

## The Rich of Bassingham, Lincolnshire 1655-1799

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Bassingham lies some eleven miles south-west of Lincoln near the county boundary with Nottinghamshire. Its 3,057 acres of soil were not particularly favourable to arable farming but because it lay between the rivers Brant and Witham it had good meadows, provided they were effectively drained. Between 1601 and 1799 its population conformed to national trends with about 380 inhabitants at the beginning of the period which declined to some 203 by the later seventeenth century and then revived particularly after the 1740s, to reach 413 at the first census in 1801.<sup>1</sup> The major events it experienced in those two centuries were its unfortunate proximity to the royalist stronghold of Newark during the Civil War of 1642-46 and the enclosure of its fields by agreement in 1655.

The rich in the parish have been identified in this paper as those who farmed half the available agricultural land in the parish. Their identification is based on five detailed but diverse lists drawn up in 1655, 1691, 1755, 1773 and 1779.<sup>2</sup> These lists specify variously acres, rents and levies for tithe and poor rates, but despite this diversity the names of those farming half the parish are readily identifiable. Some idea of their wealth, social stature and family background can usually be obtained from other parochial records, particularly parish registers, wills and probate inventories.

Inevitably five lists cannot provide a full account of all the important farmers throughout two centuries. They provide snapshots separated by as much as sixty-four years between 1691 and 1755. Many names of influential but transient farmers will be missed. For example in 1661 Robert Cliffe led the farmers of the parish in a legal contest with the rector over payment of tithe. In 1660 he had married a daughter of Richard Lamb, one of the parish's richest freeholders, and in 1661 was credited with 115 acres. He does not appear in either the 1655 or 1691 lists. The five lists record the names of forty-five men and two women who can stand as a representative sample of Bassingham's rich in the period.<sup>3</sup>

They were not, in fact, particularly rich by contemporary standards. In 1607 the owner of a nearby mansion in Doddington Pigot left £1,000 to a granddaughter and his assets were valued at probate as worth £1,249 13s.4d.<sup>4</sup> In Lincoln city between 1660 and 1700 ten died with assets valued at more than £1,000 and twenty-four with more than £500.<sup>5</sup> The mean value of the six Bassingham rich who left probate inventories between 1660 and 1700 was £247 16s.0d.<sup>6</sup> Evidence from probate inventories and wills fades in the eighteenth century but in the latter half of the century two of the Bassingham rich were credited with assets of more than £600 and two had more than £800.<sup>7</sup>

† *Sadly, Dr Jim Johnston passed away before this article went to press. There will be an obituary in the next volume of this journal.*

By definition in this paper they were all tenant or freehold farmers of at least parochial consequence. Moreover they enjoyed certain common characteristics. They intermarried with each other, most of them owned land in other parishes and they all had close kin links with other landowners, usually in nearby parishes. They did not form a particularly stable or enduring group in terms of family names but they governed Bassingham. The persistence of these characteristics over two centuries will be the dominant theme in this study.

It will be convenient to begin such a study with the two seventeenth-century lists for 1655 and 1691. The first records the allocation of land at enclosure. The second specifies tithe payments but both record the acres farmed by the rich who are listed in table 1. This includes a reckoning of the percentage of the agricultural land of the parish which they farmed and the totals of those who received land in 1655 and paid tithe in 1691.

Bassingham undoubtedly suffered severely during the fighting of the Civil War period between 1642 and 1646 from the alternating exactions of the royalists in Newark and of the parliamentary forces when they lunged northwards in attempts to capture Newark. During the Interregnum the parish's lords of the manor and the major farmers secured the right to enclose by agreement. The four absentee lords of the manor, William Thorold of Little Paunton, Edward Thorold of Hough, Christopher Wray of Glentworth and Christopher Nevill of Aubourne owned 52% of the land. Freeholders owned 48% of the land with the Lamb family amongst them being awarded 463 acres. The arguments used to justify enclosure emphasised the unsuitability of the soils for cereal production, the lack of secure pasturage for cattle and the frequent 'rotting' of their beasts and sheep by floods. In effect they wished to change the balance of the parish's agriculture regime to one in which animal husbandry dominated. They were well aware that such a change secured a doubling or trebling of profits.<sup>8</sup>

Few of the farms created at enclosure were large. There was an increase in the number of medium sized farms of between thirty-five and forty-five acres. Most of them were divided into 'closes' or fields of from four to eight acres. The benefits of independent control of one's own territory were manifold. Before enclosure the estate owned by Richard Lamb was divided into 168 lands, leas and meadows. After 1655 his property of 161 acres was consolidated into enclosures which facilitated far higher levels of animal husbandry than had been possible under open field pasturing.<sup>9</sup> It enabled the wealthy to increase their herds and flocks and made it possible for the smaller farms to maintain a dairy herd and profit by the rapid return from sales of cheese.<sup>10</sup> The whole tenor of parish life changed. There was less need for co-operation, marriages were made in late spring rather than autumn and the network of pathways through the open expanses of three fields vanished in a labyrinth of lanes and tracks, which still exist.

If the defining characteristic of Bassingham's rich was their acreage their second most common characteristic was their interrelationship by marriage. All but two of the seventeen family surnames on the 1655 and 1691 lists were linked by marriage to at least one other family in the lists between 1630 and 1720. The Browns were linked to Gibsons, Hallidays, Harwoods, Lambs, Pacy and Sampsons.<sup>11</sup> Five others of the families were related to three or more in the seventeenth-century lists. Underlying this network was a substratum of shared interconnection with the less wealthy farmers of the parish. The Crosbys did not qualify for either the 1655 or the 1691 lists but three of Francis Crosby's daughters married a Brown in 1643, a Sampson in 1643 and a Jessop in 1660.<sup>12</sup> The Gibson family which enters the rich lists in the eighteenth century had celebrated marriages to the Pacy family in 1621, the Harrisons in 1667, the Browns

Table 1

1655	Acres	1691	Acres
Andrew Richard	69	Andrew John	65
Brown Thomas	204	Arden Richard	74
Cook William	90	Blythe James	97
Gibson John	54	Brodbury Wid	83
Harwood William	143	Brown Francis	119
Lamb Richard	164	Brown John	144
Lamb Robert	173	Grant Edwardsen	98
Lamb William	129	Grant William	162
Neatby Luke	74	Halliday Henry	71
Pacy William	106	Hammond Richard	123
Ridge William	85	Harrison George	83
Samson Richard	54	Jessop Robert	84
Sethe Thomas	59		
<b>Totals</b>			
Landholders	13		12
% of agricultural land	49%		48%
Number receiving land (more than a house plot)	85		69

in 1663 and 1743, Hammonds in 1710, Lambs in 1677 and the Hallidays in 1705.<sup>13</sup> The complexity of these kin links defies succinct description but certainly underestimates the density of the interconnections. Marriages outside the parish make the linking of some families and of links to the second generation often with a different surname a matter of a lucky combination of evidence.

The third characteristic of the rich Bassingham families was that eleven of the seventeen named in the two seventeenth-century lists possessed land outside the parish. Such property is named in twenty-two parishes, all but three of them within ten miles of Bassingham with Carlton-le-Moorland, Claypole, Hykeham and Stapleford being most frequently cited. Moreover they had kin links with landowners in other parishes and through the vagaries of affection and mortality such property could accrue to the Bassingham line of the family. In this way the holdings of the Jessops, Neathys and Sampsons were augmented.<sup>14</sup> The Gibsons, the Lambs and the Pacys illustrate the diversity of extra-parochial land holding.<sup>15</sup> Such land elsewhere was a major reason for the departure of family names from the lists of rich in Bassingham itself. The decision to consolidate land in another parish which became the family's new centre of gravity was common enough and must have done much to undermine any sense of loyalty to a particular parish. Not every family sustained the habit of will making over two, or more, generations which possibly accounts for the lack of such evidence for families such as the Brodburys and Harrisons.

It follows from the previous paragraphs that if some of Bassingham's inhabitants had land and kin links in other parishes then there were landowners from outside the parish who had significant investment and influence in Bassingham's territory. Evidence for such social and economic interpenetration is considerable and can be illustrated from a variety of sources.

