

**Medieval Rothley, Leicestershire:  
manor, soke and parish**

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## **Wartnaby, Ab Kettleby and Holwell**

Wartnaby lies about three kilometres to the north east of Grimston, bordering what was once Framland wapentake. The name Wartnaby is probably a combination of an Old English personal name *Waercnoth*, with the Scandinavian ending 'by'.<sup>104</sup> Ekwall preferred the Old English meaning '*weard-cnotta*' 'watch hill' or Old Scandinavian '*vardknott*' meaning 'hill with a cairn'.<sup>105</sup> The highest point in Wartnaby is north of the settlement fields and beyond the Saltway, and lies at 170 metres above sea level. This point is on the edge of a scarp which plummets more than 70 metres into the valley beyond within a distance of less than one kilometre. It is easy to imagine that the people of Wartnaby might once have used this point as a look out. They could also have placed a cairn upon it as a warning marker for unwary walkers travelling in poor visibility. Both suggestions of the meaning of the name of the settlement give a possible Old English origin with the addition of the Danish 'by' thus giving a hybrid form. The church of St Michael (Plate 15) at Wartnaby sits at the eastern end of a hamlet consisting of houses clustered about a meeting of trackways which lead west to Grimston, south west to Saxelby, and south to Asfordby. The north lane joins the Saltway which is just under a kilometre away and a further trackway leads from the church to the road for Ab Kettleby. Wartnaby has a number of springs and a brook which feeds a lake, the outlet of which runs on to the settlement of Saxelby and then towards the fields of Grimston.<sup>106</sup>

## **Chadwell and Wycomb**

Chadwell and Wycomb were two settlements sharing the same open-field system prior to the enclosure. Chadwell is a topographical name which means 'cold spring' and its Domesday spelling of *Caldwelle* may have been changed in the eighteenth century.<sup>107</sup> Ekwall considers that the correct form of the name should be

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<sup>104</sup> Cox, *Place-names*, p. 111.

<sup>105</sup> E. Ekwall, *The concise Oxford dictionary of place-names* (Oxford, 1960), 4<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 499.

<sup>106</sup> In the eighteenth-century enclosure award the glebe for Wartnaby amounted to 15 acres 2 roods and 4 perches, and the tithes amounted to 11 acres 1 rood and 18 perches. The inappropriate tithes were held by Lord Howe, and amounted to 68 acres and 1 rood.

L.R.O. 4D/72/1/2 Enclosure acts, awards and maps, p. 93f.

<sup>107</sup> Cox, *Place-names*, p. 23.

'Caldwell', as this name was used more frequently in the documents.<sup>108</sup> Wycomb, or more correctly Wykeham, has been identified by Gelling as a possible Romano-British settlement.<sup>109</sup> This is of particular interest because Goadby Marwood, which lies just over one kilometre to the north of Wycomb, was once a Roman town. The '*ham*' names were among the first of the Anglo-Saxon settlement names, and so Wycomb could be one of the two earliest settlements in the soke of Rothley.<sup>110</sup> Chadwell and Wycomb, which lay within Framland wapentake, were counted as an island of Goscote wapentake because of their connection with the jurisdiction and parish of the soke and church at Rothley. These settlements lie about one kilometre apart. Wycomb is fed by brooks which arise within the township boundaries, and Chadwell is sited near multiple springs, some of which rise near the main street. The church of St Mary (Plate 14), once a chapel of Rothley, is twelfth-century and has a Norman font.<sup>111</sup> The settlement of Wycomb consists of a small cluster of houses with a main street and a back lane, and tracks from Wycomb lead to Scalford, Goadby Marwood and Chadwell. The settlement of Chadwell lies to the south east of the church along two streets which end in a track going westwards to Scalford and eastwards to Waltham on the Wolds. The road to the north of the church divides into two: travelling in one direction to Wycomb and in the other to the neighbouring settlement of Goadby Marwood. Chadwell was the most remote of Rothley's chapels and its agricultural significance within the soke may have been its grazing and summer pasture. Its proximity to the Saltway would make it accessible for much of the year by tenants wishing to drive their livestock from settlements lying in the Soar Valley to the west. Domesday placed two mills at Chadwell, and the brook which forms the eastern boundary would readily have powered water mills. The presence of these mills in Domesday suggests that there was a plentiful supply of grain for milling in the district. Chadwell and Wycomb remained within the parish of Rothley after the Dissolution although payments from tenants of both settlements had been granted away for the support of Wyggeston Hospital in Leicester.<sup>112</sup>

