



were essentially labourers on the lord's land who held a cottage and usually a smallholding at his pleasure.

The land areas held by each individual was measured in carucates, bovates and acres. A carucate was an area ploughed by a team of eight oxen in a ploughing season, a typical "by and large" medieval measure the precise area of which clearly depended on a number of factors but might be approximately 120 acres. A bovate was one eighth of this or a single ox plough's capacity, say 15 acres. An acre probably coincided roughly with the modern measure.

There does not seem to be a great deal of consistency in the rent paid by tenants. Most of the villeins or serfs appear to hold a toft, a dwelling complete with garden, yard and perhaps outbuildings together with two bovates, or 30 acres of land, for an annual rent of approximately nine shillings. Other free tenants seem more fortunate with one consortium of seven individuals paying as little as six shillings for ten bovates; another less so paying two shillings for only two acres.

One free tenant, however, has a tenancy of two carucates or approximately 240 acres, 38% of the total land let to free tenants and 21% of the entire manor. The name of this individual is indecipherable but includes the word Scriven which might be that of Henry de Scriven who held the manor from his lord, Edmund, Earl of Cornwall and then the king after 1300. No rent was paid for this holding other than an obligation to bear homage and suit at the manorial court in Knaresborough every three weeks. One might conclude that the holding was the manorial domain on which cottars, free tenants and bondmen would have expended their service labour. This is speculative but it seems plausible.

The generally consistent and uniform tenancy rental arrangements for the bondmen contrast with the wide variations found in the case of the free tenants. There is also a marked difference in the revenue raised. On the evidence of the documents approximately 540 acres was let to the bondmen with a total rent of £10 18s 1d whereas the 630 acres let to free tenants generated only £3 9s 5¼d.

It is difficult to assess why this is so. One might speculate that because the bondmen were tied to the manor and not free to move they had little option but to pay what was demanded. At the same time, however, because the lord of the manor had considerably more control of the serfs than free tenants the former may have been given the best land. The free tenants, on the other hand, were able to move around to some degree and find the best deal available. They could negotiate: the bondmen could not but they may have been obliged to take the tenancies of the worst or marginal land from which only a modest income could be derived.

Cash was not the only form of payment exacted from the tenants whether bond or free. Labour services on the lord's land were also required of them. The bondmen seem to have had a largely uniform need to supply annually labour valued at 13d per head. The free tenants were also required to supply labour and services which in general were significantly less than the bondmen although one individual was required to cart 16 loads of wood at Christmas representing a value of 16d. The most unusual was the requirement, in return for 12½ acres, to provide one pound of pepper, worth a shilling, at Michaelmas.

The general impression is that the manor of land was parcelled out amongst the bondmen in holdings of uniform size, usually a toft and two bovates for a uniform rent and service obligation. The arrangements with the free tenants appear ad hoc in nature, highly variable and the result of individual negotiation.

The bondmen, moreover, in addition to rent and services had to pay a tallage to the lord, an annual tax which amounted to £1.13.4 in this case. Finally, to the gross income of the manor could be added 18 shillings and 6 pence in rent paid by an unspecified number of cottars or bonded labourers.

The document lists twenty-five free tenants by name with another four undecipherable names. Of the total of twenty-nine three were women. Twenty-one bondmen are listed by name of which two were women. All the bondmen would have lived on the manorial estate. In all cases their holdings of land included a toft or homestead. Of the free tenants eleven rented homesteads but of the remainder one can only conclude that they lived off the estate and that their Scriven tenancies may have been only part of their total holdings.

There was thus a total of fifty tenants with thirty-two apparently living on the estate. There was an unspecified number of cottars which one might estimate as twenty. From this a rough estimate of the population of Scriven at the time could be attempted. To the families of the tenants one should look to add a number of servants and independent artisans and their families. Altogether this might total something in the region of two hundred and fifty.

The Extenta is also of further interest in that it gives us the precise names of each tenant both free and bond. In most cases the Christian name and surnames are specified. Of the latter many are familiar and in use today such as Townsend, Hardy, Bolton and Lewis. Others are unusual such as Skakelthorpe, Galfrus and Bustard. Some individuals are identified by their place of origin such as de Skrevyn, de Eboraco or de Sudd. The influence of Norman French seems to persist with a number of names preceded by le or de la. A significant number are identified by their connection with a parent as "Adam son of Roger" and "John son of Osbert" or a spouse "Alicia who was the wife of Ralph de la Hull". A system of nomenclature that had a long history.

As well as the Extenta we are also fortunate in having a copy of the Poll Tax return of 1379 covering the manor of Scriven. This was a variable tax levied on all households to pay for the French Wars. The return lists by name all those who paid from the lord of the manor and his tenants as well as local artisans and tradesmen. The intriguing fact is that there is not a single family name in the Extanta that is noted in the Poll Tax return. Even the manor was then in the hands of the Slingsby family, the male line of the de Scrivens having died out, and the manor passed by marriage to the Slingsbys in whose hands it remained for over 500 years. Thus we appear to have a complete change of personnel in three generations. However, in that period of almost 80 years Scriven experienced a change in the ownership of the manor, the appalling slaughter and deprivations of the Scottish raids and above all the Black Death of 1348. The latter almost halved the population and gave rise to incalculable social dislocation and changes in agricultural practice including the beginning of the end of serfdom.