Between 1687 and 1727, at least, the Eastlands of Carlton-le-Moorland had lands and a shop in Bassingham.<sup>16</sup> Bassingham's meadow fields were highly regarded for their good pasture by farmers to the south and on the Lincolnshire Ridge to the east of the parish. Two men from Wellingore

and one from Swinderby paid tithes in 1691 for land they owned in Bassingham. As well as the Eastlands the Gibsons, Hallidays, Jessops and Pregions of Carlton-le-Moorland all had kin within Bassingham itself.<sup>17</sup> The surname of Gibson was a common factor of most of the parish registers between Lincoln and Newark. They made up a durable and influential family group in Swinderby as well as Bassingham. The Swinderby branch formed long lasting links with the Browns, Gibsons and Friths of Bassingham. From Swinderby came the Harwoods whose links with Bassingham were reinforced by marriage to the Browns.<sup>18</sup>

This widespread diffusion of interest in several parishes was well illustrated by wills in which bequests were made to the poor of more than one parish.<sup>19</sup> Such widespread knowledge of conditions beyond one parish boundary was not confined to the rich. Bassingham's fifty-three settlement certificates between 1707 and 1794 frequently report the arrival of a family whose surname was established in the parish by an earlier certificate.<sup>20</sup> The move was presumably encouraged and facilitated by success of kin.

Maintenance of a family's status as one of the rich of Bassingham does not, if the 1655 and 1691 lists are compared, seem to have been a characteristic of the group. Nine of the eleven surnames in 1655 do not reappear in 1691. Given the principal sources used in this study, parish registers, wills and probate inventories it is only possible to hint at reasons for the changing composition of the rich group. The factors that led to departure must encompass innumerable combinations of individual contexts – improvidence, personal, disaster, bad harvests, the attraction of another locale – and the newcomers have left no rationale to explain their decision to settle in Bassingham. The available sources do, however, suggest some of the reasons for change.

Only two families, the Andrews and the Browns appear on both the 1655 and 1691 lists. The founding member of the Andrew family first appears in Bassingham's register as Roger of Boston at his marriage in 1609.<sup>21</sup> By mid century the family was well established in the parish on the basis of his three sons. In 1655 Richard had sixty-five acres and his son thirty-five acres in 1691.<sup>22</sup> The second brother John, and his son John, had fifty-four acres in 1655 and his son

sixty-five acres in 1691. The third brother Thomas, had been 'demolished and decreased by fire' in 1664 and had merely four acres in 1691.<sup>23</sup> The family did not sustain its wealth in the parish but lingered on at labourer level until the last of the name was buried in 1765.

The Browns were more exceptional and more durable, forming a well connected, influential and rich family for five generations. They were a prolific family, a major reason for their durability in the parish with 214 entries in the parish register between 1601 and 1799. They were close knit with the bachelors and childless invariably bequeathing wealth to brothers and nephews and supporting their kin as appraisers and witnesses to wills.<sup>24</sup> The founder member, John the weaver, and his brother Edward established the family in Bassingham in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Edward's son Thomas received 205 acres in 1655 and established a line through to the late eighteenth century. John the weaver's line faded by 1727 after three generations without any appointments to constable and with some problems over their Anabaptist tendencies.<sup>25</sup> Edward and his descendants acted as parish constable nineteen times between 1660 and 1771.<sup>26</sup> A third member of the family, Robert either a lodger or living beyond the parish boundary rented the rectorial glebe during the Interregnum and did not establish a line in Bassingham.<sup>27</sup> The Brown family will require further consideration in the eighteenth-century lists.

The survival of only two of the rich in 1655 to maintain the same status in 1691 does not however imply a sweeping erosion of the long settled families in the parish. Four families, Brodbury, Halliday, Hammond and Jessop adapted well to enclosed agriculture and attained rich status in 1691. Four other families lost ground (literally) in the parish, Gibson, Harwood, Pacy and Ridge, and no longer qualified for the elite.

Godfrey Broadbury baptised four children in Bassingham between 1630 and 1636 and was buried in 1639 leaving an inventory valued at £30 13s.4d.<sup>28</sup> His eldest son Robert received nothing at enclosure but left an inventory worth £221 17s.0d in 1674 and his widow held eighty-three acres in 1691.<sup>29</sup> There is no evidence to suggest if marriage, monumentally successful agricultural skill or lucky inheritance led to this escalation in family fortune but the newly created estate was not sustained in Bassingham after the death of his widow.<sup>30</sup> The Hallidays entered the parish with an almost ritualistic start when the first of them married Alice Brown in 1633.<sup>31</sup> His three sons consolidated the family's place in the parish which reached a peak in 1691 with one of his sons farming seventy-one acres and the family then remained a middling order resident family in the parish until the last burial of that name in the parish in 1783.<sup>32</sup>

The Hammonds were the most successful of the new rich. John a joiner, received eighteen acres at enclosure. His son, Richard, married a Huntington spinster at Ancaster and was also described as a joiner but was credited with twenty-eight acres in 1655 and 128 acres in 1691.<sup>33</sup> He had already been made constable in 1663, 1674 and 1684 and had consolidated the family estate in Bassingham. From this basis the Hammonds became one of the most enduring and influential families in the eighteenth-century parish. The Jessops flourished transiently. Gabriel received just an acre at enclosure but his inventory in 1677 was valued at £201 18s.2d. and his son Robert had eighty-four acres in 1691. His marriage was childless and at his death, kin in Stubton and Bassingham's poor benefited but the last Jessop reference in the register was in 1720.<sup>34</sup>

The Gibson family, one that has already been discussed as strongly exhibiting the characteristics of Bassingham's rich, did not reappear in 1691 for the only time in the five lists under consideration. They had been inhabitants of the parish since the first decade of the seventeenth century but

the son of the John who had secured fifty-four acres in 1655 passed the estate on to his son, another John (1656-1707), who held only twenty-six acres at 1691. This John was only twelve years old at his fathers' death. The estate might have suffered during his minority and in maturity he bred only two daughters and their husbands, Dunn and Halliday presumably benefited.<sup>35</sup> The Pacys too do not reappear in the 1691 list but resurfaced as rich in the eighteenth century. Like the Andrews and the Browns the family had established itself in Bassingham in the first decade of the seventeenth century and in 1655 two brothers, William and Anthony, received respectively 106 and forty-eight acres. By 1691 these large estates had been dispersed with a William Pacy farming twenty-nine acres, Anthony Pacy twelve acres and an Edward Pacy with just one acre. There is no evidence to explain the reduction. It could have been the dispersal of land between numerous sons for the Pacys bred boys.<sup>36</sup> Or they could have acquired land in neighbouring parishes for, like the Gibsons, they were surrounded by kin in Carlton-le-Moorland, Doddington Pigot, North Scarle, Saxilby, Thurlby, Thorpe and Waddington.<sup>37</sup> Pacys appear in every list from 1655 to 1799, twice amongst the rich, but more usually as alehouse keepers, bakers, joiners and tailors. They, like the Harwoods, had close links with Brown family from 1640, but the Harwoods remained in Bassingham in declining circumstances until 1800 with a record of alehouse management and poor relief.<sup>38</sup> William Ridge, the weaver, received eighty-five acres at enclosure and baptised four sons in the parish but only one of his grandsons appears in the 1691 list with nine acres. The other sons bred daughters and the last register entry for this line is a burial in 1704.

Five families – Cooks, Lambs, Neathys, Samsons and Settles – left Bassingham before 1691 if the record of the parish register is accepted. Of these the most surprising departure is that of the Lambs. The family sprang from a sixteenth-century husbandman and at 1655 his descendants, Richard, Robert and Thomas held 463 acres in the parish. They were the most considerable, even dominating, freehold farmers in the parish.<sup>40</sup> A convincing reason for their absence by 1691 seems to have been their propensity to breed daughters. Richard had five and the generosity of his portions to them, one getting £750 and the other four £80 each, must have eroded his acres and extinguished his strand of the Lamb name in the parish.<sup>41</sup> William was also blessed with daughters and their husbands Pacy, Nuball, Sibsey, Snell and Westend inherited Lamb territory.<sup>42</sup> Robert leased the glebe lands during the Interregnum and was an absentee landlord or lodger and did not create a family in the parish. Less wealthy strands of the family remained in Bassingham into the 1780s.<sup>43</sup>

