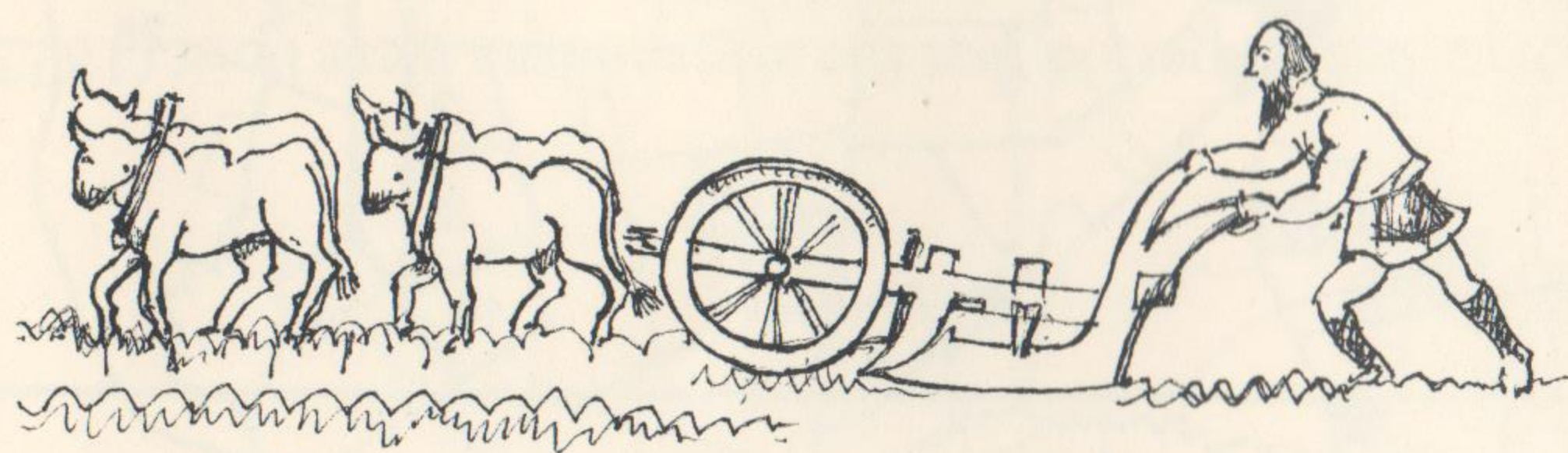


Domesday

Evidence of an Iron Age hill-fort at Ilbury, and the discovery of Romano-British remains east and north east of the Oxford road, suggest that there has probably been a substantial settlement hereabouts since prehistoric times. By the 6th or 7th century, considerable agricultural development must have taken place, followed by the establishment of the 'tun' (place) of Daeda's people in the 10th century. Practically nothing is known about these pre-Conquest years. By 1086, at the time of the Domesday Book, Deddington and Clifton consisted of 36 'hides'.



From an early Anglo-Saxon drawing

There was a 10 'hide' estate and 1 further 'hide' at Hempton, while Ilbury was 1 'hide' and 1 'virgate'. A 'hide' equalled 100–120 acres, and was originally considered an area of land sufficient to support a family. A 'virgate' was a variable measure of no fixed size. There were then perhaps 500 inhabitants of the parish, mostly employed in agriculture.

Hempton and Clifton each had its own mill, and there were two at Deddington. The arable land had a high annual value for the time. Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror, reserved just over half that land for his own profit.

Sources: The Domesday Book, 1086; The Victoria History of the County of Oxford, Vol. XI, 1983; Register of Listed Buildings, 1988; local knowledge.

This leaflet forms part of the Mapping the Millennium series, produced by Deddington Map Group and funded by Rural Action. Other subjects: Churches and Chapels, Where to Eat and Drink, Historical Characters, Countryside, Town Walk.

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The Stone House, Market Place, Deddington, Oxon OX15 0SD

The Middle Ages

In the early Middle Ages each farmer's holding was divided into many strips, scattered across the township and intermingled with the strips of his neighbours. Farming was therefore of necessity a more collaborative activity than it is today. Everyone needed to agree what would be grown where and when, and where animals would be allowed to graze. The strips lay in two great, almost hedgeless, fields, each alternately planted with crops and left fallow.

Farmers would sow seed on ridges raised up within their strips, and remains of ridge and furrow now under grass can still be seen today.



