

LITTLE SUTTON IN 1569, by ROGER LEA

A deed dated 1569, no. 19899 in Birmingham Archives Repository, throws some light on aspects of Little Sutton some 50 years after Bishop Vesey established his estate immediately to the South of the village. It is a simple list of land (a 'Terrier') belonging to a farm in Little Sutton, the total of 19 acres being in 37 separate units.

Little Sutton

The hamlet probably clustered round an open 'green' along what is now Little Sutton Road from Grange Lane to Slade Road. Nearby Hill, in Hill Village Road, was perhaps approached by way of Grange Lane and Tower Road, there being no settlement then at Mere Green. Mere Green Road perhaps did not exist, and Little Sutton Lane followed the field divisions. The creation of Moor Hall Park may well have curtailed the village somewhat at the Southern end, but Slade Road, Marlpit Lane, and Worcester Lane probably followed their existing course. It is not clear when the area of small fields and squatter-type settlements at Roughley was established.

People

Including William Croxall and Hugh Hargrove, who are mentioned in the preamble, the deed refers to 18 inhabitants of Little Sutton, the others being: Humphrey Bennett, Thomas Bull, Nicholas Burton, George Carless, John Cowper, John Duckett, Edmund Gorton, William Johnson, John Palmer, John Sherratt, William Smyth, Thomas Sponer, John Turner, Nicholas Turner, Mrs. Yardley, widow, and 'one Yate'. The 1663 Hearth Tax lists 36 names, (including Cowper and Yardley), but included in these are the inhabitants of Roughley and other outlying houses, and landless paupers, so a population of about 20 households is a reasonable maximum figure for Little Sutton proper in 1569. The reference to Mrs. Yardley is significant, as indicating her rank as 'gentry', occupying a larger house and owning more land. The possibility that the land between Worcester Lane and Marlpit Lane belonged to the dominant family, residing in a mansion (probably Marlpit Hall) is intriguing. The 'big house' could well have been at the Little Sutton end of this land prior to the establishment of Marlpit Hall.