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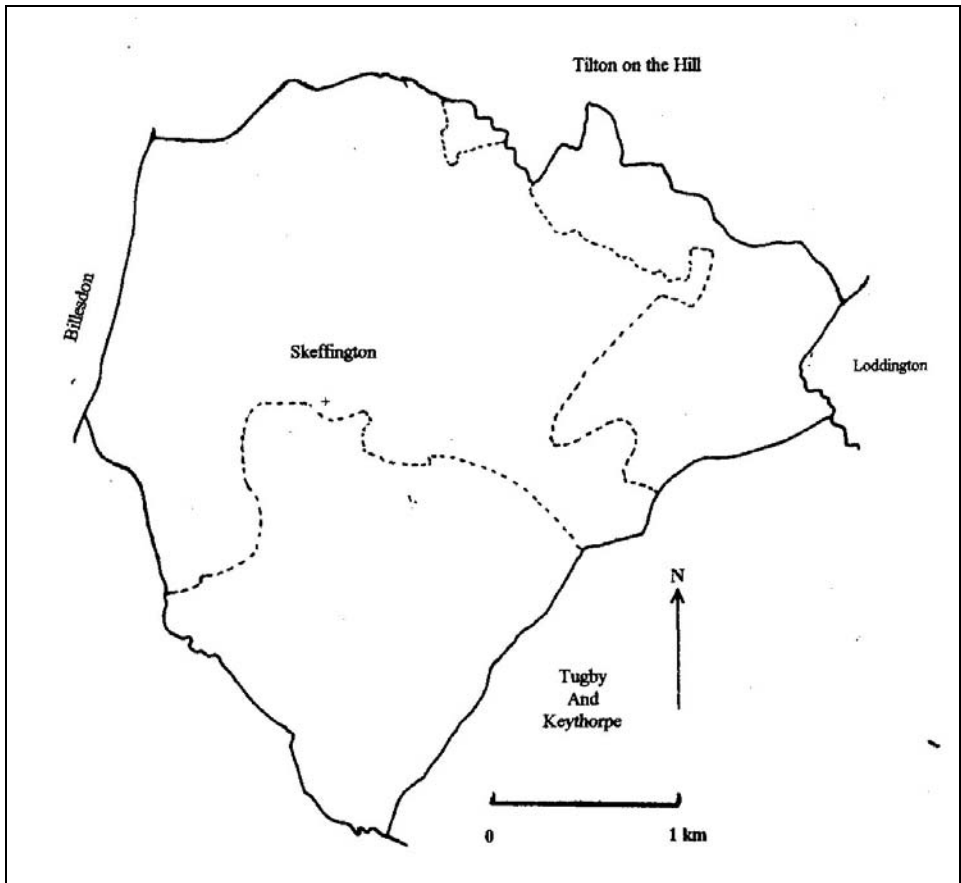
<sup>108</sup> Ekwall, *Dictionary of place-names*, p. 94.

<sup>109</sup> M. Gelling, *Place-names in the landscape* (London, 1984), p. 323.

<sup>110</sup> Keyham being the second. See below. Such an assertion presupposes that all current settlements retain their original names, which can by no means be certain.

