

TERRIERS, TITHES AND FARMING

by DAVID DYMOND

'GLEBE TERRIERS' ARE a class of documents familiar to ecclesiastical and local historians.¹ In practice they were surveys written every few years as part of a bishop's or archdeacon's visitation, to ensure that the property and rights of individual parishes were recorded and given some measure of protection.² Terriers were originally stored in the registries of bishops, but today are usually available in considerable numbers in county or diocesan record offices. Admittedly their condition is often poor and dirty, and they can be awkward and maddeningly springy to handle, which makes them difficult to read and transcribe. Nevertheless, they have already proved valuable in the study, for example, of early field systems, the enclosure of open fields, vernacular buildings (domestic and agricultural), and the internal fittings and furnishings of Anglican churches.³ This article argues that terriers have further uses which until now have been largely ignored by economic and social historians.⁴ By reviewing the dairy farming of Suffolk in late medieval and early-modern times, it particularly attempts to show that these documents can improve our understanding of basic 'peasant' husbandry across several centuries.⁵

Although the county's terriers typically run from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries inclusive, the full chronological range is actually wider: they existed well before the Church of England's canon of 1571, which is mistakenly seen by many historians as the start of the system.⁶ In fact, at least eight of Suffolk's parishes have yielded written terriers dating from before Henry VIII's death in 1547, and others are known to have possessed them.⁷ For example, in 1424 a terrier for Whitton-cum-Thurlston near Ipswich not only cites 'ancient custom' and 'the testimony of ancient inhabitants' but also claims to be using information 'gathered out of the ancient records pertaining to the church'. The earliest example so far found in the county, for Little Livermere, is dated 1401.⁸

Collectively, terriers demonstrate the provision made in Anglo-Saxon and medieval parishes to maintain a resident incumbent who, before the Reformation, usually had a household, and afterwards a wife and family. This clerical 'civil servant' (whether technically a rector, vicar or perpetual curate) was provided with the equivalent of a manorial tenement. It consisted of a dwelling which often lay within a cluster of communal institutions,⁹ and farmland or glebe which he either exploited directly or rented out to others. Historians would do well to recognise that, in spite of much latter-day modernisation and gentrification, the parsonage and glebe of a parish were frequently the last medieval tenement to survive recognizably, after centuries of reorganisation around it. Another rarely acknowledged fact borne out in Suffolk's terriers is that glebes were sometimes large enough to be organised as manors – with their own courts, court rolls and tenantry, both free and copyhold. The county had at least nine parishes with rectorial manors, and at Aldeburgh, unusually, it had a vicarial manor.¹⁰

'Rectories' were relatively intact livings, but they did not necessarily have larger acreages of glebe or higher total valuations than 'vicarages'. The latter, over a third of England's parishes, had by definition been taken over or legally 'appropriated', usually in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by religious houses anxious to supplement their incomes.¹¹ In so doing, the religious house became the legal rector, and took possession of part of the glebe and the 'great' (or most profitable) tithes. A substitute priest or 'vicar' was then inducted. He carried out the daily 'cure of souls' while often living on no more than a quarter of the original

endowments, including the 'small' (or less profitable) tithes.¹² After the Dissolution, the Crown granted most of these benefices to laymen who were called 'impropriators' or 'lay rectors'. A few places such as Bramfield (1635) were described as 'wholly impropriate' because all its original endowments had been taken over. This left the resident priest entirely dependent on a stipend given either by the religious house, or by a lay rector after the Reformation. As a result of these legal processes, therefore, vicarages tended to be in major towns (where not minutely subdivided into small parishes), ports and market centres where livings had once been temptingly richer than the average. Meanwhile, the majority of surviving rectories were modestly endowed parishes in rural areas, and therefore had not been so covetable by the religious orders.¹³

It is undeniable that terriers, because they were re-written at frequent intervals, are highly repetitious. The frequency of terms such as 'evidences', 'memory' and 'ancient custom' show that genuine efforts were made to gather reliable historical evidence and to ensure continuity. On the other hand, their writers and signatories, who included incumbents, churchwardens, sidesmen and other principal inhabitants regarded as 'honest' and 'ancient', introduced new content as necessary (if sometimes rather belatedly) and thereby provided a valuable record of change as well as continuity. Furthermore, because some writers paid more attention to detail than others, their surveys varied in layout, length and complexity. It therefore pays to scan sequences of terriers for individual parishes (providing they survive), rather than to rely on single, well preserved or highly legible examples.

D.M. Barratt and other scholars who have edited glebe terriers for individual counties have already described these documents in general terms.¹⁴ They normally begin with a description of the parsonage which, at its most informative, can specify individual rooms, storeys, structural bays and building materials, as well as surrounding gardens, orchards, barns, lesser outbuildings of some variety, working yards, ponds, moats and the occasional gatehouse.¹⁵ Then comes an account of the incumbent's glebe, in other words his *ex officio* farmland, with details such as size, position, abutments, minor place-names and attached rights. Glebes varied greatly in total size because they reflected the status and endowments of livings which themselves ranged from rich to poor. Individual pieces of land were often small and scattered, and could involve several types of land-use including arable (sometimes associated with a particular crop),¹⁶ pasture, meadow, woodland, common land, fen, heath and water. On the other hand, a few glebes are notable for being consolidated and enclosed at an early date; for example the 18-acre glebe of Mickfield (1613) lay 'about the house in six several enclosures', and at Rishangles (1627) 66½ acres of glebe lay in seven contiguous closes. A further complication is that some parish clergy sought a quieter life and rented out their glebe, wholly or partly, while others supplemented the official glebe by renting extra land.

Many aspects of parochial life are to be found in glebe terriers, some on the instructions of diocesan bishops who, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, issued printed questionnaires to guide the local compilers.¹⁷ In addition to the basic details of parsonage and glebe, we may find mention of offerings, fees, mortuaries, rents and pensions paid to the clergy; obligations imposed on them (for example, to strew the church with rushes or, as in Dorset, to provide a bull and boar for the local community);¹⁸ inventories of church furnishings including plate, books and vestments; remuneration of parish clerks and sextons; the total annual incomes of livings; details of town-houses and other endowments for relieving poverty, educating the young and sponsoring sermons; and even occasional comments on population and religious allegiance. Among other important historical themes illuminated by terriers are the origins of the glebe as parishes were formed in the ninth to twelfth centuries;¹⁹ the extent to which glebe was stealthily appropriated by lay neighbours;²⁰ the landscape of

recreation which was at first associated with church and churchyard and later pushed further away;²¹ and how the tithe system both reflected and influenced farming in the medieval and early-modern periods.²² At their very best, terriers define the possessions and rules of the community and almost amount to parochial constitutions. Occasionally they give genuine flashes of political, even democratic, feeling. Thus at Monk Soham a terrier of 1617 signed by ten men (not apparently including the rector) recorded that 'the parson hath not made choice of any that hath served for churchwardens without the consents and liking of the owners and inhabitants within the town, or the great part of them'.

Included within a small percentage of glebe terriers are sections called 'tithe customs' or 'tithe tables'. In spite of their comparative rareness, these are highly revealing lists of agricultural and other practices relating not to manors but to ecclesiastical parishes. They also date from after *and* before the crucial events of the mid sixteenth century. It is the contention here that when glebe terriers and tithe customs are analysed, where possible against other documents such as wills, inventories, town books, manorial court-rolls and various kinds of account, they can contribute significantly to contemporary debates on parish life in the early-modern and medieval periods.²³

TITHES

Tithing originated in early Jewish society and in the Old Testament, and was adopted as a Christian obligation from the fourth century onwards.²⁴ In England tithes were paid by the end of the eighth century, and specifically enforced by King Athelstan's ordinance of c. 930 AD.²⁵ The fundamental idea is simple: each year the laity were to give 10 per cent of their profits or increase to God and their local church.²⁶ Most tithes were paid in small quantities, but in total they made the church, in Robert Swanson's words, 'a considerable, and constant, extractive force' contributing to the 'constant transfer of agricultural produce from producers to consumers'.²⁷ A crucial phrase used across the centuries is 'annual renewal': tithes were levied on those crops, animals and profits of work 'that reneweth yearly' (*de decimis omnium rerum que renovantur per annum*).²⁸ In this context, however, it has to be recognised that agricultural production, and therefore income from tithes, varied as the result of many factors, such as the vagaries of weather, animal sickness, population trends and changes of rent and manorial policy.