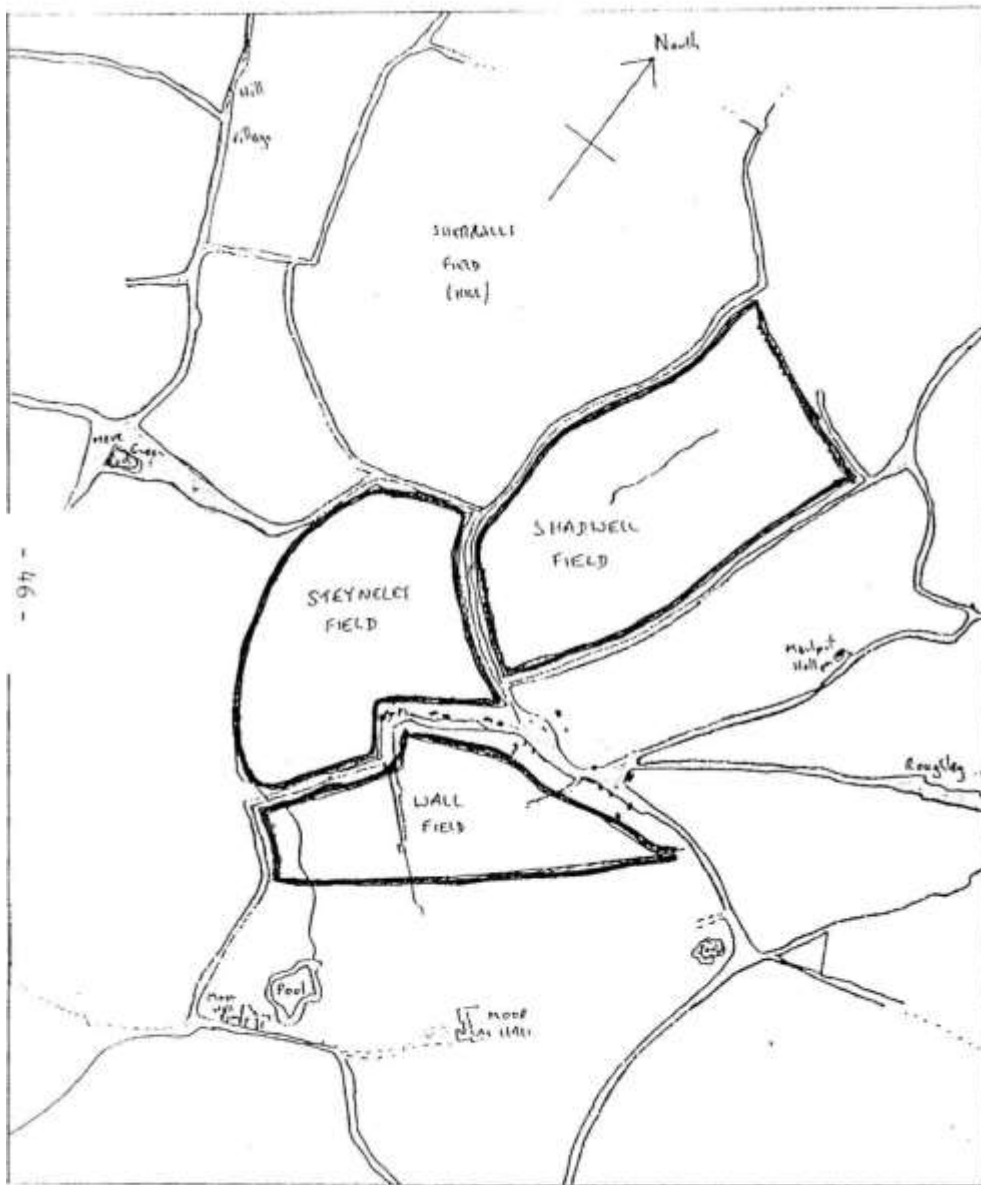
Land

The deed clearly shows that farmers had strips of land in each of the three common fields, and doles in the common meadow. It is reasonable to suppose from this that Little Sutton had earlier been a typical product of the feudal system, the settlements clustered at a focal point, the villagers contributing oxen to the plough-team and labour to the ploughing according to feudal custom. The deed shows this beginning to change, with references to 'Several Pastures', that is, formerly arable land now enclosed by a hedge and converted to pasture, in private ownership. The lands relating to the farm in question would soon be consolidated in this way, though probably still located in the three ancient fields.

