy pool 1 and 2 (Consall)
- 17 Slitting mill (Consall)
- 18 Forge (Consall)
- 19 Cherry Eye 1 and 2 (Ipstones)

Given the presence of ironstone and the availability of wood for charcoal, it is not surprising that all three of the North Staffordshire monasteries followed the Cistercian pattern of involvement with iron working.⁷ Fieldwork has revealed a number of sites with bloomery slag, in addition to material relating to the later indirect (blast furnace) process (Appendix 5.1). The former are likely to be medieval where there is no evidence for water power, though Peter Lead suggests that the 'Oliver', a treadle-operated tilt hammer seen by Plot in the 1670s, may have been in use.⁸

The earliest reference to iron working in the parish dates to the 1230s, when Henry de Audley, as lord of the manor of Horton, began to exploit reserves of iron ore.⁹ In 1438 tenants of a water-driven 'forge' in Horton Hay were given the right to cut wood there for a term of eight years,¹⁰ and a 'blow-hearth' with wheels existed there by

⁶ Worked by John Milner in 1660 (pers. com. Robert Milner).

⁷ Schubert, 1957, 85-87.

⁸ Lead, 1977, 1; Plot 1686, 389-90 and Table XXXII, 10; Schubert, 1957, 138.

⁹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 72.

¹⁰ SRO, D(W) 1490/6.M 21d.

1527.¹¹ In September of that year the site was sublet by Sir William Brereton to John, Abbott of Hulton, 'with all tools and implements in the smithy necessary for the making of iron'. Peaceful tenancy was short-lived. In May 1528 a group of men, including Christopher Egge of Horton, 'with force of arms entered the said smithy and took away the smith-wheels'. Two days later they 'broke the wheel which your orator had newly made, and burned and wasted two loads of charcoal, and destroyed such tools as were then in the smithy'. Repairs occurred, but 'the same persons, 25th June next, broke the said wheel which your orator had repaired and cast down the "blow-hearth", and most of the walls of the smithy'. Clearly the site was a water powered bloomery, and the catalogue of repairs and further damage continued for the rest of the summer.¹²

Events overtook the abbey, and in 1535 Sir William had demised the 'Blome Smythye' and its watercourse to Henry Foster. This time the local opposition had no intention of allowing work to resume. Twenty men 'with spades and other instruments riotously cut, pulled and cast down the banks of a dam'. In their defence they stated that Foster had taken undivided possession of the pasture by force, and that the 'watercourse of the ... smithy ... surrounds great part of the said ground and pasture to the great loss and decay of the profits of the same'.¹³ The Hay had for centuries formed a major area of shared pasture, accounting in 1273 for a third of the manor income.¹⁴ Not only were they being denied access, but they were seeing areas of valuable pasture destroyed.

Fieldwork in Horton Hay (Figs. 2.8 and 2.31) has produced evidence for three iron-working sites. There is a mound of bloomery slag in the garden of Halfway House (SJ923596) adjacent to fields called Upper and Lower Smithy field. A further mound was encountered by the owner of Cinderfield during ploughing (SJ922582), and substantial fragments can be found in the field boundaries. The former may represent a water-powered site, but the latter lies well above the nearest water source and is unlikely to do so. A third site lies downstream from fields with various 'pool' names adjacent to Coneygreave, where there are the much-damaged remains of a cross-valley dam (SJ932585). Here a marked kink in the stream is caused by a slag heap. While this site fits the sixteenth-century description, the only slag found is from the forging of iron from a blast furnace.

¹¹*VCH Staffs* II, 108-9.

¹²*SHC* 1910, 39-41 and 1912, 25-6.

¹³*SHC* 1910, 39-41 and 1912, 25-6.

¹⁴*VCH Staffs* VII, 72.

Dieulacres may have developed iron working on more than one site. In 1413 the Abbot of Dieulacres was privy to the theft of ironstone from William Egerton's park at Cheddleton.¹⁵ Chester suggests this may have been Consall hematite,¹⁶ but as the mining rights were already in Draycott hands¹⁷ the parkland adjacent to Cheddleton village seems more likely. No mention is made of a bloomery amongst the abbey's holdings in 1538,¹⁸ but between 1542 and 1546 Richard Fernihalgh was tenant of the Smythouse in Heaton, which lies on a stream below Turner's Poole (SJ977635).¹⁹ The pool, mentioned in 1535,²⁰ is served by a small stream rising near Thornleigh. This is caught by a cross-valley dam, which now carries the track to Turner's Pool farm. Below it and adjacent to Pool farm is the site of a second pool (SJ975638) for which much of the dam survives, together with fragments of a tail-race. From here the stream flows northwards to serve Bearda Mill before joining the River Dane. Hungerwall Smithy near Cheadle was still the property of Croxden Abbey at the dissolution, completing the local pattern of Cistercian involvement with iron working.²¹

In 1564 an ironworks and a pool in the manor of Leek and Frith were granted by Sir Ralph Bagnold to Stephen Bagot,²² and in 1595 Sir Edward Fitton of Gawsworth (Cheshire) leased 'the dame poole and poolested called Townhurst poole with the arboure hill and smythstead ... and one water corne milne' to Robert Toft of Heaton.²³ Two pools existed in 1675, when a condition of William Allen's tenancy was to allow fishing in the upper pool.²⁴ At his death in 1708, as a supplement to his water-powered mill, he had a 'hand Mill for the Grinding of Malt'.²⁵ The water mill was still in operation in 1742.²⁶ Yates indicates only a single pool in 1775 and no mill wheel.

No slag has been located in the valley below the pools, although bloomery slag has been found on the hillside above (SJ972638) and also half a mile away at SJ969634. Both sites lie on the farm known as the Old Smithies. Neither site has

¹⁵*SHC* XVII, 23.

¹⁶Chester, 1979, 3.

¹⁷Milner, 1983, 72.

¹⁸PRO SC6/3353.

¹⁹WSL M 540; PRO C66/788.

²⁰*VCH Staffs* VII, 193.

²¹Chester, 1979, 4-7.

²²*VCH Staffs* VII, 198.

²³Swythamley 8/87.

²⁴LRO John Stoddard 1675.

²⁵LRO William Allen 1708.

²⁶LRO John Allen 1742.

evidence for the use of waterpower, although the second, where material suggesting the mouth of a bellows tuyere has been found, lies adjacent to a stream.

There are several indications of iron working on the Knivedon brook, which forms part of the boundary between Leek and Lowe and Bradnop townships. On the Bradnop side lies a farm known as Pool Hall by 1663,²⁷ below which lies a breached cross-valley dam. A marshy area upstream of the dam is all that remains of a substantial pool, which may have served iron working on the opposite side of the stream, land which belongs to Knivedon. The area immediately below the dam is covered by a modern road embankment.

Held from Dieulacres in 1534 by the Smith family,²⁸ Knivedon Farm was sold by the Rev. Thomas Smith in 1883, when the fields adjacent to the brook were called Smithy Steads and Radway.²⁹ Although Smithy Steads might derive from the name of the owners rather than the reverse, its coupling with Radway, a name used for a series of fields, suggests the presence of iron ore or iron slag. Red material has been found downstream in ditching operations.³⁰ Coursed masonry was being demolished on the edge of Smithy Steads (SK 000559) in October 1997, but its position on the boundary of two fields, as shown on the 1889 6" O.S map suggests a field barn. Access to Knivedon Farm was refused. Land called 'Smelting Mill' beside Knivedon Brook in 1687 provides further evidence of iron working in this area.³¹

Field and farm names indicate activity elsewhere in the parish unrelated to Dieulacres or its tenants. Harracles, in Longsdon, formerly owned by the Wedgewood family, has fields known as Sinder Hill and Sinderhill Dale.³² The field is unploughable so no surface finds are known, but worm casts in the area to the north-west of the trig point (SJ953571) are black and sooty, although the site of Harracles Mill, lying in the valley below represents a further possibility. Smithy croft (SJ941546) and Cinder field (SJ946543) suggest further sites in the area near the Trees in Longsdon.³³

²⁷*VCH Staffs* VII, 171.

²⁸PRO SC6/HenVIII/3353.

²⁹SRO D1176.

³⁰Information from Mr. and Mrs. Belfield of Padwick Farm, Oct. 1997.

³¹*VCH Staffs* VII, 174.

³²SRO D(W)1702/2/34.

³³SRO D(W)1909/E/9/1 AND D(W)1535/1.

At Mosslee (Cheddleton), where the names Pitt Lane and Sinder Flatt occurred in 1773,³⁴ there is a substantial mound of bloomery slag immediately to the south west of Mosslee Hall (SJ999506). Mosslee's history is unknown prior to the late sixteenth century, but the existence of a large high-status building by the mid-late fifteenth century [45] suggests a manorial link, particularly as it shares an unusual roof type with the capital messuage of Cheddleton [43].³⁵ Whether the house and the bloomery were contemporary is uncertain, as garden features mask the exact relationship.

To the east of Cloud House (Rushton Spencer) substantial areas of bloomery slag adjacent to a stream suggest the site of a water-powered bloomery (SJ913638), presumably the concern of the Sutton family who held farms on both sides of the stream by the end of the sixteenth century.³⁶

Since both Ipstones and Cheddleton overlie the northern part of the Cheadle coalfield it is inevitable that the greatest concentration of iron-working sites should lie just within or to the south of these parishes. Smith, in his thesis on the Willoughbys of Wollaton, gives detailed attention to the documentation for the Willoughby Ironworks. This includes analysis of the account books of Oakamoor Ironworks to establish their output and working periods.³⁷ Chester has explored similar material, placing Oakamoor within the context of earlier and later iron working in the Churnet Valley.³⁸

Several of the sites located by Chester were bloomeries, including two in Ipstones adjacent to the Churnet near Cherry Eye bridge (SK014482), which were still working in the early seventeenth century,³⁹ and another in Cheddleton (SJ994498). This and two previously unlocated sites at SJ986492 and SJ988493, lie on the same stream in Consall township just below Consall Old Hall. At the upper site (Fig. 5.2 A) bloomery slag is to be found immediately below the dam. Being difficult of access the middle site (B) is exceptionally well preserved. Its dam still held water in 1841, when it was known as Smithy Pool,⁴⁰ and masonry is visible at the side of the outflow, together with substantial slag heaps. The lower site (C) is the least well preserved although fragments of its dam still carry a path. The state of the upper and lower sites, where relatively little remains, may indicate the removal of slag, possibly as early as

³⁴SRO D1176/C/9/3.

³⁵SRO D239/M 3096 Oct. 8th 1611.

³⁶SRO D(W)1761/A4/149.

³⁷Smith, 1964, 281-237.

³⁸Chester, 1979, frontispiece.

³⁹Glamorgan RO, Boothby Records, D/D F Bo 84, Court roll for 1616.

⁴⁰1st edition 6" O.S. map.

the seventeenth century when 'cinders' from bloomery sites, which still contained a high proportion of iron, were frequently re-smelted.⁴¹ Alternatively the proximity to considerable nineteenth century industrial activity at lime kilns and mines for coal and ironstone may have led to their removal as hard core during the making of trackways. The 1841 map of Consall Estate, to which industrial sites belonged, indicates a railway track passing along the hillside within yards of the early iron workings.⁴²

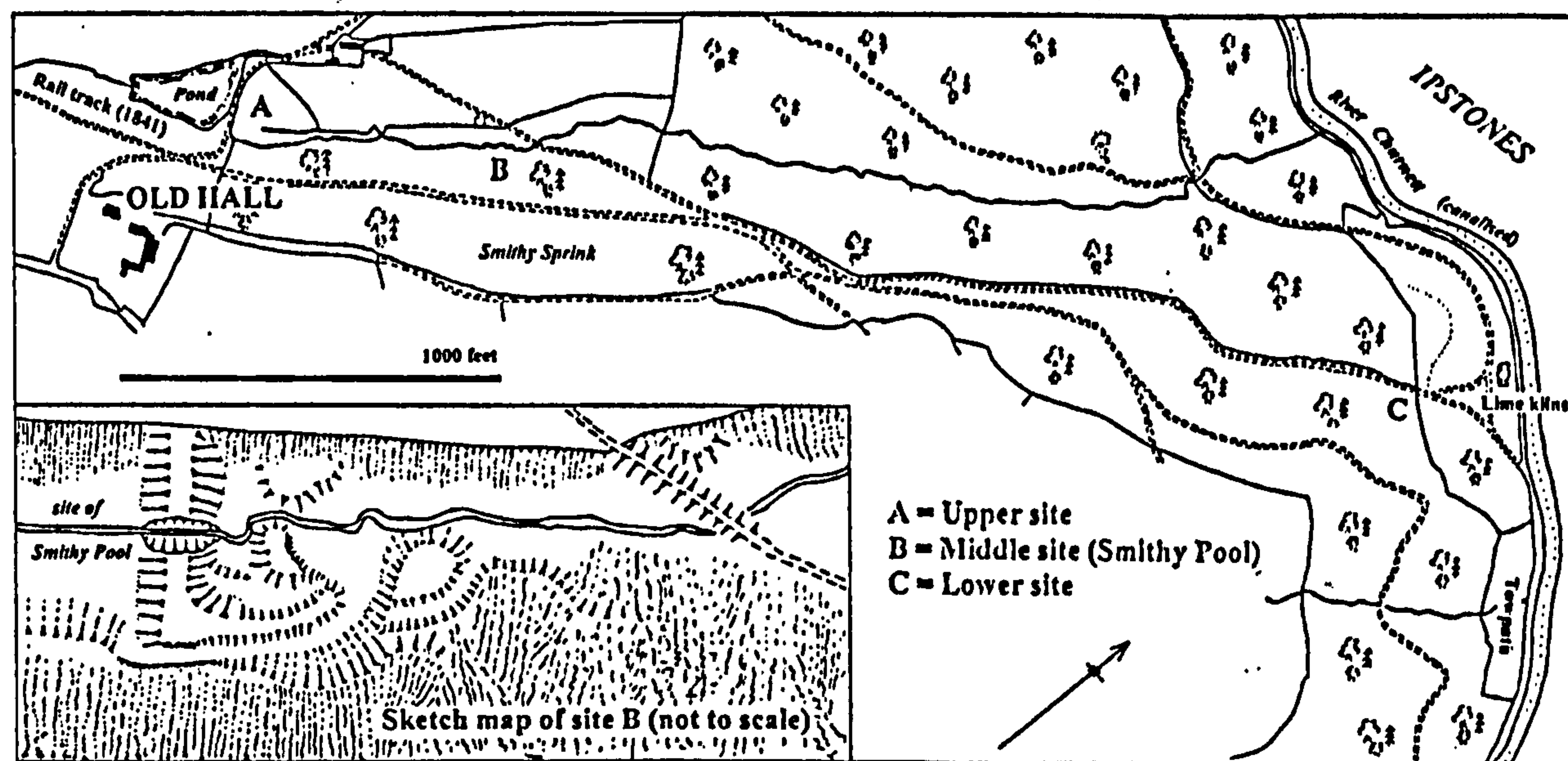


Fig. 5.2 Bloomery sites below Consall Old Hall

Consall was held from the thirteenth century by the Draycott family, together with the mining rights, a position that still obtained in 1522.⁴³ The right to mine the Froghall Ironstone was a major asset as it consists of calcareous hematite and black-band ironstone and is the only bedded ironstone in the immediate area.⁴⁴ The Draycotts' interests in iron extended beyond Consall, and by 1628 included iron mines at Normacott near Meir Heath. These were sold to John Bellot of Moreton in Cheshire in 1630. By 1647 the mines and a furnace at Meir Heath known as Baggeley Smithies were still in the ownership of John Bellot. He had married Isabel Bentley of the Ashes in Endon in 1612, and the 1647 lease gives the Ashes as his place of residence, a reminder that parish boundaries are a poor guide to economic involvement. The furnace, and the Moreton family's tenure of the Ashes, were still in evidence in 1712, although the current owner, Sir Thomas, was once again described as 'of Moreton'.⁴⁵

⁴¹Johnson, 1954, 38.

⁴²SRO 1841 sales catalogue of the Consall Estate.

⁴³Milner, 1983, 72.

⁴⁴Chisholm, 1988, 131-132.

⁴⁵SRO D593/B/1/20/3.

(ii) *Furnaces and forges*

From the mid-sixteenth century major names begin to appear as the new, more capital intensive technology of the blast furnace was introduced. In 1573 George, Earl of Shrewsbury, owned a forge at 'Oakam More', an involvement which continued up to the Earl's death in 1590. Subsequently his lands were administered by the Countess Elizabeth and, seeing new opportunities opening up, Lawrence Loggin began to take an interest. Loggin had supervised the setting up of ironworks for Sir Francis Willoughby at Middleton and Hints, and his concern was to persuade Sir Francis that there were sufficient resources at Oakamoor to justify his involvement in the building of a furnace. In the event it needed help from the Countess to proceed as Willoughby was already over stretched. The venture was short lived and in September of 1608 North Staffordshire's earliest furnace was closed.⁴⁶

The problems of Sir Francis Willoughby were of immediate importance to local men for a variety of reasons, not least for the employment prospects of the workmen involved. The skilled men, founder, finer and hammerman, could find employment elsewhere, but Smith indicates some 35 men employed for wood cutting, coaling, getting and carrying ironstone, and for occasional transporting. While many were not local men and formed communities which were isolated from the local farmers,⁴⁷ the carriers, for whom work was intermittent, must have come from a wide area since bar iron was sold as far afield as Leicestershire and Chester. At his death in 1592, John Brunte of Park Lane, Endon was owed 23s 'for carriage of coales to the new Smithy' and money for transporting iron.⁴⁸ Whether the 'smithy' referred to was Oakamoor or a new bloomery site is uncertain, as the surviving accounts begin in 1593.

At a different level, the reliability of the works was of importance to both the local smiths and the larger ironmongers. The accounts cover the period of 1593 to 1608, although there are gaps in 1598 and from 1600 to 1604.⁴⁹ Those for 1595 are particularly detailed since even the petty sales to local smiths are recorded, the smallest being 16 lbs. to the 'faseley smythe'. Discounting those later lumped together under petty sales, it becomes apparent that a number of men purchased regularly at the level of one ton or more of bar iron (Table 5.1).

⁴⁶Chester, 1979, 45-6.

⁴⁷Smith, 1964, 307.

⁴⁸LRO John Brunte 1592.

⁴⁹Nottingham University. Middleton MSS.

TABLE 5.1 Iron sold from the Oakamoor Ironworks between 1593 and 1608 excluding sales of less than one ton per annum. Goods sent to Ashbourne, Ashby, Chester/Westchester, Derby, Hartington, Leek, Leicestershire, Loughborough, Nantwich, Newcastle, Stoke, Uttoxeter, (includes petty sales).

	1593	1594	1595	1596	1597	1599	1605	1606	1608	TOTALS
Mr Rothwell of Leeke	1 0 0						9 15 0	13 0 0	8 10 0	32 5 0
Harrison Swift & dyvers others	1 4 0									1 4 0
Thomas Sherratt	1 10 0									1 10 0
Mr Dallender	2 0 0									2 0 0
Mr Bagnall	2 0 0									2 0 0
Wm Walle/Mr Wall of Chester	4 0 0							11 0 0		15 0 0
Mr Joly of Leke	4 0 2	1 10 0			17 0 0	6 10 0	26 7 0	26 5 0	12 0 0	93 12 0
Gyllam of Uxiter	3 0 0				5 0 0	1 15 0	3 0 0	1 17 0	4 17 0	19 9 0
Mr Yourke of Derby	0 10 0	1 10 0				0 10 0				2 10 0
Robart Smyth of the chastell	0 10 0	0 10 0					1 10 0			2 10 0
Robart Whitall		3 0 0								3 0 0
Mr Smallbrooke			1 0 0	4 0 0						5 0 0
Keelinge / Mr Keelinge			0 16 2	0 10 2	59 0 0	38 0 0	16 0 0	6 17 0	9 0 0	130 3 2
Mr Keelinge of Lesteshaire					6 0 0					6 0 0
Malburne			2 0 0							2 0 0
Mr Colmer			8 0 0	7 14 0						15 14 0
Jennings / Jenance			10 0 0	9 14 0						19 14 0
Bessell / Bissel			1 0 0	1 0 0						2 0 0
Walderne			1 2 0	1 0 0						2 2 0
Crewe			1 0 0	2 1 2						3 1 2
Mount			2 0 0							2 0 0
Wilde				9 2 1						9 2 1
Mr Basset				2 0 0						2 0 0
Smythe / Sherwood / Sherrard of Ashbye					3 0 0					3 0 0
Chowebente men					3 0 0					3 0 0
Wood of Ashbourne (Henry)						2 0 0	1 10 0			3 10 0
Ralph Carter						1 10 0				1 10 0
William Wood of Derby							5 10 0			5 10 0
Westchester							3 1 1 0	8 14 0	1 0 0	8 1 5 0
Mr Henshaw							1 10 0			1 10 0
Mr Fytton of Chester								4 2 0		4 2 0
Mr Robbartes of Chester								2 0 0		2 0 0

The 1595 accounts, where each man is listed, however small his purchase, show a swift turnover of customers. Over the nine years of documentation, 33 men bought one ton or more in a single year and were heard of no more. The accounts, which are monthly, indicate that erratic production was a problem. To keep the larger and more distant customers, a consistent supply was essential. Over the lifetime of the furnace only eight customers bought tonnages running into two figures. By far the most important was Mr Keelinge, six of whose 136 tons were sent into Leicestershire, next was Mr Joly of Leke with 93 tons, the men of 'Westechester', alias Chester⁵⁰ with 81 tons, and Mr Rothwell of Leek with 32 tons. The others, Mr Wall of Chester, Gyllam of Uxiter (Uttoxeter), Mr Coollmer and Jennings or Janance all took less than 20 tons. In four cases they appear as customers in 1593, buy little or nothing in 1594 and then nothing for at least two years. In the case of John Rothwell the gap was at least five years.

The combined purchases of the two Leek men suggest a considerable market for iron within the town which, unlike Newcastle-under-Lyme,⁵¹ has no documented history of earlier craftsmanship. Which 'Mr Joly' was involved is not entirely clear, though it was probably Thomas Jollye, of the family later known as Jolliffe, who were mercers in Leek by the mid-sixteenth century (cf. page 118).⁵²

John Rothwell was also a mercer. In 1588 he was tenant of a field called Hammercroft where adjacent ground was described in 1597 as being the site of a former pool. Since the land lay less than a mile from Dieulacres and formed part of its demesne, it is likely to have housed a water-powered bloomery that started life directly under abbey control. In 1611 John Rothwell bought a series of properties from Sir Ralph Bagnall, all part of the manor of Leek and Frith and thus former Dieulacres property. These included Fowlchurch, Horsecroft, and properties in Leek described as 'the inheritance of John Rothwell', together with Newgrange, which he bought for his nephew John Hulme. Presumably he also held property elsewhere since his will was proved at the Consistory Court of Canterbury.⁵³ At his death his town house in Leek had an iron cellar containing seven dozen scythes valued at £7 and six hundred-weight of bar iron at £5, together with 'lead waights & one Iron beame and schales'.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Gelling, 1992, 167.

⁵¹Rowlands, 1987, 82.

⁵²Sleigh, 1883, 33.

⁵³SRO D3359 Toft-Chorley, 1588; D3359 Toft-Chorley, 15 Jan. 1597. Swythamley 5/306. PRO Prob.11, John Rothwell 1624 [19 Byrde].

⁵⁴LRO John Rothwell 1624.

It is only possible to speculate at the missing years in his purchases from Oakamoor. Since he was not alone in finding alternative sources, it suggests that a number of local bloomeries were still in operation and despite the greater cost were preferred as a more reliable source. Certainly Schubert states the direct method was still extensively used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and includes references to a 'new' smithy at Himley, Staffordshire in 1595.⁵⁵ A bloomery seems to have been operating in Ipstones in 1614⁵⁶ and a late survival was still working at Biddulph in the Civil War.⁵⁷ Alternatively, if Sir Francis Willoughby's wares could be taken long distances and still make a profit, then three of the long-term clients, Joly, Rothwell and Gyllam, continued to use more distant sources after their initial purchases of 1593, to return when the output of the Oakamoor works became more predictable. The Paget's furnaces, which had been in operation in Cannock Chase since the 1570s, were a possible source.⁵⁸ Despite his ownership of Hammercroft there is no evidence that John Rothwell was directly involved in iron making.

The picture for Staffordshire early in the seventeenth century was of a well-established iron industry within range of suitable raw materials and with the larger share of production in the south of the county, although Newcastle-under-Lyme, where John Wright had a furnace by 1619, remained of importance in the north.⁵⁹

The Oakamoor site remained out of use for at least 70 years, to be rejuvenated late in the seventeenth century by the Foleys. Richard Foley (1580-1657), himself a nailer, was responsible for the mechanisation of the slitting-mill in the 1620s, a process which replaced the laborious hand slitting that had been an inevitable part of the process from smelting to the finished product.⁶⁰

Copious records indicate that the Foleys operated in North and Mid-Staffordshire between 1688 and 1710, and in South Staffordshire from 1692 to 1705. With their partners of 1692 they formed a group known as the 'Staffordshire Works' encompassing the 'Moorland Works' of John Wheeler, and the works of William Cotton and Partners. The 'Moorland Works' centred on the output of Meir Heath Furnace⁶¹ with the secondary processes carried out at Consall and Oakamoor. A forge

⁵⁵Schubert, 1957, 146.

⁵⁶Glamorgan RO, Boothby records, D/D F Bo 84, Court roll for 1616.

⁵⁷Lead, 1977, 3.

⁵⁸*VCH Staffs* II, 110.

⁵⁹*VCH Staffs* II, 113.

⁶⁰*VCH Staffs* II, 114.

⁶¹*VCH Staffs* II, 116.

existed at Consall by 1650 (SJ998492), and by 1683 it had a slitting mill and was coupled with a forge and a slitting mill at Oakamoor.⁶² At Consall a generalisation by Plot indicates that the finery and chafery were under one roof.⁶³ The slitting mill survives, 400 yards downstream from the forge site (SK001487). It was re-used for flint-grinding from the late eighteenth century.

Fuel supplies were among the major preoccupations for the 'Staffordshire Works'. Although coal was in use at the chafery stage, charcoal continued to be the major fuel at the finery forges, with wood brought from sources as far afield as the Macclesfield and Needwood Forests. Local landowners with relatively small supplies to sell included Philip Hollins of Mosslee, selling a mere £7 worth, in contrast to £352 for wood from Wootton Park. Hollins was also among those paid for 'trespass in pounding water on their land,' receiving the sum of £2 10s in 1688.⁶⁴ Earlier in the century, with the failure of their immediate market after demise of Sir Francis Willoughby's venture, it is apparent that the small men, who had previously profited from woodland adjacent to Consall, were reluctant to continue with their rents. William Talbot, for example, owed rent for 1612 and 1614 for 'Boothwood next the Smithie ... Boothwood next the Smithie but tow' and 'the uppermost boothwood,'⁶⁵ though the smithy mentioned here is the bloomery near Cherry Eye bridge.

In 1727 William Fallowfield of Leek obtained a patent for making iron with peat, which he delayed putting into action, as William Wood was experimenting with coal at Wolverhampton. By 1731 he had a furnace near Leek⁶⁶, which still existed in 1735. This is indicated on Johnson's map in a position near Turners Pool. He published no evidence for this location and gave no grid reference. His preparatory notes also suggest an element of doubt.⁶⁷ Lead indicates it was in Horton, but this is not substantiated by his given source,⁶⁸ and the only blast furnace slag so far located has been ex-situ in field gateways in Horton Hay near Halfway House (SJ926596) and is known to have been brought from outside the parish.

Meirheath, Consall and Oakamore all appear in the '1717' lists, which include both furnaces and forges. King indicates this to mean activity recorded circa 1710 and

⁶²Chester, 1979, 49-50.

⁶³*VCH Staffs* II, 116.

⁶⁴Chester, 1979, 54, 62.

⁶⁵Glamorgan RO, Boothby Records, D/D F Bo 84, Court roll for 1616.

⁶⁶*VCH Staffs* VII, 117.

⁶⁷*VCH Staffs* II, 181-19; WSL VCH staff notes.

⁶⁸Lead, 1977, 7. Quoting Pitt, 1817, 32.

1715. The furnace at Meirheath was producing 600 tons annually, and Consall and Oakamore 350 tons of bar iron. Consall was still in production in 1736 with an output of 150 tons, but had ceased working by 1749. William Fallowfield's elusive furnace at Leek makes no appearance in any of the lists.⁶⁹

Thus events recorded between 1500 and 1750 for the iron industry around Leek mirror the national pattern. Prior to the dissolution, all three of the North Staffordshire Cistercian houses were involved with iron working and owned or ran water-powered bloomeries. In addition there are signs that the larger landowners, with access to raw materials by virtue of manorial control or freehold tenure, were also active. Many of the names associated with major properties in the area appear in the record. When the indirect process was introduced, the need for greater capital investment shifted the emphasis to wealthier men, and the local involvement was lost.

(iii) Of people and places

As documentary and site evidence has built up, it has become apparent that the major players were inevitably those who have left the most substantial traces in the form of buildings. The Ashes [52], the Jolliffe' Hall House in Leek [9], Cloud House [149], Harracles [132], Mosslee [45], Whitehough [107]⁷⁰ and Consall Old Hall all appear in this context; so too does Horton Hay where the later activity, despite a lack of direct documentary evidence, impinged on the fortunes of the Biddulph family and the Dairy House [78]. Evidence for Windygates [127] is more elusive. In 1637 the inventory made for Richard Brough of Windygates includes an entry for 'Iern and all his implements of Iern', and a Thomas Brough of Leek was named as an ironmonger in 1667.⁷¹ In this context it seems no coincidence therefore that the parishes of Ipstones and to a lesser extent Cheddleton, both overlying coal and ironstone, have a higher proportion of substantial late sixteenth and early seventeenth century houses than those townships whose geology lacks these minerals.

Precisely how the wealth filtered out so widely is a matter for speculation. Although mining rights belonged to the freeholder or lord of the manor, such rights could be leased out. The conditions under which they were leased could be phrased to protect the long term interests of the owner. John Draycott's terms in 1628 restricted Thomas Hunt to 'having no more than three men underground, unless it be to sink

⁶⁹King, 1996, 23-46.

⁷⁰Lead, 1977, 3.

pitts', ensuring his tenant could not remove excessive quantities of ironstone during one leasehold period. In addition the leases were short term, seven years for the mine, and three years for the furnace, which would allow a revision of the terms within a reasonably short space of time if market prices changed.⁷² Rights to woodland, and in particular timber, were similarly restricted, but could also be leased, since owners with widespread estates were unlikely to concern themselves in the day-to-day management of small sprinks (coppices) on steeply sloping valley sides. Thus mining, wood cutting, charcoal burning, iron smelting and the production of iron tools all helped to generate wealth at a variety of levels, and since it included local production of the tools so essential to the farmers, helped to enable land improvement and more efficient and more extensive farming.

Coal, copper and lead

Evidence for the exploitation of ironstone is plentiful, while that for the use of coal, copper and lead is more limited. Copper and lead were available at Mixon, where a limestone inlier is accompanied by small-scale deposits of copper ore and galena.⁷³ Walter, Lord Aston, as lord of the manor of Bradnop, gave a 21-year lease for lead extraction in 1718, with the right to take copper and coal in the first three years. In 1730 Robert Bill of Stone and Thomas Gilbert of Cotton gained a 21-year lease from Anne Bosville, and working continued to the middle of the nineteenth century. George Critchlow, a whitesmith working at Pethills Forge by 1758, may have used materials from this source.⁷⁴ Bloomery slag indicates that a forge lay below Pethills Pool (SK065520), which was in existence by 1548,⁷⁵ so eighteenth-century activity at Pethills represents a change of use.

Staffordshire's lack of navigable waterways, coupled with its sparse population, left its vast coal resources largely unexploited until the 1770s and the advent of the canals. Prior to 1550 a scatter of references indicate small-scale working at the outcrops. Leland, writing in the sixteenth century, saw something of the incipient industrialisation which used 'yren out of Staffordshire and Warwickshire and see coale out of Staffordshire', and the centuries which followed saw an ever increasing need to

⁷¹*VCH Staffs* VII, 117.

⁷²SRO D593/B/1/20/3 and 4.

⁷³Aitkenhead, 1985, 122-3, 140; Robey and Porter, 1970, 256-280.

⁷⁴*VCH Staffs* VII, 214.

⁷⁵Glamorgan RO, Boothby Records, D/D F Bo 84.

tenant could expect coal to be delivered by the terms of his lease, though the cost was to be borne by himself.⁸⁵

TEXTILES AND BUTTON-MAKING

(i) *Wool, flax and hemp*

In 1500 Leek was a small market town serving an area mainly preoccupied with stock rearing. By 1900 it had seen the hey-day of a prosperous silk industry whose legacy of mill buildings and workers housing still dominates the town. Its background had been the small-scale production of woollen and linen cloth with its consequent pool of spinners, weavers, dyers, fullers and shearmen, together with the mercers whose interests spanned a wide range of goods from textiles to bar iron, and whose activities ranged beyond the purely local scene.

Specialisation was slow to reach the area. Between 1500 and 1750 only nineteen of the wills covered show the testator to have been a weaver; ten more can be inferred from the presence of a weaver's loom and its gears. A scatter of witnesses or relatives are also described as weavers. With a grand total of 42 references in 950 documents spanning two and a half centuries, the picture is that of a small-scale local industry serving only the basic needs of the local community.

Typically the cloth workers were country based, of yeoman stock and modest means. John Plant, weaver, of Redearth, left his sons two looms and their gears in 1637. A later John Plant occupied the lesser of two farms at Redearth, in a house divided between himself and his widowed mother, each paying for a single hearth in 1666. At his death, his working equipment included linen gears, woollen gears, a double loom and warping stock together worth 53s 4d.⁸⁶

William Hulme's house at Shaw in Heaton had its weaving 'shop' on the ground floor in a relatively large and well-lit room, cut off from the living quarters by a substantial stone stack. His living accommodation in 1698 was modest if well built [71], and he ran the southern quarter of Heaton Shaw as a mixed farm with 97 sheep, presumably using his own materials to make woollen cloth. Both flax and hemp were regularly grown in the locality and the five yards of hempen cloth mentioned in the inventory may also have been his handiwork.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ SRO D239/M668.

⁸⁶ LRO John Plant 1637; John Plant 1666; Joan Plant 1671. 1665 hearth tax.

⁸⁷ LRO William Hulme 1698.

At Stanley 'the Little House' was the home and workplace of William Read, finisher. It was purchased by him in 1668 for £3 10s on condition he took the vendor's son as an apprentice. A cruck-framed building of three bays with a single hearth in 1665, it lay in the centre of the hamlet with only a hempyard for grounds, and his 'newly erected' workshop formed an extension of the house [155].⁸⁸

It is not clear how John Nall housed his best loom, his two linen looms, the foot loom he had still to see 'made up', or the long list of items connected with his trade, though his house at the Hole, on the outskirts of Leek, is otherwise described in detail. A frequent practice in nineteenth century Leek was to have a separate 'shade', a working shed of one or two storeys. The list of items both preceding and following Nall's inventory suggests that this may already have been the practice by 1741, and that his shade formed an extension of the house accessible from both floors.⁸⁹

Each weaver was supported by a small army of workers.⁹⁰ The preliminaries were usually home based, and women were responsible for carding and spinning. Finishing could include fulling, dyeing and shearing before it reached the hands of a tailor who might also be a country man like those found at Over Stockmeadows and Fould in Leekfrith, and Cloudwood in Rushton Spencer.⁹¹ Rarely is there any hint of organised employment, although Thomas Joyly's possessions in 1558 included four pairs of 'sharman sheres' valued at 16s, a 'sharbord' and a spinning wheel.

Typical were the many households with one to three spinning wheels. In 1616 Katherine Hulme at Hillilees [69], one of the wealthier farming widows, left 'ten shippings of yarn', wool, 9 lbs of flax and a little wheel, besides a second wheel of undefined character.⁹² Households in 1698, 1700, 1706 and 1738 all had long and little wheels,⁹³ while William Arnett's household at Thornleigh Hall [126] had a long wheel and three small wheels in 1737.⁹⁴ The little wheels were used for flax, while the long wheels were required to spin the short, crimped local wools after they had been carded.⁹⁵ An unusual description appears in 1640 when James Clulow's household at Mill Street had 'hemp dreste and ondreste ... wool ..., a little wheele [and] a hie

⁸⁸Deeds (privately owned).

⁸⁹LRO John Nall 1741.

⁹⁰Mann, 1971, 316-8.

⁹¹LRO Thomas Stubbs 1665; Anne Dale 1727; Daniel Wood 1738.

⁹²LRO Katherine Hulme 1615 -16.

⁹³LRO William Allen 1698; Elizabeth Mountford 1700; Sarah Jolley 1706; Daniel Wood 1738.

⁹⁴LRO William Arnett 1737.

⁹⁵Kerridge, 1985, 1-13.

wheele'.⁹⁶ Frequent references to linen or flaxen yarn and to woollen yarn indicate they were the chief products, though hemp was regularly grown and used for coarser fabrics including sacking.

The weavers therefore worked a variety of fabrics, often to order and with their customers' own materials. Elizabeth Harrison had '3 yards of flaxen cloth ... at weavunge' when she died in 1612, and William Allen's inventory of 1698 indicates there was 'a piece of linen cloth now with the webster'.⁹⁷ Wealthier customers might make substantial orders. Joyce Malkin had 'new woollen cloth in the house and at the weavers' worth £6 in 1611, and there were 53 yards of linen cloth and 20 yards of woollen cloth at the Waterhouse in Onecote [140] at Andrew Withnall's death in 1663. Roger Tomkinson of Park Lane [61] had 56 yards of linen cloth in 1676, and James Bulkley of Bradnop 40 yards in 1729. All represent the yeoman farming families whose purchasing power and industry were the main driving forces behind the local economy.⁹⁸

From 1557 onwards the probate documents include scattered references to kersey, though rarely in contexts which positively identify local production. Robert Hulme, described as cloth worker, had 'In the shoppe 6 payre of sheares one presse and sev(er)all materials belonging to his trade'. The praisers listed linen and woollen yarn, totalled the whole to £44 12s 8d, and then added as an afterthought, 'more one peece of Kersey', suggesting other cloth was present, brought in for finishing, and that the praisers had not immediately recognised this piece as his private property.⁹⁹ Three mentions of medley cloth occur early in the seventeenth century, and include a wistful statement from John Clowes of Wolfdale, webster, referring to 'my medley yarne which should have made me a cloake'.¹⁰⁰

The evidence fits well with Kerridge's comments on the diffusion of kersey and medley cloth from the original centres of production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,¹⁰¹ and the production of cloth made from carded wools is confirmed by the existence of a number of fulling mills. Given the later prominence of the Jolly/Jolliffes

⁹⁶LRO James Clulow 1640.

⁹⁷LRO Elizabeth Harrison 1611-12; William Allen 1698.

⁹⁸LRO Joyce Malkin 1610-11; Andrew Withnall 1663; Roger Tomkinson 1676; James Bulkley 1729.

⁹⁹LRO John Brough 1557; Thomas Jodrell 1611; John Hulme 1637; Robert Hulme 1681; Mary Hulme 1692.

¹⁰⁰LRO John Clowes 1606; Thomas Smith 1612; Robert Wright 1620.

¹⁰¹Kerridge, 1985, 25-28.

amongst the Leek mercers it is interesting to find Richard Joylle requesting a tree to repair his 'walk-milne' in 1548.¹⁰²

Early in the seventeenth century a fulling mill existed on the Cheshire side of the River Dane, causing a dispute with William Trafford owing to constant trespass on his side of the river.¹⁰³ There was one at Abbey Green in 1677,¹⁰⁴ and another was part of the Tonnickliffes' complex near Danebridge, where they had both corn and paper mills in 1723.¹⁰⁵ A further mill was working at Endon in 1738 and 1756.¹⁰⁶ These are the most elusive of sites. Any one of a series of anonymous dams or fishpools may have served fulling, corn or paper mills since none leave distinctive features or waste (Fig. 5.1).

(ii) *Buttons, silk and mohair*

From the late sixteenth century there is clear evidence for the introduction of new forms of employment to the area which relied on outside agencies, and to a large extent on imported raw materials. Davies indicates that Macclesfield's button industry was in existence by 1574, when its townsfolk were seeking to preserve their monopoly,¹⁰⁷ and Kerridge writes of button making in 'the Flash' by the 1570s, which he defines as in and between Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Leek and Buxton.¹⁰⁸ Locally this would be taken to mean the area around the village of Flash, at 1,526 feet the highest village in England.¹⁰⁹ Certainly this was Aikin's definition in 1795 when he described 'the wild country between Buxton, Leek, and Macclesfield as the home of pedestrian chapmen who hawked buttons, ribbands and ferreting made in Leek, and small wares from Manchester',¹¹⁰ and where Joseph Naden held a stock of 208 gross of buttons in 1715-16.¹¹¹

Theirs was not a monopoly. In 1685 the parlour of John Whittaker's home in Leek was acting as his office and contained stock including £9 10s worth of buttons 'at home and at makeing'.¹¹² Clearly he was supplying out-workers, a practice which

¹⁰²PRO, SC2/202/65.

¹⁰³Swythamley 1/17b. Trespass case of 1659.

¹⁰⁴VCH Staffs VII, 198.

¹⁰⁵Swythamley 1/23.

¹⁰⁶VCH Staffs VII, 182.

¹⁰⁷Davies, 1981, 43.

¹⁰⁸Kerridge, 1985, 79.

¹⁰⁹VCH Staffs VII, 49.

¹¹⁰Aikin, 1795, 154.

¹¹¹Gaukroger, undated.

¹¹²LRO John Whittakers 1684/5.

survived into the twentieth century with cottage production of silk buttons for church vestments (Fig. 5.3).¹¹³ Other stock items were 'gympe silke and sattoning ... thrid bodies moulds scales and waights ... gympe looping nickle, a reele and bobins' and a 'gympwheeel', the whole valued with his household goods at £33 6s 2d.

How far the industry operated through chapmen is not certain. The 'Flashmen' were involved with coarse buttons and sold moulds, dyestuff and linen thread to cottagers and small farmers from whom they purchased the finished goods. Buttons of this kind, and those made from horse or oxen hair dominated the market until about 1725, when cheaper ones of horn and metal made in Birminham and Sheffield began to capture the market. But silk was in a different category. Too expensive to be farmed out, buttons from this material, at least in Sherbourne, were made in the masters' workshops.¹¹⁴

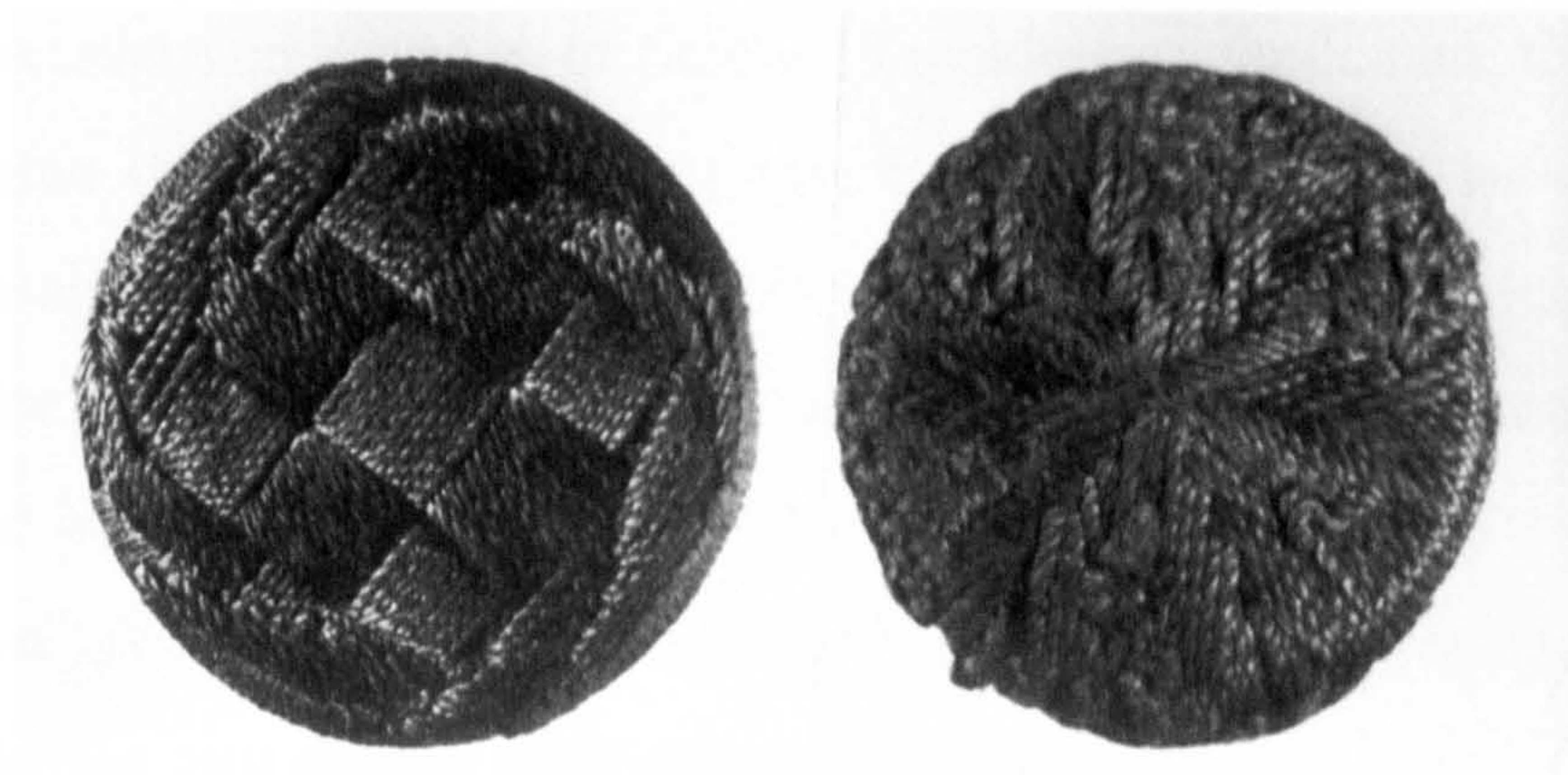


Fig. 5.3 A button covered with silk thread. Made by Mrs. Lottie Slack (1888-1993).

Sleigh was at pains to list 'button-men' and 'mohair merchants', beginning with Thomas Needham in 1702, and for the first half of the eighteenth century he lists Thomas Sutton, Joshua Toft, Edward Sykes, Samuel Lankford, John Birtles, and Joshua Strangman.¹¹⁵ The term mohair resulted from the corruption of the term 'moire', a type of cloth equally suitable for silk or goat's hair,¹¹⁶ and may have been used in Leek in the sense of a specialised silk fabric. These are the wealthy men in Richard Wilkes' mid-eighteenth century description of Leek which had 'now become a considerable place; and the buildings and lands are greatly improved; and a great trade

¹¹³Pers. com. Anne Phillips, Flash (1994), who has buttons of her grandmother's making. Pers. com John Newall, Leek (1994), traveller for silk thread until retirement.

¹¹⁴Kerridge, 1985, 137, 199.

¹¹⁵Sleigh, 1883, 6.

of making buttons for men's clothes of hair, mohair, silk thread etc is carried on with success. Many hundreds of poor people are employed in this manufacture, get a good livelihood, and bring great riches to the gentlemen that procure materials to set them to work'.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to judge how far this may have been an exaggeration. Thomas Sutton of Endon was simply 'yeoman' to the makers of his inventory in 1712, and his house with its cruck-framed parlour would have been recognisable to his husbandman forebears [63].¹¹⁸ Joshua Toft of Haregate and Joshua Strangman, both Quakers, also occupied houses suggesting modest wealth rather than 'great riches' [160 and 20]. John Wesley described Strangman's house as 'neither costly nor fine, but surprisingly neat and elegant',¹¹⁹ and Joshua Toft was content to take the low range of Haregate Hall and add a relatively modest brick-built parlour wing to it. Pew lists for St. Edward's church made in 1736 give a glimpse of others. Samuel Lankford, mohair merchant, heads the list of churchwardens in advance of Samuel Tomkinson, gentleman, though this may reflect the status of the Leek quarter rather than his own. Both he and the button merchant Edward Sykes had an above-average number of pew-sittings, Lankford having five for messuages in Spout Street, and Sykes seven for tenements in Mill Street, which it is tempting to construe as clusters of workers' housing.¹²⁰

In a town favoured by William Morris¹²¹ it would be inappropriate to ignore the dyers. Both fulling and dyeing took place in Endon township in the first half of the eighteenth century,¹²² but the main concentration was in Leek where a handmill and a dyeing furnace were among the equipment owned by Robert Hulme in 1681.¹²³ Of the major firms operating in the nineteenth century only the Badnalls can be traced before 1750. William Badnall's 'shops, workhouse, stables, buildings' lay 'at the bottom of Mill Street between a place where the ducking stool lately was and the Mills called Leek Mills,' together with 'All that newly erected dwelling wherein William Badnall then did dwell with the dyehouse'. Adjacent to the River Churnett these were included in a settlement made to trustees on behalf of his children in 1733.¹²⁴ Operating from a

¹¹⁶ Kerridge, 1985, 54.

¹¹⁷ WSL S.MS. 468, 101.

¹¹⁸ LRO Richard Sutton, 1547; Thomas Sutton, 1712.

¹¹⁹ Sleight, 1883, 6.

¹²⁰ List of seatings in Leek church, 1736. Privately owned. Shortened version in Miller, 1887, 206.

¹²¹ *VCH Staffs* VII, 114.

¹²² *VCH Staffs* VII, 182.

¹²³ LRO, Robert Hulme 1681.

¹²⁴ SRO D3359/4/31. Attention was drawn to these by Mr. Allan Badnall.

substantial 3-storey stone house [12] and known as a mohair dyer in 1736, he was able to take over the bankrupt linen-thread works of Richard Ferne's in 1758 together with a further, recently built dyehouse and 'poles for drying linen yarn' by Ball Haye brook, thus consolidating the family firm on both sides of Abbey Green Road where they had become major figures in the silk dying trade by the late eighteenth century.¹²⁵

Only the most limited evidence points to outside trade connections, although by the nature of the raw materials these must have existed. Silk may have been known in Leek before it appears in the record, since it was used in Macclesfield by 1649.¹²⁶ When Haregate Hall was sold in 1685 the vendor was William Bayley a 'Silk Ribband Weaver' of Southwark, and Samuel Toft had 'Trading stock in Salop & Hereford' in 1732 valued at £634, but the most valuable evidence for outside contacts comes from the inventory of John Wood dating to 1672.¹²⁷ This provides not only the first convincing evidence for the silk industry in Leek, but the phrase 'More silk att Lond(o)n'.¹²⁸ Kerridge writes of a well established silk industry in London by the sixteenth century,¹²⁹ so these later connections should come as no surprise.

Wood's inventory is interesting from many points of view. Property values are present, including that for his own dwelling, ^{which} suggests that he arrived from elsewhere, since inherited property would have gone unmentioned, but how many younger sons went out to learn a trade and returned to a known place where they could see an opening? His stock list indicates involvement solely with silk as a raw material, and includes the following entries 'Undied silk £179 1s 0d' ... 'More silk worth £1 14s' ... 'More silk att Lond(o)n £18' ... 'More silk for Woofing £6' and 'More silk to be Chang(e)d £110 4s'. It also includes 'Looms and Whells worth £4 1s' suggesting a workshop where both spinning and weaving occurred. 'Buttons and gall(ies) and shop g(oo)ds £100', the basic stock for button making, complete the picture of an entrepreneur with a new raw material to add to the local resources, and one who was already consolidating at least some of his production.

Both the late blossoming of the industry, the reliance on readily transportable raw materials and on outwork, can be explained by the isolated position of the town prior to turnpiking of the roads, which took place from 1762 onwards.¹³⁰

¹²⁵*VCH Staffs* VII,107.

¹²⁶Davies, 1961, 122.

¹²⁷*VCH Staffs* II, 206; *VCH Staffs* VII,106-7.

¹²⁸LRO John Wood, 1673.

¹²⁹Kerridge, 1985, 24.

¹³⁰*VCH Staffs* II, 206-7.

A vital boost was given to the silk industry nation-wide when, in 1765, after a period of decline, foreign imports were prohibited, giving the industry over half a century to re-establish itself without competition. In the south-west Pennines three towns developed substantial silk industries, Macclesfield, Congleton and Leek, but despite their close proximity they developed along different lines. Leek manufacturers were already sufficiently independent of Macclesfield in 1731 to join with other towns to petition against the extension of Lombe's patent on silk throwing equipment, and the town's strength lay in the establishment of the production of sewing silks, tailors' twist and braids, areas of production almost totally lacking from Macclesfield and Congleton, and less subject to the fluctuations of the market than the more luxury items.¹³¹

BUILDING MATERIALS

When Ralph Heaton purchased the 'moiety of messuage called Whitelee' from Walter Lord Aston in 1610, he was purchasing the freehold of his property from the lord of the manor of Bradnop, and with it the right to ' Myne and Mynes of Lyme Stone and all other Mynes stone or Coale, Freedom of Turbarie ... to dig gett drye stack & carry away peats & turves for Two Fires ... To get Clods Clay Stone Heath fures and Rushes for the Mainteining & Repairing of all houses now standing'.¹³² William Fowler, selling the manor of Ipstones in 1649, retained with the demesne lands the right to common of pasture on 'the great waste of Morrage and other commonable places' ... 'to gett heath Gorse Gravell Stone Peates & turves ... to be spent upon the said Capital Messuage', rights which the 'ancient tenants' had customarily had, and were to purchase with their freeholds from the trustees who held the manor on their behalf.¹³³

Neither clause was unusual. Both outlined conditions which regularly obtained in this area, indicating the source of basic materials for building, stone for walls, rushes to thatch roofs, and in the first case limestone for mortar and lime wash. The resources of a given holding or its neighbouring commons might vary, but the basic premise that building materials were those locally available, and free at source within the custom of the manor, formed the essential background to the vernacular buildings of the area.

¹³¹Wilde, 1974, 96-105.

¹³²SA1/2/3.

(i) *Timber*

If most of the basic building materials for use within a given holding were available by custom to manorial tenants, the right to extract materials for sale was not, and this included the right to cut timber. John Wheeldon's lease of 1628, made some twenty years before the sale of Ipstones Manor makes it clear that only Thomas Brereton or his assigns had the right 'to enter & fell timber trees or woods'.¹³⁴ This does not mean that it was unavailable, but that its cutting was a matter of careful control. The original charter for Leek town indicates that the burgesses were to be allowed timber from Leek forest for building (cf. page 20), and timber building may once have been the norm throughout the parish.

Leek manor court, meeting in April 1548, appears to have been taking into account the tenants' needs for the year, so that felling could occur in time for summer building. Of the thirteen jurors, eight had needs of their own to state. Each person's request was recorded as the number of trees required and the purpose for which they were needed. Apart from crucks (or forkes) the main needs were for 'sparres & lattes', 'clamstaves' and 'sylles' (rafters, laths, wattles and sill beams), although other requests included materials for 'a chamb(er) flore', 'durrees & a ladd(er) polle' and 'Walplates'. The word 'Rep(ar)acons', meaning either repairs or finishing touches according to context, also makes frequent appearance. Other requests included that of 'William Dampport baylyff iiii tres for ye Kynges folde', William & John Echels needing 'on Ashe for Whels', and James Brodocke 'on tre for a Weyne'. Specific needs were quantified. William Blackeden, for example, needed 'iiii grete tres for Wheles syls ladul(es)' for Leek mill, while William Hulme needed 'ii polls for sparrs & lattes'. In all 88 people had their requests heard. Together, they required the felling of 229 trees, excluding those required for the thirteen crucks, where the number of trees is unspecified. Since a cruck generally consists of blades formed from the halves of a single tree this is likely to mean 242 trees in all.¹³⁵

Surviving houses built entirely of timber are limited in number, and fall into two categories, box-framed buildings, and cruck buildings with timber-framed external walls (Appendix 5.2). With rare exceptions, these are found where the potential building stone is of poor quality or locally unavailable. The largest number are in the

¹³³SA12/1/3.

¹³⁴SRO D239/M1.

¹³⁵PRO SC2/202/65, 20 April 2EVI (1548).

town itself, where a cluster of buildings span the social and economic scale with fashionable town houses, inns and small cruck dwellings all represented.

Elsewhere in the parish timber walling tends to reflect the presence of either the Edale Shales, the Upper Churnet Shales, or boulder clay and glacial sands and gravels, though fragmentary remains are beginning to be recorded elsewhere, suggesting the survivals may not be totally representative of the original picture. The link certainly fails at Mosslee [45], which is sited on Chatsworth Grit. Here, recent attempts to date the Hall have been unavailing. The trees used for the house apparently grew fast in optimum conditions, providing massive timbers in too short a time to provide suitable samples for dendro-dating.¹³⁶ In this case it would seem that the quality of the material was the positive factor; fine trees were available, and the owner made use of them.

(ii) *Stone*

The majority of the area lies on a Namurian outcrop known as the Millstone Grit Series (cf. pages 2-7). The coarse-grained sandstones which gave rise to the name are found only in the upper half of the series.¹³⁷ These are variable in their thickness and quality. The thin bedded sandstones were suitable for flag or roofing stone, while the more massive beds could be sawn into blocks, and were used extensively for lintels, mullions, quoins and drip-mouldings.¹³⁸ By contrast the main walls reflect the nearest available stone, and the variability of the Series results in a wide range of walling materials of purely local significance.

For prestige buildings the materials might be acquired from further afield. The stone from the Sherwood Sandstone Group which underlies Leek is of the Hawksmoor Formation, and is too poorly cemented to produce durable block stone. By contrast the Hollington Sandstones, also of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, which lie on the Staffordshire-Derbyshire border near Ashbourne, provide an excellent stone in a range of colours from deep red to a creamy white,¹³⁹ and for better quality building, for those who could afford to face with ashlar, this was a likely source.

In this context the medieval churches provide an interesting contrast. St Lawrence Church, Rushton Spencer, built of timbers with a felling date range of 1307

¹³⁶Nottingham University, Tree-ring Dating Department, Report 96/23, Nov. 1996.

¹³⁷Aitkenhead, 1985, 66.

¹³⁸Lott, 2001, 102.

¹³⁹Chisholm, 1988, 131; Lott, 2001, 107-8.

to 1322,¹⁴⁰ runs true to the vernacular pattern outlined above. Lying on boulder clay it was, in its original form, a simple rectangular building with plank walls.¹⁴¹ If St Edward's Church, Leek, had a timber predecessor, what survived was lost when the town was ravaged by fire in 1297.¹⁴² The present building, set in an exposed position to the north of the town, is built of a good quality sandstone. There is no certainty as to the source for the medieval building, but similar stone was used in 1670, when the parish register states 'The fine South Porch of the church was built, stone being got from Horton, lead from Bonsall and Hartington ... and the North aisle was repaired'. As the parish church for a vast area, the normal constraints as to the source of materials did not apply, and it is therefore surprising to find the extant remains of Dieulacres Abbey use local Sherwood Sandstone, the very stone that the more affluent domestic builders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were at pains to avoid. However, the surviving fragments are internal features, whose materials may not be representative of those used for the external walling.

Only rarely is the local Sherwood Sandstone found outside the town and on a building with any pretensions. It is therefore unusual to find the core of the eastern farm at Middle Hulme [119] built of a soft sandstone, and to find stonework showing signs of re-use. Here the sandstone blocks allow relatively thin walls in the oldest part of the building, contrasting with the thickness of the ashlar-faced walls to be found, for example, at Windygates [127] or Brownsett [111]. All three houses were built and occupied by members of the Brough family, yeomen farmers of considerable substance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The family's comparative prosperity seems to have allowed them to acquire stone from a distance; perhaps, in the case of Middle Hulme, from Dieulacres, since there is no other obvious source of re-used stone.

If the Broughs' building materials lie outside the local norm so too do the rare houses which might be considered to be of gentry status. The later-seventeenth-century hall and parlour wing at Rudyard Hall [141] are believed by the owners to be built of stone brought from Warslow, a light-coloured sandstone not available locally. Neither is the creamy sandstone used for Wallgrange [138] of local origins, while externally Harracles Hall [132] is now of brick, a material which does not make a general appearance in this area until the mid-eighteenth century, although Samuel Toft's parlour wing at Haregate dates to the 1720s [160].

¹⁴⁰Nottingham University Tree-Ring Dating Department, Report 96/20.

¹⁴¹Meeson, 1983, 29-35.

Within the town, no major domestic buildings were built primarily of stone before the mid-seventeenth century, when Thomas Parker's building programme engulfed a timber-framed building and half a cottage to produce the handsome stone-mullioned frontage of his new five-hearth house [3].¹⁴³ Set at the northern end of the market place, and built of a hard yellow/brown sandstone, the lawyer's new home provided a modest rival for the timber-framed frontage of Thomas Jolliffe's Hall House [9], built in 1627.¹⁴⁴ Indeed early-seventeenth-century building by Jolliffe in Leek town, and by the Rudyard family on their main country properties [110 and 141], suggests that those living on the Sherwood Sandstone who still had access to good supply of timber used it in preference to stone.

If timber remained the main building material for those who could afford it, or whose estates still had reserves, others had to look elsewhere. Fragments of small houses using the friable Sherwood Sandstone are still visible in the occasional gable end in Leek town, and Thomas Parker's house hides the remains of just such a building. Uncovered during recent renovations, the stonework is a mishmash of material, which may also have derived from Dieulacres [3] (Fig. 6.101).¹⁴⁵ It seems that while the wealthy continued to build in timber into the seventeenth century, the less well endowed settled for second best, perhaps encouraged by successive lords of the manor to make use of the crumbling remains of the abbey.

For the Abbey Farm at Dieulacres [110] and Rudyard Hall [141], both of early-seventeenth century date, the use of abbey stone is indisputable. In 1552 the manor of Leek and Frith, together with the site of Dieulacres Abbey, was granted to Sir Ralph Bagnall, and in 1597 Sir Henry Bagnall conveyed them to Thomas Rudyard.¹⁴⁶ Substantial quantities of architectural fragments lie, largely buried, to the rear of Rudyard Hall, and re-use of stone continued in farm buildings at Dieulacres as late as the eighteenth century. Both houses use stone for the ground floor of otherwise timber-framed buildings, and although carefully re-cut there can be little doubt as to its origin (Figs. 6.16 and 6.26).

While stone was the principal building material everywhere in the area by the middle of the seventeenth century, the use of timber for internal walls and framed

¹⁴²*VCH Staffs* VII, 85.

¹⁴³LRO B/V/5 1614 - 1851; Cleverdon, 1994, 38-48.

¹⁴⁴Sleigh, 1862, 33.

¹⁴⁵Survey for the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council by the City Museum of Stoke on Trent Archaeological Service, 55-6.

¹⁴⁶*VCH Staffs* VII, 101.

chimney stacks continued well into the eighteenth century. Within the town, stone was still used in the early decades of the eighteenth century, with 62 St Edward's Street (1723) and the Old Grammar School (1724) providing the last dated examples [20 and 6]. In the countryside, stone remained the principal building material throughout the eighteenth century, being particularly in evidence in areas of Parliamentary Enclosure, but was increasingly superseded by brick in the nineteenth century.

Certainty about stone sources is rarely possible. Most farms have small quarries where rubble for walling could have been won, and many have rock-cut cellars below their parlours. Enclosure maps indicate stone sources designated for road building and in some cases, as at Wetley Rocks, these may have been used at an earlier period. At Stanley, a recent extension to Wellcroft has been built from stone won by cutting the flat platform on which it is built; in time the match will be perfect [155].

The stone detailing so characteristic of the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth-century houses was, of necessity, quarried elsewhere and dealt with by skilled stone masons, and seems to have been mass-produced by the middle of the seventeenth century (cf. pages 276-7). Cheddleton Grange [38], where a two-bay rubble-walled cruck building of circa 1500 was substantially remodelled in the seventeenth century, sounds a warning note. Here architectural details such as quoins, curvetto dripmoulds and stringcourses, and stone mullioned windows are part of the seventeenth-century remodelling. Nothing remains of earlier window or door details, which were probably of wood, and the earliest openings on the rear wall of Rushtonhall Farm [147], another cruck building, show a similar lack of stone detailing. A strong possibility exists that many of the stone farmhouses on medieval sites have surviving, but unrecognised fragments of medieval work, despite their apparently post-medieval appearance.

(iii) *Brick*

The 1720s and 30s saw brick used by those with 'out-of-country' connections, led by the Wedgwoods at Harracles Hall, where a classical façade and hipped roof conceals an earlier building [132]. Others were more modest in their requirements. Joshua Toft remodelled a semi-detached stone building to form a new parlour wing at Haregate Hall in *circa* 1720 [160],¹⁴⁷ a new parlour was added to Sutton House [63] with side walls of stone, and a similar structure replaced the main range at the Fields [79]. By the middle of the eighteenth century the fashionable town houses were built

¹⁴⁷*VCH Staffs* VII, 237.

entirely of brick [7, 21, 24], while a mixture of stone and brick was more common in the countryside.

(iv) *Materials for roofing and flooring*

Both documentary and structural evidence point to thatch as the commonest form of roofing material on the earlier houses,¹⁴⁸ though surviving examples are rare in North Staffordshire (Fig. 6.51) [164, 172]. Since relatively little grain was grown locally, the materials might be of mixed origin. A tenancy agreement of 1733 for Edge End allowed David Hall 5s 'to buy Straw and Rushes to mix in equal quantity for thatching to be done every year as occasion may require at his own charge'.¹⁴⁹ For the cruck-framed buildings the lack of headroom usually resulted in the raising of the entire roof (Fig. 5.4). Other buildings that were formerly thatched have had their side walls raised by two or three courses, which generally entailed the loss of the original roof timbers [93, 100]. Only occasionally was there sufficient headroom below the thatch for the original roof timbers to survive below a new tiled roof [3]. In all cases, Staffordshire blue tiles became the commonest roofing material from the end of the eighteenth century.



Fig. 5.4 Edge End: a cruck building raised in the nineteenth century

Stone slates¹⁵⁰ were only to be found on the better quality housing. These are still relatively common in Derbyshire, where fissile sandstones were extensively worked for

¹⁴⁸ Sleight, 1883, 4; Miller, 1891, 8.

¹⁴⁹ SRO D3359.

¹⁵⁰ Terminology advocated by English Heritage, 1997, 1; 1998, 2.

roofing slates.¹⁵¹ Presumably they could also be won from quarries within the parish as a number of houses lack the high coping, and raised side walls indicative of thatch. Surviving examples are rare [113] due to the proximity of the Potteries and the ease of access to blue-tiles in the nineteenth century.



Fig. 5.5 Buxton Brow: stone tiling on the rear of an early-eighteenth century house

Flag floors suffered a similar fate. These too, as an original feature, are likely to have been confined to the better quality housing in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, and were generally replaced by quarry tiles in the nineteenth century. For the smaller house beaten earth floors were more likely in the houseplace and service rooms, with the occasional example surviving into the twentieth century [70]. Parlours were generally positioned above a cellar and originally had timber floors, though brick-vaulting and quarry tiles have replaced them in a number of cases when the earlier timber work has rotted away [92, 100].

CONCLUSION

Throughout the period from 1500 to 1750, Leek and its former chapelries had an essentially pastoral economy. Such is the picture painted by the probate documents; such would be the expectation of the local farmers, whose present patterns of activity have changed in detail but not in substance. Search the material presented by other sources and the picture becomes more complex, with evidence pointing to a low key industrial base, furthered initially by the interests of the yeomen farmers and minor

¹⁵¹ Lott, 2001, 101-2.

gentry, and later requiring external input either from those with major capital or those with the expertise to develop the older handicrafts along new lines.

Set in hill country in an area of high rainfall, water power was readily available for corn-mills, fulling mills and bloomerics, together with a single paper mill at Bearda, and eventually a forge at Consall, together with a related slitting mill. While the corn-mills continued to grind, the iron industry began to fade in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, and the local production of cloth remained as a low key background in the face of external purchases.

None-the-less, this quiet background, in which many people were familiar with some aspect of the textile industry, proved by the later seventeenth century to be a fruitful ground in which to introduce the working of mohair and silk. The elusive nature of this particular form of cottage industry is represented by the occasional list of wares in the inventory of a local chapman, where the existence of button making becomes apparent, and which lingered on into the twentieth century to provide buttons for ecclesiastical garments (Fig. 5.5). Such was the industry which eventually developed into full-scale industrial production of silk thread and narrow wares in the nineteenth century, in which dyeing played a major part.

CHAPTER SIX Wealth and poverty: the evidence of the housing

INTRODUCTION

Buildings are often the most prominent form of archaeology in the landscape, and at the domestic level they can give considerable insight into the living standards and social expectations of their former occupants. Yet they are all too often ignored, either by archaeologists whose definition of field archaeology stops well short of the roofline, or by historians who fail to see them as documents to be read.

The fault may well lie with the building specialists, whose accounts are often more concerned with technicalities than with patterns of consumption. Despite this a number of scholars, from Maurice Barley and W.G. Hoskins onwards, have been well aware that buildings can be studied, not as ends in themselves, but for the contribution they make to history in general.¹ The presence or absence of domestic buildings at a given period, their scale, detailing and internal layout can all shed light on their occupants' place in society, or the state of the economy in which they operated. Their presence may reflect the expansion of settlement, a change of land-use, or contrasting circumstances in manor, parish or township at least as clearly as many of the documentary sources, and if both are available then the evidence of each may be amplified and enlightened.

As the earlier chapters have been at pains to suggest, North Staffordshire was slow to develop, and Leek lay in the centre of an area which for much of its history was poor and under-exploited. It should come as no surprise to find that little of its medieval housing has survived, or that the upper echelons of society who so pre-occupied Harrison and King are totally un-represented in the surviving housing stock.²

Terms such as gentleman, yeoman and husbandman, though present in the local vocabulary from the seventeenth century onwards, had their own significance on a local scale, and it is that local scale and the shifting nature of its society to which the buildings bear witness. Those perceived as gentry by their neighbours in the seventeenth and earlier part of the eighteenth century would mainly have gone unnoticed in a wider society, while the broad use of the word yeoman covered a width of circumstances, verging at one end on gentry status, and at the other indicating little more than the independent adult status of a former husbandman.

¹ Pearson, 1998, 167.

² Edelen, 1968, 94-115; Thirsk and Cooper, 1972, 780-1.

PART ONE: RURAL HOUSING

The houses of the established gentry³

(i) The medieval period

Only a handful of buildings in Leek pre-date 1500. Nothing is visible at Dieulacres apart from the lowest courses of the crossing piers, some architectural fragments,⁴ and a blocked four-centred arch in the rear wall of Abbey Farm, Leekfrith (Fig. 6.16). Elsewhere the manorial and major tenant houses have been rebuilt, leaving only two late-fifteenth century houses to represent them.

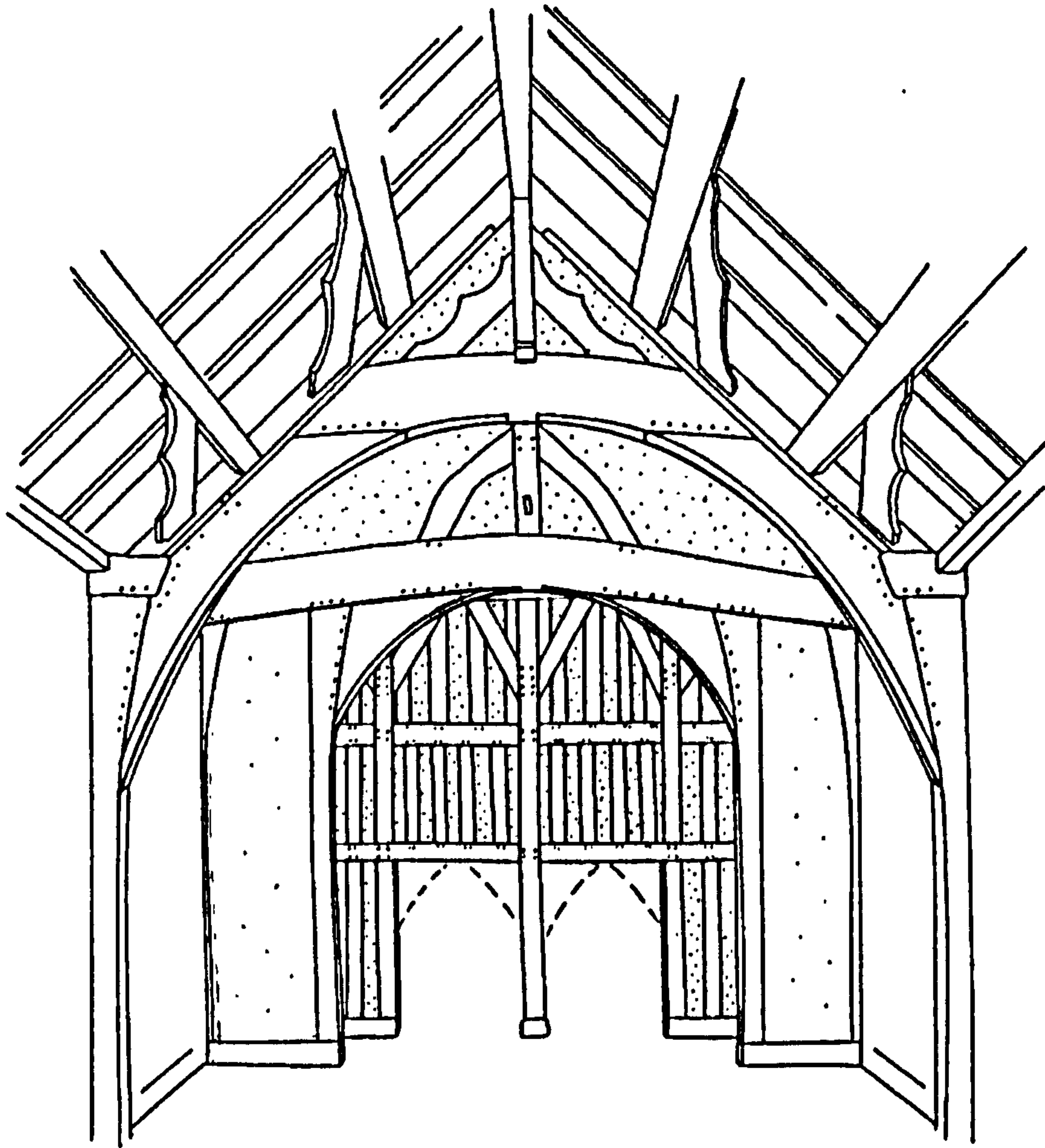


Fig. 6.1 Mosslee Hall, Basford: a reconstruction drawing of the lower end of the hall.

Mosslee Hall, Basford [45] consisted of a timber-framed open hall and cross passage with crosswings at either end, arranged in the compact rectangular form characteristic of the fifteenth century.⁵ Subsequently the lower wing was extended, and

³ A KEY to conventions used for illustrations and cross-referencing is in Appendix 6.1, and details from descriptive inventories are in Appendix 6.2.

⁴ Klemperer, 1995. A survey produced for the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

⁵ Wood, 1965, 197

the upper wing was rebuilt in stone. Though idiosyncratic in design, this was a building to rival the medieval halls of Cheshire, and belongs to a small group of high status buildings scattered across the Midlands within a thirty-five mile radius of Birmingham which share certain structural characteristics.⁶

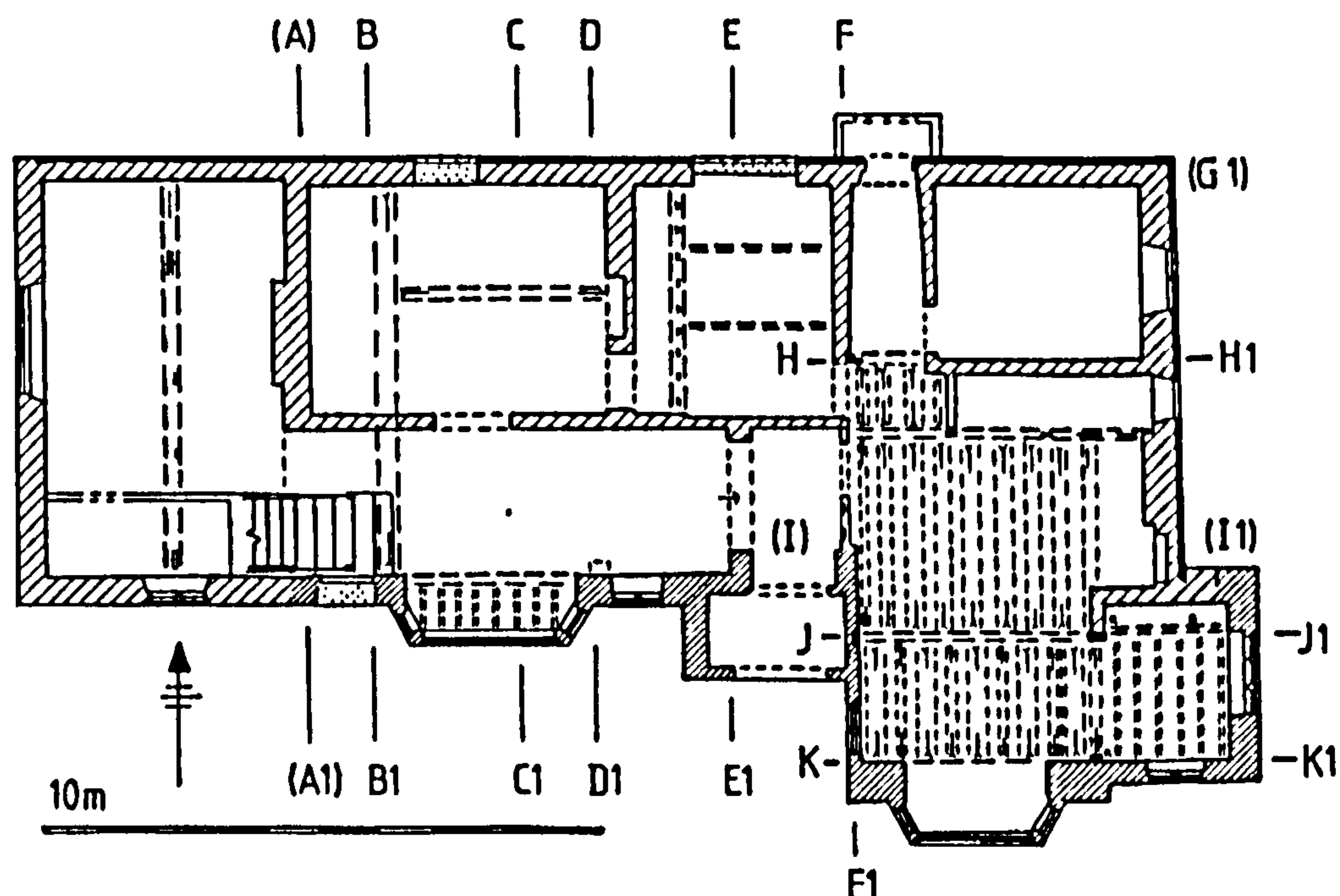


Fig. 6.2 *Mosslee, Basford: the ground plan. Trusses A-F mark the position of the open hall, G-I the original extent of the service crosswing, J and K the phase two extension. Under-building is marked as a solid line. Brackets show missing trusses.*

The hall roof consists of six trusses dividing it into irregular segments (Figs. 6.2 and 6.6). The upper end was protected from the effects of smoke by a narrow bay flanked by a closed truss (A), which was removed when a chimney stack was inserted, and a truss which was closed above its tiebeam (B). C is difficult to explain in structural terms unless the narrow space between trusses C and D housed a louvre, but its decorative effect was to divide the hall into balanced sections. The spere truss (E) defined the cross passage whose eastern side was completed in a dramatic style with a closed truss (F) using close studding and diagonal braces (Fig. 6.3 and 6.4).⁷

Truss D is a post and rafter truss with stub tiebeams, stub tenons and arch braces which rise to a broad collar supporting a kingpost with cusped down braces (Figs. 6.1 and 6.4). A kingpost in various forms is a feature of all the surviving trusses, each being treated to a crude but effective form of decoration which relied on giving a flat piece of wood its own individual outline (Fig. 6.5). A tenoned ridge plate and a double row of tenoned purlins support the common rafters, and a decorative effect is produced by a series of cusped windbraces (Fig. 6.6).

⁶ Alcock and Woodfield, 1996, 56.

⁷ Terms relating to timber-framed buildings are based throughout on Alcock, 1996.

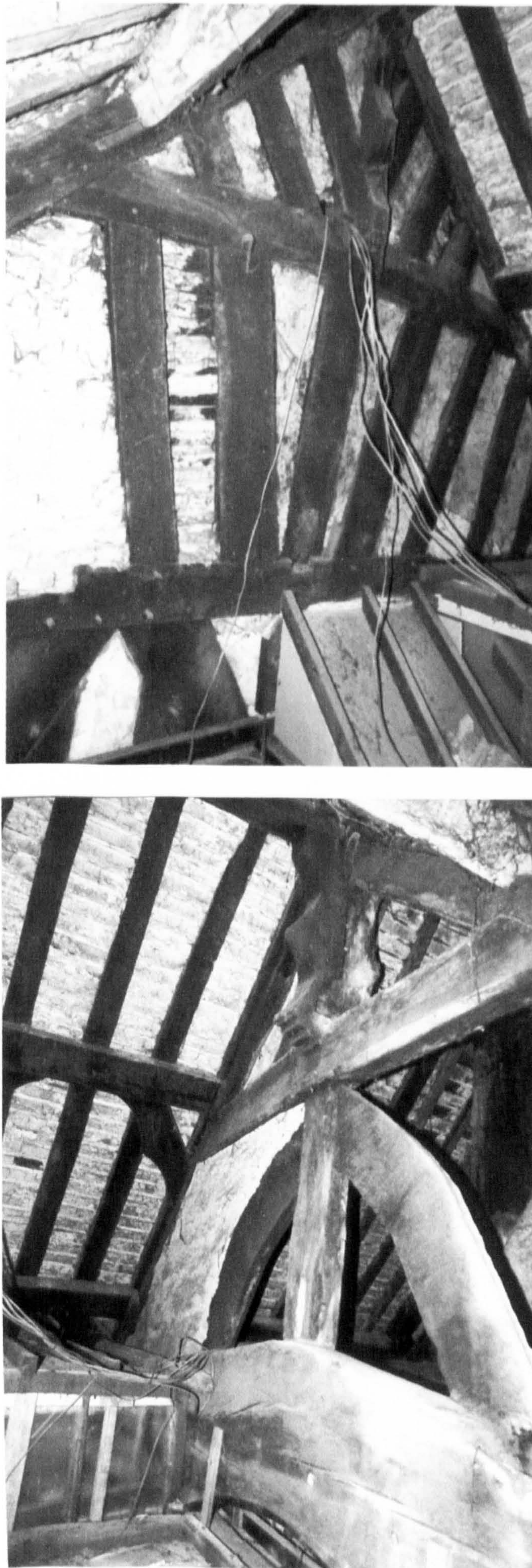


Figure 6.3 Mosslee Hall :
(above) truss F, the closed truss forming the east side of the cross passage
(below) truss E, the spere truss

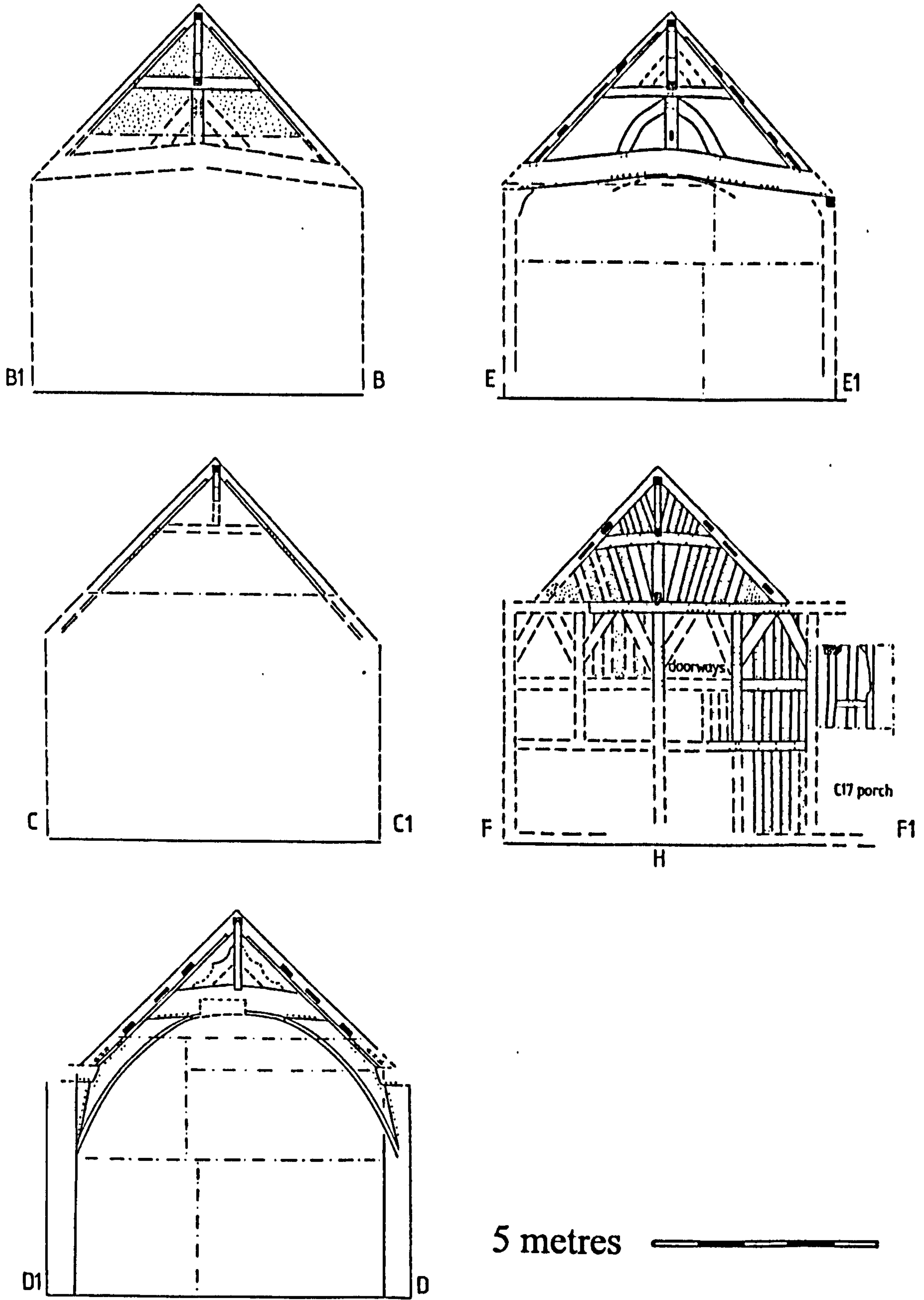


Fig. 6.4 Mosslee Hall, Basford: the roof trusses of the hall.