A broad impression of the system at work can be gained in 1341, when Edward III ordered the value of each benefice to be recorded in 'Inquisitions of the Ninths'.²⁹ Although this survey (actually based on agricultural production in 1340) resorts to many generalisations, it also mentions under individual parishes the value of tithes for specific products such as calves, flax, hay and apples. In medieval England the collecting of tithes was said to have three broad purposes: to maintain a resident priest, to repair and furnish the local church, and to relieve poverty. By Tudor times the last two had lost their significance, and even the first was being eroded. Furthermore, by about 1650, a third of all tithes are estimated to have been acquired by laymen and lay institutions, and were inherited, bequeathed, sold, bought or leased like other forms of private property.³⁰

TITHES IN KIND, CASH AND ALLOWANCES

Many tithe customs mention payments 'in kind' (*in specie*) or 'in their proper kinds', meaning that at various times of year parishioners were expected to present their incumbent with live animals, the produce derived from them such as milk and cheese, and crops of considerable diversity. The process of taking one-tenth may sound relatively straightforward, but in fact

payment in kind involved many varied and complicated practices, and means of measurement, which could easily generate misunderstandings and disputes.³¹ Thus, when in 1424 lambs were being tithed at Akenham and Whitton-cum-Thurlston, the owner sorted out every score of lambs by himself, from which he chose four; then from the remaining sixteen the incumbent chose three. In choosing the tithe pig at Wangford on the Breckland (1615–16), parishioners were allowed to select out of every ten two of the best, and the rector took the third. When a calf was slaughtered at Lakenheath (1613) the 'breast' was paid in kind. In Brandeston (1613), the tenth part of hemp had to be set out by the owner and fetched by the vicar from where it grew, but all threshed seed remained with the owner. Among the measures used in Suffolk were every tenth 'sheaf' or 'swath' of corn, 'glane' ('glean') or 'beat' of hemp, 'cock' of hay, 'heap' of peas, 'fleece' of wool,³² and 'load', 'sack' or 'faggot' of wood. Arable crops were also measured by reference to man-made features in the fields such as every tenth 'ridge' or 'stetch'.

The ages of animals were also subject to local rules and customs. For instance, calves were usually due for tithing at five weeks, and pigs at three to four weeks. At Brandeston (1613) a roasting pig was expected at the age of three weeks and a store pig at one month; no pigs were accepted as stores unless born between Ash Wednesday and 1 July; and tithe geese were paid in kind on 1 August (Lammas Day). At Monk Soham (1617), the possibility of an animal dying was raised: 'if it live'. The precise timing of tithe payments in kind varied according to the seasons. No calf was to be paid to the rector before Easter (Whitton-cum-Thurlston 1424). In some parishes tithe wool was paid 'at clipping time', probably June, at the parishioner's house (Monk Soham 1617). Eggs were invariably paid at Lent or Eastertide, fruits and nuts when they ripened in the autumn, and the 'hearth hen' at Christmas.

The official sort-out for the previous year normally took place at a meeting with the incumbent during the corn harvest, that is between Lammas Day and Michaelmas. Thus the rector and parishioners of Barningham (1635) met for their annual 'reckoning' at the parsonage on the Sunday after Lammas Day. After the business meeting, it had been the custom time out of mind for the rector to provide a 'supper of wholesome victuals'. Although parishes might have a specific 'day of reckoning', it paid each incumbent to keep a watchful eye on local farming activities throughout the year, to see that no chance of a fair tithe was missed. He had the right of entry and inspection at any time, could admonish his parishioners to pay their tithes, and could threaten backsliders with ecclesiastical censures.

The incumbent had to be aware of any special pitfalls in the regulations. On Good Friday, at Hacheston (1613), the rector was to have one egg for every hen, but only 'if it be demanded'. If he did not ask, he would not get! Perhaps this was a mechanism for limiting the number of perishable eggs due at Eastertime. Similarly, if an incumbent delayed settlement of his tithe by waiting to reach a higher number of animals in the following year, he ran the legal risk of losing everything. The tithe customs of Brandeston (1613) twice reminded the vicar of this possibility, in respect of geese payable in kind on Lammas Day, and of lambs for which 2s 6d was due on the same day. Then there were complications attached to particular pieces of land. For example, at Monewden (1613) the tithe corn due from the close of Charles Starling 'is parted by the sheaf evenly between the parsons of Monewden and Brandeston'. Rather differently, when two up-and-down acres in Occold were sown with corn they were tithed in kind, but when they were under grass the incumbent claimed 2d an acre (Rishangles, 1613).

An elementary difficulty for both tithe-owners and parishioners was how to deal with crops and animals that did not naturally occur (as most do not) in neat multiples of ten. For such troublesome numbers and quantities, it was decided at an early date that tithe could be paid on the *seventh* as well as on the tenth, and that greater fairness could be achieved by integrating payment in kind with payments of cash.³³ Thus, customs of 1228–?56 in the

diocese of Salisbury decreed that: 'if by chance anyone has but seven lambs, he shall give the seventh as tithe, and similarly both the seventh sheep's skin and the seventh goose, if he has no more'.³⁴ A statute of Archbishop Boniface of Canterbury, dated 1249–60, reveals that not only is the seventh lamb given in tithe, but because of the difference from a true tenth the rector gives 1½d *in recompensationem*. Similarly for the eighth lamb he gave back 1d, and for the ninth ½d. For totals of six or fewer lambs the parishioner paid the rector only in money, at a rate of ½d per animal.³⁵ One is tempted to assume that this system of combining cash with kind, rooted in Canon Law, was formulated in the early thirteenth or late twelfth century, when coinage was beginning to pervade rural England – thus helping to build a cash economy. Earlier canons certainly make no mention of such complex arrangements.³⁶ Moreover, we should not assume that all cash payments were necessarily early substitutes for those in kind. For example, from at least the mid thirteenth century, when crops or stock were sold or eaten before being tithed, the 'tenth penny' was levied, and other monetary charges were made on single colts and calves.³⁷

The practice of combining payments in kind with cash was adopted for animals and poultry throughout Suffolk. On the Breckland it related to calves, pigs, geese, ducks, chicken and turkeys (Ampton 1613), while in eastern Suffolk it applied to calves, sheep, lambs, pigs and geese (Bedfield 1613–14). Generally this practice involved monetary compensation, known as 'allowances', which went in both directions. That they date from the medieval period is well proven at Whitton-cum-Thurlston (1424) where, when the seventh calf was paid in kind, 3d was paid 'in recompense of the want between seven and ten'. The details are more specific at Stratford St Andrew (1613), where the tenth and seventh calves were paid in kind and allowances ran on familiar lines: thus, if an owner had nine calves, he paid his tithe calf and received ½d from the rector; if he had eight calves, he received 1d; if he had seven calves, he was paid 1½d. Again, complications arose when alternative forms of payment were allowed: at Framlingham (n.d.) parishioners could pay *either* the tithe calf *or* 10s in cash, a tithe lamb *or* 3s, a tithe pig *or* 2s.

Many other money payments can be found in Suffolk's tithe customs. Some, such as the allowances just described, were possibly part of the system as originally set up, while others were 'moduses' resulting from long-standing agreements between incumbents and tithe-payers. The parochial clergy of early-modern times frequently resented these medieval arrangements which lost value as a result of inflation, and tried where possible to get them renegotiated.³⁸ Both sides could be anxious to make new agreements or 'compositions' in order to change or terminate earlier arrangements, and generally to substitute money for payments in kind. Increasingly, therefore, the levying of tithes resembled a pecuniary tax. Thus, at Hoxne (1747) the vicar and parishioners agreed on a composition of 9d in the pound 'for all lands ploughed or pasture in lieu of all herbages'. But this was a slow trend, with significant regional variations. After all, payments in kind were retained in many English parishes until the Tithe Reform Act of 1836 brought in new, adjustable 'tithe-rents' universally.³⁹

Nevertheless, some cash payments stood for centuries as customary 'small' tithes, and were widespread in Suffolk. Good examples are as follows: 2d to 4d for orchards; the 'hearth penny' or 'hearth silver' paid for wood, broom and other fuel burnt in domestic hearths (in lieu of the 'hearth hen' or 'loke hen'); the 'ploweshott' penny for grass growing at the ends of ploughland where four to five horses turned;⁴⁰ and '8d in the noble' (since a noble was worth 6s 8d, this was the tenth penny) charged on 'outdwellers' who fed their cattle on local pastures, a practice also known as 'agistment'.⁴¹ All these levies, and others, had their origins in the pre-Reformation period. By contrast, the growing of new crops led some incumbents even further from the principles of traditional tithing. For example 4d was demanded for

every peck of beans and hemp seed *planted* at Holton St Peter (1706), and 2s for every acre of turnips *sold* outside the parish of Norton (n.d.). In this connection, it needs emphasising that the word 'custom', as well as being used in its general sense of 'an established practice', was more often used as an alternative to 'paying in kind'. Thus, at Chelsworth (1692) 'all tithes are paid to the rector in their proper kinds, and there are no customs in the parish'.