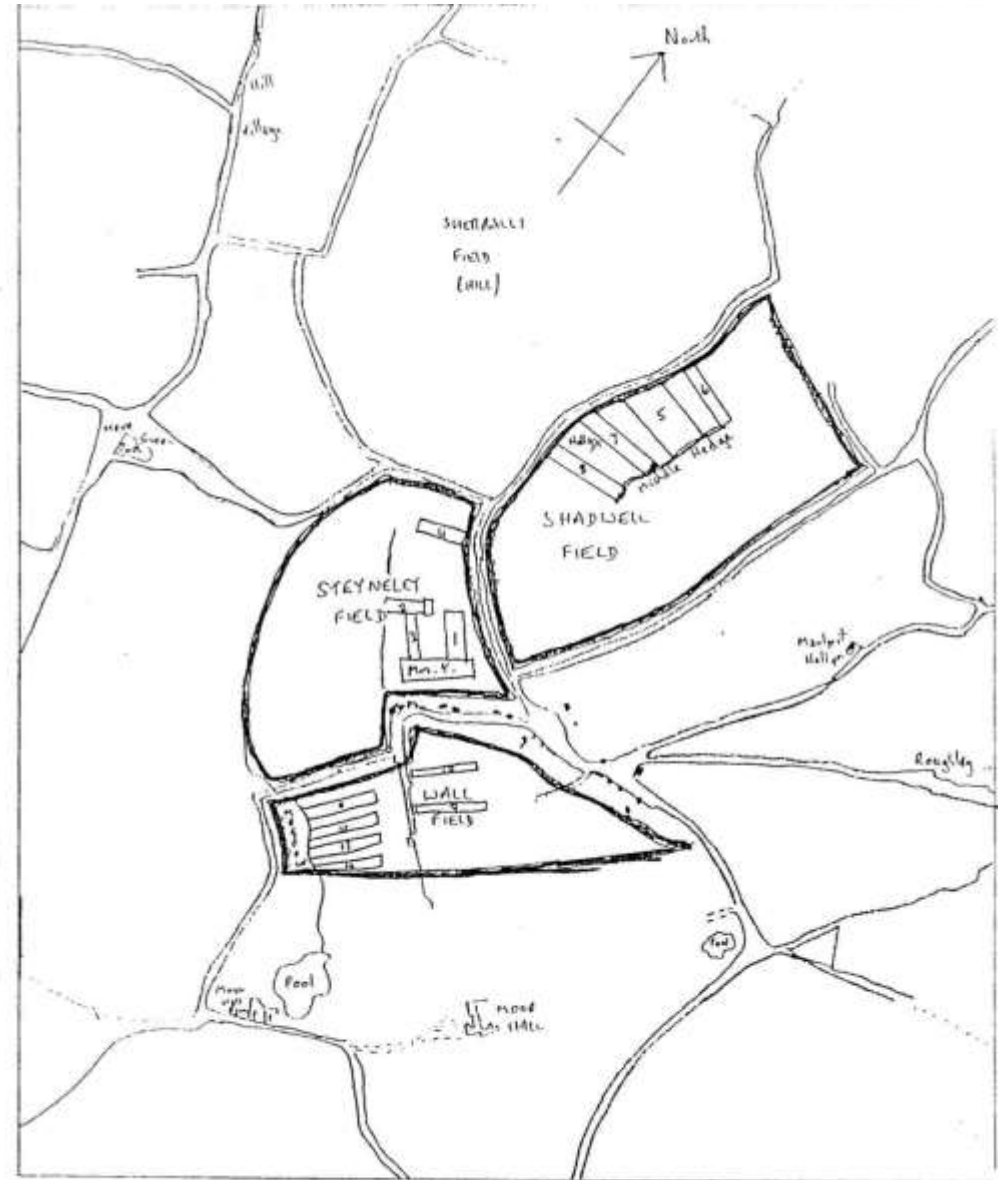
A possible layout of the fields, based on the boundaries shown on the 1824 'Corn Rent' map, is shown. This is highly speculative, and further research may well show it to be quite wrong, but it gives an idea of the layout.

Shadwall Felde

This is fairly easily identified, as it is next to one of the common fields of Hill, and the 'Hadway' is almost certainly Grange Lane. The 1824 map shows a 'Holly Tree Leasow', and a small part of the ancient field is



Possible configuration of Little Sutton in 1569.



Possible layout of strips as numbered in the text.

still divided into strips on the 1824 map. The field boundaries appear to run from Grange Lane to a pre-existing line, presumably the 'Mydle Hedge'. The description of the lands enables them to be located in a simple sequence alternating with strips of land of other farms, but the actual orientation could well have been more complex. The 1824 survey refers to the strips as the 'Edy Crofts', and the four pieces of land vary from ½ acre to nearly an acre (assuming the largest of them to be equivalent to two). The terrier refers to 19 acres of arable, and lists 37 'lands', giving an average of acre each. Assuming the size of an acre to be constant, there would be room for about 25 lands, in the area between Grange Lane and the Mydle Hedge as shown on the map, 10 in the terrier and 15 belonging to at least 7 other farms. Reference to the 1st edition OS 25" map of 1889 shows the distance along the hedges to be 220 yards, so that the strips conform almost exactly to the 'norm' of 220 yds. x 11 yds. in this particular field. This gave a good length for the heavy ox-team to plough before turning; however, by 1569 draught horses were widely used for ploughing, and the benefits of alternating pasture with arable were appreciated, making larger, hedged fields in single ownership more economic.

Steyneley Field

This is located by reference to the 'way leading out of Little Sutton in Shaddalls Field', presumably Grange Lane (formerly Butcher Lane). Reference to the 1824 survey reveals no 'Mydle Hedge', unless it is assumed that Mere Green Road did not then exist, but the hedge followed its line. Two 'several' plots are referred to in this field, one at least down to pasture. The terrier shows that the strips in this field did not lie all in the same direction, which could be inferred from the 1824 survey, where plot 241 suggests a North-South orientation, while plot 232 is East-West.

