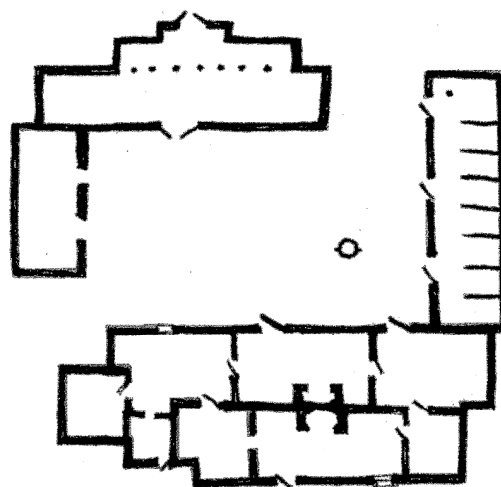
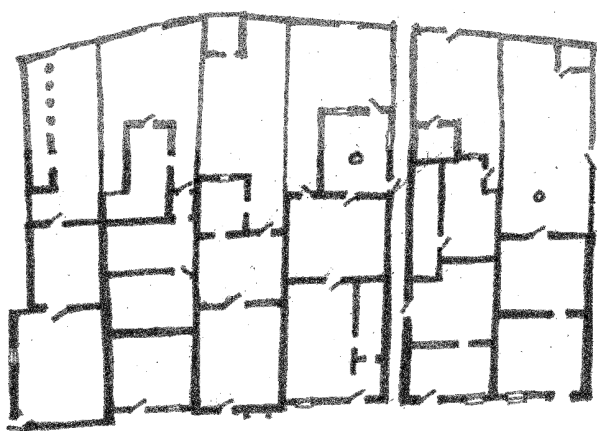
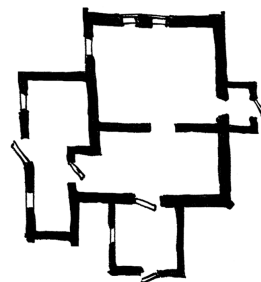
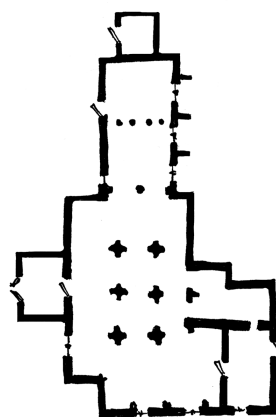
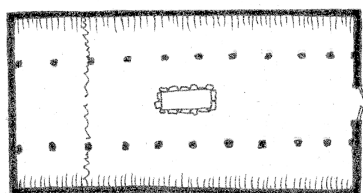
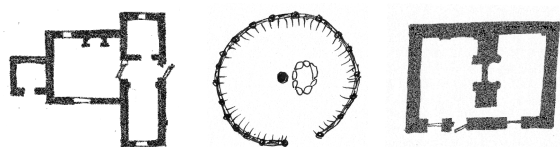
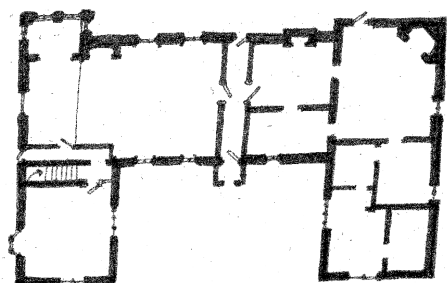
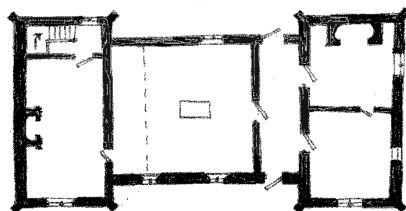
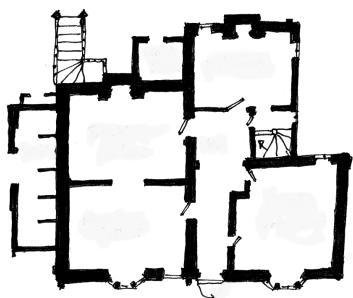


FANTASY FLOORPLANS

MEDIEVAL DOMESTIC BUILDINGS



CORNELIUS CLIFFORD

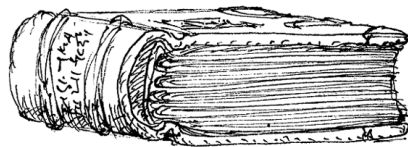
MEDIEVAL DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

FANTASY FLOORPLANS

A collection of plans of medieval domestic buildings, from small huts to grand manor houses. Based on traditional historic medieval plans and designed for fantasy role playing games. Including twenty-two floor plans, room descriptions, construction and inhabitants.