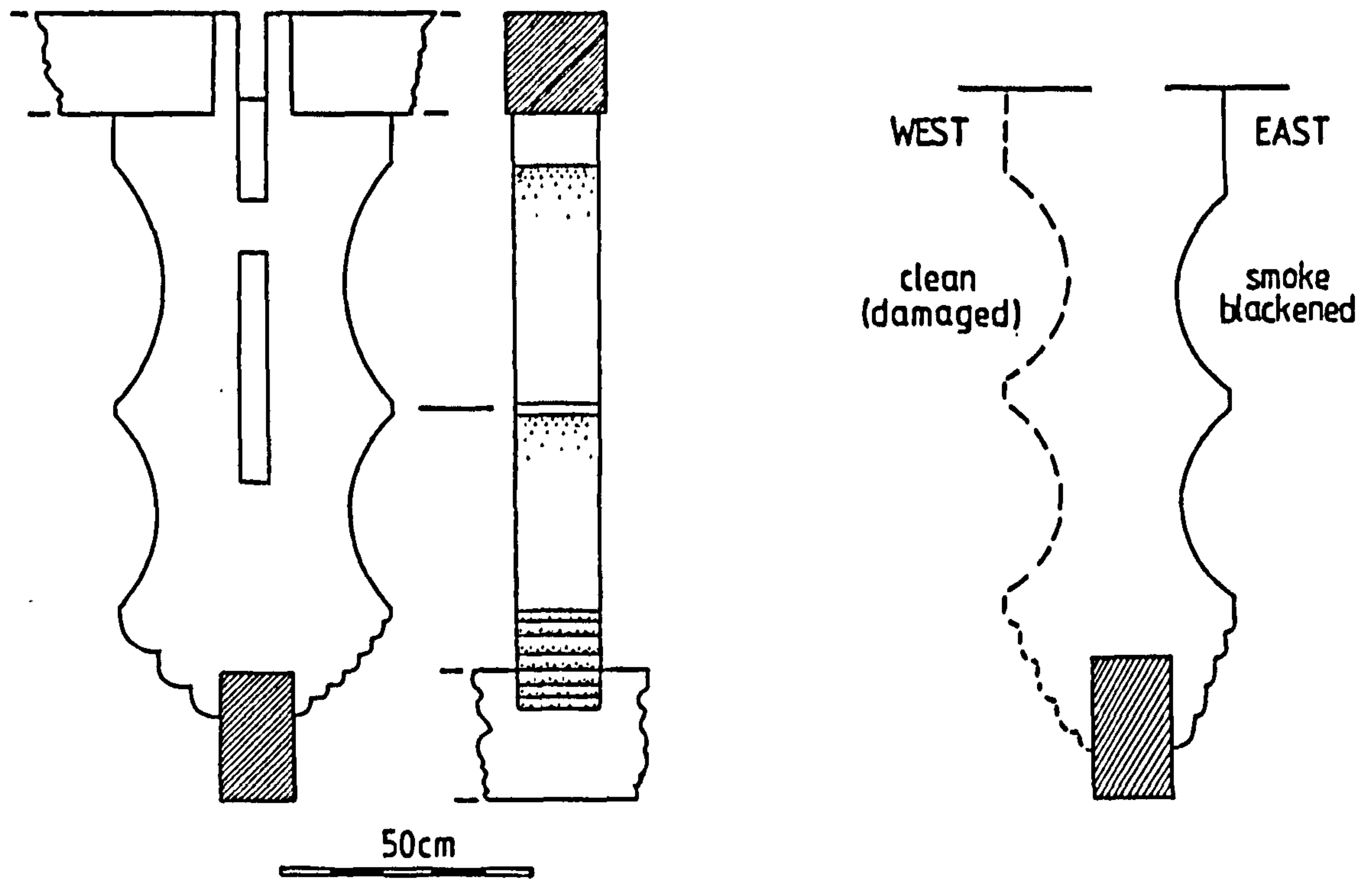


Fig. 6.5 Mosslee Hall, Basford: the kingposts of truss B (right) and truss E (left).

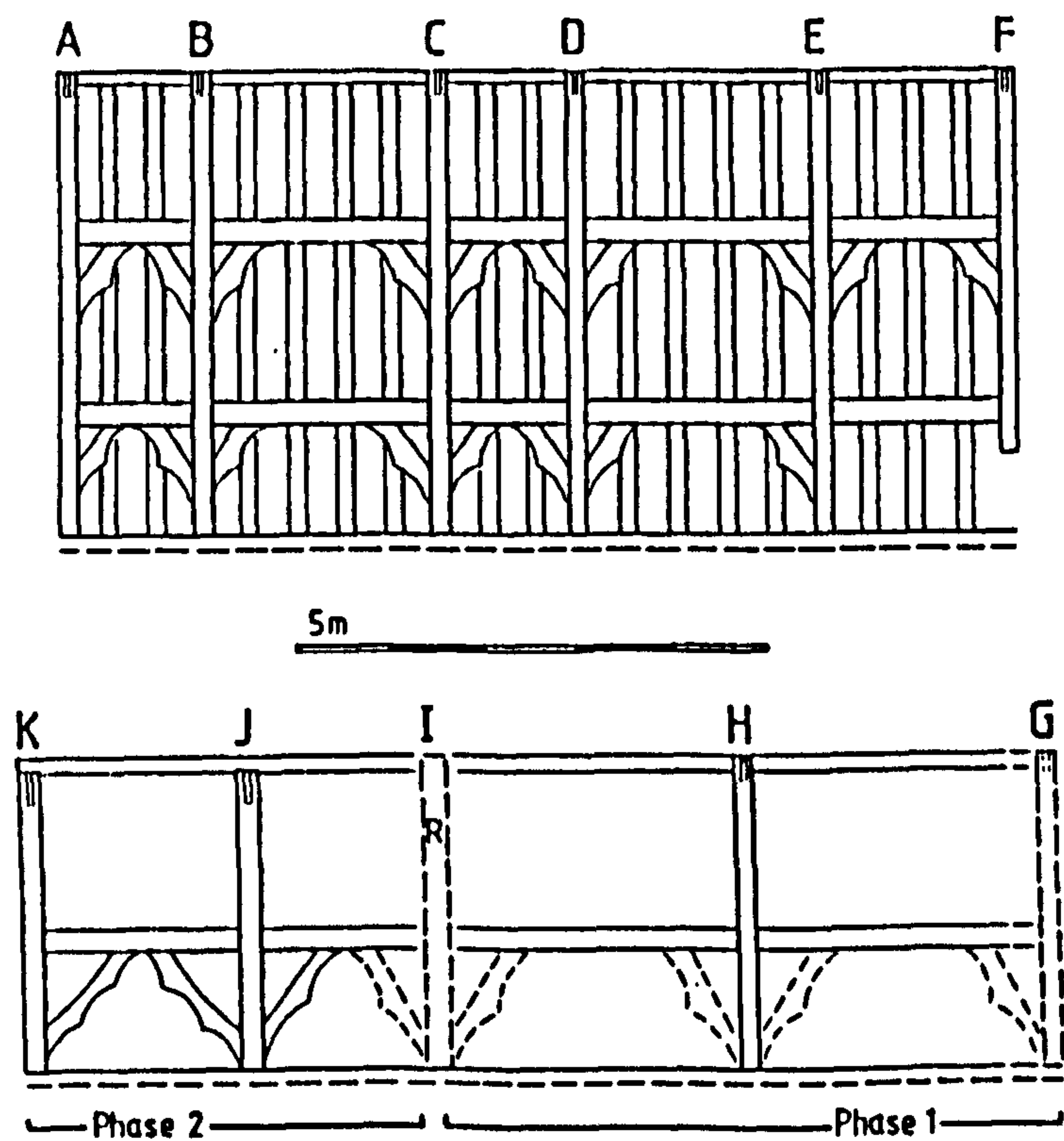


Fig. 6.6 Mosslee Hall, Basford: the hall roof (above); the crosswing roof (below)

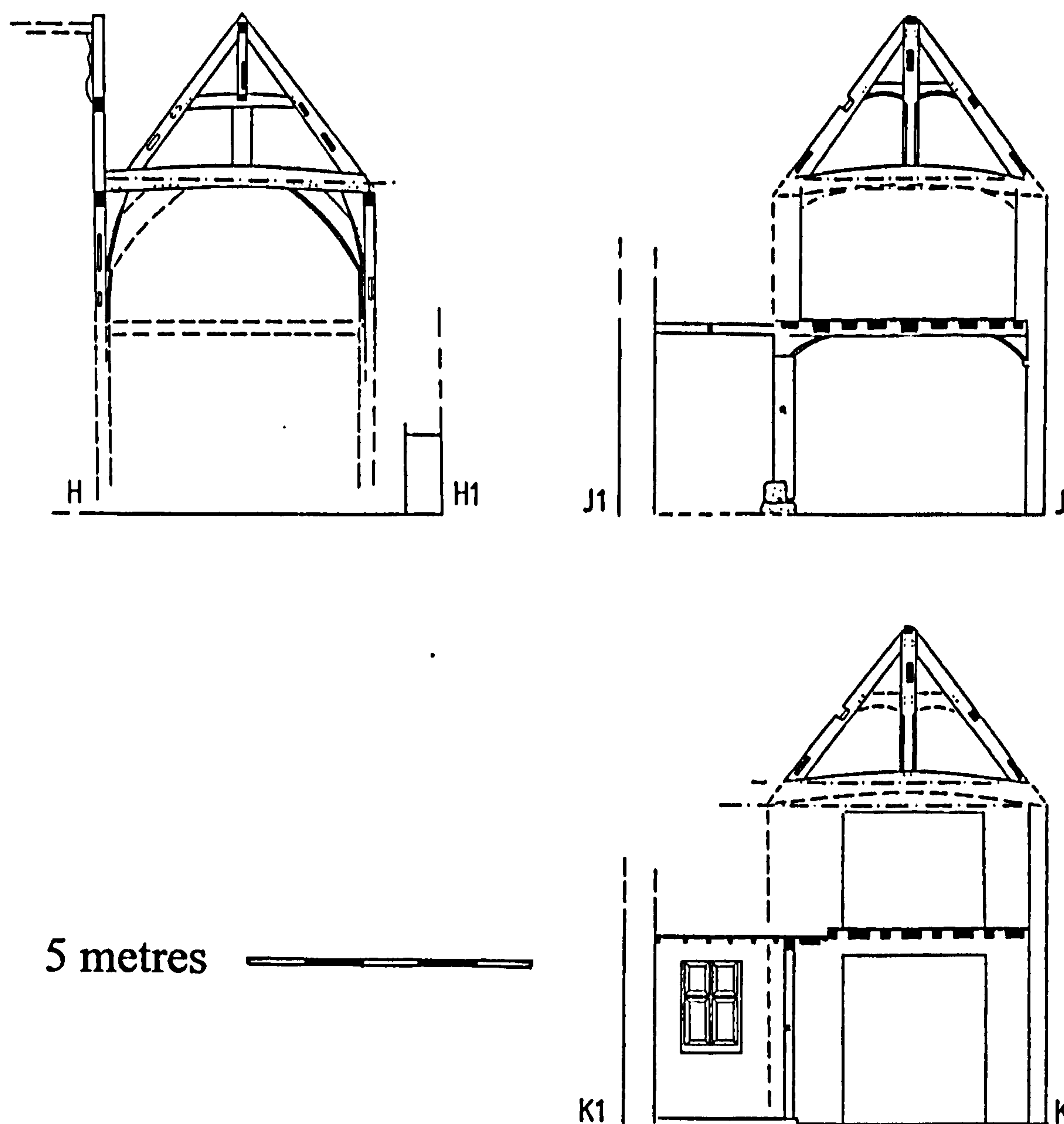


Fig. 6.7 Mosslee Hall, Basford: the crosswing roof trusses. Truss H belongs to phase one, trusses J and K to phase two. The plinth height is shown adjacent to H1.

The evidence of the first phase purlins in the crosswing, which terminated at (I) (Fig. 6.2), indicates the extent of the original building, where rooms were laid out on either side of a passageway to the south of truss H (Fig. 6.6 and 6.7).

Circa 1500, the southern bay was extended to provide a dining room⁸ and a chamber above. A fine ceiling with massive, closely spaced joists supporting wide floorboards is the key feature visible at ground floor level (Fig. 6.8). The roof trusses of the later phase consist of principal rafter and tiebeam trusses with a kingpost supporting a ridge plate, and braced laterally by a divided collar (Fig. 6.7, J and K). The principal change in constructional terms was the use of trenched purlins with carefully carpentered joints of the type later used at Finney Lane (Fig. 6.15). Though

⁸ Wood, 1965, 62.



Figure 6.8 Mosslee Hall.

(above) the exterior from the south-west..

(below) the ceiling of the medieval crosswing, inserted in phase two.



trenched purlins are the norm in this area, they are usually coupled with halved joints, and a far cruder approach to the details of the carpentry.

At some stage large parts of the building, including the upper range, were underbuilt with a tall plinth of sandstone blocks (marked on Fig. 6.2 by a solid line). Its relationship to truss H, which spans only part of the cross-wing (Fig. 6.7), suggests that there was a pentice against the eastern wall, covering the end of the service passage, and leading towards a detached kitchen.

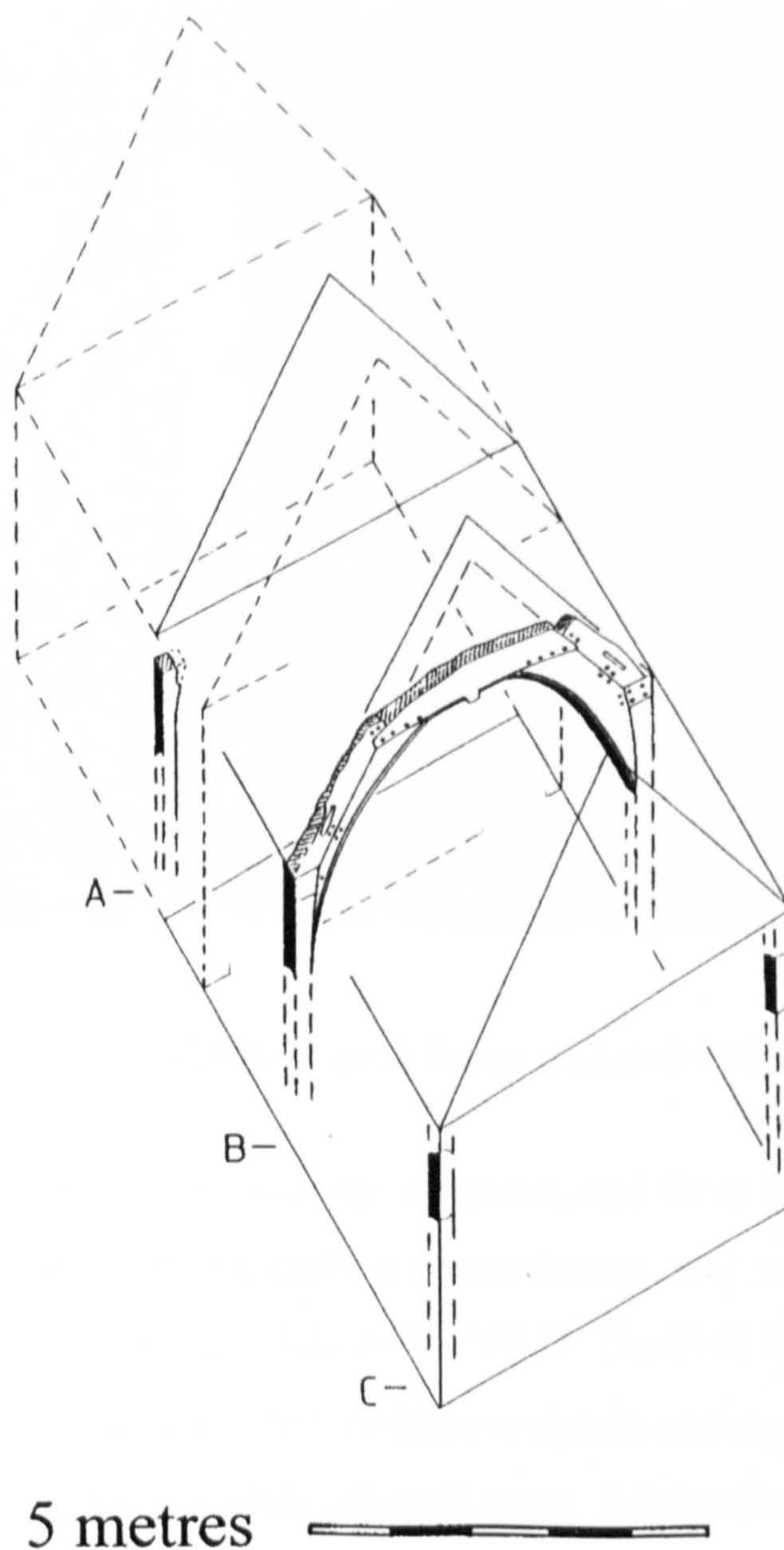


Fig. 6.9 The Hall House, Cheddleton

Though much smaller, the Hall House, Cheddleton [43] shares a similar style of carpentry, and consisted of a two-bay open hall, cross passage and a service area (Fig. 6.9). No evidence survives for an upper range. The surviving truss is an arch-braced post and rafter truss with a collar, stub tie beam and stub tenons (Figs. 6.9 and 6.10), and is comparable to truss D at Mosslee (Fig. 6.4).



Fig. 6.10 The Hall House, Cheddleton: arch brace and stub tiebeam of the open truss.

Documentation for these buildings is sparse, and there is nothing to link them to a specific builder. Mosslee is clearly a gentry house, and was occupied by Hugh Hollyns when he was fined for knighthood in 1583.⁹ The Hall House lies on a spur of land above the River Churnet close to Cheddleton church and the manor mill, where its name, position, and architectural style all set it apart. A lease from Edward Egerton to Ralph Fenton in 1611 had, as the additional lives, the sons of John Hollins of Mosslee, and James Whitehall of Whitehough, two of the wealthiest men in the area, suggesting they were trustees for the building which was in use for the manor court.¹⁰ The stylistic link between the Hall House and Mosslee Hall suggests both buildings may have had manorial connections.

⁹ Sleight, 1883, 138.

¹⁰ SRO D 239/M 3096; D239/M 2975.

Alcock has identified seventeen buildings with post and rafter roofs with stub tiebeams, to which Mosslee must be added. All lie within a thirty-five mile radius of Birmingham, and include Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire. That this type of truss was confined to prestigious structures is confirmed by the inclusion of guildhalls at Newport and Warwick.¹¹

A mid-late fifteenth-century date has been suggested for all of these buildings, supported by felling dates of 1447 for timbers from the Hall House at Sawbridge, Warwickshire, 1475 for the Hall House at Cheddleton,¹² and 1487 for the Guildhall at Newport, Shropshire. Tree-ring dating at Mosslee proved unsuccessful; although massive timbers were available, they were taken from fast growing trees and contained insufficient rings.¹³

(ii) *The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*

Despite the silence of the earlier probate documents (Appendix 4.1), the social distinctions so apparent to William Harrison¹⁴ come gradually into focus towards the end of sixteenth century, and are increasingly evident thereafter. In 1583 only seven local men were of sufficient substance to be, in theory, eligible for knighthood.¹⁵ By 1626 the number had risen to 32,¹⁶ and the courtesy title of 'master' 'mistress' or 'esquire' prefaced 56 names in the Hearth Tax returns of 1666 (Appendix 6.5).¹⁷ Inflation¹⁸ ensured that the first two groups were not strictly comparable, but prosperity was increasing,¹⁹ and the steady rise in the price of agricultural products²⁰ meant growing wealth for this farming community, whose expectations came to include new or improved housing.

Only two buildings can be directly linked to the Fines for Knighthood of 1583.²¹ John Ashenhurst's house at Bradnop was replaced in the eighteenth century; John Whitehough's successors rebuilt in Ipstones; Thomas Hammersley's house at Shaw in Cheddleton has been replaced in brick, and the others remain to be identified. Thus, with the exception of Mosslee, the only survivor is John Wedgwood's house at

¹¹ Alcock and Woodfield, 1996, 56, 61.

¹² *VA* 29, 1998, 105.

¹³ Nottingham University Tree-Ring Dating Report 96/23, November 1996.

¹⁴ Edelen, 1968, 94.

¹⁵ Sleight, 1883, 138.

¹⁶ *SHC* II, part 2 (1883), 3-22.

¹⁷ *SHC*, 1925, 155-242.

¹⁸ Bowden, 1967, 594-597.

¹⁹ *Husbands*, 1987, 353.

²⁰ Bowden, 1967, Fig. 11, 595.

²¹ Sleight, 1883, 138.

Harracles, Longsdon [132], where an older building lies concealed behind a handsome eighteenth century façade (Fig. 6.36). Here an L-shaped house consists of a central hall flanked by service and parlour wings. What may once have been a medieval open hall is divided laterally to give an entrance hall at the front and back of the building, and is partially floored over. The service wing contains a single large room with the bressumer for a firehood spanning the whole of the rear wall. Straight joints a few inches apart on the exterior of the parlour wing suggest that brick replaced timber, and the owners state that the present roof has been raised over a surviving structure.

Wedgwood's inventory confirms the assessment of 1583 (Appendix 6.2). With goods valued at £426 he was, by local standards, an extremely wealthy man. Lavishly furnished, the ground floor of his house is described as containing hall, parlour, two kitchens and buttery. A workhouse with 'bacon at the roof',²² suggests a separate building with an open hearth, possibly the detached brick building behind the service wing, which contains earlier features (Figs. 4.5 and 6.36).

Of the remaining gentry houses built by *circa* 1641, two were associated with the Finney family, who were mentioned elsewhere in the Fines for Knighthood.²³ Both replace earlier buildings, and are cross-passage houses. At Finney Lane, Basford [42] the central range is flanked by projecting wings (Figs. 6.11 and 6.13), and there is evidence for a sequence of building ending with the service wing, where a date stone, inscribed WF AF 1610 links the building to William and Alice Finney. The parlour wing was constructed first, and is marked by the absence of re-used timbers, and the presence of back purlins with joints comparable with those used in the late-medieval phase at Mosslee Hall (Fig. 6.15, Y). Smoke-blackened crucks from a former open hall were re-used in the central range, and un-blackened crucks in the service wing, suggesting the systematic demolition of a sizeable building, and its replacement by the present house.

There is nothing pretentious about the well-balanced exterior (Fig. 6.11). The interior has post and plank partitions in the parlour and the hall, and close studding in the service wing (Fig. 6.15). A stone staircase rose from the back of the hall. Major cooking hearths served both the hall and the service wing, suggesting a similar distinction to that made for houses in Cumberland, between the 'better kitchen' and the

²² LRO John Wedgwood, 1590.

²³ Sleight, 1883, 175; *VCH Staffs*, VII, 187.



Fig. 6.11 (above) Finney Lane from the southwest.

Fig. 6.12 (below) Fairboroughs from the east showing the added 'backhouse'. The ragged joint on the left of the service wing is the result of nineteenth century extension.



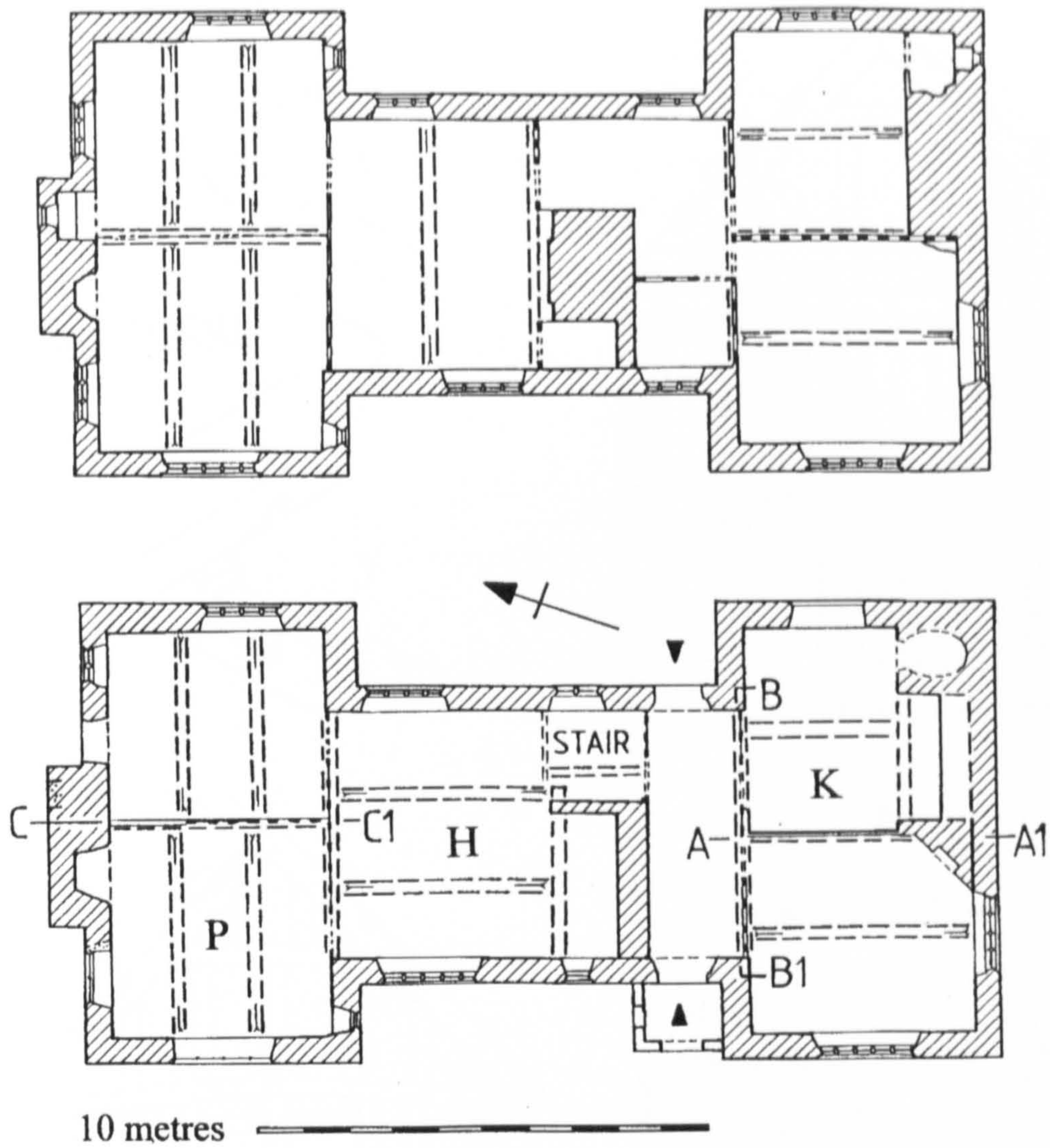


Fig. 6.13 *Finney Lane, Basford: ground floor (below), upper floor (above)*

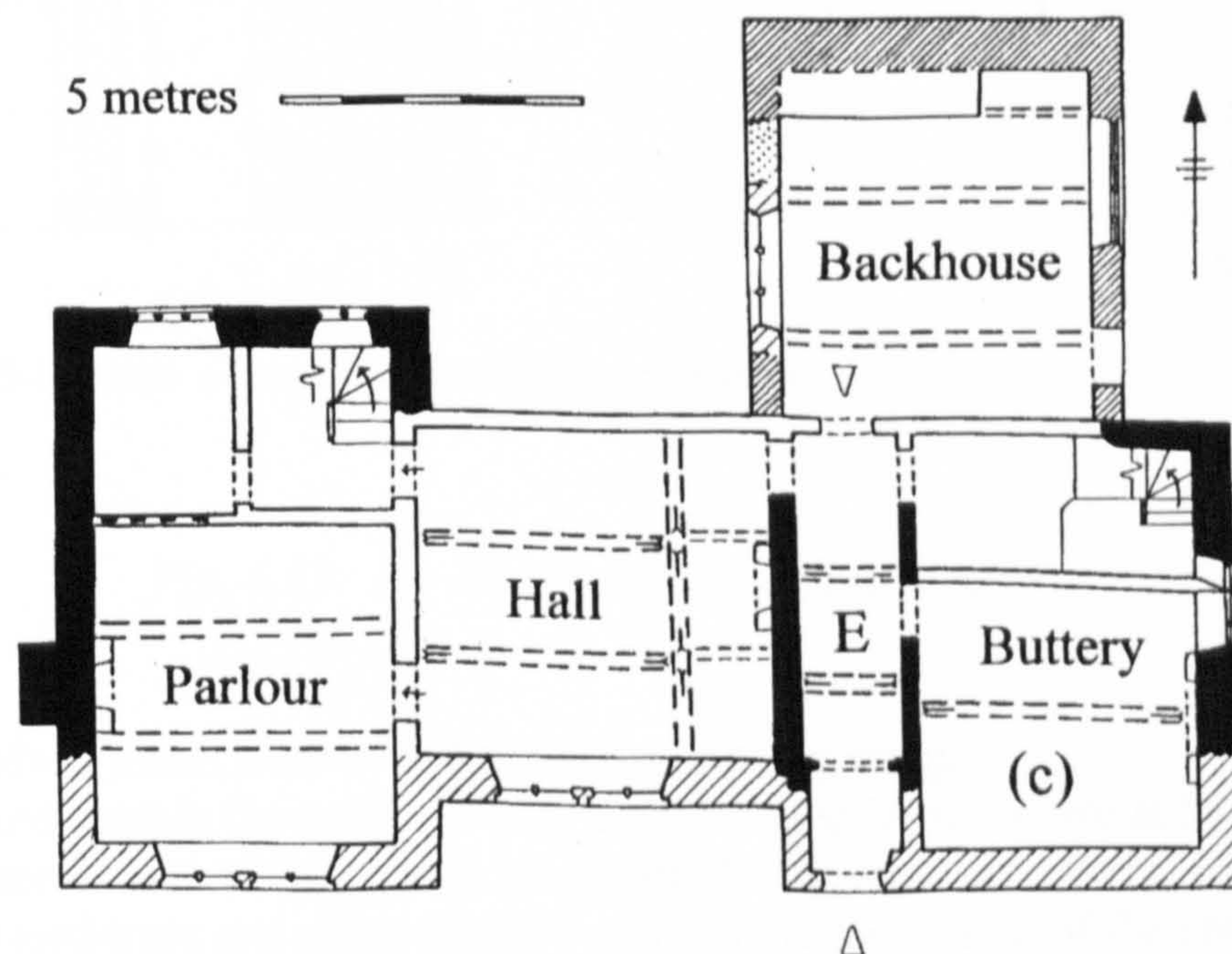


Fig. 6.14 *Fairboroughs, Heaton: the ground plan.*
 KEY: black = the earliest stonework; white = brick replacing timber.

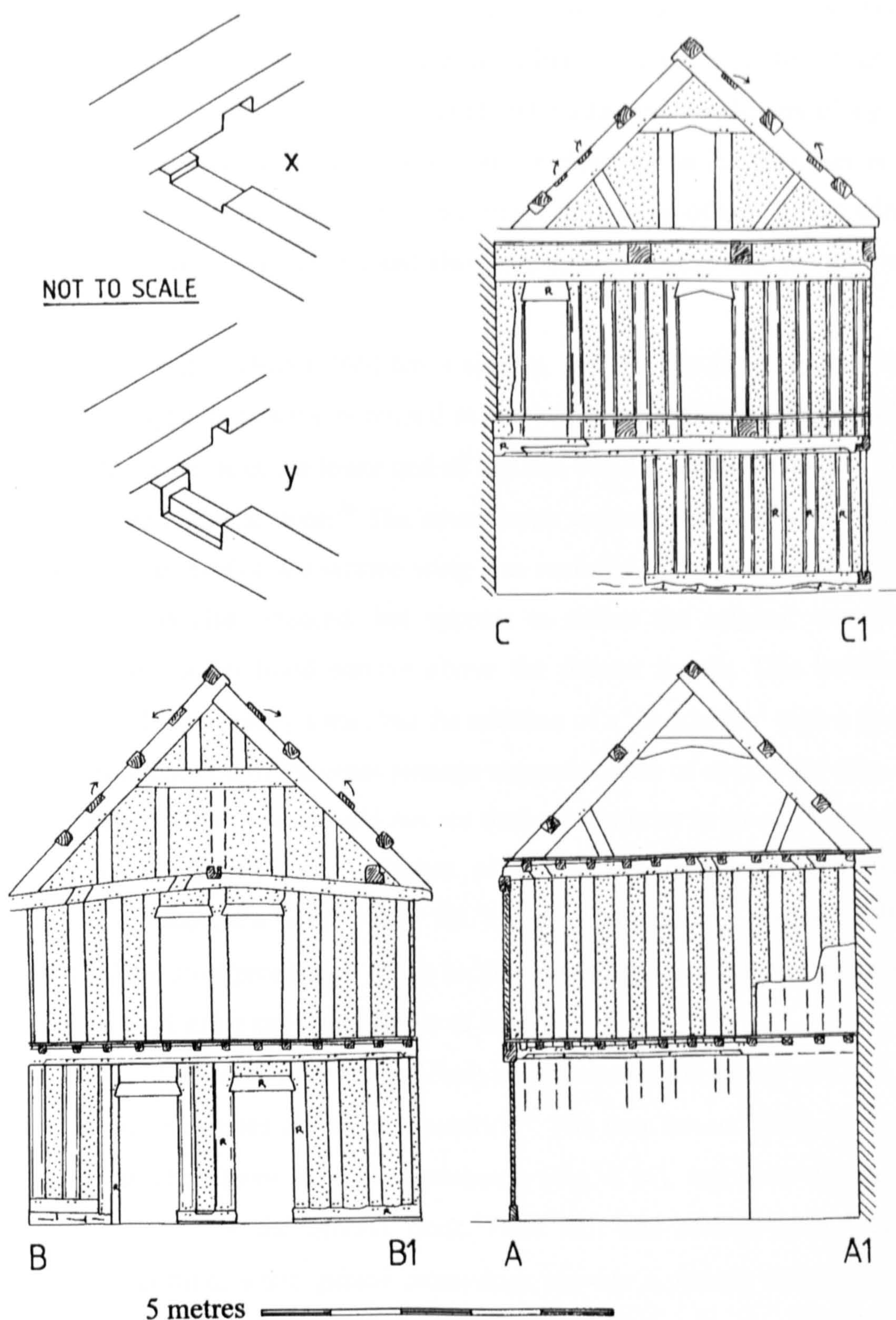


Fig. 6.15 Finney Lane, Basford: sections

KEY:

- X the halved joints used over the hall and service wing.
 - Y the joint used in the parlour wing, the type used in phase two at Mosslee Hall.
 - A-A1 the lateral truss of the service range which is open at attic level.
 - B-B1 the closed truss and close-studded wall on the lower side of the cross passage.
 - C-C1 the roof truss and post and plank walls of the parlour wing.
- Stippling indicates past or present infill of panels.

'downhouse, or kitchen' where such activities as baking and brewing took place.²⁴

Two stone hearths served the parlour wing, completing the four hearths of the hearth tax totals.²⁵ In addition the parlour chambers had the rare luxury of a garde-robe built into the external stack, with provision for clearance at its base. Set in the wall above the bread oven, are the stairs to the single attic room of the service wing. Stairs to the attics of the parlour wing must also have existed, as the hall chamber was open to the rafters.

Fairboroughs, Heaton [66] has a similar, but less regular plan, and part of the earlier house appears to have remained *in situ* when the rebuilding began (Fig. 6.14). Here too the hearth is at the lower end of the hall beside a cross-passage, a customary position in the highland zone.²⁶ The seventeenth century roof survives above parlour and hall, but the roof of the service wing was replaced in the nineteenth century. The hall ceiling was also replaced, but appears to reflect the original arrangement, as fragments from a fire-hood survive above the present hearth. This building is less securely dated than Finney Lane, but the addition of a 'backhouse' with a four-centred arch covering one end of the cross passage suggests a date of *circa* 1600 (Fig. 6.12).

Contemporary opinion did not see timber as inferior to stone. If it had, then the major houses built by the wealthiest of the local men would have used stone throughout. Instead, the houses built for Thomas Rudyard and William Jolliffe, who represented the most prosperous of the local manorial and commercial interests, all had ground floors of stone and upper floors of timber.

In 1597 Thomas Rudyard, of Rudyard purchased the manor of Leek, and with it the site of Dieulacres Abbey in Leekfrith.²⁷ His new house [110], dating to 1612, incorporated fabric from the abbey gatehouse (Fig. 6.16), and stone derived from the abbey was used for the ground floor. Here hall and service rooms lie under a continuous roofline, while gabled crosswings provide a parlour wing and two-storey porches to front and rear. At Rudyard Hall [141] a similar building, without crosswings, forms the core of a much larger house, and has an internal date stone of 1635 (Fig. 6.26). The remaining gentry houses were largely of stone, though houses of all sizes had timber-framed internal walls, and oak was used generously in roofs and floors.

²⁴ Brunskill, 1953, 162-3, quoting J. Clark, 1787, *Survey of the Lakes*.

²⁵ *SHC*, 1925, 155-142.

²⁶ Barley, 1967, 720.

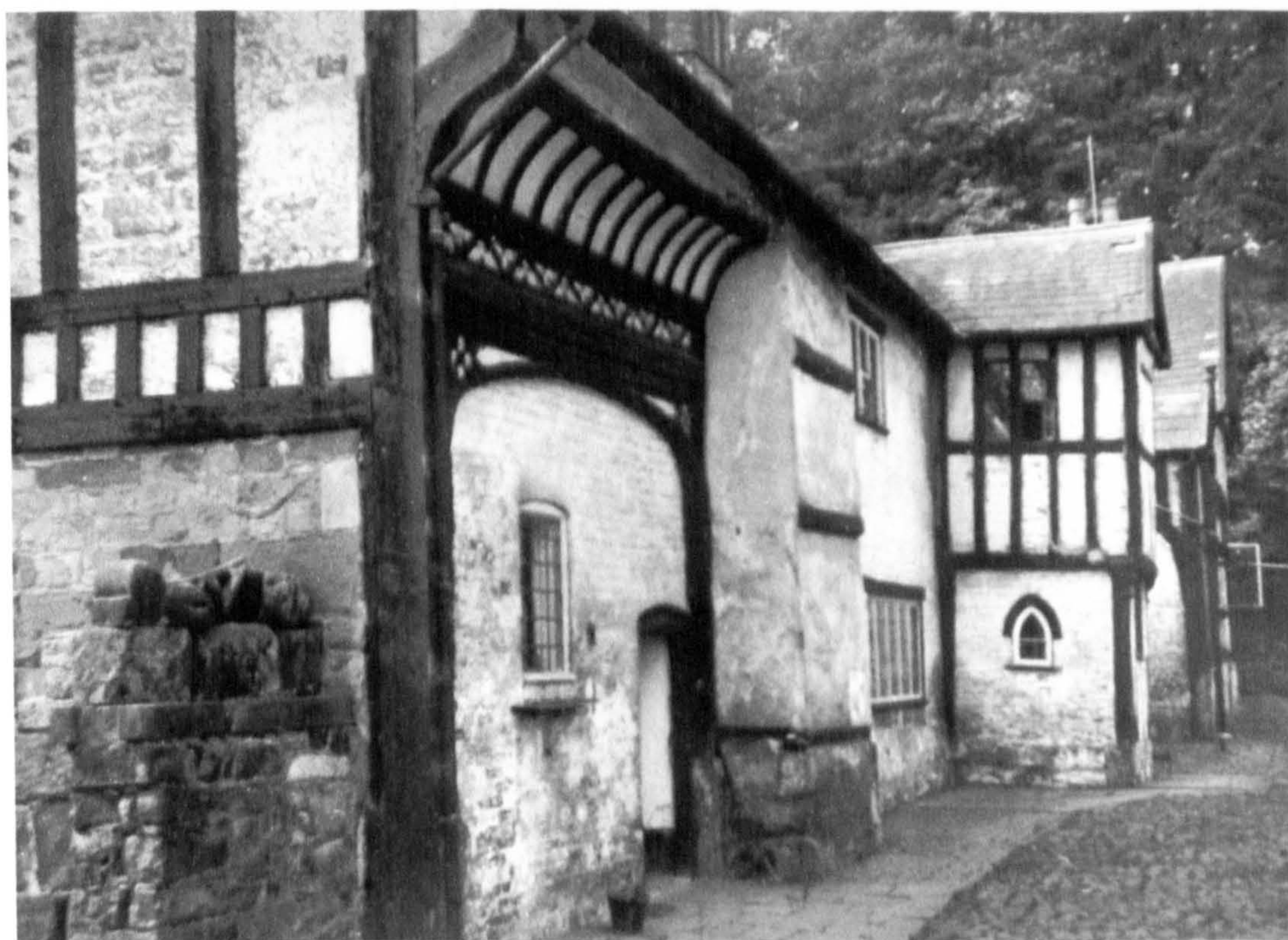
²⁷ Sleight, 1883, 25.



Fig. 6.16 Abbey Farm, Leekfrith

(above) the farmhouse from the south west (circa 1900)²⁸

(below) the farmhouse from the east with the arch of the former gatehouse.



© Crown copyright. NMR

²⁸ Moss, 1903, 222.

Here, as elsewhere in England, the majority of gentry houses retained a plan that was broadly medieval but with the addition of a first floor throughout.²⁹ At the forefront of this development was Mosslee Hall [45], where the south front was encased in stone *circa* 1600. In addition it was given canted bays and a gabled extension to the east (Fig. 6.17). Also of this period is the porch which marks the southern end of the cross passage. The northern end was later blocked and the rear doorway moved eastwards (Fig. 6.2). The upper wing seems to have survived until the 1640s, when everything except the stone plinth underpinning the rear was demolished, and replaced by a plain wing with two-light mullioned windows. The remaining exterior walls also date to this period.



Fig. 6.17 Mosslee Hall, Basford: from an early postcard (courtesy of J. Swindlehurst)

Inside, the changes included the flooring over of the hall, the creation of an attic between trusses A and D, and the insertion of an attic floor of lime-ash into the eastern crosswing. When the western wing was completed, it was provided with a fine oak staircase with splat balusters (Fig. 6.137).

The remaining gentry houses were rebuilt slightly later, and lack a cross-passage. The Ashes, Endon [52] and Windygates, Leekfrith [127] have a hall flanked by projecting parlour and service wings, the Dairyhouse, Horton [78] was originally C-shaped, and Stanlowe, Longsdon [136] has crosswings contained within a rectangular

²⁹ Barley, 1967, 718-9.



*Fig. 6.18 Windygate:
(above) the main façade.
(below) the roof of the service wing, a large-scale version of the typical roof type.*



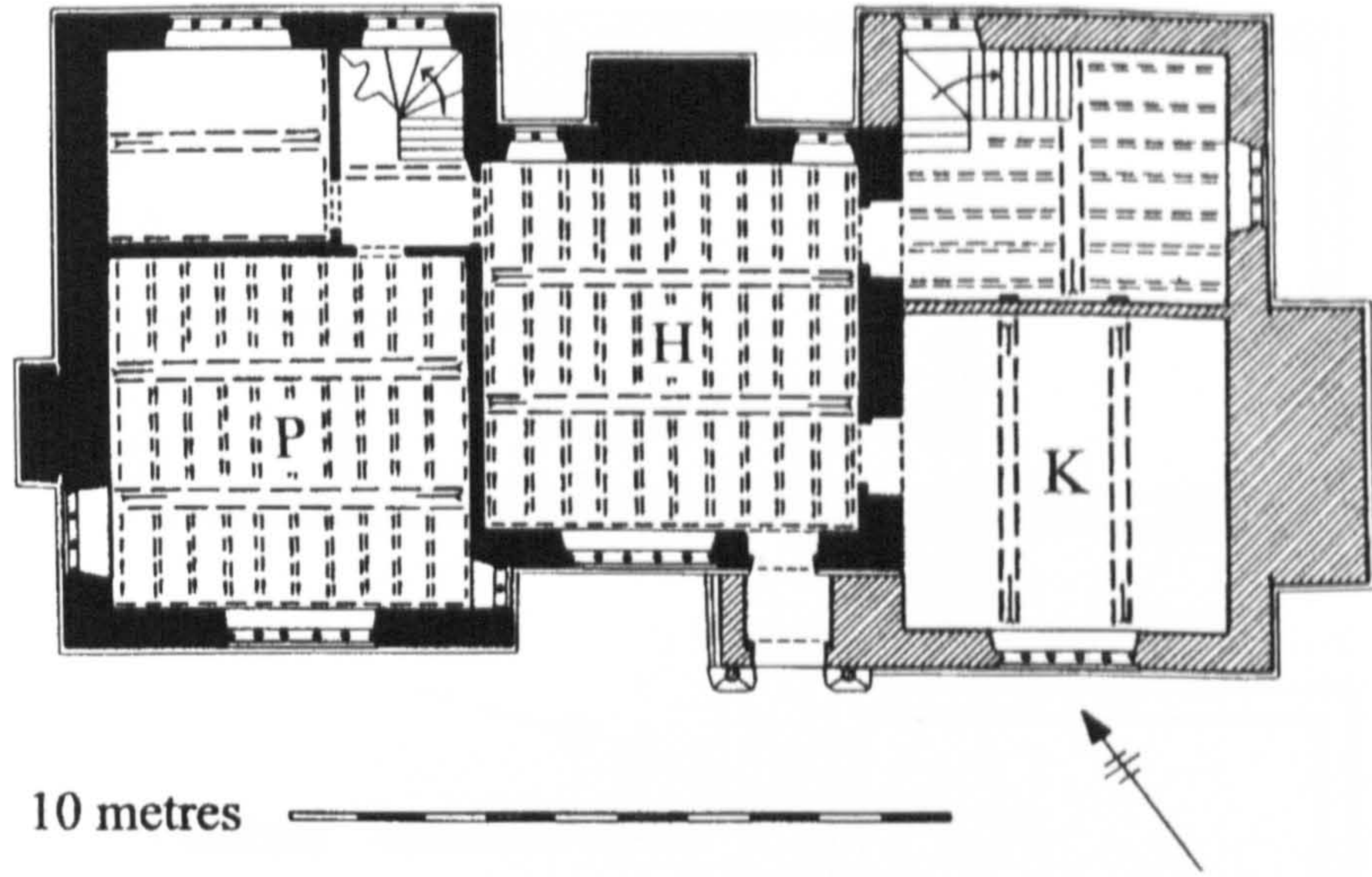


Fig. 6.19 *Windy gates, Leekfrith: the ground plan showing the two main building phases. The absence of through coursing at the stacks is also indicated.*

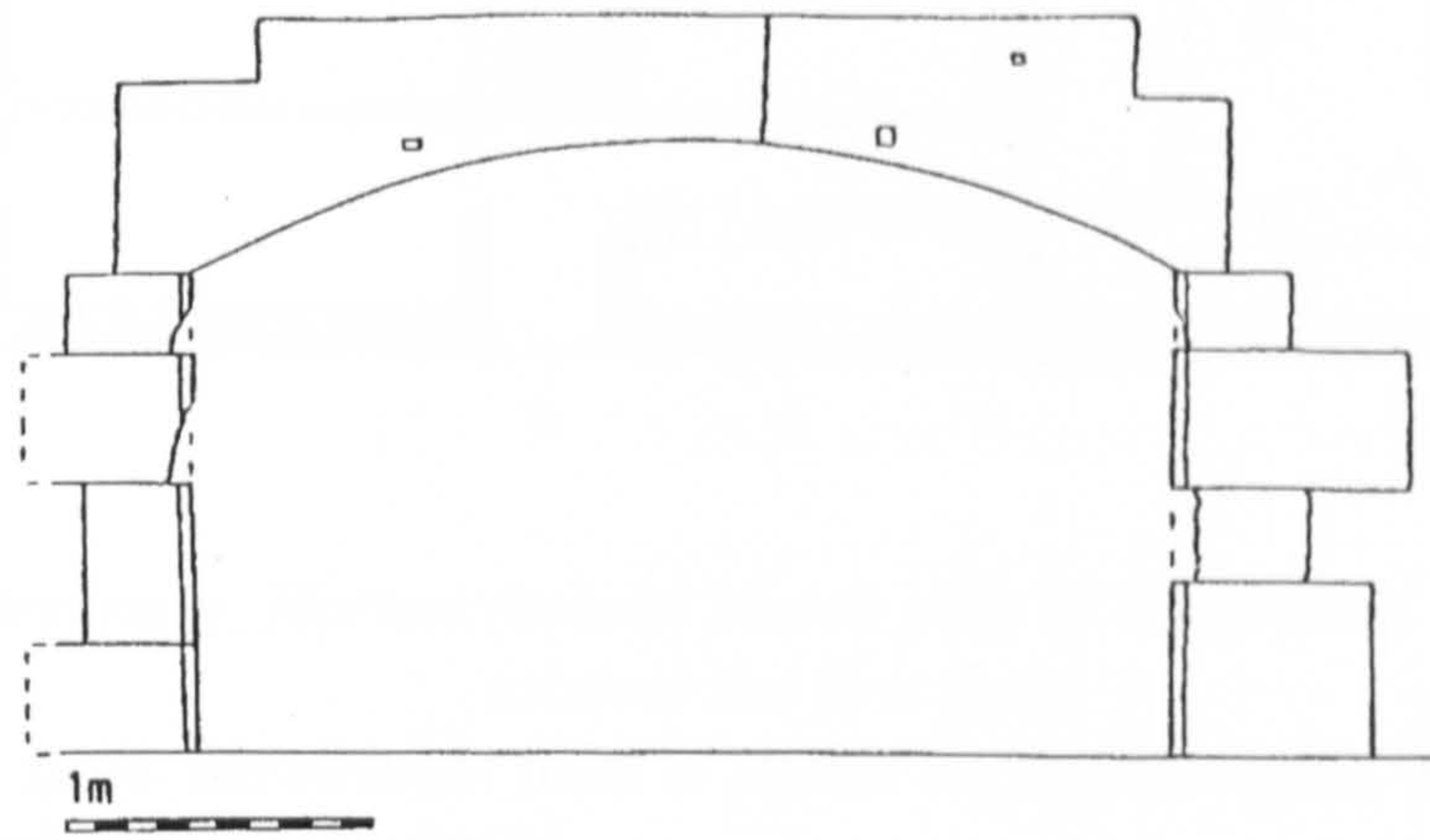


Fig. 6.20 *Windy gates, Leekfrith: the kitchen hearth*

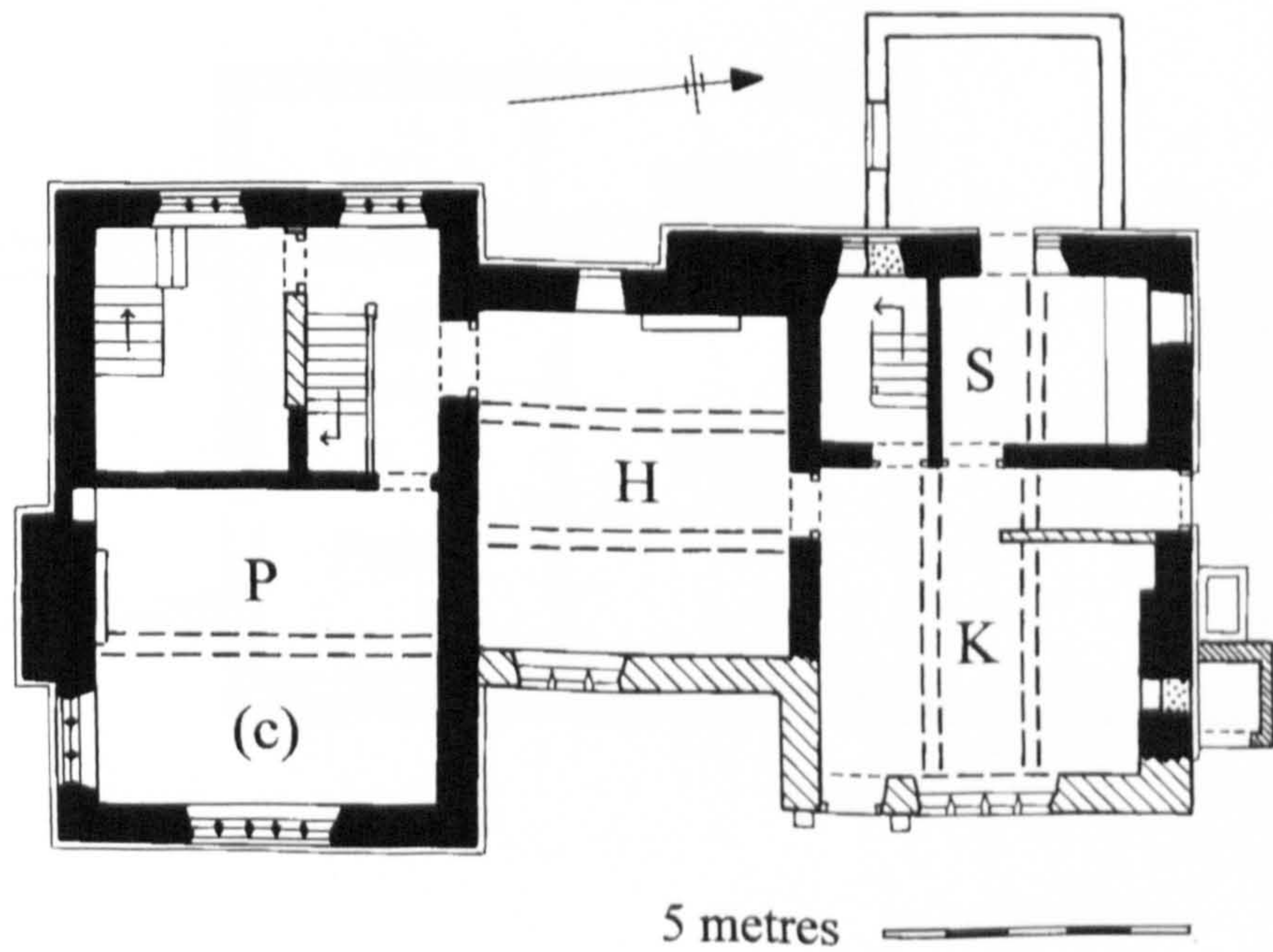


Fig. 6.21 *The Ashes, Endon: the ground plan.*

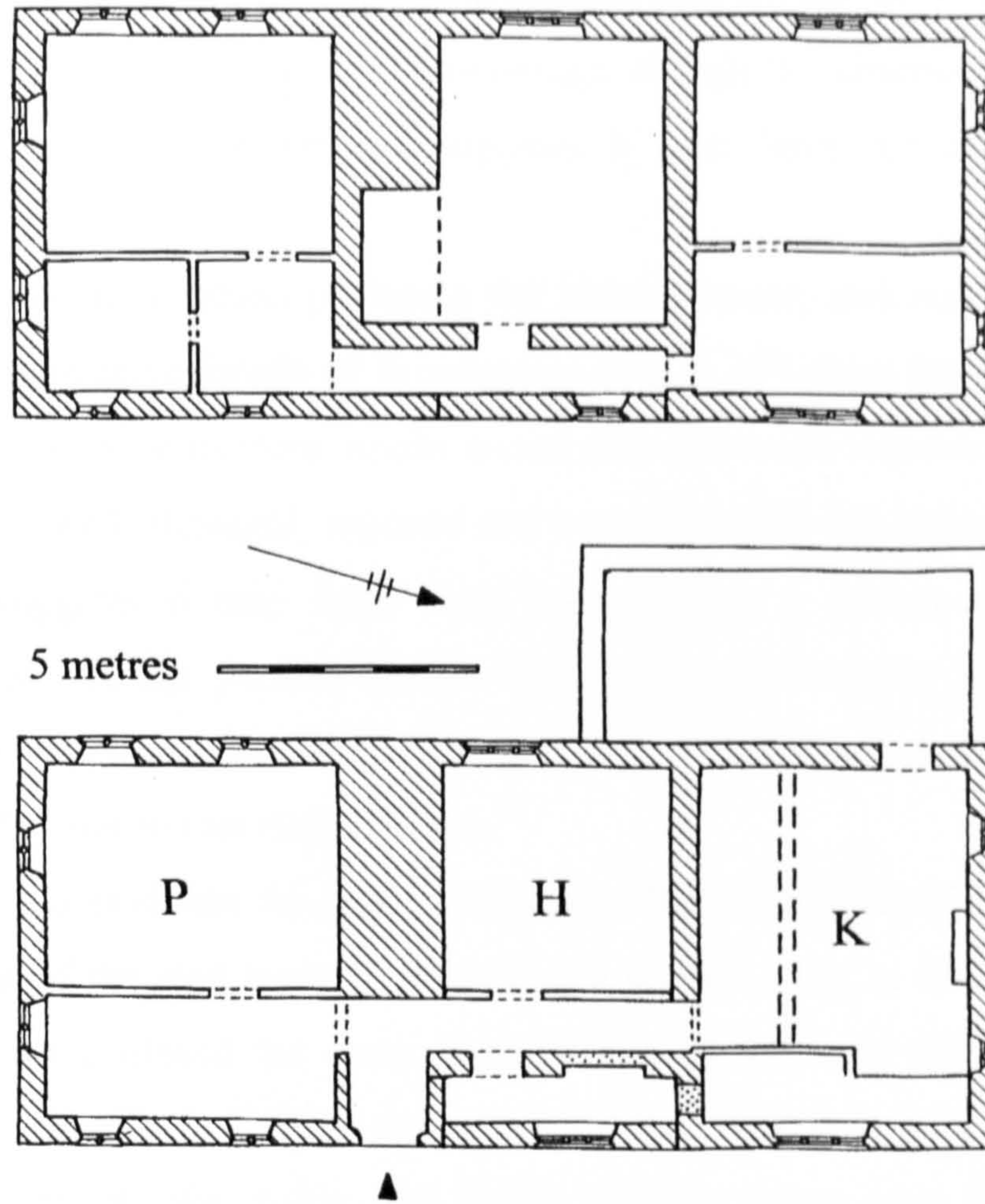


Fig. 6.22 *The Dairyhouse, Horton: (below) sketch plan of the ground floor (above) the first floor.*

Approximately to scale. No straight joint is visible on the rear wall, but the contrasting window design indicates a later build.

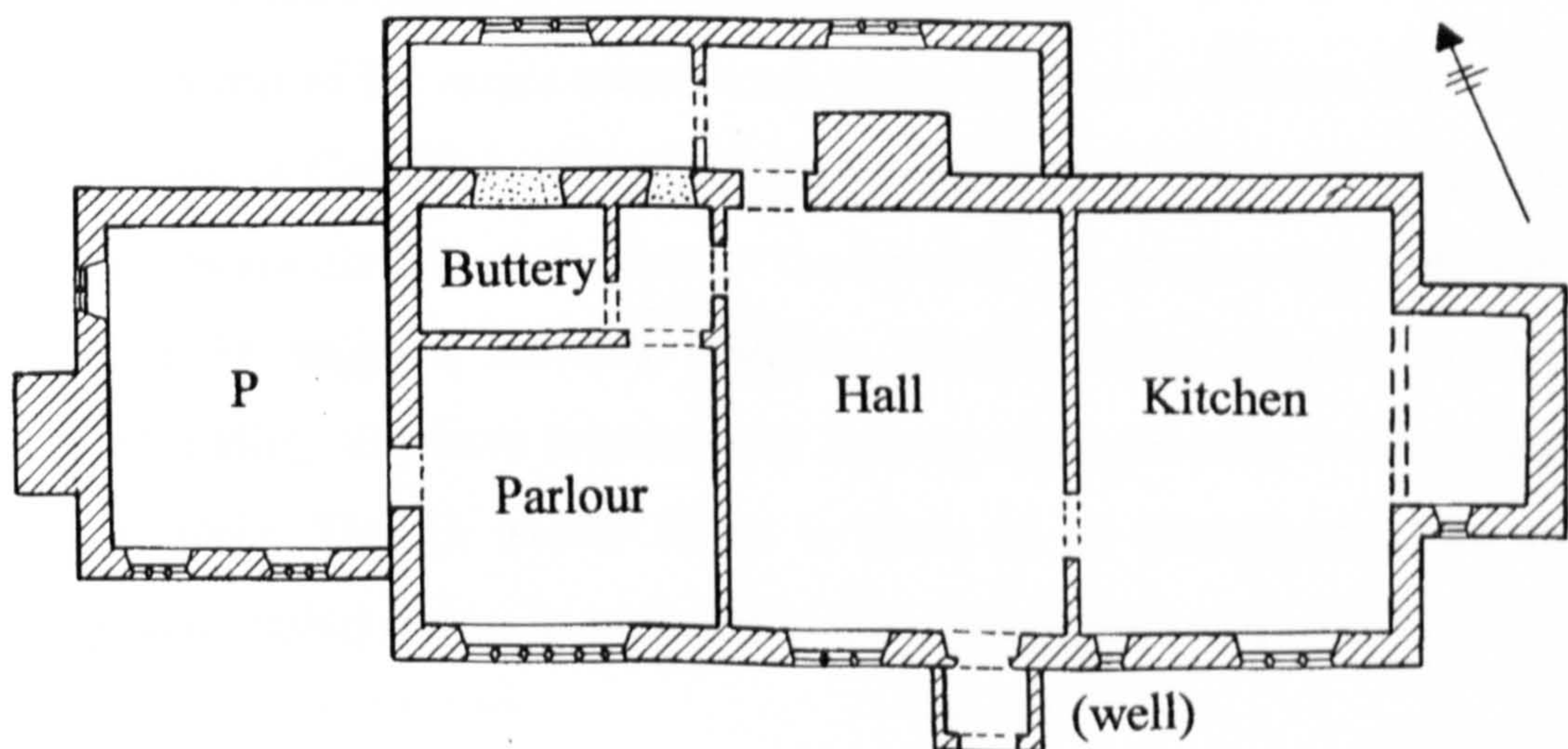


Fig. 6.23

Stanlowe, Longsdon: sketch plan, not to scale. The internal details are based on the position of the windows and discussion with the owner.

plan. All have, or have had, impressive porches. Only Horton Hall [82] is partially double pile in plan, achieved by building a catslide roof on the north side of the hall. Here too the central hall is flanked by crosswings, though the absence of a porch, and the existence of two major parlours suggests it may have functioned somewhat differently.

All have documentation predating the present house, and may contain earlier elements. The impressive façade of Windygates (Fig. 6.18) gives the appearance of a single build, but none of its three stacks course into the main stonework. In addition, the existence of a wall of roughly squared and coursed stonework between the hall and service wing suggests it may have been built against a timber-framed structure occupying the site of the present service wing. If so the massive kitchen hearth is earlier than the main structure (Figs. 6.19 and 6.20). Alternatively the house may have been deliberately built in two major phases.³⁰

There is no evidence for phase building at the Ashes [52] (Fig. 6.21), though the replacement of the east front of the hall and service wing in the later eighteenth century may have confused the issue. By contrast, the hall and service wing of the Dairyhouse [78] were built in 1635 for John and Mary Biddulph. To these were added a parlour and a porch (Fig. 6.22), and finally the two wings were linked to form a service room at ground floor level, and a corridor above, giving separate access to each of the main chambers.

Stanlowe [136] has medieval antecedents, and retains a timber-framed parlour to the west,³¹ to which the main house was added. The newer portion has a central hall flanked by crosswings, with a single main room in each section at ground floor level, and a series of smaller rooms at first floor level (Fig. 6.23).³²

The largest of the major seventeenth century houses is Horton Hall [82]. Once again the house is C-shaped with crosswings projecting to the south (Figs. 6.24 and 6.25). Opinions are divided on the date of the house.³³ An *ex situ* stone with the initials R.E. dated 1634 suggests building work by Richard Edge, alternatively the main period of rebuilding may have followed the descent of the property to his younger son, Timothy in 1647. Though earlier fabric is likely to be incorporated, the house is extremely well crafted and such contrasts as are visible relate to the status of the wings

³⁰ The Vernacular Architecture Group visited the house in April 2000. Their opinions were divided.

³¹ Described by Miller (1937), 253, as 'and old room in a new (and bad) setting with a fine oak fireplace'.

³² Leek Post and Times, March 31st, 1966.

³³ Surveys have been carried out by Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire, the RCHM, Staffordshire County Council, and the former owner, J. F. Moxon.

rather than to different phases, ashlar being used for the main façade and parlour wing, and coursed, squared rubble for the remainder.

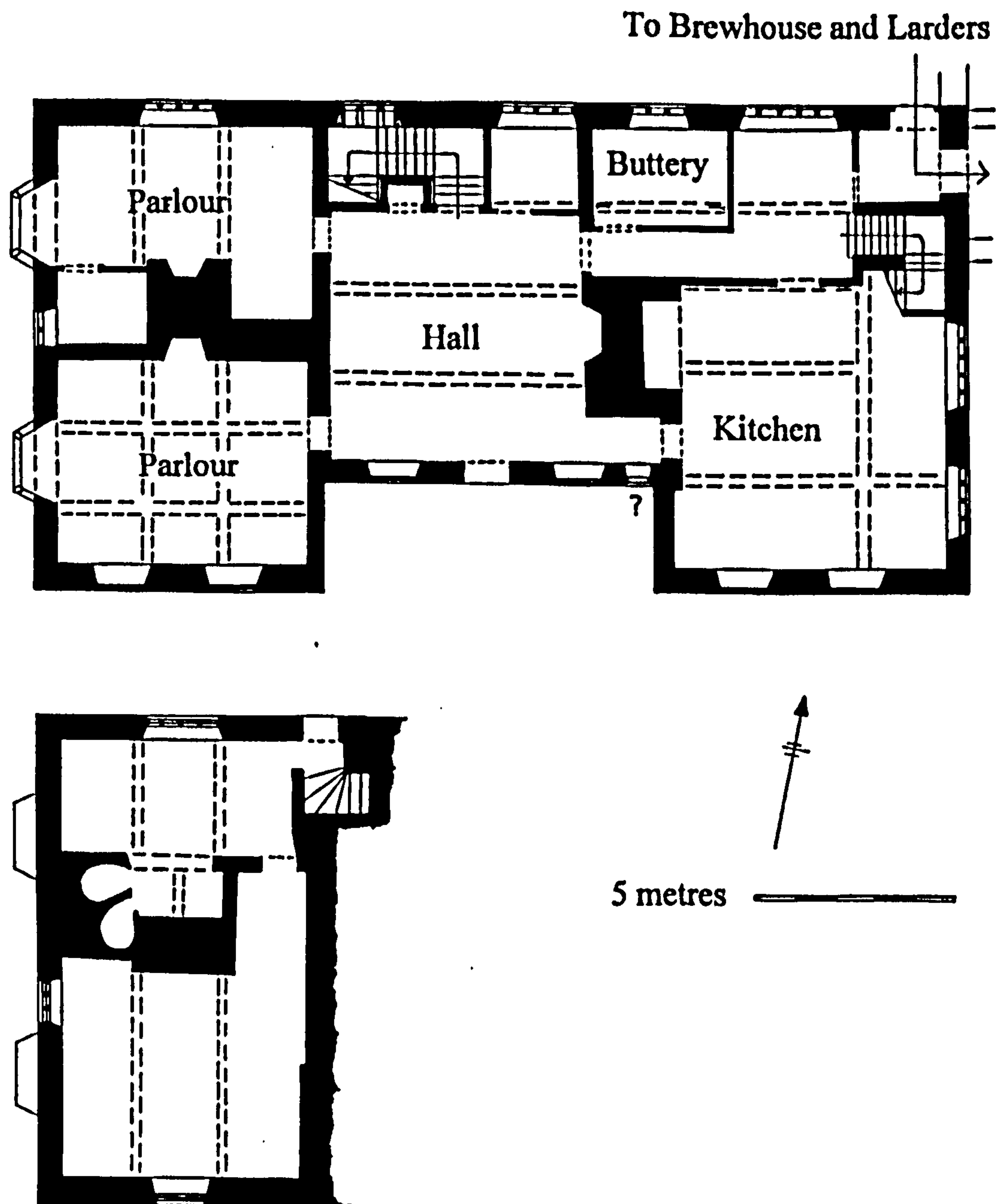


Fig. 6.24 Horton Hall, Horton: plans of the ground floor and basement. From a survey by Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire

At Rudyard Hall [141], an equally fine house resulted from a series of building campaigns. The single-pile timber-framed house, which forms the rear, may well have been an addition to a medieval hall (Fig. 6.26) If so no traces survive, and the present hall and the impressively gabled parlour wing date to the mid-late seventeenth century, and are built of pale yellow Minn Sandstone brought from Warslow.



Fig. 6.25 Horton Hall from the west showing the slope of the land.



Fig. 6.26 Rudyard Hall from the southwest. The two-storey gable conceals the truncated remains of a timber-framed house whose plinth continues as the base of the garden wall. The hall and parlour wing were built towards the end of the seventeenth century.

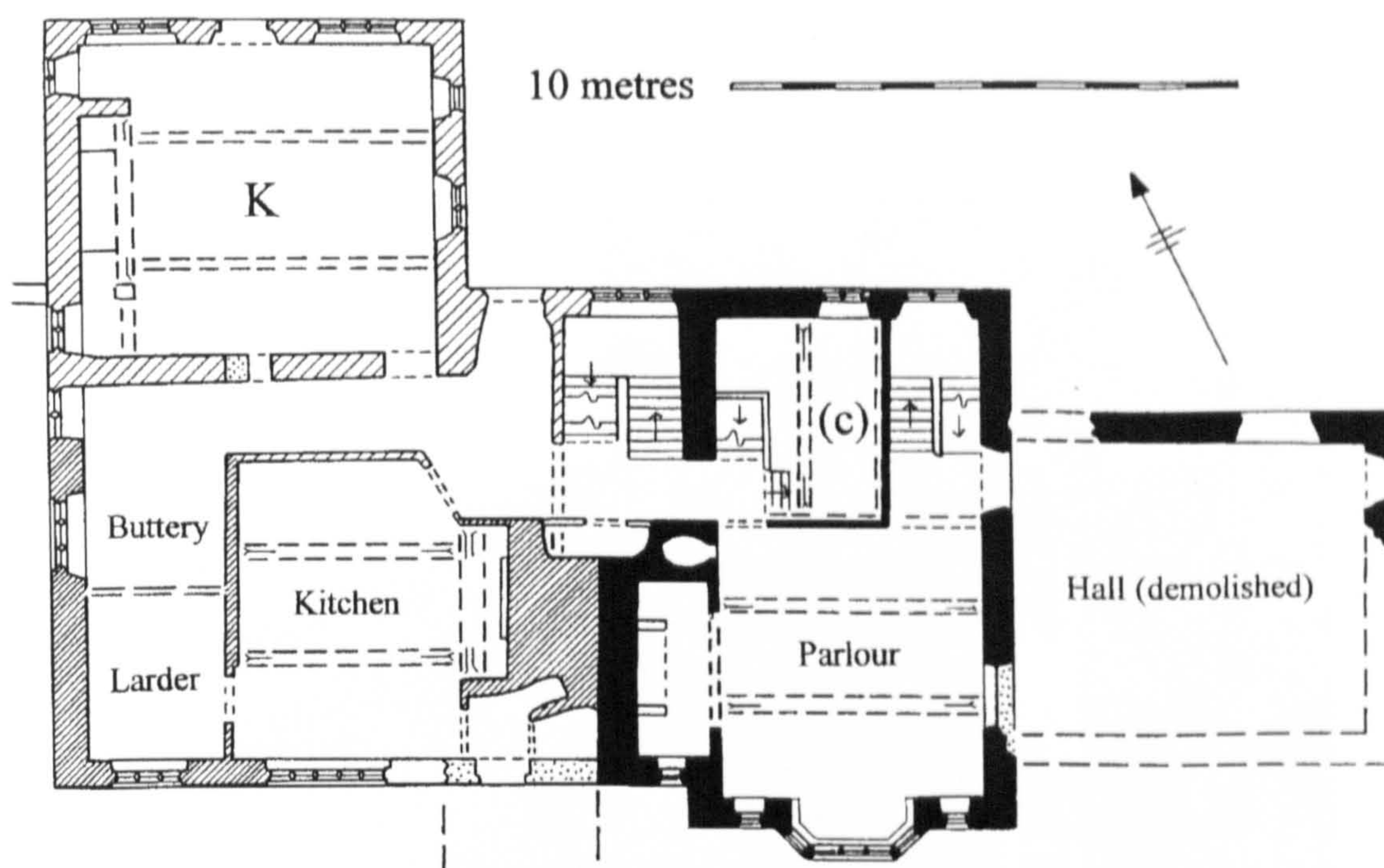


Fig. 6.27 *Whitehough, Ipstones: the ground plan. Room names are from the inventory of John Mellor (1718), when both halves of the house were in a single ownership.*

Whitehough, Ipstones [107] was described by Pevsner as ‘really like two houses’ (Fig. 6.27).³⁴ Here again a massive stone stack may well be a relic of the medieval house, and serves to link two seventeenth-century houses of different builds.

The eastern house consisted of a hall, now demolished, and a single crosswing. This has a fine mullion and transom canted bay window rising through two storeys flanked by single lights (Fig. 6.28), a feature shared with Mosslee (Fig. 6.8) and the Hall House in Leek (Fig. 6.102). Two doorways at ground floor level led to the stairs, and to the kitchen with a large stone arched hearth flanked by a bread oven. A further room and its cellar were reached from the kitchen. A blocked doorway at first floor level indicates the building was storeyed throughout. There is panelling in the room above the kitchen (Fig. 6.141) and both it and the front attic bedroom were heated. Tree-ring dating gave an estimated felling date of 1602 to 1627 for thirteen roof timbers from the crosswing, including joists from the apex attic.³⁵

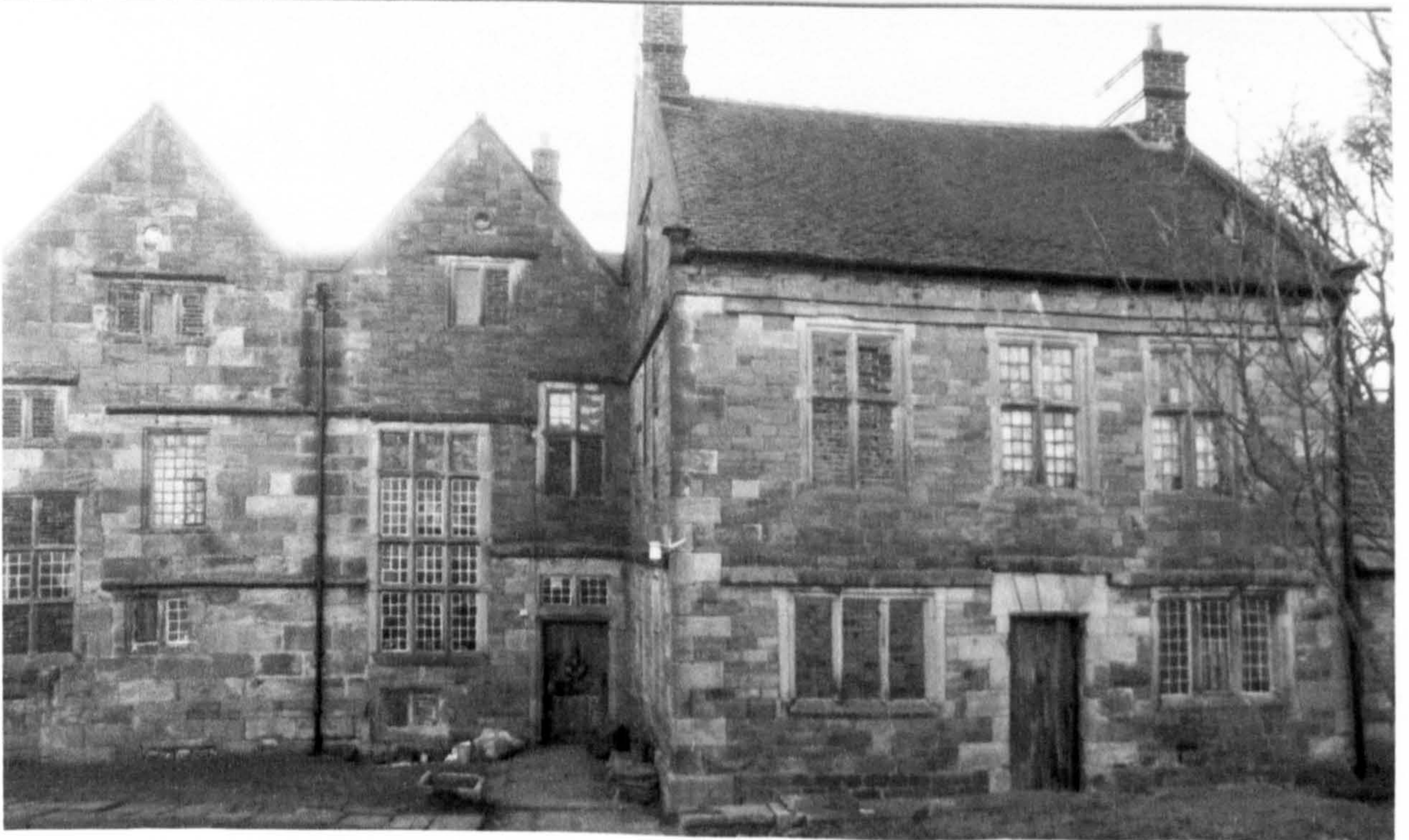
The western house was a humbler building with mullioned windows. Only its ground floor survives, as the upper floor has been rebuilt (cf. page 186). This had the standard arrangement found in many of the smaller houses, with a large houseplace and a laterally divided space beyond, providing parlour and service room. Neither house was as capacious as the full hall and crosswing houses described above, and

³⁴ Pevsner, 1974, 157.

³⁵ *VA* 29, 1998, 106.



*Fig. 6.28 Whitehough
(above) from the south
(below) from the north-west*



though seven hearths are listed for 'the Whitehalgh' in 1666, this accounted for both houses.

With the marriage of Margaret, daughter and heir of Henry of Sharpcliffe to James Whithalgh in 1469/70 the family fortunes took a major turn. Both Whitehough and Sharpcliffe lay in Ipstones, and were described as hamlets in 1597, but there is little doubt that a single family was consolidating its holdings on adjacent estates. By 1526 James Whytall of Whitehough could specify that the one third of his goods and property due to his widow for life should include Sharpcliffe, and while the 1583 Fines for Knighthood list John Whitehough of Whitehough, by 1625/6 it is Robert Whitehall of Sharpcliffe who is listed.³⁶ When Sharpcliffe was rebuilt in the 1640s this, rather than the Whitehough, became the principal family home in the area, leaving the latter as a tenant property.



Fig. 6.29 Sharpcliffe Hall, Ipstones, after the Sneyd restoration (Sleigh, 1883)

A plaque at Sharpcliffe [105] lists the builder as 'John Whitehall, of Park-hall esq., son to James, and grandson to Robert, great-grand-child to James Whitehall'. Presumably the house was built after 1642, when he inherited the property.³⁷ His wider connections are immediately apparent, as no comparable house exists elsewhere in the area. A double-pile house (Figs. 6.29 and 6.30) with three gables to front and back, and two at each end, its central valley was erased by vigorous remodelling of the house in the middle of the nineteenth century.

³⁶Sleigh, 1883, 181; SA 11/2/4; LRO James Whytall, 1525/6; Grazebrook, 1881.

³⁷ Sleigh, 1881, 181.

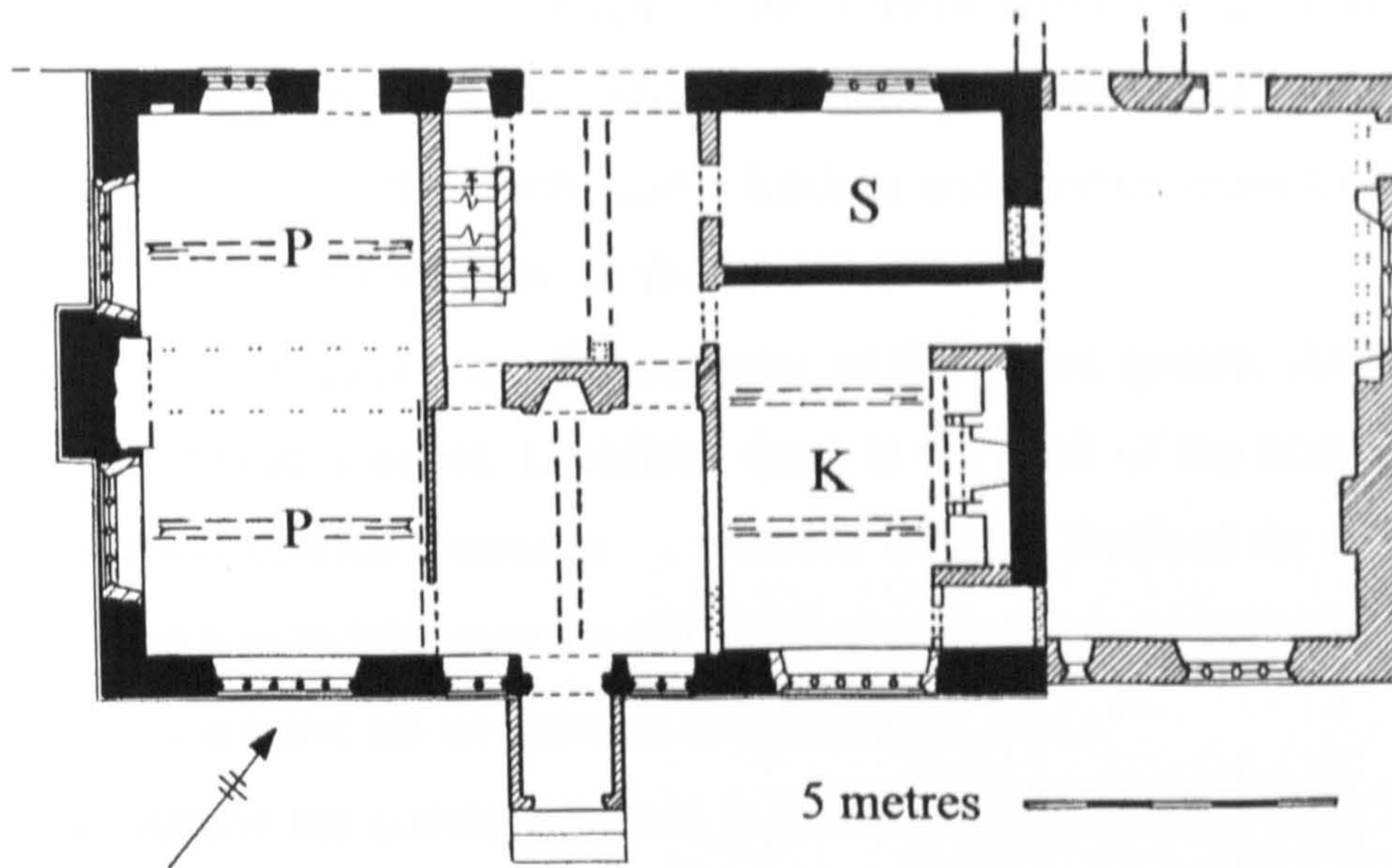


Fig. 6.30 *Sharpcliffe Hall, Ipstones: the ground plan. The internal partitions are replacements but a detailed survey has isolated original elements on the same line in the rooms above.*

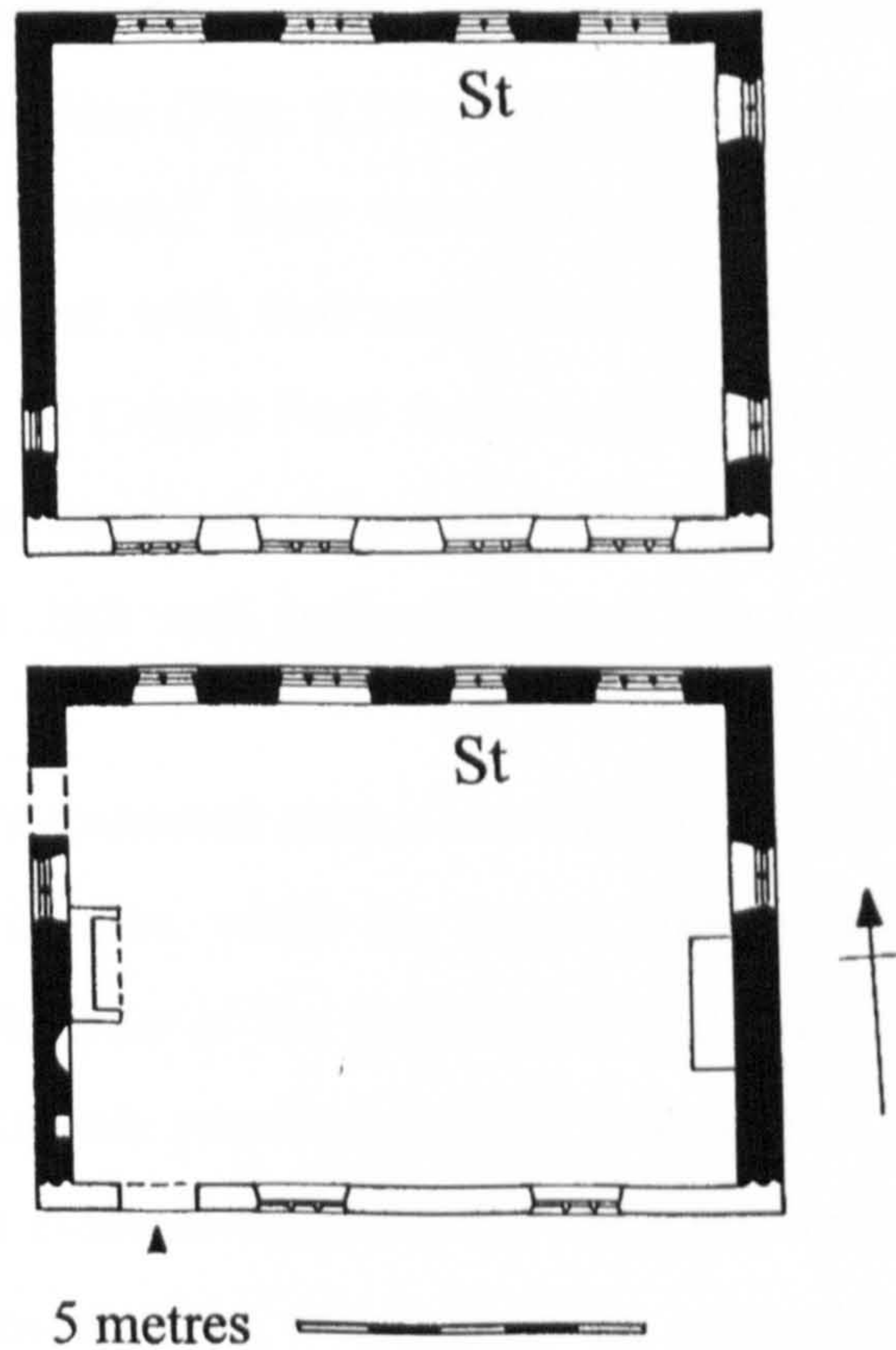


Fig. 6.31 *Hangingstone, Leekfrith: the ground plan. The front collapsed in the 1990s, and has been reconstructed. The interpretation as a double pile house is based on the number and position of the windows.*

Despite Sneyd's remodelling, sufficient of the interior walls remain to be certain that they retain their original position.³⁸ This gives two parlours to the west, an unheated central hall with stairs to the north, and a kitchen and service room to the east (Fig. 6.30), an arrangement mirrored on the floors above.

