

Evidence from Documents: 1

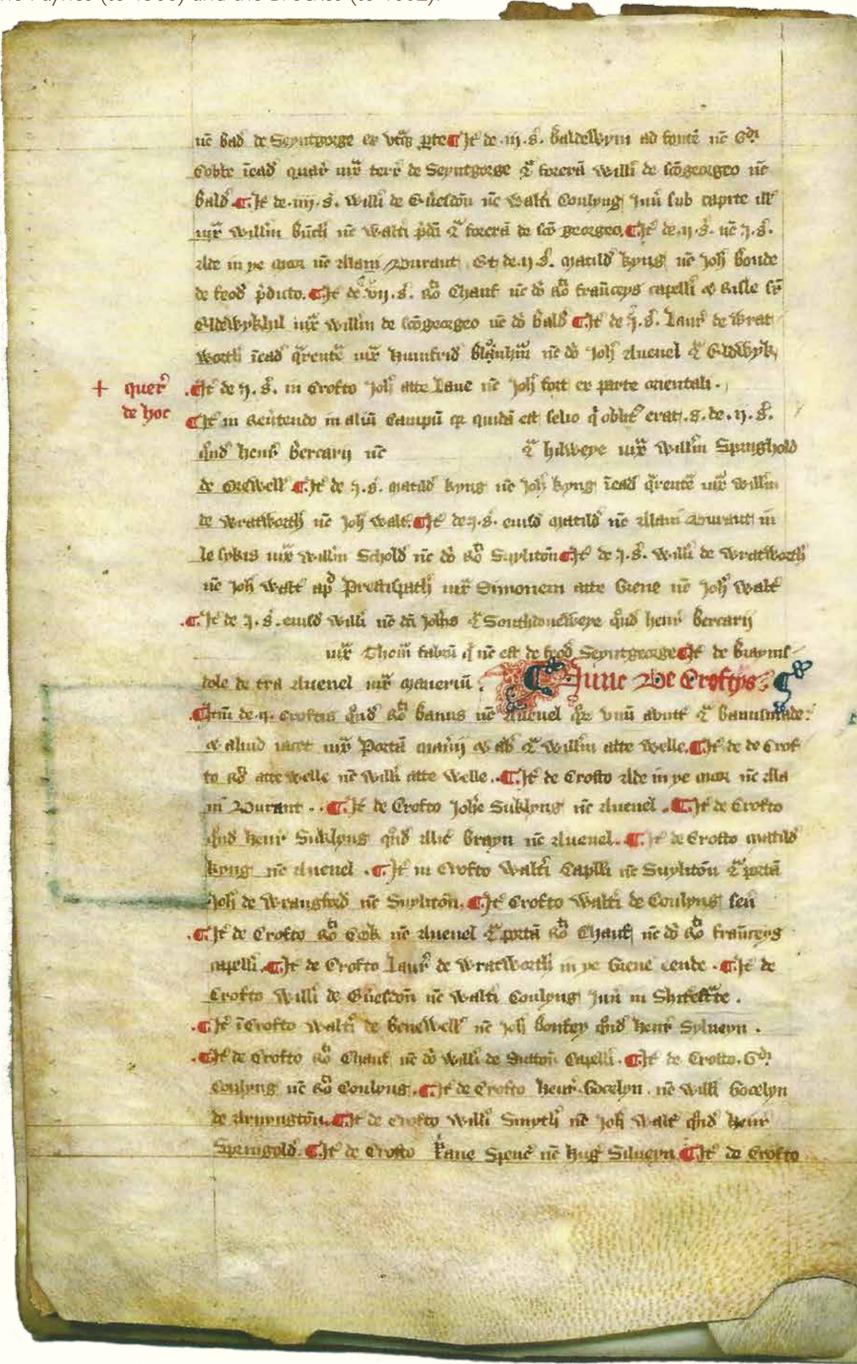
What about the people ?

From at least the time of William the Conqueror, the parish was home to people farming strips in open fields and living in cottages in small hamlets, most of which have now disappeared. What happened to the silent voices?

To search for the answer, we studied old maps which showed us where they lived and ancient documents to discover what they did. This is a sample of what we found.

The transcript of the 1327 Lay Subsidy Roll (tax assessment) provides our first real glimpse of the 64 taxpayers in Wimpole.

It includes lords of the manors such as Bassingbourn, Mor (shortened form of Mortimer) – the only family we can trace as late as 1681, Benewell (related to land held by the Barnwell Benedictine Priory) and Avenel. Other families still in the parish over 200 years later include the Paynes (to 1566) and the Brockes (to 1602).

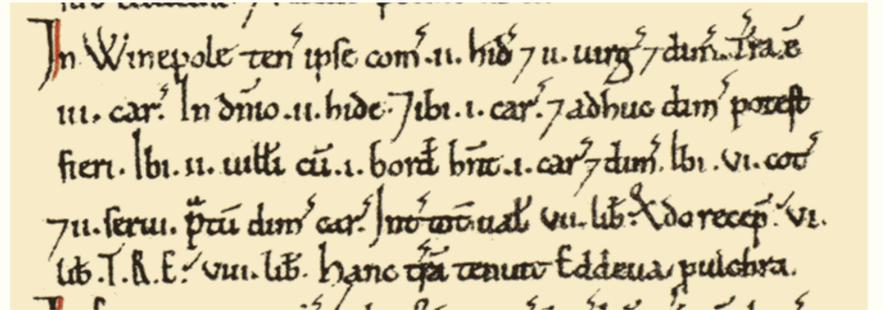


Other medieval documents written in Latin also give us names of some residents. This list of crofts of about 1350 gives us Avenel, William atte Welle, Johe Suklyns, Walti de Coulyns, Walti de Benewell and Laurence de Wrattworth

The earliest available record is the Domesday Survey of 1086.