Wall Felde

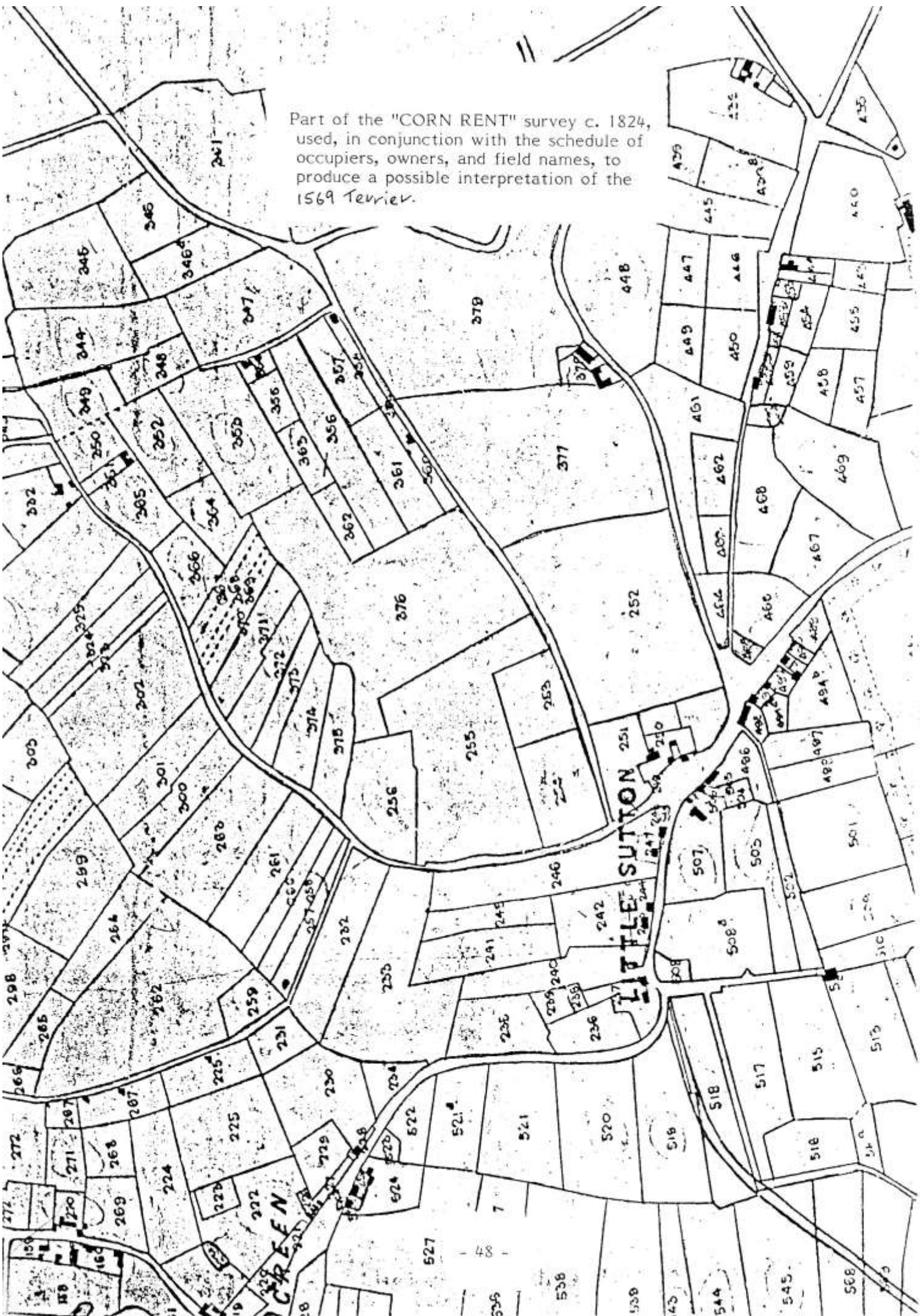
Using the 'Water Gutter' reference, this field would have been to the South of Little Sutton, the only watercourse being the one feeding the pool at Moor Hall Farm. Meadow was usually located on land liable to flooding, and until recently many meadows were annually flooded (or 'floated!') artificially to improve the hay-crop. Moor Hall Park terminates this field in an arbitrary fashion, and its creation may well have led to modification in the original layout.