Double pile houses were the preserve of the major gentry. At Hangingstone [67] on the Swythamley estate, Leekfrith, there is the shell of the house described in 1678 as 'the newly erected messuage ... wherein William Trafford the father doth now inhabit'. His son was to take over the main house at marriage, and the 'Newhouse' was required by William and his un-married daughter (Fig. 6.31).³⁹

Also outside the common mould is Coalpit Ford, Basford [39]. The property belonged to Edmund Sutton between 1587 and 1652, and subsequently to Frances Finney.⁴⁰ Set on a steep slope, it shares with Horton Hall the deliberate use of a hillside as the determining factor in the design of its service areas (Figs. 6.32 and 6.33). A regular feature of the area is the provision of a cellar beneath the parlour with access from inside the house. This provided a well lit, cool, semi-basement service room, and a ventilated space over which the wooden floor of the parlour could be built, in contrast to the beaten earth or flag floors to be found elsewhere. At Horton this was carried to its logical conclusion (Figs. 6.24 and 6.25): the house lies lengthwise across the contours, and a level 'ground' floor was achieved by building up the west end for the parlour over a basement with two major rooms which could be accessed both internally and externally. At Coalpit Ford the house lies lengthwise along the contours, and the 'ground' floor was approached by a flight of steps from the lower, eastern side. The entire space below hall and parlour formed the service area, obviating the necessity for wings.

Even in its present truncated state it is a handsome house (Fig. 6.32). The lower floors had mullioned windows, while the upper floor boasted three- and five-light mullion and transom windows at the gable ends and presumably also on the main front. The parlour was not only panelled, but had a decorative plaster frieze (Fig. 6.34). With the removal of its external staircase the main buttressing was removed on the down-slope, and the present state, which lacks its original roof and attic, may well result from instability. Fig. 6.32 shows a conjectural reconstruction of the steps, upper floor, forward gables and apex attics.

³⁸ A detailed survey of Sharpcliffe has recently been carried out as a preliminary to major repairs.

³⁹ SW 1/18; LRO Hester Trafford, 1686.

⁴⁰ SRO D(W) 1788, parcel 35/B2.

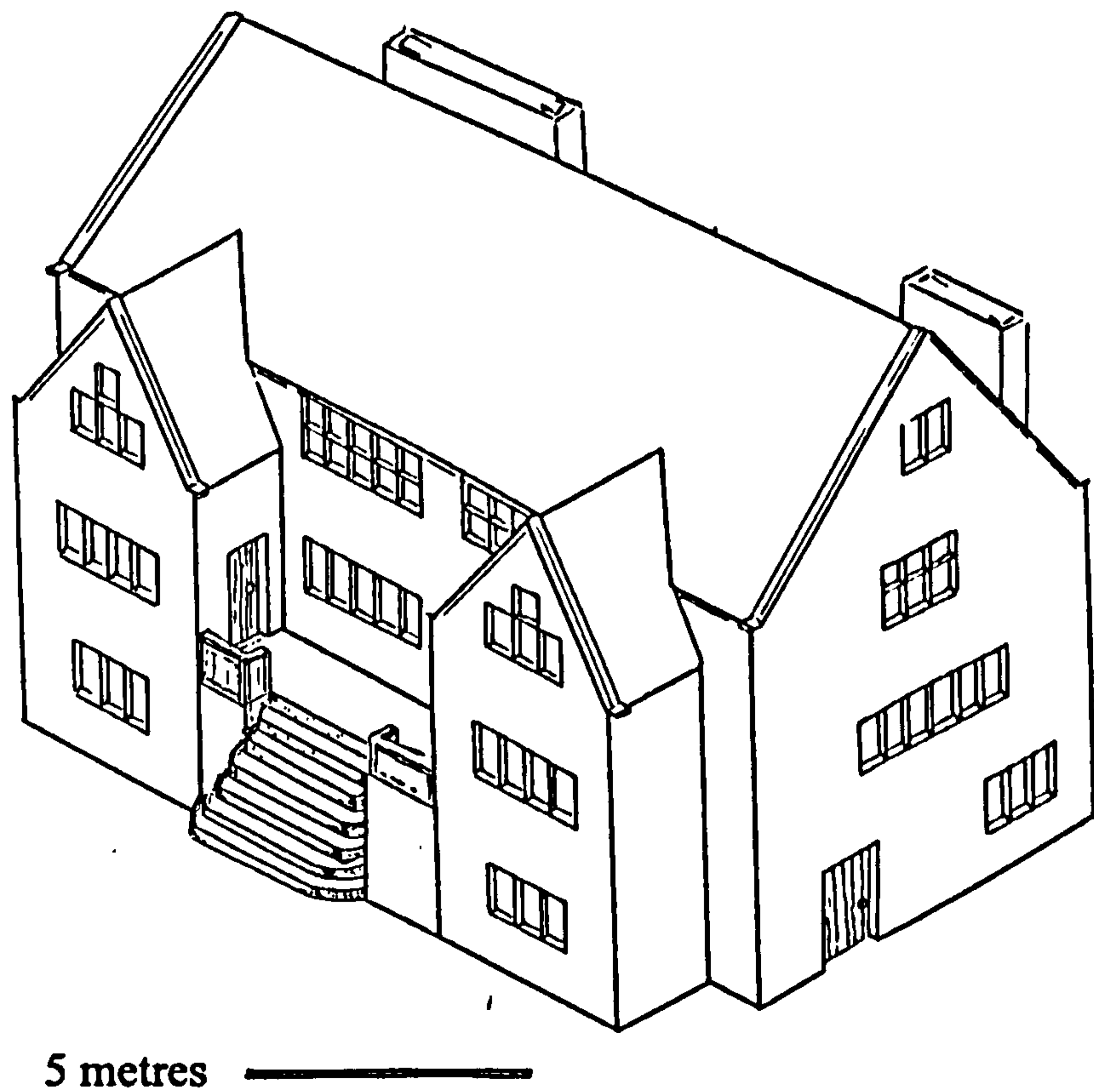


Fig. 6.32 Coalpit Ford, Rownall: a reconstruction based on the evidence of the gable windows, the proportions, and the areas of unfaced stonework between the forward wings.

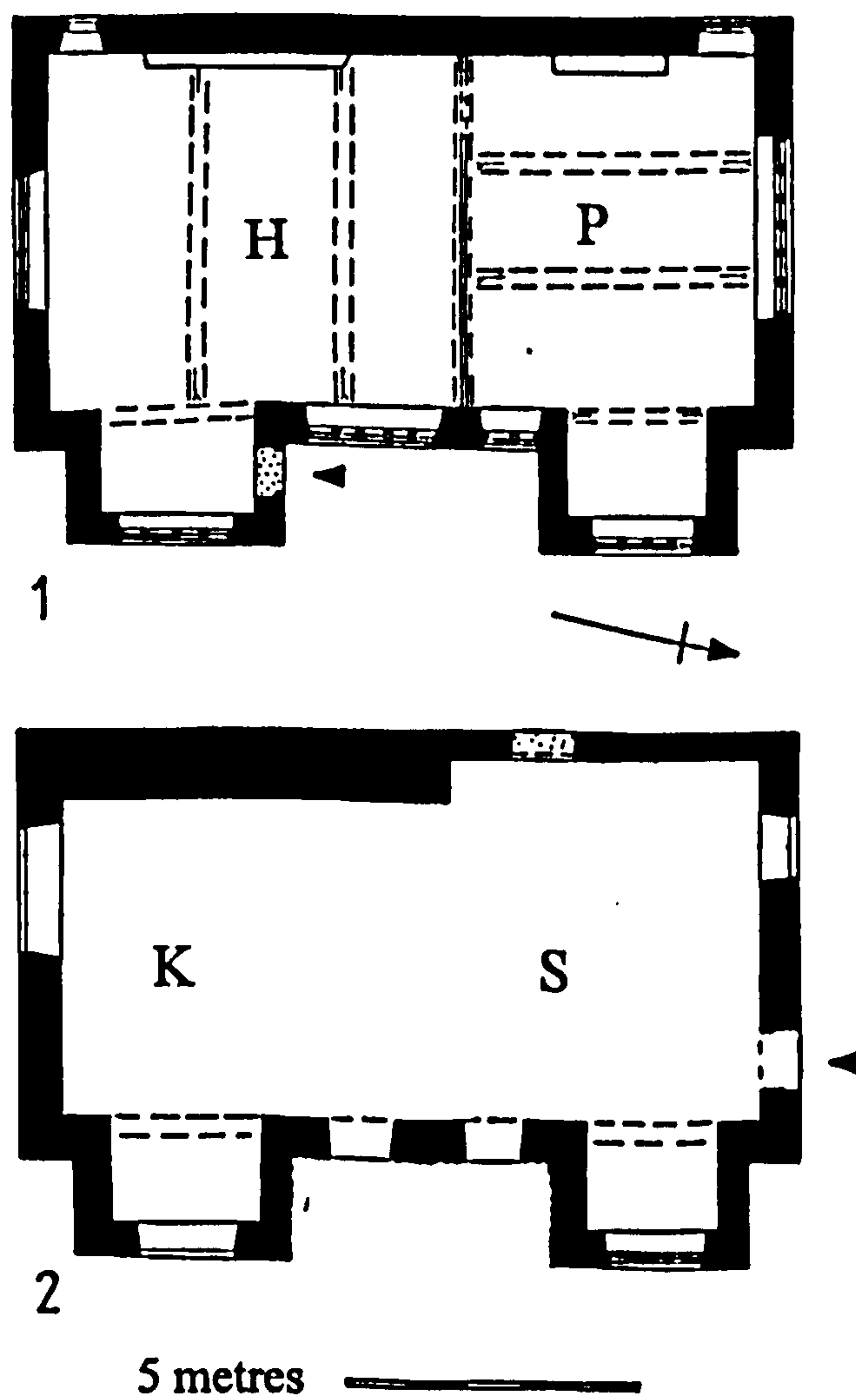


Fig. 6.33 Coalpit Ford, Rownall: the service area (above) and 'ground' floor (below).

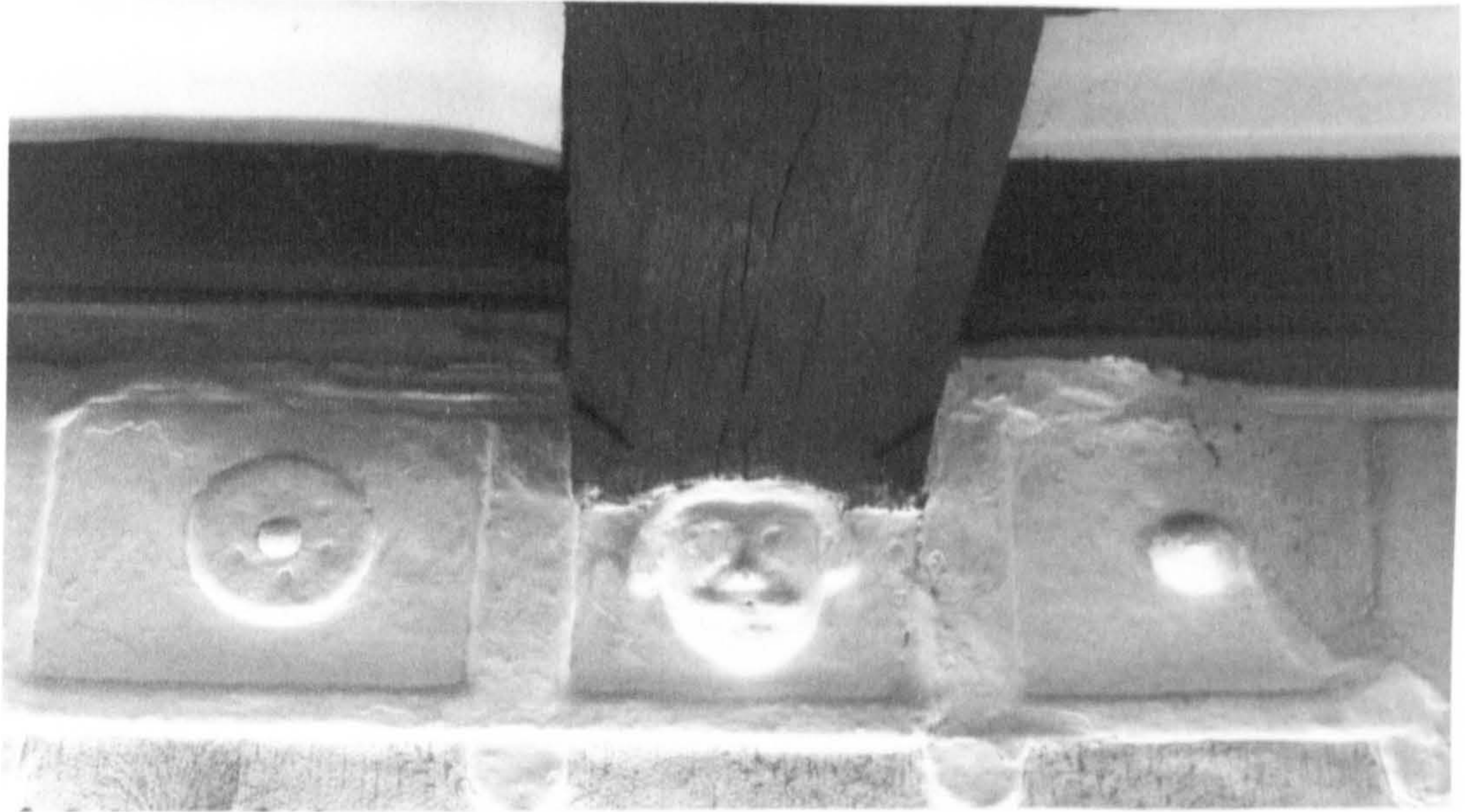


Fig. 6.34 Plasterwork in the parlour at Coalpit Ford, Rownall

(iii) *The eighteenth century*

Relatively few of the major houses were built or remodelled during the eighteenth century, and fewer still have survived. By 1667 Whitehough was tenanted by John Mellor, a wealthy Quaker, who was in full possession of the property by 1712.⁴¹ By John's death in 1718 the building formed a single household (Appendix 6.2).⁴² His son Robert rebuilt the upper floor of the western house (Figs. 6.27 and 6.28), giving it taller rooms with mullion and transom windows to match his new northern service wing. Pevsner refers to a dated doorway of 1724,⁴³ but this has not survived.

Wall Grange, Longsdon [185], purchased in 1540 by James Leveson with the rest of the Trentham Abbey estates, descended with the Leveson-Gower properties until 1911.⁴⁴ Always a major tenant property, it housed a succession of gentry families,⁴⁵ and had eleven hearths in 1666.⁴⁶ A house of thirteen or more rooms, including 'Mr Jolliffe's chamber', was described in Simon Debank's inventory of 1701 (Appendix 6.2),⁴⁷ and a map of 1714 shows a hall and two crosswings.⁴⁸ Apparently this failed to meet the needs of his successors, for the present house is a double-pile building of ashlar (Fig. 6.35) with a symmetrical, five-window front, a hipped roof, and the tall cruciform mullion and transom windows fashionable in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. It was presumably built for either Simon Debank's son or his

⁴¹ WSL 329/1/40.

⁴² LJO John Mellor, 1718.

⁴³ Pevsner, 1974, 157.

⁴⁴ PRO, L & P of Henry VIII, 1540, C66/691 (6); *VCH Staffs*, VII, 205.

⁴⁵ SRO, D593 G/1/1/1; SHC 1910, 39-41; Jolliffe, 1892, 232.

⁴⁶ SHC1925, 162.

⁴⁷ LRO, Simon Debank, 1702.

⁴⁸ SRO, D593/H/3/380.

grandson.⁴⁹

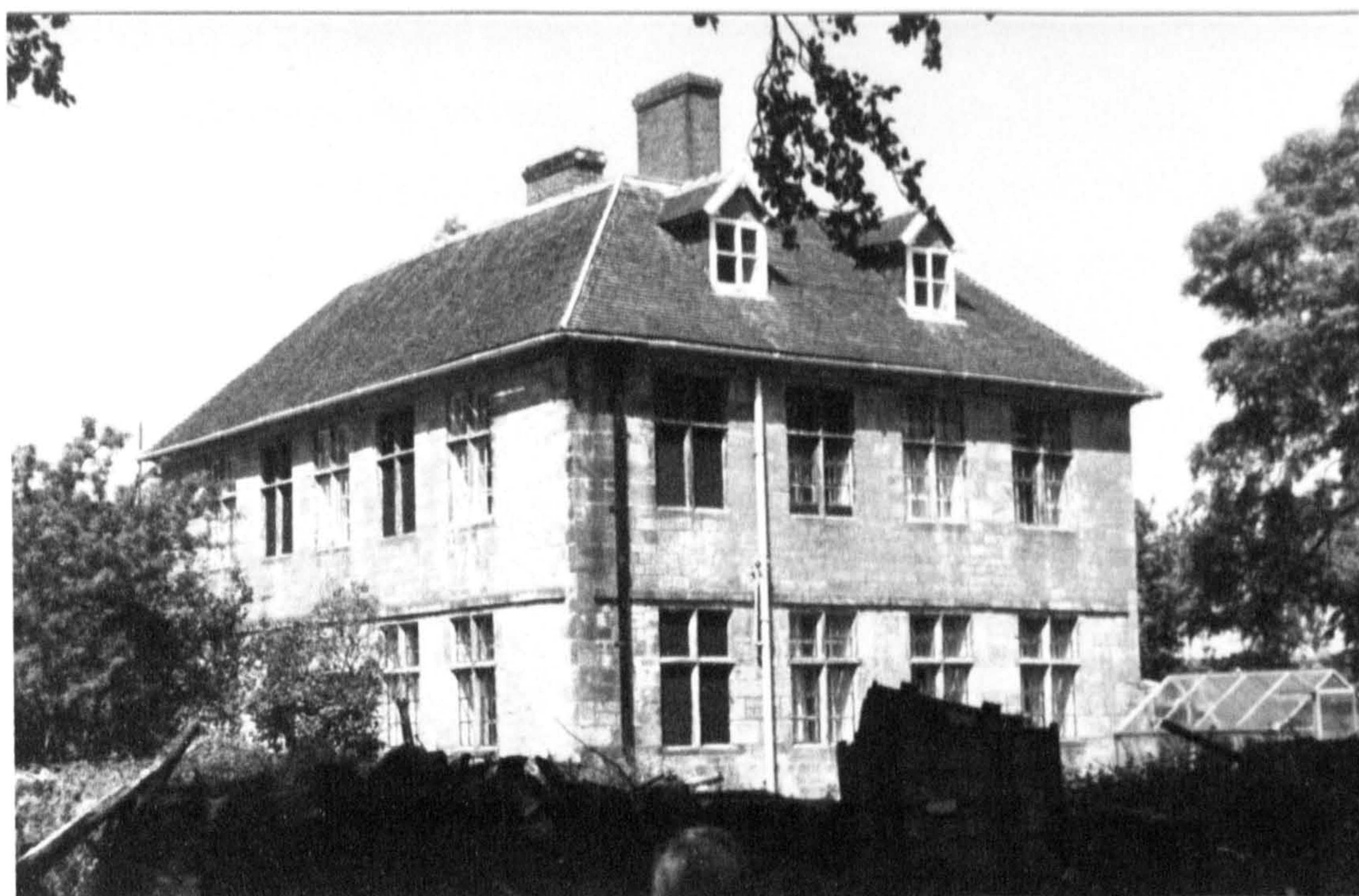
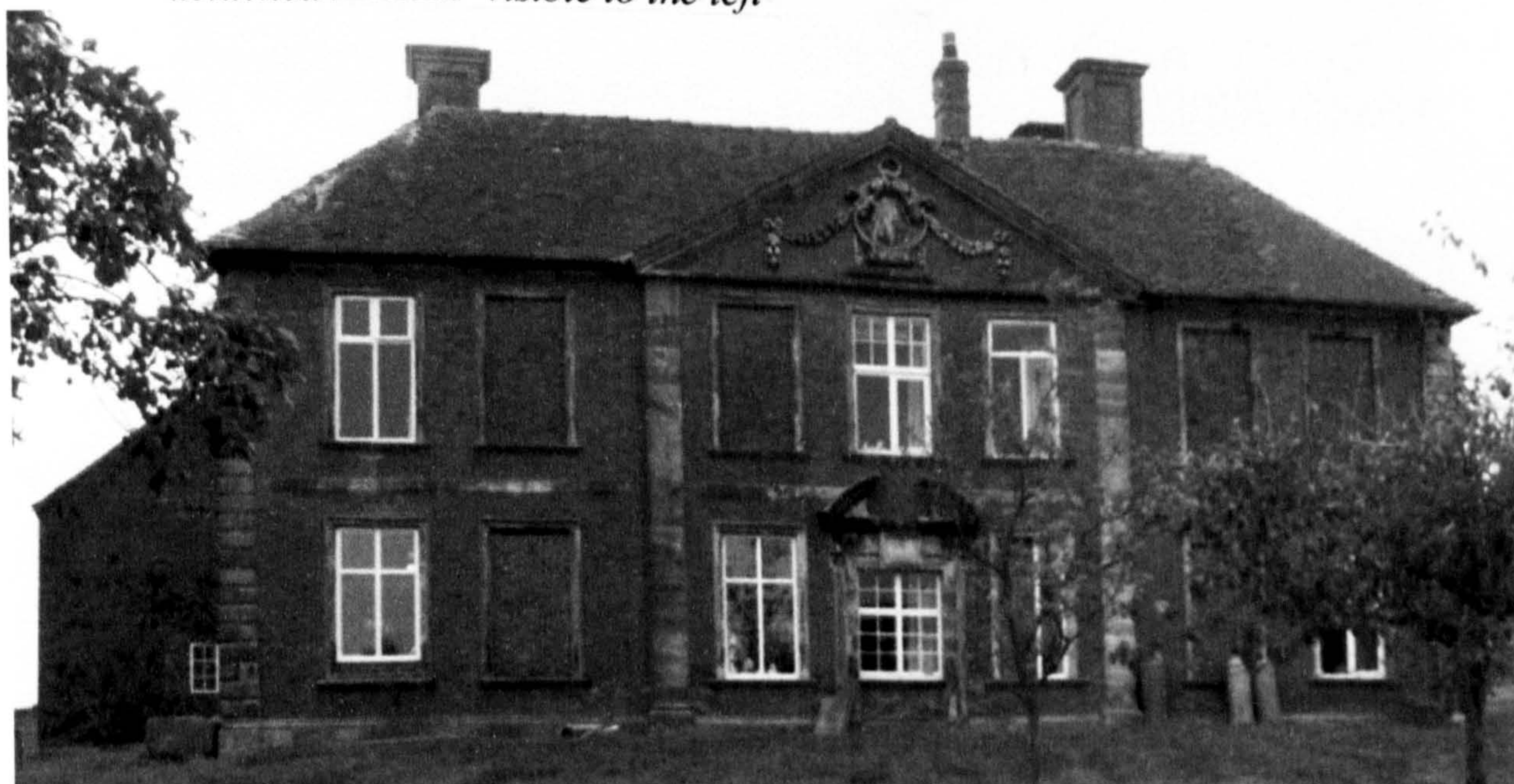


Fig. 6.35 Wall Grange, Longsdon: from the north west

Fig. 6.36 Harracles Hall, Longsdon: from the west, with the gable end of the 'detached kitchen' visible to the left



At a similar period Harracles [132] was remodelled, the roof was raised and hipped, and the outer walls replaced in brick. As at Horton there is a distinction between the treatment given to the main facades and that given to the side and rear of the service wing. The seven-windowed front of the principal façade is broken by a pilastered central section, supporting a pediment with the Wedgwood arms. The

⁴⁹ LRO, Simon Debank, 1723; John Debank, 1750.

windows on this and the parlour wing have the proportions fashionable at the period, with moulded stone surrounds and cruciform frames of wood (Fig. 6.36). By contrast the side windows of the service wing are plain and lie under soldier arches. Clearly unnecessary expenditure on the servants' quarters was considered wasteful.

At Belmont, Basford [86] John Sneyd built afresh in the mid-eighteenth century. Later Sneyds, a cadet branch of the family at Keele Hall, with substantial holdings in Ipstones and Cheddleton, were to be responsible for major alterations at Mosslee, Sharpcliffe and Basford, besides the rebuilding of Ashcombe Hall (the former Bottom) early in the nineteenth century.⁵⁰



Fig. 6.37 Ashenhurst Hall, Bradnop: from the south east (W.R. Keane, Miller 1891).

Elsewhere major eighteenth century houses have been demolished. The estate at Ashenhurst, Bradnop, was enlarged⁵¹ after 1667, when it was sold by John Ashenhurst to his cousin, Francis Hollinshurst of Gawsworth, and a new house was built *circa* 1745 to the designs of Joseph Sanderson (Fig. 6.37). A drawing of the front elevation, printed in 1775,⁵² shows a fine seven windowed façade, with a central pediment and pilasters. The steep gabled roof suggests that Harracles was not the only major house to be remodelled in the eighteenth century. A nineteenth century drawing (Fig. 6.37) shows the house after major alterations, including re-roofing and the building of a new facade at right angles to the original.

An estate at Ball Haye, Tittesworth [156] was granted to Henry Davenport in 1565, and descended directly through the family until it passed to a nephew, James

⁵⁰ Inder and Aldis, 1998, 243-5.

⁵¹ SA 1/2/6; Swythamley, 18/658.

⁵² *VCH Staffs*, VII, 172, and Plate 23.

Hulme, in 1786. James took his uncle's surname and proceeded to rebuild,⁵³ creating a fine double pile house of three storeys with a central passage plan, and extensive service quarters (Fig. 6.38).⁵⁴ The process continued into the nineteenth century, with new houses built at Swythamley and Westwood, where large estates were being amassed round an earlier core, the latter subsuming the estates at Dieulacres and Harracles.⁵⁵

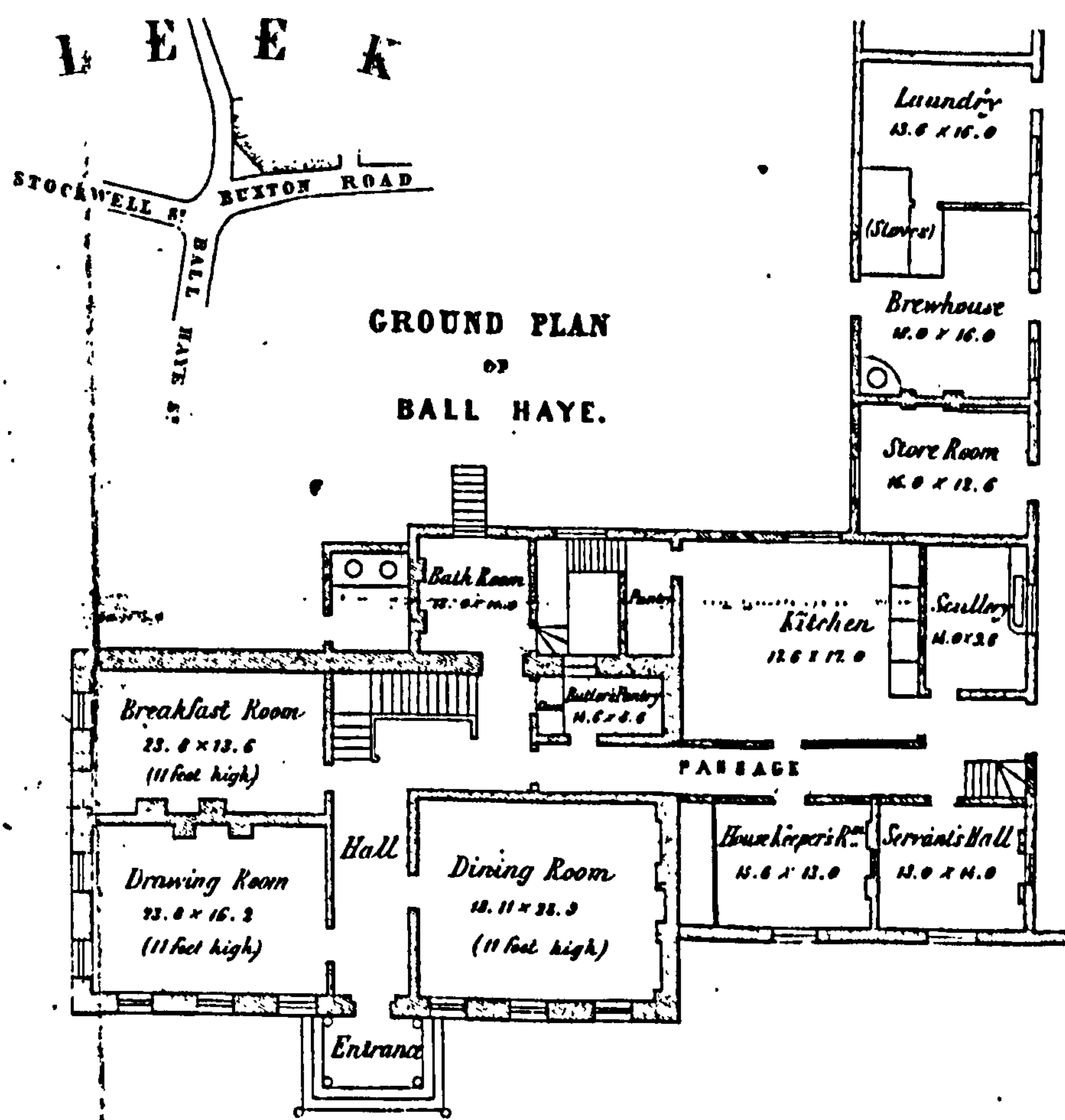


Fig. 6.38 Ball Haye, Tittesworth, in 1865: (above) the exterior from the south west (below) the ground plan

⁵³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 235.

⁵⁴ Sales catalogue of 1853 (loaned by John White).

⁵⁵ SRO 4974/B/7/34; D3272.

The lesser houses

(i) *The dating evidence for the earlier houses*

The identification of the smaller sixteenth century buildings relies on the presence of cruck construction, close studding without mid rail, or large rectangular panels. Only broad general dates can be applied to these features, and one that may extend a decade or more either side of the sixteenth century, for which limited confirmation is available from tree-ring dating.⁵⁶ A felling date range of 1577-1602 has been obtained for first phase timbers at Wallhill, Rushton Spencer [151] and cruck buildings in the Staffordshire Moorlands have produced a series of felling dates between 1499 to 1600. Arguably the dates for Wallhill fall late in the sequence, as fragments of buildings with similar walling tend to be found encased in seventeenth century stonework. The association of close studding with straight rather than curved or cusped windbraces precludes a medieval date.

Three cruck frames are associated with close studding [59, 155, 171] (Fig. 6.54). Although none have been tree-ring dated, it seems reasonable to suppose that they fall within the same period as the dated crucks, and that similar walling in conjunction with other building types is contemporary. Large rectangular panels are associated with a cruck frame at Sutton House, Endon [63] (Figs. 6.49 and 6.52), which may have been built for Richard Sutton who died in 1547.⁵⁷ Similar work is to be found at Middlehulme, Leekfrith [119] (Fig. 6.42.5) where building work was in progress *circa* 1548.⁵⁸

(ii) *Yeoman housing of the sixteenth century*

Little can be identified in this period that is not timber-framed, though stone houses on older settlement sites may also have a long and complex history. For example, both the Waterhouse, Onecote [140] and the Lowe, Heaton [68] have elusive evidence for many periods of rebuilding in stone, but nothing that can be precisely dated before the seventeenth century. Timber-framing generally survives in a fragmentary form as internal walling, though lengths of brickwork may indicate where an outer wall survived after the rest was replaced in stone. A major problem has been to distinguish between new build, re-use, and *in situ* fragments, as interior stud walling continued to be built throughout the eighteenth century.

⁵⁶ VA 29, 105-7; Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Laboratory Report for Cheddleton Grange, 1995, CHD-A.

⁵⁷ LJO Richard Sutton, 1547.

⁵⁸ PRO SC 2/202/65.



*Fig. 6.39 Wallhill, Rushton Spencer: from the north west.
Render and paint covers the majority of the timber-framing.*

The best-preserved examples are at Wallhill, Rushton Spencer [151] and Blackwood Hill, Horton [73]. Both were initially of two bays; both have an added parlour, and in the case of Wallhill, a two storey porch. At Wallhill (Fig. 6.41) the houseplace is separated from a single service room by a passageway leading to stairs, while at Blackwood Hill (Fig. 6.41) the service bay is divided. In both cases a massive lateral stack served the cooking hearth of a full-height houseplace, evidenced at Blackwood Hill by the absence of pegs in the jambs of a tall window-frame, which rises from sill to tiebeam. An unframed octagonal post supporting the northern end of the ceiling beam of the houseplace at Wallhill, and a similar post at Abbey Green, Leekfrith [108] (Fig. 6.59) indicate inserted ceilings.



Fig. 6.40 Blackwood Hill, Horton: from the west.

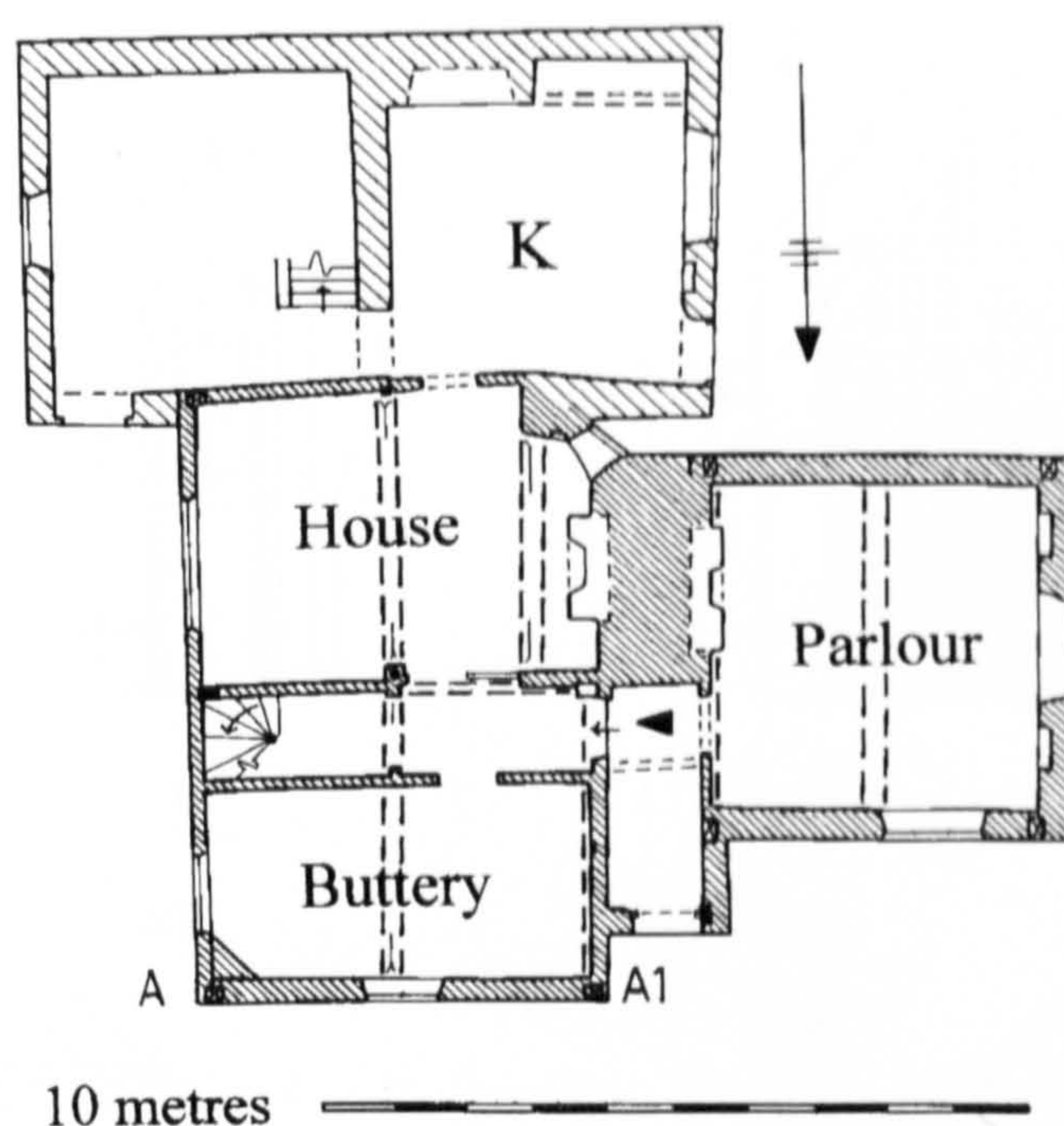
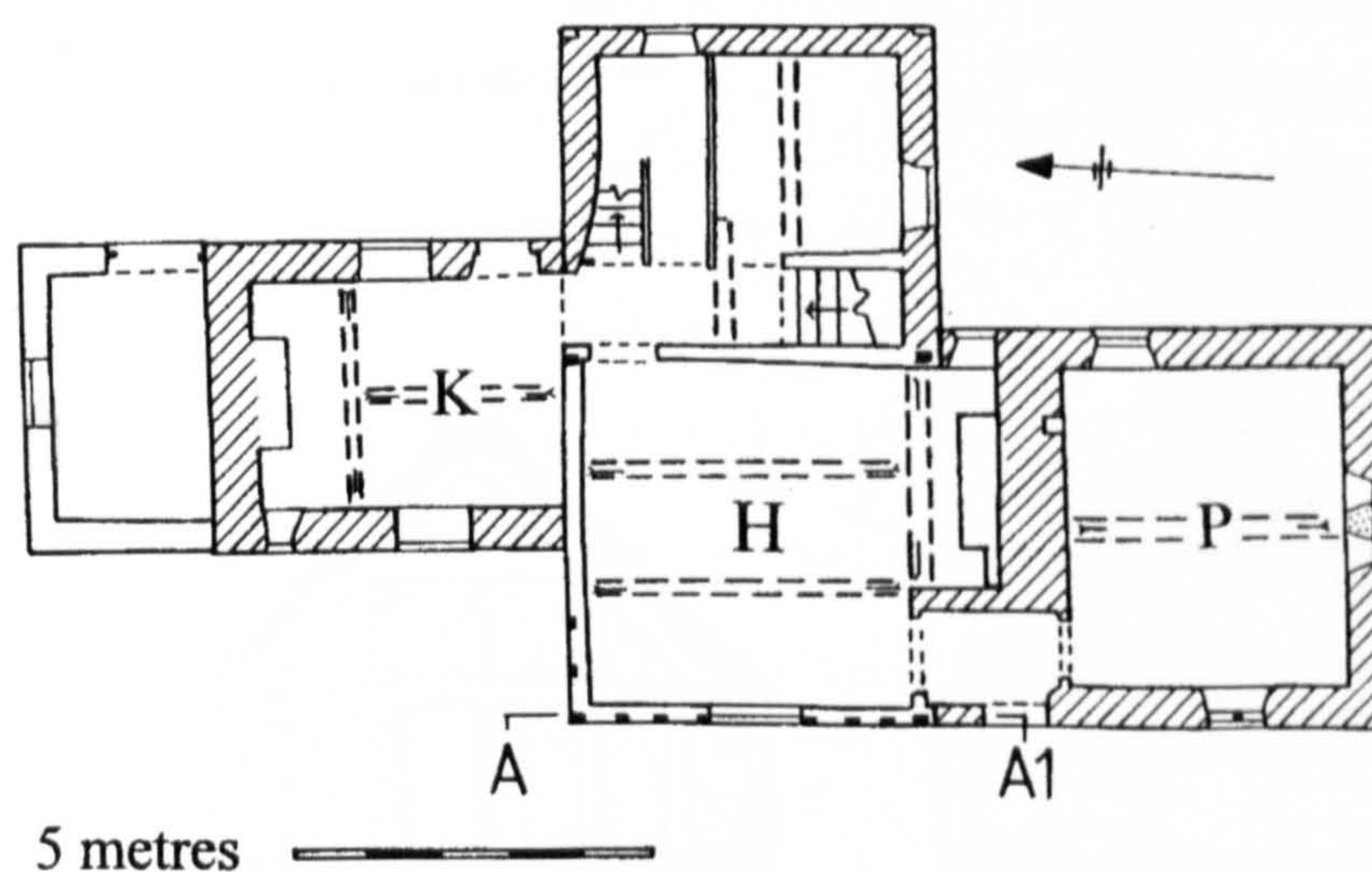


Fig. 6.41 (above) Wallhill, Rushton Spencer: the ground plan.
(below) Blackwood Hill, Horton: the ground plan.



Elsewhere the remains are more fragmentary. Bank Farm, Bagnall [165] has a single closed truss surviving as an internal wall (Fig. 6.42.1). Here smoke-blackened roof timbers suggests a firehood was added to a gable wall of a former open hall, and that square framing replaced a stone fire-back at ground floor level when the it became redundant. Mortices on the gable at Abbey Green [108] also imply a firehood (Fig.6.42.3), though there is no evidence here for an open hearth. Alternate rebuilding was the norm on the older sites, and it is uncertain whether these were two-bay buildings, or were part of a larger structure.

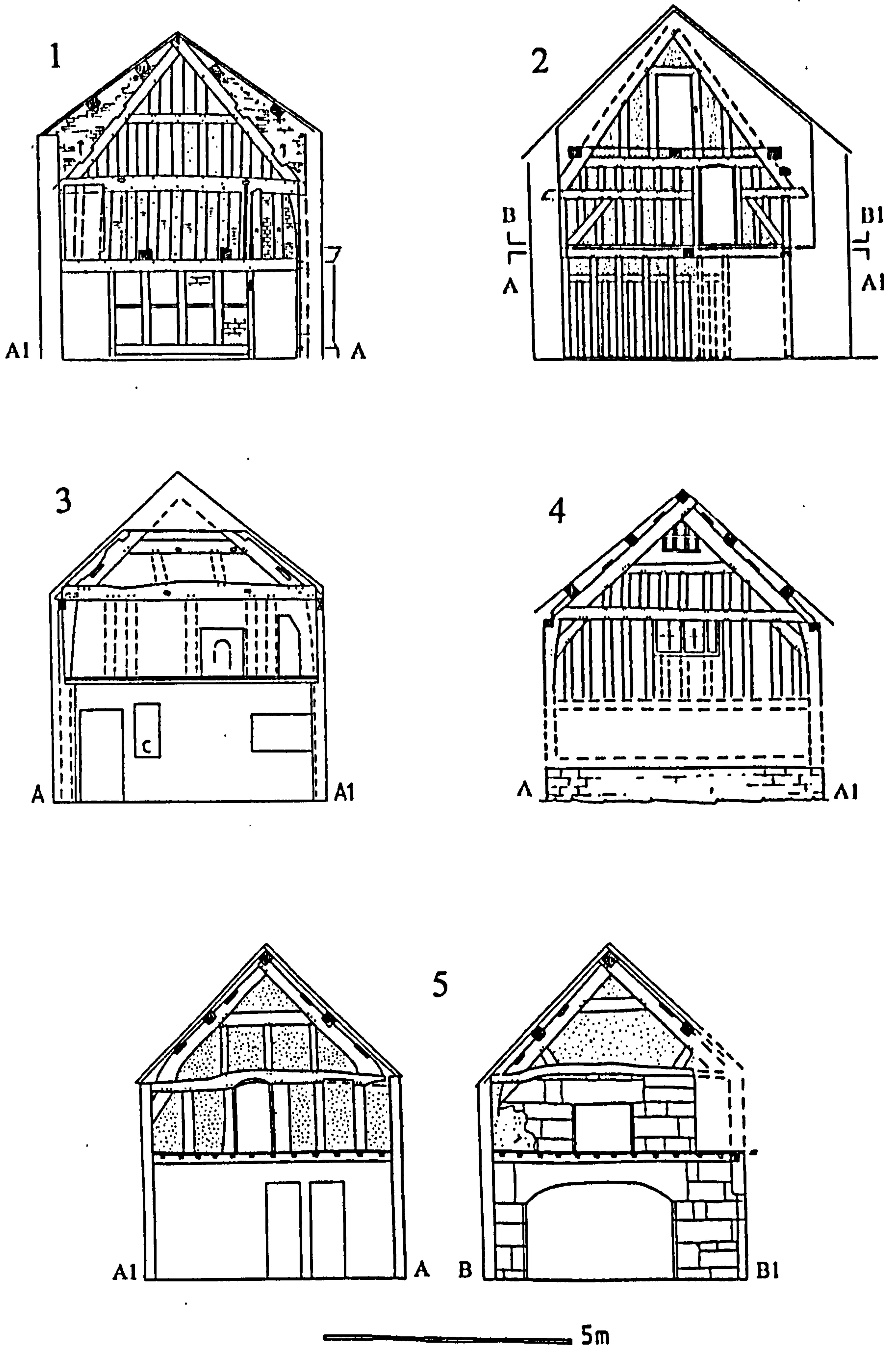


Fig. 6.42 Timber-framed trusses of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.
 1. Bank Farm, Bagnall. 2. Above Church, Ipstones. 3. Abbey Green, Leekfrith.
 4. Wallhill, Rushton Spencer. 5. Middle Hulme, Leekfrith

The scale of the building is clearer at Middle Hulme, Leekfrith [119] (Fig. 6.43). No timbers survive at ground floor level but both sections of an L-shaped roof contain wind-braced purlins, and a post fragment survives adjacent to the main stack (Fig. 6.42.5). Contrasting stonework on the south gable of the parlour suggests either phased replacement of outer walls or that the gable was remodelled when the parlour stack was enlarged.



Fig. 6.43 Middle Hulme, Leekfrith: (above) from the south west; (below) the ground plan.

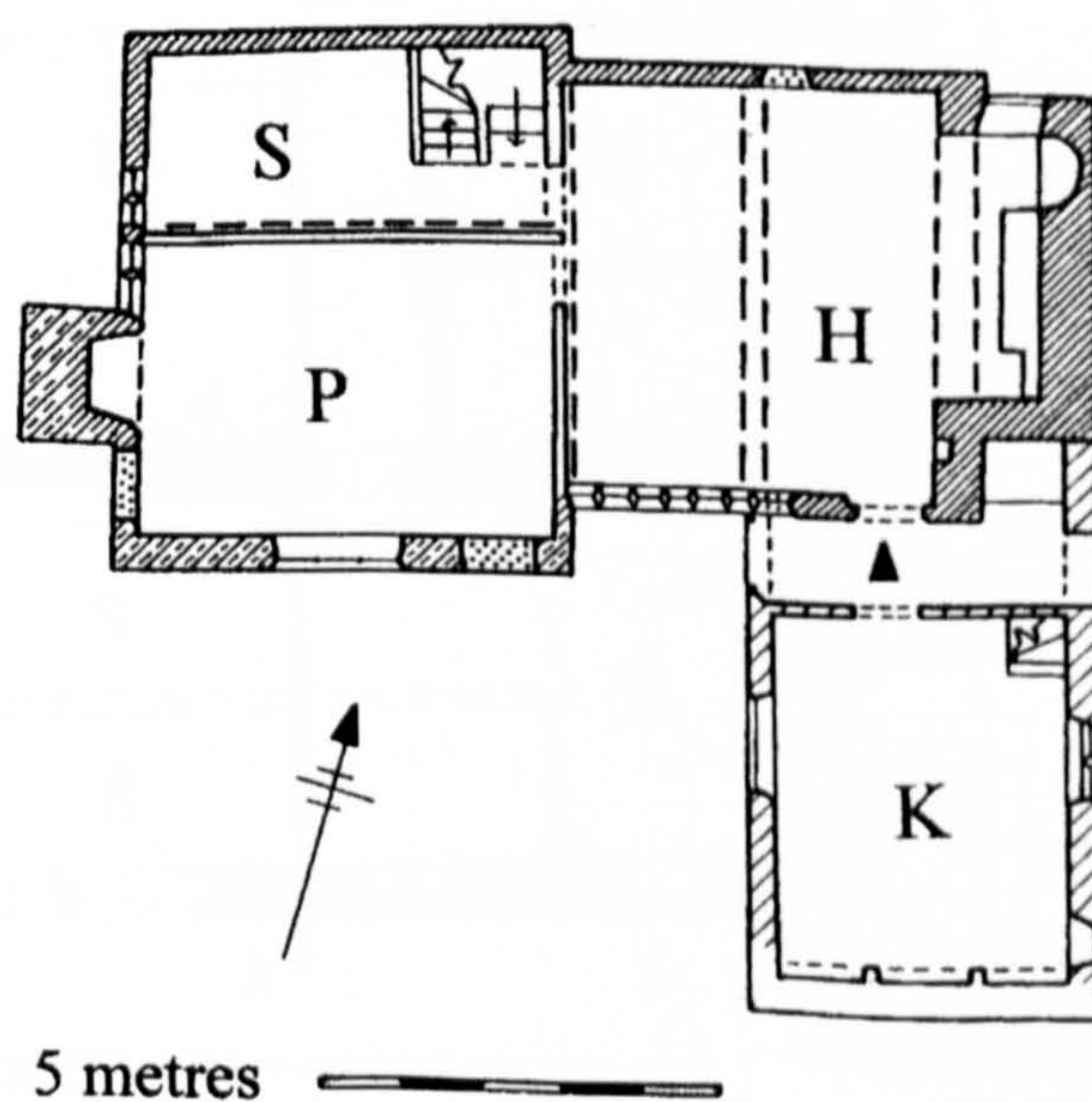




Fig. 6.44 *The Hayhouse, Ipstones: from the north east*

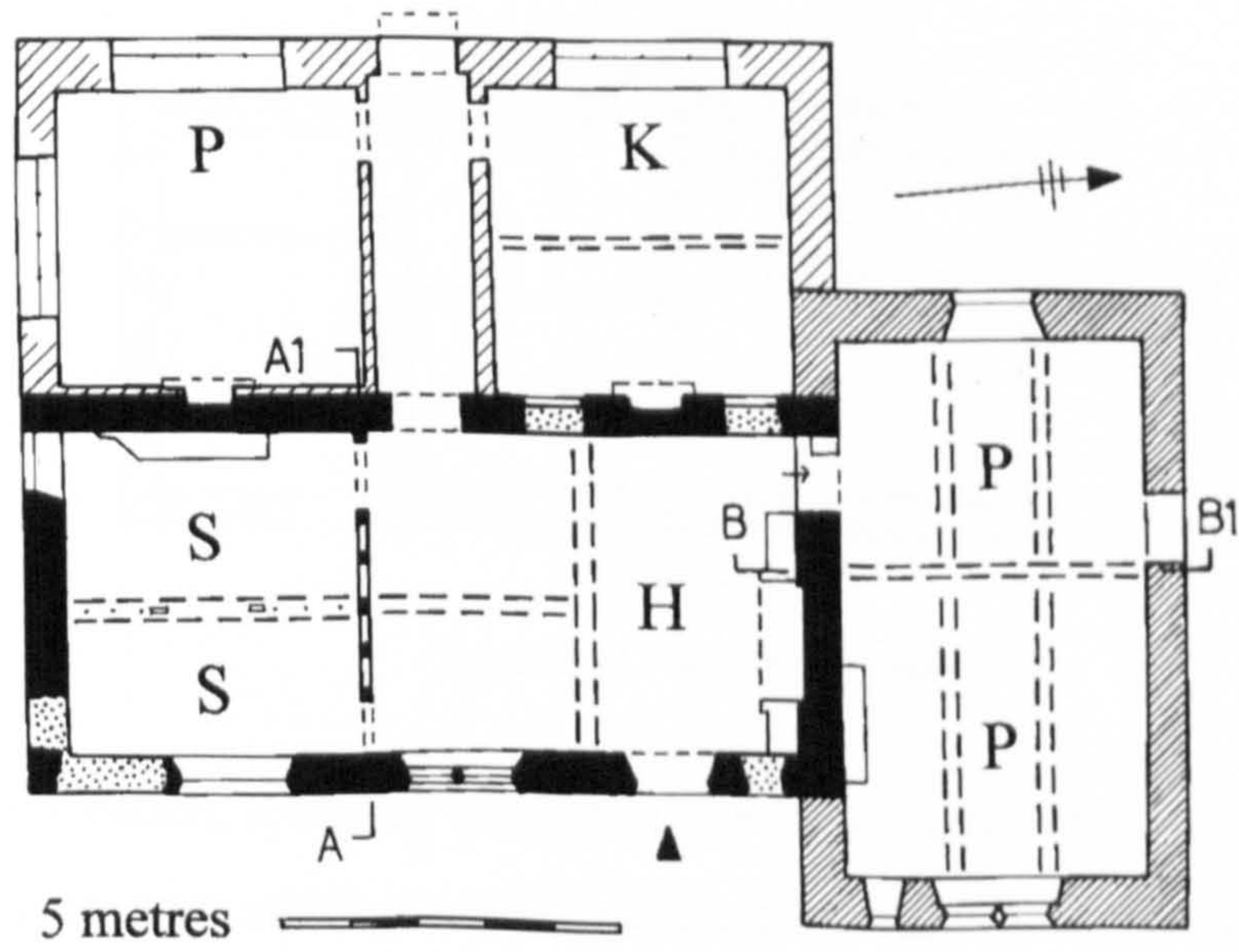
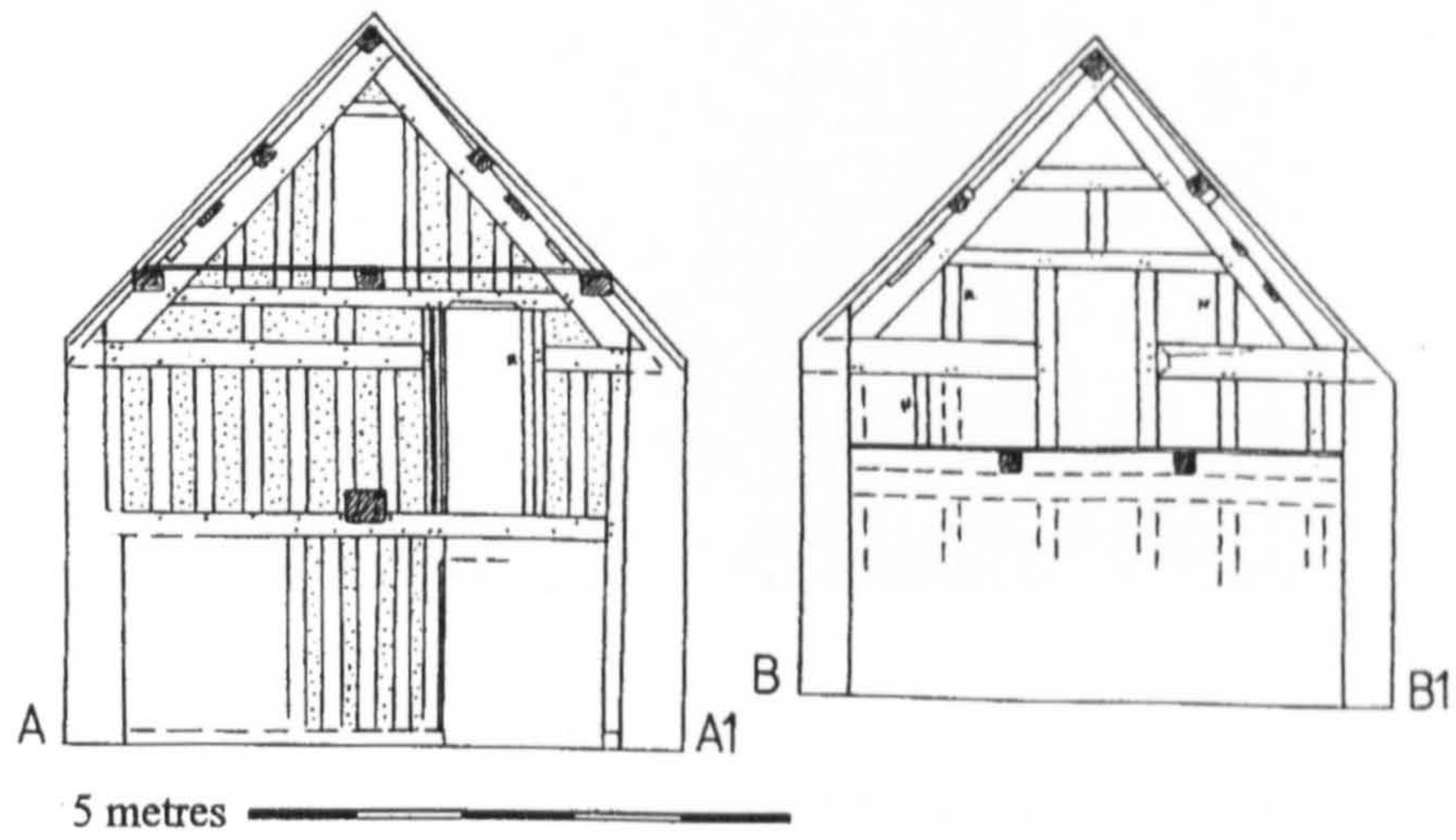
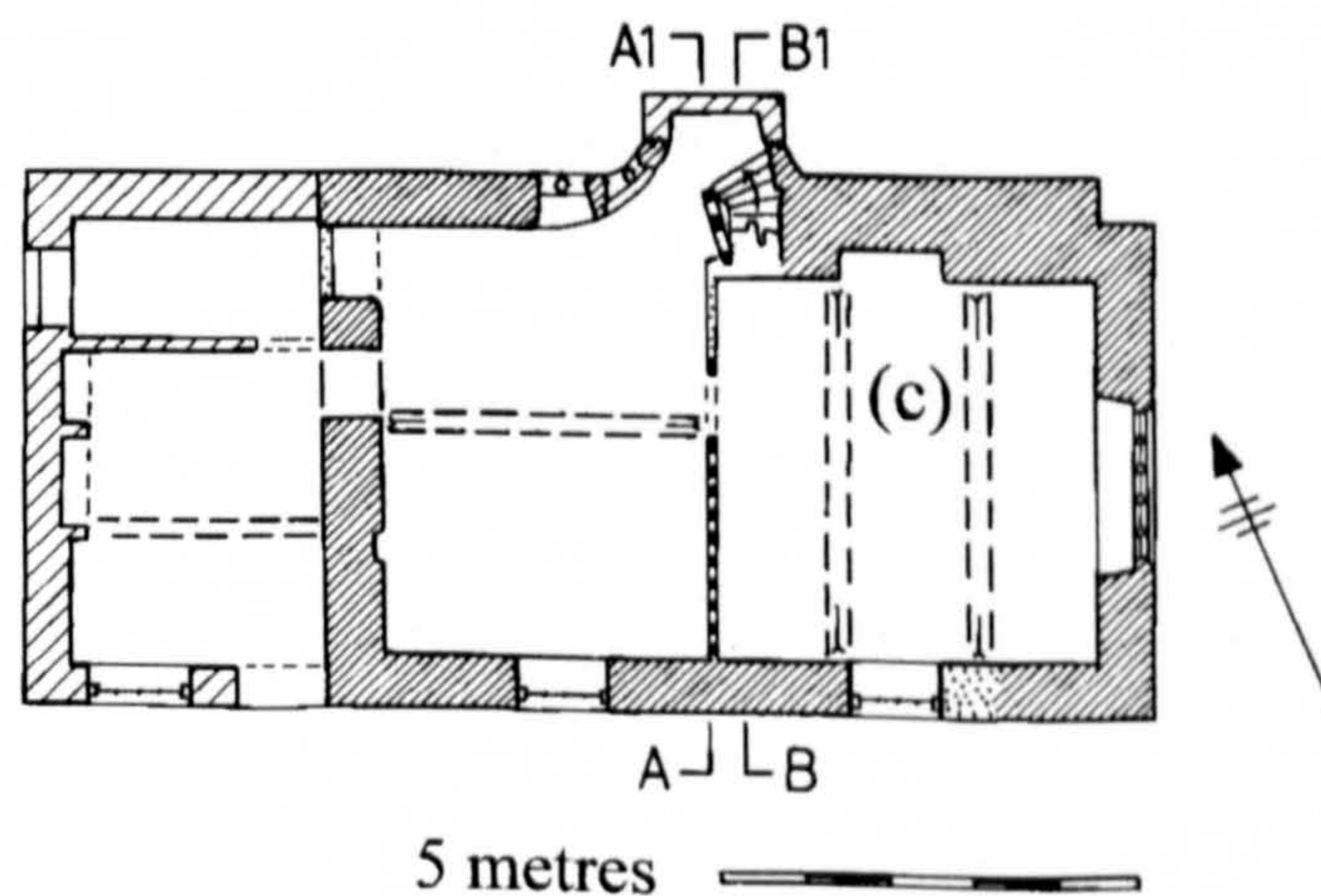


Fig. 6.45 *The Hayhouse, Ipstones: ground plan and sections.*

Houses of similar proportions may be implied by alternate rebuilding. At the Hayhouse, Ipstones [94] there is evidence of an earlier parlour wing (Figs. 6.44 and 6.45). Here a two-bay stone block contains the houseplace, and a smaller, laterally divided second bay. However, the standard arrangement of upper rooms, where one room was accessed from another was not adhered to, and a passage running behind the chambers over the houseplace led to a further wing which was replaced in 1625. Contrasting closed trusses indicate the sequence of development, though it is not clear whether the close-studded truss was new-built for its present position.



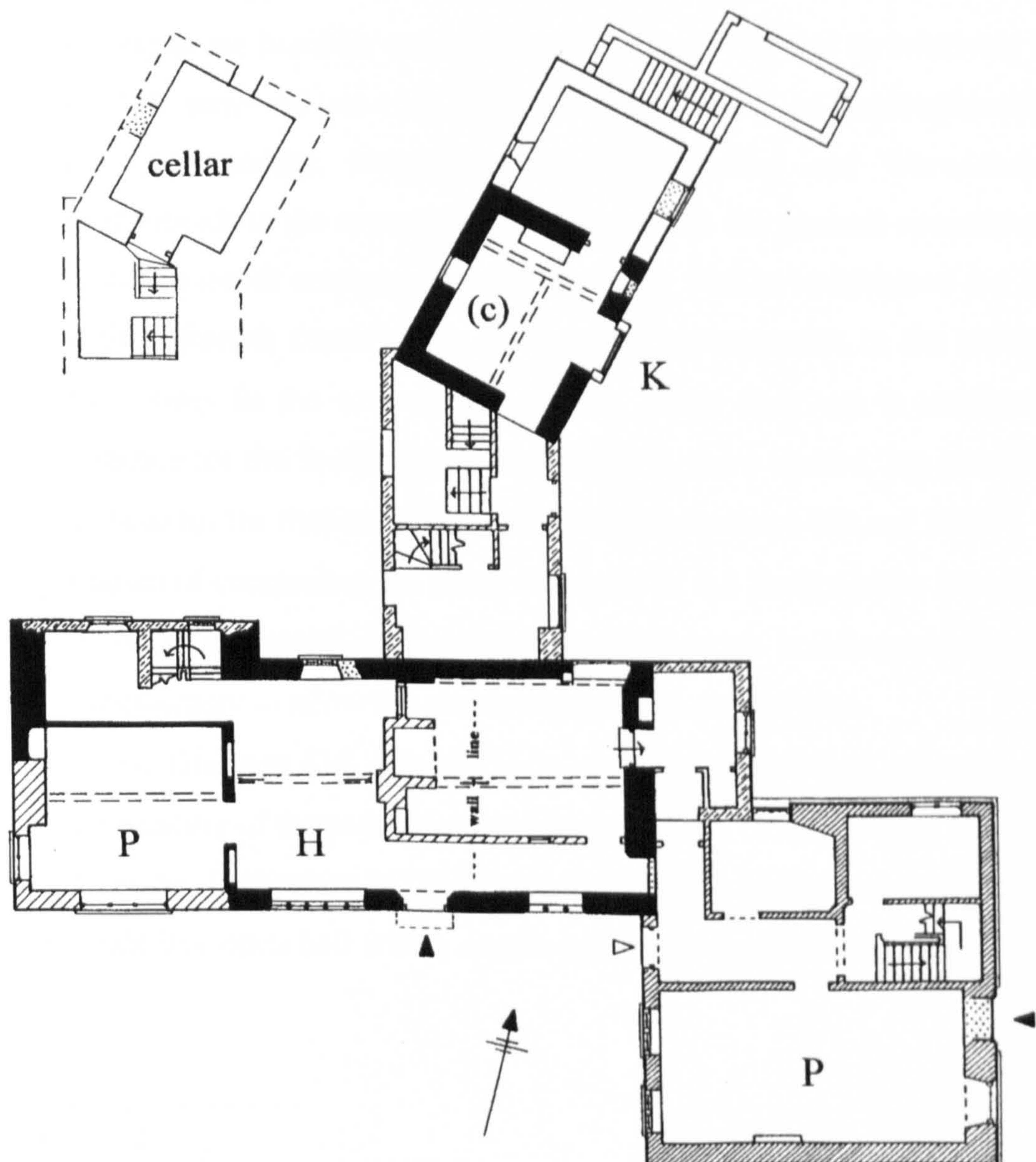
Fig. 6.46 Above Church, Ipstones:
 (above) from the south.
 (below) the ground plan with the mullions restored.



At Above Church, Ipstones [85] (Fig. 6.46), a handsome two-bay parlour wing with mullion and transom windows subsumed a good-quality timber-framed wing with two storeys and an attic (Fig. 6.42.2). To the north the footings of a stone stair turret replaced a timber structure in the same position. The upper floor was divided



Fig. 6.47 Haregate Hall, Tittesworth: from the south west. From an early photograph.



10 metres 

Fig. 6.48 Haregate Hall, Tittesworth: the ground plan. The 'little house' is marked K

irregularly, the main room filling the whole of the eastern bay, while the western bay was subdivided laterally by a close-studded partition..

Haregate Hall, Tittesworth [160] (Figs. 6.47 and 6.48) is the only small house of this period to have two crosswings. The style of the house, with its low central hall lit from the south by single ground floor window, suggests that it was built by Thomas Wardle, husbandman/yeoman, owner of the property from 1565 until his death in 1594, though no internal features survive to support this date.

(iii) *Cruck buildings*

Crucks buildings are found in large numbers across most of central and western England and much of Wales.⁵⁹ They vary widely in the quality of their construction, from the finely carpentered constructions in the yeomen farmhouses of the Welsh borders, to the poor quality, earth-fast crucks of Cumberland.⁶⁰ The crucks of North Staffordshire belong to the humbler end of the scale (Fig. 6.49), and lie relatively late in the sequence.⁶¹ A series of tree-ring dates for cruck houses in Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, ranges from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, with the greatest concentration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶² A similar study for Derbyshire and the Peak Park begins in the fifteenth century, has the greatest concentration in the sixteenth century, and tails away in the seventeenth century, when their use is confined to barns.⁶³ The evidence for the Staffordshire Moorlands is more limited, but provides a range of felling dates for the timbers of domestic crucks between 1499 and 1600.⁶⁴

For purposes of comparison all dated examples in the Staffordshire Moorlands have been included in this study, as the majority of the cruck buildings within Leek parish are too fragmentary to allow the reconstruction of a ground plan.

Sitch Farm, Bradnop [34, Fig. 6.15] is probably the earliest example (Fig. 6.49.2). Here the spacing of the padstones suggests a hall and cross passage, although a similar plan at Roston, Derbyshire [173], is associated with a smoke bay rather than an open hall. A single bay open hall with a smoke-blackened roof at Cheddleton Grange

⁵⁹ Alcock, 1981, Fig. 2.

⁶⁰ Mercer, 1975, 98-9; VAG, Spring Conference 1996, Radnorshire; Jennings, 1997, 97-8.

⁶¹ Mercer, 1975, 102-3.

⁶² VA. Tree-ring dating list from Vol. 15, 1984, onwards.

⁶³ VA. Tree-ring dating list from Vol. 15, 1984, onwards.

⁶⁴ Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Laboratory Report for Cheddleton Grange, 1995, CHD-A; VA 29, 1998, List 88, 128-9.

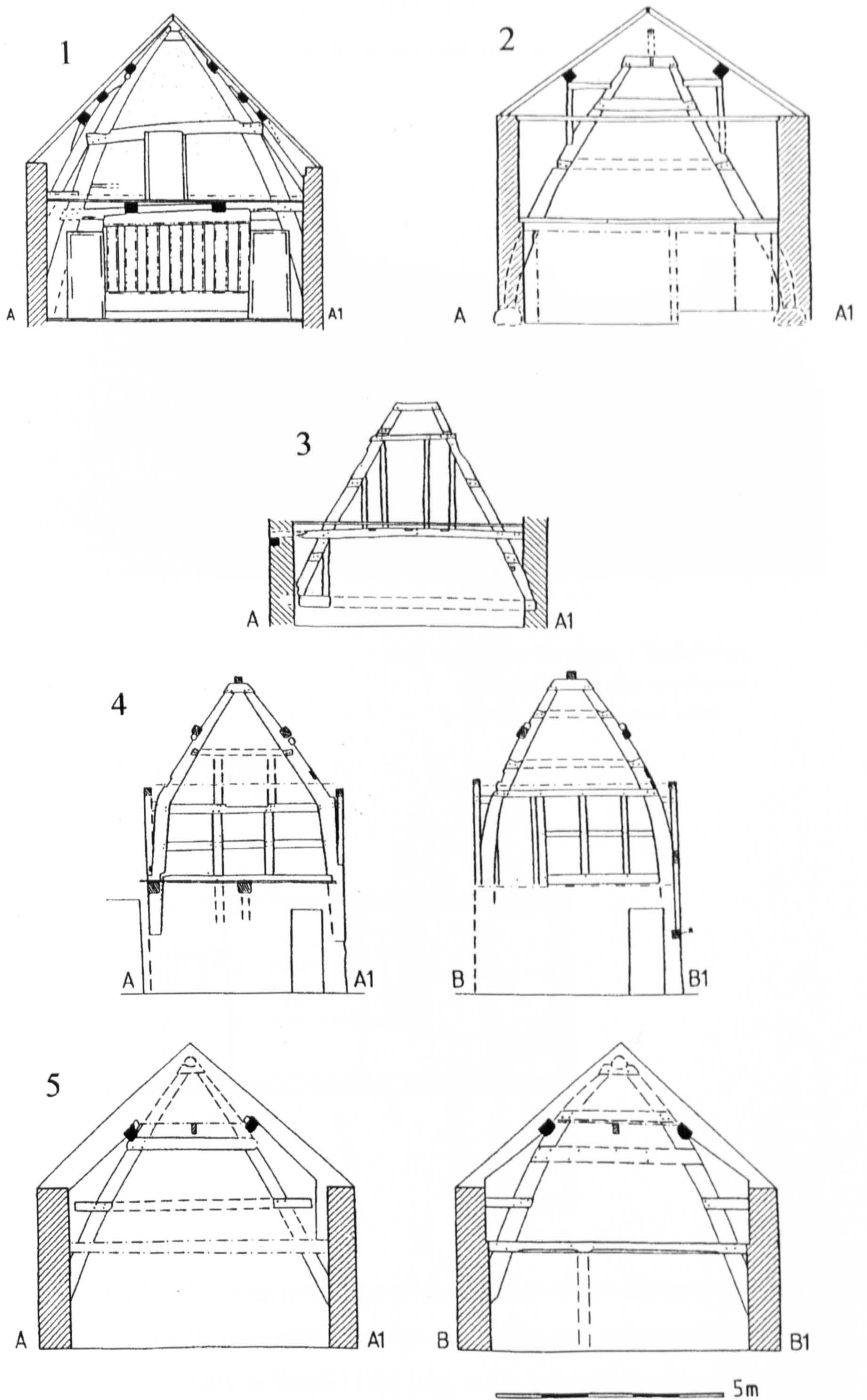


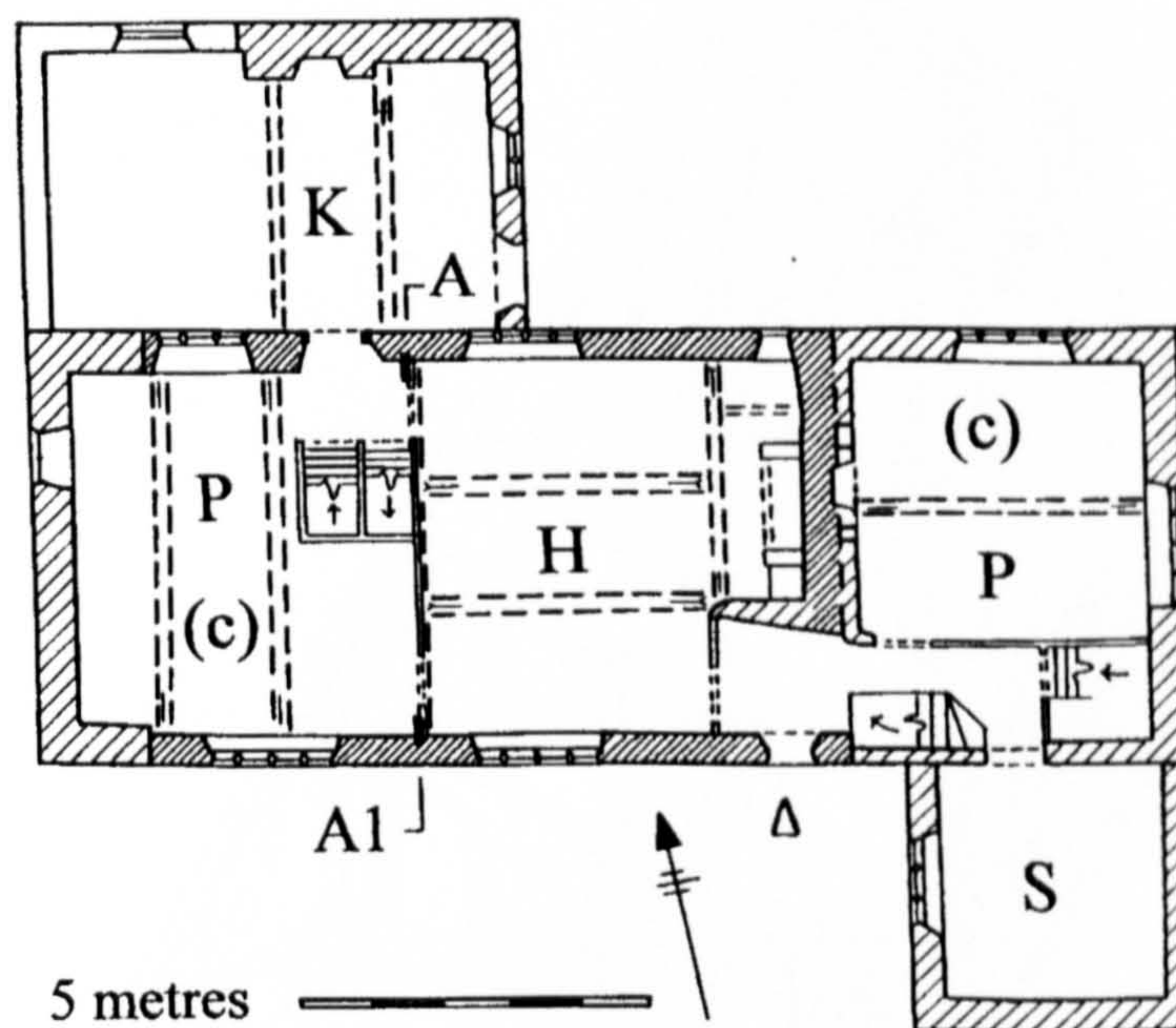
Fig. 6.49 Cruck trusses.

1 The Grange, Cheddleton; 2 Sitch Farm, Bradnop; 3 Brook Cottage, Endon;
4 Sutton House, Endon; 5 The Old School, Ford.

[38] (Figs. 6.49.1 and 6.50) was built shortly after 1499.⁶⁵ There is no evidence for a cross-passage, but a pair of doorways at the lower end indicates that the second bay was divided.



*Fig. 6.50 The Grange, Cheddleton:
(above) from the northeast
(below) the ground plan*

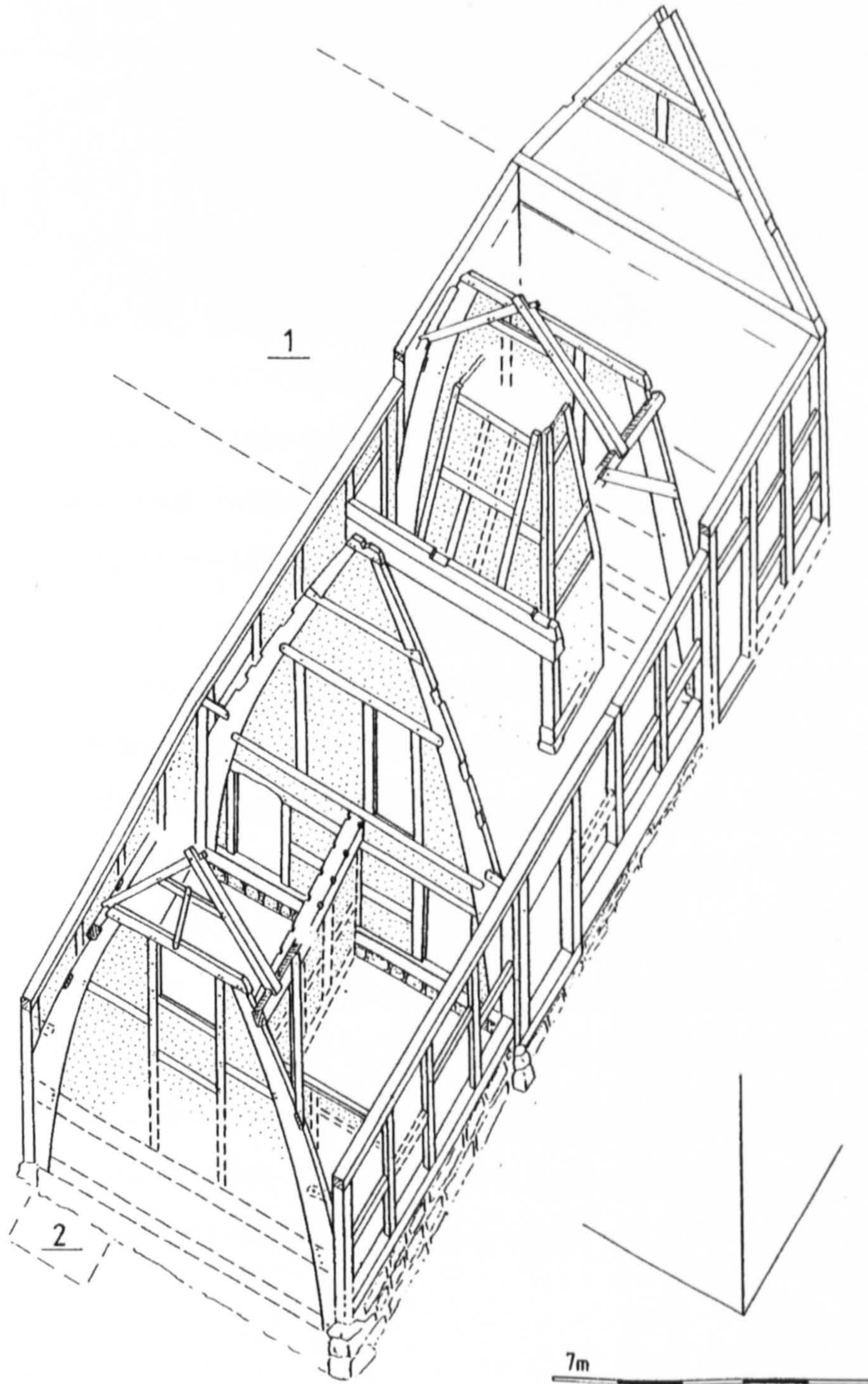


Even the smallest building may have a long history of development and change, reflecting the desire of its occupants for greater comfort and convenience. The final plan at the Whitehouse, Gillow Heath [172] (Fig. 6.51) is not dissimilar to the earliest form of the Grange, but the contrast between the halved dovetail joints used for the upper collar, and the halved joints used elsewhere suggest that the building was once

⁶⁵ Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Laboratory Report for Cheddleton Grange, 1995, CHD-A.



Fig. 6.51 *The Whitehouse, Gillow Heath: (above) from the east, (below) axonometric drawing.*



open throughout, even if a lower floor level for the second bay suggests some form of subdivision. Here a felling date of 1580⁶⁶ indicates a later structure, and one that was heated from the start by a firehood. Precisely when the cottage was ceiled over, and when the second bay was subdivided is uncertain, but the final plan was a common one in the smaller houses of the area.



Fig. 6.52 Sutton House, Endon: from the south

At Sutton House, Endon [63] the two surviving cruck trusses were carefully chosen to give maximum headroom and placed on a high stone sill (Figs. 6.49.4, 6.52 and 6.61). Once again the mixture of halved dovetail, mortice and tenon, and halved joints suggests a history of change. The absence of smoke blackening suggests the crucks were always part of a crosswing, as does the orientation of the range, as local houses were consistently built with the main house/hall broadside to the road.

In 1548 William Knight requested ‘four pairs of forks for a new dwelling house and twenty-three small trees for the reparation of the same’.⁶⁷ No three-bay cruck buildings survive, with or without the timber-framed walling implied by his request, but Ivy Farm, Rownall [50, Fig.27] may be its stone walled equivalent, though the surviving truss is too fragmentary to know whether this represents re-use. Two cruck trusses formed the main roof supports for Edge End, Tittesworth [158, Fig. 6.79] but one is a former closed truss re-used to form a smoke bay, so once again there is uncertainty about the date of the building as a whole.

⁶⁶ VA 28, 128-9.