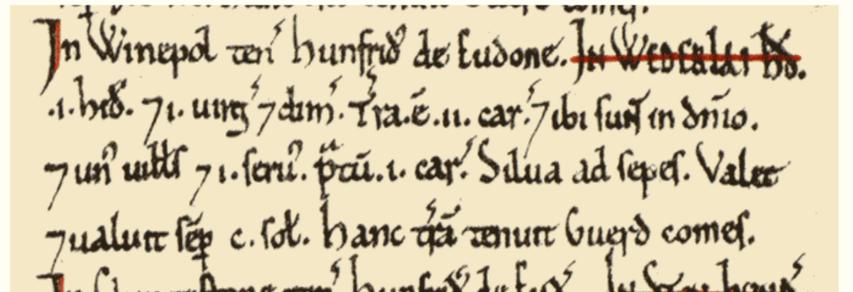
Wimpole was split into 2 manors, belonging to Count Alan of Brittany and Eudo Fitzherbert, with a total of 10 tenants and 3 slaves. By comparison, Wratworth – see separate poster – had 30 tenants and 2 slaves. Only the lords are named.

Land of Count Alan (of Brittany)



In Wimpole 2 hides and 2½ virgates. There is land for 3 ploughs. In demesne 2 hides, 1 plough and there can be half a plough more. 2 villans with 1 bordar have 1½ ploughs. 6 cottars and 2 slaves. Meadow for ½ plough. Worth £7; when received £6; TRE £8. Eddeva the Fair held this land.

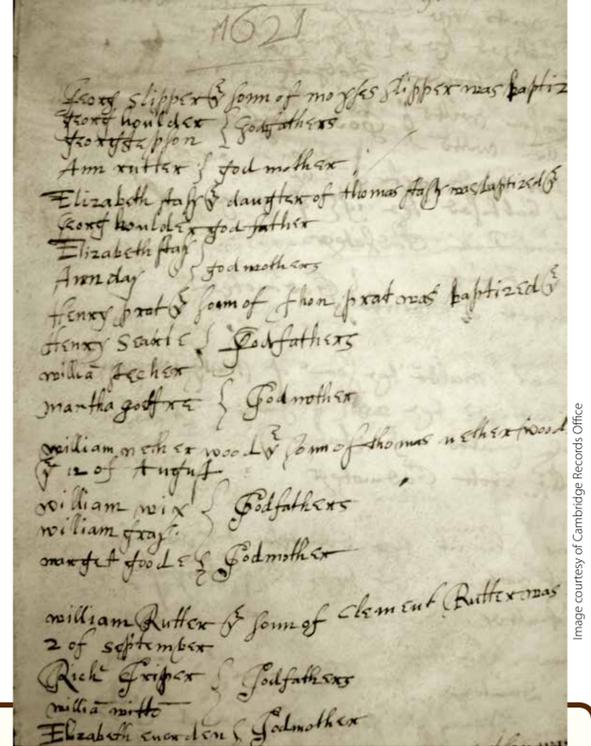
Land of Eudo Fitzherbert, steward:



In Wimpole Humphrey [of Shrewsbury] holds 1 hide and 1½ virgates from Eudo. Land for 2 ploughs and there are 2 ploughs in demesne. 1 villan and 1 slave; meadow for 1 plough and woodland for fences. Is and was worth 100s. Earl Gyrrh held this land.

N.B. VILLAN/VILLEIN = a villager of higher status than a BORDAR (small-holder) or COTTAR (cottager)
HIDE = standard unit of tax assessment, divided into 4 VIRGATES

The parish registers of births, marriages and deaths start in 1550 and enable us get some idea of how long particular families lived in Wimpole.



BAPTISMS 1621

Jul 8	Georg SLIPPER, son of Moyses SLIPPER.	Godparents: Georg HOULDER, Georg JEPSON, Anne RUTTER
Jul 29	Elizabeth STASY, dau of Thomas STASY.	Godparents: Georg HOULDER, Elizabeth STASY, Ann DAY
Aug 12	Henry PRAT, son of Jhon PRAT.	Godparents: Henry SEARLE, William ARCHER, Martha GODFREY
Aug 12	William NETHERWOOD son of Thomas NETHERWOOD.	Godparents: William WIX, William GRAY, Marget GOODE
Sep 2	William RUTTER, son of Clement RUTTER.	Godparents: Richd GRIPER, William WITTON, Elizabeth EVERS DEN

The first map we have dates from 1638, drawn by Benjamin Hare for the lord of the manor, Thomas Chicheley, before he started to build the present Hall in about 1640. The map shows six small hamlets, a small park and some enclosed fields around the manor house, with open fields farmed in strips in the rest of the parish. All the plots have the names of tenants, and we have re-created the lost schedule of land holdings.

Extract from the Hare map showing William Stokes' house – the site of what was later Mr Ratford's house – see separate poster. Home Farm now sits just east of Mr Stokes' house.

East is at the top