Medieval ridge and furrow, Deddington

Later, a four-course rotation was introduced and by the 13th century crops of wheat, rye, oats, peas and beans were cultivated.

By 1195 it is recorded that the livestock on the 'demesne' (the land held in the King's name), consisted of 54 plough oxen, 6 draught horses, 3 bulls, 24 sows, 3 boars and 249 sheep. Sheep and their wool became increasingly important and, by the late Middle Ages, Deddington's pastures were sufficient for as many as 4,500.

Turn to the inside pages to see what happened from 1500 to the early 20th century.

Farms and Fields of the Parish of Deddington



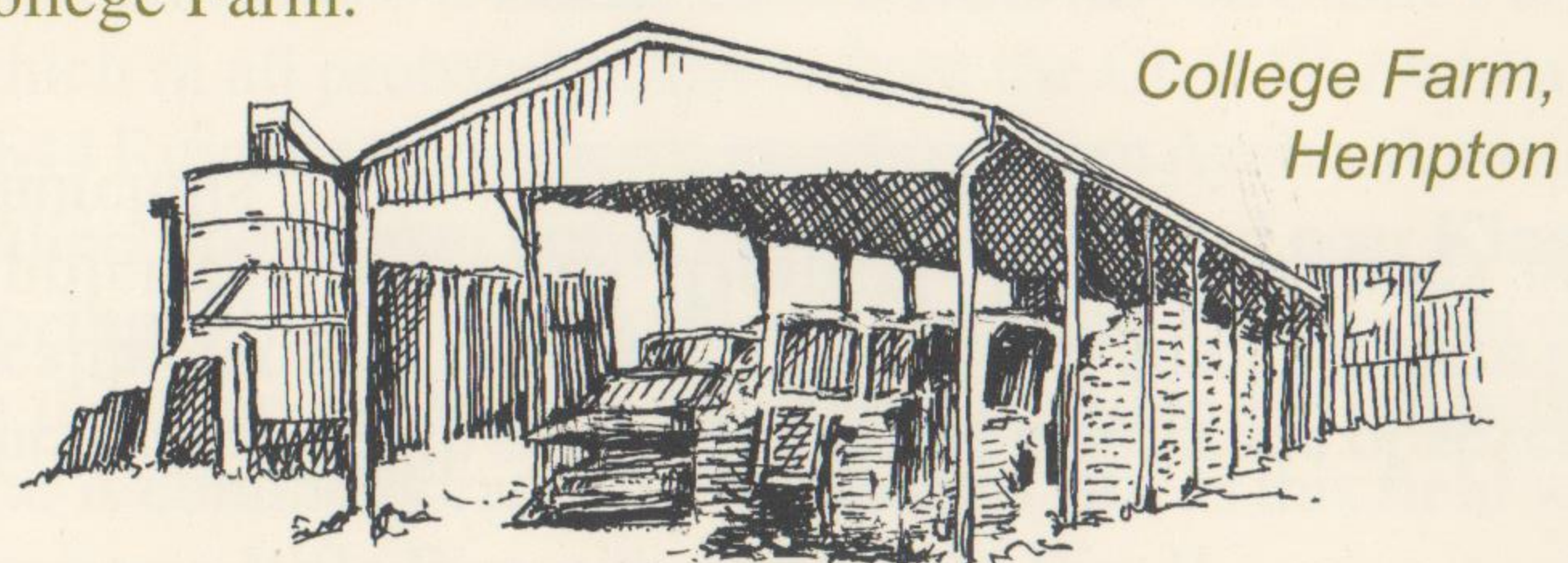
Park Farm, Deddington

MAPPING THE MILLENNIUM

THE FARMS AND FIELDS OF THE PARISH OF DEDDINGTON add up to 3,618 acres, or about 1,500 hectares. They lie on the outcrop of marlstone rock which yields the distinctive ironstone used in most local buildings, giving them their warm golden colour.

Three of the four boundaries of the parish are water: the River Swere to the north, the River Cherwell on the east and the Sowbrook or Sor Brook to the south. The western boundary has changed several times over the years as Hempton and Barford shared the same field system until the enclosures of the early 19th century.

Currently there are nine working farms in the parish (see Map 1, opposite), varying in size from 60–1,100 acres (25–460 hectares approximately). Four are on the Clifton side – Castle Farm, Leadenporch, Boulderdyke and Home Farm – and three on the Hempton side – Tomwell, Ilbury and College Farm.