Page	CONTENTS
3	Roadside Inn; four plans
4	Mud Hut
4	Stone Hut
5	Bothy (one-roomed cottage)
5	Two-roomed Cottage
6	Long House
6	Passage House
7	Yeoman's House
8	Middling Farmhouse
9	Large Dairy Farm
10	Large 'Tithe' Barn
11	Small Church
12	Row of Medieval Shops
13	Tribal Round House
14	Northling Longhouse
15	Aisled Hall House
16	Fortified Manor House
17	Hall House
18	Large Manor House

First published in 2012 by DreamWorlds



Text and illustrations copyright © 2012 Cornelius Clifford

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

WWW.DREAM-WORLDS.CO.UK

MEDIEVAL ROADSIDE INN

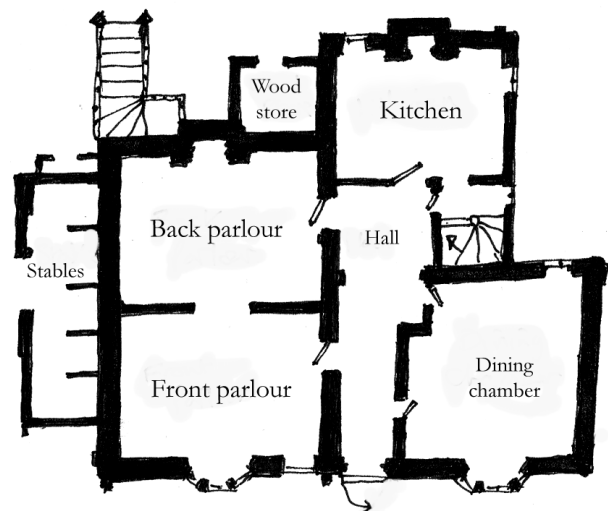
This is an example of a fairly typical 'medieval' roadside inn; the sort of place where travellers stop for a meal and a night's sleep before continuing their journey the next day. The ground floor is the main area of activity, note that there are no bars, in the modern sense of the word. The innkeepers and his staff (pot-boys, stable-boys, serving wenches and the like) wait on their customers at tables. Lots of rushing through the hall to deliver trays of food and beer and returning to the kitchen with empties!

The kitchen is the engine of an establishment like this; here the food is prepared; stews, roast meats, pies, bread, cheese, apples and so on are the likely fare. The back parlour, with its fire, would be cosy but dark, for it has no windows. The front parlour is the equivalent of a common room or public bar. The dining chamber is for the more well-to-do customers; the sort of folk who like to use a knife and fork, rather than their fingers!

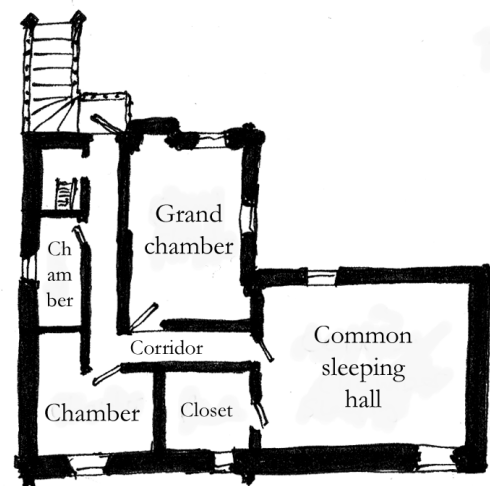
Animals are stabled outside and the staircase to the first floor is outside too, this has railings and a wooden roof to keep the rain off. Upstairs are various sleeping chambers; most folk would be happy with the common sleeping hall where they could roll up on the wooden floor, in their own bedding, for a silver penny or two. There are a couple of chambers for better off travellers and one grand chamber for nobility or well-heeled merchants. The closet contains jugs of water for washing and chamber pots.

At the top of the stairs is a little closet with a ladder up to the attics, which are accessed via a trapdoor. The attics are where the innkeeper and his family sleep and keep their personal clothes and belongings. This is also the home to some of the staff and servants. Stable-boys, serving wenches and so on are likely to 'live out' in a nearby hamlet or village. The cellars are pretty self-explanatory; cold, damp and full of barrels of beer, hams hanging from the rafters, stacks of chests and boxes of victuals.

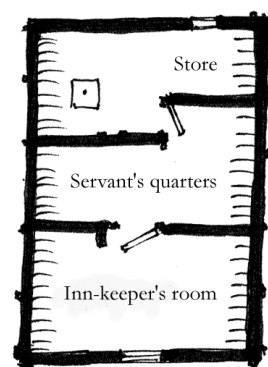
GROUND FLOOR



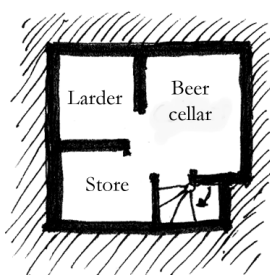
FIRST FLOOR



ATTICS



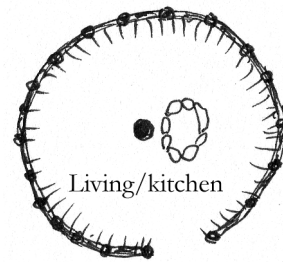
CELLARS



ROUND MUD HUT

Probably the simplest form of one-family house; a short step up from living in a cave. The walls are about three feet high and made from posts stuck in the ground, these are then interwoven with 'wattle' made from twigs and thin branches. The resulting mesh is 'daubed' with mud mixed with straw. The roof is supported by a large central post, probably a small tree trunk, and thatched with reeds or straw. The central hearth, slightly off centre to avoid the main pole holding up the roof, is really just a circle of stones. The smoke from the fire, which is used for cooking, and provides essential heat and light, escapes by seeping through the thatch. In some regions the same construction methods are used for rectangular mud huts.