The Cooks and the Neatbys reveal a quite different but understandable set of possible reasons for their departure from the Bassingham rich. The Cooks had deep roots in the parish. Two of them, both styled yeomen, had been sufficiently influential in the parish in the late sixteenth century to be buried in the church.<sup>44</sup> The richest of their descendants, William had nine acres and his cousin forty acres in 1655. The family had many land owning kin in the surrounding parishes of Claypole, North Scarle, Stapleford and Swinderby, and the Bassingham branch of the family seems to have gravitated towards them in the late seventeenth century.<sup>45</sup> William's six children baptised between 1638 and 1642 were all baptised in Bassingham but none of them was buried in the parish. The last Cook entry in the register was a baptism in 1680.<sup>46</sup> Their presence in the parish was at least recorded. Luke Neatby with seventy-four acres in 1655 is unique amongst Bassingham's rich in that the family name does not appear once in the register. He was kin to, and probably a client of, the Robert Cliffe who had led the parish's farmers in the tithe dispute of 1661. The two of them had lands in Hykeham, North Scarle, Potterhanworth and Thorpe-on-the-Hill.<sup>47</sup> Presumably their purchase of newly

enclosed Bassingham land was a transient, and possibly profitable, investment. Richard Samson, a miller seems to have lived much of his life outside the parish for three of his four sons were baptised elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> The name appears in the register until 1739. Edmund Settle had been a major tenant farmer and bailiff to the manor in the 1630s. He died in 1652 and his son Thomas had sixty acres at enclosure. One of his daughters married a Pacy but Edmund was a pugnacious man and accrued enemies. His kin, including the son vacated the parish with the last entry for the family in 1658.<sup>49</sup>

Four new names appear in the 1691 list – Arden, Blythe, Grant and Harrison – presumably attracted like Neatby by the prospect of farming enclosed fields. The most significant of these was William Grant who appropriately and profitably signalled his commitment to the parish by marriage to Isobel Lamb in 1677. The marriage took place in Doddington Pigot, one the several parishes, including Lincoln, in which he held land and it seems likely that he purchased and certainly acquired through inheritance some of the Lamb property.<sup>50</sup> His two sons and a grandson were to be inhabitants of Bassingham for three generations. They were of more than parochial repute, attaining quasi-gentry status. The two most public symbols of this status were William's appointment as Kesteven's Chief Constable and the marriage of his son John into the local gentry family, the Bromheads of Thurlby. Both William and John were accorded the status of gentlemen in surviving documents.<sup>51</sup>

The Ardens established themselves in Bassingham in 1660 when William Arden baptised eight children in the parish between 1659 and 1673. His eldest son, also William, had been baptised in Carlton-le-Moorland where an uncle was possibly the source of advice on the purchase of Bassingham land. Certainly the Bassingham branch of the family derived from, and held lands in, Sutton-le-Field (Derbyshire).<sup>52</sup> The family did not flourish in Bassingham and one hint of a possible reason for this is the wish of a pious aunt in a bequest that William's grandson would be blessed in 'ways of temperance and sobriety'.<sup>53</sup> The Blythes, like the Ardens had land and kin links outside Bassingham with Carlton-le-Moorland and Wakefield (Yorkshire) and they appear in the register from 1691 to 1773.<sup>54</sup> The Harrisons in the person of George arrived in the Bassingham record with his marriage to Mary Gibson in 1667. His grandson died in the parish in 1725 and this was the last reference to the family in the parish.<sup>55</sup>

There is a gap of sixty-four years before the first of three eighteenth-century lists of Bassingham's rich can be used to assess the durability of the characteristics they shared in the late seventeenth century. The evidence for yet another shared characteristic is relatively sparse before 1700 and this aspect of their status can usefully be considered here for the entire period from 1655 to 1799. The major landowners were, in effect, the governors of the parish. They provided the majority of the constables. These 'head men' provided the crucial administrative link between the parish and the next higher rank of national government the justices of the peace for Kesteven. These magistrates sanctioned the annual appointment of constables and other parochial offices. These offices rotated amongst the big tenant farmers and major freeholders by virtue of their land holding. The major offices, constable, overseer of the poor, surveyors of the highways came round roughly every dozen years. Eleven of the Hammonds filled the post of constable between 1663 and 1777 and the Rollisons acted twelve times between 1703 and 1774.<sup>56</sup> Parish Officer Books, Vestry Books and Constable Accounts give a rather dry record of their management.

Before the 1740s a small group of five or six met regularly to manage the business of the parish.<sup>57</sup> The rector, James Metford (1660-1719), usually participated in these early meetings but increasingly, as the eighteenth century progressed, the

rectors were non-resident, uninterested and uninvolved. After 1740 the number regularly attending vestry meetings rose to about a dozen. There was normally a preponderance of major farmers at the meetings. In 1750 those attending farmed 49% of land in the parish, in 1789 they held 38% and in 1797 they held 46% of it.<sup>58</sup> Before 1700 no one with less than thirty acres was 'elected' constable but in the eighteenth century a few with about twenty acres were appointed. They were usually members of the more enduring parish families like the Gibsons and the Pacys whose combined acreage was significant. For exceptional issues a muster of twenty might meet, as in 1664 when a rate was agreed to help those who had been 'decreased' by a recent fire that had started in a blacksmith's shop.<sup>59</sup> The vestry appears to have functioned without major contention though with the usually enlivening of meetings through drunkenness and swearing.<sup>60</sup> The magistrates at Quarter Sessions questioned its giving of poor relief only six times in the entire eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> The involvement of the four lords of the manor lessened after enclosure though their influence as the landlords of the major tenant farmers must have been a factor in parochial politics. The court leet survived late into the eighteenth century though its main concern seems to have been the administration of beast gates.<sup>62</sup> The effective governors of the parish were the major farmers.

Between 1691 and the next list of the rich in 1755 there are some signs, hardly characteristics, that they were increasingly seeing themselves as distinctive from the less wealthy farmers. Without exception in the late seventeenth century they styled themselves as yeomen in their wills rather than as husbandmen of earlier generations.<sup>63</sup> Moreover as yeomen they generally marked their status by bequests to the parish poor, a feature that became far less common after 1719.<sup>64</sup> In the eighteenth century even this title became a less satisfactory indication of their status. Six acquired the title of 'Mr' and four adopted the title 'grazier'. One, Rollison, described himself as a victualler.<sup>65</sup> Despite this colonisation of distinctive titles most of them were no more than substantial farmers. Only two of them achieved public recognition of rather higher status. One of the Grants and two of the Marfleets (to be discussed later) were appointed above the level of mere parish officers to become Chief Constables for Kesteven and one of the Grants achieved elevation to the outskirts of the gentry by his marriage to a daughter of the local social elite.<sup>66</sup>

Another way in which they distinguished themselves from the average villager was by celebrating prestigious weddings in Lincoln. All but eight of the twenty-six families in the five lists of rich were recorded in Lincoln registers.<sup>67</sup> All but three of these took place in the uphill churches of St Margaret-in-the-Close and St Paul-in-the-Bail and seventeen of them were concentrated in the years between 1710 and 1750.<sup>68</sup> It was usually an eldest son who was given such a prestigious marriage and they had to wait for the ceremony. Their ages at first marriage were consistently above the male average for Bassingham.<sup>69</sup> Their sisters too reflected status in the names of their bridegrooms. Acres married acres.

Acres and animals proclaimed status in seventeenth-century Bassingham. The rich lived in functional farmhouses built of mud and stud containing six to eight rooms plus stables, beast houses and hovels. The three senior members of the Brown family inhabited the same house from 1654 to 1742.<sup>70</sup> Father, son and grandson of the Lamb family lived in the same house from 1636 to 1677.<sup>71</sup> Less than 10% of their assessed inventory valuations was for their furniture and domestic fittings. The valuation of the main items of furniture, beds, tables, chairs, cupboards, linen and pewter were of rather higher quality than most of the villagers but the humble luxuries such as warming pans, looking glasses and chamber pots, already common in Lincoln by 1700, were rare even in the rich households of Bassingham.<sup>72</sup>

Table 2

1755	£	1773	Acres	1799	£
Brown John	52	Gibson Jos	84	Gibson Richard	119
Gibson Richard	48	Hammond John	278	Hammond William	124
Halliday John	91	Marfleet John	329	Marfleet Isaac	170
Hammond John	142	Rollison William	330	Pacy Robert	130
Marfleet John	127	Skelton John	164	Rogers Mathew	108
Marshall Rob	45	Skelton Mrs	165	Rollison William	177
Rollison William	158			Weightman William	111
Sibey Edward	40				
Skelton William	49				
	752		1350		939
<b>Totals</b>					
9 pay 49%		6 farm 49%		7 pay 50%	
77 pay tithe		67 pay for 1 or more acres [18 pay as cottagers or for less than 1 acre)		67 pay on 1 acre or more	

Inventory evidence becomes much less in the eighteenth century and increasingly a sign of status but by 1743 the parish contained at least one show house. The eleven rooms of the rectory contained most of the fashionable accoutrements of civilised comfort. The furnishings were valued at £63 10s.6d. and included rich hangings, mirrors, a weather glass, a library of books and eighty-nine ounces of silver.<sup>73</sup> Some of the rich farmers learnt during the century to adapt to this style of domestic comfort and ostentation. Isaac Marfleet, a farmer who died in 1696 had his domestic furnishings valued at £6 1s.7d. His extraordinarily lucky son, Isaac possessed furnishings worth £36 7s.3d. in 1765.<sup>74</sup> He had coffee cups, glasses, wine and silver. A few of his neighbours had houses as extravagantly furnished as this, in sharp contrast to the humbler domestic interiors of their poorer neighbours.<sup>75</sup>

A hundred years after Bassingham's enclosure a third list of 1755 gives the rich. Two more in 1773 and 1799 were the result of a poor rate levy based on rents.<sup>76</sup> They do not specify acres but do define those who paid roughly half the levy. The 1773 list was drawn up for the payment of tithe but gives the acres of those who paid tithe. In table 2 the names of Bassingham's rich for these years are given together with the numbers being rated for the levies from the parish.