College Farm, Hempton

The last two working farms in the centre of Deddington today are Park Farm, on New Street, and Earl's Farm.

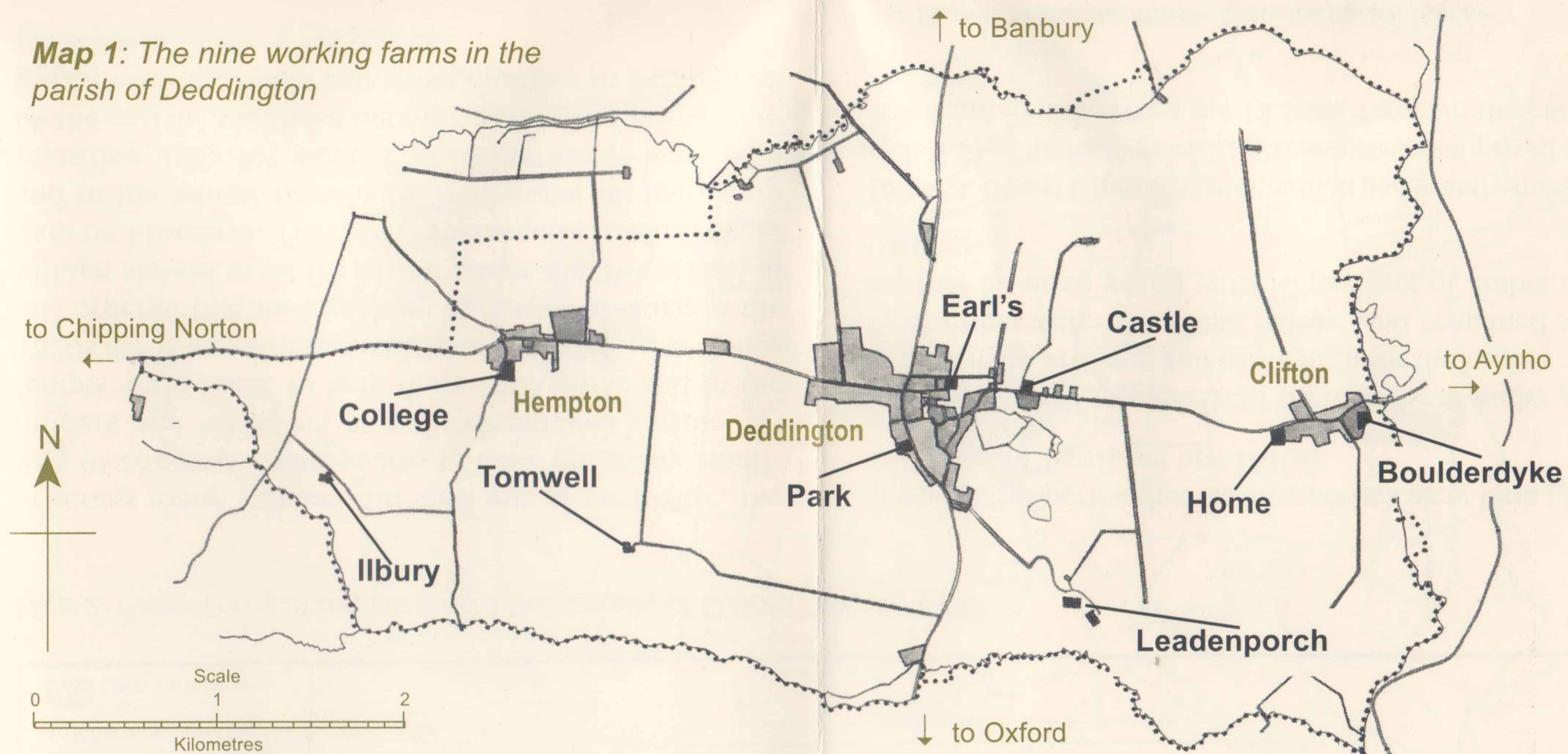
In the past, many of the older centrally placed houses were farmhouses – for example, Castle House, next to the parish church, was once the Rectorial Farmhouse.

1950s – present day

Farming in the second half of the 20th century began in much the same traditional way as it had been in the first half. Even as recently as 1970, the farms tended to specialise – there were four dairy farms: two cereal-growing and two stock-raising. The chief crops were wheat and barley, and the cultivated area was almost equally divided between pasture and arable.

Now the principal crops are wheat and oilseed rape (almost unknown only 20 years ago), with peas and beans. Three farms grow barley, one oats and one a plantation of cricket bat willows.

