

Farming to Halves

98 HOLME-MARISH-CLOSE, WEST, of the TROCESSION BANKE. 1643.

THIS GROUNDE WAS SET OUT BY M. MARDONCKE THE DUTCHMAN as part of
 my Father's Inheritance due to him, upon the IMBARKING of HOLME-MARISH
 and sold by the SA: and ME, in a TANTABLE way of CHANGE and PROFITT. 1643.

WHEATE: PLOUGHING, SOWING, &c.	PLOUGHING MY PART METRIC; BEING 2 EARTHES of 4	0	14	3
	HARROWING MY PART. BEING UPON THOSE 2 EARTHES	0	7	5
	MY PART OF PLOUGHING THE SOWING EARTH	0	5	5
	MY PART OF SEED-WHEAT; BEING 1 Bushell Bare	0	2	2
	MY PART OF SEED-WHEAT. 2-2-2. full payd for 14 bushels	1	16	0
	SEED-WASHING WITH SALT-WATER; AND SOWING	0	1	0
	FURROWS SOWING 2 Dayes. 8. TOWNE, SHOES, and KEEPING. 8. All	0	1	0
	Pulling up old collused-stalkes and Rootes	0	0	9
WATER-grubbing twice, for all the Winter	0	0	5	

a) Farming to halves at Hunstanton, from the notebook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange. (Norfolk Record Office, LEST/KA 6, reproduced by permission)

5-68.
 p. 569. Articles of Agreement made 24 July: 1678.
 between Mr Windham of Felbrigg, & John Masters
 of Bodenham in Norfolk, concerning dividing
 a haire of (cows) & plowing ground the halves.
 First the A. Masters is to live in the Yeag-house in
 Felbrigg Parke, rent free, And to have the profit
 of the many (cows) as Mr Windham pleases to keep
 in or near the Parke, paying after the rate of five
 shillings a piece yearly, upon 1st of August, &
 1st of January. And if any of the cows be not ready
 for the haire by May-day, Masters may de-
 duct so much as Mr Edmund Brittone thinketh rea-
 sonable for yt time.

b) Letting to halves agreement between William Windham of Felbrigg and John Masters of Bodenham, 1678. (Norfolk Record Office, WKC 5/142 400X, reproduced by permission)

<p>The Acc^t of Thomas Ward for Rudham Farms let to Halves to John Butler, by Wm Roads, for one year ended y^e 20th of June 1693.</p> <p>Being Lands Settled</p> <p>Charge £ 104:14:05</p> <p>Allowances £ 77:16:01</p> <p>Debet^r £ 96:10:04</p>	<p>The Acc^t of Thomas Ward for Tofts Farms let to Halves to Tho. Beaumont; for one year ended the 20th of June 1693</p> <p>Being Lands not Settled</p> <p>Charge £ 109:10:00</p> <p>Allowances £ 41:15:02 $\frac{3}{4}$</p> <p>Debet^r £ 67:02:09 $\frac{3}{4}$</p>
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c) Letting to halves accounts for farms at Rudham and Toftrees, drawn up by Thomas Ward, Steward of the Raynham Estate, 1693. (Townshend MSS, RAS/A1/6, reproduced by permission)