The absence of the six 1691 families which do not reappear in 1755 has already been described. The Browns, Hallidays and Hammonds were the surviving families from 1691.

The Browns in 1691 had been represented by two major families. The one led by Francis baptised eight children of whom only two sons survived to maturity. These two sons and their father were all buried in 1700 and the lands dispersed to nephews and cousins.<sup>77</sup> The line headed by John (1644-94), his son Joseph (buried 1743) and grandson John (1707-71) was of enduring influence in the parish until the 1770s although with decreasing land, at least in Bassingham.<sup>78</sup> The second John had four daughters who presumably received generous portions and one son, George who survived until 1811 but remained unmarried and did not live in Bassingham in the late eighteenth century. The family name was missing in the 1773 list of tithe payers but reappears in the 1799 when a Becket Brown, domiciled in Swinderby paid £15. However George's presence and possibly family influence was re-established and he was buried in the parish in 1811. His will of that year recorded some of the kin links the family had created with bequests to relations in Bennington,

Brant Broughton, London, Manchester, Navenby, North Hykeham and Upton (Nottinghamshire), particularly to the family of Henleys of Thurlby into which two of his sisters had married.<sup>79</sup>

As Brown influence in the parish waned that of the Hammonds grew giving them a major place in parish life well into the nineteenth century. Three Johns and two Richards provided an unbroken chain of authority from 1691 to 1799. Their record expressed every characteristic of Bassingham's rich. John in 1773 was styled 'Mr'. They married Hallidays, Mafleets, Metfords and Rogers.<sup>80</sup> They acted as constables five times between 1755 and 1791 and had lands outside Bassingham in Doddington Pigot and Westborough with St Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln, their preferred church for important weddings.<sup>81</sup>

The Hallidays exhibited all the same rich characteristics as the Hammonds but were not so successful. They maintained their status in the parish into the 1760s in the person of John (1724-70) but his single surviving daughter ends the main Halliday line. Lesser relations figure in the accounts of the overseers of the poor.<sup>82</sup> High infant mortality and the survival only of daughters had afflicted the family from the seventeenth century and incomers like the Weightmans and the Skeltons must have benefited by marriage to their daughters. The Skeltons were major parish landowners in the 1755 and 1799 lists. In 1760 William and Elizabeth Skelton named the one child they had baptised in Bassingham as 'Halliday'. It seems likely that Elizabeth's maiden name was Halliday though the parish register does not contain evidence of her baptism or her marriage.<sup>83</sup>

Another four families were from well established Bassingham families. Two of them the Gibsons and the Pacys had appeared in the 1655 list though not that for 1691. In addition both the Marshall and Sibey family had been members of the parish for generations but attained rich status in 1759 for the first, and last, time.

Richard Gibson paid £48 for tithe in 1755 and was a member of a family that owned land and had kin links in many neighbouring parishes. He had joined his Bassingham relations and signalled his commitment to the parish by marrying Elizabeth Brown in 1743 in the parish church of Norton Disney. His eldest son Joseph was styled 'Mr' in 1769. His second son, also Richard, married in Carlton-

le-Moorland and held land there as well as paying £199 to the poor rate in 1799.<sup>84</sup> All three of these Gibsons were buried in Bassingham and only the second son, Richard, seems to have baptised his children elsewhere, probably in Carlton-le-Moorland, but all three of them fulfilled their responsibilities to Bassingham by taking their full share of parish office.<sup>85</sup> The Pacy, like the Gibsons had kin in many of the surrounding parishes and an incomer from one of these revived the fortunes of the family. A Robert Pacy married in Bassingham and paid £16 10s.0d. for 1755 tithe and had thirty-three acres in 1773. His eldest son, another Robert, achieved a Pacy return to the list of Bassingham's rich with a payment of £130 to the tithe in 1799 and his sons carried the family name into the nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup>

The Marshalls were the most prolific of Bassingham families with 394 entries in the register between 1601 and 1800. They had kin in many of the surrounding parishes but reached a peak under Robert (1691-1753) and his sons Robert and Gervis.<sup>87</sup> Their numbers made them pervasive. This son Robert paid £45 in tithe in 1755 and his brother Gervis paid £30. Five other Marshalls paid another £59 making the total Marshall contribution to the church £134.<sup>88</sup> Nine of them farmed 137 acres in 1799 but none of them attained the ranks of the rich. Their durability and numbers ensured marriage links with the rich but there is no evidence of them owning land outside the parish. The poorer Marshalls outnumbered the richer and indeed the name Marshall caused multiple and major charges to the parish's overseers of the poor from the 1780s.<sup>89</sup> Like the Marshalls the Sibey entered the Bassingham record in the early seventeenth century with a Richard baptising five children between 1633 and 1639 but the Sibey achieved only 183 entries in the register though they married well.<sup>90</sup> Like the Marshalls they reached the rich group once, under Edward (1695-1744) and his son Edward (1730-67). Edward's widow farmed fifty-six acres in 1773 and paid £56 on the poor rate in 1799. There were three other Sibey in the 1755 and 1773 lists and two others in 1791. Like the Marshalls the lesser members of the Sibey clan caused the overseers of the poor some expense in the last thirty years of the century.<sup>91</sup> Both Marshalls and Sibey illustrate the middling and lower strata of the parish.

Three new names, Marfleet, Rollison and Skelton, appear in the 1755 list, two in the 1799 list – Rogers and Weightman.

The Marfleets were the most successful incomers to the eighteenth-century parish from the first entry of their name in the parish register on 6 November 1690. Then Isaac Marfleet married a widow Elizabeth Dunn. Her maiden name had been Brown and in 1691 Isaac farmed thirty-four acres in Bassingham. Isaac's son (1693-65) by Elizabeth was presumably an efficient farmer but he was also a lucky one. He was brought up with his elder step brothers and when the Dunns were wiped out in the early months of 1736 he inherited their lands and acquired property in Stapleford.<sup>92</sup> His son John (1724-79) also flourished and by the 1770s the family was established in Somerton Castle in the nearby parish of Boothby Graffoe. Thereafter the record in Bassingham register ends.<sup>93</sup> Both John and his father were Chief High Constables of Kesteven, an honour only previously attained by the Grants.<sup>94</sup> John's son Isaac (baptised 1756) supervised the impressive family estate to the end of the century. In what seems almost an initiation rite William Rollison of Thurlby entered the Bassingham archive by marriage to Ellen Brown in 1701. His son, William (1702-63) was described both as 'Mr' and a grazier. His eldest daughter married John Marfleet by licence in 1748 and their son, another William (1743-81), married a Gibson in 1778.<sup>95</sup> Their son another William (baptised 1778) farmed their estate for the rest of the century. The Rollisons, unlike the Marfleets, were markedly residential and the register records the burial and marriage of the parents, and baptisms and the burials of many of the

children. The family estates were augmented by bequests from a childless son of the first William who had benefited by a rare will made out by his wife leaving him lands in Washingborough.<sup>96</sup>

'Halliday' Skelton gets two references in Bassingham's register, his baptism in 1760 and his burial in 1782 as 'a butcher of Boston'.<sup>97</sup> His father was William of Stapleford who paid £49 in tithe in 1755 and whose eldest son, John, and mother farmed 329 acres of the parish in 1773. Some of it could have been Halliday land earlier in the century. A 'surname' Christian name was sometimes given to a child as a compliment to the in-laws especially if they had no male child. Certainly William Skelton was very generous to his wife's mother and father although there is no record of a Halliday-Skelton marriage in the Bassingham register.<sup>98</sup> Although the Skeltons held land in both Stapleford and Bassingham their centre of gravity seems to have been Boston. Halliday was described as of Boston and his two sisters were married to Boston men.<sup>99</sup> Their interests in Bassingham ended between 1773 and 1799. But 'Halliday's' mother, possibly out of affection for her home parish, was buried in Bassingham after a long widowhood in 1801.<sup>100</sup>

Perhaps fittingly the two new names in the 1799 list – Weightman and Rogers – and the last in this catalogue – represent two extreme types of change which have afflicted the five lists since 1655. The Weightmans came to Bassingham already well endowed with acres like Cliffe *circa* 1660, the Grants in 1691 or the Skeltons in 1755. The Rogers can stand for those small farmers who over generations as inhabitants achieved remarkable success.