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE 1569 DEED

A Terryall of all ye commonable lande arable lyenge and beyng in three feelds at Lytle Sutton Amountynge to ye nombre of nyenetyne Acres Just or days Worke which doo apperteyne and belonge to a tenement of John Chattocke of Castelbromyche beyng hys inherytance nowe yn the holdynge and occupation of one William Croxall of Lytle Sutton aforeseid vewed and taken by the seyd William Croxall his tenant Wylliam Johnson Wylliam Smythe and Hugh Hargreve with others the thryd day of Apryll in the yere of the raign of our Soveraign Ladye Elyzabeth the Quenes Majestie that nowe is the Eleventhe and yn the yere of our Lord God 1569.

STEYNELEY In Steyneley Felde Seven lands lyenge together yn lengthe between the
FELDE lands of Mrs. Yardeley Wyddoo nowe yn thoccupation of Edmund
 Gorton and is severall and the lande of John Duckett and Imbreadthe
betweene the lande of John Turner on the Eastesyde and the land of Mrs. Yardeley
aforeseyd on the West syde. [1]

Part of the "CORN RENT" survey c. 1824,
used, in conjunction with the schedule of
occupiers, owners, and field names, to
produce a possible interpretation of the
1569 Teulier.



Item two landes yn the same felde lyeng yn lengthe betwene the mydle hedge and a severall pasture of Nicholas Turner which is enclosed yn the same felde And yn breyd betwene the lande yn tholdynge of. John Sherratt on the North syde and John Cowpers on the Southe and East syde the butt parte thereof. [2]

Item two other lands chutyng upon the severall grownde of Mrs. Yardeleys aforesed and the foreseid ii lands yn lengthe And Imbreadethe betwene the land in tholdyng of George Careles on thone syde and John Sherrotts on thother syde. [3]

Item three other lands yn the seyd felde lyeng in length betwene the wey leydyng out of Lytle Sutton in Shaddalls Felde and a hadland of John Duckett and yn breyd betwene the land of John Cowper and the lande nowe in thoccupation of Humfrey Bennytt. [4]

Shadwall Feelde

Item foure lands lyenge together yn that feelde yn lengthe betwene the mydle hedge and the land of John Turner of Hyll a had beyng betwene them and Imbreadethe betwene the lande of John Turner of Lytle Sutton and the land of the heyre of Nicolas Turner nowe yn thoccupation of one Yate. [5]

Item two lands yn the same feelde lyenge yn lengthe betwene the mydle hedge and the hade which devydethe and chutethe alonge betwene the lands ends of Lytle Sutton and Hyll and Imbreadethe betwene John Ducketts lands on bothe parts. [6]

Item two other lands yn the seid felde lyenge yn lengthe betwene the seyd mydle hedge and the seyd hade and yn breyd betwene the land nowe in thoccupation of John Sherrott and a holly which groweth upon the next land adjoynynge to the seyd two lands. [7]

Item two other lands there lyenge yn lengthe as aforeseyd and yn breyd betwene the lande nowe yn thcrmpation of Thomas Bull and the lande of George Careles. [8]

Wall Feelde

Item two lands lyenge there yn lengthe betwene the severall ground of Nicolas Burton and a hadlande of John Cowpers and yn breyd betwene the land of Mrs. Yardeley nowe yn tholdynge of Edmund Gorton and the land yn thoccupation of the seyd John Cowper. [9]

Item two other lands there beyng in length as is aforenamed and yn breyd betwene the lande of Mrs. Yardeley and John Cowpers aforeseyd. [10]

Item two other lands in the same felde conteynyng a day worke and a half chutyng yn lengthe betwene the severall pasture of Thomas Sponer and a dole of meddoo nowe yn thoccupation of Wylliam Smythe of Lytle Sutton and yn breyd betwene the land of John Turner and the land nowe yn tholdynge of Humfrey Bennytt. [11]