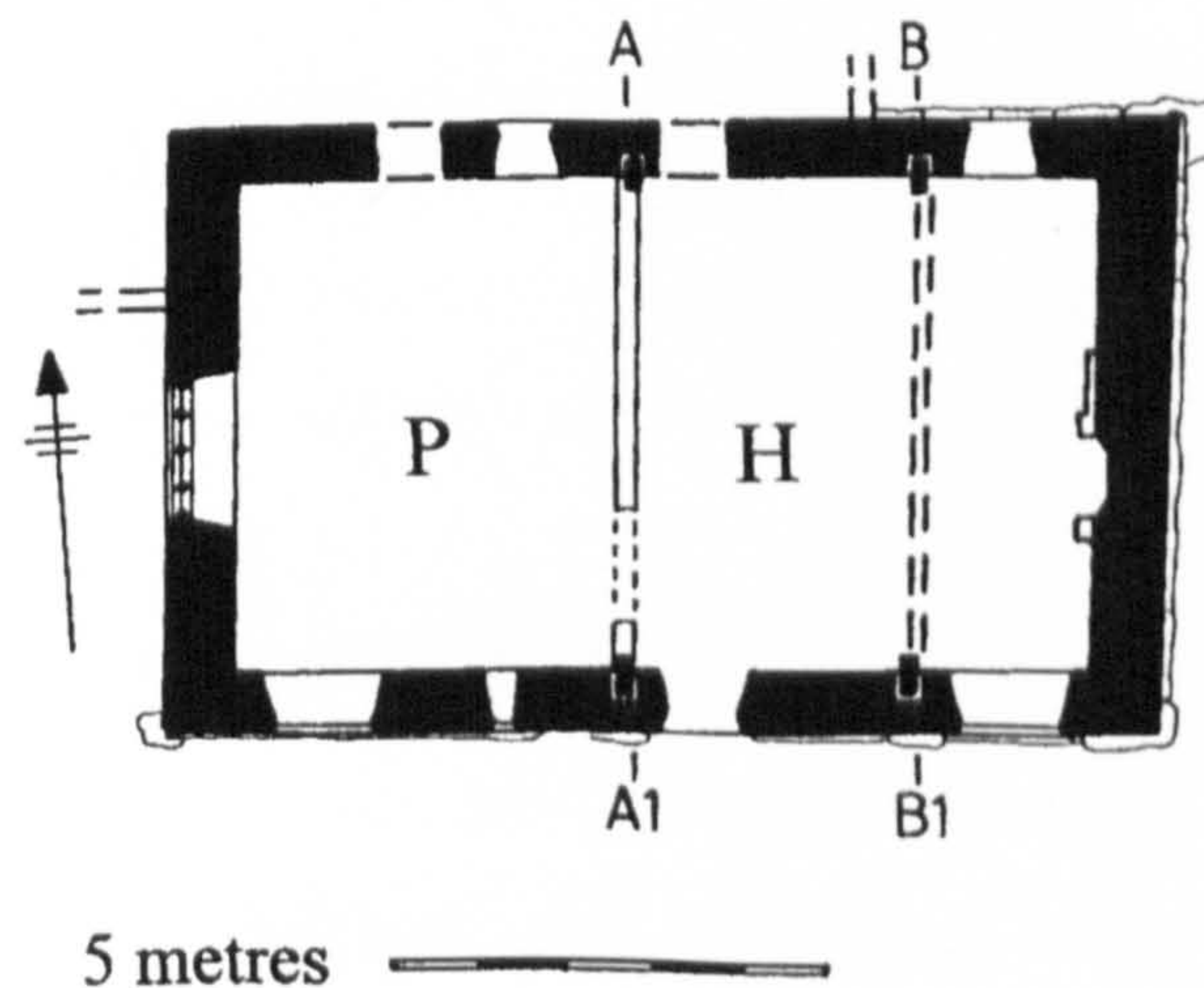
⁶⁷ PRO SC 2/202/65.

Only the Old School at Ford [170] provides a dated example of a stone walled house with crucks in situ (Figs. 6.53 and 6.49.5). Photographs taken prior to restoration suggest it was an ill-lit building, with an off-centre entrance with a four-centred arch dated 1605, five years after the felling date of the crucks.⁶⁸ Too much of truss B-B1 is missing to be sure of the details, but the spacing of the trusses and the provision of an eighteenth-century stone hearth against the eastern gable suggests the eastern section formed a smoke bay. No evidence survives for a closed truss in the centre of the building, leaving the ground plan uncertain. A small light to the west of the entrance indicates the stair position, and confirms the existence of an upper floor to the western end, lit from the gable.



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*Fig. 6.53 The Old School, Ford:
(above) 'at risk' in the 1950s.
(below) the ground plan*



⁶⁸ Nottingham University Tree-ring Dating Department. Un-numbered report for sampling in 1985.

The scale of the cruck buildings, and the little that is known of their history suggests their owners were relatively poor, yet three examples from the Staffordshire Moorlands have trusses with close studding, arguing money to spare for a more expensive type of construction (Fig. 6.54). At Gillowfold, Gillow Heath [171] a single truss is the earliest element in a classic example of alternate rebuilding.⁶⁹ Fragmentary remains of a similar truss survive at Hollinhurst [59], one of the larger farms carved out of Endon Park in the sixteenth century. A third example, Tudor House [155] lies in the centre of Stanley village, where a closed truss is complete at ground floor level, and has two doorways, suggesting a similar plan to that of the Whitehouse and Cheddleton Grange. By 1668 it was the home of a craftsman whose land was limited to a small hemyard,⁷⁰ but its style and the provision of a third bay to the upper end suggests it was once one of the main farms of the hamlet

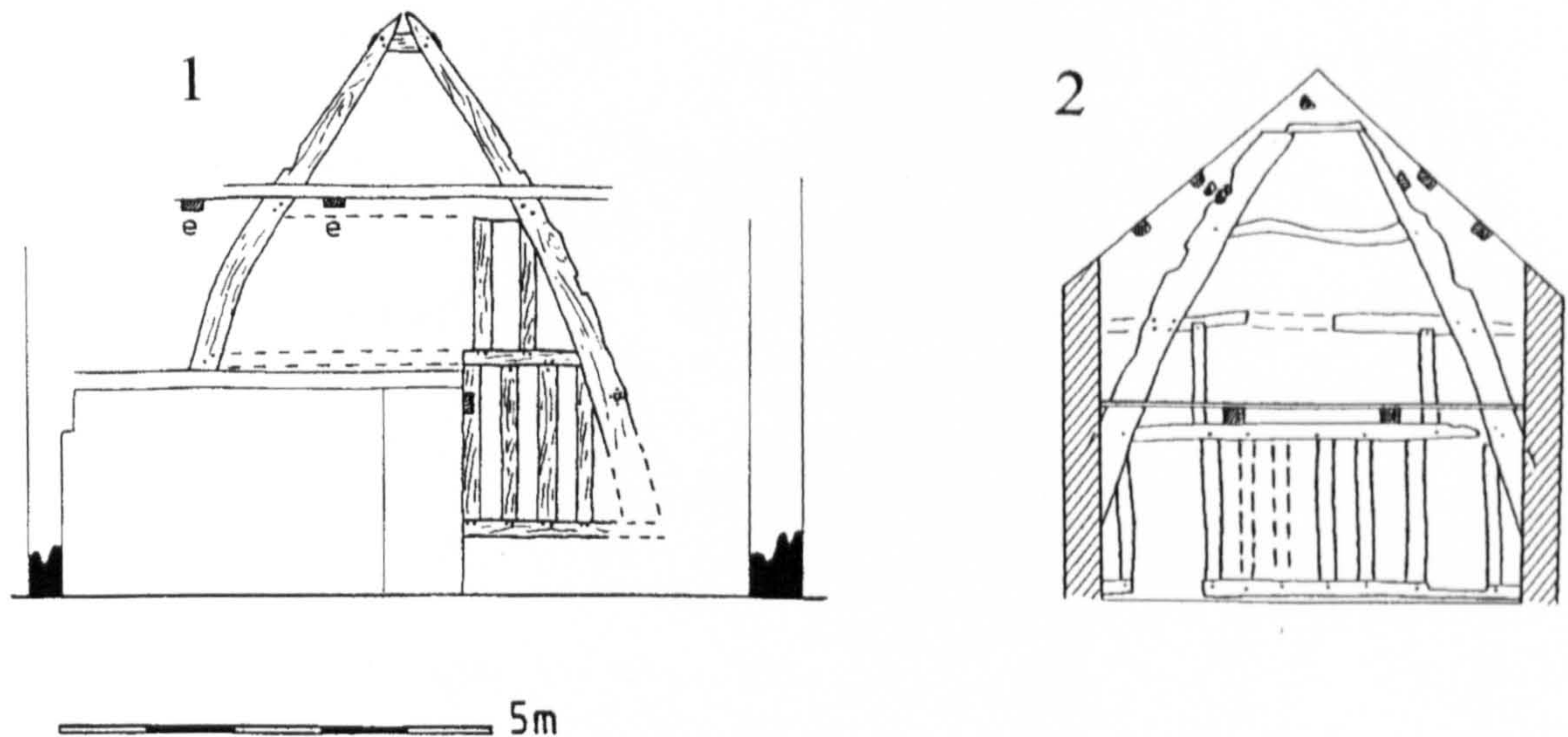


Fig. 6.54 Crucks with close studding.

1 Gillowfold, Gillow Heath (survey by R.A. Meeson) 2. Tudor Cottage, Stanley.

Neither documentation nor surviving remains present a clear picture of the houses of the poor. A glimpse can be caught at Endon, not in the medieval centre, where the farms have been rebuilt, but in a straggle of cottages on low ground near the ford. Here at Brook Cottage [55] (Fig. 6.49.3) a single re-used cruck forms the dividing wall between separate properties. A single bay to the east of the cruck has ground floor walling of stone, and has been raised in brick, a pattern to be seen elsewhere in the hamlet, suggesting this was once a cluster of one- and two-bay single

⁶⁹ Survey by R.A. Meeson.

⁷⁰ Deeds (privately owned).

storey cottages subsisting in tiny roadside enclosures, since none is related to the hamlet's open fields.

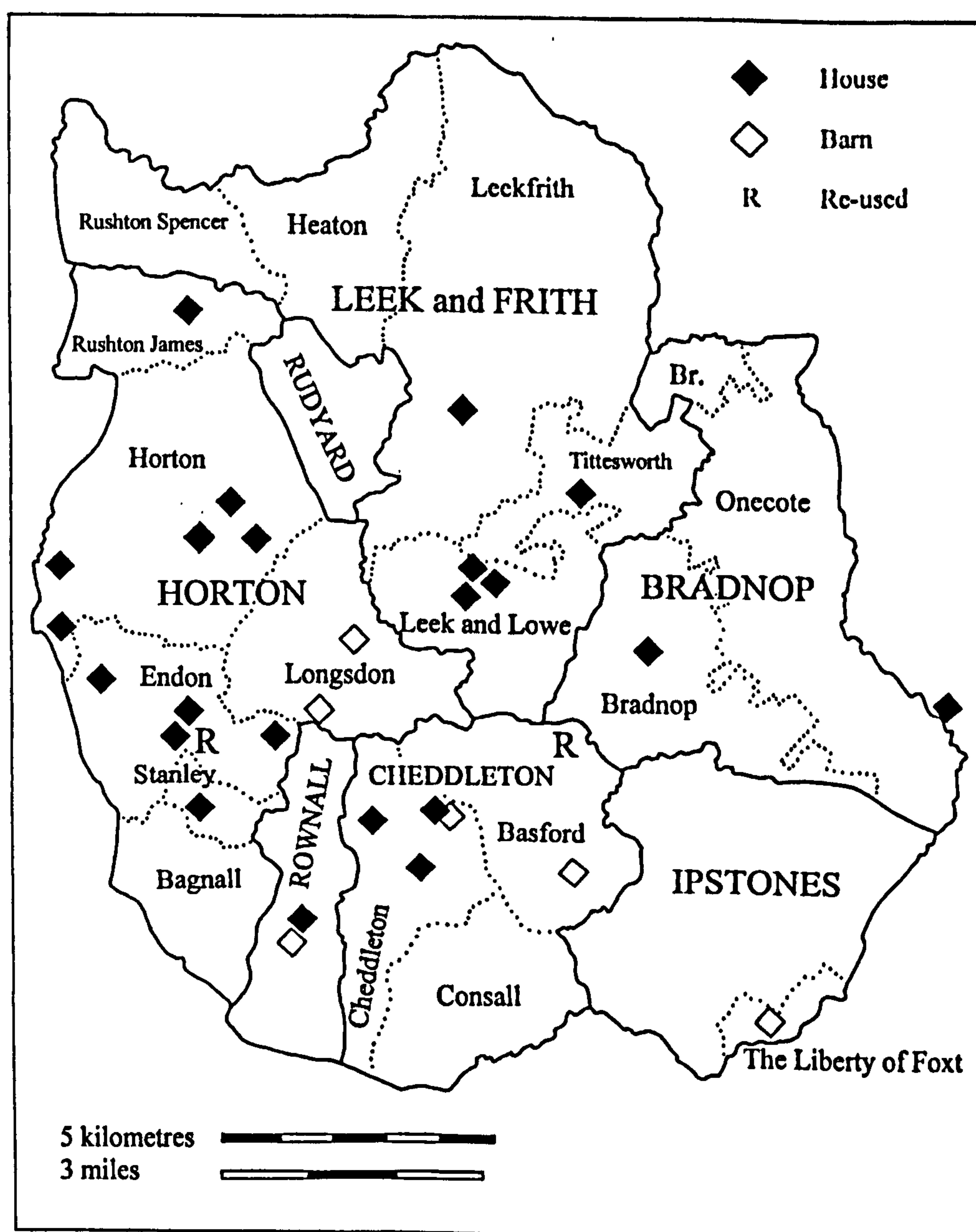


Fig. 6.55 Leek: the distribution of crucks

From their distribution there is little doubt that cruck buildings were once common throughout the parish (Fig.6.55). With few exceptions their survival is now limited to the medieval hamlets. No domestic cruck buildings survive in the townships dominated by large gentry estates (Basford, Consall, Longsdon and Rudyard), and they are unusual in the townships where large-scale conversion to freehold took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus in Ipstones a single blade has been found in a barn at Foxt, none has been found in Rushton Spencer, and two in a rural context in the manor of Leek, despite good documentation for their use in the middle of the

sixteenth century.⁷¹ By contrast, in Horton and Cheddleton, where large numbers of small tenant properties co-existed with larger farms, a substantial number of cruck buildings survive. Three more survive in Leek town [4, 22, 26] where once again small tenant properties remained in evidence.

Whether they represent the bottom end of the social scale is less certain, as, in some cases, is the nature of their external walls. Repeated requests to the manor court of 1548 for trees to make 'clamstaves and a sill'⁷² suggests that a local variant of Lincolnshire's 'mud-and stud', or Lancashire's 'clam-staff and daub'⁷³ may have been in use for the poorer buildings.

(iv) Houses for the 'better sort'

The dividing line between the greater and lesser men is difficult to define in the documentation, and far from clear from their housing. Patently the larger houses were homes for those of above average wealth, the established gentry with landed or commercial interests stretching beyond the immediate area, and relatively large estates within it. These men could afford to build extensively and to a preconceived plan. But others, including some who also paid fines for knighthood in 1625-6, the yeomen and minor gentry who were the later holders of the fragmented manors, and the rising men perceived to be of gentry status at the time of the hearth tax returns, might occupy quite modest houses. These men, the 'parish' gentry, might use their growing wealth to enlarge their industrial or farming interests, or to make better provision for their sons and daughters, while building in a more modest and piecemeal fashion.

William Hulme, fined £10 in 1625-6, owned Hillilees in Heaton [69]. No Hulme at Heaton was charged for more than two hearths in 1662, 1666, or 1672. None is referred to as gentleman, and the core of the farmhouse is a modest building with a single crosswing. Though enlarged by his successors, the addition of a substantial agricultural block to form a double pile against the crosswing, and the steady accretion of a fine collection of farm buildings suggests the family's priorities lay elsewhere.

Fragmentation of the manor might accompany the expansion of freehold tenure. By the 1620s the lordship of Rushton Spencer was in five parts.⁷⁴ The holders included members of the Sutton family at Cloud House [149] and the Hallhouse [150], and the Goodfellowes at Wallhill [151]. All three had been fully rebuilt by the 1620s,

⁷¹ PRO, SC2/202/65.

⁷² PRO, SC2/202/65.

⁷³ Mercer, 1975, 24-5; Cousins, 2000, 5-9.

⁷⁴ SHC, NS, VII, 212; NS X (I), 66.

and all were single crosswing houses.

The most impressive is Cloud House [149]. Here, a gable entrance leads straight into the hall, where the visitor faces a close-studded wall of the upper end (Fig. 6.56), which has evidence for a bench and perhaps a seat back. Like the exterior, with its five-light mullion and transom windows (Fig. 6.57), this was designed to impress, as the remaining interior walls are square-framed. A massive external stack served the cooking hearth on the eastern wall of the hall. A smaller stack served the parlour and parlour chamber, which had two of the three hearths paid for by William Sutton in 1666. The house has two full storeys and an attic served by two-light windows in the gables and by a dormer dated 1612. An earlier William Sutton purchased the farm in 1596, and may have been the builder.⁷⁵



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Fig. 6.56 *Cloud House, Rushton Spencer: the upper end of the houseplace*

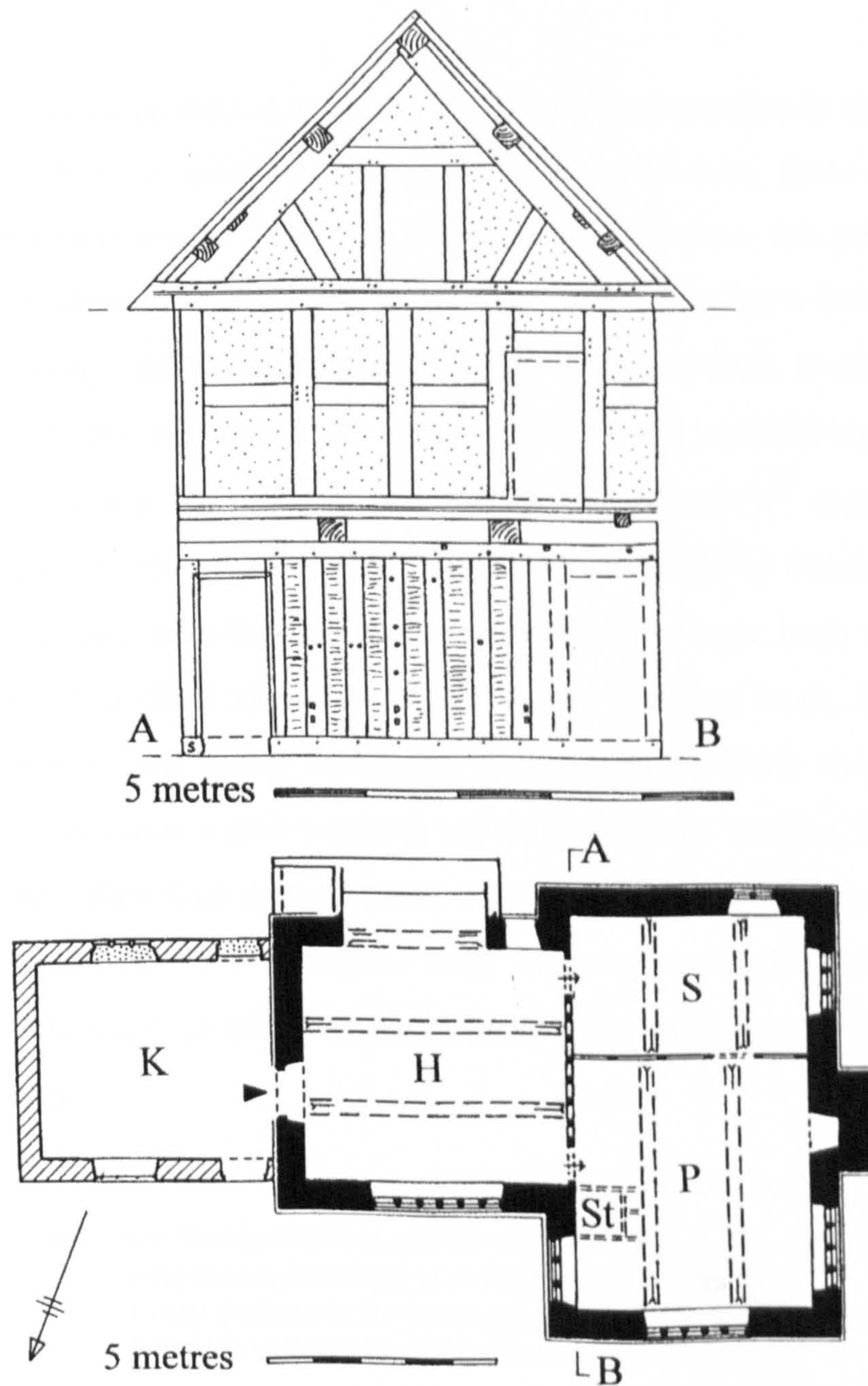
Structurally the building spans the period of change from timber to stone, as does the crosswing roof at Whitehough, Ipstones [107]. The carpenters were clearly familiar with the techniques required to build a fully framed house, as the stone gables mask principal rafter and tie-beam trusses, and the roof has a full complement of straight windbraces. The gable trusses show no sign of closure, and one can only assume the craftsmen concerned were reluctant to abandon the familiar form of roof construction, and relied on the stone gables purely for weather-proofing. Altogether the house provides a most durable and well-built example of conspicuous consumption at minor gentry level.

⁷⁵ SRO D(W) 1761/A/4/149.



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Fig. 6.57 *Cloud House, Rushton Spencer:*
 (above) from the north
 (below) the closed truss between hall and parlour wing.



Wallhill [151] and the Hallhouse [150] are on a more modest scale, though the presence of a two-storey porch with a closet over the entrance, and the triangular arrangement of one over three lights in the gables of Wallhill lift the house out of the common rut. So too does the servant's chamber in the inventory of 1662 (Table 6.1), as only the gentry houses have evidence for 'servants in husbandry'.

Table 6.1 (i) Wallhill: from the inventory of Thomas Goodfellowe, 1662⁷⁶

	PARLOUR WING	HOUSEPLACE	SERVICE END	PORCH
U	2 Chamber over the Parlour	4 Chamber over the house	7 Ch. over the Buttery 8 Servant's chamber	5 Closet 6 New closet
G	1 Parlour	3 House	Buttery	

ALSO Barn, stable, wayne house, kiln.

ALSO Loose boards.

(ii) Wallhill: from the inventory of Thomas Goodfellowe, 1671

	PARLOUR WING	HOUSEPLACE	SERVICE END	PORCH
A	3 Coploft	3 Coploft		
U	7 Great chamber	4 House chamber (loose boards)	5 Little chamber	6 Clossitt
L	1 Parlour	2 Houseplace	[.....]	[.....]

ALSO Stable, little stable

A peculiarity of probate documents for North Staffordshire is the comparative rarity of descriptive inventories. At Stoneleigh, in Warwickshire, three-quarters of the inventories are room-by-room.⁷⁷ In Leek less than a fifth follow this pattern. As there was no legal requirement for this form, some other factor must have been in operation. A single documentary reference provides a possible explanation. In the inventory of Thomas Stubbs appears the statement 'the house garden and yard having been found to be a Chatell the tenant right is preased by us tow pounds',⁷⁸ suggesting locally accepted criteria for the circumstances in which a house might be considered a chattel, and thus require inclusion in the inventory. These seem to have been variable. While descriptive inventories often appear to relate to new building work, this was not an automatic connection, and where additional evidence is available the properties can generally be seen as either a new tenancy, a purchase by the testator, or to have been acquired by means other than the customary inheritance pattern of father to eldest son. The Wallhill inventories, for example, were occasioned by the death of Thomas Goodfellowe the younger in 1661, when, in the absence of descendants, his properties passed to his father.

⁷⁶ See Appendix 6.2 for descriptive inventories and the related KEY.

(.....)

Information contained in or implied by the inventory.

[.....]

Extant features in the house not mentioned in the inventory.

1, 2, 3 etc

Numbers indicate the order of rooms in the inventory.

⁷⁷ Alcock, 1993, 13.

⁷⁸ LRO Thomas Stubbs, 1666.

William Tonnycliffe, Francis Gibson, and William Nabs were all part owners of the manor of Heaton for a brief period during the seventeenth century. Francis Gibson's house at Wormhaugh [154] is a single pile, three-cell house, with straight joints indicating the replacement of timber-framing. A descriptive inventory of 1666 lists six rooms for a house charged in the same year for four hearths. If the arrangement shown in Table 6.2 is correct, then there was still no chamber over the houseplace, and it was entered from a cross passage. William Nab's house at Heaton Lowe [68] presents a similar picture. A single pile four cell house, it is distinguished by an elaborate porch added in 1651 (Fig. 6.58), three years before he became joint lord of the manor,⁷⁹ and sixteen years before 'Mr. Nabbs' paid for four hearths.

Table 6.2 Wormhaugh, Heaton: from the inventory of Thomas Gibson, yeoman, 1671

	PARLOUR	HOUSE	ENTRY	LITTLE PARLOUR
U	3 Parlour chamber (with sick bed)		4 Entry chamber	6 Chamber over the little parlour
L	2 Parlour	1. House	(Entry)	5 Little parlour



Fig. 6.58 Heaton Lowe: the porch added by William Nabbs in 1651.

Only a crosswing survives of William Tonnycliffe's house at Bearda [64, Fig. 6.33, 34], but by 1677 he also owned Abbey Green Farm in Leekfrith [108] (Fig. 6.59) tenanted by his brother John. In 1666 he paid for six hearths in Leekfrith, and five in Heaton, which, despite legislation requiring payment to be made by the tenants,⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 187.

⁸⁰ Arkell, 1992, 40.

appears to have included the tenant properties occupied by his brothers.⁸¹ This makes it difficult to gauge either property from the Hearth Tax, though Abbey Green had at least sixteen rooms in 1681 (Appendix 6.2).⁸² Here render conceals a complicated sequence of development in which a timber-framed house was subsumed into a substantial central lobby entrance house. This was built across the contours allowing a semi-basement cellar to be built below the parlour. A service area, largely of brick, has replaced the earlier arrangements, making the relationship of the rooms to the inventory uncertain.

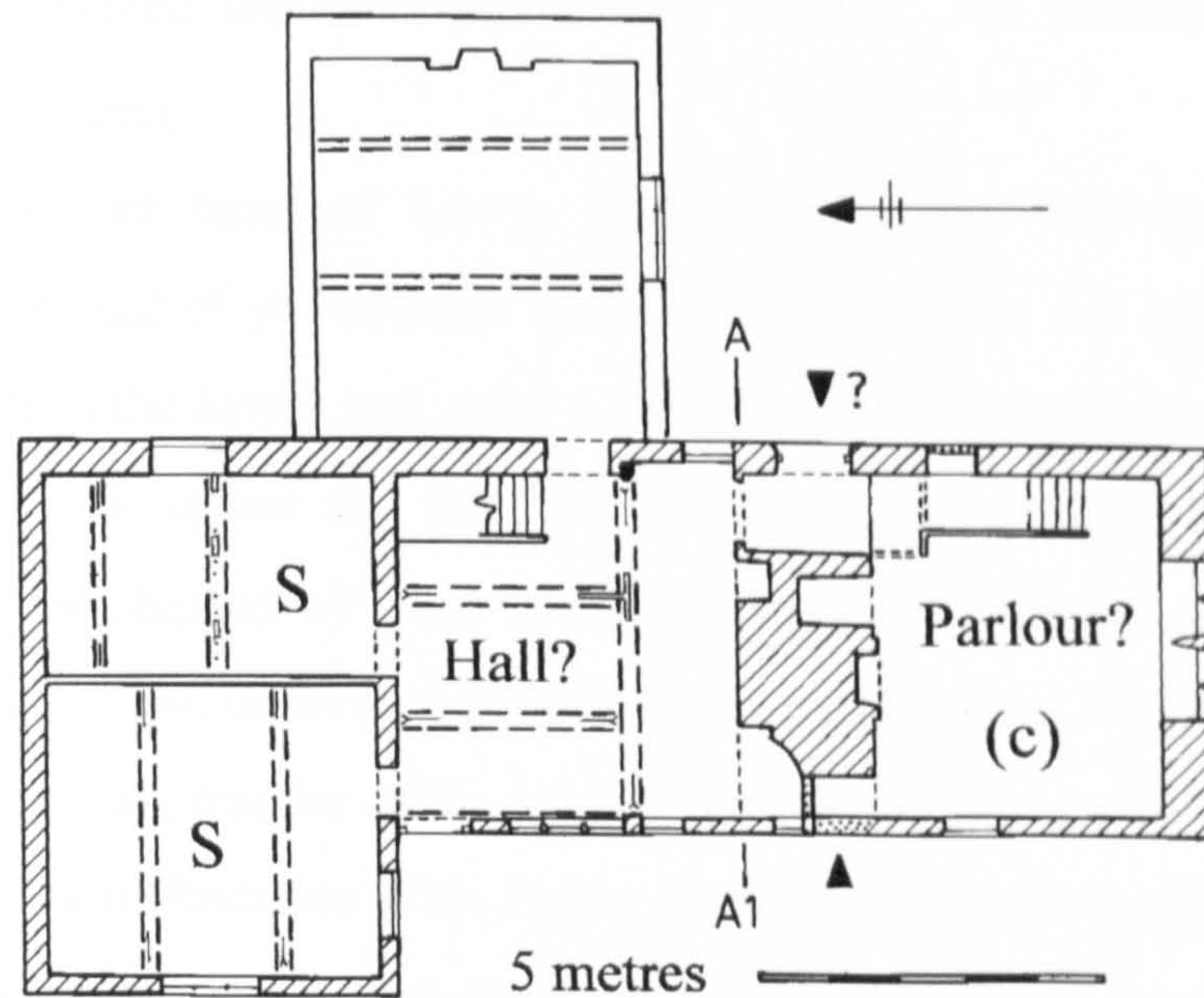


Fig. 6.59 *Abbey Green, Leekfrith: the ground plan.*

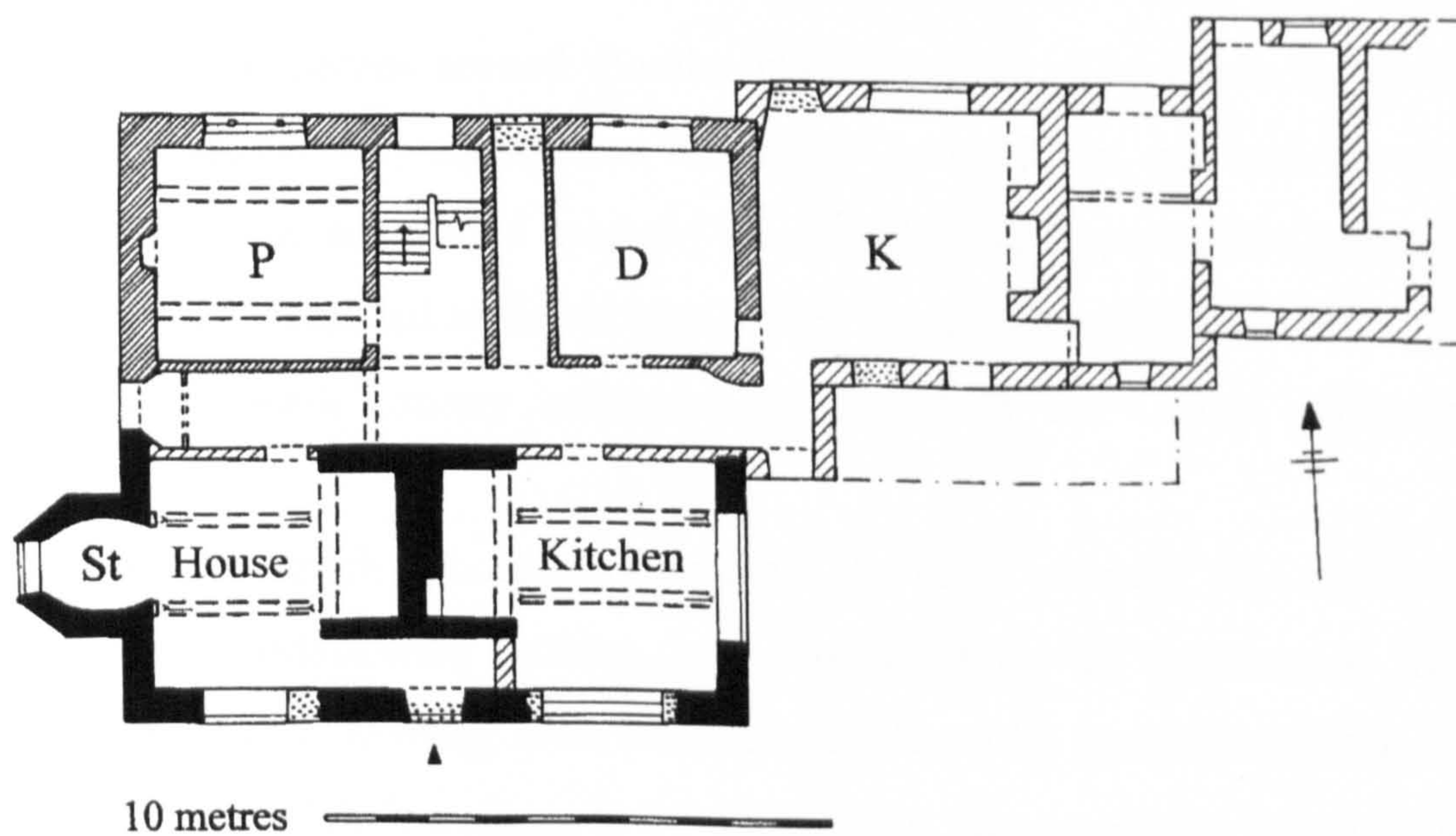


Fig. 6.60 *Manor Farm, Endon: the ground plan with the central hearth restored.*

⁸¹ SRO D(W) 1702/1/2; D3272/1/4/3/19.

⁸² SRO John Tonnycliffe, 1681-2.

Such piecemeal replacements seem to typify the aspirations of the rising men, and took many forms. The southern section of Manor Farm, Endon [61] was built in 1637 by John Hollinshead, freemason, for Roger Tomkinson and his wife (Fig. 6.60). In 1666 the house had three hearths, and was accessed from the south by a central lobby entrance. Back-to-back cooking hearths can be identified as those of the house and kitchen named at his death in 1676,⁸³ but the dairy, buttery and parlour (Appendix 6.2) were replaced in the eighteenth century, suggesting they belonged to an earlier period and were deemed too old-fashioned to survive. An unusual feature was the provision of a stair turret.

At the adjacent farm of Lawn, Endon [60] (Fig. 6.144), a brick exterior conceals the houseplace of yet another timber-framed house. An oak bressumer spans the cooking hearth in the lower end, with a small splat baluster staircase in the adjacent corner. In contrast, the upper end consists of a fine stone parlour wing with mullion and transom windows heated by three of the four hearths available to Richard Heath in 1666. His father, Andrew, described simply as yeoman, ranked highly in the estimation of his fellows. He was a trustee at the sale of Ipstones manor in 1649, and thus a joint holder of the manor of Ipstones with Philip Hollins of Mosslee and Sampson Fynney of Caldon.⁸⁴ Whether he or his gentleman son was the builder is uncertain.

Some time before 1667, Sampson Fynney, as the surviving trustee for Ipstones manor, sold to John Johnson and James Janney.⁸⁵ The Janneys were long term holders of a group of properties around Booths Hall, Ipstones. The surviving portions of Booths Hall [88, Fig. 46] suggest that it rivalled Cloud House, and both inventory and hearth tax evidence suggests a property of considerable importance (Appendix 6.2). The property also included an aisled barn, a rare form for Staffordshire [Figs. 6.47-49], although seventeenth century examples are found in the Calder valley in West Yorkshire.⁸⁶

Here as in much of northern England,⁸⁷ the term 'yeoman' was widely used for the majority of established farmers, and distinguishing the major men from their fellows through their housing is no simple task. The older farmhouses tended to grow with the fortunes of their owners, to be occupied in one generation by a husbandman, the next by a yeoman, and finally by a member of the 'parish' gentry. Sutton House at

⁸³ LRO Roger Tomkinson, 1676.

⁸⁴ SA12/1/3.

⁸⁵ DRO 231/M/T714.

⁸⁶ RCHM, 1986, 41.

⁸⁷ Levine and Wrightson, 1991, 159.

Endon [63] typifies this progress. A crosswing is all that survives of the sixteenth century house. In the seventeenth century the hall was replaced by a houseplace with chamber and attic above. Next a kitchen was built behind the crosswing containing a second cooking hearth and a fine splat baluster staircase (Fig. 6.137). Finally, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the original parlour was demoted to a service area with the addition of a further crosswing (Fig. 6.61; Table 6.3).

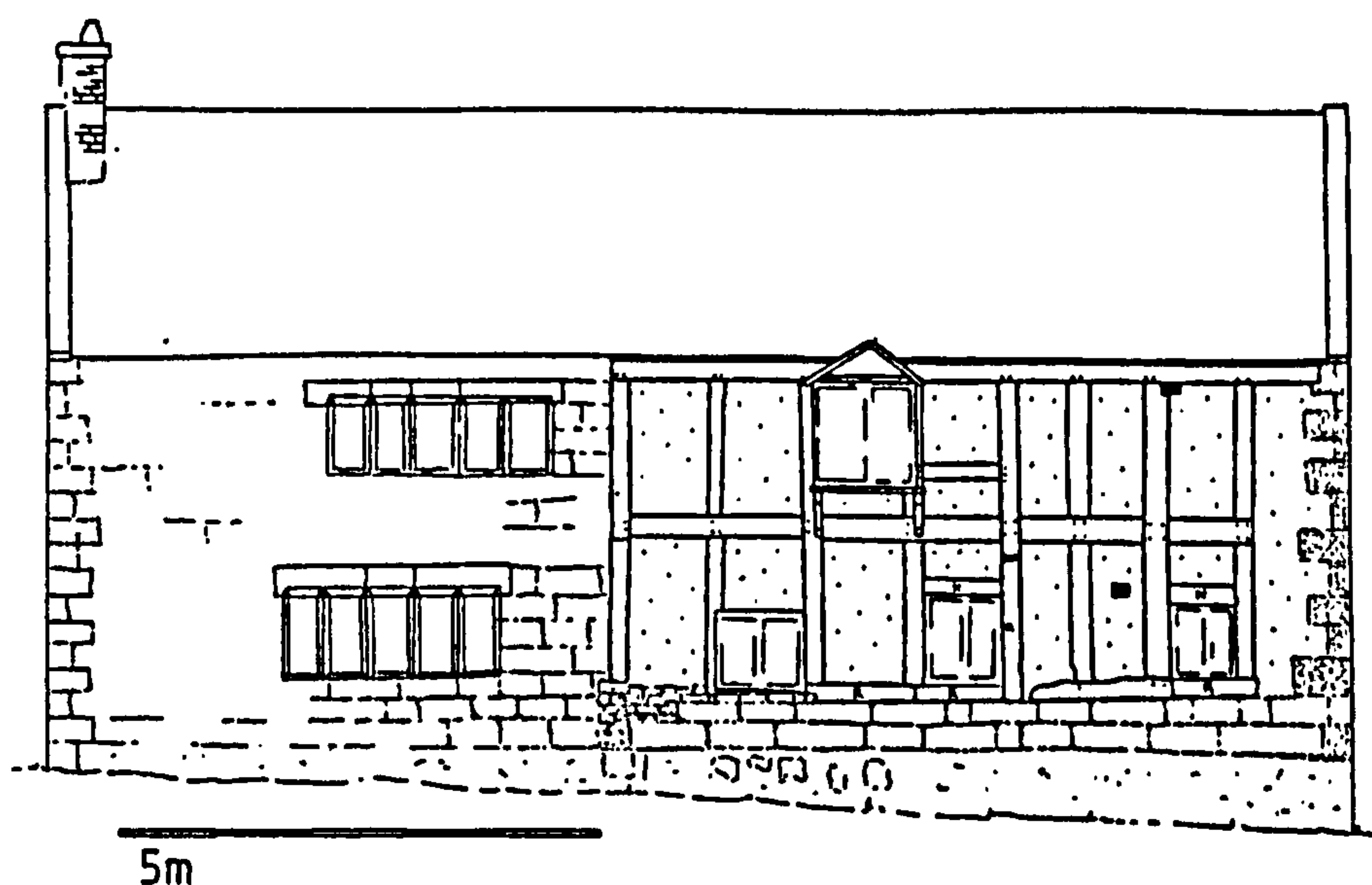


Fig. 6.61 *Sutton House, Endon:*
(above) the northwest elevation of the added kitchen and early parlour wing; (below) the ground plan.

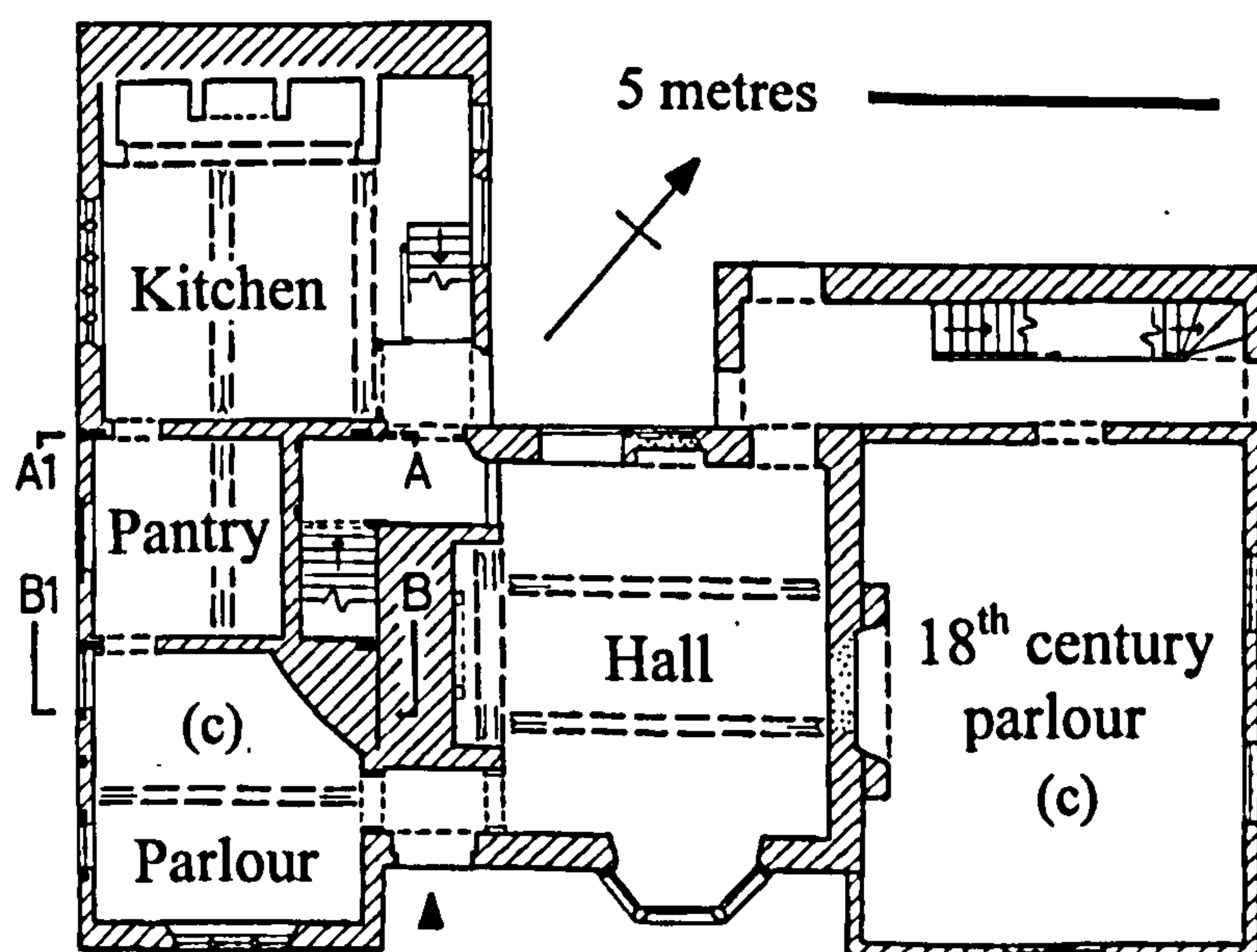


Table 6.3 *Sutton House before the addition of the eighteenth century parlour. From the inventory of Thomas Sutton, yeoman, 1712.*

	PANTRY/BUTTERY	PARLOUR	HALL	KITCHEN
A	11 Garret over Pantry	12 Garret over Parlour	14 Garret over Hall	13 Garret over Kitchen
U	8 Buttery chamber	7 Parlour chamber	6 Hall chamber	9 Kitchen chamber 10 Little chamber
L	3 Pantry	1 Parlour	2 Hall	5 Kitchen [with stairs]
C		4 Cellar (seller)		

ALSO Millhouse, barn (with loose boards)

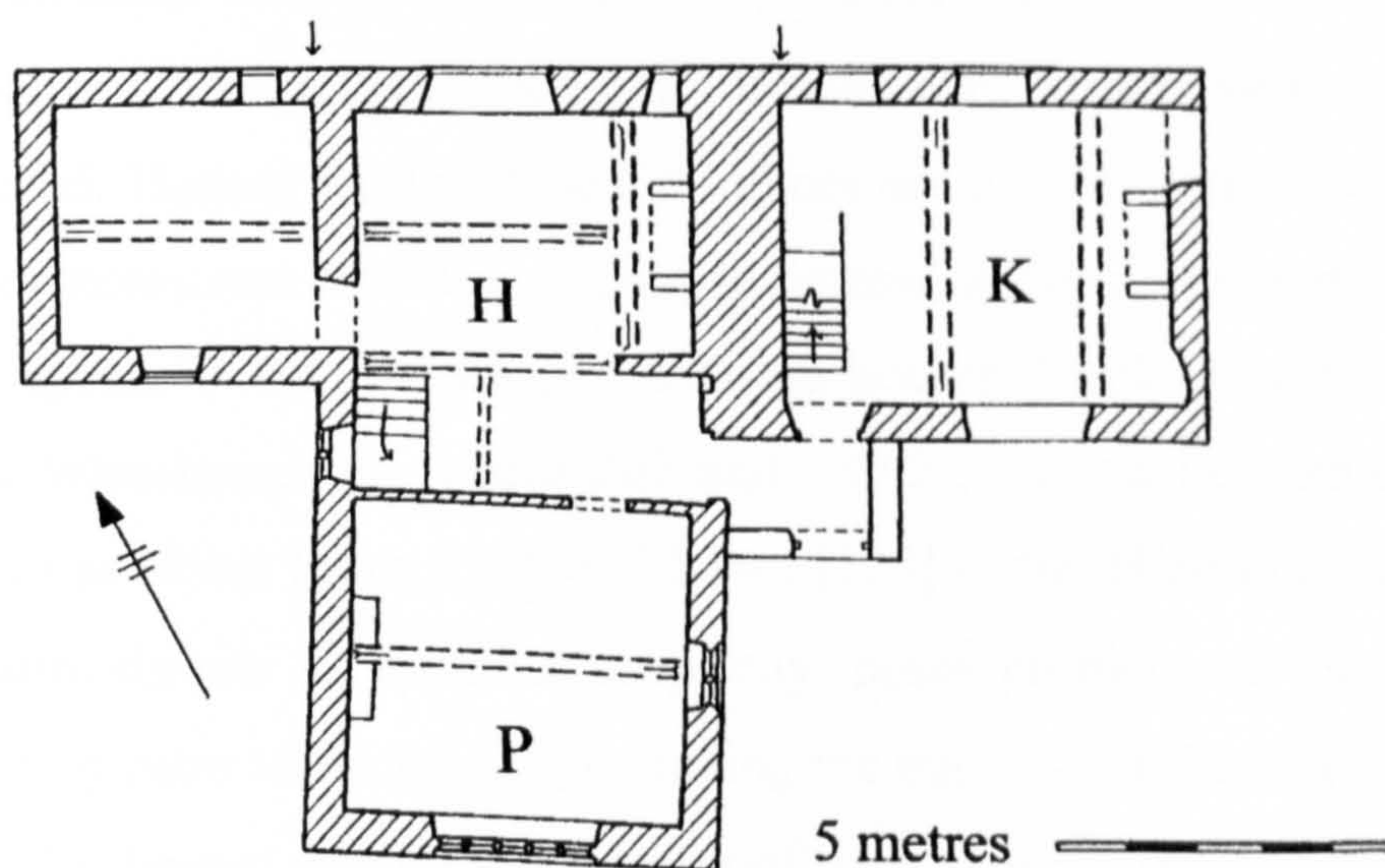


Fig. 6.62 *Waterhouse: (above) from the south; (below) plan*

At the Waterhouse, Onecote [140] (Fig. 6.62) the sequence is less clear. A reference to ‘bacon at the roof’ in 1599 implies the survival of an open hall, and indicates substantial rebuilding after that date and before the completion of the kitchen in 1639.⁸⁸ The unusual position of the houseplace and its hearth, added to its uneasy relationship to the parlour, all suggest piecemeal development. So too does the kitchen, which was originally of one storey, wider than the houseplace, and accessed from a single external doorway. Yet the final result, with a fine parlour to the south with a ‘solar’, is a comfortable yeoman farmhouse that might have developed still further had it remained owner occupied.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ LJO Andrew Withnall, 1599.

⁸⁹ LJO Andrew Withnall, 1669; SA1/3/8.

(v) *New types of housing*

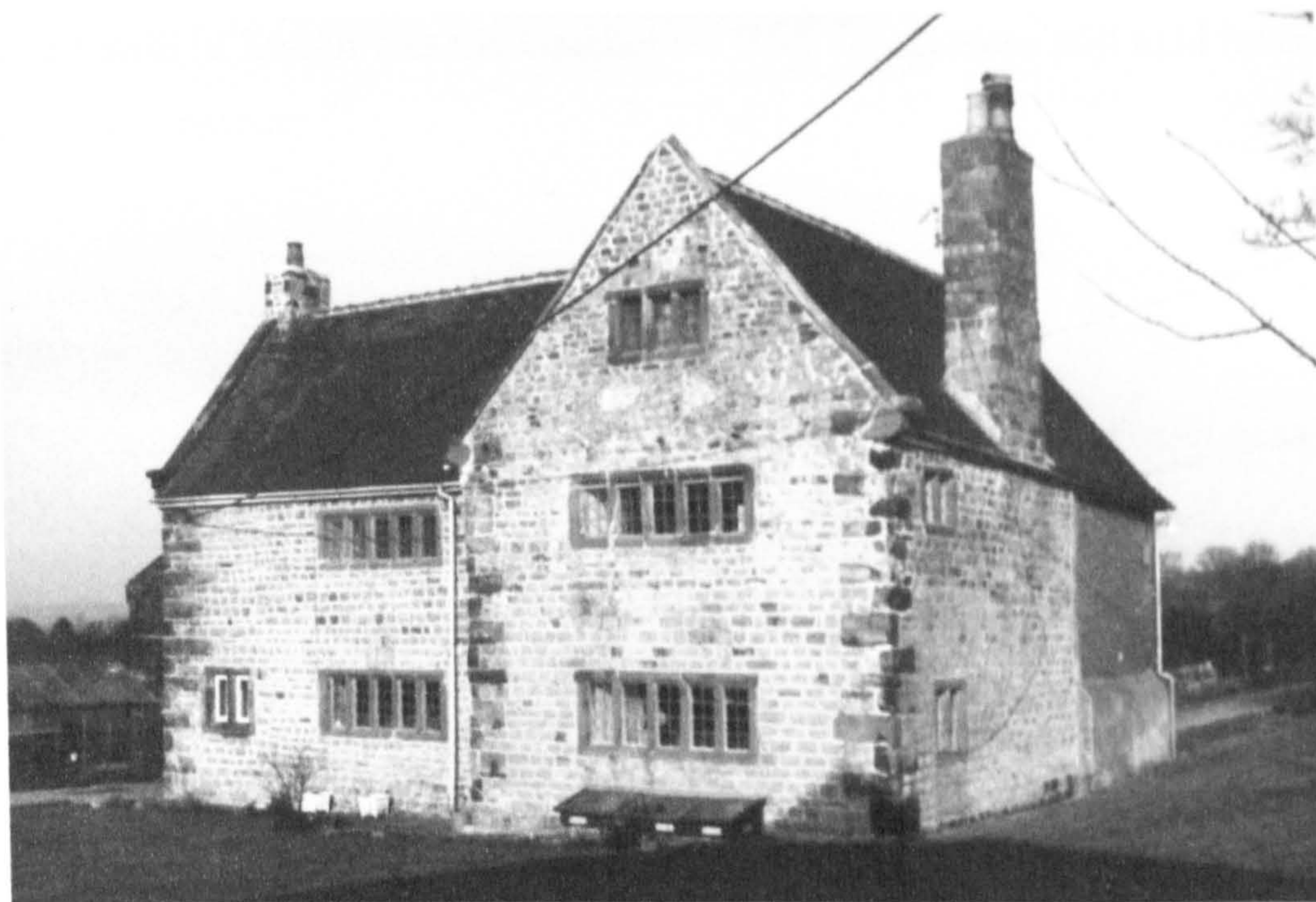
The newfound prosperity which led to the enlargement or rebuilding of existing farmhouses was part of a more complex picture in which rising population demanded a more radical solution. New holdings, like Aston Sitch in Bradnop⁹⁰ or the Trafford farms at the High Forest [116] and Hangingstone in Leekfrith [67] required new houses, as did expansion in the older settlements such as the Leekfrith settlements at Thornleigh or Upper Hulme. Here, as elsewhere in England, a new style of housing resulted, to be seen at its clearest in the houses of a single build.

By modern standards the requirements were modest. A houseplace and parlour/service room were the essentials, with chambers above and perhaps additional space in the form of attics and a cellar. As with their predecessors, these were single pile detached houses, but in a variety of sizes and forms to suit all needs and all pockets. Lobby-entrance houses of either two or three bays formed the majority. Central lobby-entrance houses, and lobby-entry houses with an unheated central room are also represented. Houses with opposed entrances are a rarity, but lobby-entrance houses with a two-storey rear out-shut, and single crosswing houses are not unusual.

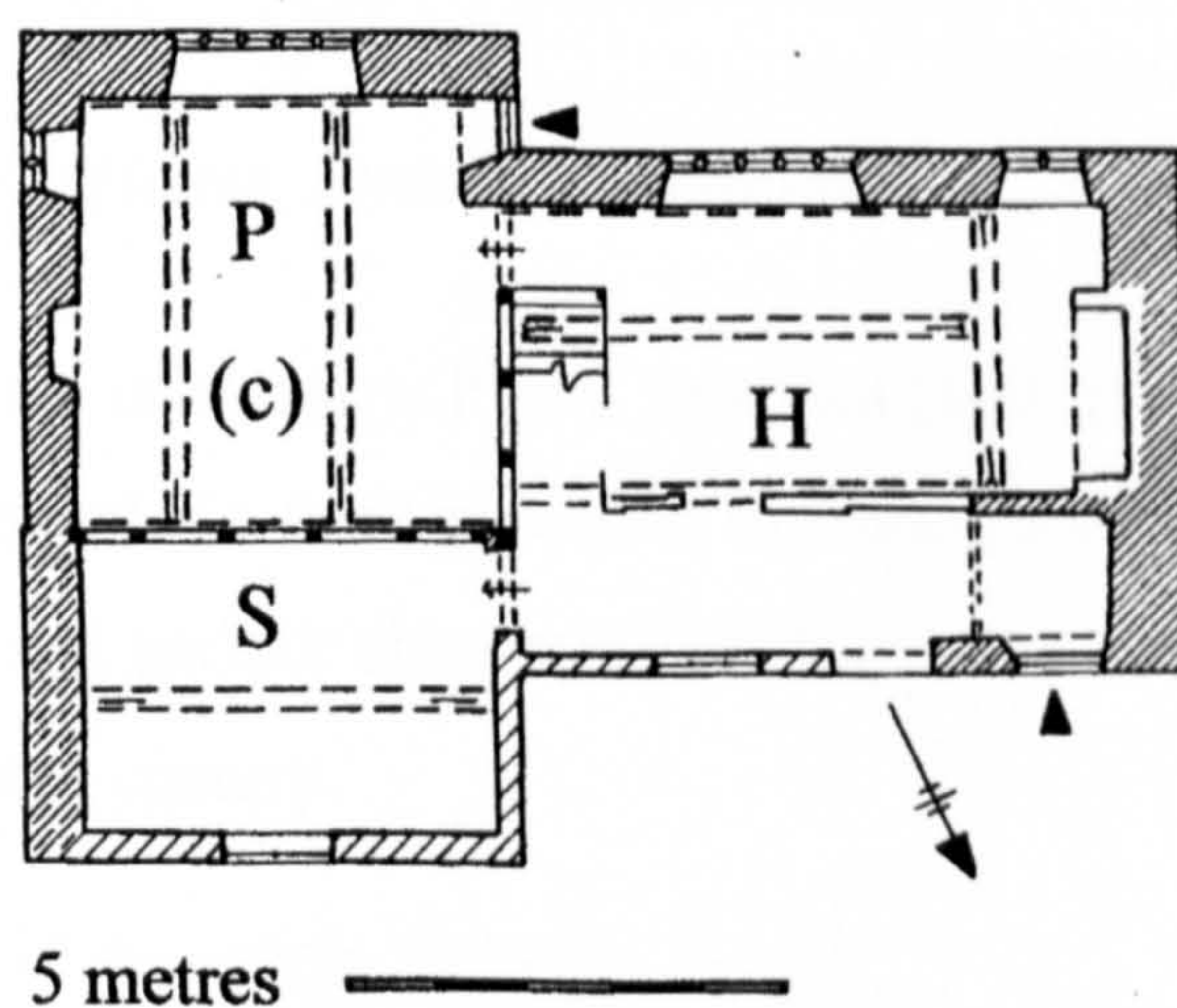
The most capacious were the single crosswing houses. Unlike Cloudwood or the eastern house at Whitehough (cf. pages 207 and 180-2), the smaller examples have lobby entrances as at Home Farm, Leek and Lowe [128] or the High Forest, Leekfrith [116]. Home Farm, despite its apparent simplicity, poses problems of interpretation. Most of the building dates to *circa* 1628, including the majority of the exterior walling, and the traditionally framed interior walls and roof. However the use of brick for some part of parts of the northern walls suggests they were once timber-framed (Fig. 6.63). Were the builders confining timber to the north walls much as the gentry might confine coursed rubble to the service wing, or was the house built against its predecessor? Either could account for the absence of windbraces, a basic component in a fully framed house.

This was a three-hearth house in 1666. Its main hearth had a timber-framed firehood, while the parlour and parlour chamber had shallow stone hearths set in the thickness of the outer wall, an unsatisfactory design which explains the persistence of external stacks until the chimney-breast came into common use in the later part of the eighteenth century. The cellar lies in its customary position below the parlour, and a service room fills the rear of the crosswing. The attic above the houseplace was unlit as

⁹⁰ SA/2/3; LJO John Horsley, 1714.



*Fig. 6.63 Home Farm, Leek and Lowe:
(above) from the south. The render masks brick to the rear.
(below) the ground plan.*



A similar house served the farm at the High Forest [116, Fig. 6.61], one of two new houses built by the Traffords to serve their ring-fenced estate at Swythamley.⁹¹ In Horton village Boot Hall [74, Fig. 6.40] takes this form, as did the much-altered Toft Hall in Heaton [72, Fig. 6.38]. All except Home Farm have one or more hearths served by large external stacks after the manner of the larger gentry houses, and were given additional service accommodation within a few years of the original building.

Documentation is slight for the central lobby entrance houses, but they seem to have provided above average accommodation at the yeoman farmer level. Hollin House, Endon [58] (Fig. 6.64), an impressive three-storey example built round a

⁹¹ LRO William Trafford, 1627; Ann Trafford, 1648; Hester Trafford, 1686; Leek Par. Reg. 1640, 1670.

massive stone stack (Fig. 6.66), was a copyhold property held by the Malkin family whose main farm in Endon was the Gatehouse. Both farms were still held by copyhold in the nineteenth century.⁹²



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Fig. 6.64 Hollin House, Endon: from the south, 'at risk' in the 1950s

On a smaller scale is Meadow Place, Ipstones [100] (Fig. 6.65 and 6.67) where back-to-back hearths included a timber-framed fire-hood for the houseplace and stone hearths for the parlour and parlour chamber. This too was a copyhold property until the middle of the seventeenth century.



Fig. 6.65 Meadow Place, Ipstones: from the south;

⁹² SHC IX, 42; LJO Charles Malkin 1688; NMR 42712; SRO D(W)1909/E/(1).

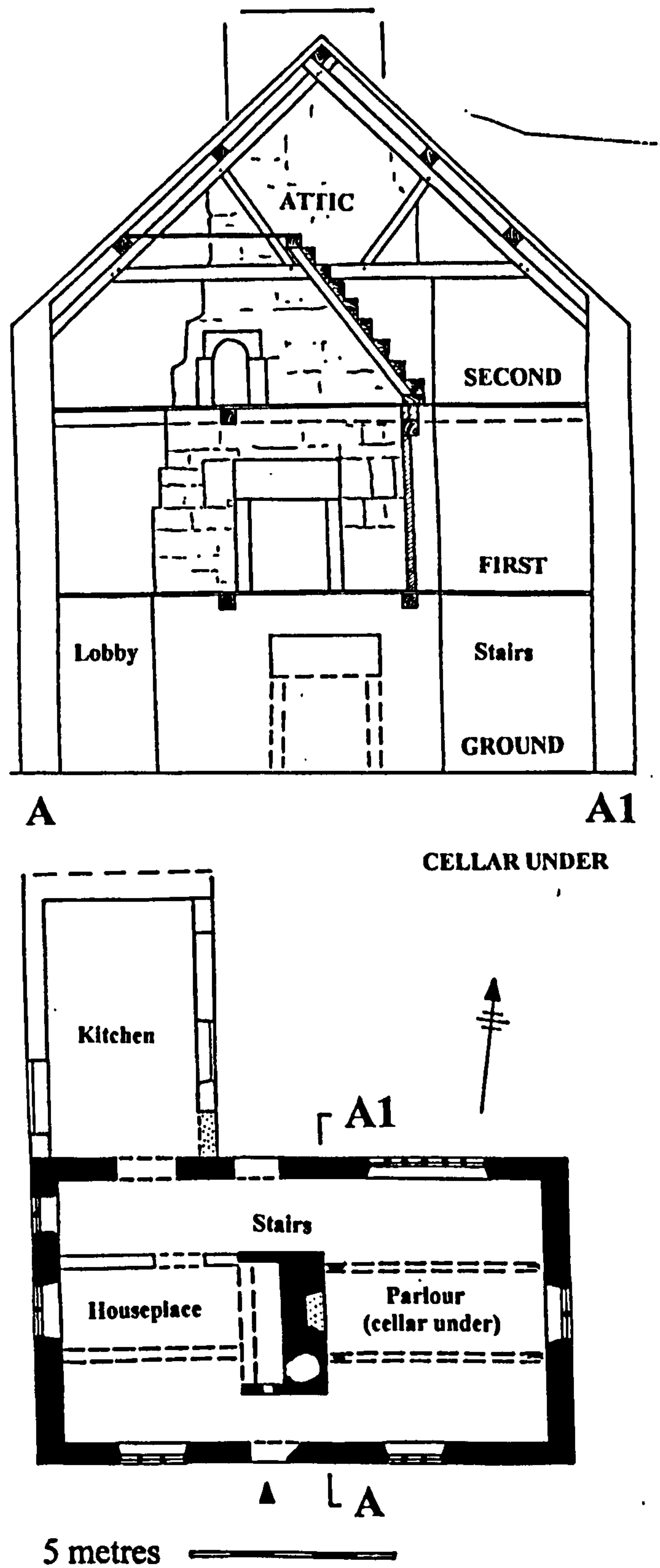


Fig.6.66 Hollin House, Endon

*(above) a section showing the parlour hearths and the solid tread attic staircase;
 (below) the ground plan including a twentieth century extension.*

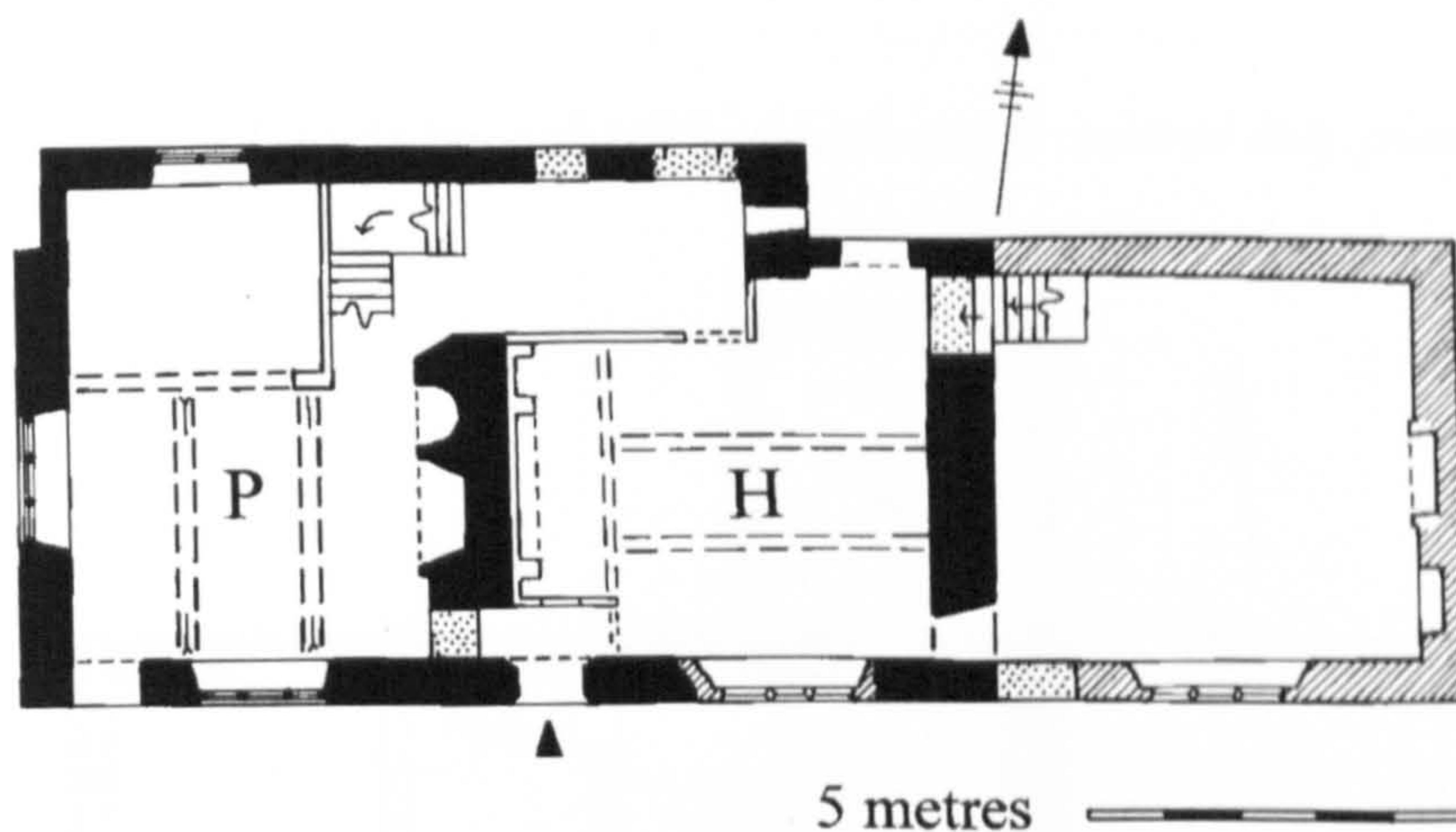


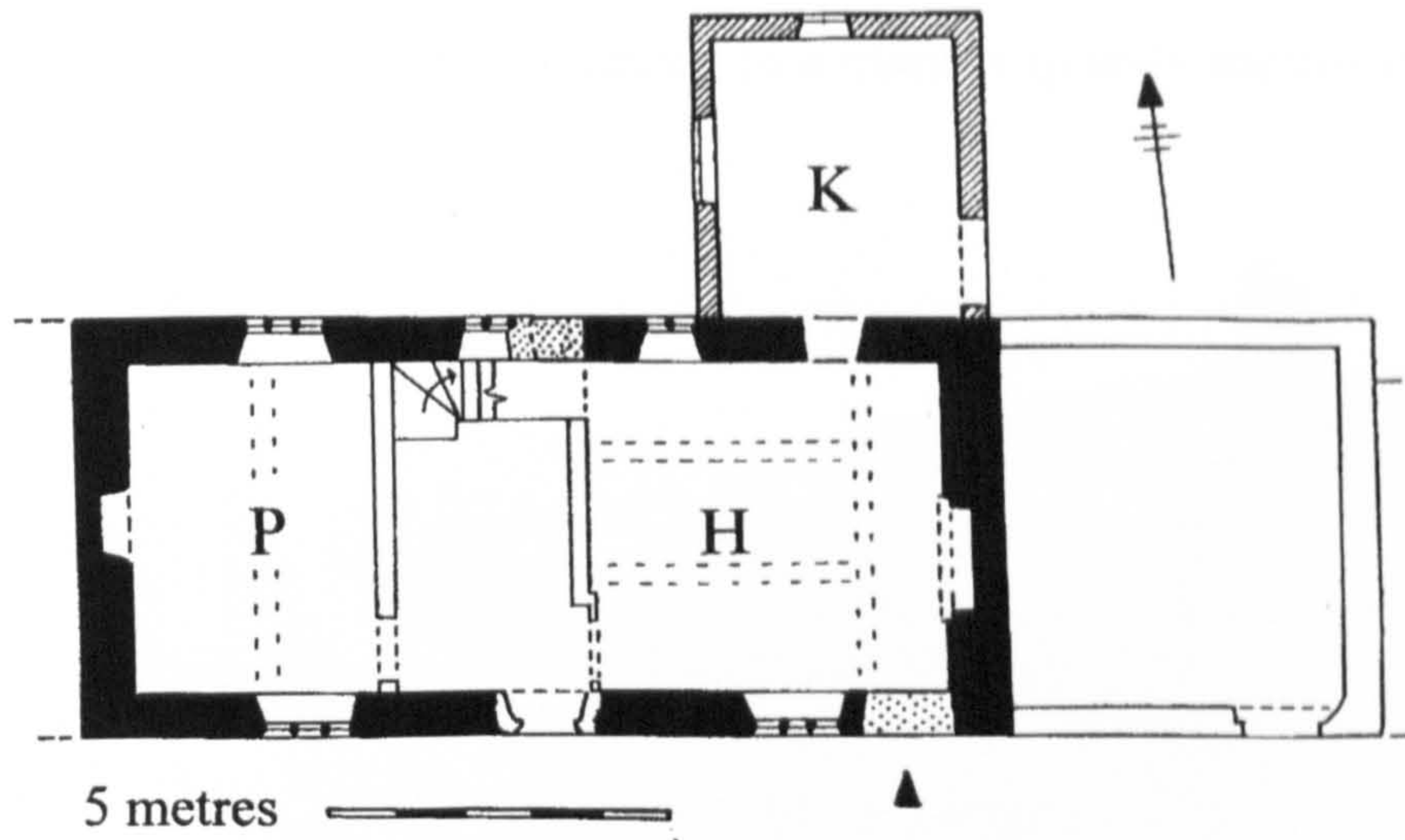
Fig. 6.67 Meadow Place, Ipstones: the ground plan.



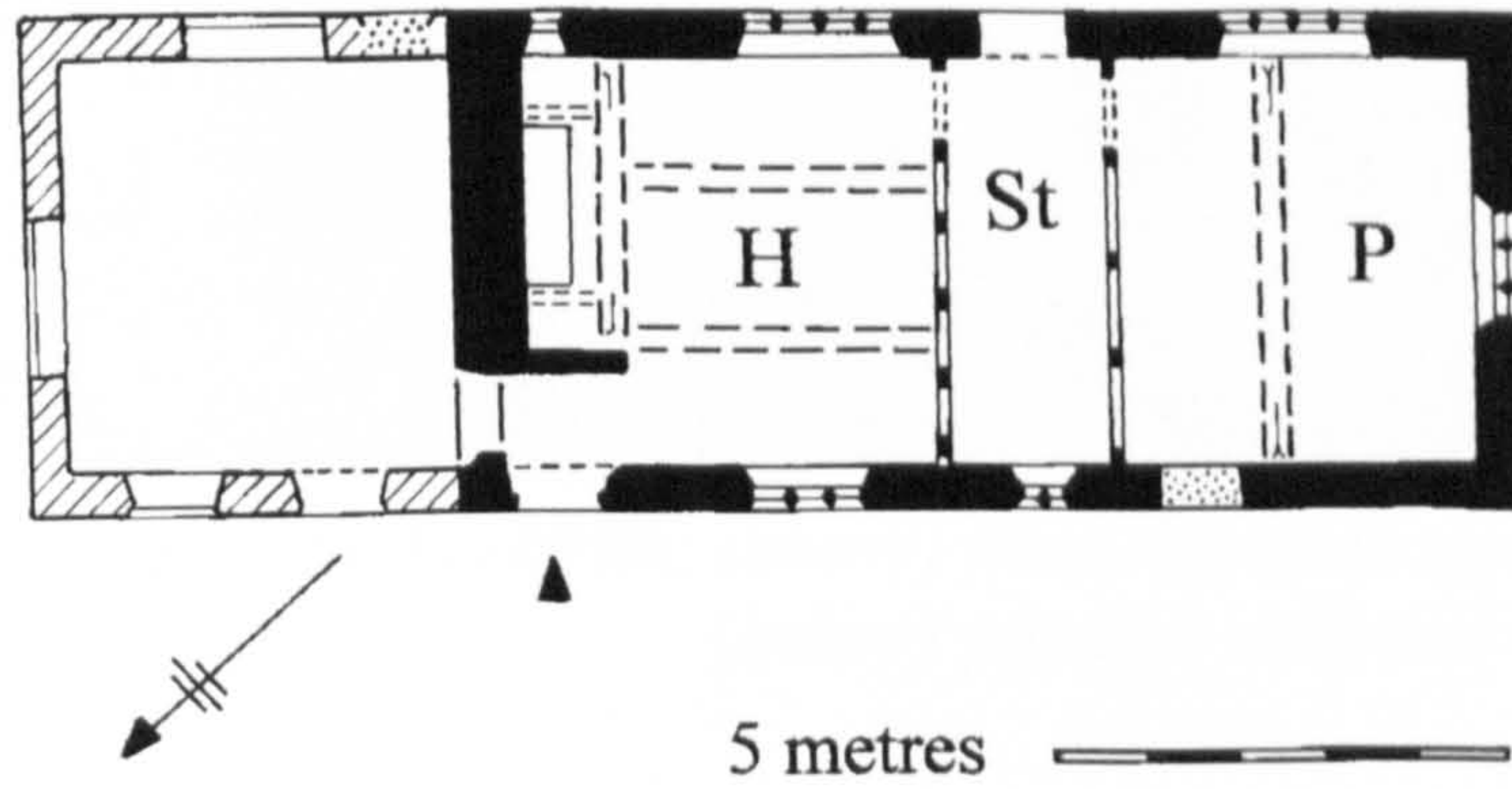
Fig. 6.68 Jackhaye, Bagnall: from the north

Houses with an unheated central bay might also have a lobby-entrance. These had the hall/houseplace at one end, separated from the main parlour by a narrower bay containing stairs, passage and an unheated parlour or service room. At Revedge, Bradnop [33] a much-altered version had two hearths in 1666, and housed the heir to the Ashenhurst estate (Fig. 6.69). Both the second hearth and the number of windows on the rear set it apart from the smaller lobby-entrance houses, where windows tend to be confined to the south side, particularly in the bleaker areas such as Leekfrith. A smaller example, Jackhaye, Bagnall [167], was built for Thomas Cliffe, yeoman, in 1675 (Figs. 6.68 and 6.69). A more spacious version at Thornleigh, Leekfrith [126] is without a lobby entrance (Figs. 6.69, 6.70). This is a beautifully crafted house, and must have represented a considerable capital outlay. Owned for centuries by the

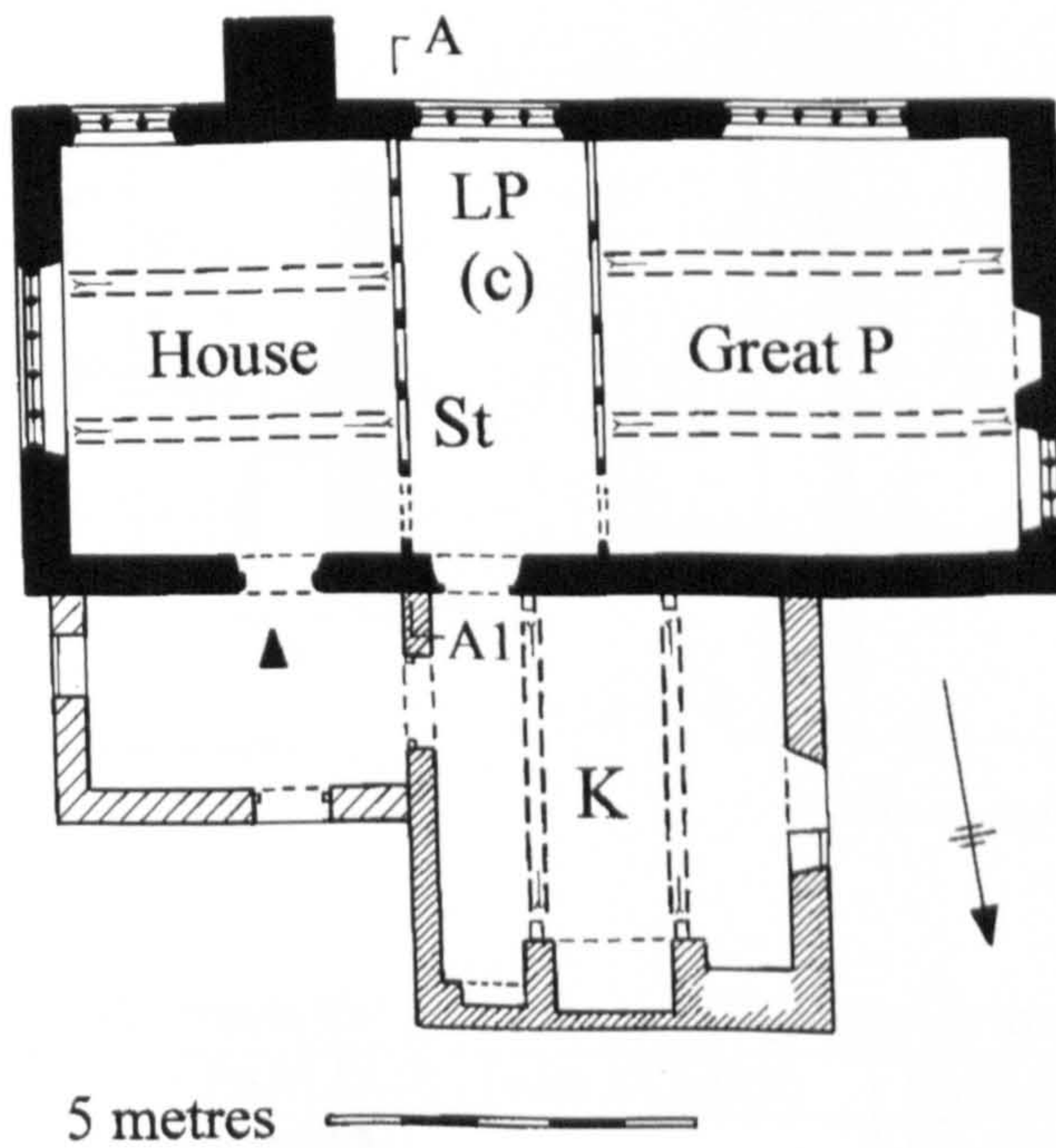
Fig. 6.69 Three houses with an unheated central bay plan



a) Revedge, Bradnop



b) Jackhaye, Bagnall



c) Thornleigh Hall, Leekfrith

Armetts, its builder was probably William Armett, clerk, who paid for two hearths in 1666. The houseplace has an external stack, the windows have internal arches of stone in place of wooden lintels, and detailing on the outer face of the internal doorways leads the visitor through to the main parlour in a manner quietly reminiscent of a great house (Fig. 6.70).



Fig. 6.70 *Thornleigh Hall, Leekfrith: (above) from the south west (below) passage wall and doorway*

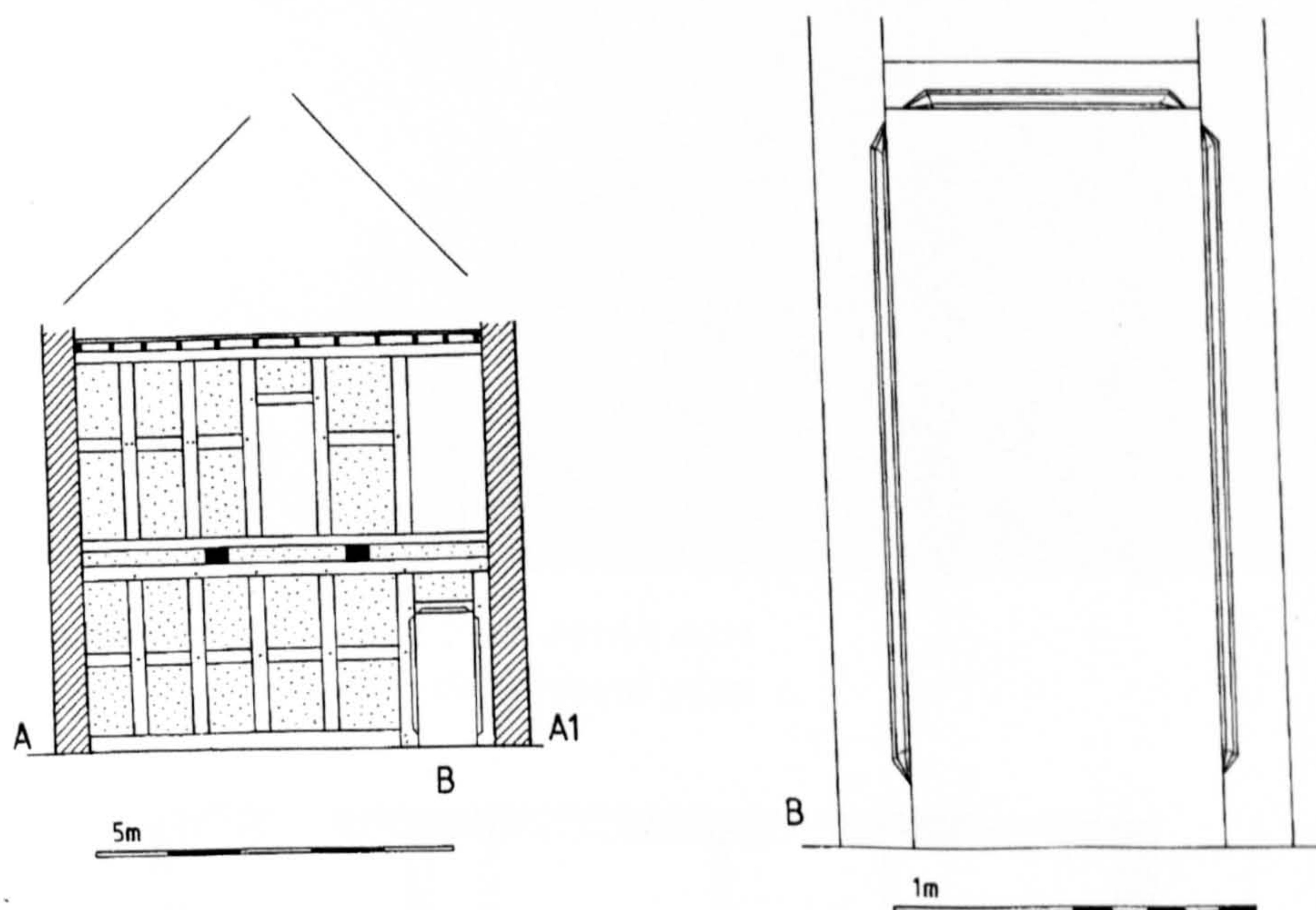


Table 6.4 *Thornleigh Hall: from the inventory of William Armett, clerk, 1667*

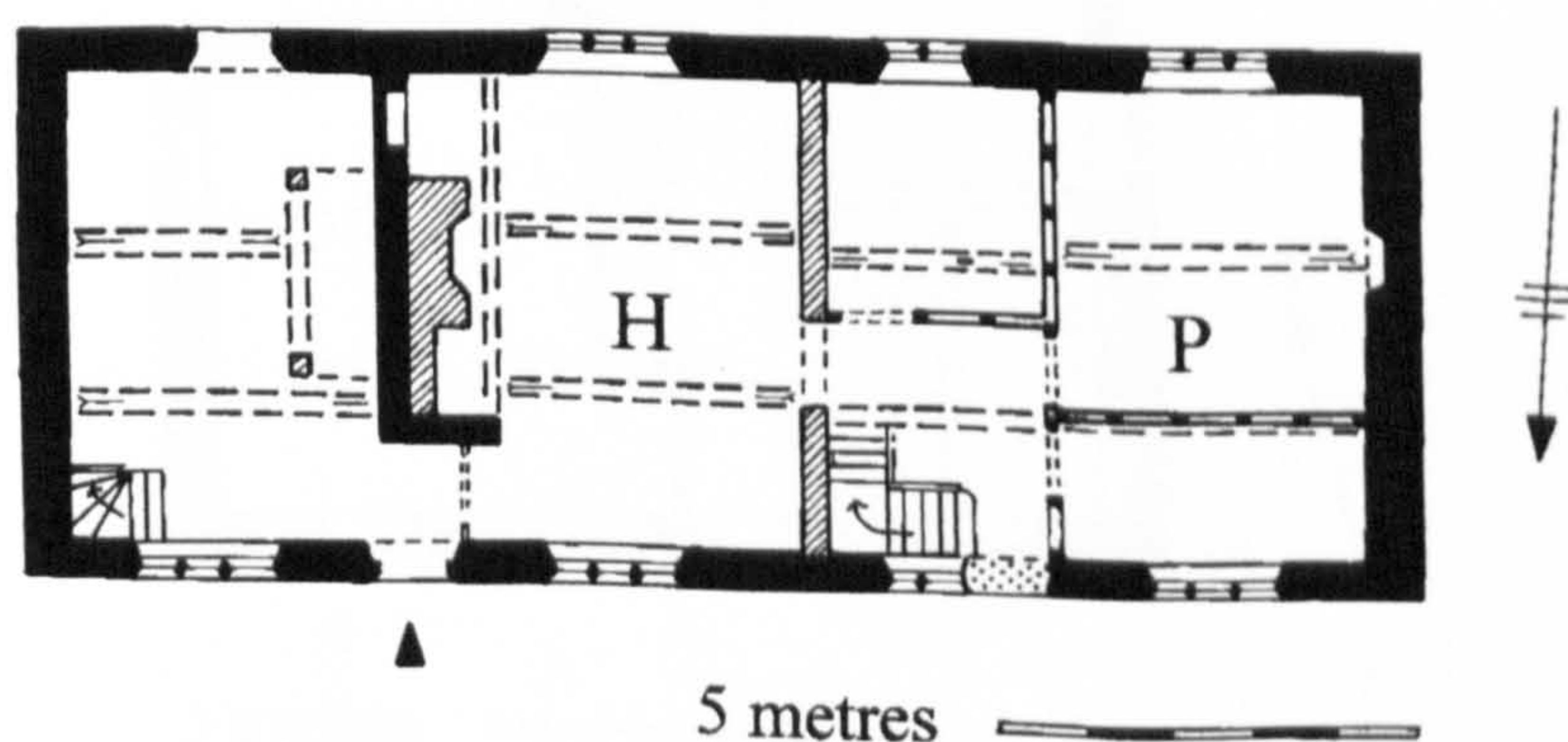
	HOUSEPLACE	PARLOUR / [with STAIRS]	PARLOUR
A	The Cock loft	[Cockloft]	[Cockloft]
U	Chamber over the house	Chamber over the little parlour	Chamber over the Great Parlour
L	(House)	Little parlour	Great parlour
C		[Cellar]	

Eighteenth century examples also lack the lobby-entrance, and include the Abbey Inn, Leekfrith [109] (Fig. 6.81) and the Trees, Endon [137]. An uncommon variant at Rownall [48] (Fig. 6.71) is a four-bay lobby entrance house dating to 1674 with a plan that combines an unheated central bay with the semi-detached lower end of the three-bay lobby entrance plan (discussed below). Here the survival of the original staircase leaves no doubt as to the nature of the unheated bay, part of which houses a passage and staircase.