Map 1: The nine working farms in the parish of Deddington



Livestock comprises about 800 sheep, over 500 pigs, cattle including one herd of Highland cattle, and horses, including thoroughbreds. There is a chicken farmer, and one with 40 hives of bees.

One farm uses agricultural contractors, the others are all self-farmed and, apart from some casual labour at harvest time, the total number of employees is six in an adult population of some 1,700. (It was stated in 1795 that *most* of the inhabitants were employed in agriculture, and this was also very probably true back in medieval times.)

Pasture vs. arable

The last 20 years or so have seen drastic reductions in pasture. No doubt BSE has played a part recently, but the main factor is probably the cost of labour.

There is now six times as much arable land as pasture.

	Pasture	Arable
1914	2	: 1
1970s	1	: 1
Today	1	: 6



Many old hedgerows have been removed so that pasture could be made into fields capable of using modern machinery. This has contributed to reductions in the agricultural workforce.

Machinery

Tractors, ploughs, combines, cultivators, sprayers, muck spreaders, drills, fertiliser spreaders, hedgers and hay-making equipment are all in use.

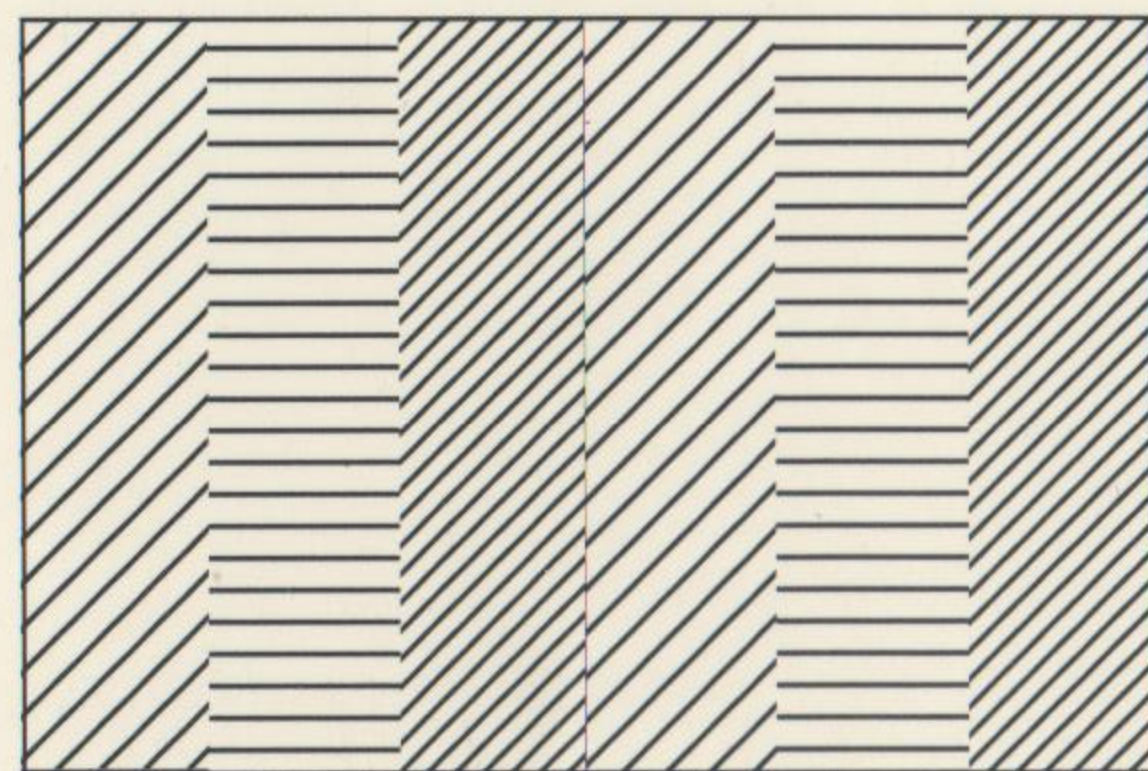
Quad bikes and an agri-buggy are used to get around the farms in place of the horses of olden times.

See inside pages for a brief history of how farming developed from the 16th century into today's familiar fieldscape.

Farming 1500–1800

In the 16th century Deddington was described as 'verye fertile, yieldinge greate store of corne and pasture'. Ownership in the parish had long been concentrated in the hands of institutional landlords, largely the three 'manors' (or estates) of Christ Church, Oxford, the Dean and Canons of Windsor, and the Duchy of Lancaster.