One question worth asking at this point is whether the rules recorded in tithe customs were actually observed in every detail. Were they to some extent an idealised standard, meant above all to teach the incumbent his basic rights, but not intended to be taken too literally? Although the incumbent was the only beneficiary of the system, he had in his own interests to be ever watchful and determined. Many difficulties could arise between tithe-owners and tithe-payers, and disputes between them were legion. They were caused, for example, by the movements of animals across parish boundaries; the unfairness of cash payments that remained unchanged as the value of money fell; the confusing effect of having absentee incumbents and stipendiary curates; and the inevitable misunderstandings that arose between established laymen and newly appointed clergy. Perhaps most irritating was that tithe customs dealt overwhelmingly in *quantities* while, as the result of natural factors or human dishonesty, crops and livestock inevitably varied in *quality* and therefore *value*. When one looks at detailed 'reckonings' between incumbents and parishioners in early-modern tithe books, one certainly finds, in addition to payments closely conforming to written custom, a bewildering jungle of queries, mistakes, disputes, legal cases, compromises, offsetting bargains, compositions, instalments, debts, odd jobs, and confusion with rents and other non-tithe issues.⁴²

SUFFOLK DAIRYING

That dairying was of widespread importance in Suffolk in late medieval and early-modern times is demonstrated by a variety of sources. A detailed valuation of Sibton's benefice in June 1551, certified by three royal commissioners, provides an excellent example.⁴³ Clearly based on a glebe terrier, it reveals that the vicar, who occupied a parsonage and glebe of only five acres, relied for about half his income on the tithing of cattle. In a parish of about 2860 acres he levied tithes on 175 cows owned by his parishioners (at a rate of 2d a cow), on 6 cows without offspring, on 8 calves and on other 'young neat'. However, he got nothing from an unstated number of cows grazing on the demesne of Sibton's former Cistercian abbey, which had been dissolved in 1536.⁴⁴

Tithe customs also reveal that the tithing of cattle was complicated, and subject to the variations of parochial tradition. For example, a sum of money ranging from ½d to 4d was paid for the 'fall' or birth of a calf. Alternatively, because it represented 'annual renewal', the tenth or seventh calf was often given to the incumbent at the age of 5–6 weeks, with monetary allowances for shortfalls either way,⁴⁵ and the animal was not to be delivered before Easter. In 1424 at Whitton-cum-Thurlston, the owner chose the first two calves, and the parson chose the third for his tithe. At Monk Soham (1617) the tithe calf at the age of five weeks was given to the incumbent or his assigns at the parishioner's house, or in an adjoining highway. If the rector did not collect his calf, upon being informed that it was ready, the animal was left in the churchyard or adjacent road. In some parishes the tithe-payer was offered a choice between payment in kind or in cash, as previously noted at Framlingham (n.d.). An increasingly likely choice was to abandon the payment of a tithe-calf altogether, and to substitute a sum of money ranging from 2s to 3s 4d.

Another variant, based on the acceptance of live grass and mown hay as crops, was to pay money for feeding and grazing or, as the term predominantly was in Suffolk, for 'herbage'. For example, at Wangford (1615–16) 6d or the tenth penny was paid for herbage of every cow

which had a calf. Payment for meadows was usually in cash by the acre. Some were specifically named in terriers, but usually the distinction was made between lush 'bottom' or 'watered' meadow which produced the best-quality hay, tithed at 4d an acre or more, and 'hardland' meadow on the drier valley sides which carried a charge of 2d an acre or less (Parham 1613). Where an owner had fewer than seven calves, and therefore a tithe animal could not be demanded, other options obtained: at Hacheston (1613) owners paid 4d for each calf sold, 2d for each killed and 1d for each weaned, whereas at Ilketshall St Andrew (1613) ½d was paid for the fall of a calf 'if they amount not to a tithe'. Sums varying from 1d to 3d were paid for the grazing of young 'buds' or yearlings, one or two years old, and similar amounts for bullocks and heifers. At Tannington-cum-Brundish (n.d.), 3d was specified for a cow that had aborted her calf, and 4d for a cow newly bought for the dairy between Easter and Midsummer. Other tithable categories included 'gast' or barren cows which still produced milk, 'fat kyne' or beef cattle and, as previously mentioned, the beasts of outsiders ('outdwellers' or 'outsitters') which fed on pastures within the parish.⁴⁶ At Brandeston (1613) outsiders paid the same as parishioners, that is, 4d for every calf killed, weaned or sold; in addition they either paid herbage at the rate of 6d per noble for the rest of the year, or (if parishioners approved) 7d per noble and nothing for the fall of a calf.

Finally we come to the complex issue of 'lactage', that is, the tithing of milk and its derivatives such as cream, butter and cheese. Already in 1341–42 the Inquisitions of the Ninths recorded 223 Suffolk parishes (out of a total of about 418) paying this levy annually.⁴⁷ The figures quoted are undoubtedly underestimates because the jurors of some hundreds unhelpfully merged detail, or simply presented less of it than their neighbours. Where lactage appears it is given a monetary valuation, but we are not told whether the parochial clergy received the levy in kind or in cash. Where it was sufficiently distinguished from other kinds of tithe, its valuation can be seen as ranging from 1s a year at Foxhall to £5 at Stoke by Nayland; 61 parishes paid lactage worth over £1 a year, and 45 paid their incumbents less than £1. Although some hundreds recorded little or no information on this subject, surrounding areas were fortunately more generous. Thus, the hundreds of Hartismere, Stow and Thingoe presented only two cases of lactage between them, but adjacent Blackbourn, Thedwastre, Hoxne and Thredling listed all, or nearly all, their parishes as paying this form of tithe.⁴⁸

Overall, it is clear that on the eve of the Black Death this levy was made in all parts of the county, even on the sandy soils of the western Breckland and eastern Sandlings.⁴⁹ Mark Bailey writes that before the Black Death Suffolk possessed the 'most intensive dairy farming regime in medieval England', although its scale and relative importance must have varied according to local soils and the extent, which was never abundant, of highly valued meadowland and other pasture.⁵⁰ Finer detail in the Inquisitions of 1341–42 is regrettably elusive. Only 13 parishes in the entire county specifically mentioned cheese (*caseus*) among their tithable products; one referred to 'whitemeat' (*album*) and another butter (*butirum*).⁵¹ It may be that the majority of lactage-yielding parishes at this date were concerned with the production of liquid milk rather than with its processing into more solid forms but, as will be shown below, at some point before 1400 some parishes were undoubtedly specialising in the manufacture of cheese for which they left firm documentary evidence in their tithe customs.

The tithing of liquid milk certainly happened in Suffolk, but was laborious and raised awkward questions (for instance, how much time was allowed between milking and delivery, and who supplied the container?). At Brandeston (1613) those who did not make cheese had to deliver milk at the church porch every tenth day, avoiding any kind of fraud, while at Little Livermere (1401) milk was paid every ten days from when the calf was seven weeks old until Hallowmas (1 Nov). This practice, be it noted, involved the tithing of time! At Monk Soham

(1617) it was the custom, if the cow gave more milk than the tithe calf could suck, to milk some away. Yet, as frequently happened with tithes, money was substituted for payments in kind. Instead of liquid milk, the normal levy was between 1d and 3d. Thus, at Stratford St Andrew (1613) 2½d was paid for the lactage of every milch cow, and 2d for that of each barren cow.