Farming to Halves

The Hidden History of Sharefarming in England from Medieval to Modern Times

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Preface

Our story of sharefarming in England has taken nearly 30 years to crystallize and almost merits a history in its own right. It is a classic example of a research student stumbling on an idea, hitherto entirely overlooked by historians, which gradually overturns the received wisdom; in this case the absence of sharefarming in England. The idea that sharefarming existed, and was considered sufficiently significant for a Norfolk landowner to copy out lengthy sharefarming agreements into his estate book on the eve of the agricultural revolution, was a radical proposition for the agricultural history establishment to accept. In 1996 Dr Joan Thirsk, who had examined Liz Griffiths' PhD thesis, encouraged her to give a paper to the British Agricultural History Society. It was received politely, but raised few questions and made hardly any converts. Undeterred, Joan introduced Liz to French historians specializing in *métayage*, which led to further papers, the publication of the sharefarming agreements in French, and an understanding of the true importance of the discovery in a European context. Soon after, the Norfolk Record Society agreed to publish William Windham's Green Book, which contained most of the agreements, in its entirety. In 2001, Joan asked Liz to join her in giving a paper at the Economic History Conference on a neglected area of agricultural history. The response was gratifying, as sharefarming had become in the intervening years a recognized practice in farming circles. The real breakthrough came in 2002 when the Marquess Townshend of Raynham kindly allowed access to the Townshend archives. Here was significant evidence of sharefarming from the 1660s to the 1690s. This was enough to convince Mark Overton that we should bid for a research grant to take the project forward. We are very grateful to the ESRC for funding the project, 'Farming to halves: the hidden history of sharefarming in England from medieval to modern times' (RES-000-23-1231) with Mark Overton and Professor Michael Winter as co-investigators, from 2005–7.

This book is therefore the result of a tortuous but tenacious journey. At every stage, we have received encouragement and support from fellow historians. Without Joan Thirsk sharefarming would never have reached the public domain, but others have also played a vital role, allowing access to documents, giving interviews, sending references, reading chapters, and just talking things through. Our particular thanks go to the Marquess Townshend of Raynham, and his secretary, Scilla Landale, for access to

the Townshend archive; in Shropshire to the Evans family at Curdale Farm, Cleobury Mortimer, John Griffiths at Overwood Farm, Cleobury Mortimer and David Cooke of Coppice Farm, Ratlinghope for allowing us to use their farm diaries; to Peter Edwards for lending us his notes on Shropshire probate inventories; to John Alban and the staff at the Norfolk Archive Centre; to the staff at the Shropshire, Hereford, Lincolnshire and Sussex Record Offices, and the libraries at Newtown, Powys and Hereford. Our thanks also go to those that gave oral evidence: in Shropshire, John Haywood of Wall Town Farm, Neen Savage; Brian Price of Bockleton Court, Stoke St. Milborough; Brian Davis of Penywern, Clun; and Jane Bevan, sister of Edward Foster of Newton House, Bridgnorth: in Norfolk, to Jim Papworth of Felmingham Hall and the late Ian MacNicol of Stody Lodge. We received helpful information from John Henderson of Skipton, North Yorkshire; John Cyster of Newenden, Kent; John Young, previously head of Land Agency and Agriculture for the National Trust; Peter Fletcher, of Stratton and Holborow; Ian Hamilton, of Hamilton Taylor; Will Gemmill of Strutt and Parker; Philip Wynn of Aubourn, FPD Savills and the Country Land and Business Association.

A number of historians kept a watchful eye out for references and provided useful leads, including John Broad, Richard Hoyle, Paul and Elizabeth Rutledge, Susannah Wade Martins, A. Hassell Smith, Robin Stanes, and Nat Alcock who led us to Richard Suggett's book on Radnorshire. Several European colleagues, including Francesco Galassi, Annie Antoine, Rui Santos, and François Brumont were especially helpful. More thanks go to those who replied to our updates in *Rural History Today* and sent references: Christopher Smout, Avice Wilson, Jim Lewis, Angela Hall, Peter Annels, and Chris Lewis. Our thanks also go to Richard Wilson who went through the whole text at an early stage, and to Robert Kirkham for keeping us up to date with events in New Zealand.

Professor Michael Winter, Director of the Centre for Rural Policy Research at the University of Exeter, was a co-applicant on our ESRC grant, and encouraged us throughout the duration of the ESRC project. We are very grateful to him for contributing the unpublished material from the 2007 survey of farm tenures in Chapter 9, and to Dr Allan Butler for carrying out the analysis of the data.

Finally our thanks to Meemee Overton for her support and to Peter Griffiths who not only provided access to his family archives and technical advice on land management, but has lived with sharefarming for as long as Liz has known him.