None of the yeoman farmhouses was built to a double pile plan. The nearest approach is the provision of a rear out-shut covering the stair position and one or more service rooms. Meadow Place, Ipstones [100] combines this form with a central lobby entrance (Fig. 6.65 and 6.67), while Bank Top, Ford [139, Fig. 6.74, 6.75] and Blackbrook, Ipstones [87, Fig. 6.45] are essentially two-bay lobby-entrance houses (Figs. 6.72). Both had a large houseplace and a smaller parlour on the south side, with stairs and service room(s) to the north. None had cellars, so the outshut served the dual purpose of taking the staircase out of the main room and giving level access to cool storage.



Fig. 6.71 Rownall: (above) from south east
(below) the ground plan



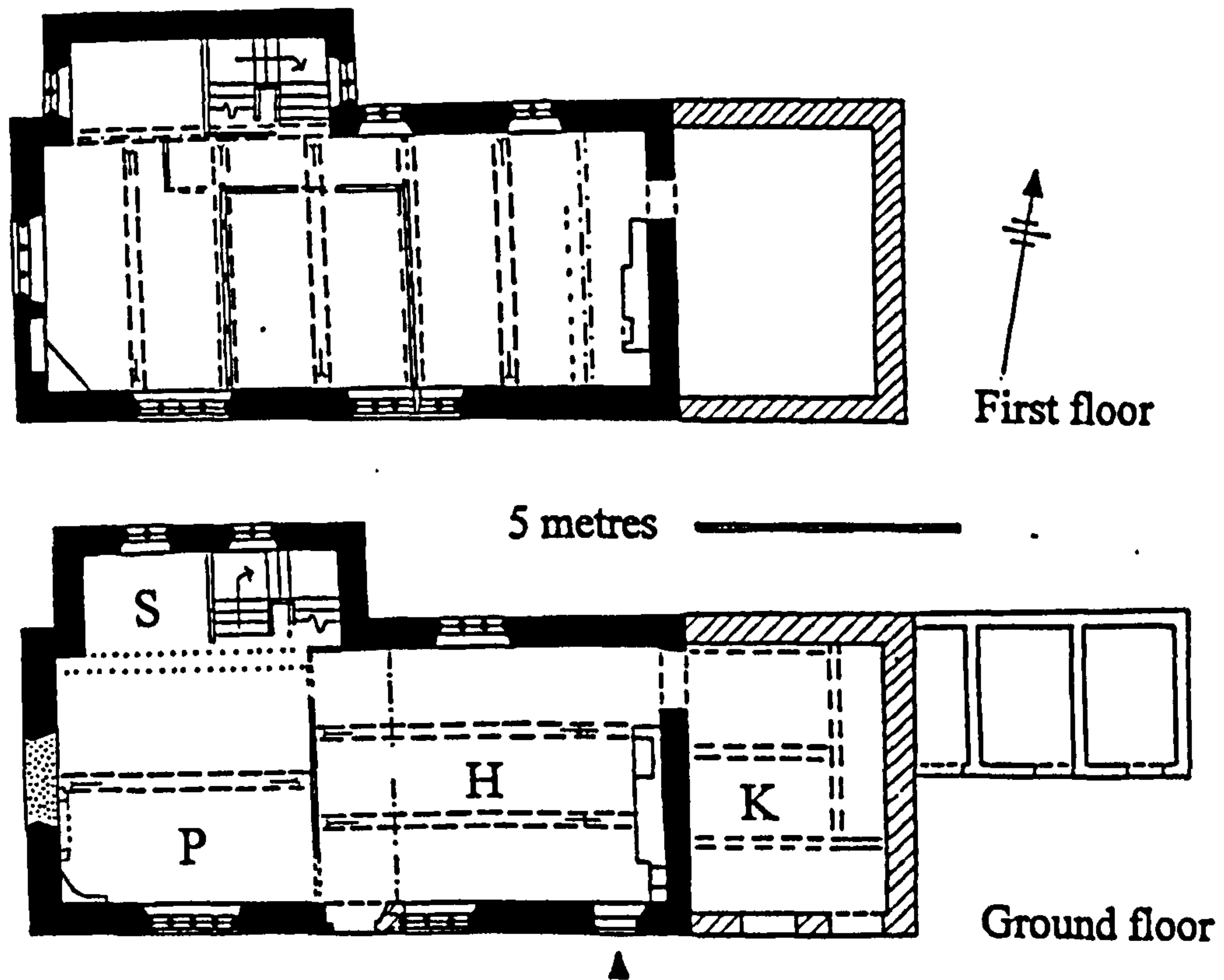
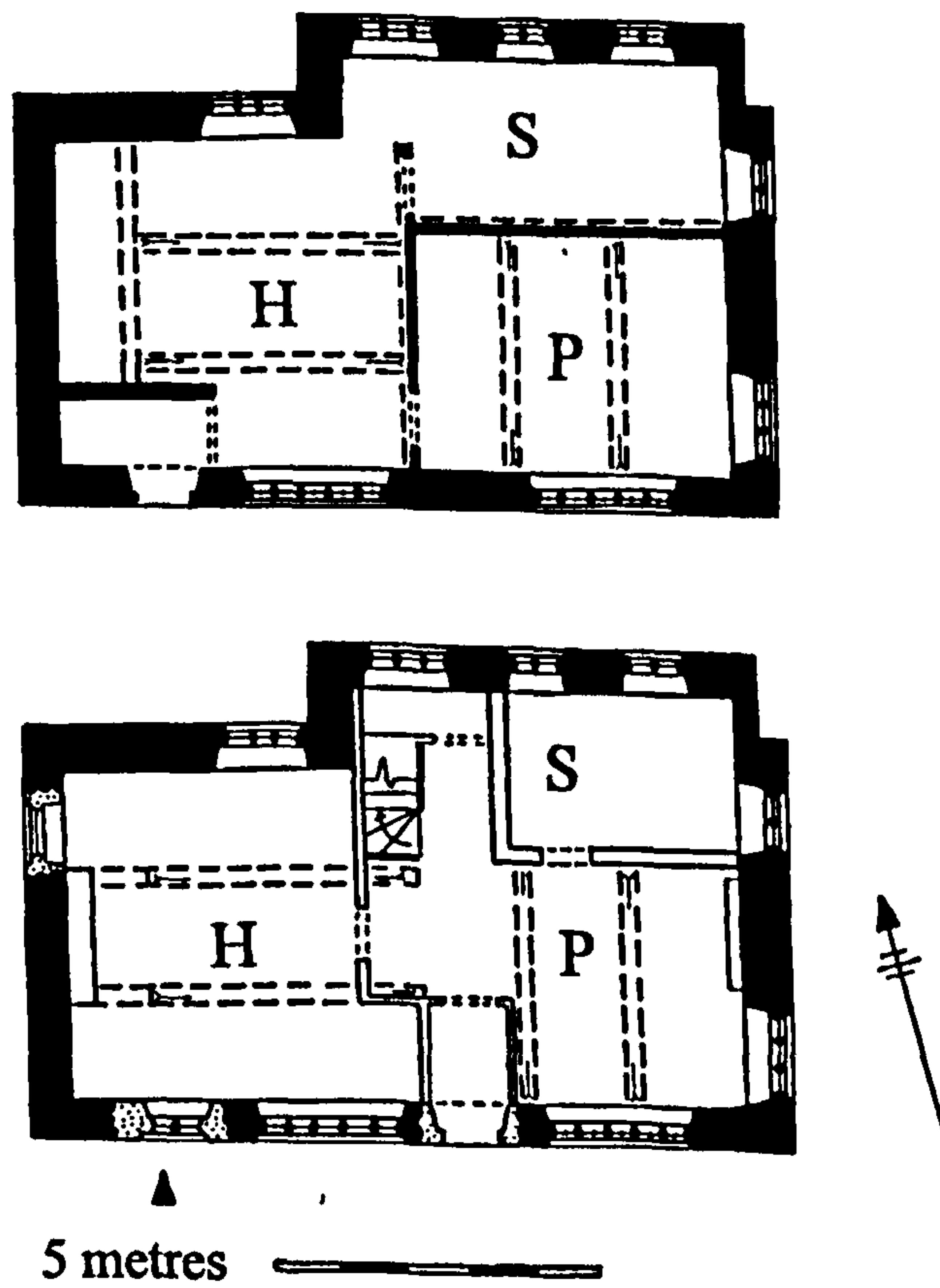


Fig. 6.72 (above) Bank Top, Ford

(below) Blackbrook, Ipstones: the present plan below a partial restoration

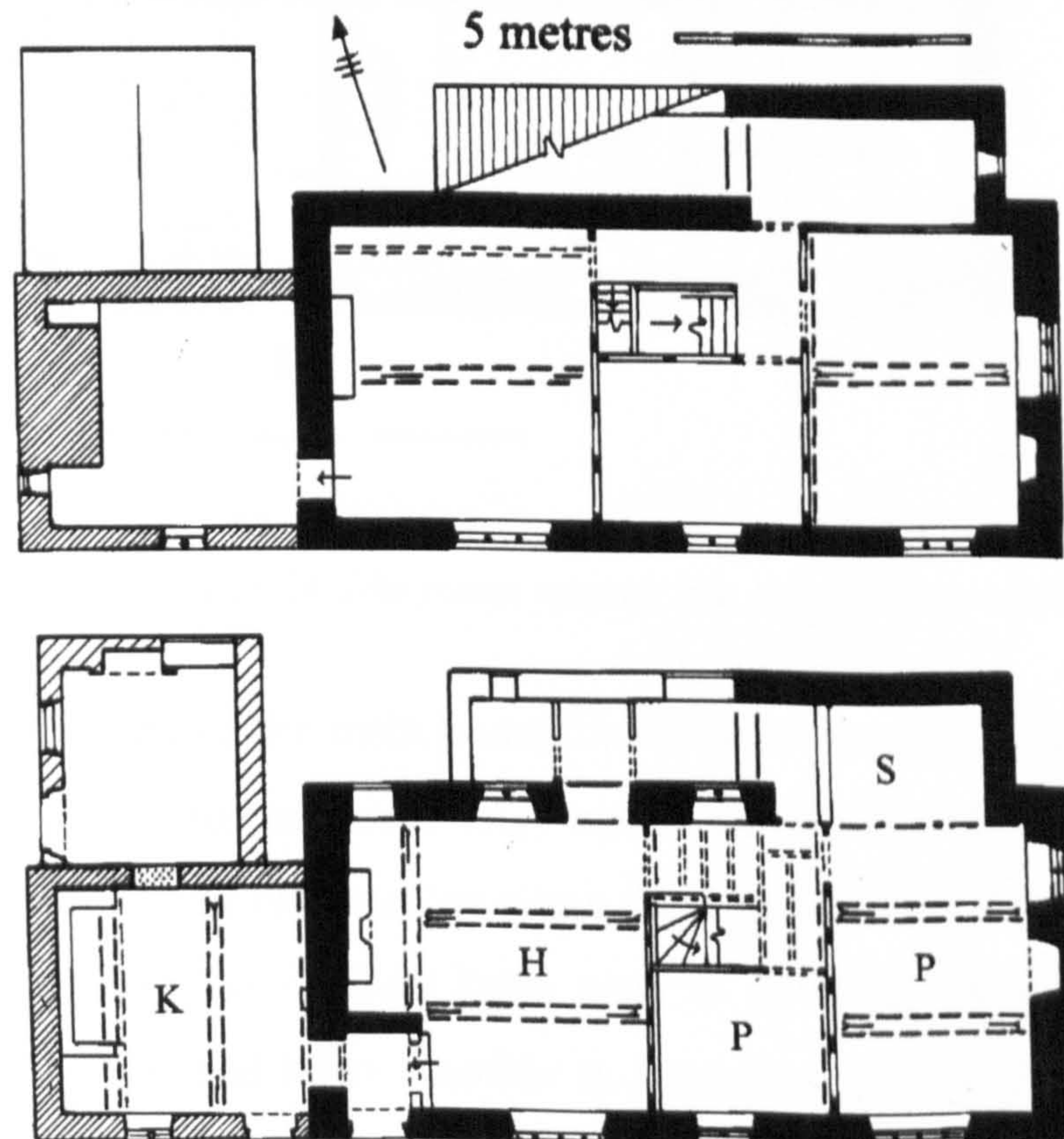


At Basford Bridge [36] a three-bay lobby entrance house with an unheated central bay has a rear out-shut with one full storey and a triangular attic. As at Rownall the staircase leads to a central landing allowing separate access to each of the four first floor rooms (Fig. 6.73).



Fig. 6.73 Basford Bridge, Cheddleton: (above) from the south

(below) plans of the ground and first floors



Both three-bay lobby entrance houses and three-bay houses with opposed entrances might have a single hearth set against an internal wall of stone. The wall was multi-purpose. It provided a fireback against which to build the firehood, it acted as a giant storage heater to provide warmth for the bay behind it, and it ensured the existence of independent accommodation on the upper floor of the lower bay. In the single-hearth version the upper bay was also unheated. Both Gate Farm, Foxt [93] (Fig. 6.74) and Ford Old Hall [169] (Fig. 6.75) fall into this category. Both have opposed entrances in the lower bay and date to the early seventeenth century.

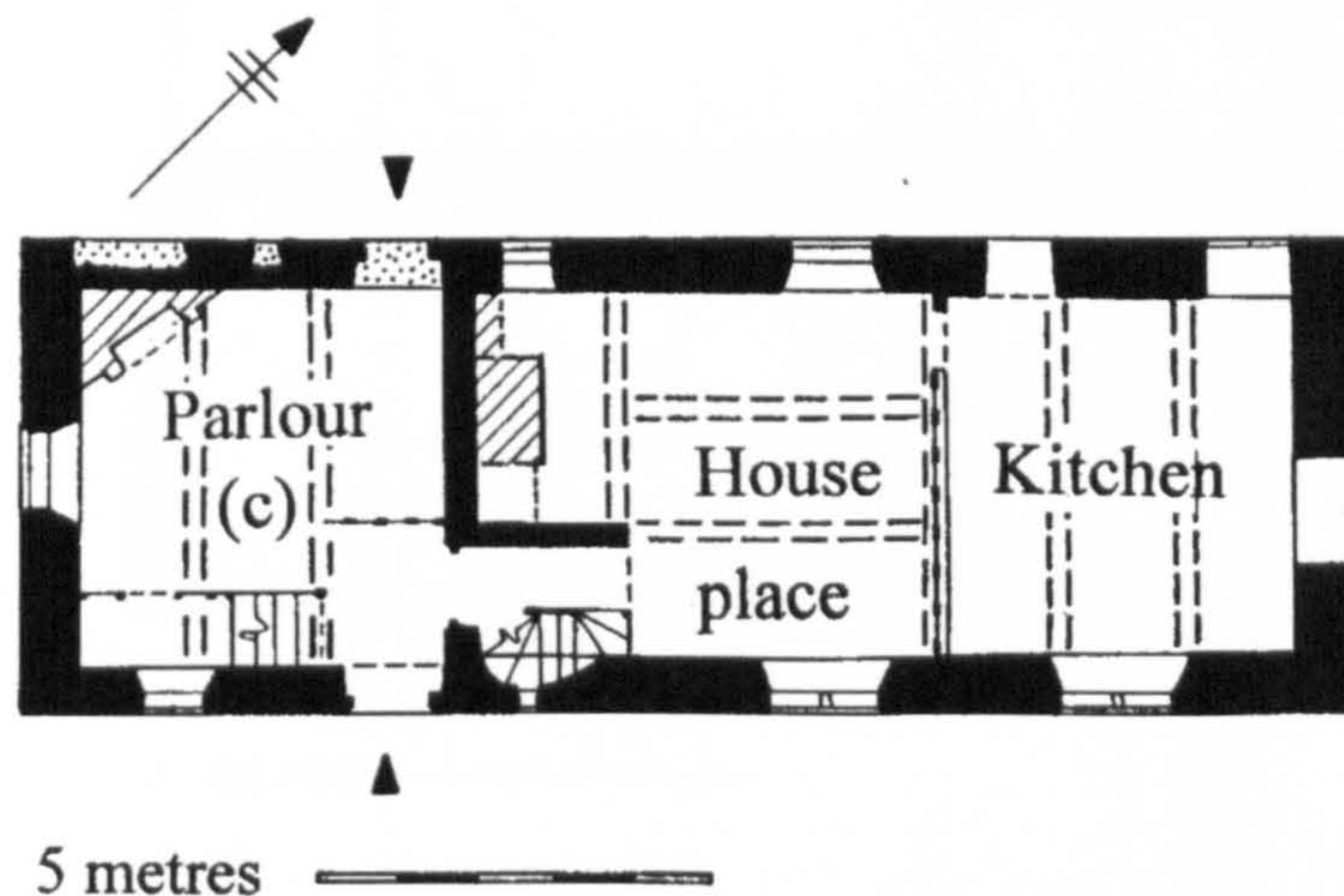


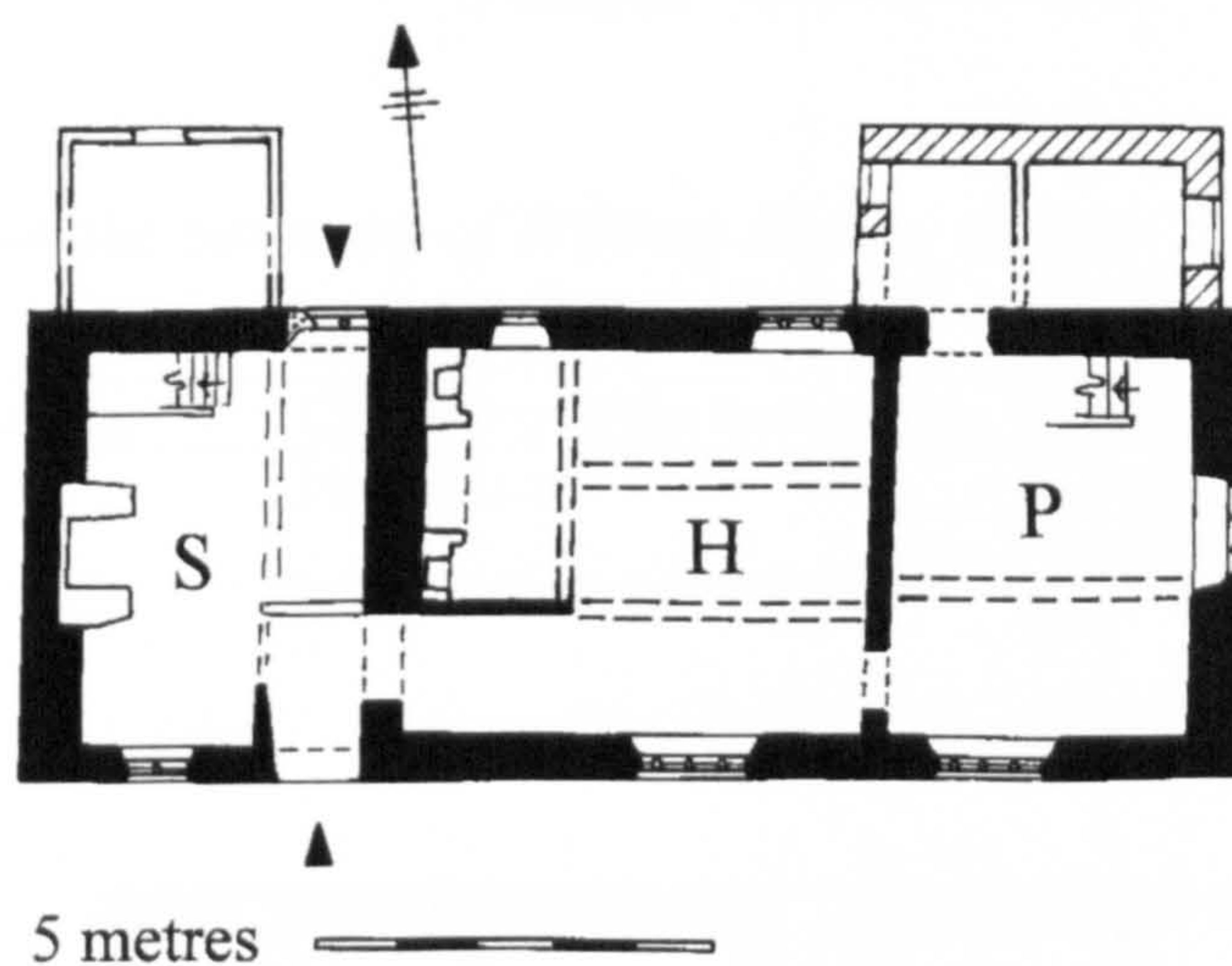
Fig. 6.74 Gate Farm, Foxt: from the east (above); the ground plan (below). Built for John Whieldon in 1624. The room names are taken from a will of 1775.

Such houses formed the main home for many of the smaller men, whether they were called yeomen or husbandmen. They could provide a widow with a two-thirds share of a house if she had children, or a one-third share if she did not. Thus in 1666 Mary and Joseph Wheeldon of Gate Farm were to have the 'House above the entry' consisting of two bays, and Mary (mother in law) was to have the house below the

entry, 'conteyning one bay'.⁹³ A century later the widow's accommodation consisted of 'Cellar, Parlour, Chamber and Garret over the same ... also the Passage leading from the Parlour to the Houseplace, with full liberty ... to Brew, Bake, Wash, and do all other customary business in the Kitchen'.⁹⁴



Fig. 6.75 *The Old Hall, Ford* (above) from the south east.
(below) the ground plan.



A house of this size and plan could be flexible in its use depending on the owner's requirements. In a three-bay lobby entrance house at Shaw, Heaton [71] the lower bay was in use as a weaver's workshop in 1698. This was isolated from the living quarters by the lobby entrance,⁹⁵ and the upper bay was divided laterally into parlour and service room (Fig. 6.76, Table 6.5). At Buxton Brow, Leekfrith [113] dating to *circa* 1700, the inner parlour was heated, and the end bay had an additional

⁹³ SRO D239/M7.

⁹⁴ LJO John Wheeldon, 1775.

⁹⁵ LJO William Hulme. 1698.

doorway onto the farmyard, suggesting it formed a service area (Fig. 6.77). The owners of both were regarded as yeomen.⁹⁶



Fig. 6.76 Shaw, Heaton: (above) from the west with its nineteenth century barn; (below) Shaw: the ground plan of the seventeenth century house.

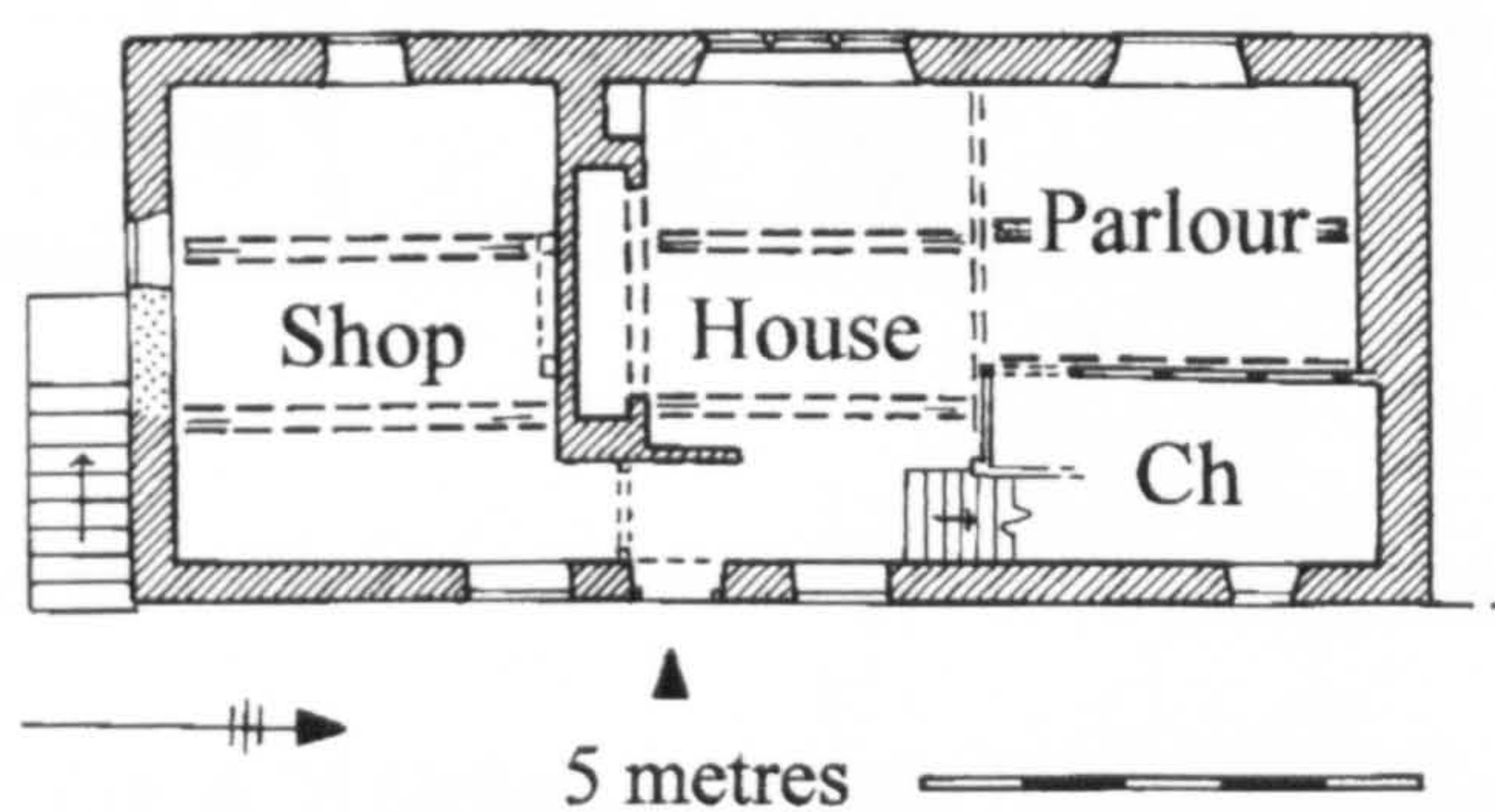


Table. 6.5 Shaw: from the inventory of William Hulme, weaver, 1698

	SHOP	HOUSEPLACE	PARLOUR/CHAMBER
U	Chamber over the shop	Chamber over the houseplace	Chamber over the parlour
G	(Shop)	Houseplace	Chamber Parlour

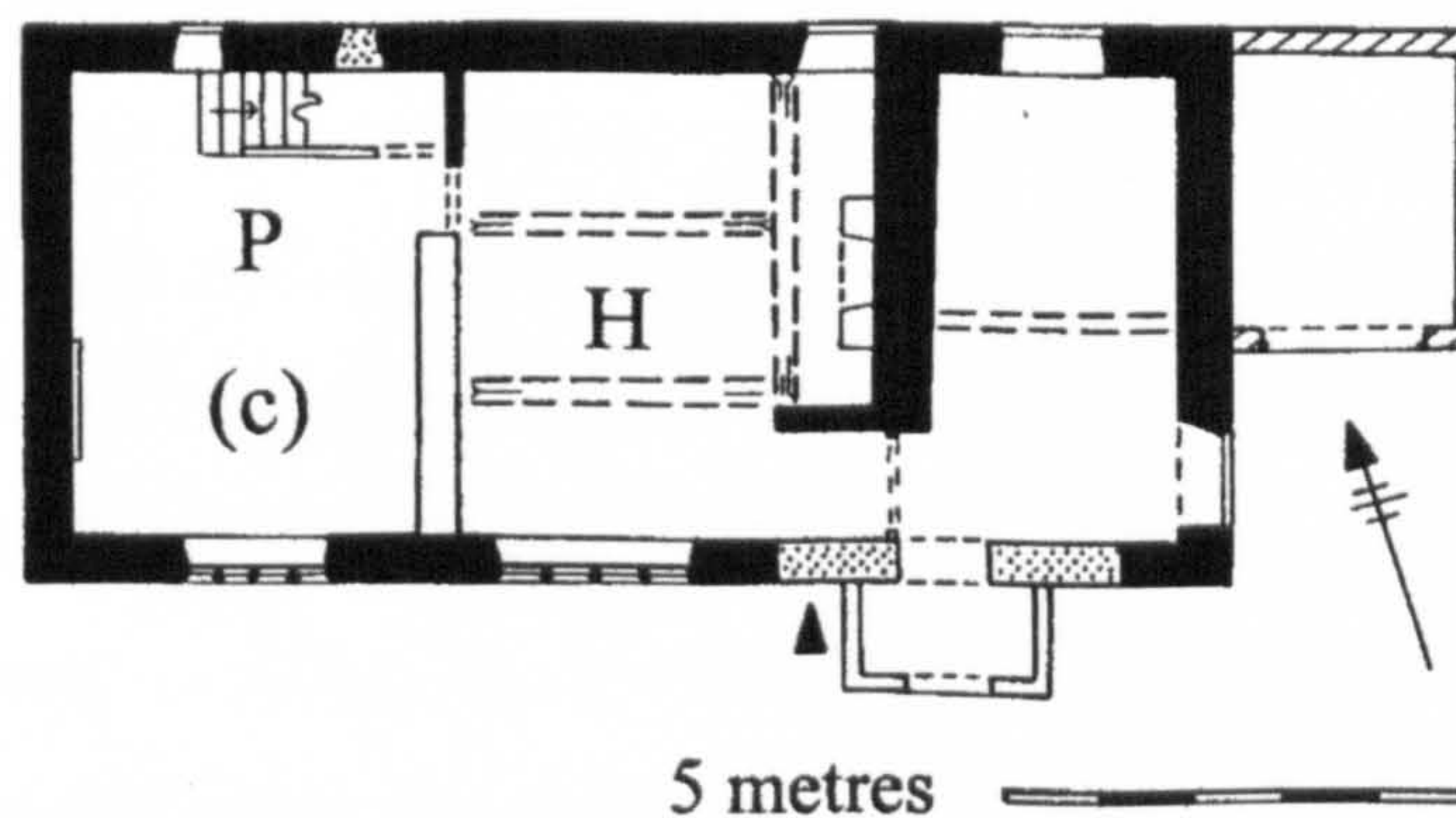


Fig. 6.77 Buxton Brow, Leekfrith: the ground plan.

⁹⁶ Deeds of Buxton Brow. Privately owned (Mr. and Mrs. Findlow).

Not so William Rogers of Oxhay, Leekfrith [120] whose inventory of 1744 declared him to be a gentleman. If so his expectations were modest. His tiny parlour housed a bed, the rest of the upper bay formed a dining room, the houseplace contained nothing worth noting except a clock, and the end bay formed a kitchen with a semi-basement cellar to the rear (Table 6.6). It was however a well heated house, with three hearths on the ground floor and others above, some of which may have been added during his tenure (Figs. 6.78 and 6.79).

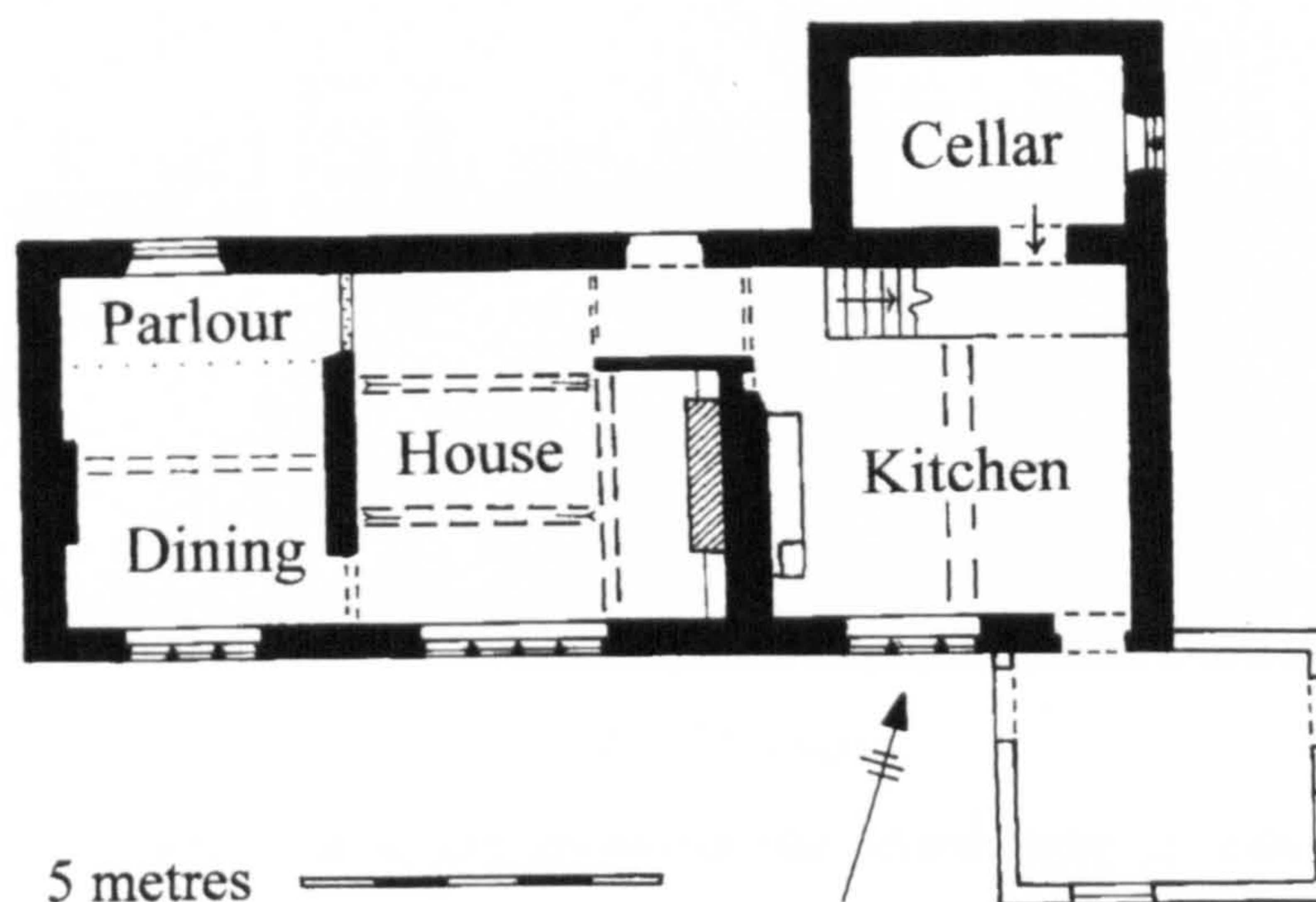


Fig. 6.78 Oxhay, Leekfrith: the ground plan

Table 6.6 Oxhay: details from the inventory of William Rogers of Oxhay, 1744.

	PARLOUR/DINING ROOM	HOUSE	KITCHEN	CELLAR
U	4 Chamber over the parlour	5 Chamber over ... (with cheese)	6 Chamber over ...	
L	2 Parlour (with a bed) 3 Dining room	1 Houseplace	7 Kitchen	8 Cellar

The smallest of the new house forms was the two-bay lobby entrance house. Hallgate, Horton [81] (Fig. 6.80) must have been typical with its thatched roof, one and a half storeys, and four-light mullioned windows to ground and first floor rooms. Internal features, found also in the larger houses, are the stone heck screen supporting the bressumer of a firehood, the fire-window set inside the hearth space opposite the lobby entrance, and the closed truss with square-framing built of reused timbers which formed the single internal division. Most of these houses lacked headroom, whether their trusses were in the box-framed tradition as at Hallgate, or made use of crucks, as at Edge End, Tittesworth [158], and have been substantially remodelled to give additional headroom (Fig. 5.4).



Fig. 6.79 Oxhay

(above) the exterior from the south showing the blank area of walling on the upper floor characteristic of the firehood position

(below) four vintages of heating arrangement in the houseplace, the heck-screen and bressumer associated with the original firehood, the eighteenth century stone fireplace, a tiled fireplace of the 1950s, and an electric convector heater.



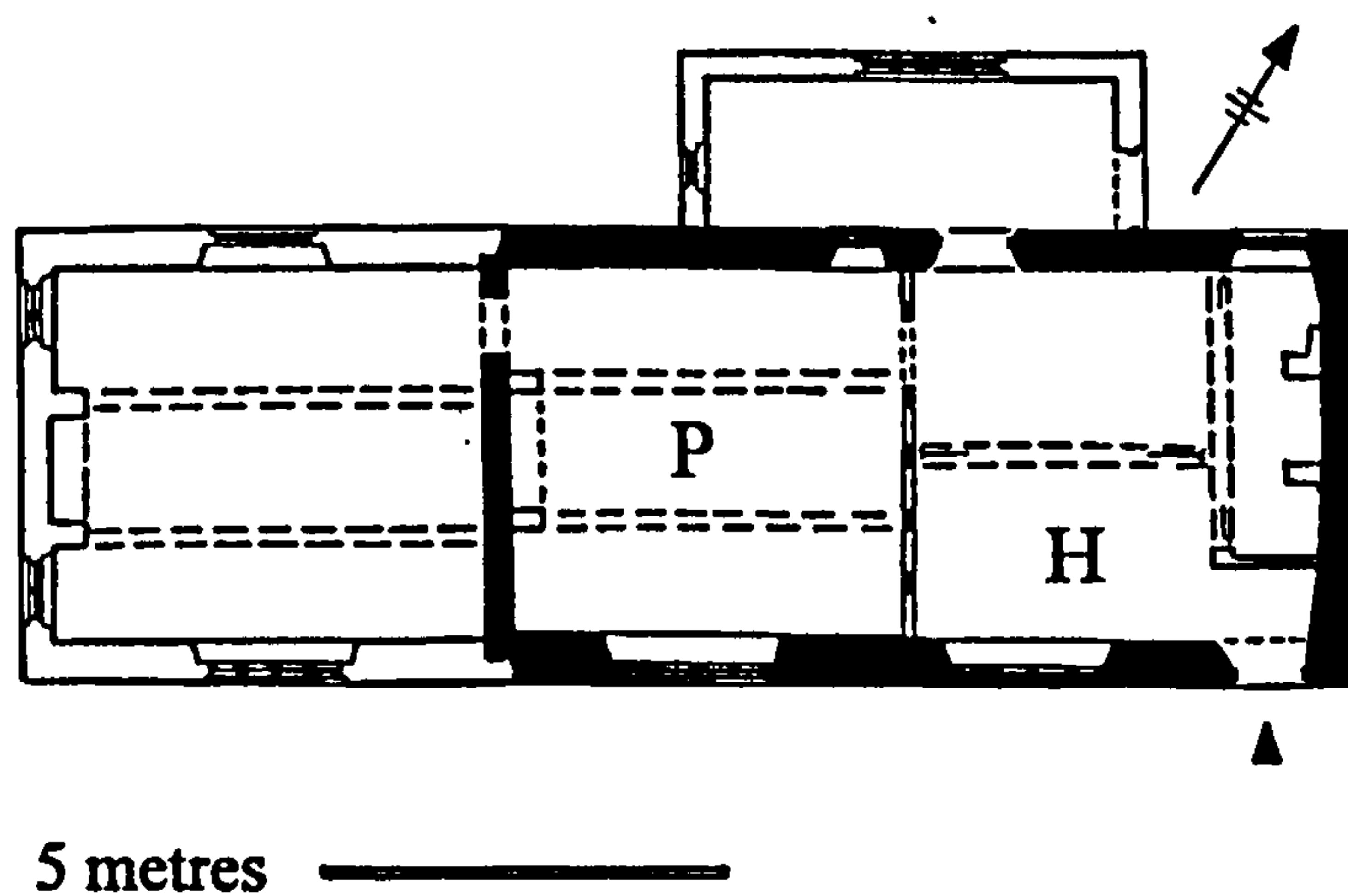
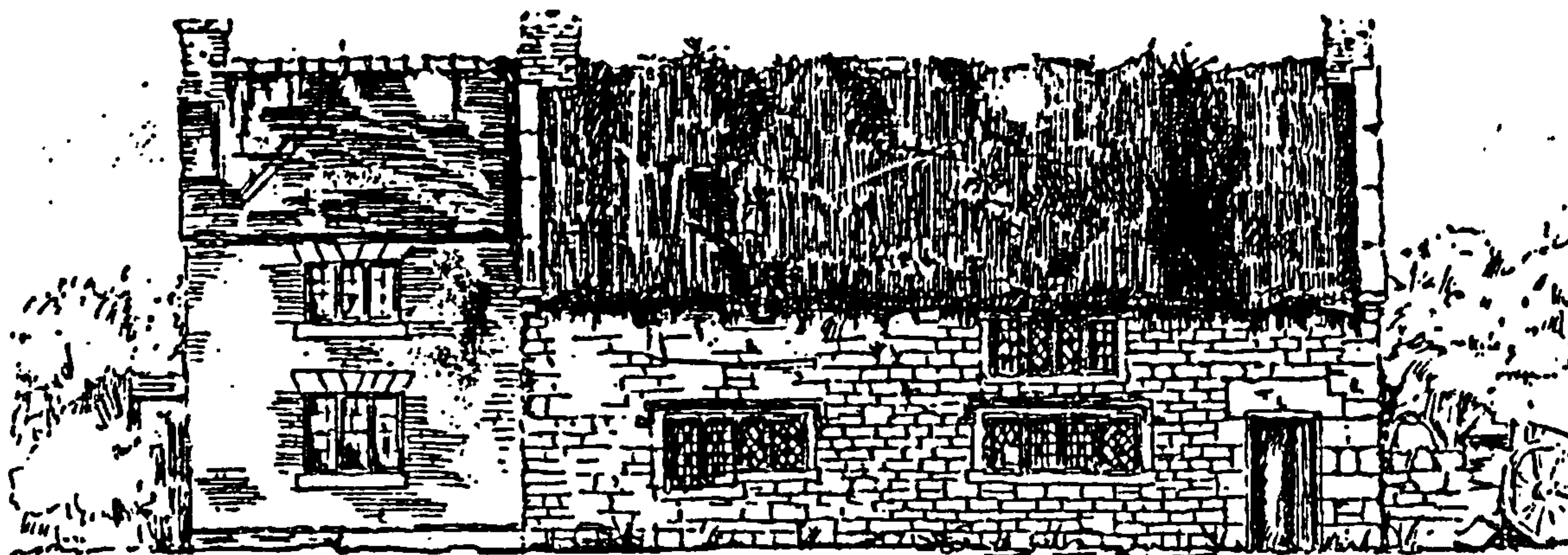


Fig. 6.80 Hallgate, Horton: (above) John Brealey's survey of 1894; (below) the ground plan in 1994

Incomplete examples survive at Marsh Farm, Leekfrith [117], the Dingle, Rushton James [143], and probably at Poole, Leekfrith [121]. All have lost their bressumer and heck screen, but have the characteristic signs of alteration, a scarf joint on each of the axial beams supported by a metal plate. The form was still being built in the middle of the eighteenth century, a likely date for the house at Ringehay, Basford [47, Fig. 6.23]. A late example in Ipstones dates to 1742 [91, Fig. 6.51]. Since it is on a larger scale its roof has escaped alteration, and the rear of the laterally divided second bay has a three-light transom stair window. As with the cruck buildings little documentation is available for these houses, which seem to have been occupied by husbandmen or minor freeholders

(vi) The eighteenth century and beyond

Relatively few of the houses on the earlier settlement sites were rebuilt after 1700, though many saw extensions and alterations. Among the exceptions is the Abbey Inn (former Allen's tenement) in Leekfrith [109] built by John and Mary Allen in

1702, shortly after the family had acquired the freehold.⁹⁷ Set with its back into the hillside, the main services were in the semi-basement cellar, and the 'ground' floor was approached by a flight of steps leading to a central entrance which led straight into the central bay. The stairs lay immediately inside the entrance with an unheated room behind. Above are a further full storey and an attic with dormers (Fig. 6.81).

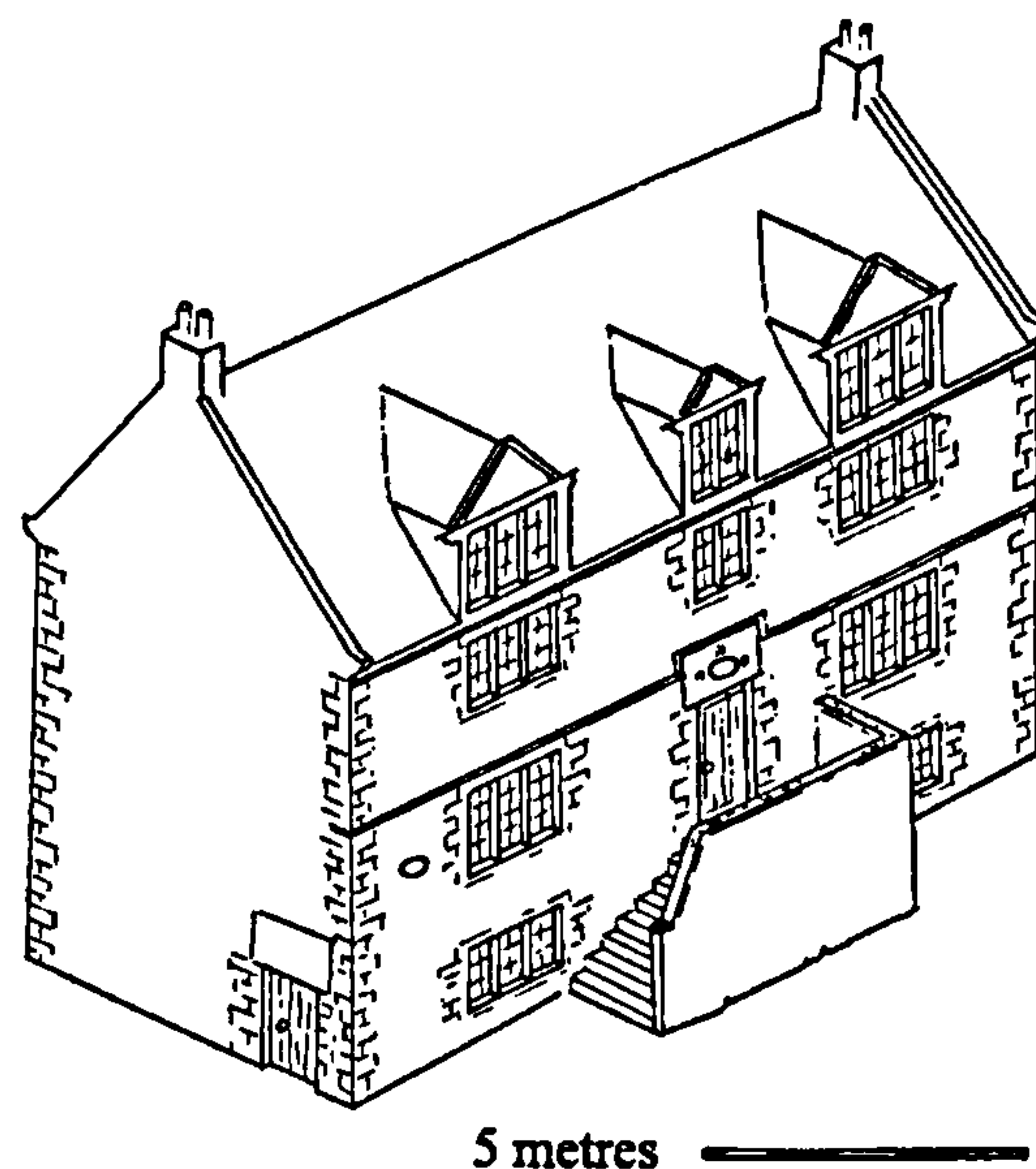
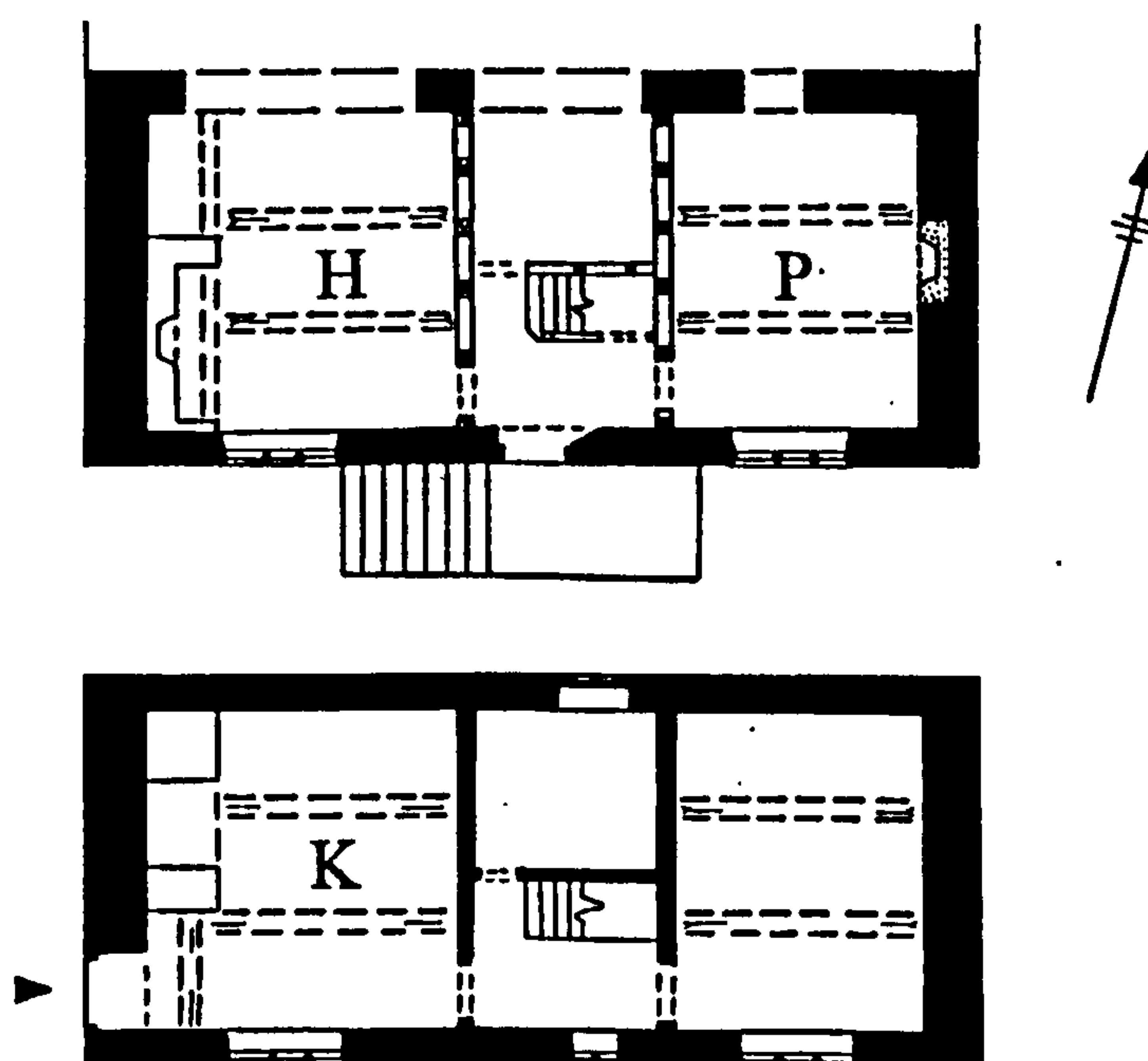


Fig. 6.81 *Abbey Inn, Leekfrith (former Allen's tenement): (above) a reconstruction drawing with the steps as shown in Lucy Nixon's drawing of 1890⁹⁸; (below) plans of the basement and 'ground' floors.*



Also of the eighteenth century is Lower Lady Meadows, Bradnop [99]. Its

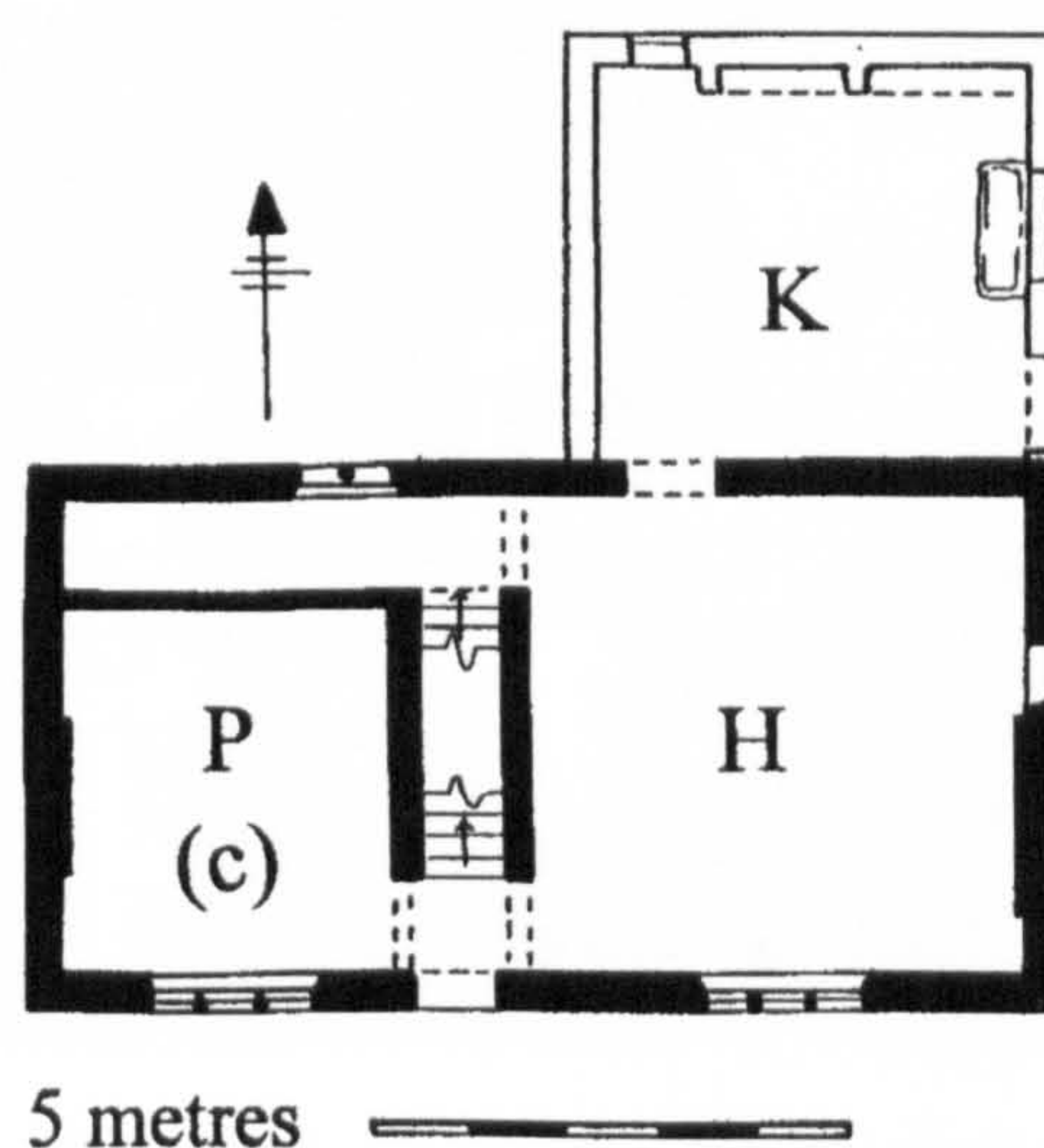
⁹⁷ SRO D(W)1702/1/23; D3272/1/4/3/17b.

⁹⁸ Miller, 253.

owner, John Meakin, held land in the manor of Ipstones, which he purchased in 1651,⁹⁹ and part of his cellar may still survive. The present house was built towards the end of the eighteenth century as a 'central' entrance plan house. The two main rooms flank a tiny entrance lobby leading to a straight staircase, a plan that was to become common in the smaller nineteenth century houses (Fig. 6.82).



*Fig. 6.82 Lower Lady Meadows, Bradnop:
(above) 'at risk' in the 1990s when its farm buildings retained their original fittings;
(below) the ground plan.*



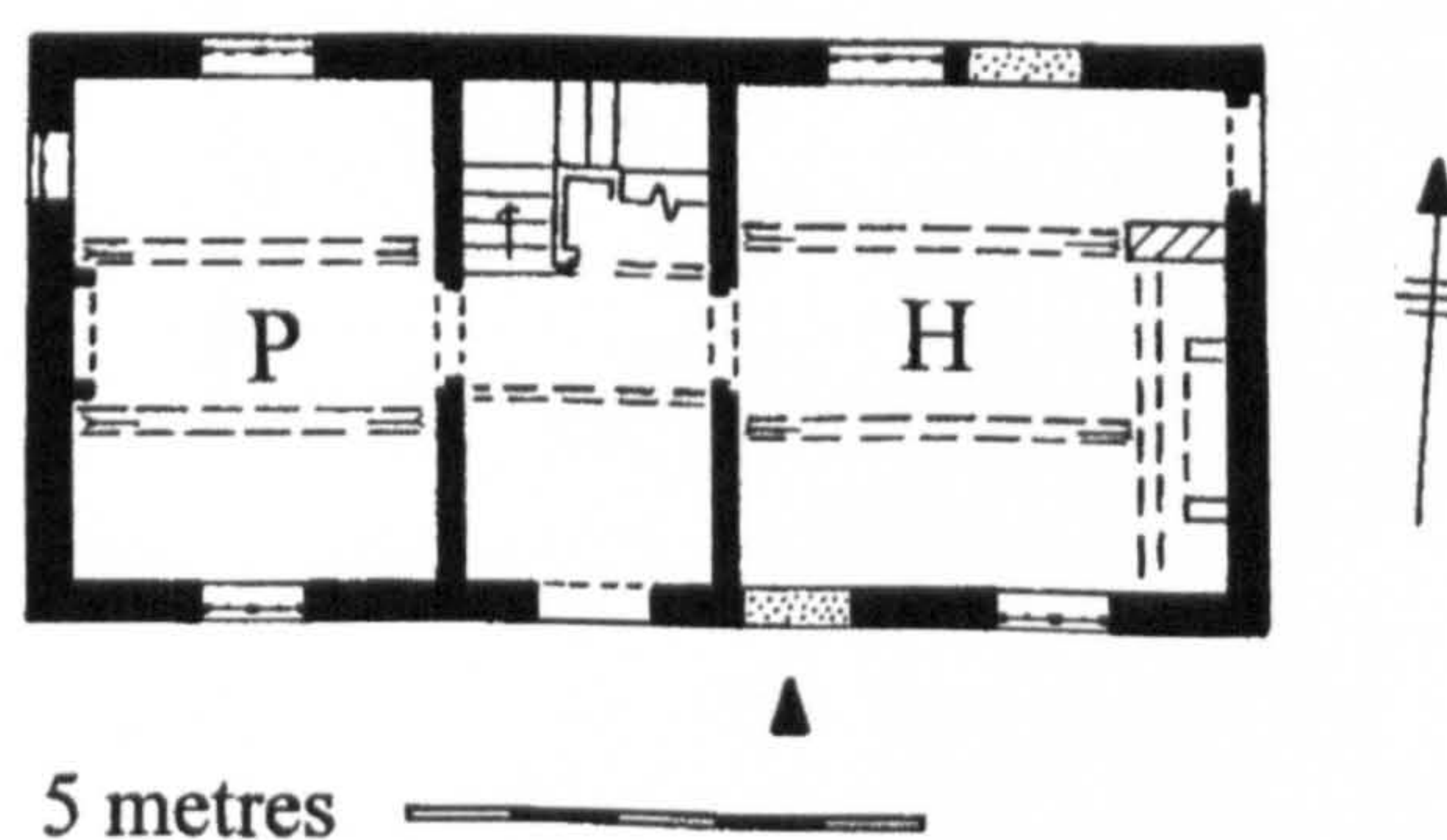
In many cases neither the scale nor the style of the earlier houses suited their later occupants. By the middle of the eighteenth century townhouses were regularly built to a central passage plan, as was the occasional house in the countryside. The urge to follow suit took a number of forms. At the Hayhouse, Ipstones [94] a tall central passage plan block was built to the west of the original house (Fig. 6.44 and 6.45). At Manor Farm, Endon [61] a similar structure replaced earlier buildings to the north, and the central part of the new range contained both passage and staircase (Fig. 6.60).

⁹⁹ Deeds (privately owned).

Brick was the fashionable material of the eighteenth century. The affluent might add a parlour, as at Sutton House [63] (Fig. 6.61), build an extension to house a brother¹⁰⁰ as at Haregate, [160] (Figs. 6.47 and 6.48), or rebuild the main range as at the Fields, Horton [79, Fig. 43]. Few houses were totally of brick, though the Trees at Endon [137] is an exception (Fig. 6.83); others include Gratton Hall and Frith Bottom. Gratton Hall, Horton [80] is a substantial late eighteenth century, double-pile house with a central passage plan and a fine staircase rising to the attics. Frith Bottom, Leekfrith [115] is on a smaller scale with an L-shaped plan, later infilled in by the addition of a kitchen. The house has two and a half storeys and a central entrance plan (Fig. 6.84). Houseplace and parlour flank the entrance hall, and a small service room and staircase occupy the rear of the house. The houseplace contains a fireplace comparable with those at Oxhay and Whitehough (Figs. 6.79, 6.133), and the parlour hearth is flanked by elegant semi-circular alcoves and has a fine over-mantle and fire-surround (Fig. 6.84).



Fig. 6.83 Trees, Longsdon: (above) from the southeast before restoration in the 1990s. The original door position is visible to the right of the present front door. (below) the ground plan.



¹⁰⁰ *VCH Staffs VII*, 237; LRO, Thomas Wardle 1594.

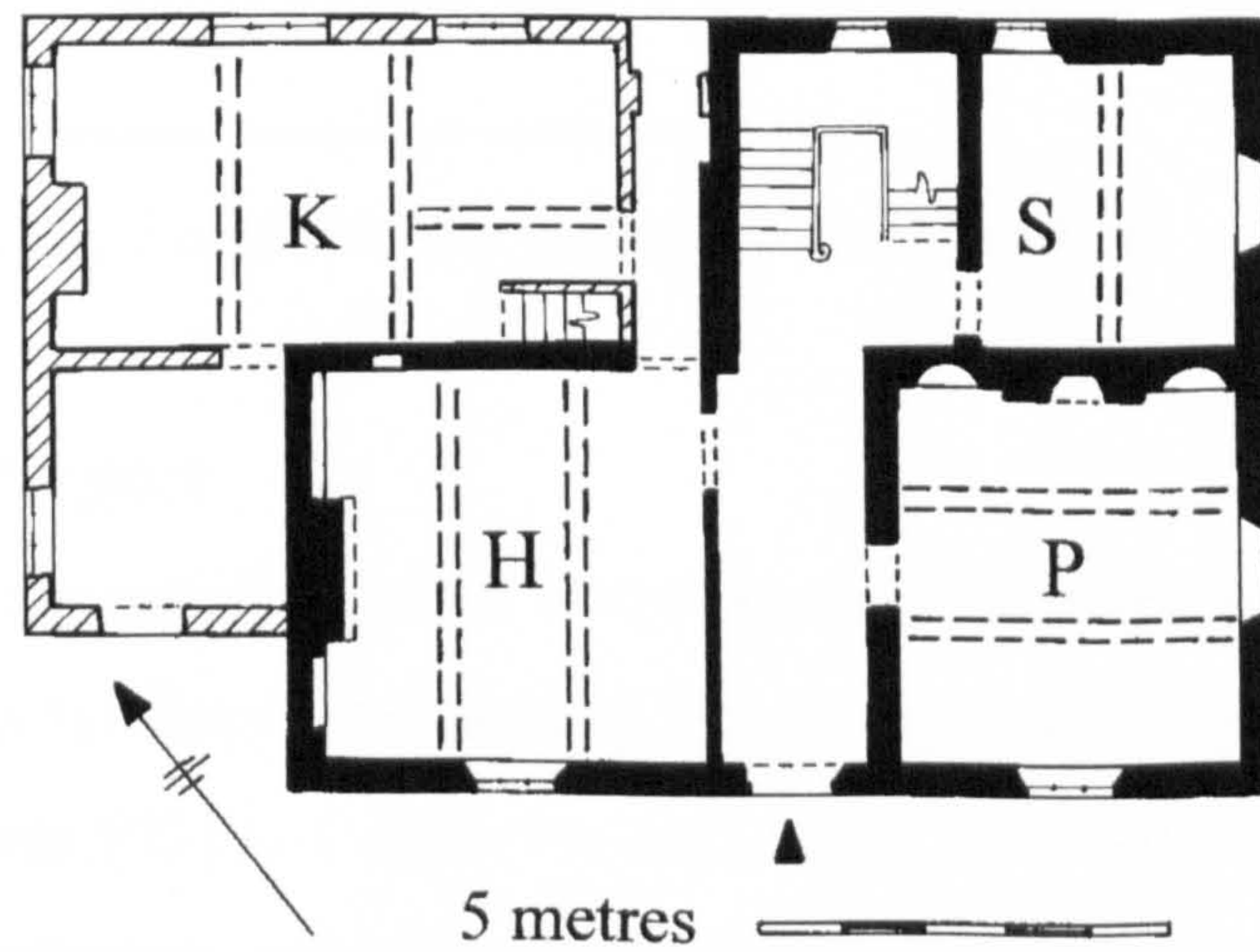


Fig. 6.84 Frith Bottom, Leekfrith: (top) from the south west
 (centre left) detail of the parlour hearth and alcoves
 (centre right) detail from the staircase
 (bottom) ground plan

The nineteenth century saw continued building in both brick and stone. Houses of both materials tended to ape the town houses with their symmetrical facades, and many houses were altered to fit this plan. The unheated central bay plan lent itself readily to modification. New doorways were cut at Jackhaye and the Trees (Fig. 6.69 and 6.83), and at Revedge [33] the doorway was moved (Fig. 6.69). The plan could also be created by moving a doorway and inserting an additional partition, as at Bank Top [139] (Fig. 6.72), or by cutting a new doorway into the firehood position as at Knivedon [129, Fig. 68]. The ultimate in multiphase alteration was achieved at Gunside in Leekfrith [114] where a small cruck building developed into a two-bay stone farmhouse in the seventeenth century, was converted to an irregular central entrance passage plan at some indeterminate date thereafter, and then had a central entrance plan house added at right angles in the nineteenth century (Fig. 6.85).

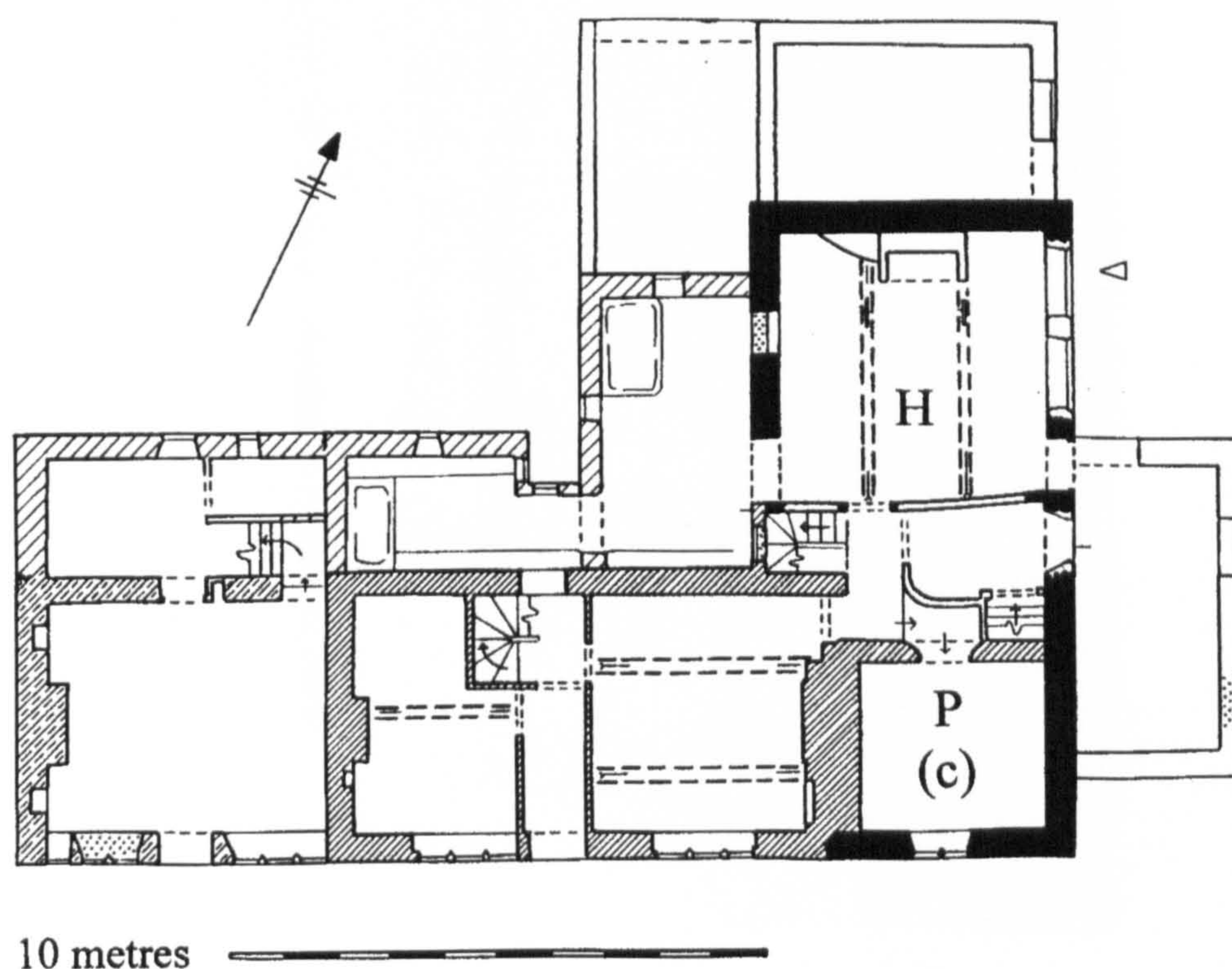


Fig. 6.85 Gunside, Leekfrith: the ultimate in revisionism

(vii) *The houses of the poor*

Documentation for the smaller houses is sparse, and it is difficult to establish which if any of the forms so far described housed the poorest members of community. Bank Top [139], Gate Farm [93] and Ford Old School [170] were all single-hearth houses, yet none of their occupants was exempt from the Hearth Tax, and all have expensive architectural details. Bank Top in particular, with its rear out-shut, and fine decorative screen (Fig. 6.86) cannot be regarded as a poor man's house. Many of the smaller

houses may have been comparable, since the Hearth Tax returns of 1666 show that 75.9% of householders in the hundred of Totmonslow occupied single hearth houses, including members of the gentry, and that only 28.9% were deemed too poor to pay (Appendix 6.4). A clear distinction must therefore be made between the more prosperous members of the community who occupied single-hearth houses, and the poorest members of society who, while they occupied premises that were similarly equipped, were exempted from payment. The former might include gentlemen in 'chambers' and gentry widows, as well as yeomen, craftsmen and townsfolk well able to support themselves.



Fig. 6.86 Bank Top, Ford: (above) the screen at the upper end of the houseplace; (below) a detail of two of the carvings

The extent to which the number of hearths in a man's house can be taken to represent his wealth is questionable. Comparison with figures for a selection of rural, urban and industrial areas¹⁰¹ indicates this part of North Staffordshire contained a relatively high percentage of single hearth houses, but that with less than a third of their occupants too poor to pay it ranked well above the poorest areas of England.

None-the-less the poor existed, and had to be housed. Many will still have been occupying cruck-framed cottages, but others may have had single-cell houses of stone. To the rear of Haregate [160] a single cell building of two storeys and cellar may be the 'Little house' left provisionally to the tenant's widow in 1721 (Fig. 6.48).¹⁰² At Morridge Side in Bradnop [32] three walls of a single cell house survive to full height, indicating a single ground floor room with a loft above (Fig. 6.91). This was subsumed into a larger building in the mid-eighteenth century, and was among the cottages scattered along the southern slopes of Morridge to which the county justices allocated four acres of land in 1655.¹⁰³

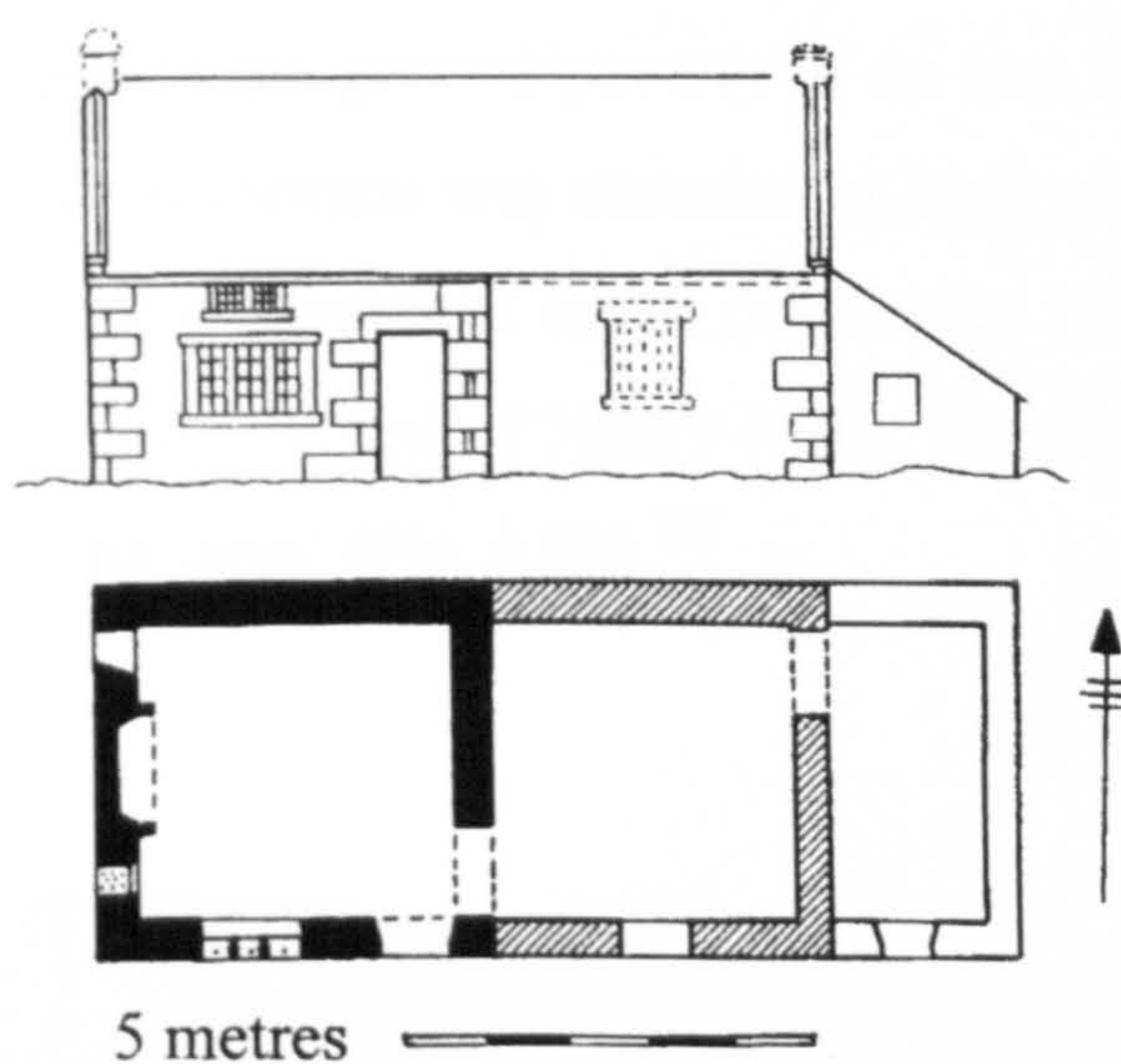


Fig. 6.87 *Windy Arbor, Cheddleton: elevation and ground plan.*

Dating to the middle of the eighteenth century is Windy Arbor, Cheddleton [51], a small but sturdily built single-cell house with flush mullion windows, which served a twelve-acre small holding carved from the waste of Cheddleton after 1737 (Fig. 6.87).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Levine and Wrightson, 1991, 157.

¹⁰² LRO Richard Clulow, 1721.

¹⁰³ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 174; Abstract of Title for Morridge Side (loaned by Mr. Bill Tatton).

¹⁰⁴ Pers. com. Robert Milner; SRO Q/RDc 29.

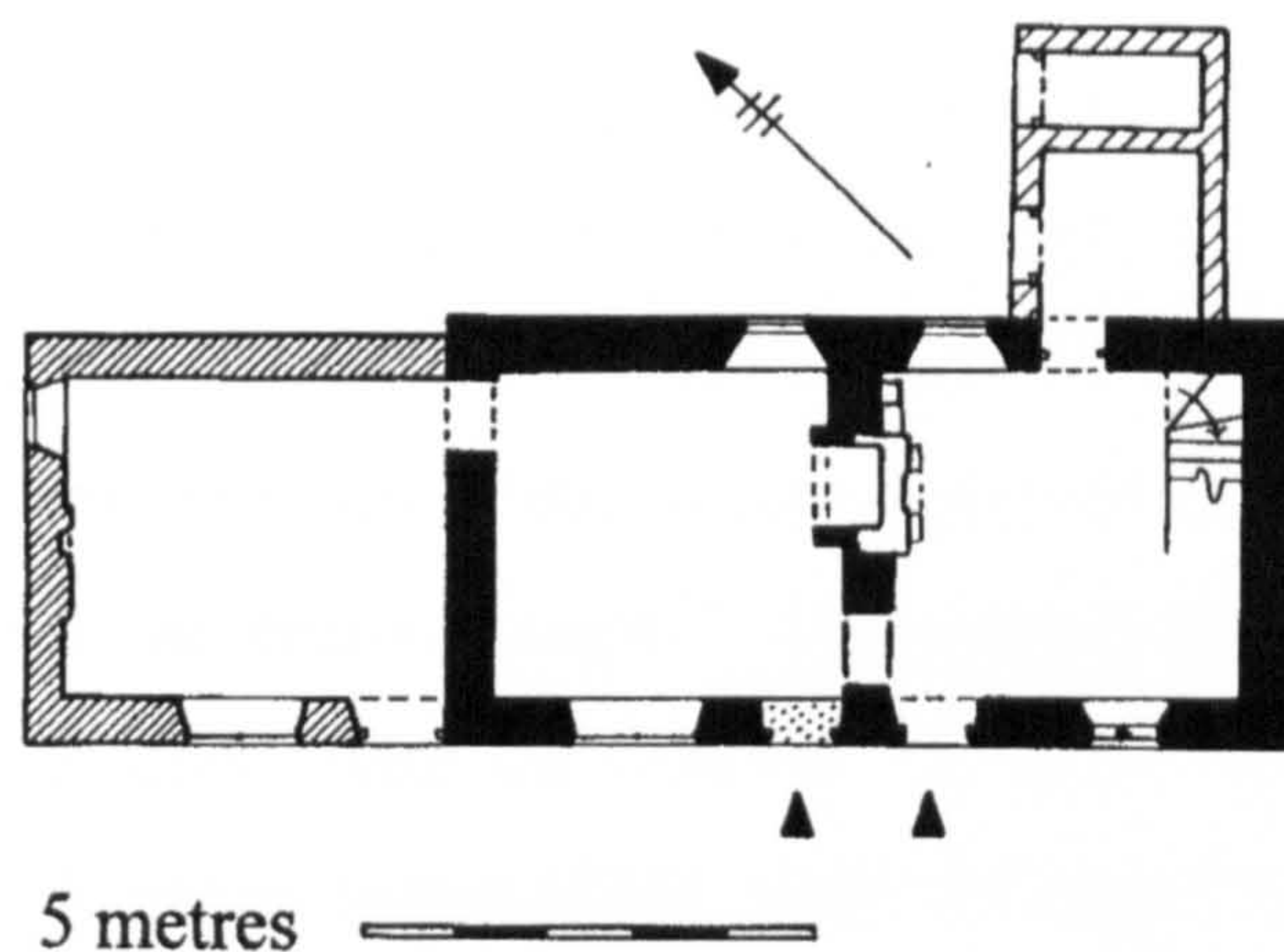


Fig. 6.88 School Cottages, Bradnop : the ground plan.

Semi-detached single-cell cottages in Bradnop dating to 1750 [35] are almost identical in plan size, but have two full storeys and a deep attic after the manner of the later farmhouses (Fig. 6.88). Single cell cottages of the eighteenth century survive on the former wasteland at the back of Mill Street, where a steep north-facing slope rimmed the former town-fields, and was still part of the 'townlands' in the early nineteenth century. Owing to the failure to collect rents, the land was lost to the town,¹⁰⁶ the result perhaps of the general poverty of an area which must always have attracted squatters. Similar settlement was attracted on high ground around the Roches where there are the ruins of a number of single cell houses [123]. A survivor was still occupied in 1833, and left to the son of Henry Mills, stone-mason, with 'leave if he thinks proper to remove the same' (Fig. 6.89).¹⁰⁷



Fig. 6.89 Roche End, Leekfrith: a single cell cottage in the foreground. Behind it is the house of Henry Mills with housing for cattle below it. The roofs were removed before 1975 at the order of Sir Philip Brocklehurst in order to deter squatters.

¹⁰⁶ TNSFC lviii 81 pl.79.

¹⁰⁷ Swythamley, 27/444.

(viii) *Housing on the later smallholdings*

Local farmers occupying dual-purpose buildings often claim them to be 'typical' of the area. In reality the longhouse was rare in Staffordshire, and dual-purpose buildings including both house and farm-buildings under a single roofline appear to be absent from the north of the county until Parliamentary Enclosure, unless Brookhouse in Horton is accepted as such.¹⁰⁸ The houses discussed above have all, at least in origin, been detached, with the possible exception of Marsh Farm, Leekfrith [117] and the Dingle, Rushton James [143]. Farm buildings adjacent to sixteenth and seventeenth century houses like Revedge, Bradnop [33] are invariably an addition. None predate the mid-eighteenth century, and most are considerably later.

Small, integrated farm units are absent from early settlement sites, and present in large numbers in areas of late enclosure. Their origins lie in the conversion of the barns that were regularly built after large-scale enclosure, evidenced by such farm-names as Mellow Barn and New Barn in Ipstones, or Pyotts Barn in Rushton James. In addition, the enlargement of cottage holdings after enclosure often resulted in new building which also took this form. None of the holdings was large, and this was the cheapest way of providing appropriate accommodation for both man and beast.