Before the days of refrigeration, lactage in kind could be more conveniently paid in the less perishable form of cheese. (Tithe of cheese was due only when *not* paid on liquid milk.) In at least 24 Suffolk parishes, detailed tithe customs have survived which reveal that householders who made cheese from cows' milk were expected to supply their incumbents with a certain number of tithe-cheeses 'in lieu of lactage', in fact between 9 and 15 each year (see Fig. 132 and Table 1). Exceptions were allowed in which individuals, tenements or manors negotiated to pay fewer cheeses than the rest of their neighbours, as at Fressingfield (1613) where William Sancroft paid 6 and 7 cheeses in alternate years, and another tenement 'doth pay yearly very small cheeses'.⁵² A good example of the standard system is provided at Bedfield (1613), where each individual was required to pay 15 cheeses in the summer and early autumn, that is five at Midsummer (24 June), five at Lammas (1 Aug.) and five at Michaelmas (29 Sept.). The making of this cheese was to start on 3 May, and on every tenth day thereafter a cheese was set aside for the incumbent.

<i>Map</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>No. of cheeses</i>
1	Akenham	15
2	Bredfield	15
3	Braiseworth	14
4	Brandeston	15
5	Brent Eleigh	'in kind'
6	Charsfield	15
7	Chelsworth	9
8	Combs	9
9	Cretingham	15
10	Debach	15
11	Edwardstone	'whitemeat'
12	Elmswell	9
13	Fressingfield	13
14	Hoxne	14
15	Kettleburgh	15
16	Long Melford	3-4
17	Mendlesham	9
18	Monewden	15
19	Monk Soham	15
20	Old Newton	9
21	Stoke Ash	14
22	Thorndon	14
23	Whitton-cum-Thurlston	9
24	Winston	15

TABLE 1 – Key to parishes in Fig. 132.

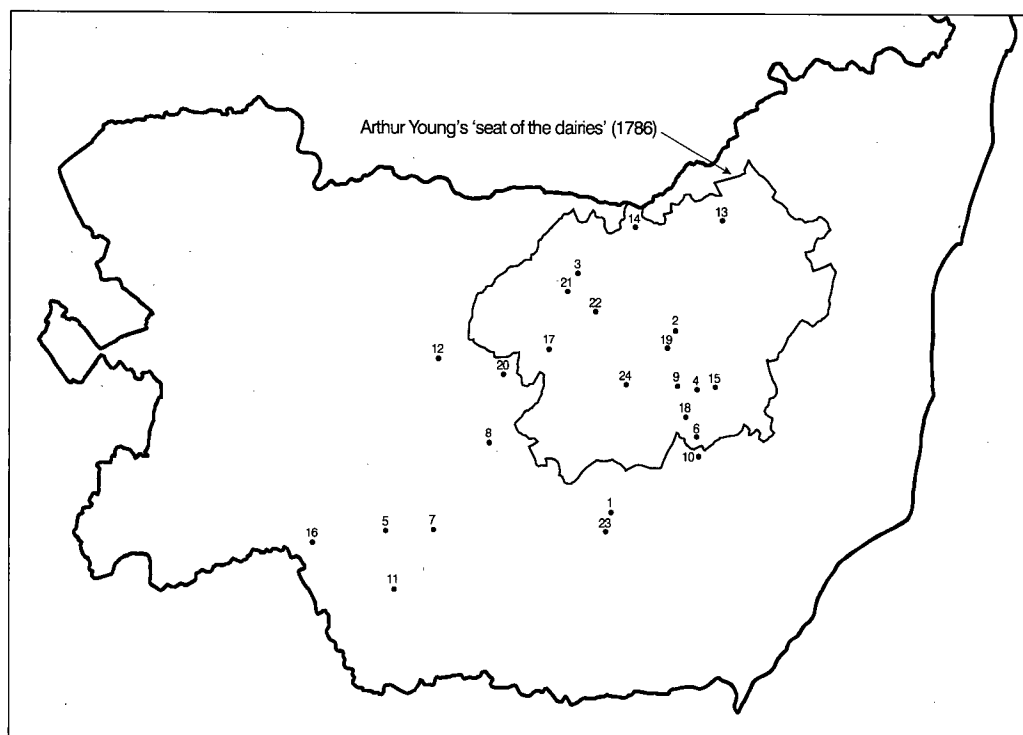


FIG. 132 – Suffolk parishes known to have traditionally paid tithe-cheeses in kind, shown against Arthur Young's 'seat of the dairies' (1786). See Table 1 to identify individual parishes (p. 441).

Rather more detail was given for Brandeston in the same year. Of an annual total of 15 cheeses, five were to be paid between 3 May and 24 June. Of these, three were meant to be of the biggest size and made of two 'meals' or milkings, one 'flett' (skimmed) and the other 'unflett' (unskimmed). The vat to be used was described as of 'tenn to the wey' which may imply ten cheeses each weighing approximately 22 to 26 lbs.⁵³ Another five cheeses made after Midsummer were handed over at Lammas, and a final five made after Lammas arrived at Michaelmas. Owners of 'lesser' or smaller dairies paid the largest possible cheeses they could make, but were warned not to be deceitful. At Chelsworth (1692) the 15 cheeses demanded by the vicar were, at the parishioner's choice, brought either to the church 'and set up in it', or they were delivered safely to the parson's house. To avoid cheating, each dairy at Monk Soham (1617) was to use 'so great a vat as the owner do usually make'.⁵⁴ The resultant 15 cheeses were to be brought either into the 'church' (that is, into the parishioners' nave) or into the chancel (the rector's domain). The amount of detail put into these documents may have been intended to avoid misunderstandings, or could have resulted from previous disputes and legal cases. Either way, it is curious that these tithe customs do not give the precise weights of the required cheeses.

Fortunately, an indenture of 1608 reveals an even more detailed agreement between the parson and parishioners of Kettleburgh to 'continue ancient customs for ever'. Inhabitants who made two cheeses a day had to pay, every tenth day after 30 April, one cheese weighing 30 lbs until the full 15 were paid. Cheeses made between Sunday and Thursday were to be delivered on the next Sabbath; those made on Friday and Saturday were due a week later. People who made only one cheese a day 'shall put into the tenth cheese all the milk of two meals': the 'flet' milk should come from the richer milking in the evening (which gave a

creamier product) and the 'unflet' from the morning. Furthermore, all cheeses had to be 'well and housewifely salted and handled' (turned to aid the drying and maturing process).⁵⁵ If the milk of two meals 'will not make a cheese of thirty pounds', the parson would accept such weight as could be made. Cheeses had to be delivered to the rector's chancel, and an account kept of the weights. While the parishioner was obliged to make up any underweight, the rector had to compensate for overweight.⁵⁶

The most colourful description of these practices comes in 1550 from the parish of Combs near Stowmarket, where each parishioner who made cheeses was expected to pay nine a year to the rector, split between the feasts of Midsummer and Lammas. A local clerk called John Bury (aged over 50) testified at the Norwich consistory court that, when a previous rector held the living in the early sixteenth century, he [Bury] had been asked 'to go with him divers and many times to the said town [Combs] where the parishioners did use to bring their tithe cheese into the church there'. There he helped 'to turn the said cheeses, standing and lying around about the said church of Combs, in the glass windows to air and dry them' (Figs 133–34).⁵⁷ During another incumbency he helped 'to carry the tithe cheese from the church of Combs to the parsonage there'.