William Weightman baptised five children in the parish between 1782 and 1789.<sup>101</sup> He paid £111 to the poor rate in 1799 and was probably associated with a Hugh Weightman who paid £49, almost certainly kin perhaps a brother. William's estate was rated as 151 acres in 1812 but the further fortunes of the family require detailed nineteenth-century study.<sup>102</sup> John Rogers appeared in the register with his marriage in 1719 and by 1740 had baptised eleven children.<sup>103</sup> By 1755 he was credited with a tithe payment of £5 and his eldest son £6. In 1773 his third surviving son, Henry farmed six acres and his widow had five acres and was in receipt of poor relief. His ninth child, Matthew, was however phenomenally successful paying £108 to the poor rate in 1799. The youngest son, William, remained a labourer and was on poor relief from 1799 to 1801.<sup>104</sup> The tenth child, Henry, is mainly recorded for his ale house licences.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the changes in the names of the twelve families which controlled most of Bassingham's land in the latter half of the eighteenth century the characteristics which had distinguished them a hundred years earlier were still apparent.

Only one of them, William Weightman was not apparently linked to any of the other major land owners. The Hallidays, Hammonds, Gibsons, Marfleets and Rollisons had property in Boothby Graffoe, Carlton-le-Moorland, Doddington Pigot, Hykeham, Norton Disney, Stapleford, Upton (Nottinghamshire), Washingborough and Westborough, and the Browns and the Skeltons had links with and possibly property in adjacent parishes and Boston.<sup>106</sup> There is no evidence for the other four – Marshall, Pacy, Rogers or Sibey – possessing land elsewhere. The families of Gibson, Hammond, Marfleet and Rollison appear in all three lists between 1755 and 1799 and must have provided significant continuity and the Skeltons appear twice. Despite this there were still major alterations in the rich group with seven families appearing just once. All of them were constables during the period and their grip on the governance of the parish was unchanged, traditional and well managed. Yet consensus had to be managed and the hegemony of the oligarchy was not unchallenged.<sup>107</sup> Admittedly the best

Table 3. *Number of families farming Bassingham parish.*

Year	First c.50% of the parish	Next c.25% of the parish	Last c.25% of the parish
1655	13	17	49
1691	12	14	38
1755	9	13	51
1773	6	12	49
1799	7	10	50

example of a crisis of control comes from outside the period 1655-1799 but it illustrates sharply the necessity for the governors to be well in touch with issues that were important to lesser parishioners. In 1832 seven of the vestry, including a Marfleet, met and resolved not to keep a parish bull in future years. A week later at a specially convened meeting held at 6.00am twenty-three parishioners voted that a parish bull should be kept each year according to 'ancient usage'. None of the seven who had passed the resolution was present.<sup>108</sup>

Although there was a continuity in characteristics there was also evident change.

A witness to a committee on the Woollen Trade in 1806 complained that wealth 'has gone more into lumps'.<sup>109</sup> Such a coagulation occurred in Bassingham between 1655 and 1799. The numbers of rich who farmed some half of the parish halved in the period (table 3). The rich had bigger farms. Thomas Brown received 267 acres at enclosure. In 1773 Hammond, Marfleet and Rollison had bigger farms than this. In 1655 three of the rich had farms of fifty to sixty acres, only Gibson's farm in 1773 was of a similar size. The rich themselves were becoming more differentiated in wealth. In 1655 the three richest of the group farmed 42% of that group's land: in 1773 they farmed 69%. By 1799 the rich were a smaller minority of the population. In 1655 the rich householders represented 17% of the population: in 1799 merely 8% of the householders.<sup>110</sup>

The influence of this growing concentration of wealth with fewer farmers on parish life is difficult to assess but table 3 suggests such concentration might not have been socially significant. The decreasing number of rich operated throughout the period in a context of between sixty-four and seventy-nine neighbours all of whom farmed more than a house plot. The middling group too declined in the period but the poorest group with just a quarter of the land under its control remained remarkably stable. It must have been of considerable importance that entry to the group of rich was not an impossibility. Indeed in every list but one of the rich there were upcomers from the ranks of the two poorer groups. In 1691 the Brodburys, Hallidays, Hammonds and Jessops joined the rich. In 1755 Marshall and Sibey, in 1799 Pacy and Rogers. The opportunity to rise in the society of the parish was seen by every generation. The fluid land market combined with hard work, luck and the abundant proximity of kin made promotion possible.<sup>111</sup> The social balance remained stable. There was a continuity of families that must have been of great significance in an ever changing population. Bassingham produces 712 family reconstitution forms for the years from 1601 to 1800 and 66% of these record presence in the parish for no more than one generation. The relatively small number of more durable families could have given them an importance akin to the 'core' group of 'real' villagers identified in twentieth-century Elmdon.<sup>112</sup> Not only the rich families of the five lists such as the Gibsons and Hammonds but lesser families like the Marshalls and Pacys would have been of such a core in the Bassingham of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Changes in the names of the rich and their acres are made relatively clear by the five lists but there are indicators of more intangible changes in the attitudes of Bassingham's

parishioners towards their kin and their neighbours between 1655 and 1799. It is, at present, generally accepted that kin relationships were narrow, shallow and predominantly latent rather than active.<sup>113</sup> This view has recently been questioned, largely on the basis of oral evidence for the twentieth century, and it is argued that without such oral testimony importance of kin has been seriously underestimated for earlier centuries.<sup>114</sup>

Certainly the network of kin both within Bassingham itself and in neighbouring villages formed a vital context for most of the nineteen families named in the 1655 and 1691 lists. Similar links provided an important and active context for the inhabitants of parishes in south-west Nottinghamshire in the seventeenth century.<sup>115</sup> Certainly as far as Bassingham was concerned the tribulation of the Civil War period could have enhanced the value of kin links as a resource for survival.<sup>116</sup> The need for such support could have been aggravated by the adaptation to an enclosed agricultural regime which is indicated by the sweeping change in the names of the rich group between 1655 and 1691 when nine out of the eleven names in 1651 do not reappear in 1691. The stagnation of the population could also have been a cause of instability.<sup>117</sup>

The ubiquity and strength of the kin and its internal parish network seems weaker in the late eighteenth century. Bequest analysis for six Lincolnshire parishes, Bassingham and five of its neighbouring parishes, shows a marked reduction in bequests to kin between 1601 and 1800.<sup>118</sup> Bassingham subscribed to this trend. The mean number of bequests made in seventy-two Bassingham wills between 1650 and 1700 was 8.2, between 1750 and 1800 it was 4.9. The bequests that were made were increasingly concentrated on the nuclear family of wife, children and grandchildren. Kin, neighbours, friends and parish charity apparently mattered less in the last half of the eighteenth century accounting for 35% of the total bequests as compared to the 44% of bequest dispersed to these groups during the period 1650 to 1700. Perhaps it was of more significance that the rich in the late eighteenth century were not enmeshed within the parish with the supporting proximity of kin. A measure of this is the number of family reconstitution forms derived from the parish register which record kin of the rich families baptising, marrying and being buried. Between 1650 and 1700 there were seventy-nine representatives of the rich families of the period being recorded in the register. Between 1750 and 1800 there were fewer rich but only forty-six family reconstitution forms provided evidence of the breadth of their kin links within Bassingham.<sup>119</sup> A major feature of combining evidence from the family reconstitution forms and the rich families is the frequent conjunction of wealthy linkages of brothers, cousins and nephews whose support, even if no more than a loyal labouring resource, could have contributed to the accumulation of acres. In the seventeenth century such a close background of kin was a characteristic of the Andrews, Ardens, Browns, Cooks, Hallidays, Lambs, Pacys and Rodgers. In the late eighteenth century there were far fewer such conjunctions of kin. With the late exception of the Rodgers the families of the rich such as Hammonds, Marfleets and Sibey were much less kin linked within Bassingham itself.