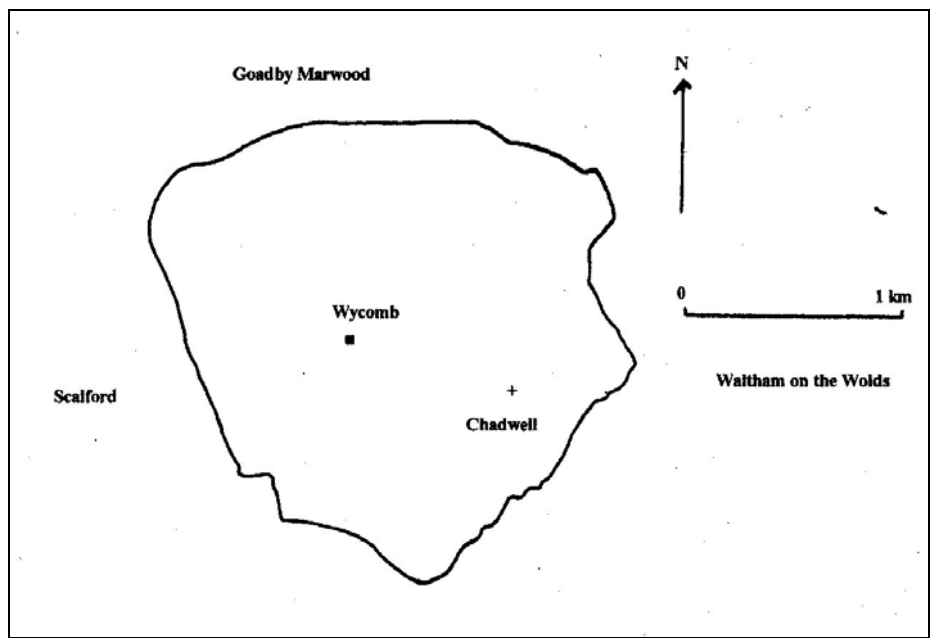
<sup>111</sup> N. Pevsner, *Leicestershire and Rutland* (Harmondsworth, 1984), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 129.

<sup>112</sup> A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *A calendar of charters and other documents belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester* (Leicester, 1933), especially the chapter on 'Charters and other



**Map 24. Skeffington showing parts from extant tithe maps**

Source: L.R.O. Ti/293/1 DE 248 1/83 Tithe map of Skeffington 1844



**Map 25. Chadwell and Wycomb**

Source: L.R.O. First edition OS map 6-inch series XIII

## **Chadwell and Wycomb**

Chadwell and Wycomb lie to the north east of Melton Mowbray and the enclosure award for these two settlements indicates that they once shared a common open-field system (Map 25).<sup>568</sup> The main settlement would appear to have been at Wycomb, with the church of Chadwell serving both communities, but standing in a much smaller settlement one kilometre to the south east. At Domesday this twin township was reckoned to be 4 carucates of arable, but the chief asset was two mills. Several water courses spring up in the vicinity of the settlement of Chadwell thus it is likely that both mills occupied this part of the township. The joint open-field system can be seen in a thirteenth-century charter in which Gilbert, son of Hugh le Hopere, sub-tenant to Robert son of Henry of Caldwell, was granted land which specifies two open fields, South Field and North Field.<sup>569</sup> Further records reveal a grant of land made to the monks of Garendon abbey outside Wycomb for quarrying, and the local tenants were given permission to use the quarry on condition that they did not sell any of the stone.<sup>570</sup> To the north of Wycomb lies the settlement of Goadby Marwood, a known Roman town, and Gelling has identified Wycomb, or more correctly *Wykeham*, as a possible Romano-British settlement.<sup>571</sup> Fox has suggested that Chadwell and Wycomb might have become associated with the soke of Rothley through transhumance and seasonal settlement before the creation of open-field systems.<sup>572</sup>

## **Summary**

Throughout the soke there is evidence for open-field farming in the medieval period. Types of crops grown both in the valley of the Soar and on the uplands of High Leicestershire have been recorded. There is evidence for some tenants having large holdings, perhaps sub-letting to lesser tenants. Animal husbandry was varied, and there

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<sup>568</sup> L.R.O. 4D 72/1/2 Enclosure maps and awards for lands in the soke of Rothley.

<sup>569</sup> There were 23 selions of land in the South Field, and 22 selions in the North Field. A translation of this document can be found in the L.R.O. Farnham Bequest MSS: 5D/184. Several names mentioned within the grant can be matched with names in the Rothley rental and customary.

<sup>570</sup> The Farnham Bequest contains a copy of this and many others. The evidence for the stone quarry can be found in the Belvoir charters, Vol. IV, p. 7. For further details see L.R.O. Farnham Bequest MSS: 5D/184. It has always been something of a puzzle why Chadwell and Wycomb remained as part of the soke, even after it became stranded like an island in the middle of the Framland Wapentake. Perhaps the presence of the two mills and the stone quarry were of particular economic value in the middle ages.

<sup>571</sup> M. Gelling, *Place-names in the landscape* (London, 1984), p. 323.

is evidence for the regulation and control of types and numbers of animals within the settlements.