From evidence of this kind, it is obvious that some parish clergy were receiving far more cheese than they and their households could possibly eat. Fortunately cheese has to mature and lasts fairly well, and most of it must have been sold on to retailers, factors and merchants, thus giving incumbents an active role in the cheese trade. Their prices should have been competitive, primarily because they did not have to bear the costs of production.⁵⁸ Another consequence of the plentifulness of cheese was that it was sometimes regarded by local people as a form of currency. For instance, in 1542 when a 'gathering' or collection was made for church repairs at Brundish, 19 local men and women responded. While 14 of them gave money amounting to 11s 4d, the remaining five (two widows and three men) donated a total of eight cheeses which were subsequently sold for 4s 8d.⁵⁹

Two small adjacent parishes immediately north of Ipswich, Akenham and Whitton-cum-Thurlston, provide especially telling evidence. For each, a terrier of 1424 survives in the form of a later copy, providing incontrovertible proof of the medieval roots of both the production of cheese from cows' milk and the elaborate system of tithing which surrounded it. At Akenham, each maker was required to pay 15 cheeses a year,⁶⁰ but in neighbouring Whitton nine a year were the normal tithe (seven individuals and tenements were specified). Their first delivery was expected on 10 May, and as usual they were bound to bring their cheeses to church, and there to deliver them to the parson. Specified here among the tithe-payers were four individuals, of whom one was a hermit, and eight holdings of land including a manor and two 'halls'. Because some holdings in this area of small parishes straddled parish boundaries, both terriers give examples of paying tithes to more than one cleric.⁶¹

We may deduce from this evidence that dozens of parishes in High Suffolk, where cheese had become a major product, had adopted a new and more elaborate system of tithing at some point before 1400. This involved the making of a set number of cheeses between the beginning of May and the end of September (following strict rules of manufacture), their regular stockpiling over ten-day periods, and their subsequent carriage and presentation to the parish priest at two or three major festivals. The 24 parishes that so far can be proved to have observed this custom, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, are sufficient in number to show a concentration in the north-eastern quadrant of the county, in an area which closely coincides with what in 1786 Arthur Young still called 'the seat of the dairies' (Fig. 132).⁶² Both within and beyond this zone, other parishes must once have paid tithe-cheeses in kind,⁶³ but positive local evidence for them does not survive, or has not yet been found. At this point it is worth noting that the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 mentions many fewer Suffolk parishes paying lactage than



FIG. 133 – The exterior of Combs church from the north-east.

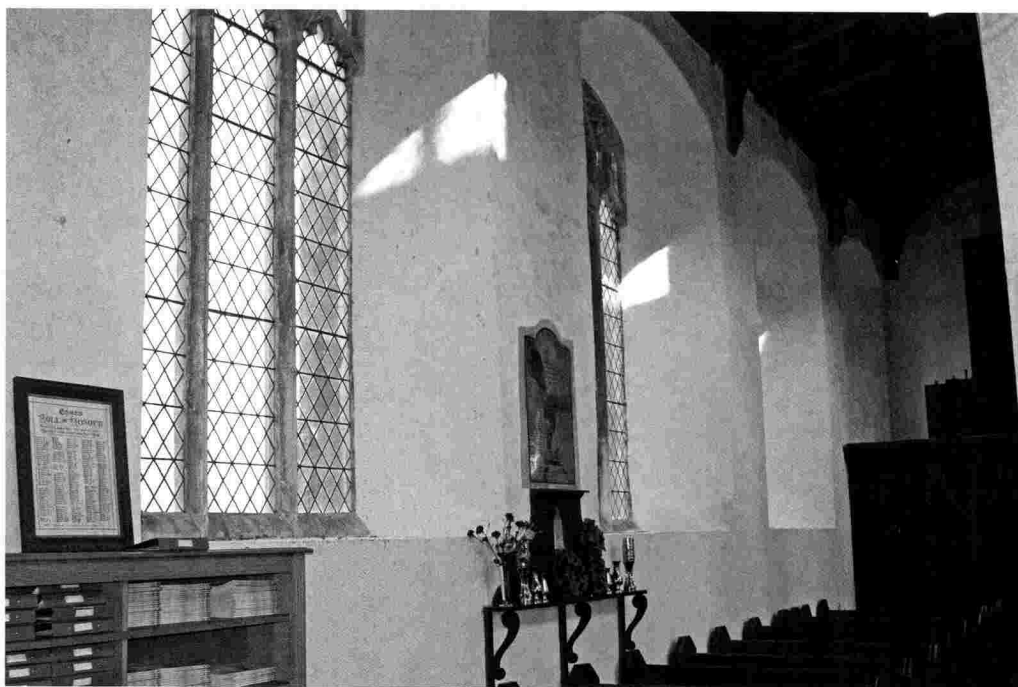


FIG. 134 – The interior of Combs church: flat window ledges in north aisle of nave, where in the early 16th century John Bury may have helped to turn cheeses ‘to air and dry them’.

did the *Inquisitiones* of 1341. In so doing it may have deliberately recorded those parishes that in the early sixteenth century still paid their lactage in the form of tithe cheese, and at the same time demonstrated a decline of that practice in favour of cash payments.⁶⁴

From the mid fourteenth century onwards, the dairy-farming of High Suffolk must be seen against a background of major economic, social and topographical change. The Great Famine of c. 1315, the Black Death of 1348–49 and other visitations of sickness had reduced the population of England by at least a third and probably by a half. This catastrophe caused much personal tragedy and economic dislocation, but it had better consequences for those who managed to survive. The grip of manorial lordship loosened as villeins gained their freedom, and a new kind of peasant aristocracy, the yeomen, began to emerge and prosper. Simultaneously wages rose and the standard of living improved. Changes occurred even in the national diet, as less reliance was put on the production of cereals and demand grew for dairy produce and meat.⁶⁵ Recent research has shown that manorial demesnes in Suffolk reduced their involvement in dairying in the second half of the fourteenth century, and had largely leased off or sold their herds by 1400. As a consequence it was left to the smaller farmers, with their wives and families, to maintain the dairying tradition into the fifteenth century and beyond. As Bailey has expressed it, 'dairy farming in particular was better suited to smaller enterprises using domestic labour, particularly women'.⁶⁶ Because more land was now available to a reduced population, including demesnes which were increasingly leased out, individual holdings tended to grow in size and to consolidate into units which were more economic to farm. As a result of these social and economic changes, much of the landscape of the heavier land was progressively transformed. Arable was converted to grass, and encroachments on commons, greens and road-verges were commonplace. Hedges were planted and ditches dug to create an intricate mosaic of enclosed fields, often small but sometimes over 20 acres, which remained a major feature of the central two-thirds of Suffolk until the middle of the twentieth century.⁶⁷

DAIRYING IN PROBATE RECORDS

Further light on the late medieval dairying tradition of Suffolk is cast by unfinished work of the late Peter Northeast.⁶⁸ In early wills which survive for over twenty parishes around the small town of Debenham, he searched for references to livestock. In all, for the period 1374 to 1530, he found and abstracted relevant data from 144 wills proved in four different ecclesiastical courts.⁶⁹ Most testators omitted mention of their occupations and social status, but the exceptions were two gentleman, twelve clergymen, twelve widows, a tailor, a carpenter and a husbandman. In this cross-section of predominantly rural society in High Suffolk, Northeast found bequests of 76 horses, 181 sheep and 687 cattle (580 dairy cows and 107 calves, heifers, 'buds', bullocks and bulls). The actual numbers are not especially telling because they are limited by several factors and are clearly underestimates. For example, beneficiaries such as children and godchildren are not always named or even numbered; not all animals are mentioned ('my best cow' clearly indicates more than one, and 'able' animals imply that others were somehow imperfect); and in any case will-makers were a minority of the total population. More significant are the relative *proportions* of those numbers, and it is the marked preponderance of dairy cows which is outstanding. They undoubtedly constituted a major form of personal wealth in this region, and were important assets to inherit.⁷⁰ The largest herds recorded in these wills numbered 52 (John Cheke of Debenham, 1489) and 60 (Edmund Withe of Winston, 1530), but most testators mentioned fewer than five cattle and many only two, or just one. Except for sheep, the numbers of animals per testator tended to rise over time, particularly in the early sixteenth century.