Nonetheless despite evidence for a fading of kin importance generally in eighteenth-century Bassingham it remained a characteristic of the rich. Detailed lists exist for those who held parochial office in the parish between 1750 and 1760 as constables, overseers of the poor, surveyors of the highways and churchwardens. In those years the offices were held by twenty-five men with eighteen different surnames. Only four of them were not apparently related to one or more of the others. Twenty-one of them shared thirty relationships, as father and son (2), brothers-in-law (12), brothers (4), fathers and sons-in-law (6), cousins (3) and step father, step mother and uncle.<sup>120</sup> Kinship for them was still very obvious, a pervasive factor in their way of life, giving links that made for coherence and co-operation.

The evidence to assess the influence of these rich governors on their fellow parishioners is practically non-existent for Bassingham. If they had been more in touch with trends of attitudes and thought at a national level there could be indications that they sought to nurture an improved morality and a readier sense of obedience on the other parishioners. By the end of the eighteenth century there was on the part of the national middling sort a growing avoidance of rustic festivity and the grosser kinds of leisure pursuits. This was reinforced as part of an enhanced concern to inculcate a morality of providence, sobriety and industry and a greater concern for the family and its children.<sup>121</sup> No such high minded notions of 'civilising' an uncouth populace seem to have motivated the Bassingham rich, keeping the peace, mainly by rough, unrecorded local action, and the prompt payment of parish rates and national taxes seem to have been their major concerns as parish officers. Their main personal concern was the security of their own family and its posterity. The norm of their wills was the continuation of their name and their acres to their children, preferably the eldest son and security for their widow.<sup>122</sup> Aspirations towards the status of gentleman were not apparent. Efforts to rise above the status of yeoman farmer, with the exceptions of the Grants and Marfleets, were not visible. They made their marriage links horizontally with farming families of their own ilk and social level.

The life style of a few of them did become more distinctive. A few did have houses which were affluently furnished. They accepted the title 'Mr' or perhaps assumed it. The artisan/craft backgrounds of some of them were lost by 1750 in a seventeenth-century past but the distance between them and the majority of the parishioners had not vastly increased.<sup>123</sup> They were substantial yeomen farmers in their own local context and they spent little effort and less money on any ostentatious display of their wealth or power. In the few occasions when they expressed themselves beyond the parish boundary they styled themselves accurately as 'Principal Landowners'.<sup>124</sup>

Defining the rich and then isolating them from the poorer families in the parish gives a sharpness to what was a blurred and fluctuating boundary between them. To attribute certain characteristics to the rich is, in large measure, a consequence of the more abundant evidence for the rich. There is one labourer's will from eighteenth-century Bassingham. It expressed a concern for his family including the wish that his son be apprenticed, a concern that is usually arrogated to the higher levels of rural society.<sup>125</sup> It is easy in the absence of evidence to attribute significant change in attitude solely to the rich. The robust, even truculent independence whereby they secured their parish bull in 1834 was an enduring aspect of Bassingham's parish life. In 1640 Lincolnshire's deputy lieutenant, enraged at the parish's refusal to provide able men for the war with Scotland, had recommended that one of the constables be executed to encourage obedience.<sup>126</sup>

Such continuities must have existed beneath the surviving documentation. Indeed in the early seventeenth century the social structure, on the evidence of the surviving tithe

book was not markedly different from that of the eighteenth century.<sup>127</sup> Despite changes in the names of the rich there was an inherent stability in Bassingham, a stability that was all the more remarkable in an unstable world.<sup>128</sup> It does not seem to have given the parish a particularly strong feeling of identity or social cohesion. The inhabitants lived in a neighbourhood of parishes and although some might have felt a loyalty and affection to Bassingham's acres it led to no overt expressions of communal concern – a non-history of an unexceptional parish in a relatively untroubled and poor environment which seems to have enjoyed comparative stability in an unsettled, if interesting world.<sup>129</sup>

## Notes

1. These estimates are based on Liber Cleri of 1603 printed in *The State of the Church*, edited by C. W. Foster, Lincoln Record Society, 23 (Horncastle, 1926), pp.306-07; *The Compton Census of 1676*, edited by A. Whiteman (Oxford, 1986), p.195. Multipliers used as in E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England* (1981), pp.569, 570. *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England, Lincolnshire*, vol.2, edited by W. Page (1906), pp.361-62.
2. The five lists are all in Lincolnshire Archive Office (hereafter LAO) 1655 – Bassingham Par Doc 17/3, Distribution of land at enclosure. 1691 – Bassingham Par Doc 4.18A, Papers re law suits. Names, rates and acres levied for tithe. 1755 – Bassingham Par Doc 10/1, Parish Officers Book 1714-1793, Poor Rate Levy of 5d. in the £ yearly rent. 1773 – Bassingham Par Doc 4/8, Valuation for a tithe of 7½d. in the £ with acres. 1799 – Bassingham Par Doc 13/1, Accounts of Overseers of the Poor 1789-1826.
3. In the references which follow there will be many references to LAO Bassingham Parish Registers Vols 1 and 2 (hereafter Bass Reg I and for other parish registers a similar contraction) and to *Parish Registers of the City of Lincoln 1538-1754* edited by C. W. Foster, Lincoln Record Society, 9 (Horncastle, 1925) (hereafter Lincoln Marriages). LAO Bass Reg I, 31.7.1660; LCC Wills 1679/1/73; Bassingham Par Doc 4.18A, Papers re law suits. Widow Brodbury in the 1691 list had a son Robert aged nine years. LAO Bass Reg I for husband was buried 5.1.1685 and she was buried 2.2.1712. Mrs Skelton in 1773 was the mother of the John in the list. Her maiden name was probably Elizabeth Halliday (see notes 98 and 99). LAO Bass Reg II her burial 2.11.1801. Five women were constables between 1650 and 1802, six were overseers of the poor between 1717 and 1800.
4. LAO LCC Wills 1607/2/304; Inv 102/172.
5. J. A. Johnston, 'Furniture and furnishings in seventeenth-century Lincoln', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 35 (2000), p.17.
6. LAO Inv 158/34, 174/31, 177/218, 185/141, 194/216, 219A/80. They were usually termed 'yeomen'. The other thirteen yeomen inventories of the late seventeenth century had a mean value of £127 15s.2d.
7. LAO Inv 214/144, 222/219; LCC Wills 1791/15.4.1791, 1797/9.11.1797, 1799/15.11.1799.
8. LAO Swinderby Par Doc 23/7 Various Papers Vol.1 ff.107, 164; Ben 2/64 f.5.
9. LAO Parliamentary Survey CC2/152756a.
10. J. A. Johnston 'Seventeenth-century agricultural practice in six Lincolnshire parishes', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 18 (1983), pp.8, 12-13.
11. LAO Bass Reg I to Gibsons 5.2.1665 Hallidays 30.6.1633, Harwoods 10.6.1635 and 15.4.1661, Lambs Lincoln Marriages 5.9.1727, Pacys Lincoln Marriages 22.3.1723, Samsons Bass Par Reg I 8.7.1737.
12. LAO Bass Par Reg I – Brown 7.8.1643, Jessop 15.6.1647 and 12.7.1660, Sampson 12.5.1643.
13. LAO Bass Par Reg I – Brown 5.2.1665, Lincoln Marriages 25.3.1723, Bass Par Reg I 23.3.1743, Halliday 6.5.1705, Hammonds Lincoln Marriages 24.2.1710, Bass Par Reg I Harrison 21.5.1667, Lamb 14.6.1677, Pacy 7.5.1621.
14. LCC Wills 1675/263, 1693/103, 1719/2/104.
15. LAO LCC Wills 1664/43, 1636/217, 1670/575, 1670/105, 1704/211.
16. LAO LCC Wills 1687/1/90, 1713-14/96, 1714/114, 1727/103; O Wills 3653; Inv 187/198. Two Eastlands farmed seventy-five acres of Bassingham land in the 1691 list.
17. LAO Carlton-le-Moorland Reg 20.11.1714, Par Doc 12/1 Constables Accounts 1738-1795, 1739; LCC Wills 1719/2/104, 1705/185.
18. LAO Bass Reg I 5.2.1663, 12.5.1667, 24.6.1630, 3.5.1684, 10.6.1635, 15.4.1661.
19. LAO LCC Wills 1675/263, 1708/91, 1713/70.
20. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 13/7 Settlement Certificates, Mandevills 13/7/8 and 13/7/20, Tindalls 13/7/19, 13/7/36, 13/7/39, Savages



