



Langdyke Trust



Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

# ENCLOSURE OF THE OPEN FIELDS

## WHY?

The reasons for communal ploughing and grazing of livestock had long been forgotten, but the disadvantages were a frequent source of annoyance.

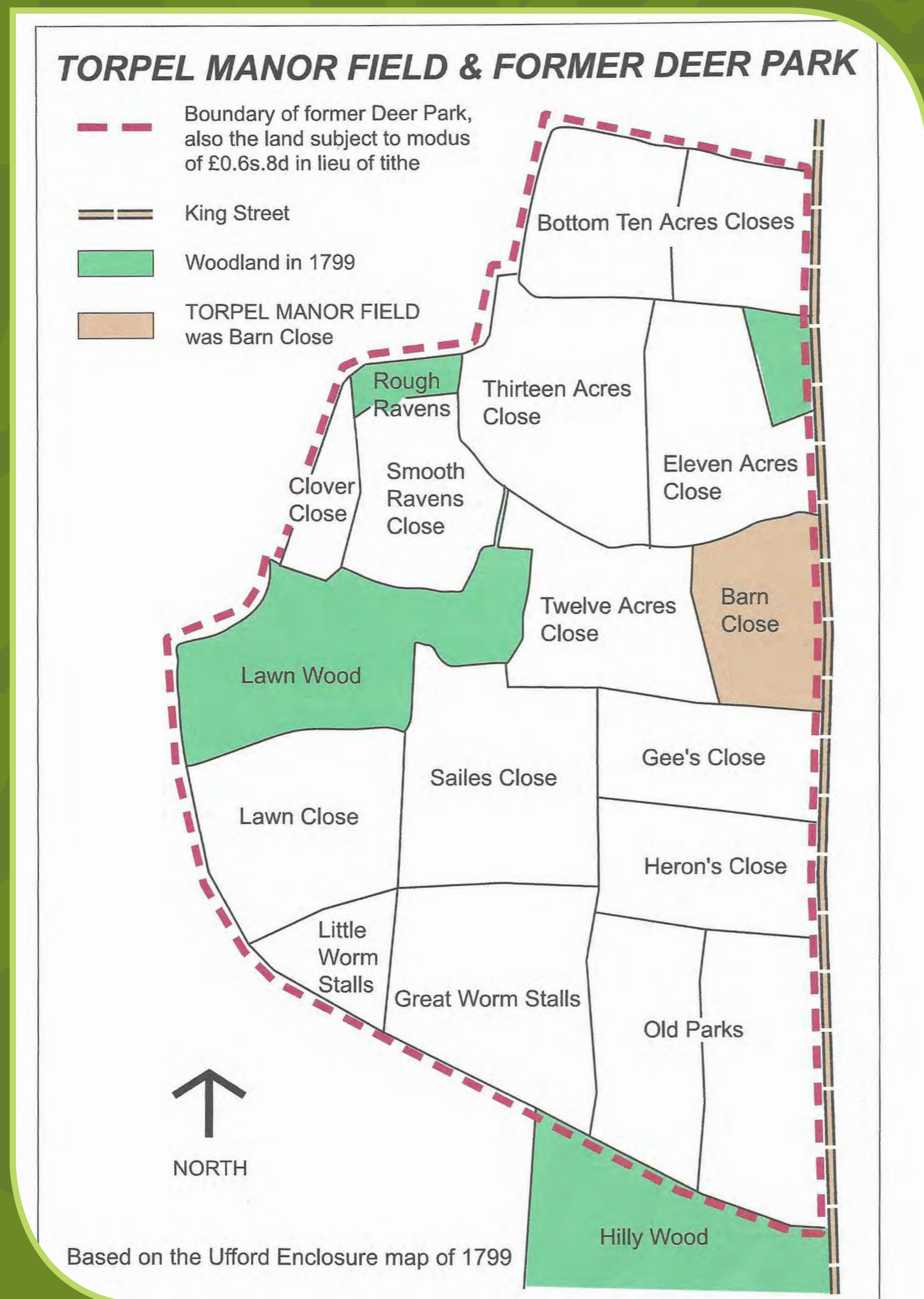
## WHEN?

Even at the time of Domesday Book freemen were cultivating compact plots of land. In Tudor times some lords were short of workers and they changed from growing crops to sheep farming. But locally some open fields survived until nearly 1800.

## HOW?

In many villages there was agreement as to how the land should be redistributed but in others there had to be a special Act of Parliament. Usually the biggest landowner set the ball rolling, in Ufford this was Sir John Trollope.

The Stamford Mercury 4th Sept 1795 reported: "Notice is hereby given that application will be made to the honourable House of Commons in the next session of Parliament for leave to bring in a bill for dividing, allotting, and inclosing the open and common fields, meadows, commonable lands and waste grounds in the parish of Ufford with Ashton and Bainton in the county of Northamptonshire".



TORPEL'S FORMER DEER PARK AFTER ENCLOSURE, 1799

## MAIN CHANGES?

1. Grazing rights were abolished. Sir John Trollope, as lord of the manor was entitled to the "soil of the waste ground and commons".
2. Persons who had held a cottage or enclosure for 20 years "peaceably and quietly could continue to hold and enjoy the same".
3. Roads were staked out and hawthorn hedges planted.

## CHANGES AT TORPEL?

The former deer park was still quite distinct from the surrounding fields. Two closes were called Old Parks. Tenant farmers paid a copyhold rent to the owner, Sir John Trollope.

## CHANGES IN THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE?

- small hedged fields replaced open countryside and farm houses were built surrounded by their fields.
- the poorest people such as John Clare's family, lost their independence and either became farm labourers or moved into towns to find work.
- landowners employed gamekeepers and erected PRIVATE! KEEP OUT! signs across John Clare's favourite footpaths.