The strips of cultivated land were held side by side, manor by manor.



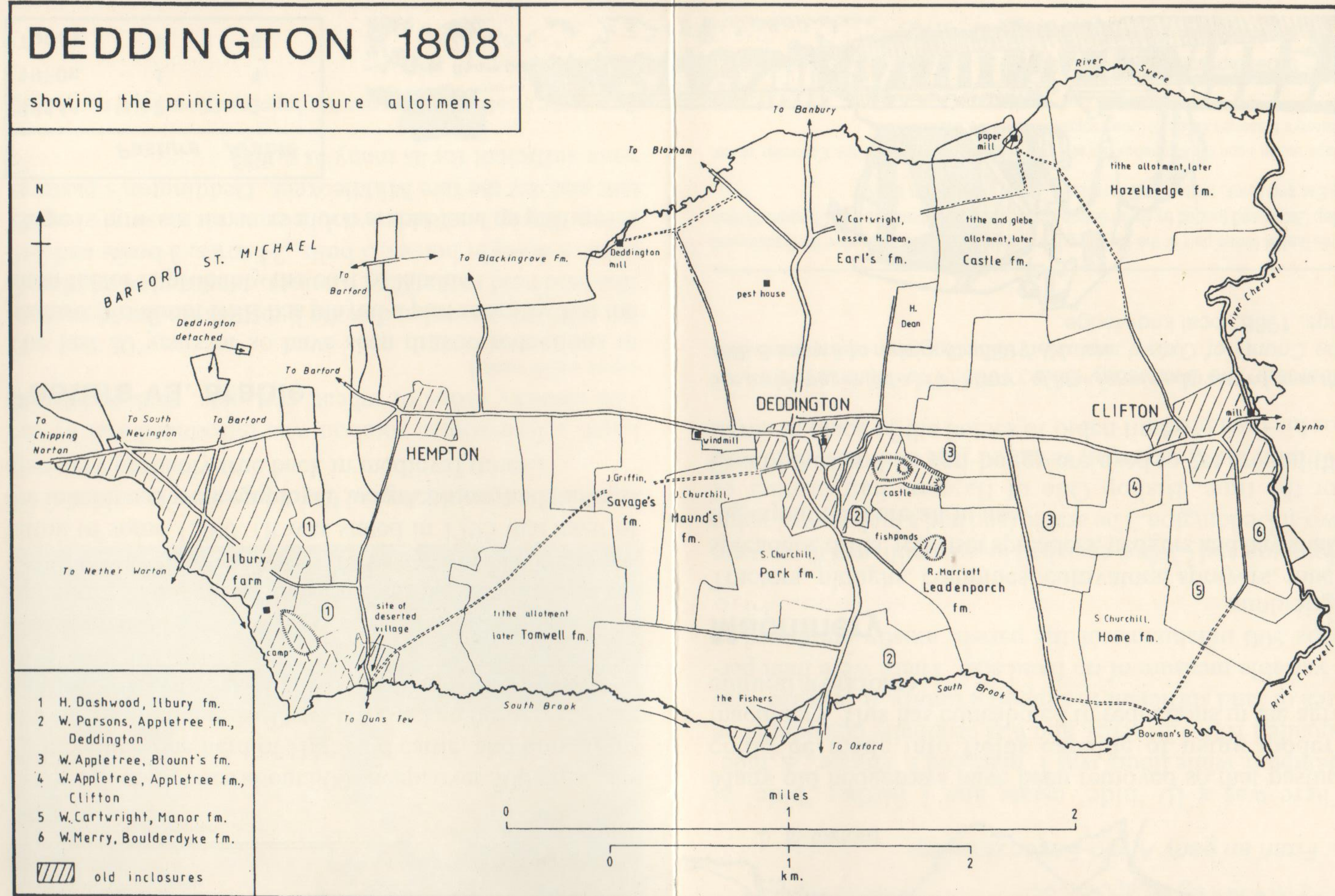
As late as 1777 one of the principal farms had its 80 acres scattered in 329 pieces of arable and 90 pieces of grass, although there had been some reorganisation and consolidation by then. Common land was subject to very complex rules and regulations, and in 1795 there were about 45 acres of common.

The 16th and 17th centuries saw the emergence of several wealthy farming families in the village, amongst them the Appletrees, Bustards, Drapers, Lanes, Stilgoes and Churchills.