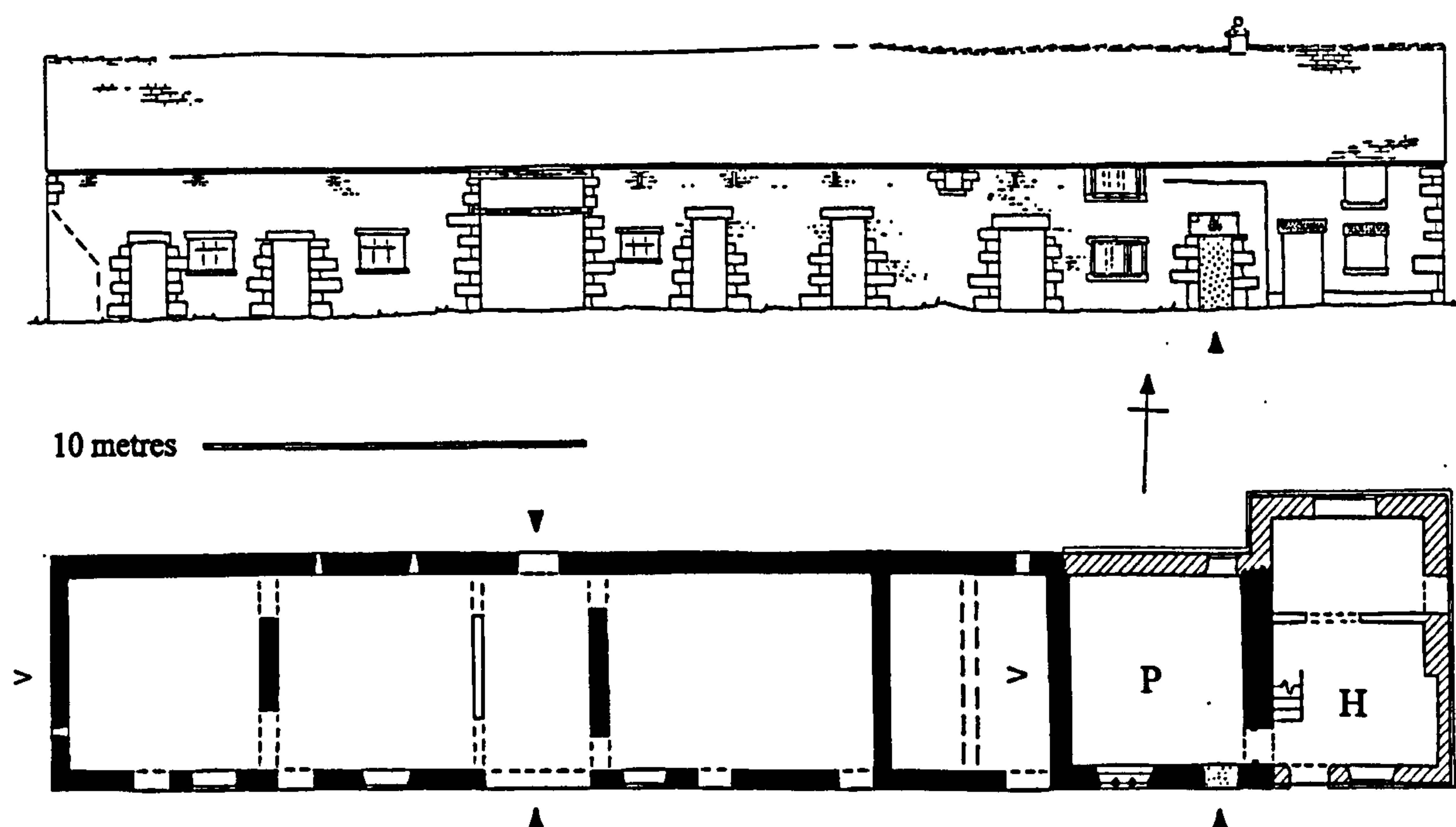


Fig. 6.90 Pelhams, Ipstones (the former New Barn). The eastern bay of the barn was a stable and has a pitching hole linking it to the main barn. The building has been substantially raised and all except one of the doorheads has been altered.

¹⁰⁸ Meeson, 2001, 31 and an unpublished survey by R.A.Meeson.

In Ipstones 1500 acres were enclosed between 1650 and 1680.¹⁰⁹ Here pre-existing enclosures might already have barns, and viable smallholdings could be created around them. In 1651 the sale of the early enclosure at Cromwithies included Jauncey's barn, and in 1711 the holding together with 'All that Edifice or Building called Janneys Barn part whereof is lately converted into an House' was sold to William Slack for £70.¹¹⁰ Such conversions are evident elsewhere, as at Pelhams [104], the former New Barn, built in 1707 (Fig. 6.90).

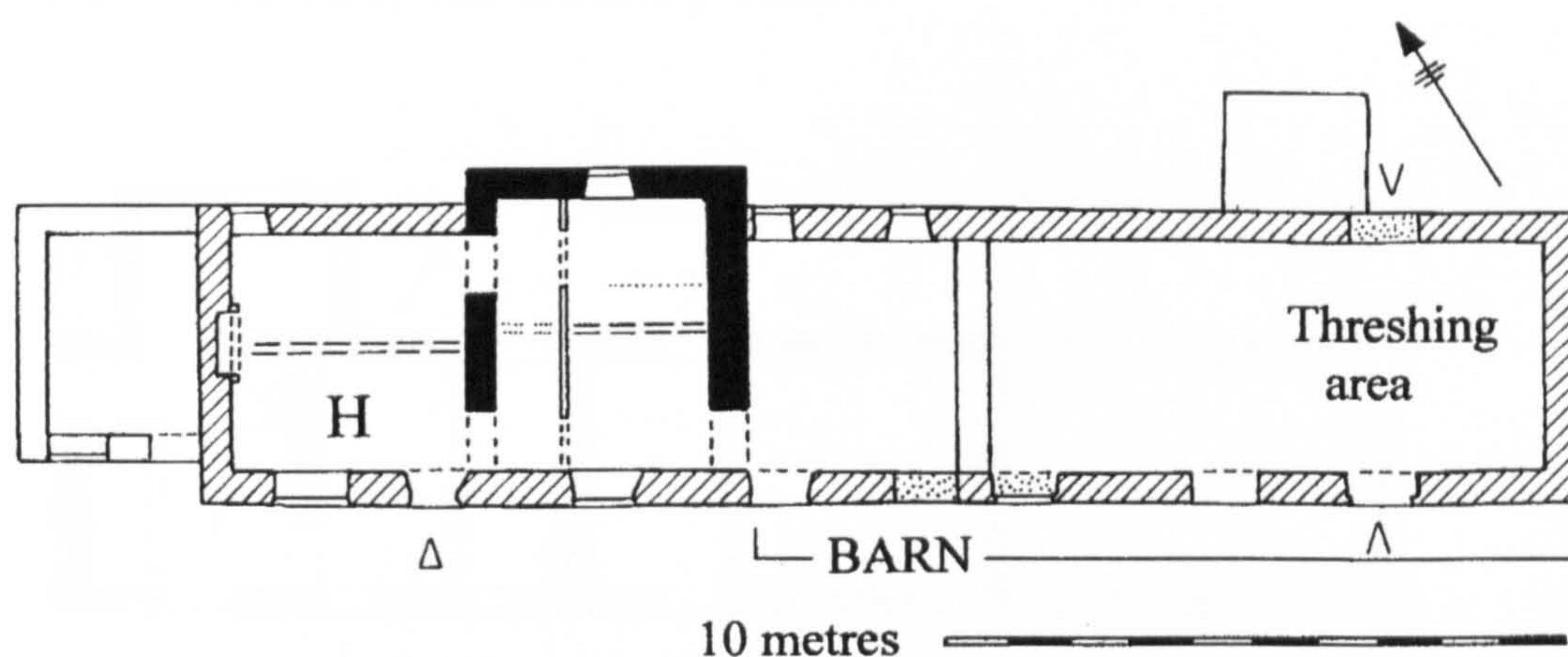


Fig. 6.91 *Morridge Side, Bradnop*

Morridge Side, Bradnop [32] and a series of adjacent properties provide an alternative scenario. The Enclosure Award for Bradnop dates to 1769.¹¹¹ A year later the Aston estates were sold. Four acres of land and a cottage at Morridge Side were sold to its tenant, Jeremiah Kirkham. When Jeremiah enlarged his holding the original cottage was subsumed into a double-fronted house with a range of farm buildings (Fig. 6.91). Similar double-fronted houses with attached farm buildings were built on all the former cottage holdings on Morridge.



Fig. 6.92 *Churl's Knowl, Rushton Spencer: from the south.*

¹⁰⁹ SA12/1/3; SA 12/1/1.

¹¹⁰ SRO D239/M3934; DRO 231M/T739.

¹¹¹ SRO 5116/1; abstract of title for Morridge Side (loaned by Mr. Bill Tatton).

In Rushton James, a smallholding at Churl's Knowl [142] was described as recent encroachment in 1777. Here too Parliamentary Enclosure made it possible to enlarge the holding. By *circa* 1800 the house had been rebuilt (Fig. 6.92 and 93) together with a range of farm buildings, comprising a miniature threshing barn and a cow-house with hayloft over, to which a stable and calf pens were soon added. In all cases the relative cheapness of the form must have been the governing factor, though the buildings are sturdy and eminently durable.

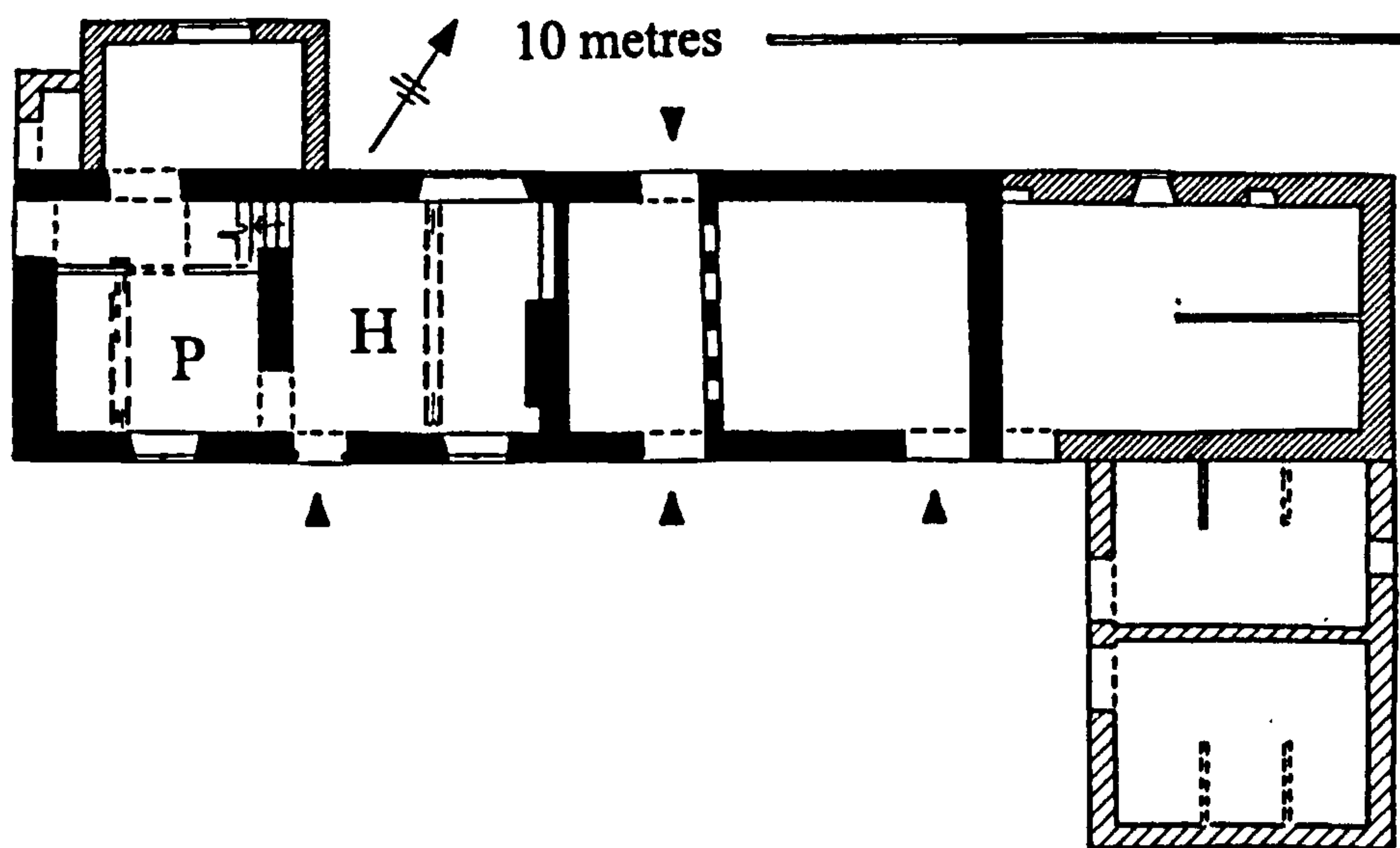


Fig. 6.93 Churl's Knowl, Rushton Spencer: the ground plan.

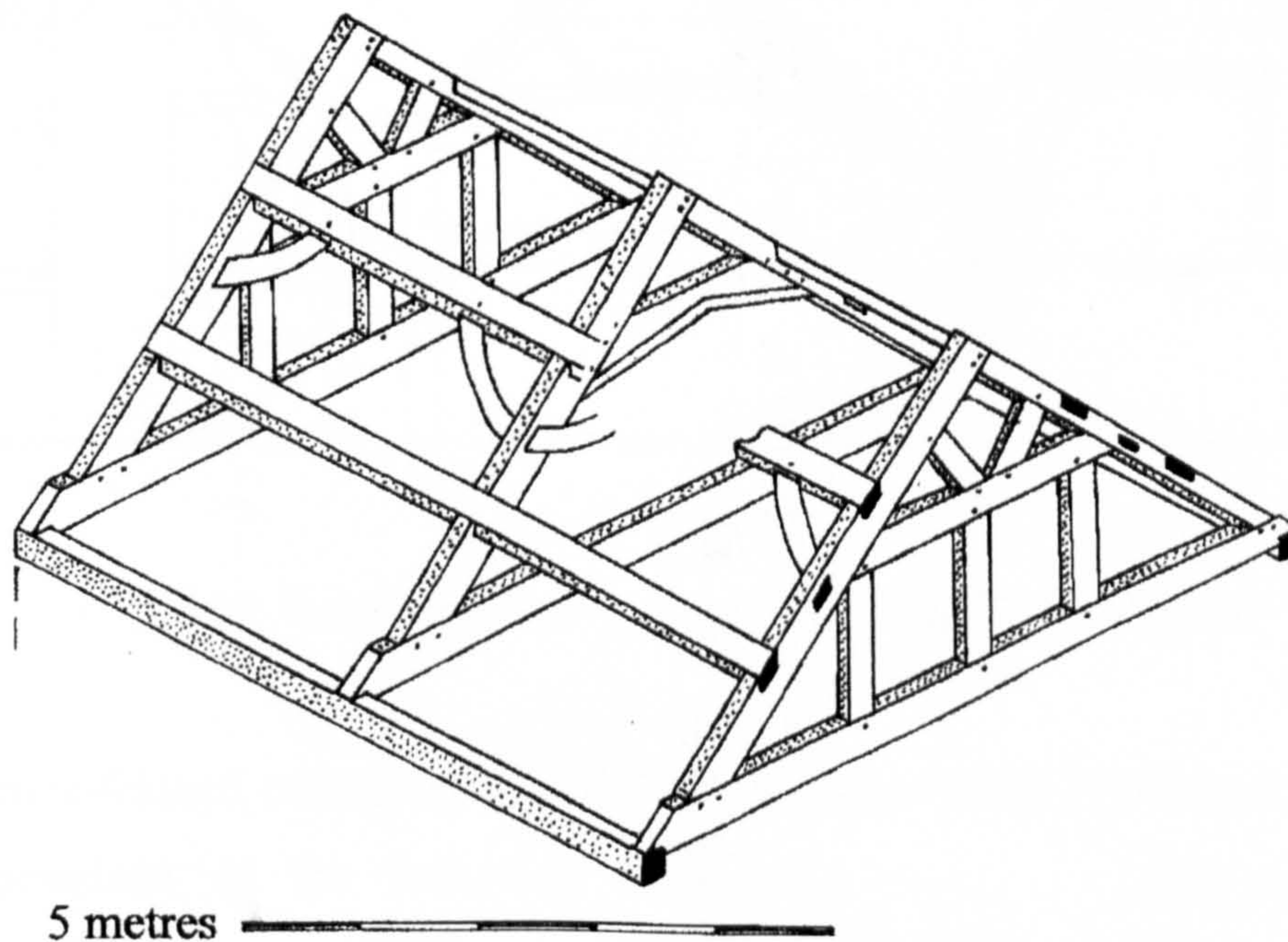
PART TWO: Urban housing

The medieval period

Nothing survives of the house from which the earls of Chester wrote their charters, which probably fell victim to fire in 1297,¹ thus the only building in Leek town to pre-date 1500 is a two-bay, two-storey timber-framed crosswing hidden inside the Swan [16]. Here three principal rafter and tiebeam trusses with double side purlins, curved windbraces, widely spaced studs and rafters set broadside to the purlins, have been dated on stylistic grounds to the late fifteenth century (Fig. 6.94).² A tenant property at the dissolution, it was sold to George Vigers, husbandman, in 1565.³ In 1639 his son-in-law was described as a gentleman, when the presence of ‘twenty five flagons quarts and pints’, and a cellar with eleven barrels and three dozen wine bottles, suggests it was already a thriving inn.⁴



Fig. 6.94 The Swan: (above) a detail of the early roof showing a side purlin with curved windbraces and four of the original rafters.



¹ Lynam, 1911, v.

² Pers. com. N.W. Alcock and R.A. Meeson.

³ SRO D(W) 1702/1/13; LRO George Vigers, 1597/8.

⁴ LRO Thomas Bowers, 1639.

The sixteenth century

Evidence for the sixteenth-century is also sparse. At 2-4 Church Street [3] an irregular stone façade masks the remains of a timber-framed building of which the western gable is missing. Its internal trusses were braced below the tie beam, suggesting the upper floor was a single room, perhaps in use as a warehouse (Figs. 6.95 and 98).

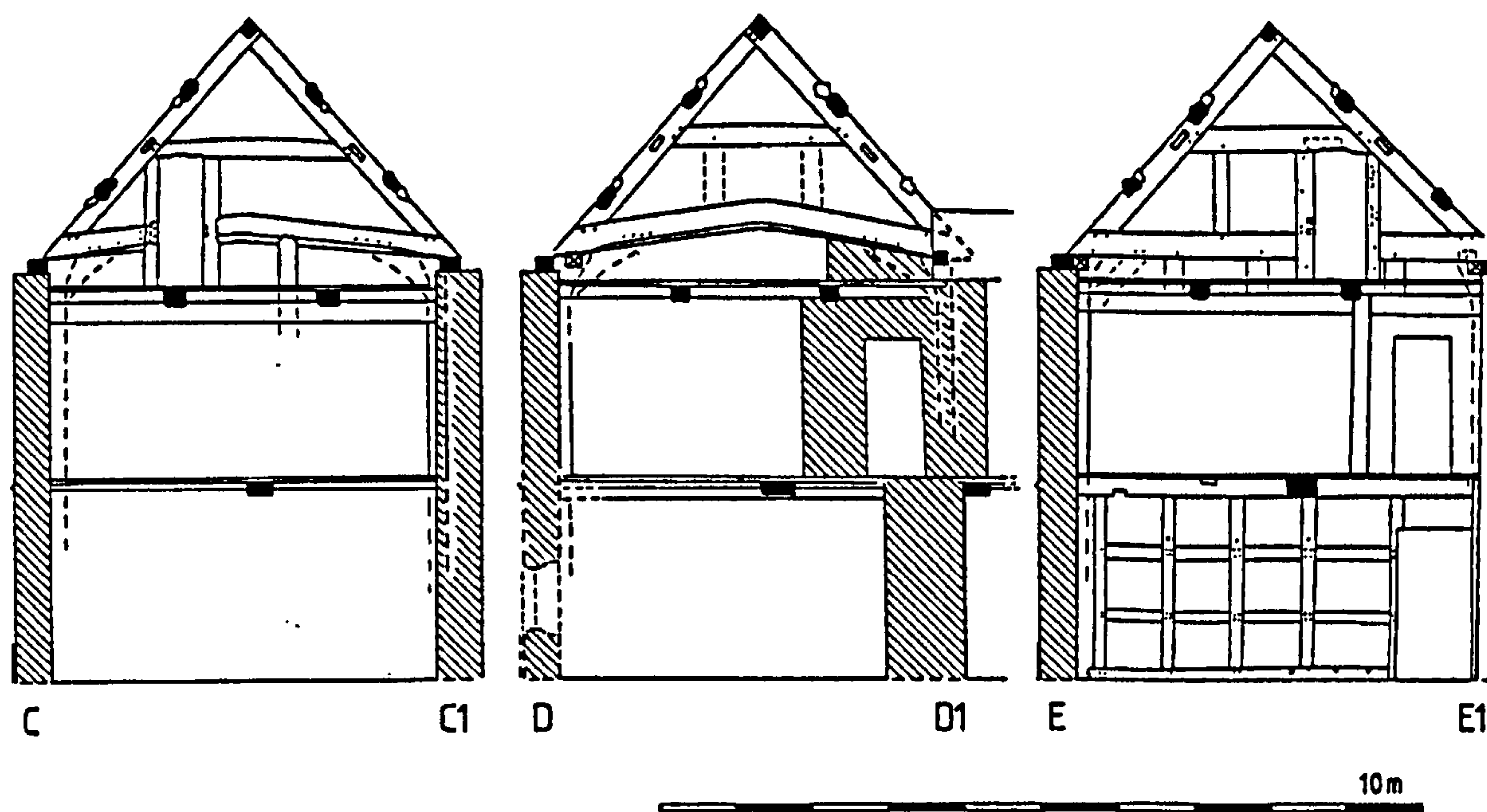


Fig. 6.95 2-4 Church Street: the roof trusses. The form of the braces is uncertain.

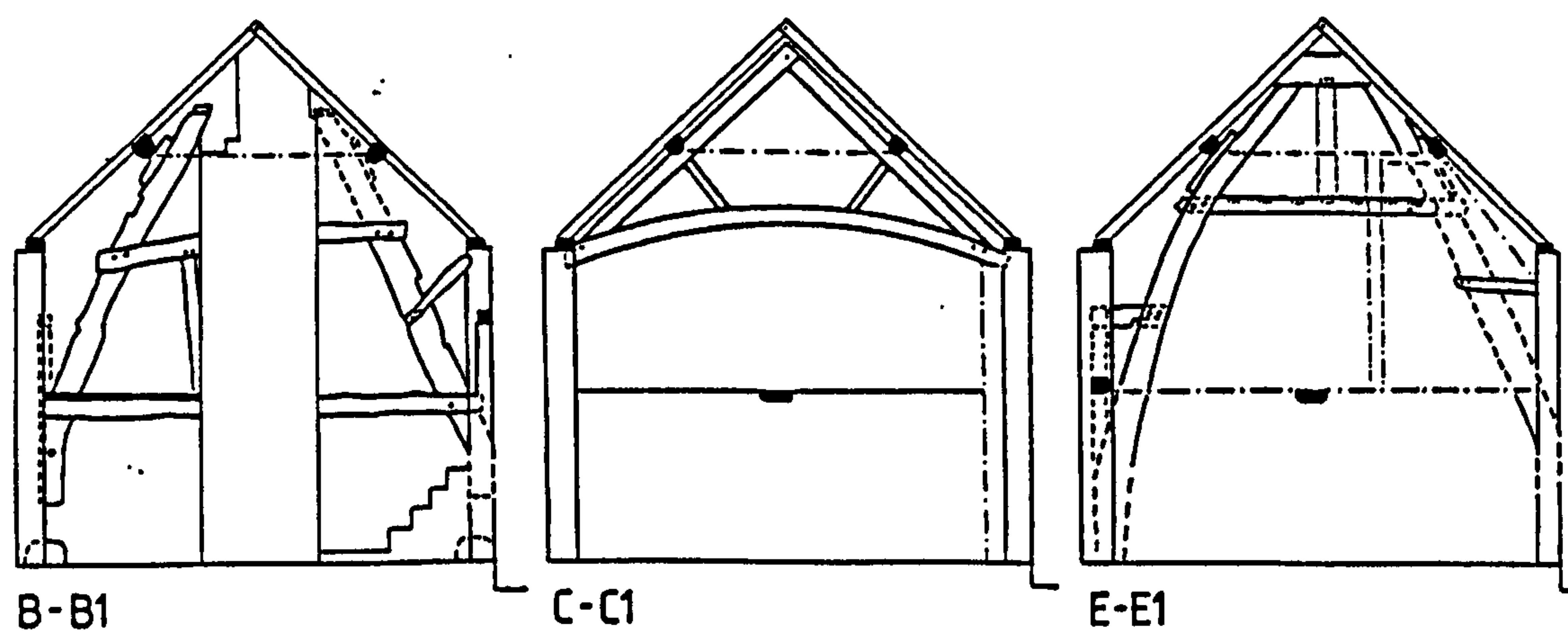


Fig. 6.96 2-4 Clerk Bank: two cruck trusses and a later replacement

A cruck-framed cottage and workshop on Clerk Bank [4] have a scale that is more characteristic of the surviving fragments, and represent the combination of house and 'shop' regularly referred to in the town inventories.⁵ The house was tiny, with a single bay houseplace and a laterally divided second bay (Fig.

⁵ LJO For example John Jodrell, 1608; Thomas Gent, 1631; Thomas Barker, 1647; John Wood, 1673.



Fig. 6.97 2-4 Clerk Bank from the southwest. Before the restoration of the eastern section.



Fig. 6.98 Detail of an open truss in 2-4 Church Street.



Fig. 6.99 The Vicarage and 2-4 Church Street from the west. The white gable is that of the detached kitchen/cottage to the rear of the main building.

6.96 and 6.100). A second firehood was added, back-to-back with the first when the 'workshop' was converted to housing. Crucks also survive in a two-bay house at the Black Swan [22] and at the 'Old Timbers' [26]. Nothing survives of their original walling apart from fragmentary stone plinths.

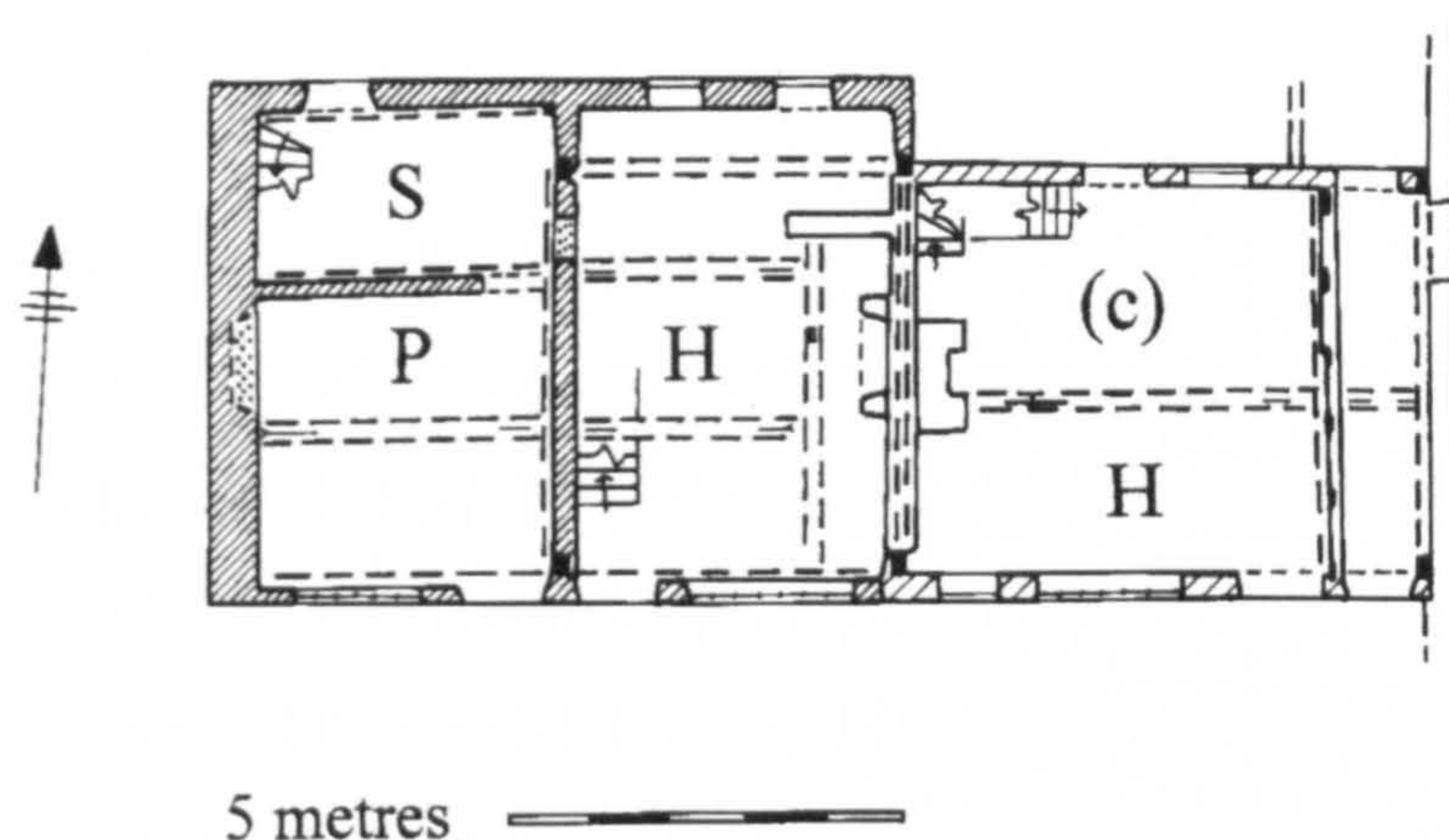


Fig. 6.100 2-4 Clerk Bank: cottage (west) and former workshop (east). Both are now cottages and the original living quarters have been extended to the north.

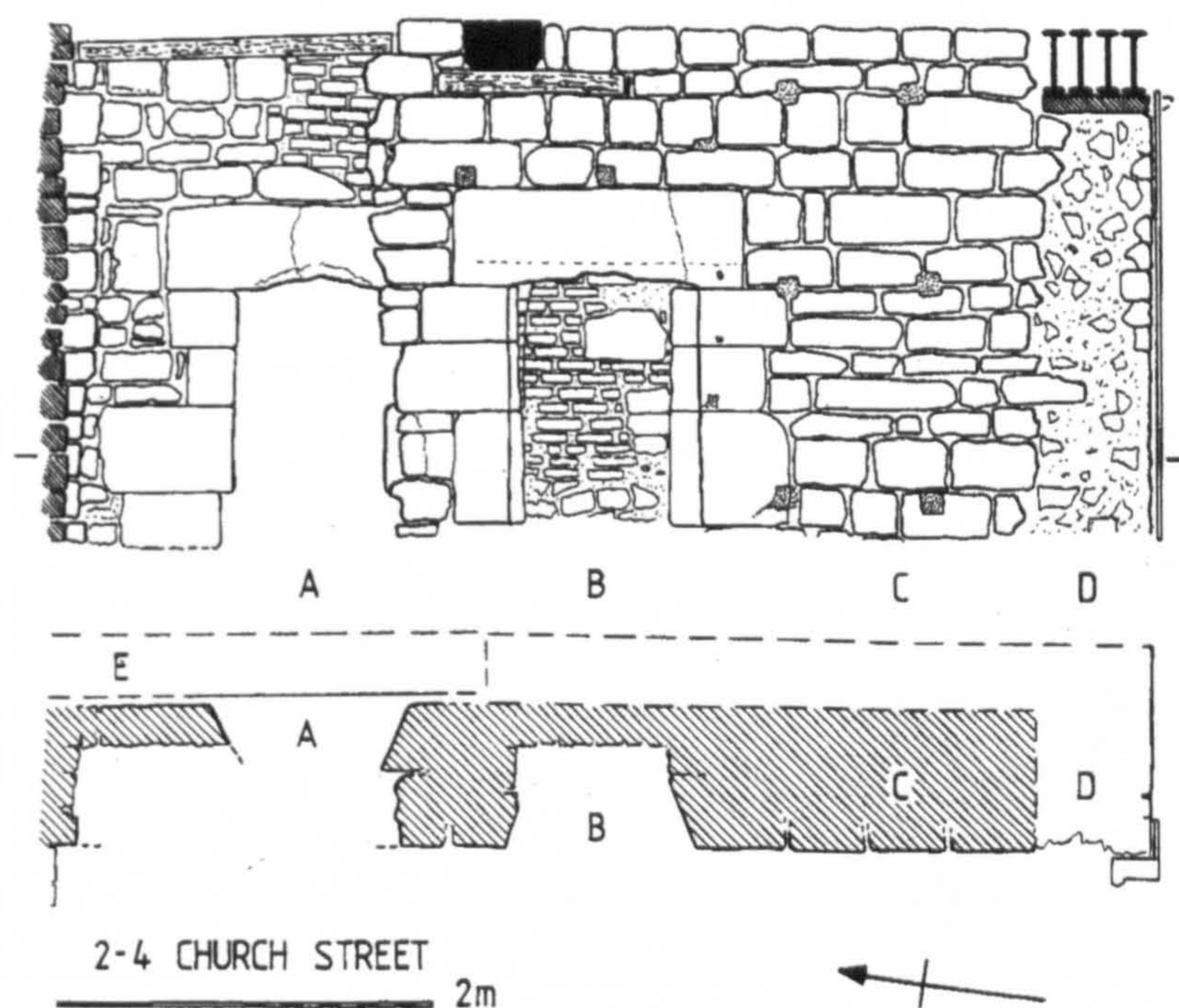


Fig. 6.101 2-4 Church Street: the east wall of the earlier stone house showing the two hearths and a section through the south façade of Thomas Parker's house. The RSJs span the later shop front.

A number of stone buildings may also be of sixteenth century date. All that generally survives is a fragmentary gable of one-and-a-half storeys. A building of this

kind was subsumed into the house of built for Thomas Parker around the middle of the seventeenth century [3], where two walls were uncovered during recent building work. An internal wall to the east had back-to-back hearths (Fig. 6.101). Since neither was large enough for cooking the house must have had at least three bays. The varied nature of the Sherwood Sandstone used for its building suggests that it may have derived from Dieulacres.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: timber and stone

William Jolliffe dominated the commercial scene at the start of the seventeenth century, much as his newly built Hall House [9] was to dominate its neighbours (Fig. 6.102). Built in 1627, it was a double pile house with a three storeys over a semi-basement cellar (Figs. 6.103 and 6.104). With stone gables and a stone plinth rising to the ground floor windowsills, its upper storeys were timber-framed. The rear pile has a pitched roof from which a small gable gives access to the flat roof of the front pile, which served as a prospect tower. Brick replaced timber in the eighteenth century, but the building retained the canted bays of the original design and a series of stone hearths in shallow chimneybreasts on the gable walls [Fig. 6.5].

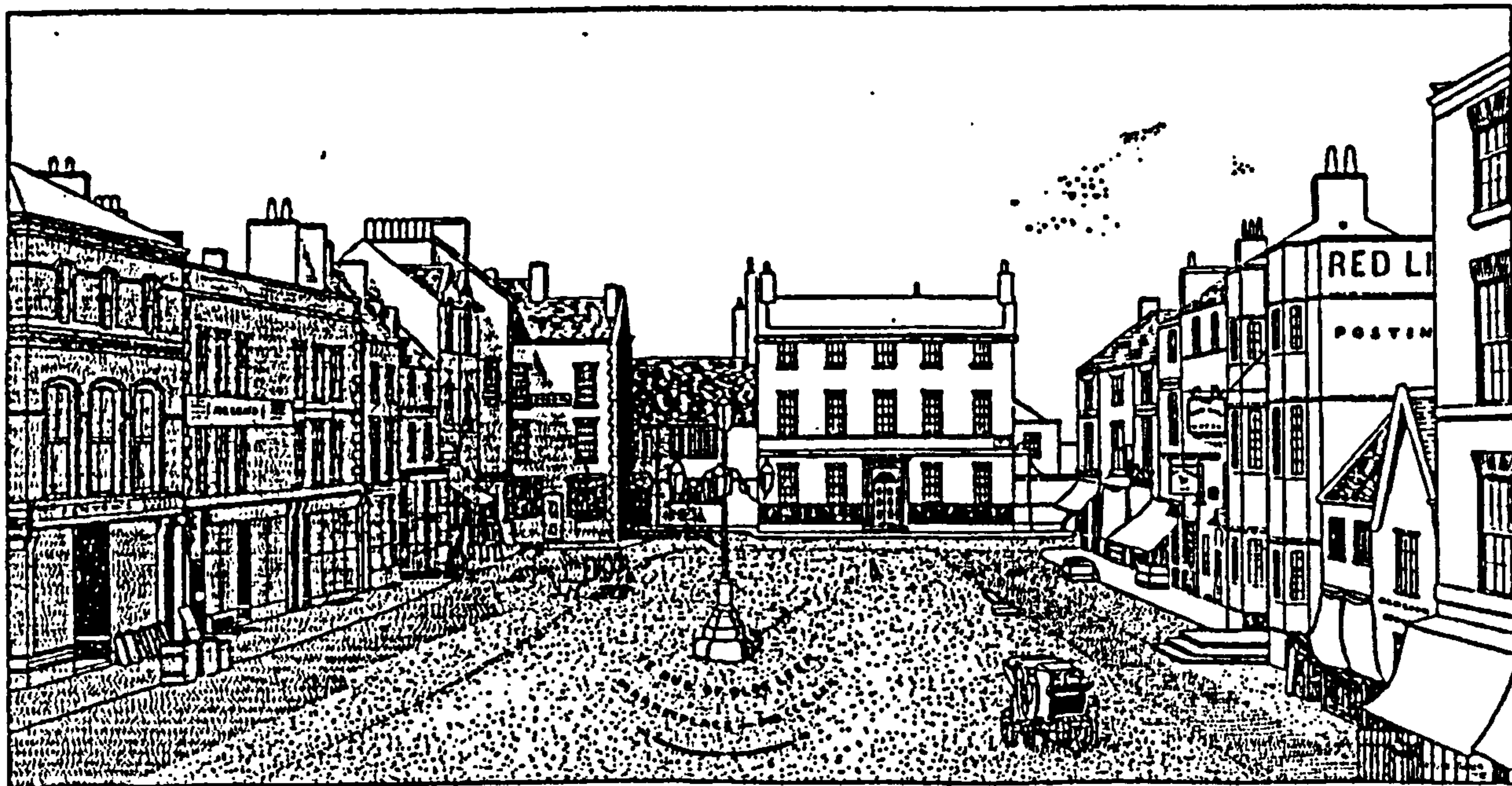
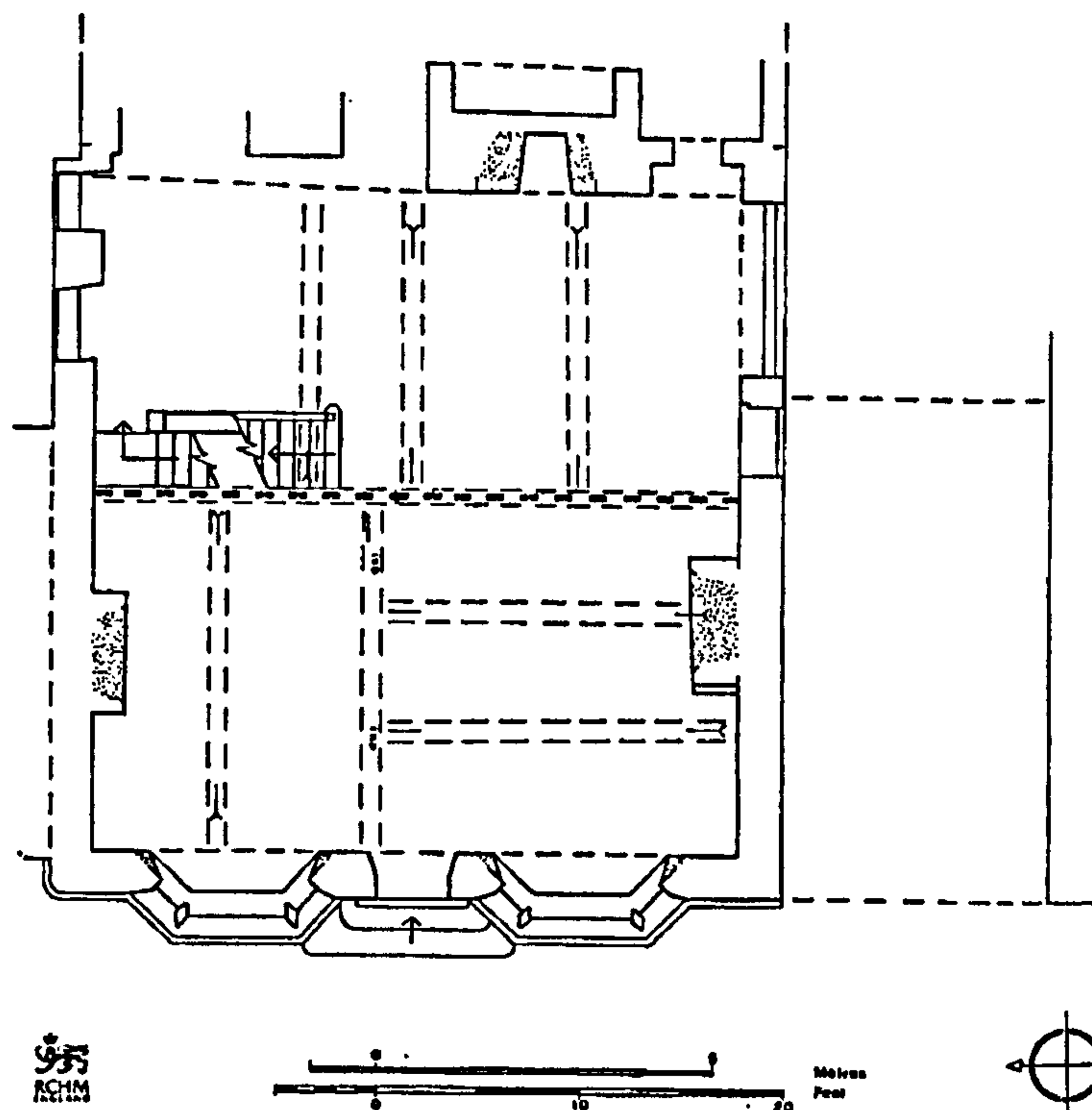


Fig. 6.102 The Market Place ('The Hub of Leek' by Frank Green circa 1870). The flat roof Red Lion (the former Hall House) is on the right, with a tiny gabled neighbour from which a plaster ceiling was removed prior to its demolition (Fig. 6.112). Foxlowe is in the centre with Thomas Parker's house partly obscured to its left.



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Fig. 6.103 The Red Lion (the former Hall House). The plan omits added features apart from the staircase, and was designed to isolate the surviving parts of the seventeenth century house prior to restoration.

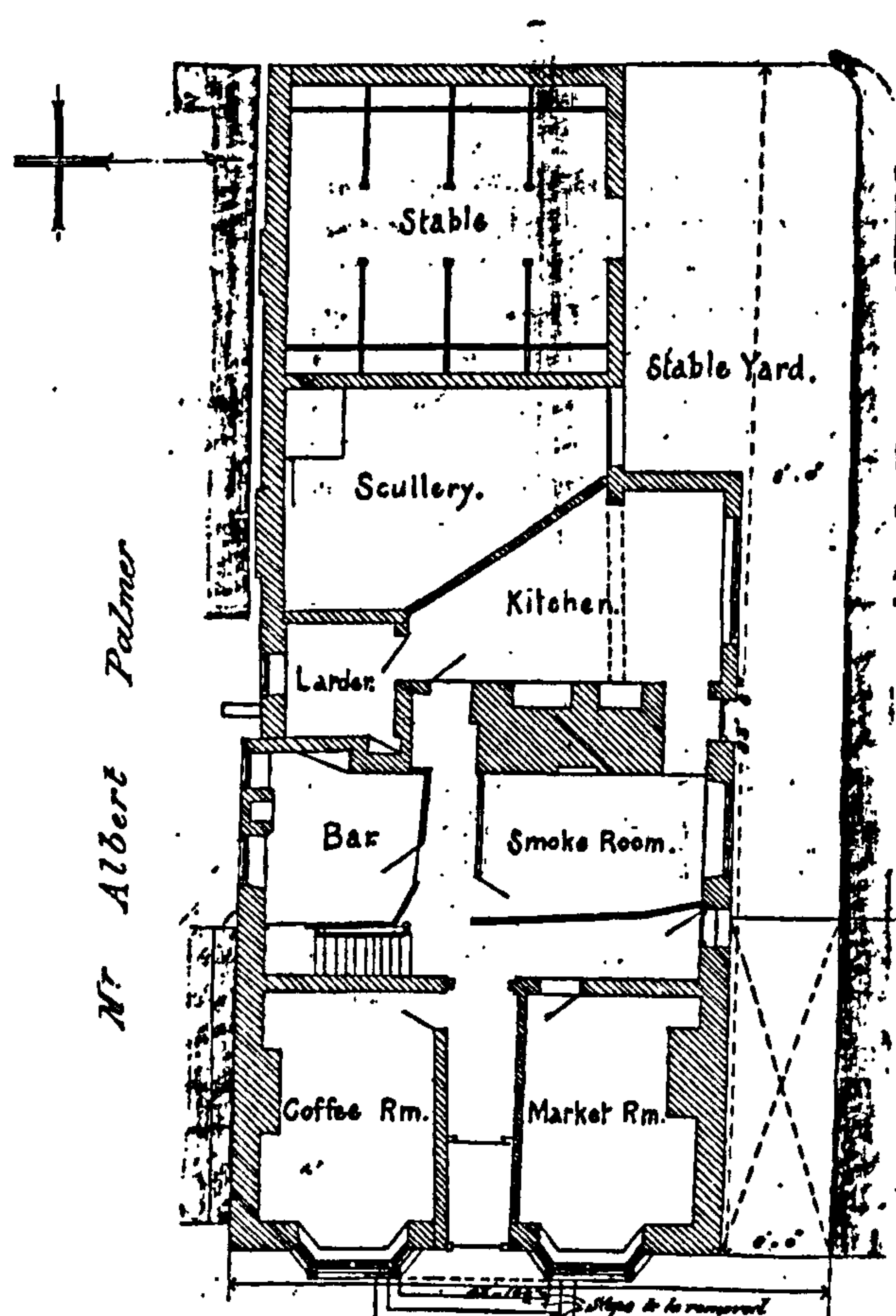


Fig. 6.104 The Red Lion (former Hall House) in 1897. Four public rooms occupied the ground floor of the Hall House, while the service areas and stables underlay the eighteenth century Assembly Room (now demolished).⁶

⁶ SMDC Deeds of the Market Hall. (from the sales catalogue of 1897).

An active land market required lawyers, and by the middle of the seventeenth century Thomas Parker had acquired a substantial frontage on the north of the market place. Here he remodelled the existing buildings into the house where his son, the first Lord Macclesfield, is reputed to have been born [3].⁷ The result was a capacious two-storey house with irregular fenestration, five hearths and a timber-framed stair turret leading to newly constructed attics (Fig. 6.105 and 6.106). As at Haregate (Fig. 6.48) a single



Fig. 6.105 2-4 Church Street. From a drawing by W. R. Keane in Miller, 1891.

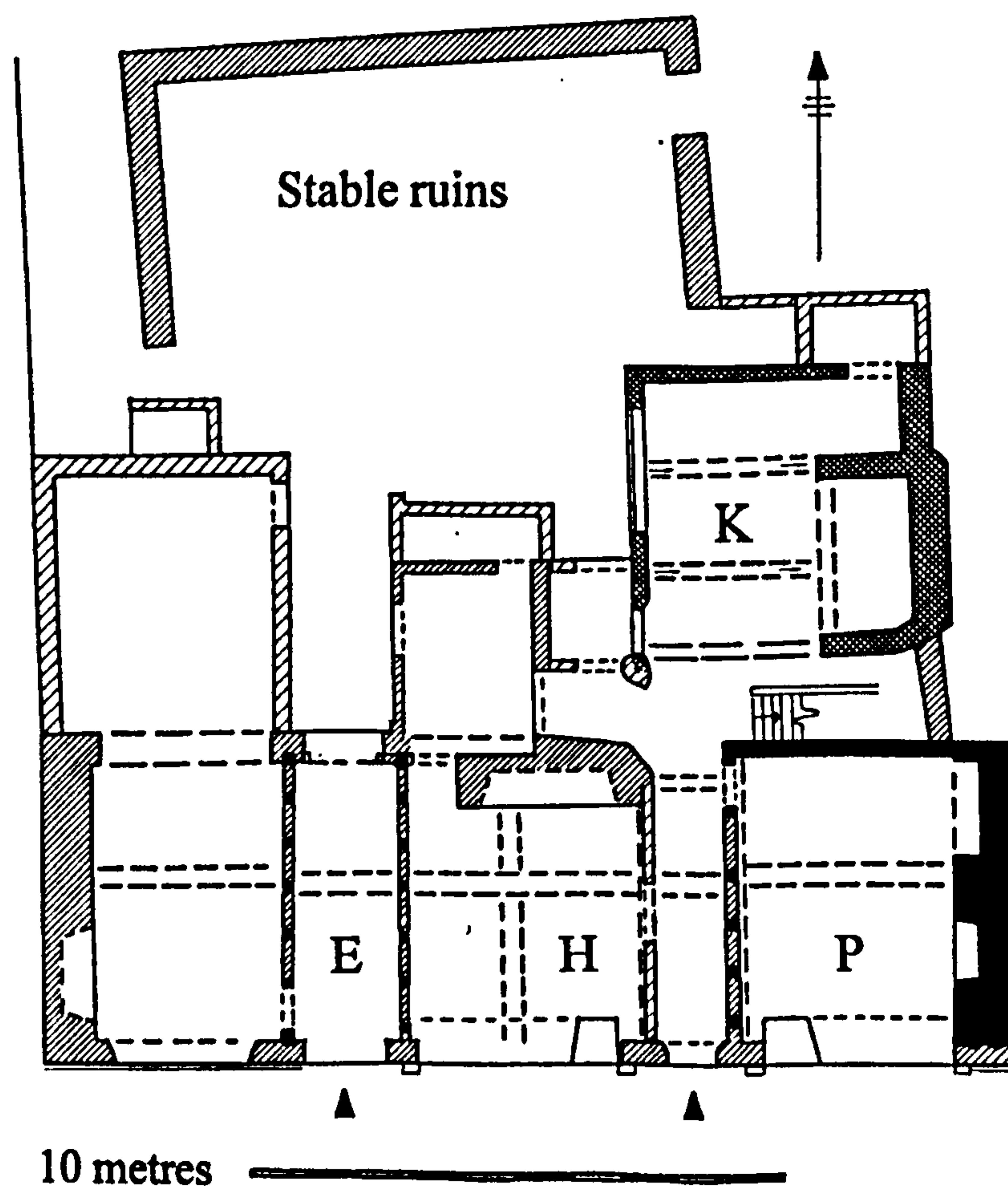


Fig. 106 2-4 Church Street: the ground plan with the detached cottage marked K

cell cottage at the rear is now linked to the main building, and may have served as a detached kitchen. Presumably it was in place when 'Mr Parker' paid for six hearths in 1673.

No other private houses can be positively assigned to the seventeenth century, and none has escaped major modifications. The inns have fared better. Nothing is known of the Roebuck [8] beyond Sleight's claim that the frame was brought from Shropshire in 1626, and that it came to William Stanley with half the Ashenhurst estate in 1744.⁸ Certainly the Ashenhursts were among the few local families wealthy enough to contemplate the formidable cost of such overland carriage,⁹ but even the richest of the early seventeenth century builders built with local materials; there was timber still available on the larger estates, and local expertise to build with it.



"ROE-BUCK."

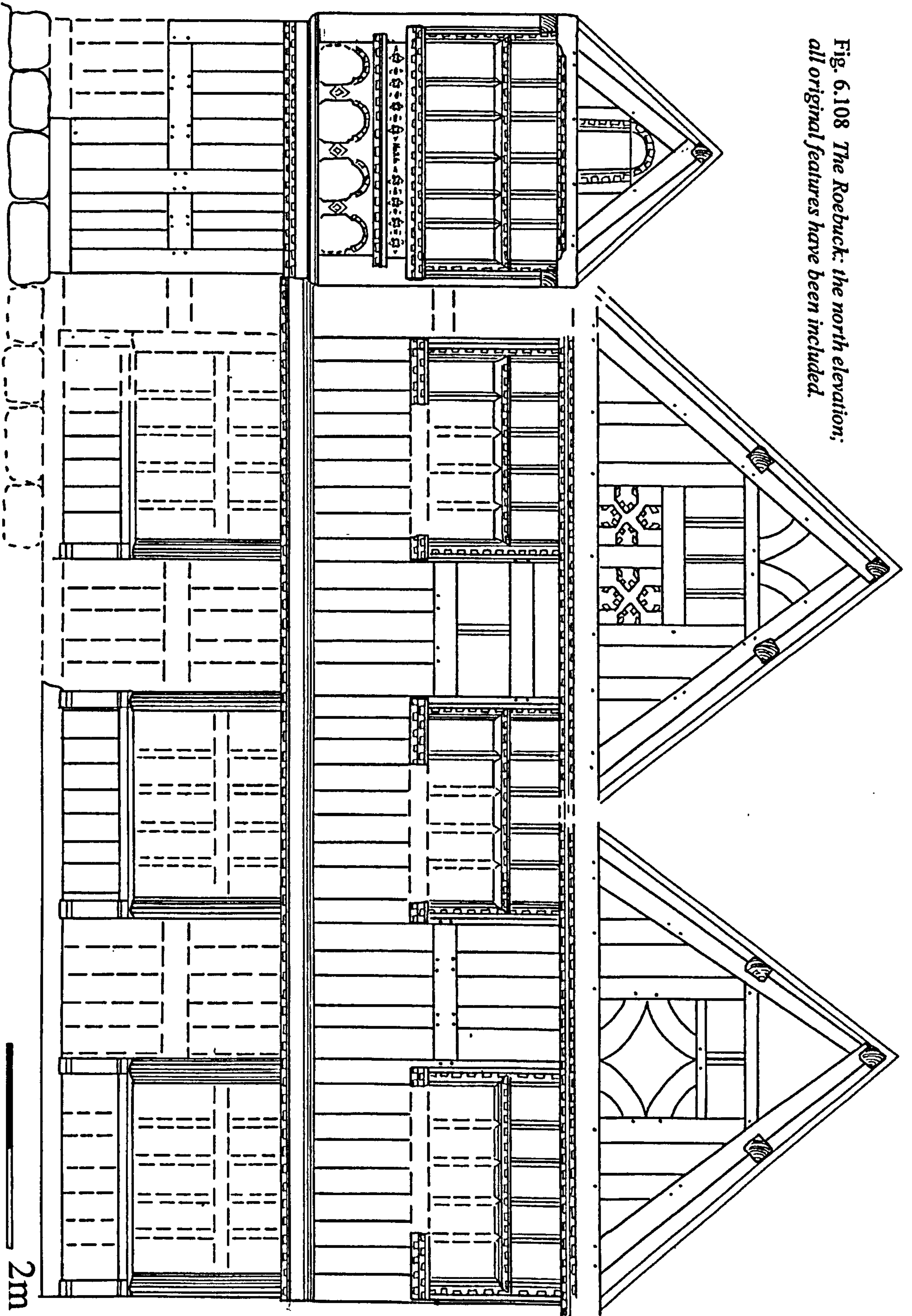
Fig 6.107 The Roebuck (reproduced from Sleight, 1883, 10). Render and paint conceal the gable windows, but the position of the main entrance is visible at the far end in the angle formed by the two-storey porch and the main building, although filled by a window.

Speculation apart, the use of close-studding, the provision of no less than three five-light mullion and transom windows for each floor, and a further five-light window over the entrance porch, indicates the builder to have been a wealthy man (Fig. 6.107). The Ashenhurst family and their successors, the Hollinhursts, had commercial interests in Leek (c.f. page 109). If this was their property during its early history it would have

⁸ Sleight (1883), 10; Swythamley 18/657.

⁹ *AHEW IV 1500-1640*, 612.

Fig. 6.108 *The Roebuck: the north elevation; all original features have been included.*



provided them with a fine town house second only to the Jolliffes' Hall House (Fig. 6.108).

The Swan [16] saw repeated enlargements during the seventeenth century, and the addition of an assembly room in the eighteenth century, accessed through an entrance-lobby built to the north of the main range (Fig. 6.109). The eastern front has been replaced, but a video¹⁰ taken during 'restoration' work shows a mullioned window supported by elaborate brackets, suggesting Leek's finest timberwork could be very elaborate indeed [Fig. 6.6].

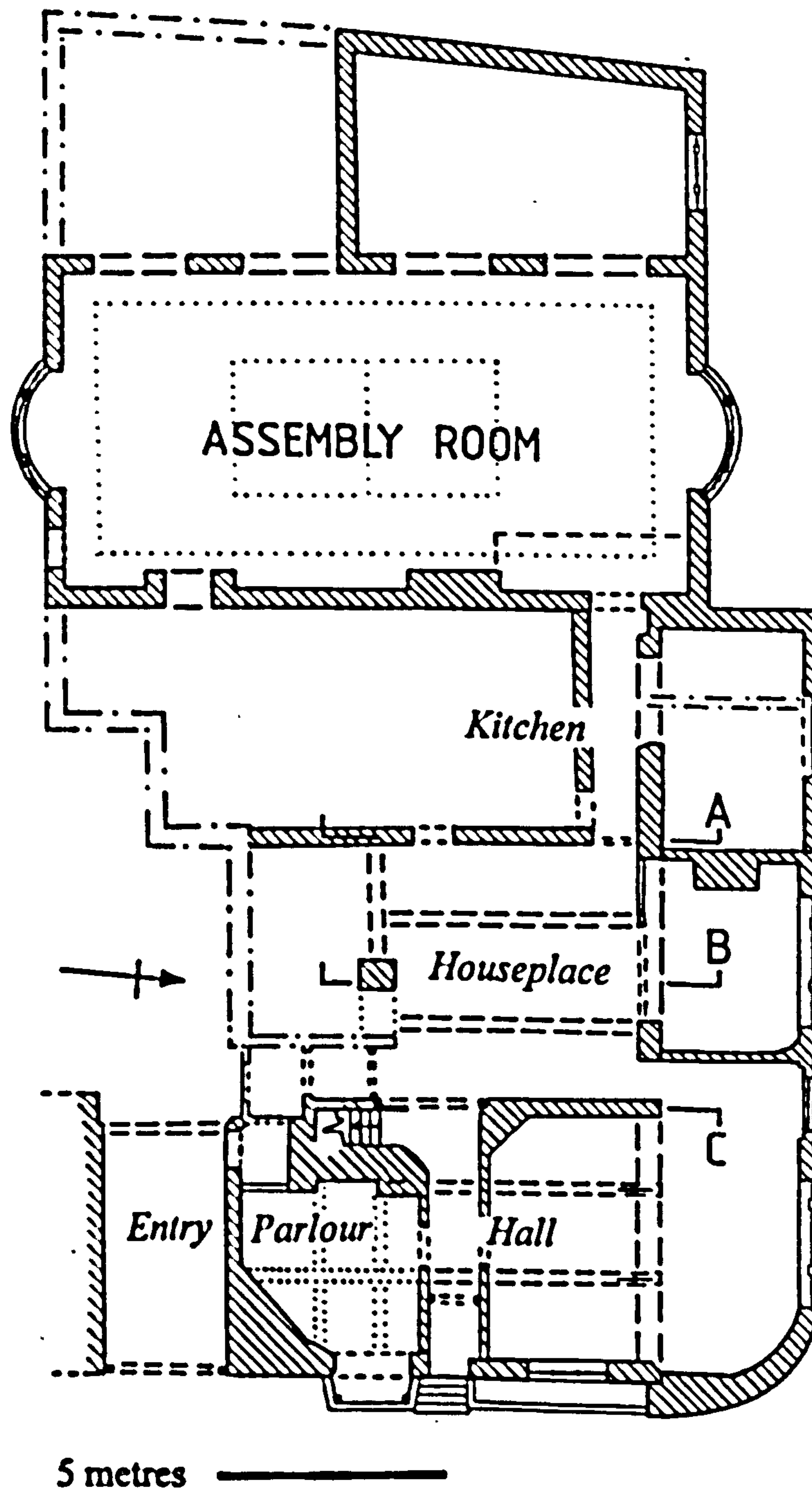


Fig. 6.109 The Swan: with room names from the inventory of Thomas Bowers, 1639.

¹⁰ Property of Mr. and Mrs. O'Hagon, former licencees of the Swan, now of the Abbey Inn.



“BLACK’S HEAD.”

Fig. 6.110 The Black’s Head (demolished). From Sleigh, 1883, 10.

Some buildings are known only from illustration. The Black’s Head (Fig. 6.110) was another elaborately framed building, smaller in scale than the Roebuck, and with a cart entrance similar to that of the Swan. A small house to the south of the Red Lion/Hall House with a single crosswing (Fig. 6.102) belonged to the Jolliffes until the middle of the eighteenth century, and must have been of considerable importance since it contained a decorative plaster ceiling, the only one known from this area (Fig. 6.112).



Fig. 6.111 The Bird in Hand. From Miller, 1937, 170.

Speaking of the year 1810, Joshua Brough described Leek as having ‘some very good houses ... interspersed with a great number of thatched houses and cottages, many of which were of mean appearance, and were low and uncomfortable dwellings’,¹¹ a lack of headroom well illustrated by the former Bird-in-Hand (Fig. 6.111), and echoed in Sleigh’s description of the Black Lion as ‘a low ‘thacked’ house with two small dormers’.¹²

¹¹ Miller, 1891, 8.

¹² Sleigh, 1883, 10.

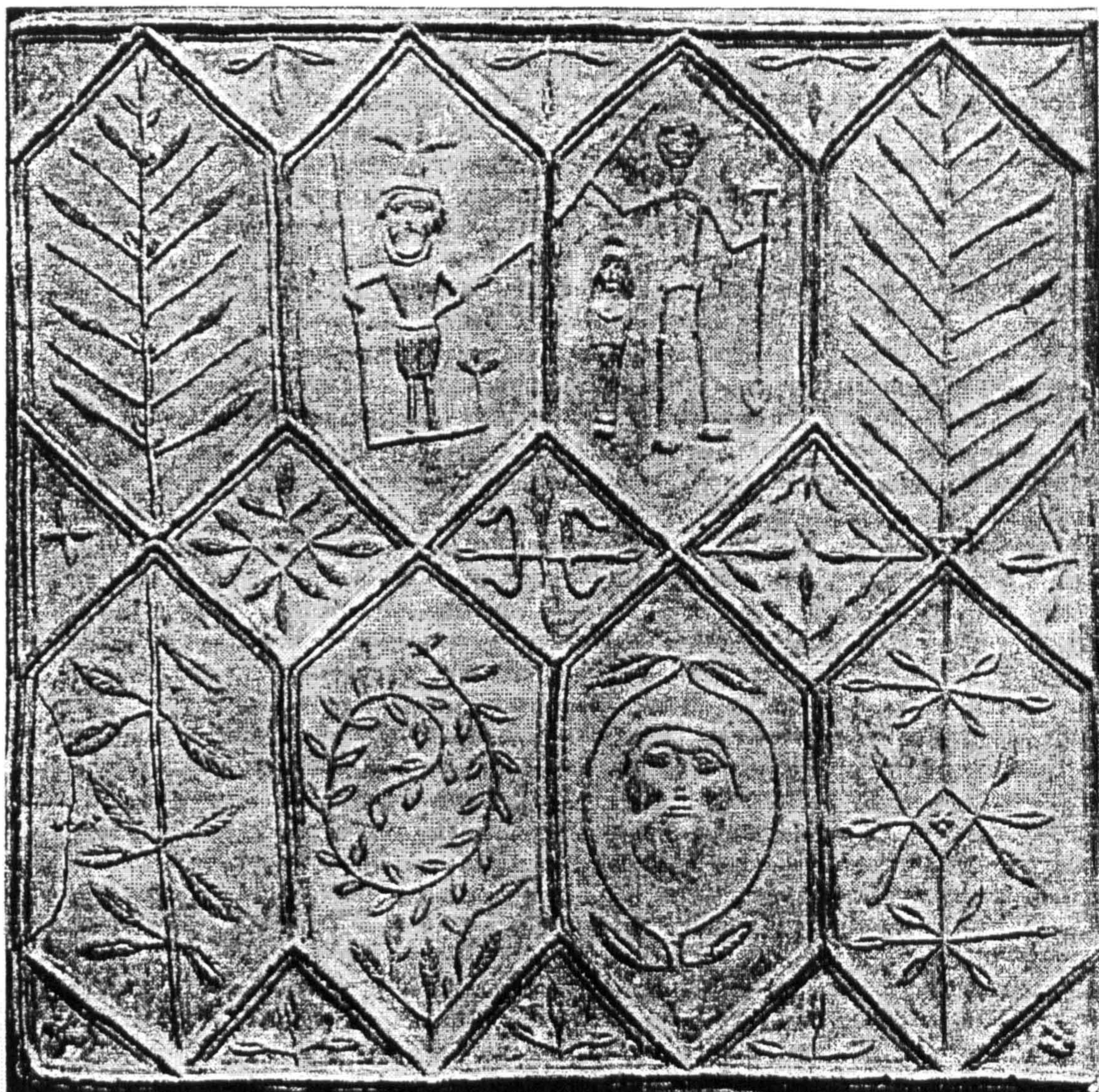


Fig. 6.112 The plaster ceiling from the former Jolliffe property (see Fig. 6.101).

Building in stone continued into the opening decades of the eighteenth century. At the end of the seventeenth century the Vicarage [2] was described as 'very old and ruinous'. Its timber frame was considered past repair, and the core of the service wing was rebuilt *circa* 1700; 'the rest was built for Mr. Jackson in 1714' (Figs. 6.121 and 113).¹³ Nineteenth century sashes have replaced the original windows but the staircase survives, adding to a useful collection of dated examples (Fig. 6.139). In 1614 the vicar still worked land in the town field, and the house provides the final statement on its occupants' social progress in the century that followed. Laurence Brandreth's inventory of 1635 might still be that of any small yeoman farmer but in 1695 the rambling timber-framed house was occupied by George Roades. A series of luxury household items, a single horse, money and watch valued at £83 tell a very different

¹³ Sleight 1883, 83.

tale, as does the list for Thomas Walthall in 1712.¹⁴ These men had outgrown the past accommodation and their successors were to live like gentry.

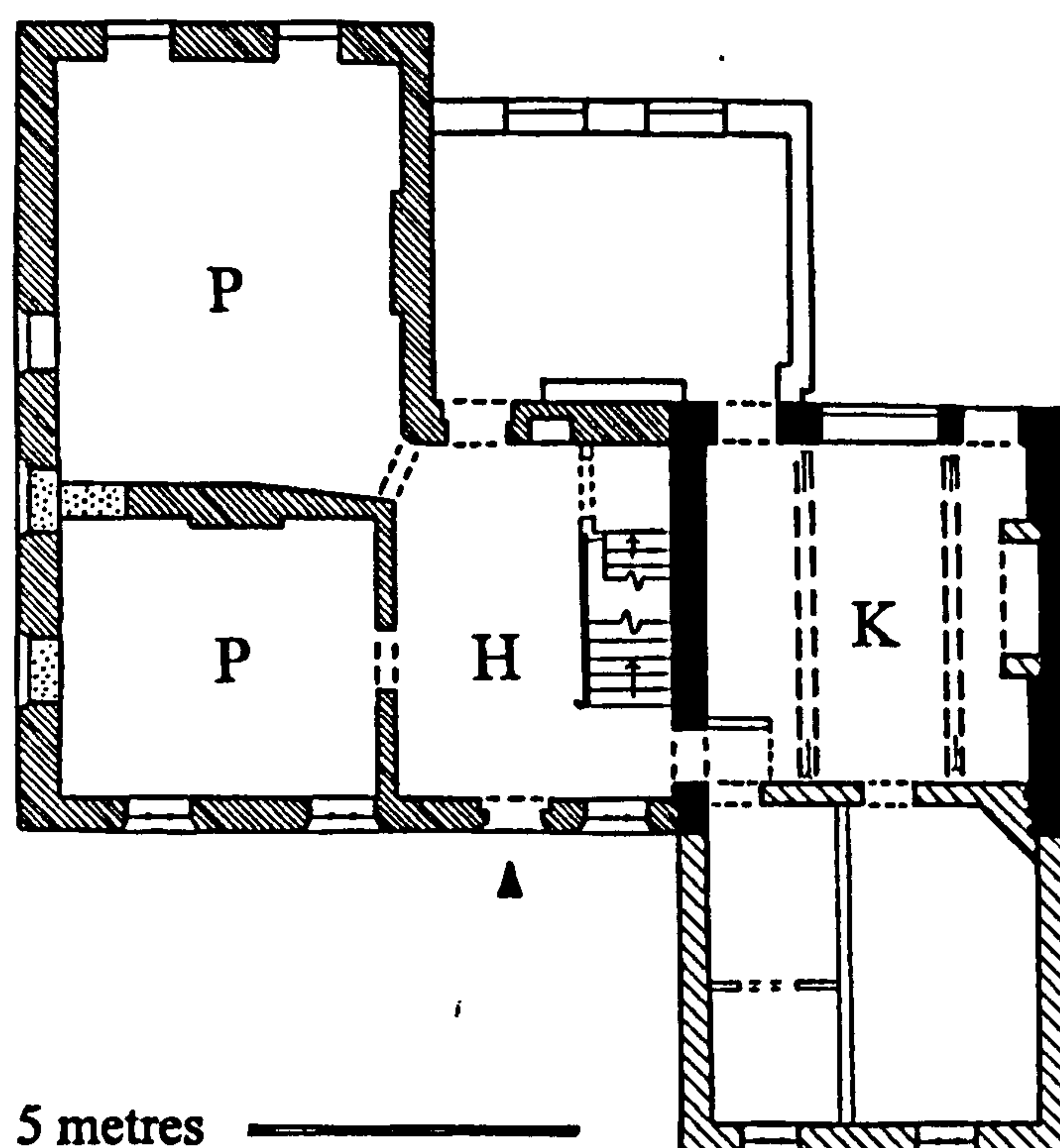


Fig. 6.113 The Vicarage

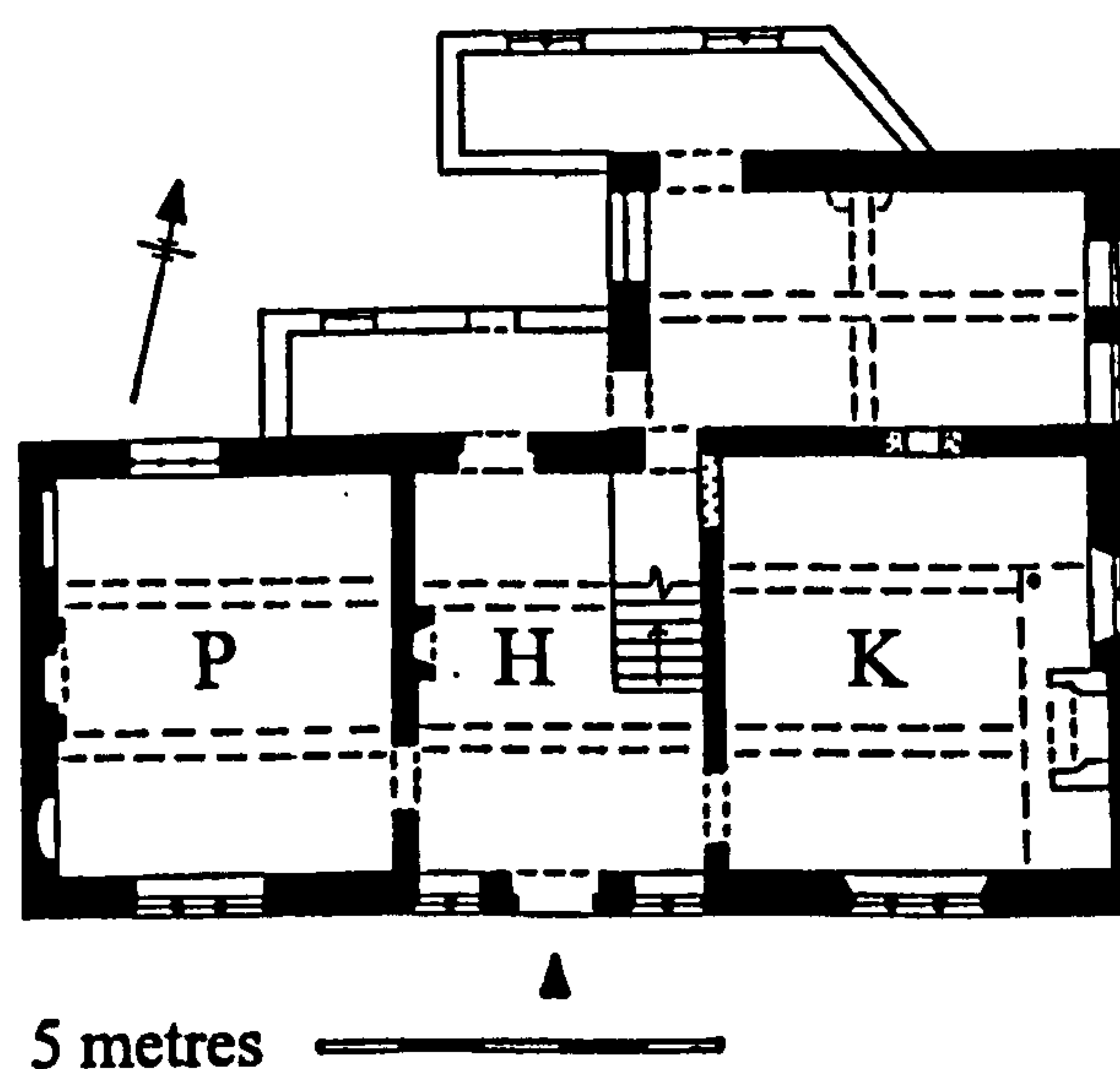


Fig. 6.114 Greystones

Of a similar date is Greystones [25], a fine L-shaped house of two storeys, attic and cellar, with a symmetrical façade lit by two- and three-light mullion and transom windows (Figs. 6.114 and 6.115). Here the central hall was flanked by parlour, and kitchen with a service room to the rear. The fine twisted baluster staircase with its ramped handrail rose through the full height of the building (Fig. 139), and is

¹⁴ LJO B/V/6 Glebe terriers for 1614; Laurence Brandreth 1635; George Roades 1695; Thomas Walthall 1712.

comparable with other examples from the early eighteenth century, as is the raised and fielded panelling of the parlour.



Fig. 6.115 Greystones: from the south

The 'Old House' at 62 St. Edward's St. [20] was described in 1774 as 'neither costly nor fine, but surprisingly neat and elegant' (Figs. 6.116 and 117).¹⁵ A modest town house, built in 1724 for the Quaker button merchant, Joshua Strangman, it was among the earliest of the Leek town houses to have a double-pile plan, though nineteenth century remodelling has removed much of the evidence at ground floor level. The staircase is at the rear (Figs. 6.138 and 139), and was partially provided for by a gabled projection. Rising through the full height of the house it gave access from a separate landing to each of the four rooms on the first and second floors, a marked advance on the usual country practice. No wonder John Wesley sang its praises.



Fig. 6.116 St. Edward's Street with No. 62 to the right and No. 64 in the centre

¹⁵ Sleight, 1883, 6. (From *John Wesley's Journal*, 4, 23).

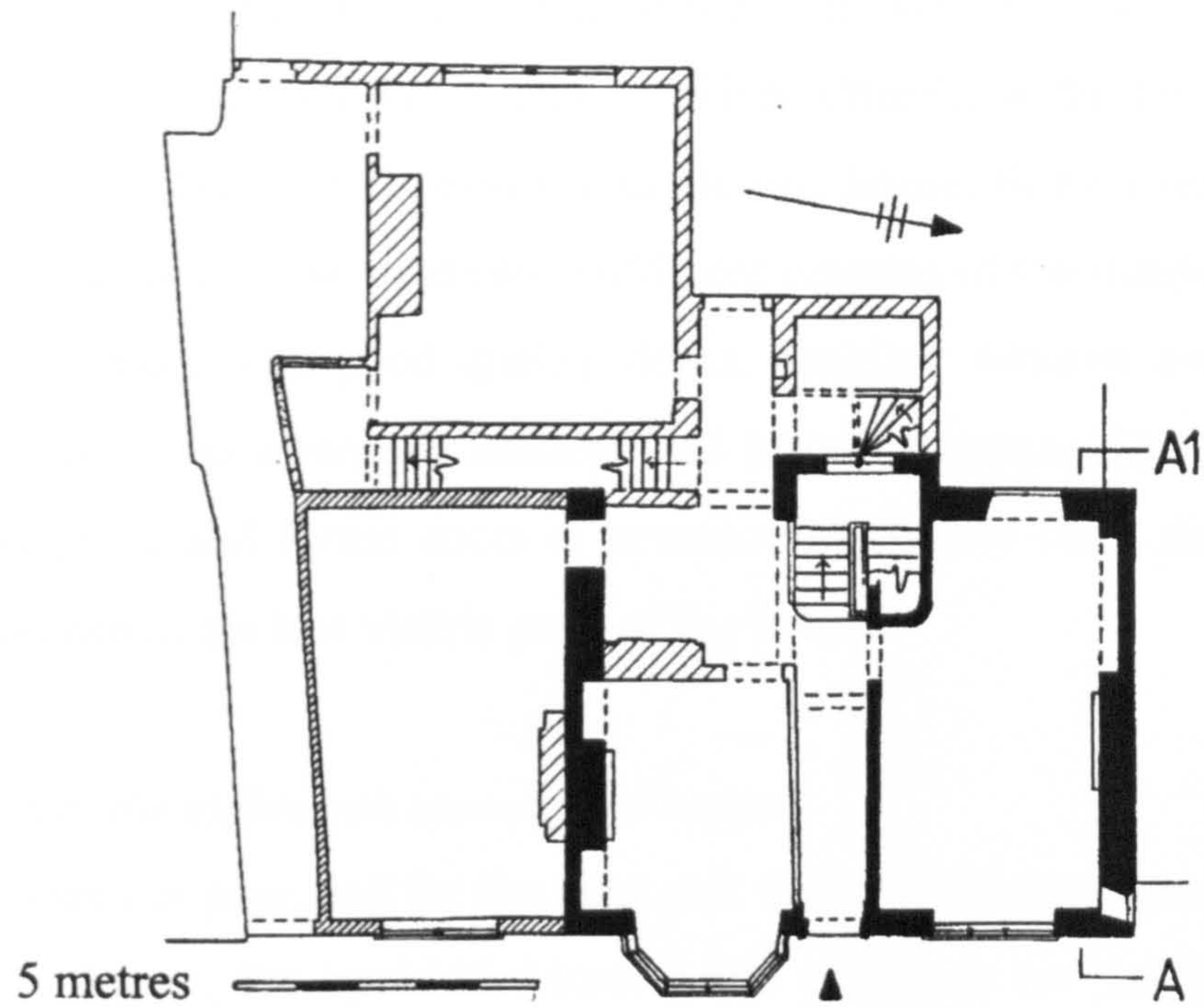


Fig. 6.117 'The Old House', 64 St. Edward's Street.



Fig. 6.118 210 Mill Street with the remnants of the Brindley Mill to the west

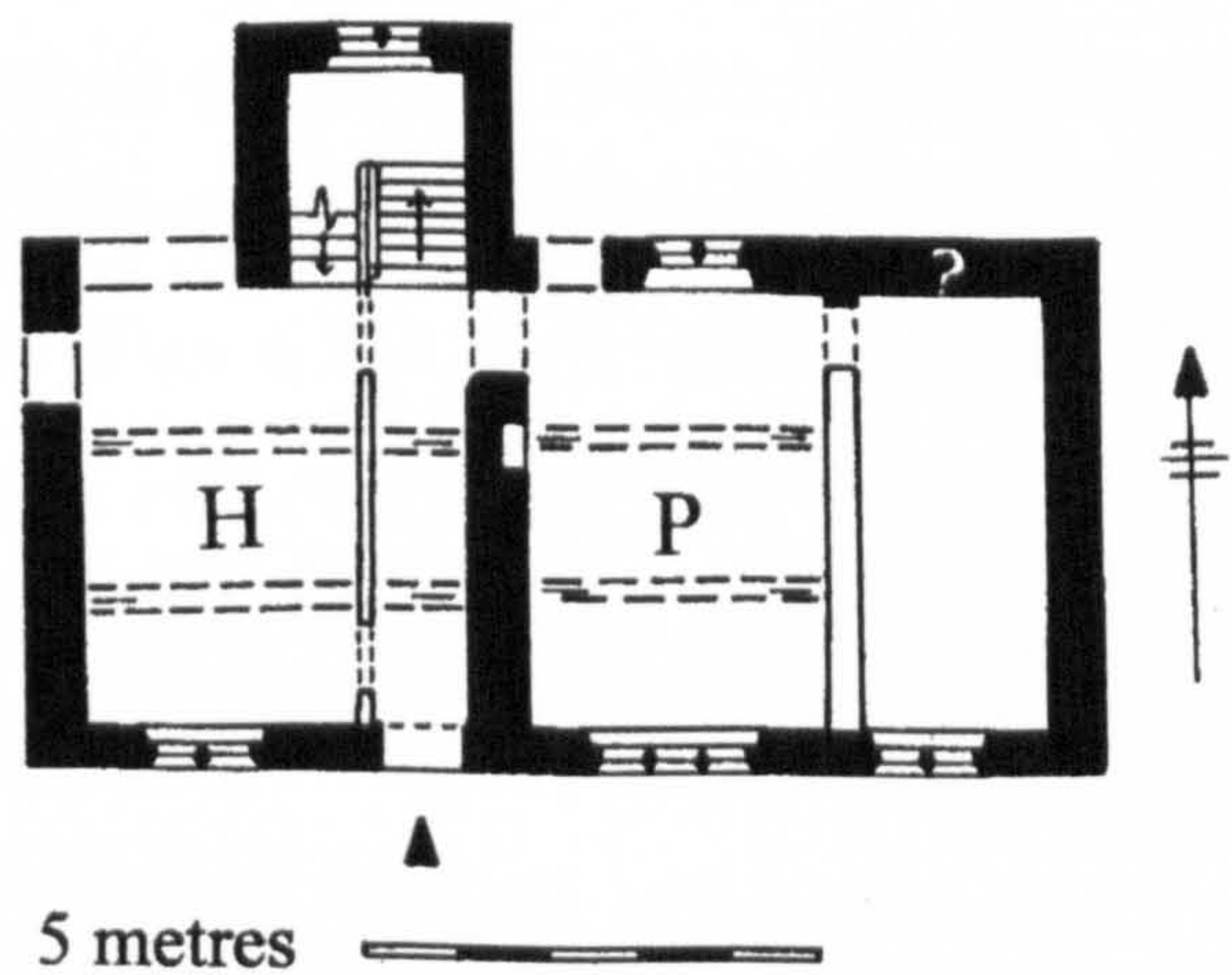


Fig. 6.119 210 Mill Street (the Conservative Working Men's Club).

An important outlier was the home of the dyer, William Badnall, described as ‘newly erected’ in 1733,¹⁶ and lying near the River Churnet at the foot of Mill Street [12] (Figs. 6.118-9). This is a three-storey single-pile house, lit by a series of two and three-light chamfered mullion windows. Sufficient remains of the interior to know that it was well-appointed, with good quality doors, panelled window surrounds, and a projecting stairwell with a ramped handrail and turned balusters (Fig. 6.139), though the attics have plank and batten doors of seventeenth century date, showing a purse-conscious approach to the less visible parts of the house.

Building in brick: the eighteenth century and beyond

‘The buildings are but poor, and for the most part thatch’d’ wrote Blome in 1673,¹⁷ but change was in the air, for by 1716 Morei could comment on ‘les bon edefices’,¹⁸ suggesting a spate of new building had already occurred. Stone remained in use until the 1720s but the succeeding houses were of brick, and reflected the rising prosperity of the legal profession, and those involved in the button and silk industries. Some like the dyer William Badnall might find it convenient to live adjacent to their work [12], others like Joshua Toft might purchase a rural property [160], but the majority followed the example of Joshua Strangman [20] and built in the centre of the town.

Of necessity, men dealing in silk had distant contacts in the commercial world, and were more aware of national trends than the surrounding countrymen, a fact reflected in their ideas of suitable housing. The new generation of houses had symmetrical facades with a central entrance, three, five, or seven sash windows to the upper floors, and a parapet concealing the roof. In addition, classical detail in the form of a pediment or pilasters might be applied to the doorway or the central section of the house. Though the main façades boasted sash windows, expense was spared by having block mullion [21] or casement windows [28] at the rear.