Another useful body of comparative evidence dating from the 1570s and 1580s comes from the earliest surviving probate inventories of the Sudbury and Suffolk archdeaconries, which together cover the whole county.⁷¹ Here the dairying industry is revealed more fully than in wills, and its scale strongly suggests that most dairy farmers were in the business commercially and not just for home or local consumption. As well as details of livestock and herds, we also discover the layout of houses and outbuildings, the equipment they contained, and products maturing or waiting to be eaten or sold. Individual herds, sometimes described as being in pastures or yards, were not particularly large. Eight herds had 15 or more cows, and the largest contained 25; at the lower end of the scale 55 herds had under 10 cows each, and 39 had under 5. (Wealthier people whose wills were proved in higher courts no doubt owned greater numbers.)⁷² In these two decades, cattle prices ranged widely, depending on age and condition: bulls were valued at 13s 4d to 26s; dairy cows from £1 to £2, heifers from 13s 4d to 25s; calves from 3s 4d to 13s; bullocks from 10s to £1; and yearlings from 4s to 13s. A large proportion of dairy-farmers had rooms and outbuildings dedicated either to the processing of milk or to the storage of dairy products. These they called the 'milk house', 'buttery', 'dairy house' (or simply 'dairy'), 'cheese house' and 'cheese chamber'. They were generally on the cooler, north side of the house and had latticed windows to aid ventilation.⁷³ Whatever the scale of the enterprise, dairying equipment and produce was also recorded in 'backhouses', 'outhouses', and various first-floor 'chambers' where storage conditions were suitably dry and cool.

The equipment regularly mentioned and valued in inventories covers a wide range, but the essentials were not prohibitively expensive and were clearly within the purchasing power of large numbers of people. Most of them were made of wood, although cloth, earthenware and metal were also represented. For the handling of liquid milk the list includes milk bowls, tubs, pails, 'keelers' (wide shallow wooden tubs) and skimmers or fletting dishes. For cream, the main essentials were 'cream firkins' (small barrels) and 'cream pots'. For making cheese, the necessary equipment included sieves, vats (strong wooden tubs of varying size in which curds were put), breads (heavy, circular lids of wood to compress cheese in the vat), cheese cloths (muslin to line the vat), cheese tongs (a wooden rack laid across the vat, on which freshly made cheeses were put to dry), presses (a heavy wooden framework to compress cheese, using weights or screws), boards and planks (to stand cheeses on), and 'mawe pots' (to store rennet which curdled the milk). For making butter, the householder needed churns (worked by vertical plungers), butter pots, 'pints', 'prints' and scales.⁷⁴ The most expensive items in the dairy were churns (from 8d to 2s 6d each), salting troughs (from 2s 6d to 5s each), and presses which at their most elaborate incorporated ironwork and could be 'double' in form (from 4d to 20s each). Of course it was vital for all equipment to be kept clean, 'rather than be exposed to the chance of sluttish nastiness, too common in many dairies'.⁷⁵

Storage of produce in the dairy and elsewhere necessitated a battery of measures and containers. Cream was measured in firkins and earthenware pots. Butter, variously described as sweet, fresh, salt and 'whey' (made from the watery milk left after the separation of curd), was measured in gallons, firkins, barrels and pots. Cheeses were either counted as individual objects, or measured in quarters and weys. A wey of cheese cost between 25s and 33s 4d, and a quarter between 6s 8d and 10s.⁷⁶ Some stored cheeses were described as hard and others as soft; it seems that hard cheese was normally 'great' in size, while soft cheese was 'of a small sort'. In 1583 a 'great' cheese was valued at 2s 6d, while a small, soft cheese commanded roughly the same price and was presumably regarded as superior.⁷⁷

Two other by-employments which were regularly combined with dairying appear in these inventories. The first is a reminder of how the appetite for meat had grown. Pigs, partly fed on abundant skimmed milk from the dairy, were commonly fattened either for household

consumption or for sale. In the early 1600s Robert Reyce pointed to 'the great multitude of milch cattle ... upon which depends the swine's cheifest maintenance ...'⁷⁸ As a consequence, bacon in the form of 'flitches' and 'chines' is often recorded in the same buildings and rooms as cheeses. Secondly, stores of hemp and hemp-seed, derived from small, heavily manured fields known as 'hemplands', supported the making of linen, sackcloth and canvas which was a strong domestic industry in north-eastern Suffolk and the Waveney valley. While some unpeeled hemp was still in the sheaf or 'kembell', fibres of hemp that had been peeled and softened by the process of heckling were measured in bushels and stones, and stored in firkins.⁷⁹ The growing of hemp in Suffolk and elsewhere certainly had medieval origins, but it later suffered from foreign competition and had to be specifically encouraged by national legislation in the 1690s.⁸⁰

The laborious and time-consuming system of paying tithe-cheese in kind was progressively replaced by cash. For instance, by 1550–51 the rector of Combs (whose predecessor half a century earlier had counted tithe-cheeses stacked in the windows of his church) received his lactice at Lammas at the rate of 4d for each dairy cow.⁸¹ Of the tithe customs which survive in written form for early-modern Suffolk, a clear majority record the payment of lactice in money, and are presumably the result of switching from earlier payments in kind. That this adjustment did not necessarily lead to harmony is shown by events at Hoxne. Here on 20 October 1612 the vicar suspended his 'ancient' customary tithes or 'recompence', and let them to four local yeomen for an annual sum of £60. He had no doubt that lactice was 'the greatest' of his tithe-customs, but that it 'breedeth variance, discord and unkindness' between vicar and parishioners. He preferred to receive a lump sum instead.⁸²

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries the dairy farmers of Suffolk changed their emphasis. Their best and sweetest milk now went into the making of high-quality butter, and only their 'flet' milk, skimmed several times, went into cheese. In the mid to late fifteenth century, cheese had been one of the most important commodities exported from the port of Ipswich.⁸³ Even in c. 1603 Robert Reyce still wrote of the 'goodness and excellency' of Suffolk cheese, but he already suspected that it was lacking 'in the wonted quality'.⁸⁴ By the second half of the seventeenth century, this cheese had definitely lost its reputation – except for hardness and durability – and was regarded as suitable only for servants, apprentices, prisoners and, in particular, His Majesty's Navy.⁸⁵ Although it carried uncomplimentary names such as 'bang' or 'thump', and was regarded by some as 'only fit for making wheels for wheelbarrows', it still found a ready market at home and abroad.⁸⁶

Suffolk's butter, by contrast, had become widely recognised as of top quality and gave considerable prosperity to its producers.⁸⁷ Through Ipswich, Woodbridge, Southwold and other eastern ports it was exported in large quantities to markets in London and further afield. In 1722 Defoe judged that Suffolk was 'famous for the best butter and perhaps the worst cheese in England'.⁸⁸ Surprisingly, tithe customs of the early-modern period rarely mention butter, presumably because by this time most lactice payments were made in cash, ranging from 1d to 12d for each dairy cow. Nevertheless, as has already been seen, butter itself and the equipment for making it are very evident in the farming inventories of Elizabethan Suffolk.

CONCLUSION

Mainstream economic history of the medieval period, and beyond, is primarily concerned with the running of demesnes, manors and large estates, and depends heavily on sampling England's incomparable heritage of manorial documents. These open up a world inhabited by lords, stewards, bailiffs and lessees, and of course by the free and unfree tenantry who constituted most of the population (and filled many a court roll with particulars of their holdings, services,

dues, offices, debts and offences).⁸⁹ The main emphasis, inescapably, is with economic 'output'. By contrast, tithe customs, within glebe terriers, speak largely of the same individuals but reveal them in a parallel and differently organised world of lay parishioners and incumbent clergy. Their purpose, within individual parishes, was to present the official rules and customs which governed the payment of tithes and other clerical dues. These are burdens which have to be considered in assessing the changeable standards of living achieved by households or communities across late medieval and early-modern times. Although doubtless these rules provoked much disagreement, and were regularly bent or broken, they reveal important aspects of communal life, as has been shown above by the tithing of Suffolk's cheese.

It has to be conceded, however, that tithe customs never take the form of annual accounts. We are not told what crops or animals each tithe-payer produced in a particular year, or what he made as a craftsman or sold as a retailer, and what subsequently the local priest or appropriator received in kind or in cash. The best means we have of gauging such economic statistics are in the tithe and herbage books occasionally left behind by parish clergy (mostly dating from the seventeenth century and later).⁹⁰ In spite of this serious defect, however, tithe customs do reveal important structural obligations and practices within the lives of parishes, which historians cannot find in the standard run of manorial records.

Only occasionally and recently have economic and social historians built the process of tithing into their calculations of agricultural production and consumption in the medieval period. As Swanson conceded in 2008, 'tithes and tithe management had an impact on the English economy which merits more attention than it has yet received'.⁹¹ The few pieces of research that have been published are mainly concerned with rectories that, from an early date, were in the hands of religious houses such as Durham and Winchester, and are therefore traceable in the richest monastic records. It still remains true that we know very little about the burden of tithes in the great majority of rectories and vicarages in the medieval and early-modern periods. The discovery of more pre-Reformation tithe customs, and their deeper study, would be of undoubted value in making up this deficit.