- 13/7/32, 13/7/45. Thirty-four of the fifty-three settlement certificates have a surname that occurs twice or more.
21. LAO Bass Reg I 27.5.1609.
  22. LAO LCC Wills 1661/865, 1685/2/181, 1704/6, 1707/7.
  23. Public Record Office, Hearth Tax Returns 17 Charles II E179 f.323.
  24. LAO LCC Wills 1678/137, 1685/2/18, 1700/20.
  25. LAO Churchwardens Presentments Ch P/L 1671-1686, LCC Wills 1651/118, 1680/1/429.
  26. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 12/1, 12/2 Constables' Accounts 1651-c1745, 1745-1832.
  27. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 17/3 Enclosure Decree.
  28. LAO Inv 149/16; LCC Wills 1639/574, 1684/2/138.
  29. LAO Inv 185/141.
  30. LAO Bass Reg I burial of widow 2.2.1712; LCC Wills 1705-8/6.
  31. LAO Bass Reg I 30.6.1633.
  32. LAO LCC Wills 1708/113, 1716/73, 1731/102. Bass Reg I 25.9.1788 last Halliday burial.
  33. LAO Bass Reg I 30.1.1615, buried 17.1.1672; Richard's marriage 7.4.1665, buried 6.5.1703, LCC Wills 1729/196.
  34. LAO Bass Reg I 15.6.1647; Inv 219A/80; Bass Reg I Robert baptised 8.12.1649, buried 8.9.1719; LCC Wills 1719/9/104.
  35. LAO LCC Wills 1664/43; Bass Reg I 6.7.1705 Halliday marriage, 1.6.1706 Dunn marriage.
  36. LAO Bass Reg I 21.2.163. The five Pacys whose wedding dates and burials are in the parish register baptised sixteen boys and seven girls between 1635 and 1700.
  37. LAO LCC Wills 1664/306, 1665/105, 1680/12, 1695/306.
  38. LAO Bass Reg I 15.4.1661, 21.7.04 – a Harwood on relief as early as 1704.
  39. LAO Bass Reg I William marries 11.5.1620, buried 27.9.1658; LCC Wills 1661/138, 1677/226.
  40. LAO LCC Wills 1598/151.
  41. LAO LCC Wills 1661/883.
  42. LAO LCC Wills 1679/1/73, 1677/230.
  43. LAO Bass Reg II when the last Lamb, a labourer buried three daughters in 1778, 1779 and 1784 – the latest recording the last Lamb entry in the register. There is no secure dynastic link with earlier Lambs. The last of the richer Lambs, a 'Mrs' and a spinster was buried 15.8.1784.
  44. LAO LCC Wills 1582/148, 1582/149.
  45. LAO LCC Wills 1639/324, 1665/430; Bass Reg I 27.1.1642. An Edward Cook of Swinderby held fourteen acres of Bassingham land in the 1691 list.
  46. LAO Bass Reg I 6.5.1609, 27.1.1642. The last reference to the family is a burial 31.10.1680 but a widow complained of being left in poverty LCC Wills 1679/1/116.
  47. Luke Neatby was baptised 5.11.1620 North Scarle Parish Register I and buried 1685 at Thorpe-on-the-Hill. His will is LCC Wills 1685/ii/48 and Cliffe's will 1675/263.
  48. LAO LCC Wills 1601/55, 1693/103.
  49. LAO Bass Reg I 19.7.1635 Pacy marriage, 10.5.1658 last Settle register entry, Bassingham Par Doc 4, Tithe Book f.17.
  50. LAO Doddington Pigot Par Doc Parish Register I 4.1.1676; Inv 174/31; LCC Wills 1667/440, 1679/1/73, 1701/4/74, 1708/92, 1713/45.
  51. LAO Kesteven Quarter Sessions Files KQS 1682-1705, he was styled as 'gent' and his son John described himself 'gent' in his will LCC Wills 1713/45.
  52. LAO Bass Reg I 1659-73, baptisms; LCC Wills 1673/111. The last register reference to the surname is in 1757. LAO Bass Reg II 13.5.1757.
  53. LAO LCC Wills 1699-1702/2/84. The last register entry for them is the burial of Charles described as of 'Wakefield', Bass Reg II 1773.
  54. LAO Tallents 1/9/6.
  55. LAO Bass Reg I 21.5.1607; LCC Wills 1720/1/192.
  56. Their status was also recognised more publicly by the listing of every freeholder worth more than £10 and the appointment of the senior amongst them to the Grand Jury at Quarter Sessions. Constables mattered in Bassingham. Every major landowner held the office, frequently more than once. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 10/1, Parish Officers' Book 1714-93, Vestry Book 10/1/1714-1793; Constables' Account Books 12/1, 1651-c1745, 12/2, 1745-1832; Overseers' Account Book 13/1, 1789-1826.
  57. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 12/1, 12/2 Parish Officers' Book 1714-1793, 1718, 1721, 1738.
  58. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 12/1 Constables' Accounts 1651-c1745, for 1750, 1789, 1797.
  59. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 12/1 Constables' Accounts 8.5.1664.
  60. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 12/1, 12/2 Parish Officers' Book 1714-93, 1772 and 1773, 14/1 Highway Surveyors Accounts – 1761; cf. *The Diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765*, edited by David Vaisey (Oxford, 1985), pp.267-68.
  61. LAO Kesteven Quarter Sessions Files KQS 1700-99. Two thefts, one of a turkey, four bastards and one marital dispute were the only other major issues.
  62. LAO Bassingham 12/2 Constables Accounts' 1797; Gross Papers 1/8.
  63. In the Bassingham wills between 1601 and 1651 four testators described themselves as yeomen and twelve as husbandmen. Between 1655 and 1700 twenty-six were yeomen and seven husbandmen.
  64. Between 1655 and 1700 sixteen of the twenty-six yeomen left money to the poor of the parish. After the death of the rector, Metford, such bequests practically ceased.
  65. William Andrew 1731, John Halliday 1762, John Hammond 1773, John Marfleet 1794, Mathew Rogers 1798, William Rollison 1763; graziers John Sampson 1719. John Brown 1767, Richard and Joseph Gibson 1769 and 1777; victualler Sam Rollison 1767.
  66. LAO Kesteven Quarter Sessions Files. KQS William Grant 1700-05, Isaac Marfleet 1742-61, John Marfleet 1760s, Lincoln Marriages 12.11.1703.
  67. The eight for whom no Lincoln marriages were recorded were Brodbury, Gibson, Harrison, Lamb, Neatby, Pacy, Rogers and Skelton.
  68. Nine at St Margaret-in-the-Close (the most prestigious), nine at St Paul-in-the-Bail.
  69. In the seventeenth century the mean age at first marriage of thirteen eldest sons of the rich was 32.8 years and of the thirty in the eighteenth century 28.7. The mean age of eighty-four Bassingham males at marriage in the seventeenth century was 28.5 years and sixty-five in the eighteenth century 26.8 years.
  70. LAO Inv 157/5, 194/216, 201/168.
  71. LAO Inv 144/72, 158/34, 219A/177.
  72. J. A. Johnston, 'Furniture and furnishings', p.10.
  73. LAO Inv 210/419. His furnishings made up 18% of his assessed wealth.
  74. LAO Inv 192/123, 214/144. The spelling of the more exotic items in the latter will have caused the parish scribe, John Taylor, considerable difficulty.
  75. LAO Inv 204/85, 207/285, 222/219.
  76. See table 2.
  77. LAO LCC Wills 1700/20, 1700/21.
  78. John's widow held sixty acres in 1773, and in 1799 a Becket Brown domiciled in Swinderby paid £15 in poor rate for the land he held in Bassingham.
  79. LAO LCC Wills 1811/36; Bass Reg II 4.1.1763, 2.10.1767 – Henley marriages, George's burial 12.4.1811.
  80. LAO Bass Reg I and II (after 1743) Halliday 2.4.1710; Marfleets 1.2.1749, Metford (the rector) LCC Wills 126/135 and Rogers Bass Reg II 19.9.1765.
  81. LAO 12/2, Constables' Accounts; LCC Wills 1729/196; Lincoln marriages 24.2.1710, 12.5.1740.
  82. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 10/1 Parish Officers' Book 1714-1793. Henry boarded the poor in the 1750s but his whole family was afflicted with small pox in 1759 and was nursed at the expense of the overseers of the poor. His widow, Mary, was on poor relief 1778-86 at a cost to the parish of £27 14s.2d.
  83. LAO Bass Reg John 1695-1728, his son John 1744-70 whose sister Elizabeth, baptised 5.10.1722 married a Skelton.
  84. LAO Norton Disney Register II, 23.3.1743; Bass Reg II Richard buried 1773, Joseph 1744-77, Richard 1755-93; LCC Wills 1773/9.1.1773, 1799/15.11.1799; Tallents 1/7/6.
  85. Richard Gibson was constable five times between 1744 and 1770, LAO 12/2 Constables 1745-1832.
  86. LAO Bass Reg I 9.4.1735 was the date of Richard's marriage. He was an incomer and his two eldest sons had been baptised elsewhere; LCC Wills 1753/28.9.1753
  87. LAO LCC Wills 1753/28.9.1753; Bass Reg II son Robert buried 14.9.1761.
  88. They paid John £32, George £12, Widow Pacy £11, John £4 and Jonas £3.
  89. J. A. Johnston, 'The management of the Poor Law in seven parishes of western Lincolnshire 1790-1834', *East Midland Historian*, 8 (1999), p.8.
  90. LAO Bass Reg I and II, marriages to Browns 20.10.1618, 193.4.1676, 11.2.1688, to Gibson 17.12.1795, Ridge 3.6.1680, to Rollison 28.11.1738, to Rogers 11.6.1788.
  91. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 10/a, Parish Officers' Book 1714-93 for 1769 and 1781-83. The Sibeyes together with the Hallidays, Marshalls and Rogers were the only names of the eighteenth-century rich who appear in poor relief accounts.
  92. The Dunns baptised eleven children, three of whom survived to maturity but they and their parents were all buried between January and March 1736 LAO, Bass Reg I, LAO LCC Wills Joseph Dunn's will 1736/49, Isaac Marfleet I's will 1695/6/i/271, Inv 1692/123, Isaac II's Inv 214/144.
  93. Marfleet must have been in residence at Boothby Graffoe by the early