At Rothley there were grazing rights and access to woodland which the tenants shared with the southern half of Mountsorrel, and this connection was underpinned by a close parochial relationship. Similarly, Gaddesby, Barsby and South Croxton shared many assets with Ashby Folville: the land between them was inter-linked and the boundaries showed elements of overlap suggesting possible inter-commoning of livestock, and untidy divisions of arable. There was a complicated arrangement of two conjoined settlements each with its own open-field system, and an open-field system which was shared by two separate settlements. Parochial ties were also in evidence between some of these villas and the church at Rothley. The overlapping of shared interests suggests that this landscape was once a sub-estate dependent on Rothley, and that subsequent fission and fusion created a set of relationships which left their mark not only on the agrarian organisation, but also on the administrative and parochial boundaries. Tilton lay at the heart of a large parish which included Halstead, Whatborough and South Marefield, but the settlement showed an unusual arrangement between two adjacent settlements. Skeffington, although no longer part of the soke under the Templars, demonstrated a complex arrangement of sub-tenancies within the township which suggest that the township was divided into three or four large sub-units which nevertheless continued to be controlled from a single, nucleated settlement. Chadwell and Wycomb, the furthest removed of the soke settlements from Rothley, shared a single open-field system, and possessed mills and a stone quarry which would have been a positive asset to the soke economy. Strong links and effective co-operation appear to have maintained these inter-dependent systems, but some early moves to enclose led to disagreements over pasture rights. Despite this, many villas, both within and outside the soke, continued to share common land and left behind both landscape and documentary evidence of their agrarian relationships and communal organisation.

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<sup>572</sup> H.S.A. Fox, personal communication. Fox has written about this topic in 'Introduction: Transhumance and seasonal settlement' H.S.A. Fox, ed., *Seasonal Settlement* (Leicester, 1996), Vaughan Paper No. 39, pp. 1-23.



Further evidence for linking these three vill does not appear until the nineteenth century when maps and local knowledge were used to establish assarts linked to all three of these vill which had been made in the territory of the wolds to the north east (Map 34).<sup>640</sup> It is possible that land lying to the north east of Ab Kettleby parish known as Wartnaby Wolds could have been the land which owed tithes to Ab Kettleby church in the fourteenth century. If this is the case then these assarts appear to have created a confusion in land holding and jurisdiction at a time when payments of tithes and manorial dues were still being clarified.

### **Chadwell with Wycomb**

Chadwell and Wycomb were a joint township assessed (like Keyham) at 4 carucates in the Domesday Survey and lay surrounded by non-soke territory. They lay at the eastern extremity of the Rothley soke territory. The townships which lay closest to Chadwell and Wycomb to the north and west were Goadby Marwood and Scalford. Waltham on the Wolds lay to the east (Map 35). For each of these settlements there was a church in the *Matriculus*, and each church was in the patronage of an ecclesiastical organisation.<sup>641</sup> One slight suggestion of a connection with the soke was found in the neighbouring township of Scalford, when there was a claim of ancient demesne as of the soke of Rothley in 1392.<sup>642</sup> It is possible that part, or all, of Scalford was once attached to Rothley, the most likely connection being through the land which had descended to the Countess Judith at Domesday, and later to king David of Scotland in the early twelfth century. Despite this, attempting to place Chadwell and Wycomb within the context of a larger local estate has yielded little firm evidence, nor does there seem to have been any fiscal or parochial connection with their immediate neighbours. It is possible that Chadwell lay at the heart of an early settlement arising as a result of seasonal transhumance by the tenants of the soke which was ultimately granted a chapel of its own.<sup>643</sup> If this were so, there would be no need to see Chadwell and Wycomb as part of a local estate. That Wycomb is an early settlement can be established through its

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would probably pre-date the Wapentake divisions of the early tenth century. A connection subsequent to that division would be most unlikely.