APPENDIX

References to glebe terriers mentioned in this article and its endnotes, in alphabetical order:

- Akenham 1424: *East Anglian Notes & Queries*, ns 9, 75-76
- Ampton 1613: SROB, E 14/4/1
- Assington ?1527: SROB, 806/1/6
- Barningham 1635: SROB, E 14/4/2
- Bedfield 1613-14: SROI, FAA 2701/19/85
- Boyton 1635: SROI, FAA 2701/19/23
- Bramfield 1635: SROI, FAA 2701/19/36
- Brandeston 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/109
- Chelsworth 1692: SROB, 806/1/35
- Clopton 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/119
- Cratfield 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/108
- Eye 1490: SROI, FF 569/E34/1
- Framlingham n.d.: SROI, FC 101/C2/1
- Fressingfield 1613: SROI, FF 569/F31/1
- Hacheston 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/20/189
- Holton St Peter 1706: SROI, FF 569/H84/4
- Hoxne 1747: SROI, FF 569/H104/11
- Ilketshall St Andrew 1613: SROI, FF 569/16
- Lakenheath 1613: SROB, E 14/4/1

Lt Livermere 1401: SROB, FL 602/3/1
 Melton 1613: FAA 2701/20/185
 Mendlesham 1613: SROB, E 14/4/1
 Mickfield 1613: SROB, FAA 2701/20/224
 Monewden 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/111
 Monk Soham 1617: SROI, FC 98/C2/1
 Norton n.d.: SROB, 806/1/117
 Pakenham, 1431–32: SROB, 806/1/120
 Parham 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/119
 Rattlesden 1706: SROB, 806/1/124
 Ringsfield 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/62
 Rishangles 1613: SROB, E 14/4/1
 Stradishall 1613: SROB, E 14/4/1
 Stratford St Andrew 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/19/113
 Tannington-cum-Brundish n.d.: SROI, FC 93/C3/1
 Wangford (nr Lakenheath) 1615–16: SROB, E 14/4/4
 Wenhaston 1613: SROI, FAA 2701/20/166
 Westhall 1539: SROI, FAA 2701/19/72
 Whitton-cum-Thurlston 1424: SROI, FF 569/W68
 Wrating, Little 1536 (1613): SROB, E 14/4/1

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NOTES

- 1 The term 'glebe terrier' is tautologous. Both words mean 'land' or 'soil' (Latin *gleba* and *terra*). 'Glebe' came to mean the land set aside for the support of a resident priest.
- 2 In this article terriers are mentioned by parish and date, thus Parham (1613); for full references, see Appendix, pp. 448–49.
- 3 E.g., Gray 1915, 119, 134–36; Tate 1946, 125–40; Beresford 1953–55, 5–28; Barley 1967, 724–34; Barley 1985, 632–38; Podd 2008, 11–18.
- 4 For the attitudes of economic and social historians to tithing, see Swanson 2008, 89–112.
- 5 Suffolk's glebe terriers are in the following classes: SROI, FAA 2701/19 and 20 and FF 569; SROB, E 14/4/1–5 and 806/1/1–182.
- 6 E.g., Watts 2009, 1.
- 7 They are: Westhall (1539), Little Wrating (1536), Assington (?1527), Eye (1490), Pakenham (1431–32), Akenham (1424), Whitton-cum-Thurlston (1424) and Little Livermere (1401). Stradishall (1613) refers to an older terrier of 1457–58; Clopton (1613) invokes 'an ancient terrier' from the time of Edward IV; Ringsfield (1613) quotes details from 'an auncient dragge booke' written by a former rector in 1543; Wenhaston (1613) quotes 'an old terrier book of paper', undated; a testimonial letter of 1538–39 records the tithe customs of Walsham le Willows. A valuation of Sibton's benefice dated 24 June 1551 is clearly based on a terrier and tithe customs: *Val. Eccl.* III, 442. Vincent Redstone knew of Suffolk's pre-1571 terriers in 1903: Redstone 1903, 267–300.
- 8 Query for the archival profession: what is the earliest known glebe terrier to survive, original or copied? It may be concealed under a name such as survey, extent, drag or even rental (or Latin equivalents).
- 9 Today the terms 'rectory' and 'vicarage' refer to the incumbent's house, but their fundamental application was to the whole living. In this article, to minimize confusion, the word 'parsonage' is used for the house (although technically the 'parson' is a rector). The institutional heart of a medieval community may have included church, churchyard, parsonage, gildhall or church-house, recreational ground, early school, almshouses, principal manor house and instruments of punishment such as stocks and pillory.

- 10 Rectorial manors existed at Eyke, Halesworth, Hasketon, Helmingham, Holton, Lavenham, Long Melford, Sutton and Thelnetham.
- 11 Terriers sometimes give an annual valuation for livings, comprising the profits of glebe, tithes, fees, pensions, etc. For the background, see Thompson 1947.
- 12 Sometimes the division was more complicated. At Mendlesham (1613) the corn-tithe did not belong wholly to the lay-rector; the vicar received one-third of the sheaves.
- 13 Dymond 1999(c), 72–73.
- 14 Barratt 1955; Hobbs 2003.
- 15 Terriers sometimes recorded recent or ongoing building works: Watts 2009, 133–34. Parsonages are normally accompanied by a barn, but the term ‘tithe-barn’ is nearly always associated with a religious house.
- 16 Suffolk incumbents often invested in ‘hemplands’ or ‘hempgrounds’ close to the house; they were small, heavily manured fields in which hemp was grown for the local linen and canvas industry. Already in 1424 Whitton had two hempgrounds beside its parsonage, and Melton (1613) had a ‘hemphouse’. Occasionally the glebe contained a ‘retting pit’ for soaking hemp, as at Boyton (1635). See N. Evans 1985, esp. ch. 3.
- 17 Hobbs 2003, x–xi; Watts 2009, I, 7, 26. Suffolk terriers contain more information on buildings as a result of printed questionnaires in 1784, 1791 and 1794.
- 18 Bettey 2010, 2.
- 19 Pieces of glebe belonging to two or more parishes sometimes lie adjacent; they were apparently single blocks later subdivided. Article forthcoming, ‘Adjacent Glebes’.
- 20 Dymond 2002, 73–91.
- 21 Dymond 1999(a), 165–92; 1999(b), 464–97.
- 22 E. Evans 1985, 389–405.
- 23 The most relevant kind of account is the tithe or herbage book kept by individual incumbents: N. Evans 1980, 24–27.
- 24 Genesis, xxviii, vv 21–22; Leviticus, xxvii, vv 30–33. For detailed descriptions of the tithing system, see Selden 1618; Gibson 1761; E. Evans 1985, 389–405.
- 25 Whitelock, Brett and Brooke 1981, I, I, 44–46, 97–99, 351.
- 26 The occasional ‘twentieth’ or ‘thirtieth’ was a special concession to landowners (Rattlesden 1716).
- 27 Swanson 2008, 112.
- 28 Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, I, 511. Saffron could be tithable, although gathered three-yearly: Gibson 1761, 669, 677.
- 29 *Non. Inq.* (1807).
- 30 E. Evans 1985, 389.
- 31 Gill and Guilford 1910; E. Evans 1976.
- 32 Wool was also tithed by weight.
- 33 Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, II, 795–97; Bullard and Chalmer Bell 1929, 75–77; Gibson 1761, 664; E. Evans 1970, 21; 1976, 20; Kain and Prince 1985, 259, note 11.
- 34 Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, I, 511.
- 35 Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, II, 795.
- 36 A statute of 1198–?1215 contains the earliest known rule for tithing lambs moving between parishes: Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, I, 41–42.
- 37 Powicke and Cheney 1964, II, I, 511.
- 38 [Customs are] ‘very unreasonable in these days, when both lambs and calves are grown about five times dearer than they were ... and the value of money is now three times more than it was then’: Richard Goltý’s tithe-book of 1624–78: SROI, JC1/29/1. Incumbents varied in their keeping of tithe accounts, and often used deputies called ‘tithingmen’: see Bettey 2005, 119–34; Gill and Guilford 1910, 91, 103, 117, 122, 128.
- 39 In the southern and eastern Midlands, from the mid eighteenth century, tithes were commuted for allotments of land as part of parliamentary enclosure: *BPP*, 1836, XLIV; Kain and Prince 2000, 11, fig. 3.
- 40 Whereas 1d or 2d was usually charged for the birth of a foal, and packhorses were occasionally tithed, plough-horses were normally exempt ‘in regard of their labour, it being as well for the benefit and profit of the parson as of ourselves’ (Monk Soham 1617).
- 41 Movements of stock across parish boundaries, whether out or in, posed major problems for tithe-owners.
- 42 E.g., the tithe books of Hoxne (SROI, FC 82/C1/9), Cavendish (SROB, FL 546/3/13–15) and Walsham le Willows (SROB, FL 646/3/20).
- 43 *Val. Eccl.*, III, 442. Most of this certificate reads like a list of tithe customs.
- 44 In 1513 the abbey’s herd totalled 140 cows: Denny 1960, 37–38.
- 45 At Brandeston (1613) the vicar, unusually, paid *no* allowance to anyone owning 7–9 milk cows.