- 1770s, LAO Boothby Graffoe Par Doc 22/1 which records the marriage of two Marfleet daughters Mary, 20.5.1771, and Rebecca 30.10.1775, both to Nottinghamshire grooms of Retford and Worksop.
94. LAO Kesteven Quarter Sessions Files KQS 1742-61, 1760s.
  95. LAO Bass Reg I, 15.5.1701; LCC Wills 1732/206, 1765/24.5.1765, Lincoln Marriages 22.6.1748, Bass Reg II 10.4.1772.
  96. LAO LCC Wills 1757/20.8.1757 of the wife, 1767/18.9.1767 of her husband.
  97. LAO Bass Reg II 8.7.1760, 4.7.1782.
  98. LAO LCC Wills 1769/138.
  99. Marriage licences recorded in Bass Reg 1775 and 1777.
  100. LAO Bass Reg II 2.11.1801
  101. LAO Bass Reg II 7.9.1782-1789.
  102. LAO Reeve 1/10/2C/1. Earlier wills show a family of this name with lands in Griesthorp (Nottinghamshire), Hykeham and Normanton (Nottinghamshire), LCC Wills 1710/2/187A, 1716/73, 1721/2/188.
  103. LAO Bass Reg I and II 4.5.1719, buried 27.6.1763, baptisms 1721-1740.
  104. LAO Bass Reg II Mathew baptised 15.5.1735, buried 13.5.1808; Bassingham Par Doc 10/1 Widow Rogers on relief 1774-77, William 1799-1801, Poor Accounts 13/1.
  105. He was however the only one of a rich family name to be involved with ale houses LAO KSB Ale House Registers 1781-1812. In an earlier volume of licences 1678-1706 the Grants, Hallidays, Harwoods and Lambs were so involved. Perhaps an indication of the growing social distance between the rich and the others.
  106. LAO LCC Wills 1811/36, 1729/196, 1765/24.5.1765, 1799/15.11.1799; Inv 214/144.
  107. H. R. French, 'Social status, localism and the "middle sort of people" in England 1620-1750', *Past and Present*, 166 (Feb, 2000), p.84.
  108. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 10/2 Vestry Book 12.4.1832, 15.4.1832, 19.4.1832.
  109. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964), p.281.
  110. This is a rough approximation based on households rather than population because of the difficulties of assessing numbers of males, females and children in a family. There were probably some ninety houses in Bassingham in 1799. The 1811 census gives the parish ninety-eight houses and a diocesan return of 1788 gives it as eighty (LAO Spec 4). In the 1666 Hearth Tax Return (Public Record Office E79 ff.320-323) seventy-seven houses were listed including those too poor to pay the tax. The proportion of rich in 1799 balances the 7% receiving significant poor relief, LAO Bassingham Par Doc 13/1 Overseers' Accounts 1789-1826.
  111. The five lists reflect a fluid land market, albeit perhaps less free in the late eighteenth century. In 1655 forty freeholders farmed 48% of the parish, in 1808 thirty-three paid 38% of the parish land tax, though most of this land had been acquired by the Marfleets, LAO Land Tax Returns KQS 1808.
  112. M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core* (1981), pp.xxiv, 15, 198.
  113. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village Terling 1525-1700* (1979), pp.82-87; D. Cressy, 'Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England', *Past and Present*, 113 (1986), pp.36-38.
  114. B. Reay, *Microhistories 1800-1930* (Oxford, 1996), pp.156, 168.
  115. A. Mitson, *Networks in S. W. Notts 1580-1700* University of Leicester Ph.D. (1989), pp.1,105.
  116. J. A. Johnston, 'Family, kin and community in eight Lincolnshire parishes 1567-1800', *Rural History*, 6.2 (1995), p.190.
  117. The only period between 1601 and 1800 when Bassingham's burials exceeded baptisms was 1661-1700.
  118. J. A. Johnston, 'Family, kin and community', pp.185-87.
  119. The voluminous Marshalls have been excluded from the 1750-1800 totals. They provided twenty-five family reconstitution forms for the period but these include several new Marshall strains from outside Bassingham.
  120. J. A. Johnston, 'Six Lincolnshire parishes 1601-1800: six communities?', *East Midland Historian*, 11 (2001) p.30. The nearby parish of Swinderby is unique in that it has two static population lists for 1771 and 1791. These with parish register evidence show that one major farming family, the Hagues, was related to 19% of the parish's population, 27% if transients and servants were omitted, p.29.
  121. Joan Kent, 'The rural middling sort in early modern England 1640-1740: some economic, political and socio-cultural characteristics', *Rural History*, 10.1 (1999), pp.31-43; Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp.225-65; J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* (Oxford, 1976), p.53.
  122. The wills of forty-six men between 1639 and 1811 in the lists of rich, whose family history from marriage to burial can be traced, have survived. All but eight left their lands to the eldest son. Three such bequests were conditional on the son paying bequests to sisters and brothers. Three shared lands between sons and daughters and in two a pair of sons shared the land. There are only three examples in the five lists Richard Andrews in 1655, William Ridge in 1655 and Isaac Marfleet in 1755 where both father and son have land.
  123. The Browns sprang from John the weaver, LAO Inv 139/287, the Hallidays from Henry the carpenter, LAO Bass Reg I 22.2.1662, the Hammonds from John the joiner 30.1.1615, the Marshalls (or some of them) from John the shoemaker buried 22.3.1662 the Pacys from William the joiner LAO Bass Reg I 6.5.1658.
  124. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 4/18B/3; H. R. French, 'Social Status', pp.96-97.
  125. LAO LCC Wills 1784/19.6.1784. John Loughton, labourer, with an estate valued at less than £20 cf LCC Wills 1737/2, 1784/28.1.1784, 1797/9.1.1797 the wills of three of the 'unrich' of Bassingham.
  126. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1640* (1880), pp.196-97, 247.
  127. LAO Bassingham Par Doc 4/1 Tithe Book.
  128. Keith Wrightson, *Earthy Necessities 1470-1750* (2000), pp.12, 18.
  129. Bassingham's neighbourhood is expressed in the text with particularly close links with Carlton-le-Moorland, Stapleford and Swinderby.