The 1808 enclosures – and after

By the late 18th century, Deddington's unenclosed farmland was regarded with disfavour, and arguably the most important change in the agricultural life of the parish since the early Middle Ages came with an Act of Parliament in 1808 allowing the parish to be enclosed. Strips of land were thrown together and redistributed as individual, consolidated farms. Map 2 shows how these farms were laid out.

In the long run, enclosure led to an increase in farming efficiency, for example the putting in of new land drains, and certainly land values rose. There was not a great deal of difference in the number of farms after enclosure – by 1851 there were 13 of over 150 acres and seven others of over 40 acres. A century later there were 15 farms in the parish excluding minor holdings. (Today there are the nine farms shown on Map 1.)



Map 2: From The Victoria History of the County of Oxford, Vol. XI, 1983

Whereas many farmers did well out of enclosure, the loss of common rights seems to have put many smallholders and labourers at a disadvantage. Various attempts were made to help them find work, and in the 1820s the Vestry (the equivalent of today's Parish Council) ordered that men seeking agricultural work in the village should meet for hiring under the Town Hall at 6am on Mondays. This later increased to twice a week, and in the winter months of 1832 some 60 men were reporting daily for work. Part of the wages were paid by the parish, and those unemployed on the farms were put to work on roads and stone quarries or sent out as roundsmen.

It was in this period that the almshouses were built (1822) and a Coal Charity set up (1830s).

By 1914 almost two thirds of the land were under grass, with density of sheep and cattle high for the county. Principal crops were wheat and barley (and remained so for another 50 or so years) with 10 per cent of arable under oats.

In 1954, Christ Church Manor, which had greatly increased its holdings in the 19th and 20th centuries, comprised 1,604 acres and included 5 of the 15 large farms in the parish.

For Domesday and the Middle Ages, see the back pages.

Field names today

All the fields of Deddington parish have names. Some have kept their names through the centuries, others have changed over the years.

Sometimes fields are named after a previous owner, sometimes after whoever worked in the field, and there are numerous examples of both of these traditions in the village: **Garretts Banks (1)**, **Gardeners Hill (2)**, **Ben's Garden (3)**, **Justin's Peace (4)**, **Peggy's Bank (5)**, **Sid's Field (6)**, to name just a few (see Map 3).

Other names tell fascinating stories. One of the oldest is **The Fishers (7)** which is thought to have been the fishpond for Deddington Castle in the 12th and 13th centuries, when locally caught fish was an essential part of the diet.

Another old one is **Battle Thorn Hills (8)**, on Castle Farm, which in all probability dates from the Civil War when in 1644 Royalist troops were marching from Aynho. A sword, bullets and human bones have all been found near **King's Spring (9)**, where it is rumoured that King Charles stopped to drink on his way to the Battle of Edge Hill. Another war is commemorated by **The Butts (10)**, as this field was used as a Rifle Range during World War II.