Samuel Lankford’s house [21], built in 1747, is typical of the larger houses, both in its initial plan and its subsequent history. The house presents a symmetrical appearance, with pairs of sash windows flanking a doorway that leads to a central hall with a staircase at the rear (Figs. 6.116 and 120). Its double-pile plan consisted of two major rooms to the east, and smaller service rooms to the west. The service accommodation rapidly proved inadequate and a kitchen block was added to the north west. A second service room was erased in the nineteenth century with the creation of

¹⁶ SRO D3359/Badnall/4/31 (information supplied by Allan Badnall)

¹⁷ Sleight, 1862, 4, quoting Blome’s *Britannia*, pub. 1673.

¹⁸ Sleight, 1862, 4, quoting Morei’ *Historical Dictionary*, 1716.

a dining room taking the full depth of the house, when the lower section of a service staircase was removed. The land behind the house sloped steeply upwards in the direction of the town fields, and the last major alteration was the creation of a first floor drawing room with a bow window at the upper garden level, whose basement is shown on plan. Such major alterations are characteristic of the town houses that remained in domestic use.

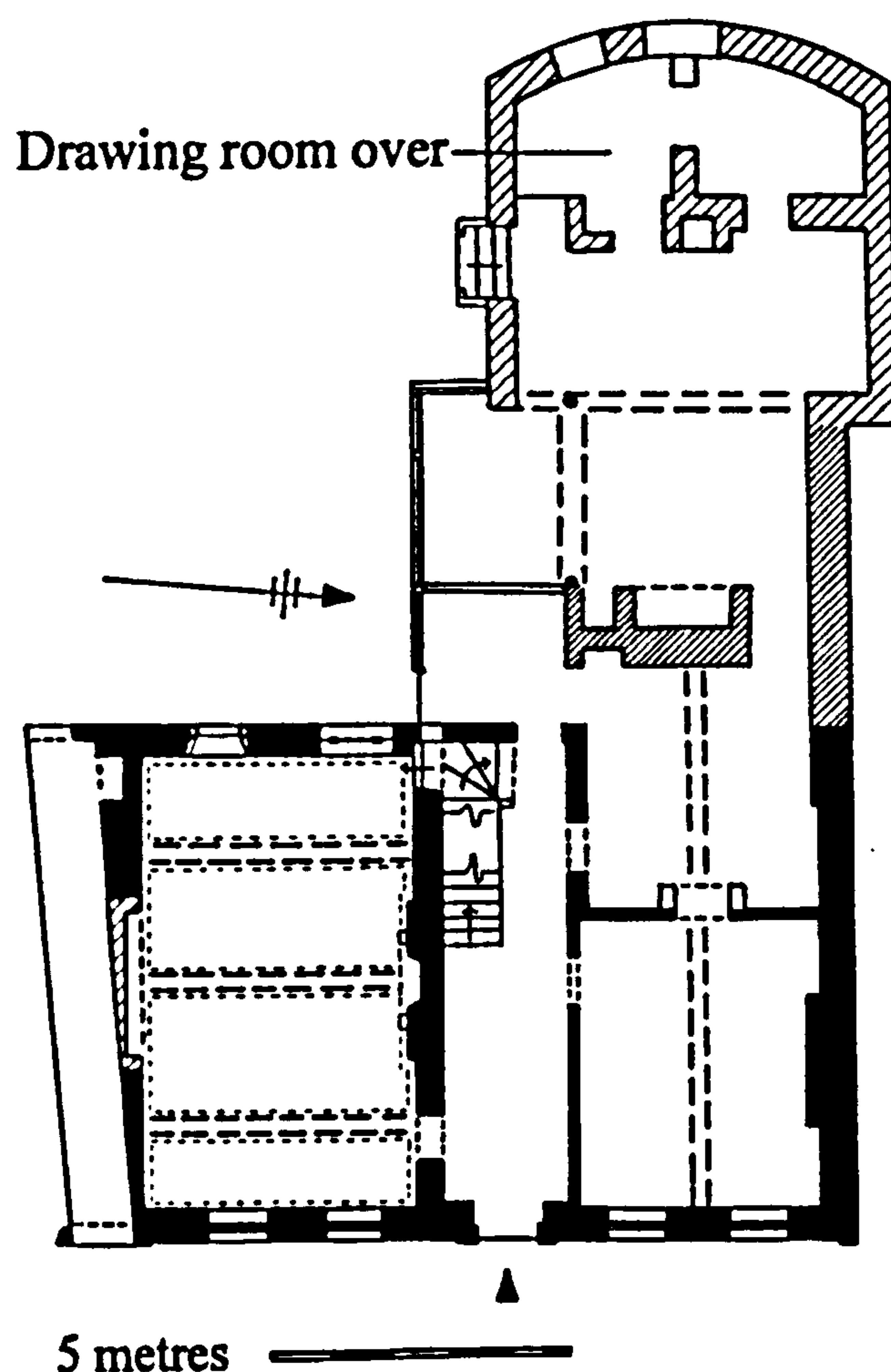


Fig. 6.120 64 St. Edward's Street

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the lawyer Thomas Mills had built himself a fine brick house on the north of the Market Place, later called Foxlowe, a suitable second home for the owner of Barlaston Hall.¹⁹ Like Samuel Lankford's house, it was in wealthy hands in the nineteenth century, and has been considerably extended (Fig. 6.121 and 122). Both the roof and the plan were double pile, and the space was unevenly divided into smaller rooms to the south, and larger rooms to the north. The western rooms were substantially altered in the nineteenth century. The south-western room was enlarged, and the north-western room was extended and given a fashionable bow window overlooking the garden. In addition the kitchen was

¹⁹ Sleigh, 1883, 208; *VCH Staffs*, VII, 91.



Fig. 6.121 The Vicarage, 2-4 Church Street and Foxlowe from the flat roof of the Red Lion (former Hallhouse).

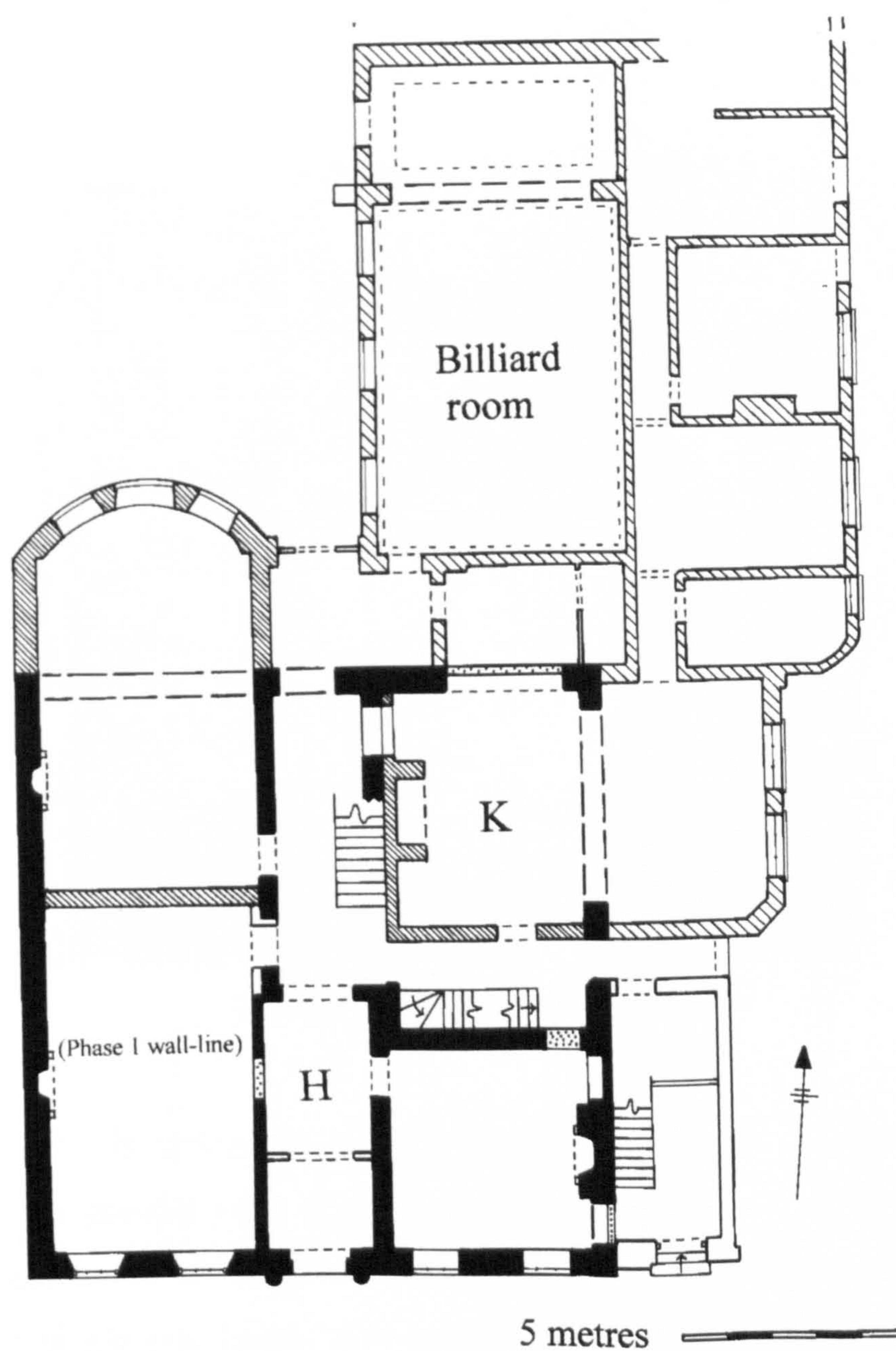


Fig. 6.122 Foxlowe: the ground plan

remodelled and enlarged, and finally a billiard room and additional service areas were built.

10 Derby Street [7] was reputedly built to house both offices and domestic accommodation for another legal firm.²⁰ It may have been built for John Davenport, partner to William Challinor from the 1780s, certainly it was occupied by William Challinor by 1821. From the 1880s the firm was known as Challinor and Shaw, retaining the family connection for a further century.²¹ Like Thomas Mills's house it is on a generous scale, with a fine five windowed front with an advanced, central pedimented bay giving emphasis to the doorway (Fig. 6.123). Its main reception rooms occupy the bulk of the ground floor, the staircase being offset behind the western room. Domestic accommodation occupied the first and second floors, and when the rear was extended in the nineteenth century to provide a court room, it sprawled still further to the south.



Fig. 6.123 10 Derby Street

The smaller houses might be single pile. All tended to have symmetrical frontages, but the grander ones were built with sash windows while their humbler cousins had casements. 10 Stockwell Street occupies the middle ground [28] (Fig. 6.124) being a single pile house with paired sash windows flanking a pedimented

²⁰ Pers. com. Cathryn Walton. Deeds at the SMDC but unavailable for checking.

²¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 123.

doorway. Reception rooms flank the central hallway and stairs, but in the absence of a second pile the kitchen was relegated to the basement.



Fig. 6.124 10 Stockwell Street from the north

The better houses stand out as well-designed and well crafted, and the least altered of the eighteenth century houses are among the better quality buildings. At a humbler level houses were built by lesser craftsmen for less wealthy clients, perhaps the minor shopkeepers. They too are of brick, but lack the well-balanced appearance of the houses with the large sash windows and good quality doorways, and are more likely to have been converted into shops. Of this category only the Wilkes Head [17] retains any part of its ground floor façade (Fig. 6.125) and even here, the two doorways and enlarged windows tell of nineteenth century alterations, when its interior was divided and back-to-back winder staircases inserted to serve each half.



Fig. 6.125 The Wilkes Head

Housing the poor

Little can be said of the houses of the poor. No documentary evidence survives for the three cruck buildings, but the conversion of 2-4 Clerk Bank [4], first into two, and then into three dwelling indicates how little space might be available for the poorer households. The only purpose-built single-cell house of the seventeenth century lies behind 2-4 Church Street [3], where the ground floor is dominated by a large hearth, which served a building with two storeys and an attic (Fig. 6.106 and 126). Given its relationship to the main house its function must remain in doubt. Elsewhere such buildings have been documented as dairy, brewhouse or wash-house, and a detached kitchen is also a possibility.²²

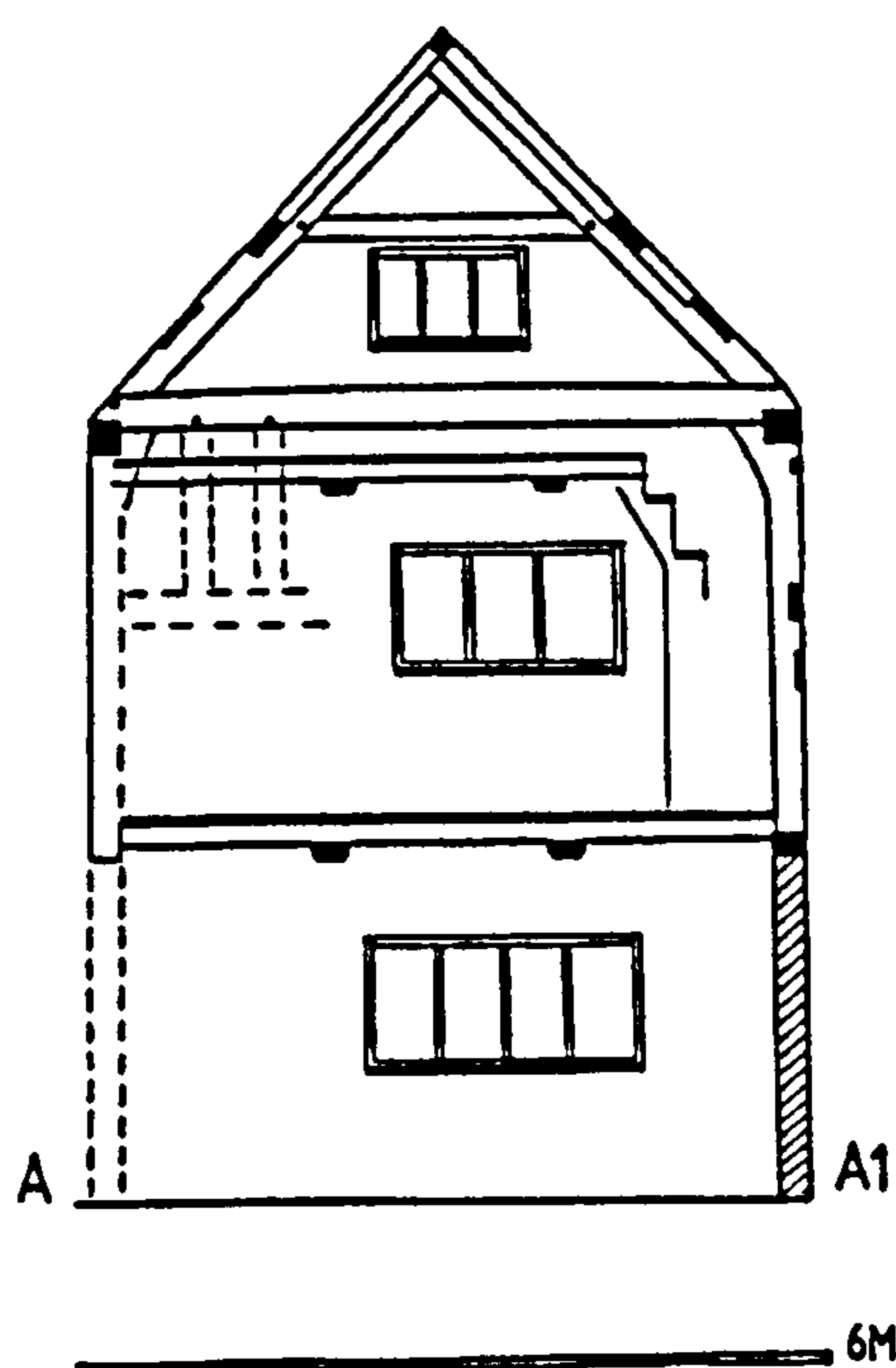


Fig. 6.126 The western truss of the single cell building behind 2-4 Church Street

The Ash Almshouses [1] were on an even smaller scale. Nine single-cell houses arranged in an L-shaped block originally had one-and a-half storeys with a single room on each floor, though now raised and enlarged (Fig. 6.127). Endowed in 1675 by Elizabeth Ash, a daughter of William Jolliffe, they were intended to provide for poor women of upright lifestyle and proven churchmanship like Dorothy Hayward, whose meagre possessions included a bible.²³

²² Hist. Mon. Commission, *West Dorset*, 54 (40); *Hereford East*, 194 (3); *Hunts.*, 121-2 (4). Barley, 1990, 36.

²³ Copy of endowment deed. Leek Historical Society; LJO, Dorothy Hayward, 1678.



Fig. 6.127 The Ash Almshouses.

The Quakers provided for their own poor, and in 1697 the rents of four cottages were appropriated for their relief. These were pulled down in 1784 to make way for 'Four dwelling houses to be 61 feet long 15 feet wide and 14 feet 3 inches from the top of the doorsills to the square. The building to be erected of good bricks covered with good tiles and to be equally divided into four dwelling each consisting of one room on the ground floor and chamber over it with a fireplace and chimney to each room all the stairs to be cased and a pantry under, with doors to both of them'. James Clewlow's estimate for materials, his own employment as carpenter, and that of Benjamin Barlow as mason and bricklayer came to £184 11s 8d, though the final sum paid was £201 17s 8d. No expense seems to have been spared to create durable and comfortable homes, and Evan Murray, the first occupant, was in by May 1795 (Fig. 6.128).



Fig. 6.128 5-8 Overton Bank, the 'Quaker cottages'

PART THREE: Fixtures, fittings and dateable features

Internal features

(i) *Cooking and heating*

Central to the use of any house were its cooking arrangements, which were in many cases the only source of heat. The halls at Mosslee [45] and Cheddleton [43] presumably had open hearths, though their position is unknown. The ground plan at Mosslee, with a passageway leading through the service area to what appears to have been a pentice, suggests there was also a detached kitchen. Of the smaller open halls, only Cheddleton Grange [38] provides significant evidence at a vernacular level. Here the size of the hall suggests the fireplace occupied the position of the later firehood (Fig. 6.50). ‘Flesh at the roof’ is a recurrent phrase in sixteenth century inventories, and a scatter of references at the start of the seventeenth century indicate open halls were still in use at that date.²⁴

For most homes, a smoke bay or a timber-framed firehood was the next step. The lower part of a smoke-bay survives at Edge End [158], formed from a re-used cruck, and at Ford Old Hall [169] a smoke bay was formed using an upper cruck. An exceptionally wide smoke-bay at Ford Old School [170] is also associated with a cruck, and dates to 1605. The conjunction of smoke-bays and crucks suggests all were built *circa* 1600 or earlier.

Smoke bays were relatively rare, but fire-hoods of either timber or stone continued to be built until the middle of the eighteenth century, and were associated with the majority of single hearth houses. Complete examples survive at Cheddleton Grange [38] and the Whitehouse [172]. At the Grange it was an insertion into an open hall, while at the Whitehouse it was an integral part of construction *circa* 1580 (Fig. 6.51).

North Staffordshire fire-hoods have a massive bressumer at head-height in the houseplace spanning the space between a heck screen and the outer wall (Fig. 6.130). Some way above this might be a single beam spanning the width of the building before the hood tapered towards roof level, a form that is incompatible with upper floor access to rooms behind the firehood. Both Fairboroughs [66] and Cheddleton Grange [38] have this form of construction (Fig. 6.129). In some cases a timber bressumer supported a stone firehood, as at Sutton House [63] or Dunwood House Farm [131],

²⁴ LJO Edward Clowes, 1600; Ralph Goodwin, 1609; John Sherratt, 1614; Thomas Washington, 1619; Laurence Cooke, 1621.



Fig. 6.129 Cheddleton Grange: the upper part of the firehood. Uprights below the main horizontal beam indicate the width of the firehood.



Fig. 6.130 Rownall: the houseplace during restoration work in the 1990s.

though this is relatively unusual and confined to the more prosperous farmhouses.

At the upper end of the scale and in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, the houses of the gentry and major yeomen tended to have external stacks with stone fireplaces flush with the inner face of the wall. The cooking hearth might then be spanned by stone arch, as at Middle Hulme (Fig. 6.42.5) and Windygates (Fig. 6.20), or by a timber bressumer as at Cloud House. Both forms are represented at Whitehough (Figs. 6.133 and 6.27). No local parallel has been found for the stone arch of the axial stack at Shaw (Fig 6.131), though similar hearths occur elsewhere in the Pennines.²⁵

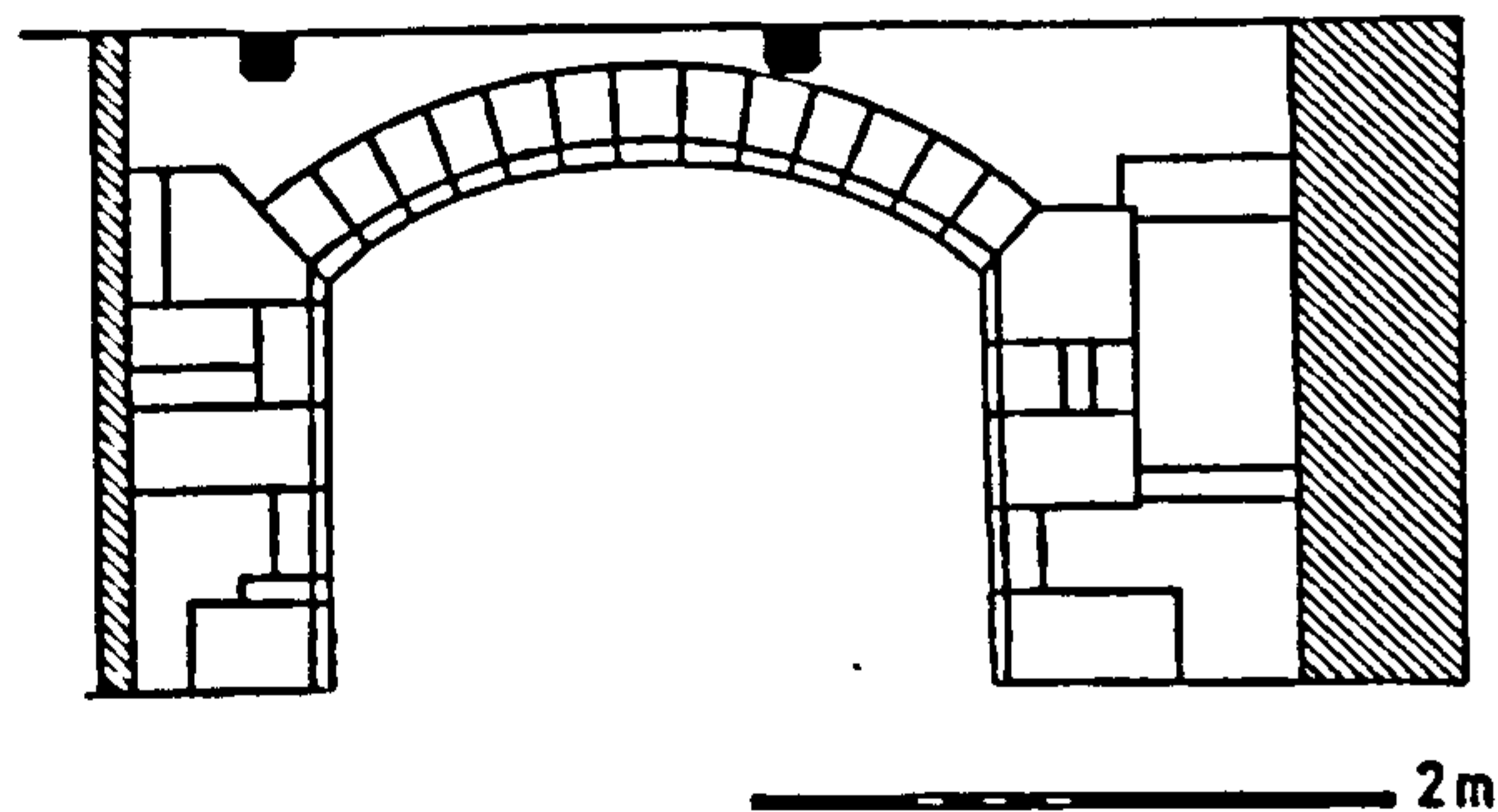


Fig. 6.131 Shaw: the hearth in the houseplace

A marked contrast existed between the size of the cooking hearth, and the size of any subsidiary hearths. In the seventeenth century the latter were small and plain, like those serving the parlour and parlour chamber at Cheddleton Grange (Fig. 6.132) or the chamber over the houseplace at Middle Hulme (Fig. 6.42). The contrast suggests that wood or peat were used in the cooking hearths, and that the smaller hearths were fuelled by coal. Peat was certainly available to both tenants and freeholders in the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁶

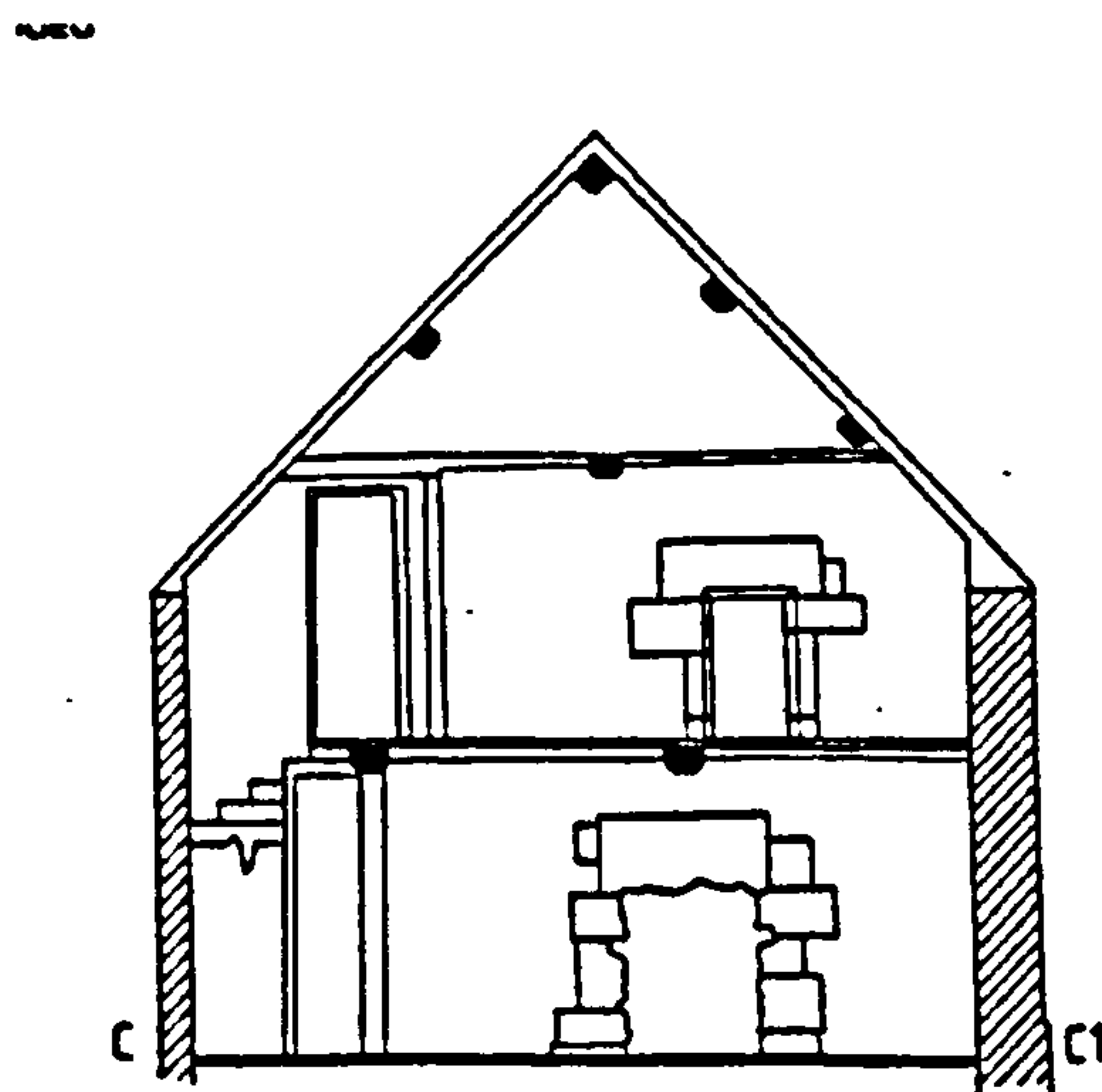


Fig. 6.132 Cheddleton Grange: hearths in the parlour and parlour chamber

²⁵ Pearson, 1985, 80.

²⁶ SRO D3359 Toft-Chorley (1597); SA 1/2/3 (1610) and 12/1/3 (1649); LRO Thomas Wood, 1615.

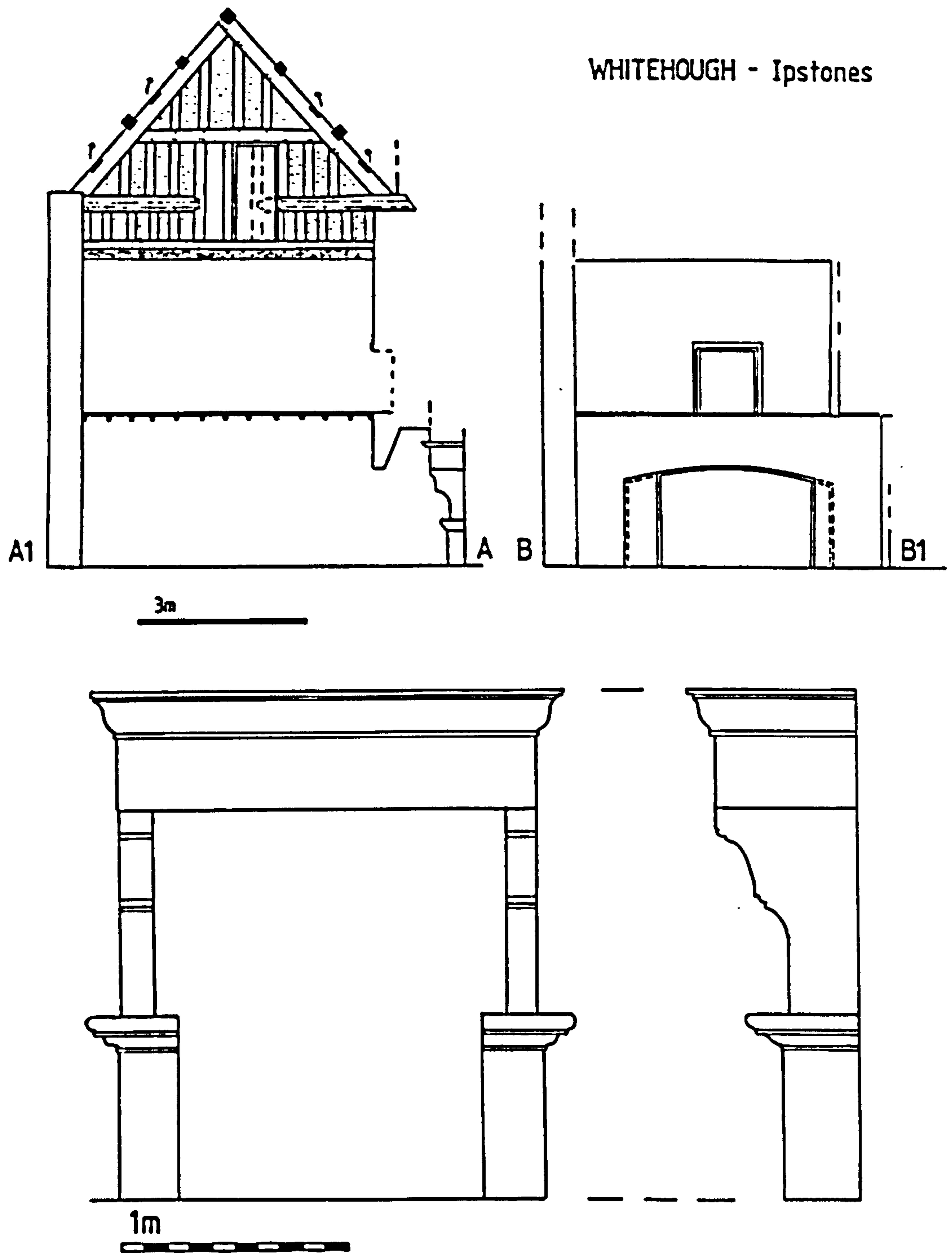


Fig. 6.133 Whitehough: seventeenth and eighteenth century hearths in the crosswing. (above) sections; (below) the eighteenth century fireplace.

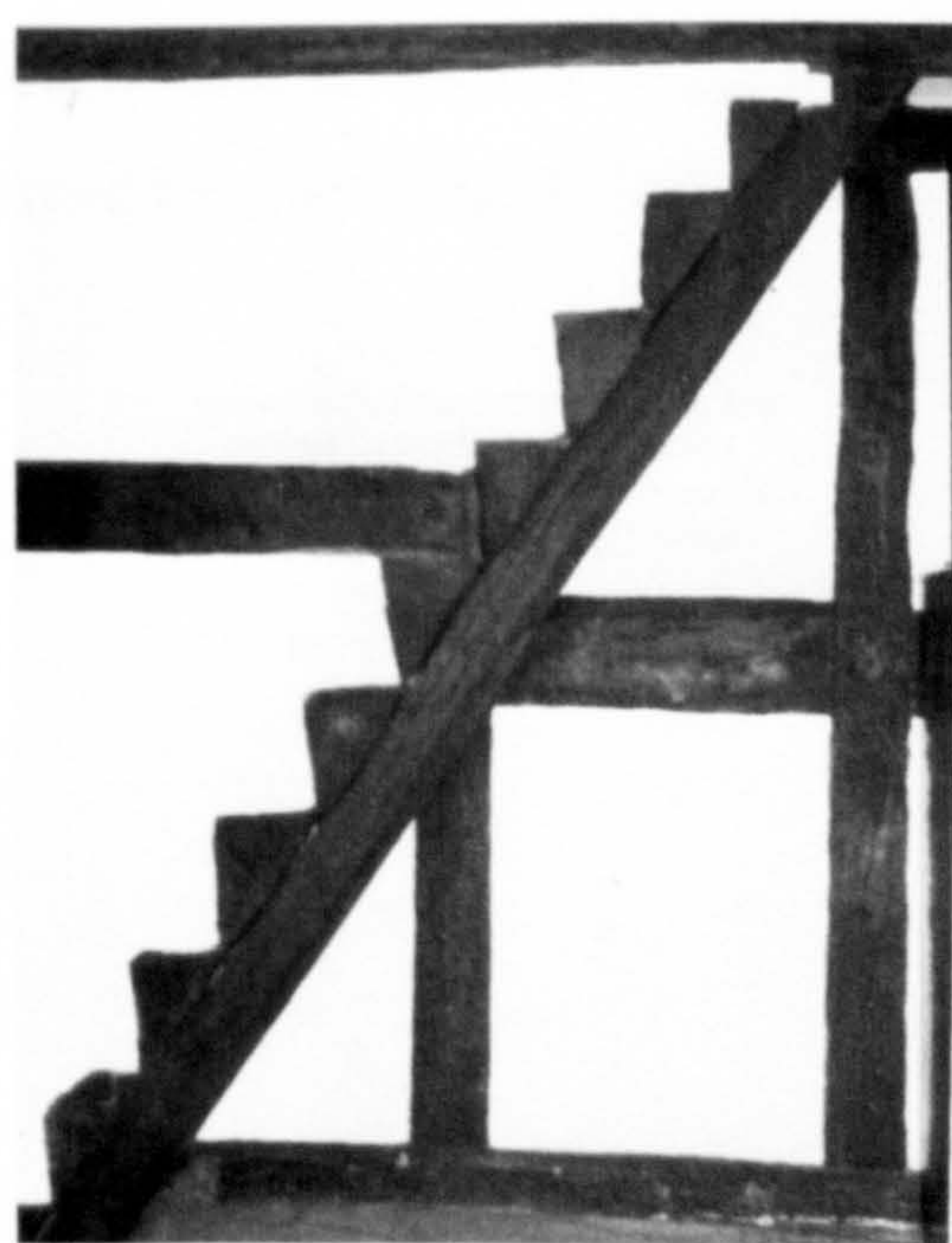
Cooking hearths were lit by a fire-window, and were effectively a small room into which later cooking arrangements could be inserted. Fireplaces like those inserted at Whitehough [107] (Fig. 6.133), Revedge [33, Fig. 14] and Oxhay [120] (Fig. 6.79) seem to have been common in the second half of the eighteenth century. None is securely dated, but a comparable hearth at Lee House, in Waterhouses, was *in situ* by 1751. Later still chimneybreasts were inserted inside the fire-hoods, and a number of

houses retain nineteenth or early twentieth century iron ranges in this position. Both types of hearth represent a move away from wood fired cooking towards coal, which was now being mined in substantial quantities, and by 1752 tenants of the larger properties, like Mosslee, were assured of their supplies by the terms of their lease.²⁷ Exceptionally, the Hall House, Leek, had chimney breast as early as 1627, yet another aspect that places it outside the local norm for domestic architecture [Fig. 6.5].

Since oatcakes were an important part of the staple diet, and needed a clean, smoke-free area to cook them in, an additional cooking hearth was desirable. This may be the origin of a number of small corner hearths to be found on gable ends of formerly unheated parlours. Bank Top [139] had a hearth specifically used for this purpose. An iron bakestone is still kept at the house, and the circular fitting that housed it survived until 1998. The triple hearths found in later farmhouses [168, Fig. 85], or as an addition in the earlier farmhouses (Fig. 6.43) had this as one of their uses.

(ii) Staircases

Little is known of the staircases that served the earlier houses. Ladders are mentioned among the items for which wood was required in 1548,²⁸ and solid tread ladder staircases serve attics at Cloud House (Fig. 6.134) and Hollin House (Fig. 6.66). Footings for a stone staircase were seen at Finney Lane in the 1980s, and stone cellar stairs at Above Church [85] appear to be original. A semi-circular alcove at Gate Farm (Fig. 6.74) may have served a wooden spiral.



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Fig. 6.134 Cloud House: attic stairs

²⁷ SRO, D239/M668.

²⁸ PRO, SC 2/202/65.



Fig. 6.135 Waterhouse: the staircase.

The majority of the seventeenth century staircases have splat balusters (Fig. 6.137) to staircases with a series of short flights designed to take up a minimum of space. The earliest dated example is at Mosslee, where they were originally in the parlour wing, dating to 1640. The latest belong to a straight flight of stairs in the Grammar School, built in 1723. Among the finest are those at the Waterhouse (Fig. 6.135) where they occupy a corner of the houseplace, and Sutton House where they rise from the added kitchen. Horton Hall has two splat baluster staircases, one rising from the hall, and the other from the service wing, while the Ashes has a staircase in each wing, both with turned balusters (Fig. 6.136).

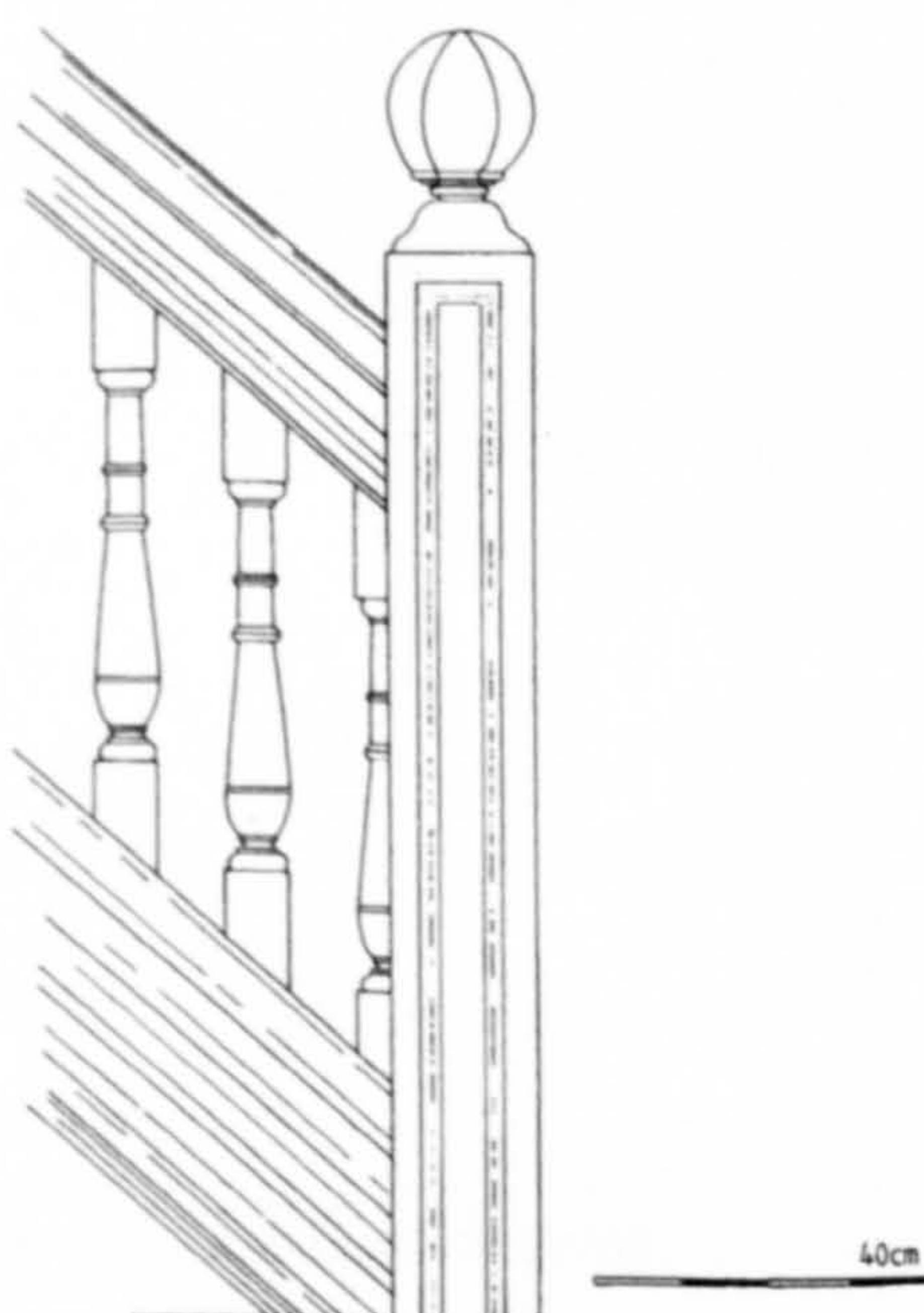


Fig. 6.136 The Ashes: the staircase in the parlour wing.

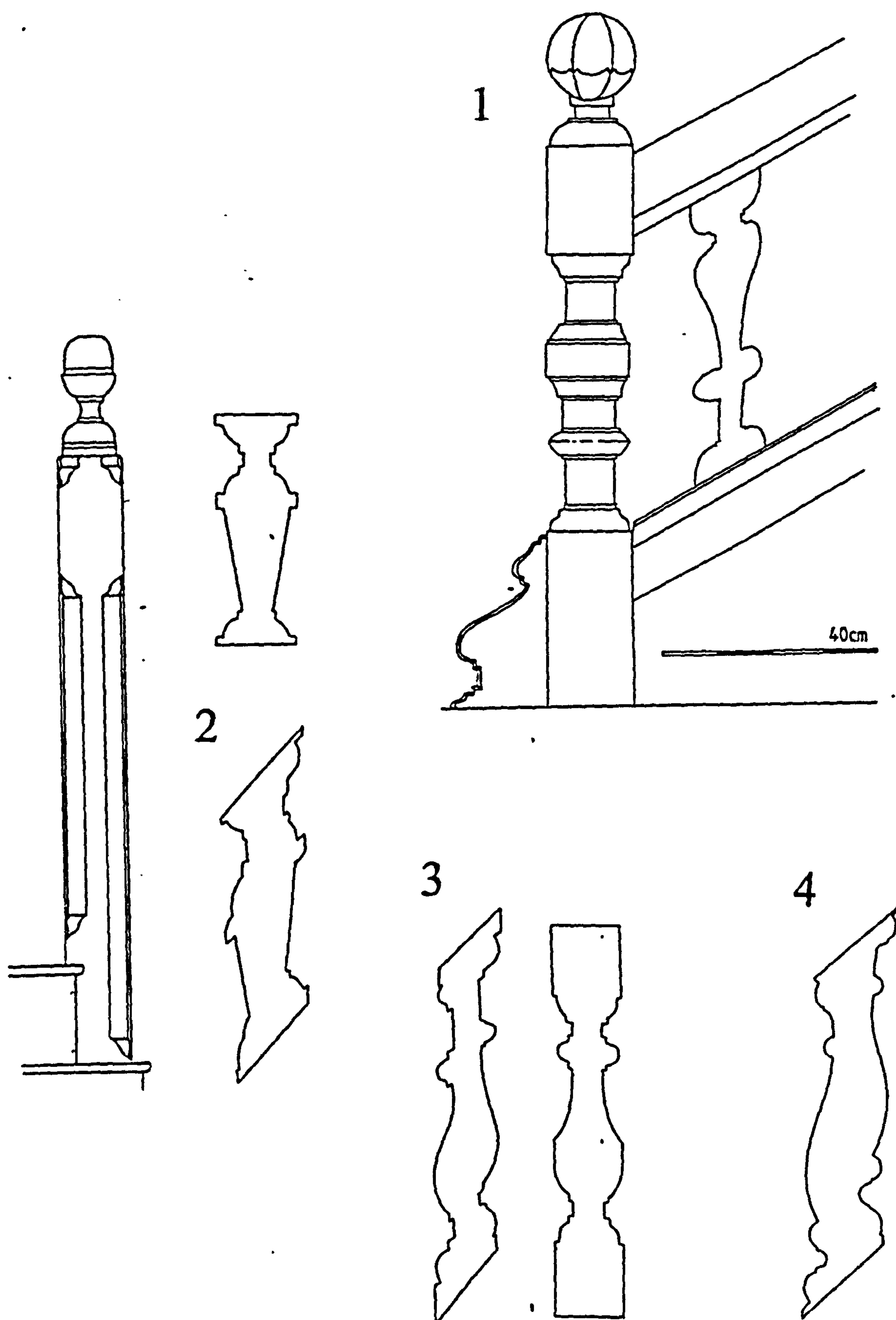


Fig. 6.137 Splat balusters

1. Mosslee Hall (1640); 2. Sutton House (undated); 3. Rownall (1674);
4. The Old Grammar School (1723)

A number of staircases date from first half of the eighteenth century, and are closely related in style (Fig. 6.139). All have turned or twisted balusters, decorated open strings, and ramped handrails. The Vicarage staircase dates to 1714. An elegant staircase at Greystones is similar to a sturdier version at the 'Old House', 62 St. Edward's Street, dating to 1724 (Fig. 6.138). The main staircase at Whitehough dates to *c.* 1720, and another at 210 Mill Street to the 1730s. A similar staircase at 10 Derby Street dates to 1760.



Fig. 6.138 The staircase at 62 St. Edward's Street.

By the second half of the eighteenth century plain strings and slender square cut balusters were in fashion, sometimes strengthened by the occasional metal baluster as at Belmont [86], where the staircase dates to *circa* 1770. A similar staircase exists in the eighteenth century part of Manor Farm [61]. Elsewhere the early staircases have largely to have been replaced by straight flights in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

Other internal features

Only limited evidence survives for other internal features, whether decorative or functional. Few seventeenth century houses had under-ceiling, and the ceiling of a now demolished town house on the Market Place, the property of the Jolliffe family, is the only decorative plaster ceiling to have survived (Fig. 6.112). The absence of

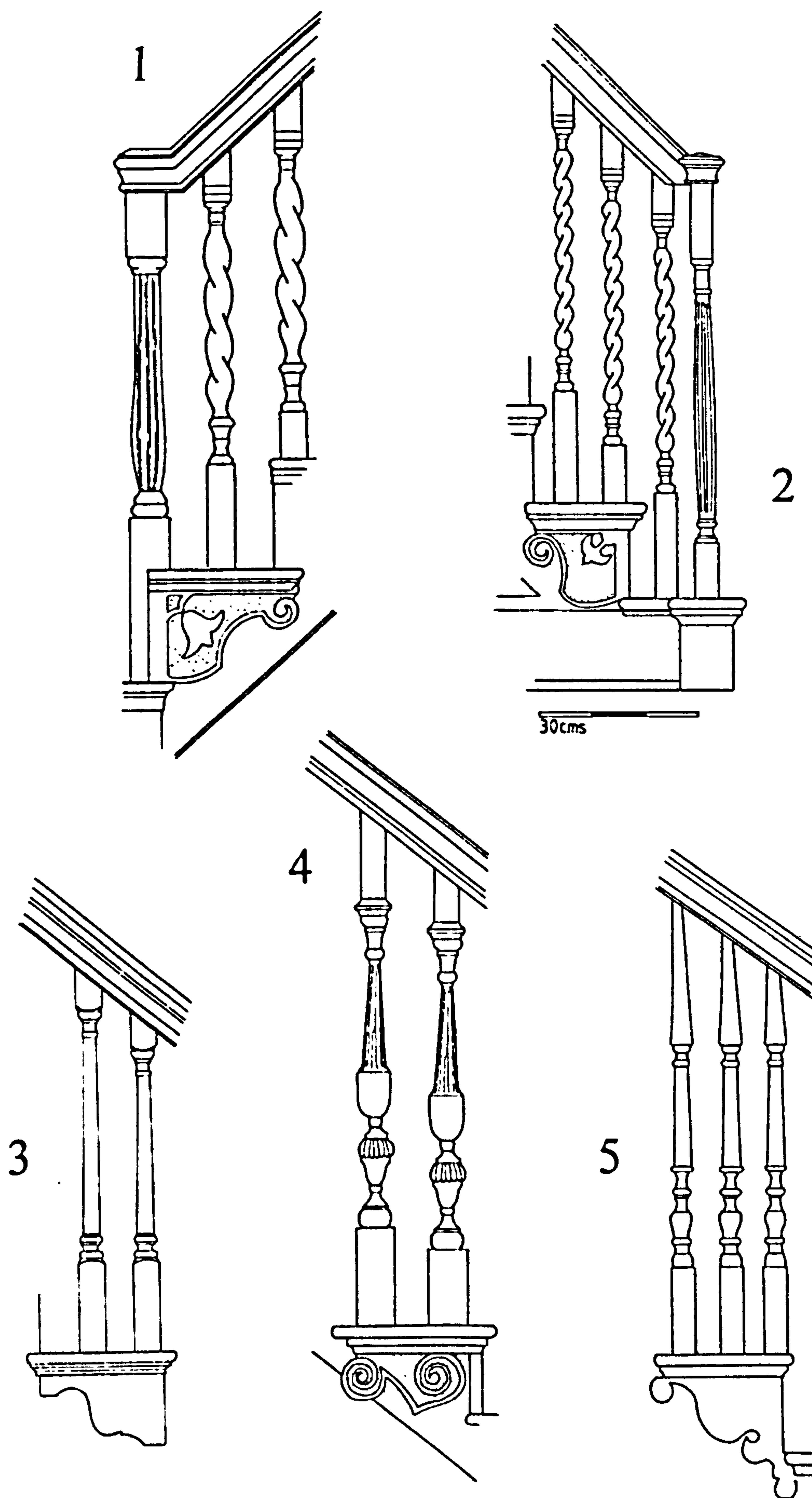


Fig. 139 Staircase details

1.62 St Edward's St. (1724); 2. Greystones (uncertain); 3. 210 Mill St. (c. 1730); 4. The Vicarage (1714); 5. Whitehough (c. 1720).

stopped joists for the inserted ceiling over the hall at Mosslee [45] suggests that under-ceiling has been lost from this position. At Horton Hall [82], the largest of the seventeenth century gentry houses, there is positive evidence that under-ceiling was not intended, as the surfaces between the joists in the parlour retain their lime-washed surfaces, and the present ceiling is an addition. At Coalpit Ford [39] decorative plasterwork is confined to a simple frieze in the parlour (Fig. 6.34).

The fragment of wall-painting found at Cheddleton Grange [38] may date to as early as 1500 (Fig. 6.140). It was destroyed during recent restoration work.

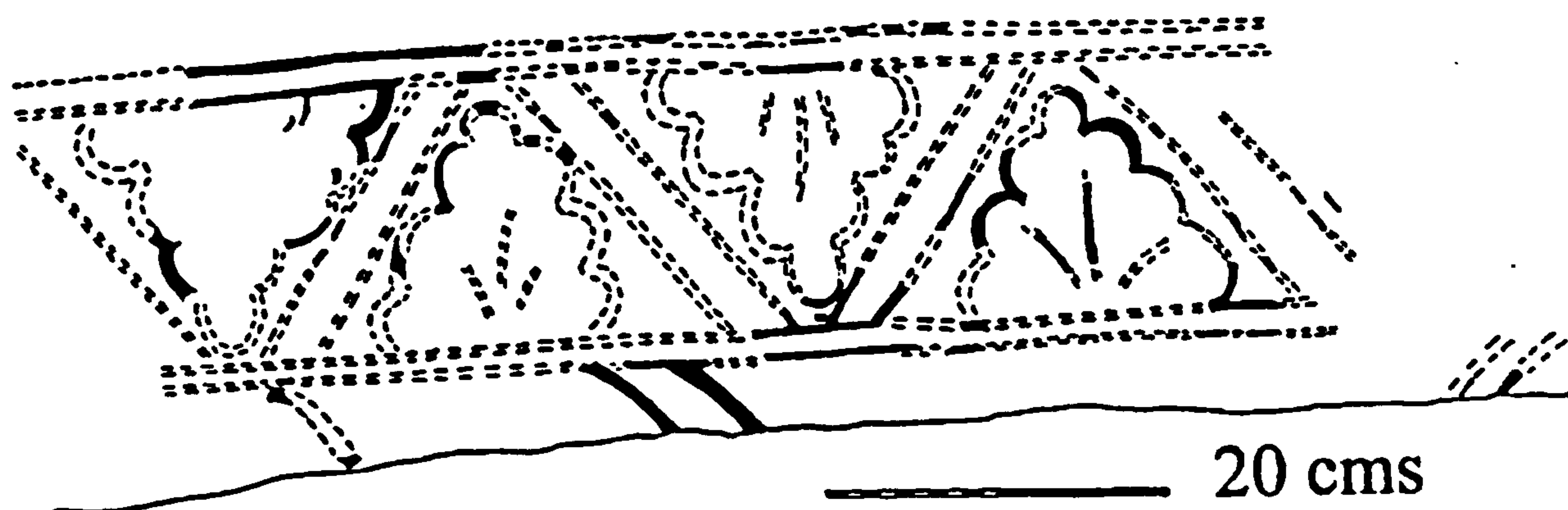


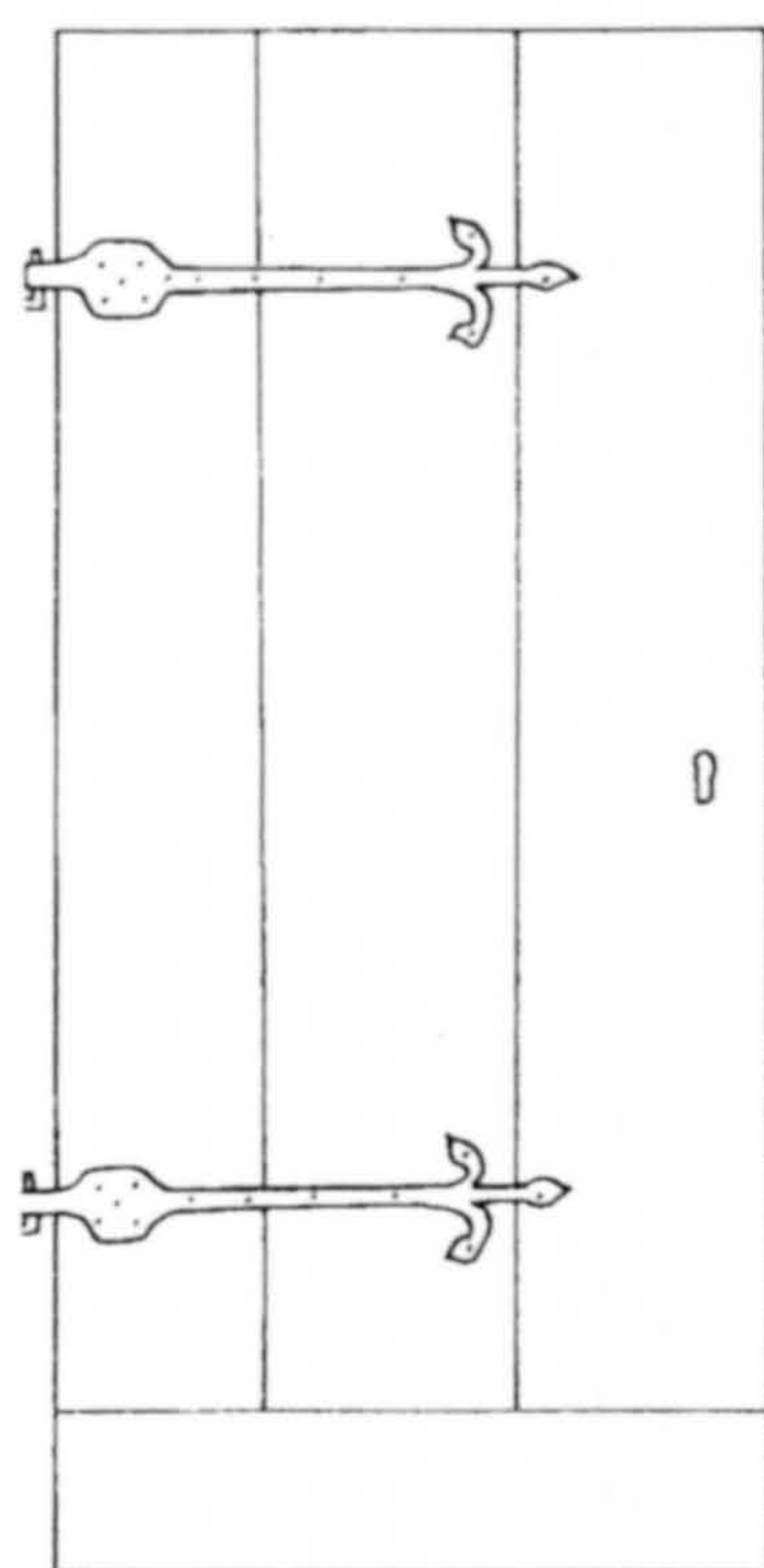
Fig. 6.140 Cheddleton Grange: fragment of a wall painting on the collar of the cruck

Panelling was used in the parlour chambers at Whitehough [107] (Fig. 6.141), and Hollin House [58], and fragments also survive in the parlour at Coalpit Ford [39]. *Ex situ* examples occur in the hall at Rudyard Hall [141] and the service bay at Bolton Farm [92]. More elaborate panelling, also of seventeenth century date conceals the stack at the head of the main staircase at Whitehough (Fig. 142). Panelling with an arcade²⁹ pattern survives in an upper room at Haregate [160]. Examples of eighteenth century panelling occurs more frequently, with plain raised and fielded panels on panelling, dados, door surrounds, doors and window fittings, as in the eighteenth century part of Haregate [160]. These are sometimes accompanied by semi-circular display alcoves as at Greystones [25] or Frith Bottom [115] (Fig. 6.84). Few houses retain more than a fragment of their original fittings, but remodelling at Whitehough [107] *circa* 1720 has left its mark in the form of doors throughout the ground and first floors (Fig. 6.141 and 142).

²⁹ Alcock and Hall, 1994, 41.

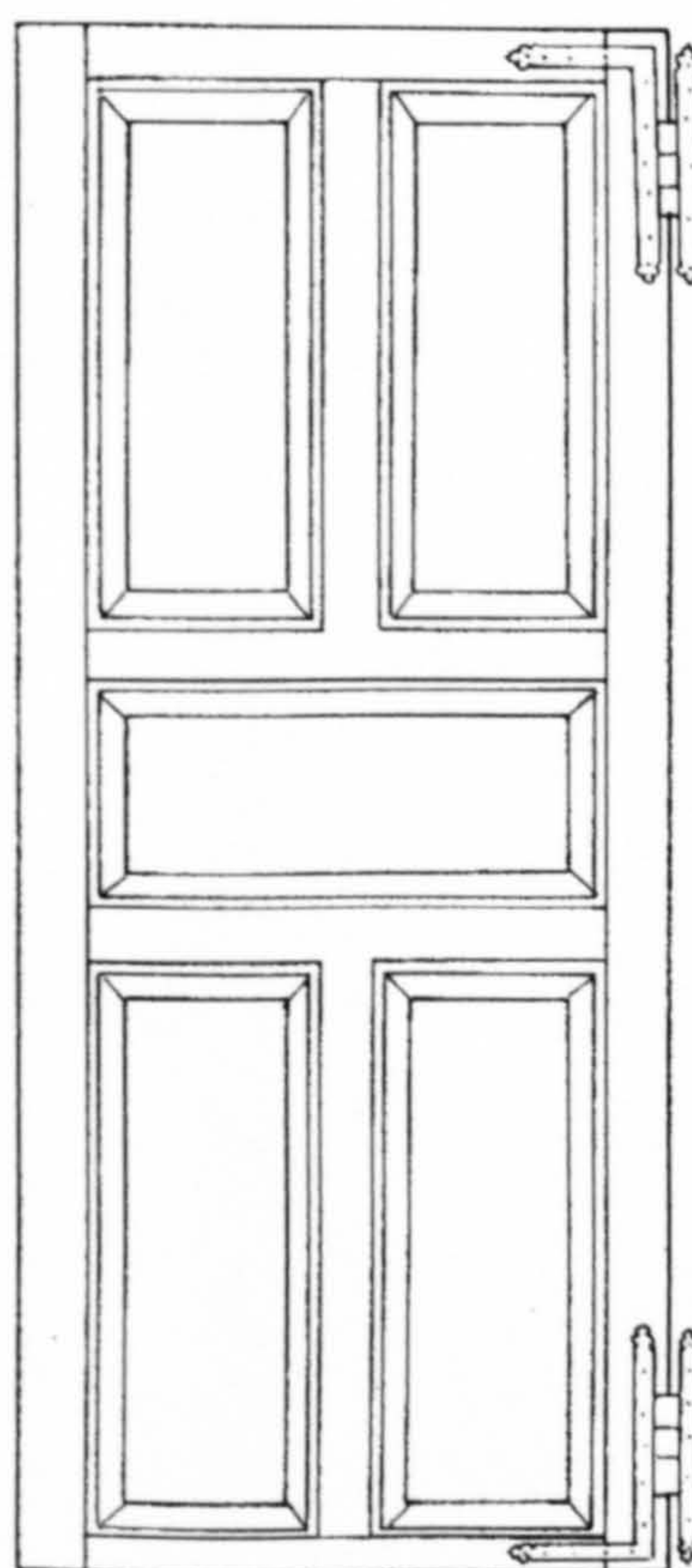


Fig. 6.141 *Whitehough*: (above) the parlour chamber; (below) a seventeenth century door from the cross-wing attic; an eighteenth century door from first floor (c. 1720).



1

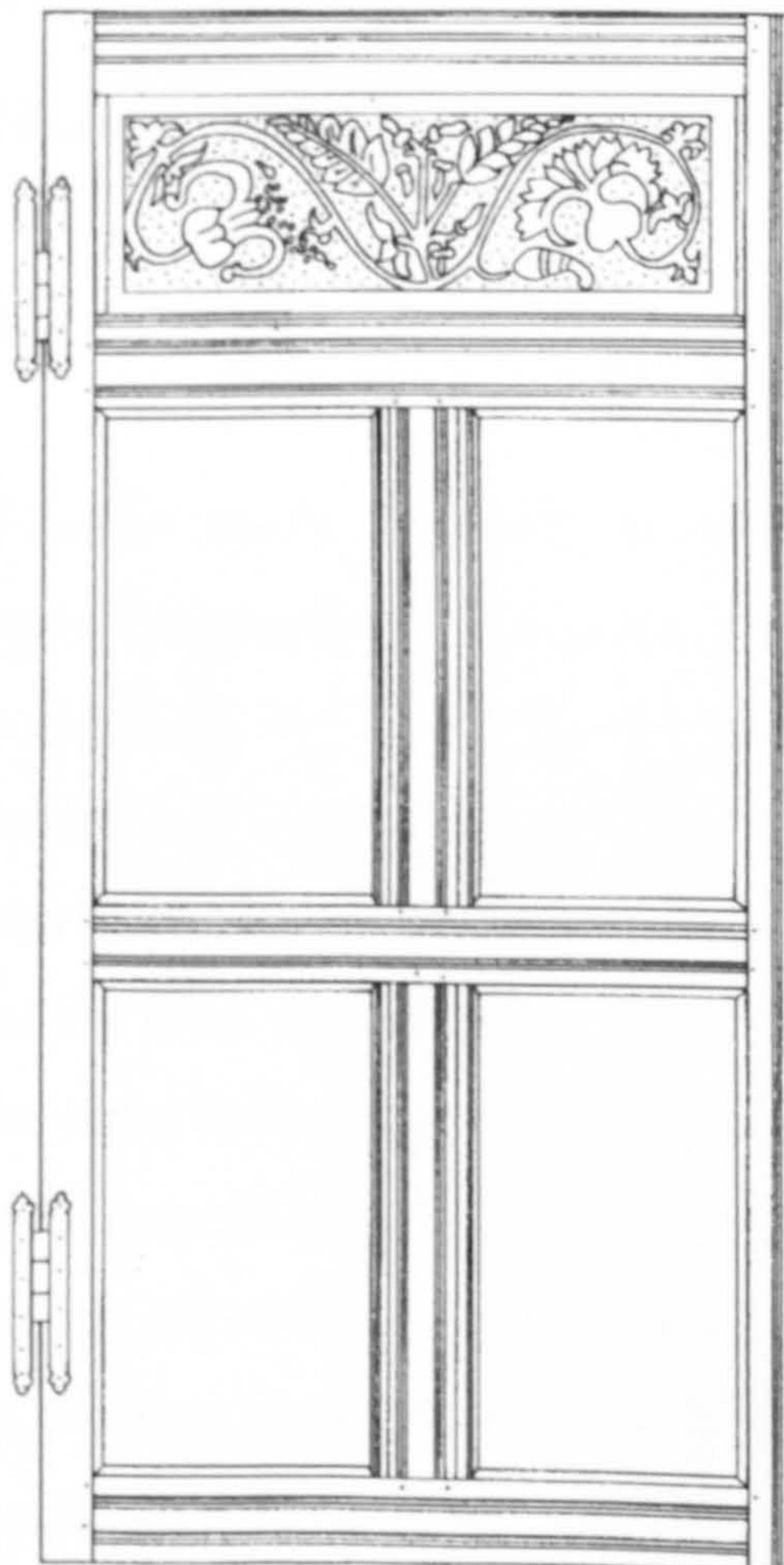
1m



2



Fig. 6.142 *Whitehough: (above) panelling at the head of the stairs;
(below) the right hand door*



20cm

At Cloud House [149] some unusual structures are framed into the north gable of the attic (Fig. 6.143). These are formed by posts rising between tie-beam and principal rafter, supporting the low closed partitions of what may be a pair of boxed beds or storage facilities. The adjacent dormer carries the date of 1612.



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Fig. 6.143 Cloud House: the attic with one of the bed/storage features

EXTERNAL FEATURES

(i) *Windows*

'After 1660, and possibly earlier' ready cut windows and doorways were available at various local stone quarries in Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire and Somerset.³⁰ The nature of the stone used for the detailing in houses built after the Civil War and the disappearance of non-standard mullions on the smaller houses, suggests this pattern obtained here, with the quarries at Hollington as a principal source.

Two styles of window were in use in the seventeenth century, one with the mullions set back from the outer face of the wall, and the other with them set on the outer face. Both have wide date ranges. The earliest date known for a 'set-back' example is at Harracles Mill [133] where a single window dates to *c.* 1570. The latest example is at the Friends Meeting House in Leek [15], dating to the 1690s. For the 'outer-edge' variety, the earliest is 1628 [128], and the latest 1742 [91], though the

³⁰ Barley, 1967, 747.

School Cottages at Bradnop, built in 1750, probably had this type [35]. Both are regularly associated with rectangular lights with horizontal lintels. Only two examples of mullioned windows with semicircular heads have been found [1 and 45], a type regularly associated with sixteenth century housing in the Lancashire Pennines, some thirty miles to the north of Leek.³¹

Whichever form the window took, the vast majority of the mullions were truncated diamond in section, though other forms were in use in the first half of the seventeenth century, supporting Barley's comments on later mass production. Dated examples of alternative shapes include cavetto mullions (1605, 1625), and ovolo mullions (1610, 1638). Mullions in the crosswing at Whitehough also appear to have been custom made, and date to the early decades of the seventeenth century.



Fig. 6.144 *Contrasting window styles:*

(right) Lawn, Endon: parlour wing with non-standard mullion and transom windows.

(left) Dairyhouse, Horton: parlour wing with symmetrically placed two-light windows with standard (truncated diamond) 'outer edge' mullions.

The broad date range of the main window types, and the use of truncated diamond mullions, provide little guide to the large number of houses that do not carry convincing date stones. Mullioned windows in association with crucks tend to be small and with up to five lights [50] [Fig. 6.27] and (Fig. 6.75), giving a broad indication of the likely style of the earlier stone windows. At a more prosperous level, Lawn Farm, Endon [60], has five- and six-light mullion and transom windows to the parlour wing with non-standard mullions (ovolo at ground floor level, and semi-circular for the upper floors) (Fig. 144) suggesting a date in the first half of the seventeenth century. The later use of mullions, particularly in the eighteenth century is associated with larger windows of two or three lights, and with a strong feeling for a balanced exterior,

³¹ Pearson, 1985, 7-25.

as at the Dairyhouse, Horton [78] (Fig. 6.144) [Figs. 23 and 51]. The use of chamfered mullions had largely died out by the middle of the eighteenth century, and where mullions continued to be used they were block mullions, with a flat outer face and chamfered inner section.



Fig. 6.145 The stair window at Whitehough, circa 1720

Little is left to indicate the presence or absence of glazing in the earlier houses. The medieval glass industry in England was backward compared with that of France, and showed little expansion until the third quarter of the sixteenth century.³² Thus, prior to the 1560s, good quality glass could only be obtained from abroad, and was too costly for general use. With the arrival of French glassmakers in 1567³³ home-produced glass became more readily available. It is probable that in the Leek area the higher status houses of the early seventeenth century were fully glazed from the start. However, the evidence is limited in the stone houses to the occasional presence of vertical bars in the centre of each light to which leaded glazing was attached, or the occasional non-standard mullion in the higher status houses with suitable rebating for glass. Detailed work on timber-framed houses in Sussex, within easy range of the Wealden glass industry, suggests that even at gentry level some windows in the less

³² Frank, 1982, 32.

³³ Crossley, 1990, 226-9.

important rooms might remain unglazed in the early seventeenth century, and that a mixture of glazed and unglazed windows was commonplace in the lesser houses until at the end of the seventeenth century. Cottages, and the now non-existent hovels, were likely to have been unglazed windows until an even later³⁴ Areas outside the main living spaces were those most likely to be left unglazed, the likely state of the projecting stair wing behind 2-4 Church Street, Leek [3], where diamond shaped wooden mullions survive.



Fig. 6.146 *Goldsitch, Heathylee: diamond paned glazing with its original glazing bars. The lead has recently been painted white*

Small diamond shaped quarrels set in lead were the sturdiest type, as this shape spread the stress evenly throughout the window.³⁵ These have generally been replaced by wooden casements with four to six oblong panes in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, or at a later date by single panes. Parlour windows at Goldsitch House (SK009642), Heathylee (Fig. 6.146) provide a rare local exception. Leaded windows with oblong quarries dating to the eighteenth century survive with greater frequency. A good example is to be found at Whitehough lighting the early eighteenth century staircase (Fig. 145).

(ii) Doorways

The earliest doorways have false four-centred arches with recessed spandrels (Fig. 6.58 and 6.147). Dated examples range from 1605 to 1651, making them a good indicator for the first half of the seventeenth century. By the second half of the century a simpler form, lacking the recessed spandrels, had become the norm. The earliest dated examples belong to the 1670s, and have plain lintels chamfered on the lower

³⁴ Martin and Martin, 1991, 84-5, 2-5.

³⁵ From a paper read by Jill Channer to the Association for the History of Glass, Nov. 21st, 2001.

edge and rising to a shallow point. An occasional alternative, with examples dating to 1674 and 1675, has a flat lintel with moulded sides (Fig. 6.147) and (Fig. 6.68). By the eighteenth century the arch had been replaced by a flat lower edge, but deep lintels were still in use until the middle of the century.



Fig. 6.147 (left) Ford Old School: 1605; (right) Rownall Farm: 1674

(iii) Date stones and other dated feature

A survey of dates on house and barns to the end of the eighteenth century produced 59 dates from the list descriptions, on either date stones or fixtures (Appendix 6.6). A further ^{twelve} had been omitted from the listings. Thirty belong to primary features, 23 are either *ex situ* or relate to secondary features, and 18 relate to barns or garden walls.

Of the house dates, 15 pre-date 1640, three, all on fixtures or secondary features, date to the 1640s and 50s, the remaining 53 are of post Restoration date, including 25 from the last forty years of the seventeenth century when a spate of barn and garden-wall building seems to have occurred. The general spread of the local figures is confirmed by dates from the remainder of Totmonslow, though the number of unrecorded dates is unknown, as is the precise relationship to the buildings.

No datestones are available from the sixteenth century. That this is not simply a matter of fashion is confirmed by the general absence of mullioned windows with rounded heads, a noticeable feature of late-sixteenth century houses in the Lancashire Pennines,³⁶ and barely evident in Leek. The incidence of datestones serves to confirm the picture already outlined, in which the major men tended to be house-building in the

³⁶ Pearson, 1985, 6-17.

first half of the seventeenth century, and a fallow period in the 1640s and 50s was followed by renewed activity in the later seventeenth century, when those who had already updated their houses turned to the building of barns and garden features. In contrast to the seventeenth century, when the dates are all for rural buildings, dates for the eighteenth century emphasise the changing role of town and country, and are equally divided between farmhouses, barns and town dwellings.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Discussion and conclusions

PRE-CONQUEST LEEK

No evidence has been found to indicate that Leek was an early minster, and the parish was probably founded late in the tenth century, when Wulfric Spott, a devotee of St. Edward the Martyr (d. 978 or 979) held an estate at Rudyard.¹ Whether this was its ultimate origin is less certain.

Evidence from many parts of Britain suggests that major land divisions existed when the Anglo-Saxons arrived, including a system of 'multiple estates'² pre-dating the parish system that came to be based on them.³ Jones argues that the multiple estates, documented in Wales in the thirteenth century, are of Celtic origin,⁴ while Fleming suggests they may be even earlier.⁵ Despite this, few can be traced with certainty before the early or middle Anglo-Saxon periods, and their recognition may, like that of Leek, be reliant on later evidence of ecclesiastical links and topographical unity, with the inevitable possibility of circular argument.

In Norfolk and in parts of Devon multiple estates are represented by hundreds,⁶ in the East Midlands by a system of sokes.⁷ They may also form the basis of the vast medieval parishes of the Pennines, Cheshire and North Staffordshire, as Tringham has suggested for Leek.⁸ If so, with its compact shape governed by major natural features, Leek appears more akin to the 'river estates' of southern and eastern England⁹ than to the fragmented network of holdings in Elmet (the area around Leeds),¹⁰ or the sokes of the East Midlands,¹¹ but dependencies may perhaps be inferred from the inclusion, in the early thirteenth century, of estates at Denstone and Quixhill in the Earl of Chester's fee of Leek,¹² or the linking of Rudyard with Darlaston in the will of Wulfric Spott *circa* 1004.¹³

A growing awareness of the archaeological evidence¹⁴ coupled with detailed

¹ Tringham, 1999, 9.

² Hoskins and Finberg, 1952, 303-305; Jones, 1975, 3-27; Fleming, 1998, 47-51.

³ Owen, 1979, 35.

⁴ Jones, 1990, 49-50.

⁵ Fleming, 1998, 51-61.

⁶ Hoskins, 1952, 294-5, 308; Williamson, 1993, 63-4, 84-9.

⁷ Stafford, 1985, 30-31.

⁸ Tringham, 1999, 7.

⁹ Fleming, 1998, 46-47.

¹⁰ Jones, 1975, 15.

¹¹ Stafford, 1985, 30-31.

¹² Tringham, 1999, 11-12.

¹³ Whitelock, 1930, 541-2.

¹⁴ Taylor, 83-106.

work on place-name studies¹⁵ means that Anglo-Saxon place-names are no longer accepted as proof of primary settlement. Indeed Sawyer comments that English replaced British as a language even where a substantial British population is known to have survived the English conquest.¹⁶ Thus some or all of the township names in Leek may represent the re-naming of British settlements, with the Anglo-Saxon presence first evidenced in the more desirable locations. The absence of pagan Anglian burials¹⁷ argues that there was no more than a token population in this part of Mercia until after the death of the pagan king Penda in 655.¹⁸

Place-name evidence for estates as far apart as Devon and Norfolk indicate specialism in the outlying areas designed to ensure regular supplies for the estate centre. This aspect of management had vanished by the late Saxon period, when the individual units were for the most part economically independent.¹⁹ Against this background the Leek names are singularly uninformative. Largely topographical in type and therefore regarded as amongst the earlier of the Anglo-Saxon place-names,²⁰ the absence of specialism may reflect either a false conclusion as to the derivation of the parish, or simply the limited economic possibilities of a marginal upland area.

The Danish hold on the area was brief, and its long-term effects were minimal. The place-name evidence as interpreted by Gelling²¹ fits well with Sidebottom's theory of a dual presence,²² with one group gaining control in the centre of Leek, and another settling on marginal land in the north of Leekfrith.

Elsewhere in England a pattern of linked settlements has been found, forming separate administrative and ecclesiastical centres. Tringham argues that Rudyard, lying just to the north of Leek, may have provided such an administrative centre.²³ However its appearance in the will of Wulfric Spot as an appendage of Darlaston²⁴ argues a lack of importance unless it can be seen in the context of a deliberate attempt to consolidate Anglo-Saxon control in areas where the Danes came to acknowledge their overlordship.²⁵ Such an attempt would certainly explain how such a relatively insignificant

¹⁵ Gelling, 1997, 87-88.

¹⁶ Sawyer, 1978, 90-91.

¹⁷ Gelling, 1992, 29.

¹⁸ Sawyer, 1978a, 38.

¹⁹ Hoskins, 1952, 303-304; Williamson, 1993, 81-5.

²⁰ Sawyer, 1978a, 160.

²¹ Gelling, 1992, 136.

²² Sidebottom 1999, 206, 210, 213; 1996, 10-15.

²³ Tringham, 1999, 10.

²⁴ Whitelock, 1930, 541-2.

²⁵ Sawyer, 1975, 29.

place as Leek came to be listed in Domesday among the massive and widespread estates of the Leofric family.²⁶

POST-CONQUEST LEEK: MANOR AND TOWNSHIP

‘The bedrock of rural organisation in the late Saxon period was the township, the fundamental unit which enabled a community to be self-sufficient.’²⁷ In Leek, as elsewhere, their creation was not a single event. The broad outlines might be in place by Domesday, but the division of Rushton and Rudyard lay in the future, and the final sections of the moorland boundaries remained to be drawn at the time of Parliamentary Enclosure.

The dispersed settlement pattern obtaining in the townships was typical of the ‘highland zone’ to the north and west of England,²⁸ where the absence of large areas of open field tended to marginalize the manor courts, and lead to weak manorial control.²⁹ Convenience, and presumably the hunting, brought the earls of Chester to Leek in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,³⁰ while in 1246 a house at Endon saw use by Henry of Verdun,³¹ but in general the major players were conspicuous for their absence and manorial control might be exercised at more than one remove from the chief lord. By the post-medieval period such control was most in evidence where it had devolved to a single resident family, and least obvious where the local yeomen were the driving force, as it seems they often were, for copyhold of inheritance was the most common form of tenure, and bred independence of action.

Within the townships it is the coherent nature of their internal organisation as reflected by the patterns of medieval settlement that leaves the most unanswered questions. Between 850 and 1200 nucleated settlements came into being³² in a great swathe through central England. Outside this area, in Rackham’s ‘ancient countryside’³³ the older pattern of dispersed settlement lingered on,³⁴ particularly in sparsely populated areas of pastoral farming where large-scale re-organisation might be deemed unnecessary. Despite this, the pattern presented by the individual townships suggests that something equally decisive may have occurred in North Staffordshire,

²⁶ Slade, 1985, p. 6, 22; Hill, 1981, Fig. 182.

²⁷ Brown and Foard, 1998, 80.

²⁸ Clay, 1984, 54-55; Roberts and Wrothmell, 1998, 94-97.

²⁹ Thirsk, 1967, 8-9.

³⁰ Tringham, 1993, 2-3.

³¹ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 181.

³² Lewis et al, 1997, 203.

³³ Rackham, 1986, 3-5.

³⁴ Taylor, 1983, 125.

masked for the historian by the habit of considering each area by parish rather than by township.

From the thirteenth century large parts of Leek parish were controlled by the abbey of Dieulacres, but the settlement evidence argues strongly for a population that was well entrenched before the arrival of the Cistercians, and whose existence and concerns influenced the abbey in its choice of sites, both within the estate of the original gift, and elsewhere in the manor of Leek. Whether the main monastic holdings belonged to Dieulacres, Hulton, Trentham or Lilleshall the pattern is the same. Their granges may have occupied what now appear to be prime sites, but in every township except Leekfrith they lay in a secondary position in relationship to a township hamlet, and to all outward appearances post-date the founding of these abbeys.

Only in Leekfrith was the Cistercian ideal a near-reality. Here the core of the Earl of Chester's forest of Leek,³⁵ the woodland area recorded in Domesday,³⁶ formed a major challenge for the monks of Dieulacres, their monastic site was a waterlogged valley, and their granges required clearance. Both seem to have been achieved with their customary energy, and the result in settlement terms is a landscape where granges are evenly spaced between earlier hamlets, suggesting a determination to maximise both existing rents and future farming prospects. Restrictions that might have hindered expansion in the royal forests³⁷ caused little impediment here, since, despite the retention by Earl Ranulph of hunting rights for land on Gun and Wetwood, his foresters were specifically precluded from entering the abbey's lands. Here hunting was supervised by the abbey's own foresters³⁸ and decisions as to land use belonged to the abbey. The inclusion amongst the granges of Swythamley, with its pre-Conquest settlement name, and the former Nether Hulme under the guise of New Grange, does little to alter this picture of expansion into a wilderness.

For the areas outside monastic control a similar pattern obtained. The township hamlets were sited in key positions, parks and hays took large areas of the less desirable land, and subsidiary settlements appear most often on the periphery of the township, or ringing large areas of waste. Here, as in the monastic manors, the existence of additional farms at the edge of the township represented little threat to the livelihood of the main hamlet, and no substantial expansion seems to have occurred until the population explosion of the sixteenth century.

³⁵ Barraclough, 1988, charter 176.

³⁶ Slade, 1958, 22.

³⁷ Thirsk, 1967, 36.

³⁸ *VCH Staffs* VII, 197.

The repetition within each township of the same range of features, hamlet, field and pasture, park and hay, and peripheral farms and granges, speaks of a considered operation, in which more than one voice was heard. So too with the expansion of settlement into the demesne properties. Who decided to divide Horton Hay and Endon Park? The interests of both lord and tenant were served by doing so, but was the lord or his steward actively involved in the division of these properties, or was it a township decision? In neither case were the resultant farms easy to run, as in both areas they consisted of exaggeratedly long holdings, but in the setting of a community used to the idea of apportioning strips in an open field might this have seemed a logical solution?

An increasing body of evidence indicates that the initiative for the internal organisation of the vill/township lay with the 'community of the vill', even if the final authority remained with the lord of the manor.³⁹ Most comes from the fielden areas, where manor and vill were generally coincident.⁴⁰ Only rarely, as for example in the huge manor of Wakefield, Yorkshire, is there evidence for a manor containing several vills, each holding its own meeting or 'plebiscite' to order its affairs.⁴¹ While no documentation has been found to indicate a direct parallel between Wakefield and Leek, the broad patterns of land use within each township speak strongly of a similar internal organisation, and might well be found if a detailed study of the manorial records for Horton could be undertaken.

It would be difficult to conceive a situation such as that in Rushton Spencer in 1596,⁴² or Ipstones in 1649, where the tenants as a whole set up the means to purchase their freeholds en-masse, if there were no previous history of group action within the townships. In Ipstones it is particularly clear that the process was well considered, and carefully devised to ensure that each man's interests were protected.⁴³

The idiosyncratic approach of the individual townships to enclosure of the moorlands again suggests that it was the township rather than the manor that was the decisive unit (Fig. 2.29). In only one manor is there evidence for long-standing prejudice against enclosure. While the men of Ipstones were moving to enclose all those parts not specifically excluded by the 1649 terms of sale, their neighbours in Bradnop were continuing a long-running battle against the Astons' attempts to enclose Morridge, a dispute that remained unresolved until the Parliamentary Enclosure in

³⁹ Harvey, 1989, 31-43.

⁴⁰ Ault, 1965, 40-54.

⁴¹ Ault, 1972, 66; Dyer, 1985, 29.