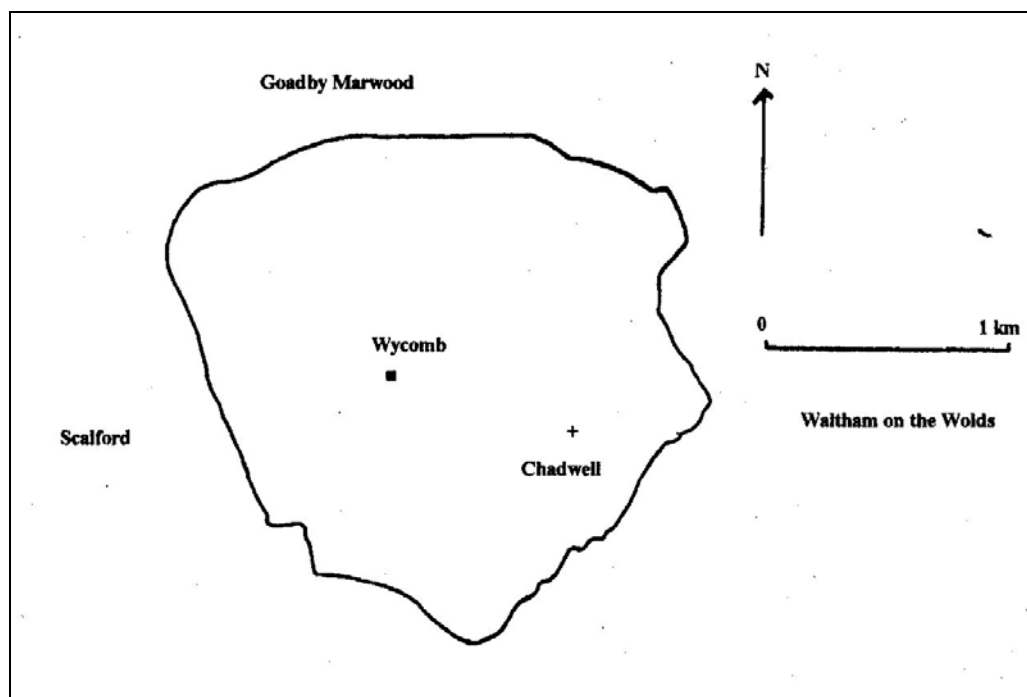
<sup>640</sup> L.R.O. 4D 72/I/2, Vol. II. The assarts associated with Wartnaby were known locally as Wartnaby Wolds. The record of the judgement in the case states that Wartnaby Wolds had never been part of the soke of Rothley. It is unclear which parish it belonged to, but it would seem likely that the parish church of Ab Kettleby had been the recipient of the tithes.

<sup>641</sup> Goadby Marwood was connected with the abbey at Garendon, Waltham was in the patronage of the nuns of Eaton, and the patron of Scalford was the prior of Daventry. In the early thirteenth century Scalford parish had no dependent chapels, and its dedication was to St Egelwine the martyr, a name suggesting an early foundation.

<sup>642</sup> Farnham, ed., *Village notes*, Vol. IV, p. 30. An Assize Roll of AD 1392 gives some details.

<sup>643</sup> Prof. H.S.A. Fox, personal communication.

name, for Goadby Marwood was the site of a Roman Town, and Wycomb (the old spelling is Wikeham) may originally have been a *vicus* settlement on the edge of this Roman centre.<sup>644</sup>



**Map 35. Chadwell and Wycomb showing relationship with surrounding townships**

Source: L.R.O. First edition OS map 6-inch series, sheet XIII

Vill	Chief tenant at Domesday	Holding
Goadby Marwood	Geoffrey de la Guerche	6 carucates
	Robert of Bucy	6 carucates
Scalford	Robert of Bucy	½ carucate
	Countess Judith	11 carucates
Waltham on the Wolds	Hugh of Grandmesnil	16 ½ carucates
	Guy of Craon	2 ½ + ½ carucates

**Figure 17. Chadwell, Wycomb and neighbouring villis**

Source: W.P.W. Phillimore, ed., *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles Episcopi Lincolnensis AD MCCIX - MCCXXXV* (Lincoln, 1912), Vol. I, pp. 271, 272; DB ff. 234 c, 235 b, c, 236 c, 233 a

### Tilton on the Hill

Part of Tilton belonged to the soke at Domesday and remained under the Templars in the thirteenth century. The parish encompassed other Domesday soke dependencies at Halstead and South Marefield, and in addition the vill of Whatborough,

<sup>644</sup> M. Gelling, *Place-names in the landscape* (London, 1984), p. 323.