- 46 8d a noble (i.e. the tenth penny) was charged for herbage when drovers brought cattle to Hoxne fair; they were charged less if they could make a composition with the rector: SROI, FC 82/C1/9.
- 47 *Non. Inq.*, 63–105.
- 48 In some hundreds, e.g. Thedwastre and Cosford, the term lactage was qualified as of hay (*feni*), of meadow (*prati*) and of calves (*vitulorum*). The only reference to lactage of *sheep* came under Thorpe Morieux (*Non. Inq.*, 94), an important reminder that ewes' milk also had value (*lact' vacc' & ovium*).
- 49 In 1341–42 lactage was paid at places like Westleton, Reydon and Benacre on the Sandlings of the east coast, at Brandon and Elveden on the Breckland and at Mildenhall on the Breck-Fen edge.
- 50 Bailey 2007, 79, 84.
- 51 Twelve of the thirteen parishes paying tithe on cheese were in the northern hundred of Blackbourn, that had sandy and clay soils (*Non. Inq.*, 71–74); cheese and butter were both mentioned at Wissington in the Stour valley (*Ibid.*, 102).
- 52 SROI, FF 569/F31/1. Payments of tithe-cheese also appear in MacCulloch 1976, 36, 38, 39, 53, 63(2), 64, 66.
- 53 Tithe customs do not specify the weight required for tithe-cheeses. Although a statute of 1431 enacted that a wey of cheese should be 224 lbs, in Suffolk it was normally reckoned at 256 lbs: OED; *Rolls of Parliament*, IV (1783), 381; Yaxley 2003, 41. More evidence is needed on the sizes, weights and characteristics of Suffolk's cheese.
- 54 Refers to the cheese vat or mould, which varied in size: Yaxley 2003, 41, 72.
- 55 SROB, FC109/C1/1. Kettleburgh has no surviving tithe-customs.
- 56 Sadly, none of these detailed cheese-accounts has yet been recognised.
- 57 NRO, DN/DEP 5/5a, fol. 30r. Medieval churches made the best available refrigerators, particularly on their north sides. A scientific technique for recovering historic odours from medieval masonry has yet to be invented.
- 58 When farm products were tithed in kind and stored well, incumbents must often have engaged with the commercial market. But what was done with all those highly perishable eggs at Eastertime?
- 59 Brundish Town Book: SROI, FC 89/A2/1. I thank Kate Jewell for this reference.
- 60 At Akenham obligations to pay a mixture of tithes were listed for nine individuals, four other holdings and three outsiders. Other small tithes due to the rector included pigs, hops, geese, wood, broom, hay and eggs.
- 61 The tithe corn of Thurlston did not belong to the rector of Whitton. The tithe customs of Whitton-cum-Thurlston were established by an ancient composition of Anthony Pynton, who founded a chapel at Thurlston: SROI, FF569/W68/3.
- 62 Young 1786, 194. These parishes were still paying tithe-cheeses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- 63 As proved independently for Combs and Kettleburgh (above, pp. 442–43).
- 64 In 1535, across 13 deaneries the *Valor* lists only 35 parishes paying lactage and 48 paying herbage, predominantly in the centre and east of Suffolk: *Val. Eccl.*, III, 403–88. MacCulloch 1976 for a list of parishes paying lactage and herbage c. 1600.
- 65 Dyer 1990; Britnell 1991, 611–24. In areas of lighter soil such as the Breckland, other responses were made to the same pressures: Bailey 1989.
- 66 Bailey 2007, 222.
- 67 Amor 2006, 175–97; Martin and Satchell 2008, chs 3–4. Stephen Podd points out that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some enclosed pastures in places such as Helmingham were as large as 20 to 100 acres.
- 68 Box of manuscript slips raised by Peter Northeast, now part of the Northeast Collection in the SRO: HD 2448.
- 69 Courts of the Archdeaconries of Suffolk and Sudbury, Norwich Consistory Court and Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
- 70 The will of William Martyn of Helmingham (1459) valued a cow at 6s 8d and a calf at 2s. Other assets in these wills included pigs, poultry and bee-skeps.
- 71 SROB, IC 500/3/1–53 (for the years 1573–77); SROI, FE/1 (for the years 1582–84). The exceptions are four 'peculiars', three belonging to the Deanery of Bocking and one to the diocese of Rochester.
- 72 In 1614 Edward Lowe of Shimpling in south Norfolk bequeathed 87 cattle, 141 cheeses in store and 93 milk bowls: NRO, DN/INV 27/133; Thirsk 1967, 47.
- 73 Specialists in vernacular architecture are able to distinguish 'working' rooms in some surviving domestic buildings.
- 74 For further explanation of these technicalities, see Yaxley 2003, 40–41, 72.
- 75 Twamley 1787, 118.
- 76 In the mid fifteenth century a wey of cheese was valued for customs purposes at 8s, probably an underestimate of its true worth. Nick Amor kindly supplied this comment.
- 77 In 1610 Mendlesham bought cheeses weighing about 10 lbs to sell cheaply to its poor: SROI, FB159/E7/28. Borwright's tenement in Fressingfield (1613) for its tithe 'doth pay yearly very small cheeses'.

- 78 Reyce 1902, 37; Holderness 1984, 233. Flitches are the cured sides of pigs; chines are from the backbone.
- 79 The hemp fibres were valued at about 2d a pound, and threshed hempseed at 1s to 2s a bushel. For the distribution of linen weavers in the north and east of Suffolk, see N. Evans 1999, 142–43, 212.
- 80 Evans, E.J., 1985, 402.
- 81 NRO, DN/DEP 5/5a, fol. 14.
- 82 SROI, FC 82/C1/9.
- 83 TNA, E 122/52/42–43, 45–48; E 122/53/9. The requirement to export all cheese and butter through Calais was relaxed from 1431, and subsequently abolished; thus dairy produce could be exported direct to key markets in Holland, Zeeland and the Baltic: *Rolls of Parliament*, IV, 293; V, 24. Nick Amor kindly supplied this note.
- 84 Reyce 1902, 40–41.
- 85 For cheese supplied to the Navy, see *Acts of Privy Council, 1601–4*, 52.
- 86 Blome 1673, 207; Raynbird 1849, 288; Grose 1790, *sub* Suffolk.
- 87 The best butter came from the re-growth of grass after mowing: Defoe 1727, 33.
- 88 Defoe, 1748, pp. 43–44. Francois de la Rochefoucauld also praised Suffolk cows and dairies in 1784: Scarfe 1988, 144–46.
- 89 E.g. Campbell 2000; Bailey 2007.
- 90 E.g. tithe and herbage accounts of Walsham le Willows, mainly early seventeenth century. In 1625 tithes were paid by 90 tenants, of whom 54 kept c. 500 cows: SROB, FL 646/3/20/1–13.
- 91 Swanson 2008, 90–92, 112; Dodds 2007; Swanson 2006.

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Abbreviations

BPP	<i>British Parliamentary Papers</i>
Non. Inq.	<i>Nonarum Inquisitiones</i> (1807) [Inquisitions of the Ninths]
n.d.	no date
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
SROB	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich
TNA	The National Archives