⁴² SRO D(W)1761/A/4/149.

⁴³ SA 11/3/1-16, 12/1/3.

1769.⁴⁴ Elsewhere the amount of land to be enclosed confirms the different approaches taken within the individual communities (Fig. 2.29). This is at its clearest in the manor of Horton. In 1815 little except small patches of roadside waste remained to be enclosed in the township of Endon, and only marginally more in the townships of Horton and Stanley. This contrasts sharply with substantial areas of unenclosed land in Longsdon and Bagnall. Since they were in one lordship, and set on similar terrain, the variable factor must surely be the local population, the 'community of the vill'.⁴⁵

THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF OWNERSHIP

With the steady conversion to freehold, manorial control weakened still further. Most townships had contained the occasional freehold property, but the majority of farms were held by copyhold of inheritance. Since copyhold rents were fixed, landlords were seeing an ever-diminishing return. With little hope of altering the form of tenure, sale was a means of realizing their assets, which might then be re-invested as freehold properties entered the market.

The pace of the change varied from township to township. Where the community was united and held by copyhold of inheritance the matter might be achieved in a single operation, as at Rushton Spencer or Ipstones.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, change came piece-meal, or not at all. The dissolution brought large areas of the parish back into secular control, including the manors of Leek and Bradnop. Tenant properties in the former were held under a variety of terms.⁴⁷ Some, like John Rothwell's holding at Fowlchurch, might be referred to as 'his inheritance'⁴⁸ but others were clearly leasehold, reflecting the fragmentation of the former granges into secular tenancies.

Swythamley, the High Forest and John Rothwell's holdings were creamed off from the manor even before it was granted to Sir Ralph Bagnall in 1552. Sir Ralph was among those to receive property for services rendered to the Crown. In contrast to the estates acquired by the more astute of the rising gentry at the dispersal of the richer Benedictine houses in the West Country,⁴⁹ or the wholesale acquisition of Trentham by the Leveson-Gower family, this did not form a long-term holding, for it seems he

⁴⁴ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 174; SRO AW/M 5116/1.

⁴⁵ Wake, 1922.

⁴⁶ SRO D(W) 1761/A/4/149; *SHC* NS vii. 212; NS x (1), 66; SA, 12/1/3.

⁴⁷ PRO, SC6/3353.

⁴⁸ SW 5/306.

⁴⁹ Aston and Bettey, 1998, 118-123.

looked his gift-horse in the mouth and by 1580 much of it had already been sold piecemeal to his tenants, only the rump surviving to pass on with the manor.⁵⁰

Other properties awaited sale by successive lords in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵¹ Farms in Bradnop were disposed of in a series of single sales. Heaton, formerly held by Dieulacres with the manor of Leek, remained in crown hands until 1614, but then passed rapidly through a succession of hands, all yeoman farmers and minor gentry,⁵² who retained their own properties and disposed of the remainder.⁵³

Properties in Cheddleton may also have reached the market during this period, presumably those whose tenancies could not be adjusted in the landlord's favour, as the enclosure awards of 1736 gave Thomas Jolliffe and Edward Arblaster only 713 acres of available waste in addition to their share as lords of the manor, the remaining 1,200 acres going to various freeholders.⁵⁴ In the manor of Horton the process was a long drawn-out affair, with major farms surviving as copyhold properties until at least 1816 (Fig. 2.30). Contrary to the general trend, the township of Rudyard reverted to a single pair of hands with the purchase of Barnswood after the dissolution.⁵⁵ Consall too had remained a separate unit and survived as a single, undivided estate.

Neither copyhold nor freehold tenure precluded the engrossment of the smaller farms, or the purchase of property to produce a ring-fenced estate. The evidence suggests that the major non-manorial estates with medieval origins resulted from the engrossment of a hamlet, as at Sharpcliffe or Whitehough. With patience this could be added to, by the purchase of copyhold or freehold properties as they fell vacant, as at Ashenhurst, where in 1630 John Ashenhurst was disputing the payment of herriots on three adjacent farms described as 'Anciently the Inherytance of the Ashenhursts' and on a further property added to the estate in his lifetime.⁵⁶ The subsequent growth of the Ashenhurst estate fed on the newly expanded freehold market. By the mid-eighteenth century it had grown to substantial proportions, with major properties as far away as Wincle Grange in Cheshire.⁵⁷ So too did the Aston holdings in Bradnop. Having divested themselves in the seventeenth century of various properties that once belonged with the manor, they then re-purchased as freeholds became available.

⁵⁰ Sleigh, 1883, 19.

⁵¹ PRO C66.697 3493; *VCH Staffs*, VII, 196; deeds for Buxton Brow (privately owned).

⁵² *VCH Staffs*, VII, 187.

⁵³ Deeds at Swythamley Hall in the possession of Mr. R. Naylor. An abstract is held at SRO.

⁵⁴ SRO Q/RDc29.

⁵⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII, 217.

⁵⁶ SA1/2/6.

⁵⁷ SW 18/657

Documentation for the dispersal of their estates in 1770 takes the form of two massive documents, one relating to properties that were still part of the manor, mainly cottages and small-holdings, the second to the freehold properties that formed the bulk of their subsequent acquisitions.⁵⁸

Major early eighteenth century houses in the area are few, and relate to the old established gentry estates. By the middle of the century a quickening land market saw newcomers establishing ever-larger estates, including the lawyer, Thomas Mills, whose purchases included Harracles.⁵⁹ Subsequently, the arrival of a cadet branch of the Sneyd family saw the growth of family estates at Belmont, Ashcombe, Basford and Sharpcliffe. Belmont subsumed the former Hollins estate of Mosslee, and the great medieval house became a tenant farmhouse. A similar fate awaited Harracles, which with Dieulacres, was subsumed into a nineteenth century estate based on the former grange of Westwood.⁶⁰ The largest estate was ultimately that of Swythamley, but it too awaited the nineteenth century and recently created industrial wealth.⁶¹

The seventeenth century saw the building of large numbers of stone houses of considerable durability, and the presence or absence of these large late estates has substantially affected their survival. A subjective overview might suggest, for example, that seventeenth century building activity was at its greatest in Ipstones, and that relatively little occurred in either Bradnop or Leekfrith. A summary of the taxable housing stock shows otherwise (Table. 7.1). While Ipstones had a sizeable number of two, three and four hearth house, many of which have survived, so too did Leekfrith and Bradnop, where they are not immediately apparent, indicating the subsequent history of the townships had a major bearing on the survival rates.

Survey work in Bradnop and Leekfrith has shown that almost all the older farms have houses with seventeenth century origins. Many are almost unrecognisable as such. One can only suspect that many of the smaller farmers were in financial difficulties when they sold up, that their houses had deteriorated, and that subsequent renovation eradicated most of the original features. Exceptions exist. The best preserved of the Leekfrith houses stayed for centuries with a single family, remained largely unaltered, and were presumably adequately maintained [125, 126, 127], for despite being subsumed into the Swythamley estate their houses are well preserved. Not so Brownsett [111], where a single mullion and transom window is all that is left

⁵⁸ SA, 3/1/1. deed of 5 May 1770; deed of 5 May 1770, (held at Longshaw Farm, Bradnop).

⁵⁹ D3272/1/4/3.

⁶⁰ SRO D3272.

⁶¹ *VCH Staffs.* VII, 102; Brocklehurst, 1998, 9.

of Edmund Brough's house, and the modest house that lay adjacent became the surviving farmhouse.

TABLE 7.1 *The 1666 Hearth tax totals by township, omitting exemptions*

<i>Constablewick</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10+</i>	<i>Total</i>
Leek	37	12	18	6		73
Rushton James	25	1		2		28
Horton	60	11	3	3		78
Longsdon	13	5	1	6	1	26
Endon	22	8	9	1		40
Stanley	4	1	2			7
Bagnall	13	3	3			19
Lowe	13	2	2	1		18
Leekfrith	67	20	13	3		103
Rushton Spencer	17	4	5	1		27
Heaton	28	4	7	3		42
Tittesworth	16	8	5			29
Bradnop	53	23	9	5		90
Rownall	25	2	1	1		29
Ipstones	40	10	11	1		62
Rudyard	13	1	2	1		17
Cheddleton	19	11	5	3		38
Basford	25	4	3	3		35
Consall	11	7	1			19
TOTALS	501	137	101	40	1	780

POPULATION AND MOBILITY

Quantifiable material is unavailable before 1563, when the population of the medieval parish numbered under 2,000. Growth was to be rapid in the succeeding century (Fig. 3.2). Between 1566 and 1666 the quinquennial totals arrived at by Wrigley and Schofield indicate that England as a whole saw a rise of some 62%.⁶² Between 1563 and 1666 the population of Totmonslow rose by 121% and that of Staffordshire by 125%.⁶³ The average of 213% for the medieval parish of Leek is deceptive, for everywhere, it seems, urban growth exceeded that of the countryside, and the figures include the market town. But it also includes the countryside, where the picture was more variable. For Consall and Rudyard, townships in a single lordship, low growth rates could be expected but cannot be proved, but in Horton (96%), Ipstones (102%), Cheddleton (169%) and the chapelry of Rushton (224%) the growth rates of the open townships are fully evident.

From the early sixteenth century, heavily fuelled by immigration, London's population had grown at a startling rate,⁶⁴ and from the mid-sixteenth century towns of

⁶² Wrigley and Schofield, 1981, 528.

⁶³ Palliser, 1974, 55.

⁶⁴ Clark and Slack, 1976, 63; Wrigley, 1985, 688.

5,000 or more throughout Britain grew faster than the population as a whole.⁶⁵ For the smaller towns it is rarely possible to isolate the figures,⁶⁶ and those in Totmonslow are no exception. Between 1563 and 1666 the growth rates for the post-medieval parish of Leek and for Alton were high (484% and 400% respectively) as were those for the area round the former market village of Alstonfield (381%). Commercial farming, was both a cause and an effect of population growth, and the increase in specialist marketing worked in favour of the market towns, for with increasing pressure on the surrounding countryside they were the inevitable recipients of surplus population.

Throughout England it was the 'open' areas like the parish of Leek, with ample pasture and growing opportunities for industrial employment, that saw the fastest growth,⁶⁷ but the terms 'open' and 'closed' applied to a community's attitude to immigration are relative terms. Even in Totmonslow, an area of plentiful wastes and sparse population, some townships were less tolerant of growth than others, the vested interests of the major landowners and the needs of the nucleated communities in the smaller townships providing the most evident curbs. But nowhere truly lacked space for expansion. The larger men were able to engross farms without apparent complaint, and might subsume a former hamlet in the process, but pastures and parks were subdivided into new tenancies, new 'intakes' became new 'livings', and cottagers settled in the wastes, all without major upheaval because open grazing was plentiful and could supplement the income of even the smallest holdings.

Mobility was high in pre-industrial England, and the distances covered might vary with both gender and economic status.⁶⁸ Many moved only within the range of their normal experience, the distance travelled to market. The average cattle-market area extended to a radius of eleven miles.⁶⁹ Leek had no rivals under that distance, and with the growing importance of its cattle market may well have drawn from considerably further afield. Marriage partners for those living in Leek town in 1656 came mostly from within a twelve-mile radius, while others travelled up to fifteen miles (Fig. 3.6). This then was the radius of regular weekly contacts, whence came firsthand knowledge of opportunity for those who must move.

Not all migration was local, nor was the pattern constant over time; movement was at its highest in Tudor and early Stuart England, falling off in the second half of

⁶⁵ Wrigley, 1985, 688.

⁶⁶ Houston, 1992, 19.

⁶⁷ Houston, 1992, 19; Smith, 1978, 228; Laslett, 1985, 59-60.

⁶⁸ Smith, 1990, 173.

⁶⁹ Everitt, 1967, 499; Clark, 1972, 125.

the seventeenth century, and the areas attracting most 'subsistence' migrants were the marginal woodland and pastoral areas likely to be among the poorest and least populated at the start of the sixteenth century.⁷⁰ Hey's study of locative surnames in Staffordshire provides a localized view of north-south movement through an influx of names from Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, all present by 1666.⁷¹ Many had reached Leek by the 1530s (Table 3.5), and names like the Lancashire Higginbottom are to be found among the tenants of Dieulacres.⁷² Few came northwards, as the ultimate magnet was London, and it is interesting to observe that the same counties, all among the poorest in the 'highland zone', are heavily represented in migration to Kentish towns between 1580 and 1640, while Staffordshire is not.⁷³

Most farms were self-sufficient, run by family members and, since they were involved in pastoral farming, generally had surplus labour that could be employed in some form of industry.⁷⁴ From the sixteenth century onwards servants are in evidence in the major properties such as Rudyard, Dieulacres, Windygates and Swythamley,⁷⁵ but to judge from the generosity of bequests these were long-standing members of the household, and not brought in on an annual hiring. Inheritance, at least on the older and well-established farms, was by primogeniture, ensuring long periods of family continuity unless death intervened,⁷⁶ reinforced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by marriage settlements, which might bring new and inalienable property.

A surplus of labour meant movement for the younger siblings unless additional employment was available,⁷⁷ and while occasional examples of Borough English have been found, these were the exceptions. Fathers were expected to make provision for their younger sons, and might purchase property that they were then free to bequeath, or they might ensure them an apprenticeship. A family of blacksmiths like the Armetts were well placed both to train their sons, and to find them employment within an easy radius of their birthplace. In 1717 two generations of the family had smithies at Rushton James, Uttoxeter and Sutton in Staffordshire, and at Buglawton in Cheshire, while the youngest son stayed at Heaton, both work and to inherit.⁷⁸ The local poor law records are missing, so knowledge of formal apprenticeships is limited, but in 1636

⁷⁰ Clark and Slack, 1972, 117; Smith, 1978, 227; Smith, 1990, 173.

⁷¹ Hey, 1998, 23-25.

⁷² PRO SC6 Hen.VIII, 3353.

⁷³ Clark, 1972, 126-7.

⁷⁴ Thirsk, 1961, 73.

⁷⁵ LJO Thomas Rudyard, 1573; Robert Watts, 1617/18; William Trafford, 1627; Richard Brough, 1637.

⁷⁶ Appendix 6.1 [61, 63, 93, 129].

⁷⁷ Thirsk, 1967, 10.

⁷⁸ SW 8; LJO William Armett, 1717.

Richard Sheircliffe was apprenticed to Edward Clayton, a Sheffield cutler, presumably a younger son, since his father, Henry, was described as 'gentleman'.⁷⁹ One can only speculate as to how such distant contacts were made, but local carriers and drovers travelled long distances, and the Cheshire saltways run on through the parish to a web of destinations.

THE EARLY TOWN

Commercialisation seems an unlikely concept to pursue in the context of such a sparsely populated area. None-the-less there were situations in which the exchange of goods and services was insufficient, and money might be needed for rent, taxes or the purchase of goods that could not be made locally.⁸⁰ While much commercial activity took place informally, the creation of a nationwide system of markets indicates that there was a place for something more structured, a situation that could be exploited by the major landholders as a further source of revenue.⁸¹ Over 2800 markets were officially established between 1199 and 1483. By 1200 permission was increasingly seen as a royal prerogative,⁸² and even Ranulph III, Earl of Chester, took care to acquire a market charter for Leek before granting it borough status.⁸³

Many new towns were created between the Norman Conquest and the Great Pestilence.⁸⁴ Between 1100 and 1300 forty were founded in Staffordshire, Warwickshire and North Worcestershire alone.⁸⁵ The result, in the West Midlands, was a relatively high density of small market towns, absent only from the sparsely populated woodlands and uplands where small towns and market villages, like Leek and Alstonfield, stood out as the only large nucleated settlements.⁸⁶ The founders might be royal, ecclesiastical or secular, and over time different interests were paramount. Thus the Earl of Chester's charter for Leek, made between 1207 and 1215,⁸⁷ was granted in the period of maximum activity between 1200 and 1250, when secular involvement in town foundation was at its highest.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Joan Unwin (pers. com.).

⁸⁰ Britnell, 1993, 7.

⁸¹ Hilton, 1966, 176; Britnell, 1981, 211.

⁸² Unwin, 1990, 131; Britnell, 1978, 192.

⁸³ Barraclough, 1988, 347-348.

⁸⁴ Beresford, 1967, 327-338.

⁸⁵ Rowlands, 1987, 37; Palliser, 1972, 68-9.

⁸⁶ Laughton and Dyer, 1999, 24-25, 41.

⁸⁷ Barraclough, 1988, 347-348.

⁸⁸ Unwin, 1990, 129, Table 5.1.

Leek was therefore unremarkable apart from the size of the area that it served, and the terms of its charter, which suggest reservations about its commercial viability. New towns established in the more prosperous areas impinged on the resources of existing communities, and were generally confined to well-defined areas.⁸⁹ In such circumstances the provision of land might be minimal⁹⁰ and become the subject to dispute thereafter.⁹¹ But a well-populated and prosperous hinterland ensured the townsfolk had food supplies without direct access to farmland, and provided surplus labour that could be absorbed into the town.⁹² In the under-populated and under-exploited landscape of North Staffordshire a different situation obtained. High altitude, a poor potential for arable farming, and the small size of the existing communities made the area unpromising. A generous allocation of land, half an acre in the town, an acre in the fields and full grazing rights in the pastures of Leek,⁹³ was therefore essential, both to draw men into the fledgling town, and to ensure them a basic livelihood.

Reservations about the town's commercial viability seem to have been justified. A century and more after its foundation occupational surnames are barely visible in the lay subsidy returns⁹⁴ and fail to reflect the twenty or so names found by Dyer in the fourteenth century court rolls.⁹⁵ Occupational surnames present in the parish in the 1530s and 40s show a greater diversity but relate almost entirely to rural crafts. By 1600 the regular licensing of ale makers and victuallers suggests a greater degree of specialisation,⁹⁶ as does the mention of numerous 'shops'.⁹⁷ None-the-less, the term 'yeoman', used throughout the seventeenth century for the majority of men represented in the probate documents, suggests that the farming element retained a considerable significance.

What lay behind the foundation of a town in this particular spot? In 1086 Staffordshire was among the poorest and least populated areas of England.⁹⁸ With no navigable rivers⁹⁹ it remained ill served by means of communication until the

⁸⁹ Hilton, 1966, 188-191.

⁹⁰ Carus Wilson, 1965, 55.

⁹¹ Everitt, 1967, 467.

⁹² Hilton, 1966, 171.

⁹³ Sleigh, 1862, 11-12.

⁹⁴ SHC, 1886, 218-91889, 115.

⁹⁵ Pers. com. Christopher Dyer.

⁹⁶ SHC 1929, 98, 174; 1930, 326; 1932, 49; 1935, 137, 207, 252.

⁹⁷ LJO John Rothwell, 1623; Thomas Gent, 1639/40; Matthew Stubbs, 1692; James Beech, 1750.

⁹⁸ Darby, 1977, Figs. 34 and 35; 248-252.

⁹⁹ Hoskins, 1976, 198.

eighteenth century, but Leek straddled the Earls Way,¹⁰⁰ a long-distance route of significance to men of national importance. The road name is associated with the earls of Chester, for whom Leek served as one of a chain of manors linking Chester with their estates in the East Midlands.¹⁰¹ But the situation was far from new.

The vast estates of the Earls of Mercia were equally far flung. They too included an isolated estate at Leek,¹⁰² equally well placed to serve lord and retainer. It seems no accident therefore that others, both before and after, should hold townships on the line of the Earl's Way. Wulfric Spott's estate at Rudyard may have served to consolidate Saxon control in an area recently captured from the Danes,¹⁰³ but its location, for the owner of lands as distant as the Wirral and Conisbrough,¹⁰⁴ is unlikely to have been a random choice. Neither would that of Hugbridge, carved from the Verdun's holding at Rushton by the early thirteenth century, and held by Hugh le Despenser¹⁰⁵ whose family, by the early fourteenth century, were among the wealthiest and most powerful in England.¹⁰⁶ In this context the formation of a new borough, even in such an isolated position, takes on a new significance. It might lack the obvious potential of the towns along the Avon, but it could, like other new towns in the Midlands, serve as a positive focus on a long distance route-way.¹⁰⁷

For the earls of Chester it was already significant. The manor had been granted to Hugh I by 1093. Charters were issued from Leek in the 1170s and Earl Hugh II died there in 1181. Ranulph III issued a charter at Leek circa 1210 and the manor remained in demesne until his death in 1232.¹⁰⁸ Centrally located cathedrals or castles may dominate the spatial organisation of the more prominent medieval towns¹⁰⁹ as at Lichfield or Tamworth, but there is no obvious focal point for Leek other than its church and the newly created market place. Accommodation must once have existed for the earls, a hunting lodge perhaps, or a full-scale complex of open hall and subsidiary buildings, but in 1297 the town was ravaged by fire¹¹⁰ and, if the chronicler is to be believed, little survived. Certainly there is nothing in the urban landscape to

¹⁰⁰ Dodd and Dodd, 1974, 53-54.

¹⁰¹ Tringham, 1993, 3.

¹⁰² Hill, 1981, Fig. 182.

¹⁰³ Sawyer, 1975, 29.

¹⁰⁴ Whitelock, 1930, 47.

¹⁰⁵ *VCH Staffs*, VII,

¹⁰⁶ Fryde, 1950, 344-347; *Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁰⁷ Dyer, 1999, 30, 39; Britnell, 1981, 213.

¹⁰⁸ Tringham, 1993, 2-3; Barraclough, 1988, charters 392 and 393.

¹⁰⁹ Unwin, 1990, 139.

¹¹⁰ Lynam, 1911, v.

indicate the site of the earls' house beyond a tentative connection with the site of the Hall House [9] on the eastern side of the Market Place.

With the gift of the manor to the abbey of Dieulacres in 1232 the town settled to a quiet history of service to its immediate hinterland, with its modest array of burgage plots remaining relatively constant in number.¹¹¹ Even this may have been too many, as plots to the south of those on Derby Street either remained unsettled or were subsequently abandoned (Fig. 2.20). Thus the area covered by the town remained substantially unaltered from its foundation until the end of the seventeenth century, when the occasional building works took place on its outer edges.

The advantage lay with towns on important nodes in the communication network, particularly those where roads and rivers met, and many of the smaller rural markets did not survive.¹¹² Of 45 markets chartered in Staffordshire only nineteen remained in 1500.¹¹³ Leek, lying near the junction of the Earls Way and the Macclesfield road, was a survivor, unlike its more isolated neighbour at Alstonfield.¹¹⁴ Yet its population remained small. Full occupation of the original burgage plots, assuming one household for each, would give a population of around 400. In 1563 the figures for the post-medieval parish of Leek, lay in the region of 536 to 655, including both town and countryside.

Even in 1666 the maximum figures for the town seem barely to have reach 600, though the precise number of the exempt is uncertain (Table 3.4). Nothing in the urban layout gives the lie to this. The older houses, whether timber-framed or of cruck construction lie broadside to the street, and there is no physical evidence for back building as there is in the more crowded medieval towns. The occasional reference to a cottage behind a main property, and the survival of a single-cell structure behind 2-4 Church Street [3] does little to alter this picture. The population increase may have been large but the base was tiny, and its effects required no significant expansion, save perhaps in the encroachment across the Market Place.

Insignificant in terms of the urban hierachy,¹¹⁵ Leek was none-the-less of considerable importance to the surrounding countryside, particularly for its weekly market and annual fairs. In 2001 the local stock farmers were reduced to a state of acute anxiety when the cattle market was closed during the foot and mouth crisis.

¹¹¹ Sleight, 1862, 14.

¹¹² Unwin, 1990, 137-8; Hilton, 1966, 170-1; Chartres, 1985, 409-412.

¹¹³ Palliser and Pinnock, 1971, 49-63; Everitt, 1967, 470-471.

¹¹⁴ Palliser and Pinnock, 1971, 49-63.

¹¹⁵ Everitt, 1967, 478; Unwin, 1990, 139; Clark and Slack, 1972, 4-5; 1976, 8-9.

They, like their predecessors, rely on the steady sale of small numbers of animals at the appropriate time. A single beast may be 'finished' and ready for handling by a local butcher at a given moment, and be past its prime a few weeks later. Store cattle can be fed throughout the growing season, but surplus stock must be moved on before winter sets in. No haulier will collect in petty numbers, and neither would the drovers of the past, hence the importance of an autumn cattle fair. Major men might operate outside the 'open market' but the smaller men were unable to do so. Thus the weekly market remains an essential outlet to provide a regular source of income.

THE EXPANDING ECONOMY: 1500-1750

(i) *Farming*

The engine of change that ultimately led to greatly increased prosperity was fuelled by the need to feed, clothe and house the growing population. Although by no means the poorest, the county of Staffordshire prior to 1515 remained among the least prosperous areas of England, with relatively little growth in lay wealth between 1334 and 1515,¹¹⁶ its underlying poverty witnessed by the poor survival rate of secular medieval buildings.¹¹⁷ The lay subsidy returns of the 1520s confirm this picture.¹¹⁸ Comparison of these with the 1670 Hearth Tax returns has provided a broad measure of economic growth between these dates. Significantly none of the Staffordshire communities sampled by Husbards showed a decline in their share of the taxable population, while a substantial number show an increase.¹¹⁹

As food prices spiralled in response to increased demand¹²⁰ government concern grew over the mounting loss of arable land, since with dearth came an increasing risk of social unrest, already a factor in fielden areas subject to large-scale enclosure and engrossment.¹²¹ In pastoral areas like Leek this was of little immediate concern. With open field agriculture confined to a single small field for each hamlet, enclosure was a matter of mutual self-interest and could be agreed between neighbours. While substantial areas of waste remained, the engrossment of a neighbouring farm presented little problem, allowing larger and more efficient farms to develop side by side with their smaller neighbours. Copious advice was available on land improvement. Aimed initially at the gentry, this gradually became more

¹¹⁶ Schofield, 1965, 504, 506, 509.

¹¹⁷ Meeson, 1996, 10-24.

¹¹⁸ Sheail, 1971, 120.

¹¹⁹ Husbards, 1987, 153.

¹²⁰ Bowden, 1967, 594-5.

¹²¹ Thirsk, 1967, 240-1.

accessible,¹²² and by the start of the seventeenth century the larger farmers were to be found improving their land by liming or marling while, even at the end of the century, their less prosperous neighbours were pursuing more dubious tactics.

Never on a large scale, arable farming in Leek remained at subsistence level throughout the period, continuing to support the families and livestock of those involved. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries much of the population increase could be absorbed into new farms, each aiming at its own balance between arable and livestock. Oats was the commonest crop, being the grain most tolerant of acid soils and high altitude,¹²³ but both barley and rye were in evidence. Oxen were the basic draught animals of the sixteenth century, but decreased in numbers as time progressed, a decline not totally balanced by an increase in horse-power, suggesting arable farming was being abandoned on some of the smaller holdings. In any event, there was a steady decline in the proportion of the population directly involved in farming. Those who were, often enlarged their holdings, but it was the livestock that formed the main element of their production, leaving both town and countryside increasingly dependent on outside sources for their staple diet.

Appleby identifies 'two Englands, one subject to trade depression and harvest failure but able to avoid widespread starvation, the other pushed past the edge of subsistence by the same dislocations'.¹²⁴ Staffordshire had its share of problems¹²⁵ of which, in the absence of early registers, only a pale shadow is visible in Leek. A slight peak in the number of probate documents reflects the widespread dearth created by four successive bad harvests in 1594-7,¹²⁶ and a series of higher than average winter deaths were registered in 1699 and 1700 (Figs 3.3. and 3.5). For many areas, particularly in the north and north west, the evidence is all too clear. High levels of subsistence related deaths were recorded in Cumberland and Westmorland in 1597 and 1623, the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1587, 1597, and 1623, and in Tyneside in 1596/7.¹²⁷ These were the extremes, with high food prices affecting areas that were particularly poverty stricken or wage dependant. In general the link between fluctuating wheat prices and mortality was less strong.¹²⁸ Thus for several years in the 1690s harvests were deficient and food prices high over much of northern Europe.

¹²² McRae, 1992, 37-39, 43-45.

¹²³ Thirsk, 1967, 171.

¹²⁴ Appleby, 1973, 430.

¹²⁵ Palliser, 1974, 54-75; Appelby, 1978, 8, 134.

¹²⁶ Appleby, 1973, 419.

¹²⁷ Clay, 1984, 18; Appleby, 1973, 430; Drake, 1961, 435-6; Wrightson and Levine, 1989, 143; Appleby, 1978, 109-121, 133-154.

¹²⁸ Lee, 1981, 371-2.

While mortality crises were evident in Scotland and France, England as a whole remained unaffected,¹²⁹ suggesting Leek's problems related to a specific section of the population that was particularly vulnerable when grain prices rose.

The solution lay in a more varied approach to grain production in order to achieve a better balance between winter and spring sown crops,¹³⁰ and in market integration, allowing each area to produce that to which it was most suited, balancing its shortfall by purchases from elsewhere. For wheat, the preferred bread corn, integration may already have occurred by the end of the seventeenth century, although not for other grains, and full integration was only achieved in the mid-eighteenth century.¹³¹

For most of the 'highland zone' pastoral farming was the only serious option, and was increasingly supported by rural industry. Kussmaul's overview presents precisely this pattern in Cheshire and Derbyshire where, for the whole of her study period (1561-1820) marriage patterns were non-seasonal, suggesting rural industry was already present in the mid-sixteenth century. Leek's eastern neighbour, Alstonfield, also had a non-seasonal pattern throughout the period,¹³² reflecting the presence of the extractive industries as the main supplement to agriculture.

Leek's pastoral base is indisputable, the inevitable result of altitude, hilly terrain, and the acid nature of soils subject to high rainfall, and mirrored in the nature of the earliest settlements. Livestock took pride of place in all the farming inventories, cattle being supplemented in varying quantities by sheep. Market specialisation was already evident in the sixteenth century¹³³ and by 1673 Leek's market was described as the third largest in the county, selling besides basic provisions, cattle, sheep and oats.¹³⁴

No area went unscathed by the Civil War, and the century that followed was a difficult one for mainstream farmers, requiring a greater flexibility in their approach.¹³⁵ Market integration and regional specialization had come at a price. Output increased but the English population did not, putting a downward pressure on prices,¹³⁶ and encouraging farmers to pursue 'alternative' lines of agriculture. Thus flax and hemp

¹²⁹ Smith, 1990, 156-7; Appleby, 1979, 876-879.

¹³⁰ Appleby, 1979, 883.

¹³¹ Walter and Schofield, 1989, 9-10. 41.

¹³² Kussmaul, 182-194.

¹³³ Everitt, 1967, 490-2.

¹³⁴ Sleight, 1862, 4.

¹³⁵ Thirsk, 1997, 3, 25.

¹³⁶ Kussmaul, 1993, 170-1; Schofield, 1983, 273.

make a regular appearance in the Staffordshire inventories, and one enterprising farmer in Heaton may also have grown rape.¹³⁷ For the larger men the most evident changes were an increase in dairying, and in the eighteenth century, a reduction of flock sizes.

(ii) Proto-industrialisation

The need for greater and more reliable food supplies was coupled with an ever-increasing demand for employment. Larger farms might produce food more efficiently but they employed a smaller proportion of the population. Those not involved in commercial farming either held land that could not provide a full living, or formed part of a growing urban population which, even in a small essentially rural town like Leek, became increasingly divorced from the countryside as the period progressed.

Cottage-industry aside, there were three main elements to the industry that developed in Leek in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Iron smelting had been present from the Middle Ages, but button making and silk weaving were seventeenth century introductions, and formed the basis for what was to follow.

Rural industry was essentially home-based, involving the whole family in a combination of manufacturing and farming. Since Thirsk's seminal article of 1961 its growth has been a perennial pre-occupation with historians. Pre-requisites for its successful establishment included both social and economic factors. Surplus labour was essential, and could readily be found in pastoral areas, where the demands of farming were less great than in the arable areas. Here the combination of weak manorial control and plentiful wastes tended to attract immigrants, swelling a population that was already poor and under-employed. If partible inheritance was practised then population growth accelerated still more, and the need for alternative employment became pressing.¹³⁸ Most of these factors are identifiable in Leek, together with a plentiful water supply for those industries that required it.

With the exception of the extractive industries the immediate presence of raw materials was un-necessary. The cloth industry provides a classic example: clothiers in central Suffolk brought wool from the Midland counties, the Wiltshire industry obtaining its supplies from the Coltswolds and Salisbury plain, and the Weald of Kent relied on sheep bred on the Romney marshes or the Downs.¹³⁹ The silk industry of necessity relied on foreign supplies. Despite the best endeavours of James I, attempts

¹³⁷ LRO William Hulme, 1698.

¹³⁸ Thirsk, 1961, 70-88.

¹³⁹ Thirsk, 1961, 71-72.

to establish English silk production were a failure, as were all later attempts,¹⁴⁰ including those in the American colonies where it was hoped to establish a cheap source that was at least under English control.¹⁴¹ Thus silk for Spitalfields came in from Antwerp and Bruges,¹⁴² the establishment of broad silk weaving in Canterbury *circa* 1578 coincided roughly with the start of imports of prime silk from Italy,¹⁴³ and by 1715 Turkey and the Levant were the major suppliers.¹⁴⁴

Among the English government's concerns in the sixteenth century was the balance of payments. Woollen cloth constituted three-quarters of all exports. Severe depression struck the industry in the 1550s, bringing home the reality of relying so heavily on a single product.¹⁴⁵ A boom in the 1540s brought a sharp increase in imports. This remained an issue, causing Sir William Cecil to comment adversely in 1564 on the drain to the national resources spent on 'unnecessary foreign wares'.¹⁴⁶ Thus the government actively encouraged new projects to establish or revitalize industry in both town and countryside. Some were successful, like the introduction of the New Draperies and the growing of woad,¹⁴⁷ others, like the growing of mulberry trees as a basis for silk production, passed into oblivion.¹⁴⁸

England at the start of the sixteenth century was a backward country in economic terms, and like such countries today, its enterprises might be furthered by foreign involvement. This came either through the provision of capital, or the arrival of skilled labour, mainly protestant refugees.¹⁴⁹ For example, both became available in the Weald after Jean Carré, a merchant from Arras in Flanders, obtained a patent for the making of window glass in 1567.¹⁵⁰ Thus the scene was set for the production of a good quality product,¹⁵¹ providing first the nobility and gentry, and later the yeomanry with window glass at an affordable price, revolutionising the design of the great houses, and by the early seventeenth century, providing greatly improved comfort for 'the better sort', even in the more benighted areas like Leek.

¹⁴⁰ Thirsk, 1997, 118-130.

¹⁴¹ Hertz, 1909, 716-718.

¹⁴² Thirsk, 1997, 120.

¹⁴³ Kerridge, 1985, 126.

¹⁴⁴ Hertz, 1909, 711.

¹⁴⁵ Thirsk, 1997, 119.

¹⁴⁶ Clay, 1984, vol. II, 209.

¹⁴⁷ Thirsk, 1978, 24, 28-30, 43-45.

¹⁴⁸ Thirsk, 1997, 118.

¹⁴⁹ Clay, 1984, II, 81-2; Godfrey, 1975, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Godfrey, 1975, 16-22.

¹⁵¹ Crossley, 1990, 226, 228-9.

The ripples created by government policies in the sixteenth century are discernible in both the industries that were to develop in Leek. In 1574 the townsmen of Macclesfield were defending a monopoly that they had acquired for button making, and by 1649 their buttons were being covered with silk.¹⁵² As in other areas of ‘proto-industrialisation’¹⁵³ circulating capital was needed with which to supply raw material to out-workers through a system of chapmen. This came initially from the merchants of Macclesfield, but by the end of the seventeenth century chapmen were working from Leek, and Sleight listed seven ‘button-men’ or ‘mohair-merchants’ in operation in the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁴ The buttons had initially been coarse buttons, covered with hair or linen thread, cheap and eminently suitable for outwork, but silk was expensive, and it is likely that silk buttons were made centrally under the direct control of the merchants.¹⁵⁵

Silk weaving was slower to arrive in Leek, but was present some time before 1672.¹⁵⁶ The industry had a chequered history. After a failed attempt at Southampton, it was successfully established by protestant refugees in London in the 1560s.¹⁵⁷ Legal imports of silk doubled in the 1590s, but the lack of local raw materials made it difficult to compete with France and Italy. In the second half of the seventeenth century England’s stranglehold on exports to the American colonies assisted the industry to some extent, and a major boost came in the 1680s with a further wave of Huguenot immigrants.¹⁵⁸ In 1692 a Royal Lustring Company was incorporated, and complained bitterly about the 700,000 lbs of manufactured silk goods that had arrived in England between 1685 and 1693. Smugglers compounded the problem, and a committee of the House of Commons accepted the Company’s statement that the number of silk-weaving looms fell from 768 in 1695-6 to under 50 in 1697.¹⁵⁹ If London had cause to complain, so too did Leek, and it is a measure of its growing dependency on silk weaving that 1699 and 1700 were years when Leek’s winter mortality rates rose to crisis proportions, and were out of step with the nation as a whole (cf. page 87 and Figs 3.3. and 3.5). None-the-less at both national and local levels the industry was to survive, receiving a major boost in 1765, when foreign

¹⁵² Davies, 1981, 42-3, 70,

¹⁵³ Mendels, 1972, 241; Clarkson, 1985, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Sleight, 1883, 6.

¹⁵⁵ Kerridge, 1985, 137, 199.

¹⁵⁶ LRO, John Wood, 1673.

¹⁵⁷ Thirsk, 1997, 119-120.

¹⁵⁸ Clay, 1984, vol. II, 39, 21.

¹⁵⁹ Hertz, 1909, 710-711.

imports were banned, giving the silk industry over half a century to re-establish itself.¹⁶⁰

The two industries provide a contrast in their subsequent development. 'Proto-industrialisation' required entrepreneurs with circulating capital to provide materials for out-workers. This, for the employers, could lead to the acquisition of sufficient wealth to progress towards industrialisation, the concentration of a workforce around machinery and buildings that required fixed capital, thus breaking the link between industry and the countryside, since it requires fulltime employment.¹⁶¹ For the button industry there is no evidence for factory production, and it dwindled after the successful growth of industries in Birmingham and Sheffield, which by 1725 were producing cheaper products from horn and metal.¹⁶² By contrast, the production of narrow wares, braids and ribbons, and the production of sewing silks and tailors' twist, became factory orientated 163 with first spinning and then weaving finding a home in the vast new mills that sprang up in the nineteenth century.

(iii) *The iron industry*

The fixed capital investment required for the primary iron industry places it outside the world of 'proto-industrialization'.¹⁶⁴ The direct (bloomery) method used throughout the Middle Ages produced good quality iron in small quantities but at high cost in terms of fuel and labour. Capital outlay was small,¹⁶⁵ and local gentry like the Draycotts might establish long-term interests where the best ores were available.¹⁶⁶ Iron ore for smelting, the basic essential for iron production, is to be found in many areas of Britain.¹⁶⁷ Despite the necessity for iron-ore and perhaps limestone to act as a flux, the major prerequisite for the production of iron was charcoal, a necessity that gradually became less important after Abraham Darby's successful experiments with coke in 1709.¹⁶⁸ Therefore the major areas of iron production centred where there were large acreages of woodland, as in the Forest of Dean and the Weald, where to be economically viable, works needed to be within three to five miles of an appropriate

¹⁶⁰ Wilde, 1974, 96-105.

¹⁶¹ Mendels, 1972, 241-244.

¹⁶² Kerridge, 1985, 140.

¹⁶³ Wilde, 1974, 98-101.

¹⁶⁴ Clarkson, 1985, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Schubert, 1957, 152, 161.

¹⁶⁶ Milner, 1983, 72.

¹⁶⁷ Schubert, 1957, 96-97.

¹⁶⁸ Hammersley, 1973, 593, 610; Schubert, 1957, 229, 331-335.

supply of managed coppice-woodland.¹⁶⁹ By the early modern period both primary and secondary iron industries were reliant on waterpower for bellows, hammers and grinding wheels, and for the secondary trades the availability of cheap coal was an essential.

Such areas had a variable history of growth and decline. In the Rockingham Forest, for example, there is ample evidence for an iron industry in the medieval period, but it had vanished by the fifteenth century.¹⁷⁰ By contrast, the Weald, with a long history of iron making, was the setting for the first of the government backed projects of the 1540s,¹⁷¹ and became unrivalled in the scale of its primary production in the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries,¹⁷² before slackening demand for Wealden bar iron and then ordnance led to a terminal decline. Here, despite the growth of scythe-making in the parishes of Goudhurst and Horsmonden in the sixteenth century,¹⁷³ and the continued production of such homely items as cooking pots into the middle of the seventeenth century,¹⁷⁴ no secondary industry developed to compete with Hallamshire or the West Midlands.¹⁷⁵

For most industries it was demand that triggered changing technology. For the iron industry it seems to have worked in reverse, with the indirect process introduced into the Weald by 1496 to meet royal armament needs, when local requirements, curbed by the high price of the product, could still be satisfied by the existing technology.¹⁷⁶ Thus in many parts of England bloomeries survived side-by-side with blast furnaces for a hundred years after the new technology had been introduced. Capital costs were undoubtedly a factor, for the building of a blast furnace with its attendant requirements were far beyond the reach of the minor gentry. Thus investment at Oakamoor involved the Earl of Shrewsbury, and subsequently Sir Francis Middleton.¹⁷⁷

But the northern uplands held little interest for the landed gentry, and by the seventeenth century the larger share of the Staffordshire iron production had moved southwards¹⁷⁸ where large estates were more in evidence.¹⁷⁹ By the 1620s Thomas

¹⁶⁹ Hammersley, 1973, 606.

¹⁷⁰ Foard, 2001, 94.

¹⁷¹ Thirsk, 1978, 24-25; Crossley, 1975, 5-11.

¹⁷² Schubert, 1957, 175.

¹⁷³ Zell, 1994, 132-134.

¹⁷⁴ Thirsk, 1978, 25.

¹⁷⁵ Short, 1989, 164.

¹⁷⁶ Schubert, 1957, 161-3, Clay, 1984, 52.

¹⁷⁷ Chester, 1979, 45-6.

¹⁷⁸ *VCH Staffs* II, 113.

Jolliffe, the only local man with sufficient capital to finance such a venture, was also on the move, acquiring an estate at Cofton, to the south of Birmingham.¹⁸⁰ 'Mr. Jolliffe' had been a major client of the Oakamoor furnace, purchasing 93 tons of bar iron between 1593 and 1608,¹⁸¹ and in the absence of a local tool making industry, it is tempting to associate him with the complaint of 1603 against engrossers of bar iron who 'get into their hands the most part of the iron made in all those woodland countries' to sell it 'at excessive and very great prices' to the struggling workers of the West Midlands.¹⁸² Was John Rothwell also involved, gaining his stock of scythes from one of the 'Black Country' scythe-making centres?

The West Midlands industry was centred forty-five miles south of Leek, while some thirty miles to the north west lay Hallamshire, the centre of the cutlery trade. Both developed secondary iron industries on the back of the sixteenth century population boom and the new high levels of iron production. Superficially the three areas appeared to have similar resources. By 1585 the first blast furnaces were in operation in the immediate vicinity of Sheffield, and later furnaces were built on the Tankersley seam of ironstone¹⁸³ Coal was available for smithy fires, sandstone from the Lower Coal measures could be quarried for grinding,¹⁸⁴ and abundant waterpower was available from five major streams that tumbled down from the moorland above. The Rivelin alone supported 21 water-powered sites in 1794.¹⁸⁵ A landlocked site, to which the quality of iron needed to finish the cutting edge of knives and tools had to be imported, was no deterrent in an area with a long history of cutlery production.¹⁸⁶

A similar picture can be drawn for the West Midlands where the first furnace was established on Cannock Chase by William Lord Paget between 1561 and 1563. Although parts of the tool making area lay clear of the primary production,¹⁸⁷ the distances were considerably less than those covered by iron from Oakamoor (Table 5.1). Coal was available for smithies, with the major advantage that here the copyholders had the right to mine, not just for themselves, as in Leek, but for sale, and once again, there was a previous tradition of production.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁹ Rowlands, 1989, 106.

¹⁸⁰ Sleight, 1883, 33.

¹⁸¹ Nottingham University. The Middleton MSS.

¹⁸² Thirsk and Cooper, 1972, 188.

¹⁸³ Schubert, 1957, 181-183.

¹⁸⁴ Hey, 1990, 345; Radley, 1963-4, 171.

¹⁸⁵ Crossley, 1989, v-ix; Crossley, 1990, 138.

¹⁸⁶ Hey, 1990, 351; Schubert, 1957, 161.

¹⁸⁷ Schubert, 1957, 180.

¹⁸⁸ Frost, 1981, 29; Rowlands, 1989, 106.

Iron ore, coal, wood and water power were all available in Leek, though not on any great scale. Manorial control was weak, and ample areas of moorland were available. If there were problems finding adequate wood supplies for Oakamoor furnace, these were no greater than those at the Paget's furnace on Cannock Chase, although in neither case does long-term renewability seem to have been considered.¹⁸⁹ But Leek was even more land-locked than Sheffield, lay isolated from major north-south roads, and lacked a local craft tradition on which to build. Above all, it lacked the landed gentry to provide capital for the latest technology, thus the eventual demise of all but a token iron industry was inevitable.

Any part played by inheritance customs was incidental. The primary industry required specialist workers who could, when need arose, migrate. The secondary industries, on the experience of Hallamshire and the West Midlands, were built on the basis of earlier craft skills, and the employment itself drew population. In south Staffordshire inheritance was by primogeniture, but Thirsk's other pre-conditions are in evidence. Plentiful areas of waste were coupled with weak manorial control, and settlement went unhindered.¹⁹⁰ By contrast, in Hallamshire, although partible inheritance was never formalised, Hey indicates that provision was made for all the male members of the family.¹⁹¹ A similar practice in Leek meant the provision of a livelihood, but not the division of inherited property. It is not clear from Hey's statement whether this also obtained near Sheffield. In the Weald it was otherwise, partible inheritance was certainly practised, with the consequent sub-division of holdings, and by 1600 the population found employment in three industries, glass, iron and cloth,¹⁹² but the presence of raw materials rather than an urgent need for employment governed two out of the three industries. Partible inheritance might add urgency to the need for by-employment, but it did not necessarily create it.

WEALTH AND POVERTY: THE EVIDENCE OF THE HOUSING

(i) *The over-view*

It is against these patterns of economic change that Leek's housing should initially be measured. During the Middle Ages many parts of southern England contained concentrations of population and wealth that left a substantial legacy of medieval

¹⁸⁹ Welch, 2000, 61-63.

¹⁹⁰ Frost, 1973, 353-4, 541.

¹⁹¹ Hey, 1990, 354.

¹⁹² Short, 1989, 157-9.

buildings.¹⁹³ Wealth, quality of building, and durability tend to be closely linked, and in Staffordshire, one of the poorer counties, relatively few domestic buildings survive from before 1500.¹⁹⁴ In this context Leek and its surrounding uplands present no surprises. Only five houses have been found that are of medieval date. None is likely to pre-date 1450, and the very importance of Mosslee serves to highlight the general absence of the open hall and the cross-passage plan that is the hallmark of late medieval housing.

The evidence for the sixteenth century suggests that construction of small-scale housing proceeded at a steady if not spectacular rate, with a strong element of 'make-do and mend' evident in both documents and town buildings.¹⁹⁵ The results, by southern standards, are unimpressive, and consist mostly of small cruck or box-framed buildings, with small stone houses of one or one-and-a-half storeys evident in the town. The former are notorious for their lack of headroom, as only the most carefully chosen crucks gave adequate clearance for an upper storey. Dated examples span the period 1499 to 1600 (Appendix 6.3), but are insufficient to show trends within the century.

The box-framed buildings belong to the countryside, where the expanding economy first becomes evident. These were larger and more comfortable than the cruck-built houses, with headroom for an upper storey and perhaps an attic. They are 'transitional' houses with hall or houseplace open to the roof but served by a firehood or chimney. Examples are few, mainly fragmentary, and with one exception, undated. The occasional stone farmhouse may also be of sixteenth century date, but there seems to have been a turning point in the local economy around 1600, when a greater variety of goods begin to be recorded in the probate inventories, and the wealthier men started to build with confidence and an element of display. By national standards their buildings were modest, a scaled-down version of Gervase Markham's 'plain man's country house',¹⁹⁶ with wings that are a mere two rooms deep, but in local terms they represent the new affluence of the pastoral farmer who had goods to sell at a healthy price.

Over the last 50 years one aspect of vernacular building studies has received repeated attention. In 1953 Hoskins argued that a 'great rebuilding' took place between

¹⁹³For example: Martin and Martin, 1991 (Sussex); Johnson, 1993 (Suffolk); Pearson, 1994 (Kent).

¹⁹⁴ Meeson, 1996, 10-24.

¹⁹⁵ PRO SC2/202/65. Cleverdon,

¹⁹⁶ Reproduced in Cooper, 1999, 17 from Gervase Markham, 1613, *The English Husbandman*.

1570 and 1640 in all except the four northern counties,¹⁹⁷ where Barley (1967) indicates a similar pattern between 1660 and 1720.¹⁹⁸ Brunskill (1970) stressed variability of timing with security of tenure as a factor¹⁹⁹ and later writers have accepted the premise, stressing the variations in timing for their own particular areas. The only serious challenge came from Machin (1977) who constructed an overview based substantially on date stones from seventeen counties from which to argue for rising growth from the mid-sixteenth century, continuing throughout the seventeenth century, and cyclical demand thereafter.²⁰⁰ Alcock (1983) has criticised this approach for its use of conflated evidence,²⁰¹ while Johnson (1993) points to the likelihood that Machin's evidence is skewed towards a late seventeenth century peak by changing attitudes to individual expression, resulting in the absence of dated structures in the rich southern areas most likely to have built early.²⁰² Ryan (2000), reviewing a well-documented Essex village with a substantial survival rate for medieval houses, suggested 'housing revolution' would be a more appropriate term.²⁰³

For Leek there was a major period of building activity spanning the seventeenth century, and a variable pattern thereafter. Many houses carry date stones, giving a higher total for the medieval parish of Leek than Machin found in the whole of Berkshire, or Hertfordshire, or Huntingdonshire: none pre-dates 1605 (Appendix 6.6). Since the buildings in Leek are known, the evidence can be refined beyond the simple statement of a 'great rebuilding'. Much of this housing was new, an inevitable consequence of population expansion, but different levels of society arrived at new-build, rebuild, modernisation or extension at different points in the century, according to their levels of wealth and their priorities for spending. The major men, with a breadth of interests and sizeable ring-fenced farms, benefited most from the success of commercial farming, and were most active in the decades leading up to the Civil War. Lesser men tended to be more cautious, and on many of the older farms the building was piecemeal, or took place after the Restoration when the gentry turned their attention to barns and garden walls.

Such a marked increase in both population and wealth made an increase in the rural housing stock inevitable. The 'new' houses may now stand isolated, but often

¹⁹⁷ Hoskins, 1953, 44.

¹⁹⁸ Barley, 1967, 757. Others examples are listed in Machin, 1977, 34-5.

¹⁹⁹ Brunskill, 1970, 27.

²⁰⁰ Machin, 1977, 34 -5, 54 -56.

²⁰¹ Alcock, 1983, 45.

²⁰² Johnson, 1993 b, 118-120.

²⁰³ Ryan, 2000, 11.

formed part of a small community. Two seventeenth century farmhouses survive at Apesford, for example, and one major house has been demolished, but in the decade between 1635 and 1645 no less than six couples from the hamlet were baptising their children.²⁰⁴ While some may have formed part of a multiple household it seems likely that the hamlet was larger. Examples of lost or shrunken hamlets could be multiplied to include many of the early farms, where the 'new' housing survives but the older and less comfortable housing has been lost to the steady and continuing progress of engrossment, and the reduction of those involved in farming.

Probate inventories reveal the newly affluent revelling in a greater variety of household goods, but the result of their spending is not seen in extensive urban rebuilding. There were exceptions. William Jolliffe built in 1627; the Roebuck was erected in 1625; the Swan had been extended and remodelled by 1639, while Thomas Parker built later, on the heels of the Civil War, benefiting as a lawyer from the lively land-market induced by the growth of freehold tenure. But in 1673 Blome could still write 'The buildings are but poor, and for the most part thatched',²⁰⁵ and it is clear that it was countryside rather than the town that saw the bulk of the seventeenth century building boom.

The eighteenth century brought a change of emphasis, mirroring both the development of the silk and button industries, and the steady march of enclosure. Houses on the established farms had seen recent improvement, and were built to last in a way their predecessors were not.²⁰⁶ Those on the smaller non-heritable tenancies, including most of the surviving cruck buildings, missed out on the main phase of rebuilding, to be replaced fitfully over the next two centuries, and from the eighteenth century the bulk of rural building took place on newly enclosed land, a process accelerated by Parliamentary Enclosure. As the land was improved barns became farmhouses, cottages were extended, and the farmhouse with attached farm-buildings came into being.

Fashions change. Houses with central entrances leading to an entrance hall and stairwell appear in the early eighteenth century [25, 109, 131]. This was a radical revision. No longer was the main living area the central access point for the rest of the house; it had become a private space into which one might or might not be invited. Houses of this type remained unusual in both town and countryside before the middle of the eighteenth century, after which they became a regular feature of town building.

²⁰⁴ Leek parish register 1635-45.

²⁰⁵ Sleight, 1883, 4.

²⁰⁶ Machin, 1994, 7-8.

From then onwards the older rural houses might be subject to remodelling; the main entrance being removed bodily from A to B to create the desired result [82, 87, 139]. With notable exceptions, [80, 115, 185] the countryside lived with what it had. With the growth of the large estates, a grander house might be required by the owner (29, 156), but their tenants were dependant on their landlords. With the exception of Ipstones village where mining caused a mini-housing boom, the subsequent activity centred on the town, echoing the shift of emphasis evidenced in the probate inventories (Appendix 4.1).

Town building seems to have been limited in the late seventeenth century, and the silk industry took time to recover from the 1690s. The Vicarage [2] and Greystones [25] mark an upturn in activity, which continued into the 1720s and 1730s, though the numbers remain small. Lawyers continued to be prominent, but the successful establishment of the button and silk industries must surely be responsible for the majority of the eighteenth-century town houses, besides the occasional rural property. How far these and their successors eradicated good quality seventeenth century building is a matter of speculation. The Hearth tax (Table 7.1) indicates a number of substantial houses, although it cannot confirm their date. Only two of the brick town houses carry date stones (1747 and 1760), but a cluster appear to have been built in the ensuing decades when the industry gained government protection, followed by a spate of nineteenth century activity in the town's industrial hey-day.

As for the present, in the countryside another phase is in progress. Modern farming is demanding still larger units. Small farm after small farm is occupied by a man approaching retirement, and with no son willing to follow him. Of the major holdings, Finney Lane, Whitehough, Hollin House, Mosslee, and Rushtonhall are separated from their farmlands. A new bungalow may now be the farmhouse, or the land may run with another farm. The Dairyhouse is unoccupied, the future of Stanlowe and the Ashes is uncertain. Abbey Farm, Harracles, Rudyard, Windygates and Cloud House still farm their own lands, but the tide is against them. The age of the car and the commuter has its own effects on the rural economy, and with it the local housing.

(ii) *Housing as an expression of status*

If the economy governed the overall pattern, the pocket of the individual ruled the final result. Little can be said of the medieval period. Mosslee and the Hall House lie

outside the local vernacular tradition, and are, by definition,²⁰⁷ unrepresentative of the majority [43, 45]. The scattered householders in their isolated hamlets were still little more than subsistence farmers, struggling to pay rents and taxes, and occupied housing at or below the level of the surviving buildings. A cruck building with a single open bay and perhaps another, with or without an entrance passage, seems the most likely scenario. Two much-altered examples and the fragments of a third are all that have been found [34, 38, 42].

The scale remained small in the sixteenth century. Two bays with a subdivided second bay seem to have been common, although chimneys might introduce a new element of comfort, as might an upper room. The larger farmhouses, box-framed or built of stone, boasted a single crosswing [73, 151] or even a pair within a rectangular plan [160], but they remained modest and ill-equipped: representative of a society that had little to spare beyond the basics of life, and had not yet fully awoken to the world of wealth and status.

The seventeenth century saw radical changes in both respects. As contemporary writers made abundantly plain, money and status were intimately linked.²⁰⁸ In the new century there was a widening gap between the gentlemen, the yeomen 'of the better sort', and the men who made up the majority, although the community as a whole saw fit to build in remarkably durable fashion, save only the invisible poor.

A self-conscious element is evident in the larger houses where a hall and two cross-wings were standard. Their builders were men who looked both ways, back to their medieval past, and forward to prosperous commercial farming. They were the established gentry: the Ashenhursts, Biddulphs, Edges, Finneys, Hollins and Rudyards with names that are local place-names, and the Broughs, Bulkleys and Wedgwoods, who occupied prime medieval sites, and whose eldest sons inherited. Only a minority ranked above the 'mere' gentry and none above esquire,²⁰⁹ but like the lesser men, they had incomes gained from multiple holdings of either freehold or copyhold properties, or substantial ring-fenced farms resulting from the engrossment of the surrounding properties, and perhaps from local industry. Most built before the Civil War, and built houses consciously related to their past, with medieval ground plans modified, in all but two cases, by the omission of a cross-passage, yet modern in terms of heating, glazing, and the provision of upper floors. For some this was remodelling, and the template was still in place.

²⁰⁷ See Mercer, 1975, 1.

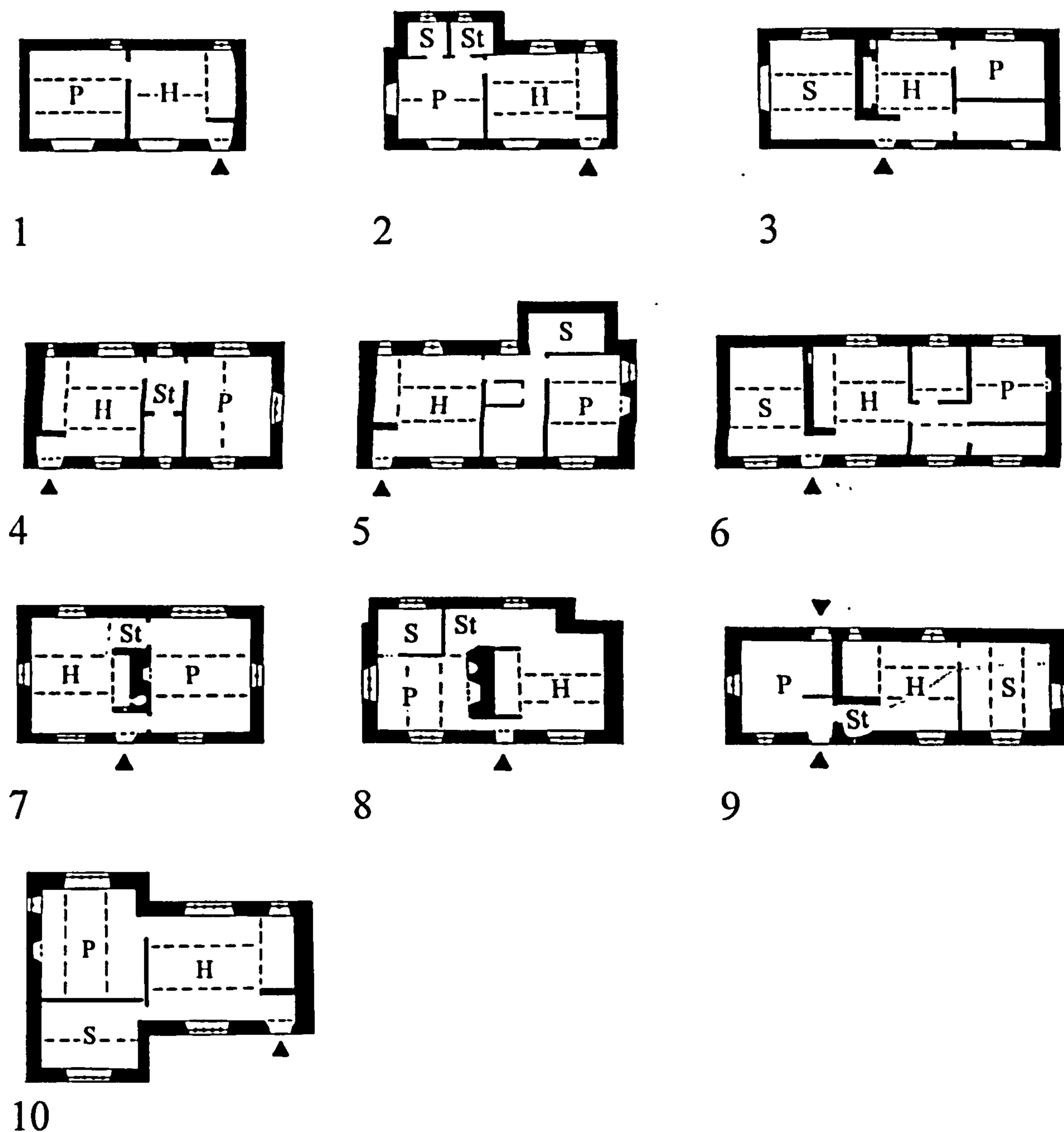
²⁰⁸ Laslett, 1983, 27, 30-36; Wrightson, 1993, 19-25.

²⁰⁹ Cooper, 1999, 5-6.

In the same tradition are Cloud House [149] and the eastern house at Whitehough [107]. Both are on medieval sites, and built for established families who could afford such expensive items as close-studding, mullion and transom windows, or canted bays as the outward expression of their status. Larger than average, they are single crosswing houses with direct access to the hall from the gable end, allowing an immediate view of the upper end, which at Cloud House, makes self-conscious use of close-studding (Fig. 6.56). Here, as in the larger houses that lack a cross passage, the single entrance emphasises the importance of the hall as the main living area, and as the contact point through which all traffic passed, and beyond which, as at Thornleigh (Fig. 6.70), privacy might be reached in either service room or parlour. For the large double crosswing houses this was coupled with a porch, a status symbol to be copied by the social climber with a more limited budget [68, Fig. 6.58]. It would be simplistic to push the argument too far, but the down-market equivalent of the full-scale hall and crosswing house is the three-bay house with opposed entrances [93, 169]. Only two are known, but both occupy a key site in a medieval hamlet, and whether from a dislike of change or sense of family continuity, they represent a strong form of conservatism.

A minority were more adventurous. Some, like the Traffords, were moneyed incomers, others had outside contacts, and both might build to plans that lay outside the local norm. The large double pile house at Sharpcliffe [105], Coalpit Ford [39] with its upper entrance, small non-standard houses like Hangingstone [67] and Whitehall's Hayhouse [95] all fall into this category, and does the double-pile of the Hall House in Leek [9], the early eighteenth century house at Dunwood [131], and perhaps Greystones [25] and Allen's tenement (the Abbey Inn) [109]. None are architect designed. They are still the work of local craftsmen using local materials, a far cry from the quiet sophistication of Wallgrange (Fig. 6.35) built for the gentleman tenants of the Leveson-Gower family, but they lie outside the common pattern because of the expectations of their builders.

While the gentry might give conscious thought to expressing their status, the majority wanted a plain comfortable house, and the new-style housing of the seventeenth century can be reduced to a number of standard forms, the stock-in-trade of the local builder that could be modified to suit the purse of the client. Its hallmark was the lobby entrance. Nothing is less designed to impress than a few square feet of space that brings you face-to-face with a blank wall, but it added to comfort at minimal cost, and in this it was eminently successful.



KEY

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Two-bay lobby entrance plan. | Based on Hallgate [81]. |
| 2. Two-bay lobby entrance plan with a rear outshut. | Based on Bank Top [139]. |
| 3. Three-bay lobby entrance plan with four cells. | Based on Shaw [71]. |
| 4. Unheated central bay plan. | Based on Jackhaye [167]. |
| 5. Unheated central bay plan with rear outshut. | Based on Basford Bridge [36]. |
| 6. Unheated central bay with a fourth bay. | Based on Rownall [48]. |
| 7. Central lobby entrance plan. | Based on Hollin House [58]. |
| 8. Central lobby entrance plan with rear outshut. | Based on Meadow Place [100]. |
| 9. Three bay house with opposed entrances. | Based on Gate Farm [93]. |
| 10. Single crosswing house with lobby entrance. | Based on Home Farm [128]. |

Fig.7.1 *Plans found regularly in the smaller seventeenth century houses.*

Variants on the lobby entrance plan are the basic stock in trade. By contrast, no. 9 is unusual, a small-scale version of the conservatism found in the larger gentry houses.

The range for Leek is best summarised by a chart (Fig. 7.1) and here a problem arises with terminology. Contemporaries used the term bay, whether the house was of stone or of timber. It represented the crossways division of the house into units that might then be subdivided laterally. For many houses the crossways division corresponds with the position of the roof trusses, the accepted meaning of bay. But the builder had a choice. He might exercise this for the whole or part of the house, and vary it from floor to floor (Fig. 6.73). Given the incompatibility of the contemporary usage with the modern use of the term cell, I have ignored the latter. It does however have its uses. A two-bay house bay might be divided into three cells, a three bay house into four or more. Hence the difficulty of equating descriptive inventory and plan-form for a building that is unknown (Appendix 6.2).

There can be little doubt that single-bay houses were the homes of the poor, and that large H-shaped houses belonged to the gentry or their tenants. The picture in between is less certain. Some houses with only one heated room were occupied by gentry (Fig. 7.2) or by yeoman farmers. Admittedly the latter term was something of a cover-all, but it does not suggest poverty. Houses of two or three bays, or of two bays with an outshut might all come into this category. The latter provided good quality small-scale housing, with a cool service room at the rear of the house and space for a staircase without cluttering a main room. Many of the three-bay houses are less well provided, and serve the smaller farms, where the provision of a second house for either an older or a younger generation was an expense to be avoided. The additional unheated bay behind the main stack could fulfil this function, or it could be used for workshop space; in either case it was cheaper to build than a separate structure. For the wealthier families, who could provide their widows or heirs with a separate home, a small farmhouse of two-bays was ideal, and by no means a sign of poverty.

(iii) *Housing and the Hearth Tax*

Are hearths rather than bays the key to relative affluence? A major project on the Hearth Tax designed to give a national overview already provides evidence for the extremes of wealth and poverty.²¹⁰ *Kent Hearth Tax* complements Pearson's work on the medieval housing, representing one of England's wealthier counties.²¹¹ The projected volume for Durham, extracts from which are published in Spufford (2000), covers one of the four northern counties, where both Appleby, and Wrightson and

²¹⁰ Spufford, 2000, 10-16.

²¹¹ Harrington et al, 2000; Pearson, 1994.

Levine found such graphic evidence for poverty.²¹² Staffordshire's place has yet to be defined, but its intermediate position on the fringes of the highland zone might be expected to register, as might the poverty of Eccleshall, the contrasts to be found in Kinver and Needwood,²¹³ and the variations in wealth between upland and lowland Staffordshire.

But what of the local level? Hearths represent initial expenditure and future fuel consumption, the level of luxury the family was seeking and the comfort it hoped to maintain. Some fuel was free, wood on the farms and turf on the moorlands, but the smaller hearths were coal burning and ^{represent} regular expense.

The standard houses of seventeenth century Leek might have a variable number of hearths. Most types can be found with only a single cooking hearth. Fig. 7, 1-4 all come in this category, but any one of the plans could have two or more hearths, either as part of the original design or added soon afterwards. A particular need was for a separate hearth to accommodate a small circular bake-stone for oatcake making, where the fat needed to be kept scrupulously clean and away from the smoke of the main hearth. A number of houses [169, 139] have such a hearth added to the corner of a formerly unheated parlour, soon after the Hearth Tax ceased to operate, and at Bank Top its circular fitting and bakestone still survived in the 1990s [139].

Two and three hearth houses took two main forms. A three-bay plan was common, with an unheated central bay housing a service room and the staircase (Fig. 7.1, 4, 5). These had a cooking hearth in the houseplace, a heated parlour, and sometimes a heated chamber above. A fourth, and initially unheated bay might lie behind the main stack providing independent unheated accommodation in the manner of the three-bay lobby entrance house (Fig. 7.1, 9). Houses with a single crosswing coupled a more generous allowance of space with similar possibilities, and could likewise be three-hearth houses (Fig. 7.1, 10). Less common are central lobby entrance houses, but these appear to have had three or four hearths depending on the height of the building (Fig. 7.1, 7, 8)

Only five men were listed as Esquire in the 1666 Hearth Tax returns. Four paid for seven or more hearths, and one for four hearths. Of the 58 perceived gentry only 21 paid for five hearths or above, 22 paid for three or four hearths (Fig. 7.2), leaving fifteen paying for one or two hearths. Sixteen who are not identified as gentry occupied properties taxed for five or more hearths. In some cases they were tenants, like

²¹² Appleby, 1973, 430; Wrightson and Levine, 1989, 138; 1991, 157.

²¹³ Spufford, 1995, 16; Thirsk, 1969, 3.

William Yardley at the Dairyhouse [78] or Joseph Wilkinson at the Ashes [52], in others they represent the vagaries of the local Hearth Tax returns, no gentry are named for Ipstones, for example.

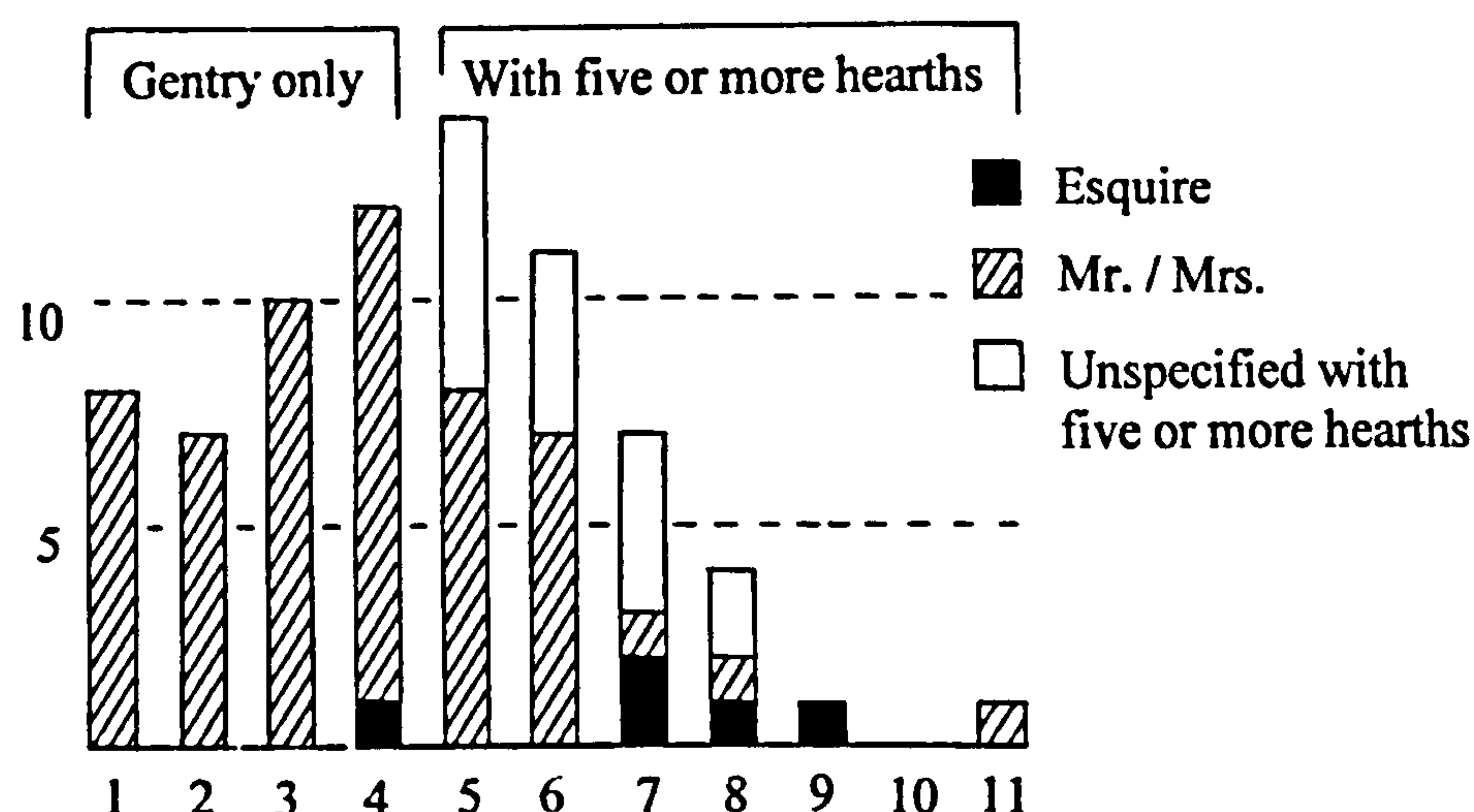


Fig. 7.2 *Hearth totals for the gentry, and houses with five or more hearths in 1666*

Cooper has analysed the figures for six counties, and identified considerable regional variation. The average number of hearths for gentry (those listed as Mr. or Gentleman) ranged from 8.00 in Surrey, to 4.5 in Derbyshire, and for those ranking as Esquire from 14.9 in Surrey, to 12.7 in Derbyshire and 9.0 in Westmorland.²¹⁴ Predictably Surrey, with its proximity to London, suggests greater wealth than Derbyshire. For Leek the gentry averaged 3.8 and the Esquires averaged 8.7, less in both categories than in any of the analysed groups, and some measure of both the local perception of gentry status, and the comparative nature of the new found prosperity.

Relatively few of the Hearth Tax returns can be related to houses that are still standing, or are sufficiently complete to allow comparison with similar but much altered buildings (Table. 7.2). A large H-shaped house like Finney Lane might have as few as four hearths [42], and Gregory King's measure of five hearths as an indication of gentry status²¹⁵ appears to founder, until it is remembered that the Finneys held property elsewhere and that this may be regarded as a second home.²¹⁶ Mr. Hollins paid for five hearths at Mosslee [45], as did Francis Finney at Coalpitford [39], and Thomas Butley (Bulkley) at Stanlowe [136]; John Potts had six hearths at Fairboroughs [66]; William Wedgwood, esquire, had seven at Harracles [132], as had Thomas Rudyard and his tenant at Rudyard Hall [141] and Dieulacres Abbey farm [110]; Timothy Edge had eight at Horton Hall [82], and with his usual capacity to

²¹⁴ Cooper, 1999, 6

²¹⁵ Spufford, 1995, 9

²¹⁶ Cooper, 1999, 6 and 347.

Table 7.2 Houses, hearths, plans and owners: some seventeenth century examples.

Name	No.	Owner in 1666	Status	House plan
Wallgrange	11	Edward Downes ten.	Mr.	Demolished. See Appendix 6.2 for rooms. ²¹⁷
Bottom	9	William Jolley	Esq	Demolished. Documents suggest major hall.
Booths Hall	8	William Janney		Multiphase. May include other properties.
Horton Hall	8	Timothy Edge	Gent	Hall and two crosswings. ²¹⁸
Rudyard Hall	7	Thomas Rudyard	Esq	Probably includes Abbey farm aswell.
Whitehalgh	7	(by house name)		Hall and crosswing (5); second house (2). ²¹⁹
Windygates	7	Edmond Hulme	(ten.)	Hall and two crosswings. ²²⁰
Harracles	7	William Wedgwood	Esq.	Hall, two crosswings, detached kitchen. ²²¹
Abbey Green	7	William Tunicliffe	Mr.	Multiphase, may include tenant properties.
Ashes	6	Joseph Wilkinson	(ten.)	Hall and two crosswings.
Dairyhouse	6	William Yeardley	(ten.)	Hall and two crosswings.
Fairboroughs	6	John Pott	Gent	Hall and two crosswings, added kitchen.
2-4 Church St.	5	Thomas Parker	Mr.	Single pile town house with detached kitchen.
Coalpit Ford	5	Francis Finney	Mr.	Non-standard design. Service in basement.
Mosslee	5	Philip Hollins	Mr.	Major medieval hall, two crosswings.
Stanlowe	5	John Butley	Gent	Hall and two crosswings plus extra parlour.
Finney Lane	4	William Finney	Mr.	Hall and two crosswings. ²²²
Hollin House	4			Central lobby entrance house (large). ²²³
Lawn Farm	4	Richard Heath	Gent	Hall and single crosswing.
Basford Bridge	3	John Forde		Unheated central bay plan. ²²⁴
Buckley Farm	3	James Buckley	Gent	Single pile, three bay with external stacks.
Cheddleton Gr.	3			Former open hall with added parlour bay. ²²⁵
Meadow Place	3			Central lobby entrance. ²²⁶
Middle Hulme	3	Widow Brough		Hall and single crosswing. ²²⁷
Home Farm	3	Timothy Plant		Lobby entrance house, single crosswing. ²²⁸
Manor Farm	3	Roger Tomkinson		Central lobby entrance plus additions. ²²⁹
Thornleigh	3	Widow Armit		Unheated central bay plan.
Wallhill	3	Thomas Goodfellow		Hall and single crosswing.
Hollinhurst	2	Hugh Sherratt		Cruck house with 2-bay addition (1656).
Revedge	2	Randle Ashenhurst		Unheated central bay plan.
Bank Top	1	Richard Johnson		Two-bay lobby entrance with rear outshut.
Ford Old Hall	1	John Torr		Three-bay house with opposed entrances.
Ford Old School	1	Richard Howerd		Cruck house, two full bays and smoke bay.
Gate Farm	1			Three bay house with opposed entrances.
Hallgate	1			Two-bay lobby entrance house.
Hallhouse CH	1	(by house name)		Two-bay open hall. Stack inserted?

KEY

Status is that recorded in the 1666 Hearth Tax. Houses untraceable in the Hearth Tax are included if the archaeological evidence is sound. Tenancies indicated if known.

²¹⁷ Wallgrange: a major tenant property of the Leveson Gower family, purchased with Trentham Abbey.

²¹⁸ Horton Hall. Hall, hall chamber, two parlours, two parlour chambers, kitchen, cellar hearth.

²¹⁹ Whitehough: (1) eastern house, hall, hall chamber (demolished) parlour, parlour chamber, attic.
(2) western house, houseplace, house chamber?

²²⁰ Windygates: by name in 1662 (illegible total). 1666 list in same order, assigned on basis of position.

²²¹ Harracles: John Wedgwood's inventory (1590) gives hearth details for all rooms except the hall.

²²² Finney Lane: all original hearths survive, no additions.

²²³ Hollin House: houseplace, parlour, parlour chamber, lower attic over the parlour.

²²⁴ Basford Bridge: three hearths in situ. Houseplace (firehood removed), parlour and parlour chamber.

²²⁵ Cheddleton Grange: hall (inserted firehood), parlour, parlour chamber. Kitchen added (firehood).

²²⁶ Meadow Place: houseplace (firehood), parlour and parlour chamber (stone hearths and stack).

²²⁷ Middle Hulme: fourth hearths extant, house, house chamber, parlour, parlour chamber.

²²⁸ Home Farm: all three original hearths in situ. House (firehood), parlour and parlour chamber.

²²⁹ Manor Farm: back-to-back kitchen and houseplace hearths survive. Full plan uncertain.

outspend his neighbours, William Jolliffe had nine at Bottom. Wallgrange, with eleven hearths, was exceptional since it was one of the major tenant properties of the Leveson-Gower estate, and appears to have had another of the houses at some time occupied by William Jolliffe (Appendix 6.2). The figures for Whitehough sound a warning as its seven hearths represent two houses [107], as, quite specifically, do the six hearths at Bradshaws [54].

No comparable material is available for the later houses, the Window Tax covers only a single township, and the Land Tax returns are not concerned with buildings, neither are there the number or variety of new buildings to allow a similar measure of classification.

In the eighteenth century the social gulf widened still further, and with the growth of major estates architect designed houses make their appearance, un-rooted in the older traditions unless an existing house was remodelled. Their owners were unquestionably gentlemen, albeit still outside the ranks of nobility, and with a wealth that was sometimes founded on 'trade'. The older farmhouses continued in use, many reduced to tenant status. Alterations took place. Kitchens were added, heating arrangements were modified, roofs were raised, and the façade might be altered to give a central entrance. These might occur on tenant or freehold properties, while the more prosperous of the long-standing freeholders might make substantial additions [61, 63], but on the older farms the main in put of fixed capital had already occurred, and the succeeding centuries saw no equivalent.

The later farmhouses, built on newly enclosed land or resulting from cottage extension, filled a humbler niche, and their builders economised by having their farm buildings under the same roofline. On the older freeholds the building of detached houses continued, although few in number and variable in scale. Frith Bottom with three floors and stylish interior lies at the upper end [115], while the plain solid craftsmanship of Lower Lady Meadows is more down to earth [99]. Piecemeal extension of both house and farm buildings at Lower Lady Meadows is a reminder that the farm came first, if it was not properly equipped it could not be profitable, and if money was short the house could wait.

The mid-late eighteenth century townhouses might face the world with similar facades, but conceal a wide variations in capacity, from single pile to double, from cramped quarters to spacious, a clear reflection of the owner's pocket and his desire to impress. and while impossible to quantify, are a league away from the rows of workers housing which accompanied the big mills into the world.

(iv) The forgotten poor

Evidence for the poor is plentiful. Exemptions were made from the Hearth Tax; almshouses were built; each quarter was made responsible for its own poor; the deaths of children at the Foundling Hospital are recorded in large numbers; the Quakers set up charities for their own; the Enclosure Awards identify squatters; poorhouses and workhouses came into being; cottage holdings can be identified on Morridge, and roadside settlement can be identified in Horton. But the houses of the poor are elusive.

Apart from the Ash Almshouses [1] the only seventeenth century evidence is the single bay cottage built into Morridge Side [32], and the ambiguous buildings behind Haregate and 2-4 Church Street [160, 3], which may be single bay houses or detached kitchens with accommodation above. Windy Arbor [51], the School Cottages at Bradnop [35] and the Quaker Cottages [14] survive from the eighteenth century, as do houses on Back' o the Street in Leek, where the north-facing town lands above Mill Street attracted squatters. A sturdy little nineteenth century house survives at Roche End [123], the last of a cluster similar to many that survive on the high moorlands beyond the parish boundary to the east. All have only a single ground floor room to the first phase of their building, and one or two rooms above. Nineteenth century back-to-the-cliff workers' housing lined Mill Street until a few decades ago, and everywhere, in both town and countryside, houses that were no longer deemed suitable for the more prosperous members of society sank down the social scale, to be subdivided, before reaching a state of neglect leading to replacement or demolition.

The present state of Windy Arbor [51] is typical. Listed Grade II, its roof tiles were removed some years ago, and it sits under tarpaulin while the owner and the local authority ponder its future. Too small for modern use, its character will be destroyed if it is enlarged. The estate agents' dream transaction, the country cottage, is a substantially enlarged version of a yeoman farmhouse, and the houses of the poor continue to disappear.

IN CONCLUSION

Marrying the demands of archaeology and history has its problems, which are compounded if the archaeology covers a landscape, and includes even a small proportion of its buildings. Hodges talks of 'parachutists and truffle hunters'.²³⁰ My truffles have been as elusive as the township boundaries, and the field-names leading to a bloomery site, or as self-evident as the varying number of chimneys topping a

²³⁰ Hodges, 1989, 287-91.

three-storey building. The view gained from my parachute is well below the dizzy heights of theoretical models, encompassing the economic and demographic background of a single parish, and an attempt to place it in context. The difficulty has been in knowing what to select and where to stop.

For the landscape I have aimed to work in the tradition established by Hoskins (1967), and Taylor (1974), and enlarged on by Aston, Rowley and Bond (1974, 1976), all of whom place emphasis on the benefits of combining field archaeology with documentation, and particularly the evidence of the maps. For the buildings extramural classes with Stanley Jones and Bob Hawkins at Sheffield University, the conventions and approaches suggested by the RCHME (1990), their regional studies of housing (Pearson, 1986; Giles, 1986), and contacts with the Vernacular Architecture Group have been important influences.

Many criticisms can be levelled at this work. No field walking has been undertaken, severely limiting the coverage of prehistory and pre-Conquest settlement patterns. Earthwork surveys have been ignored in favour of house recording. Important categories of document have been used selectively. A detailed study of the manorial records for Horton would provide a thesis in itself; a complete trawl through the probate documents would allow a better view of the descriptive inventories; access to buildings that have eluded me would enlarge the picture, particularly the remaining gentry houses, and the later buildings in the town.

Devotees of the more obscure aspects of vernacular architecture will find this study exasperating. Approaches to survey work are as varied as the people concerned, and the disciplines with which they are primarily involved. Machin comments on the sheer quantity of archaeological information contained in a single house, 'much of it unique or found only occasionally in other houses', and adds 'such information is curious but of limited significance'.²³¹ Meeson's view is diametrically opposed, 'no recorder can assume that the minutiae in standing houses demand less careful attention than that obtaining from archaeological excavation'.²³² The viewpoints are irreconcilable. The one aims for a broad over view, and is within the tolerance level of a busy owner and a house that is in daily use. The latter is an ideal that is rarely realistic unless a house is empty, and time is not at a premium. In this study I have endeavoured to record as many houses as possible, so that I could identify patterns

²³¹ Machin, 1994, 19.

²³² Meeson, 2001, 2.

rather than oddities, limiting the work to a record of the main features indicating form and phasing, and documentary work to provide them with a background.

Overall the exercise has proved rewarding. Though it only touches on the broader issues called for by Dyer (1997) it does provide a study in which the history of the buildings is taken beyond that of ownership and individual incident, into the realms of the economy that produced them, and the landscape in which they are set.