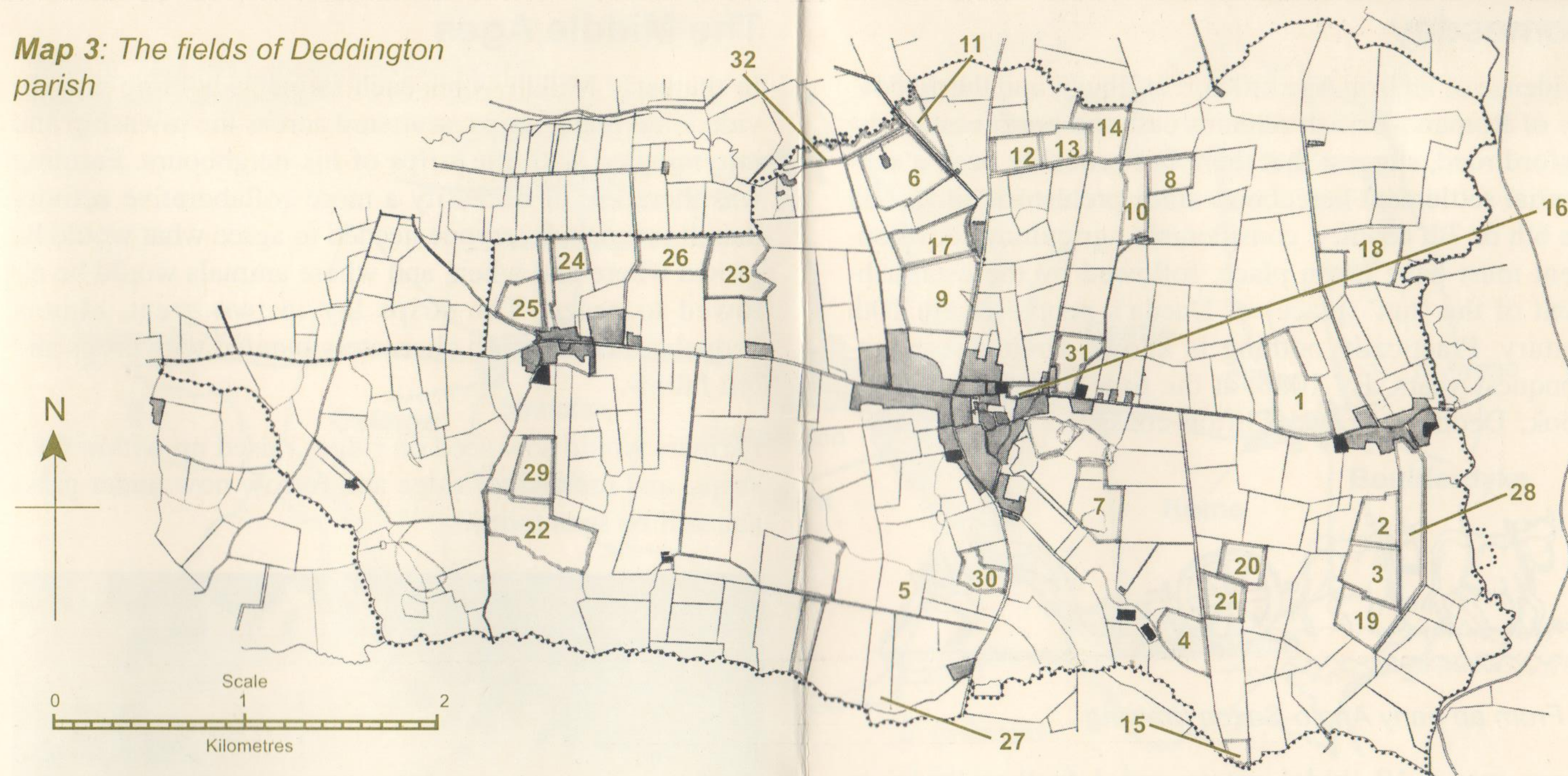
Waggoner's Halt (11) had a shed for the drivers and pasture for the horses on the steep hill on the Banbury Road, and at **Church Pits Meadow**, stone from three pits (**12**) (**13**) (**14**) was used for the repair of the church following the storm that blew down the tower in 1634.

There was also a quarry on Leadenporch Farm. Stone for the Deddington–Clifton Road came from the field called **Tatles Pit (15)**, and was carried down Jerusalem Lane by horse and cart.

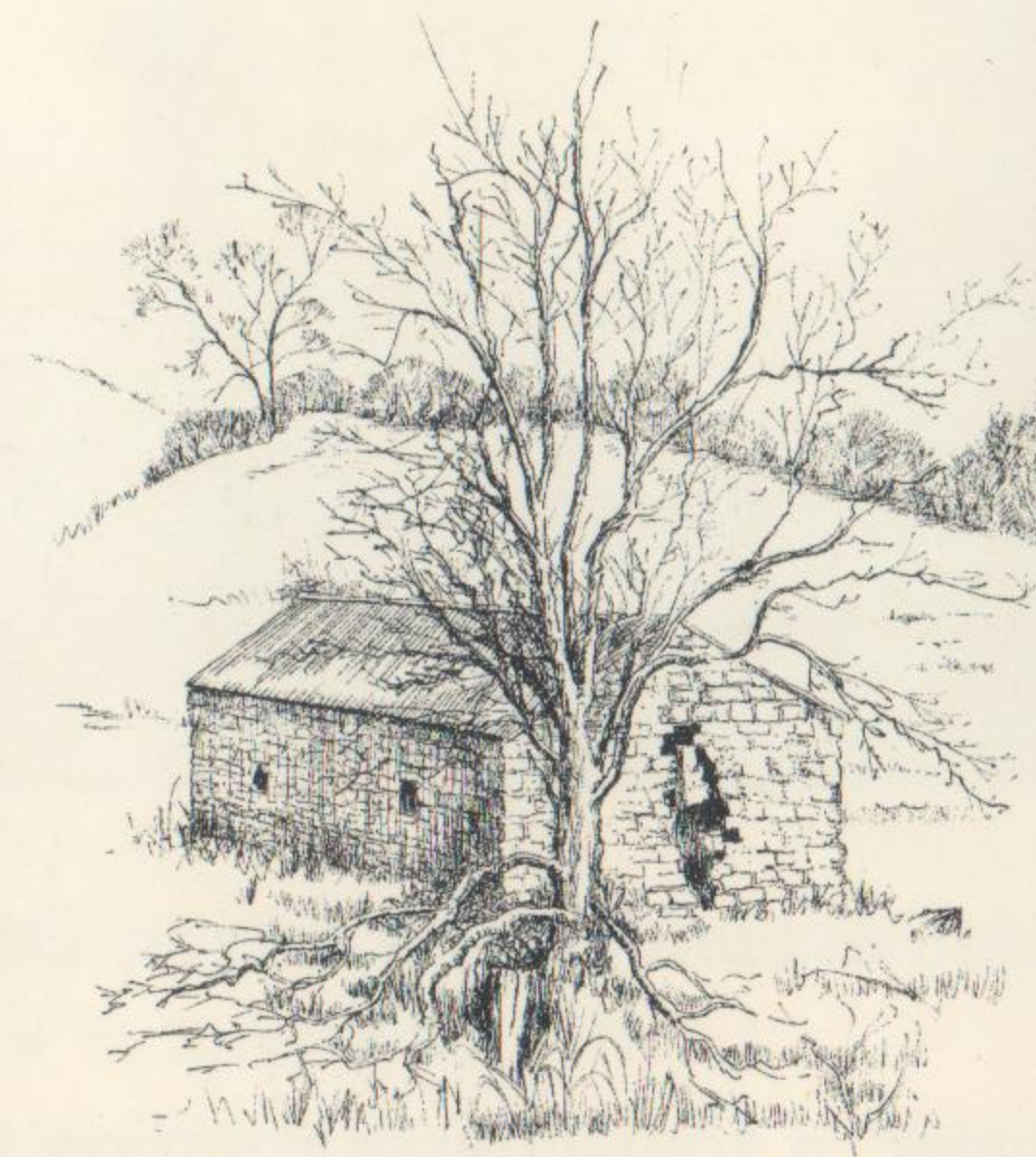
The Pound (16) was where stray animals used to be held until their owners paid a fine and reclaimed them. This field is now the front garden of Earl's Farmhouse.

Pest House Field (17) was the site of the village pest house, where sufferers from infectious diseases (mainly smallpox) were kept in isolation. This was still in use in the 19th century.

Map 3: The fields of Deddington parish



When H.E. Robinson made this sketch in 1980, only ruins were left. Now all trace has virtually disappeared.



The Pest House

Osier Bed (18) tells of the craft of basket-making in Clifton that only died out in the 1930s. **Banslip, Clifton (19)** is where a weed grew that was used in the past to stop abortion in animals. **Spinney Ground (20)** and **Fox Cover (21)** in Clifton and **Foxy Leigh (22)** in Hempton tell their own story, and Hempton seems to have had its share of fighting with **Warlands (23)**.

A series of fields called **The Slad (24)**, **Deep Slad**, **Lower Slad** and **Dancing Slad (25)** indicate a shallow valley, and it is said that the gypsies camped on **Dancing Slad**. **Snake Hill (26)** nearby was obviously somewhere to tread with care. **Purgatory (27)** has a connection in some places

with mass burials from the plague, but could also be used to describe a very wet and boggy field. On the other hand, two fields called **The Oven (28)** (**29**) are very dry and bake hard in sunny weather.

Brickyards (30) on the Oxford Road reminds us of the two brick kilns that were established during the 19th century; bricks and tiles continued to be made in Deddington until the middle of the 20th century. **Townsend (31)** next to the old Gas House marks the extent of the old town.

We are most grateful to the farmers who told us about these field names and the stories behind them.

Perhaps we should finish with a field that is no longer a field but a wood. The field was acquired by the Woodland Trust aided by a substantial contribution from the village in 1996 as a Millennium Project, and is now planted with trees and wild flowers. Its new name is **Daeda's Wood (32)** after the Mercean farmer who gave his name to the village of Deddington in the 10th century.

Every field in the parish will be named on the Deddington Millennium Map, to be published in 2000 AD.