A Hillman is the householder; he lives here with his wife, his younger brother and five children aged between one and ten. He is a gruff, hardened and tough character ~ not terribly clever or cunning. He is short, stocky, very hairy and wears animal skins for clothes. He has a stone-headed axe and several flint-tipped spears which he uses as weapons and for hunting. The only other possessions this family have are a few crude clay cooking pots, some bone scrapers, antler picks, and lots of animal skins and furs.

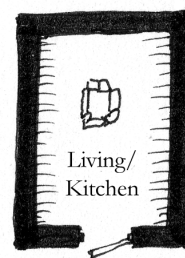


The Hillman has found a large naturally occurring nugget of pure gold in a mountain stream. A group of hard-nosed dwarves want to find out exactly where he found the gold nugget. Once they have this information, they hope it will lead them to a good vein of gold nearby. The dwarves will pay well for this information. Maybe the Hillman's wife is really the boss and she will need to be convinced or bribed to obtain the information the dwarves seek.

STONE HUT

This very simple stone hut has only one room, no upstairs and a central hearth in the floor, which is made of beaten earth. There are no windows and the side walls are very low, perhaps three or four feet high. There is a wooden door; a great leap forward! This is the home of one small family; father, mother and children, instead of being the home of a larger clan. It is a very common form of house, which can be thrown up by a small number of people in a few days or so. All it requires is a plentiful supply of field stone (e.g. rough, randomly shaped stone that is literally picked up from the fields) which is laid dry (without mortar) and not 'worked' or 'dressed' by a stonemason. In regions where there is no field stone, houses of this form are built of timber, wattle and daub, or even mud bricks.

The sheep and goat herder, or shepherd, who lives in this rough hut with his old wife has no furniture, money or weapons to speak of.

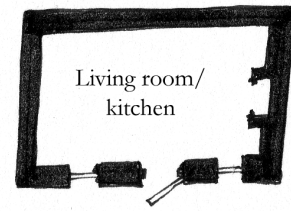


All they have is straw pallets for beds, one crude wooden milking stool and some cooking utensils. But they live a simple, contented life; herding their master's animals on the hills. The old shepherd has a secret; he knows the secret location of a magical well; 'The Spring of the Three Mystic Nymphs...'

BOTHY (ONE - ROOMED COTTAGE)

This Bothy or one-roomed Cottage is small and basically has one room for living, sleeping and cooking in. It does have a fireplace and chimney at one end, in a gable end wall, and also the luxury of windows! This type of house is common in many medieval cultures. Such little cottages are made of many different materials, depending on what is locally available. Wattle and daub, with a thatched roof; stone, with roof slates or thatch; even 'cob' which is a mixture of clay, straw and random stone, moulded and pounded into the shape of the walls and rendered when it has dried. Versions of these cottages with a chimney instead of a central hearth can have an upper storey. This is generally an attic bedroom without windows and is reached by ladder, so it is really little more than a sleeping platform.

The hunter (and night-time poacher) who lives here gets by, just. He is a hard, rough character, who beats his wife and children when they displease him.



Officially he is a huntsman and works for the local lord, when required, trapping and killing game; deer, pheasants and wild pigs, for his master's table. He also acts as beater, flushing out game, for the lord and his guests when they go a-hunting.

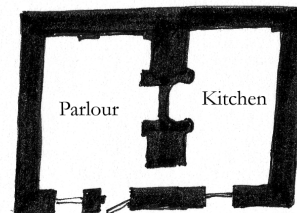
He secretly traps rabbits, partridges and so forth, at night, which counts as poaching and theft, a serious crime. The Lord's bailiff suspects but as yet has no evidence to prove it. The huntsman is armed with a short hunting bow and a long huntsman's dagger. He is an expert with traps.

TWO-ROOMED COTTAGE

This two roomed cottage has a central chimney stack, and so two fires, and therefore two ground floor rooms, are possible. Some folks would call this a house rather than a cottage. An upper floor is often inserted, since the smoke escapes up a chimney rather than seeping through the thatch, there bedrooms in this attic, which are reached by a ladder and trapdoor. Some would say that the cottage becomes a house when it acquires a proper staircase. Just as a mansion is defined as a house with two or more staircases. But this is a matter of opinion.

The peasant farmer who lives in this cottage is a relatively comfortable, if dull, man. His wife is more interesting. They have three small children and their feudal lord treats them well, providing a good house for them (in return for rent) and this feudal lord has a fair sense of justice, unusually!

The peasant has a number of fertile strips of land scattered around the fields of the village, which he rents from the Lord. When he is not ploughing and working his own strips, he has to work the Lord's land too; for about a third of the time, which is one of the obligations that he fulfils for nothing. He also gives a proportion of his crop to the Lord and another portion in tithes to the church.

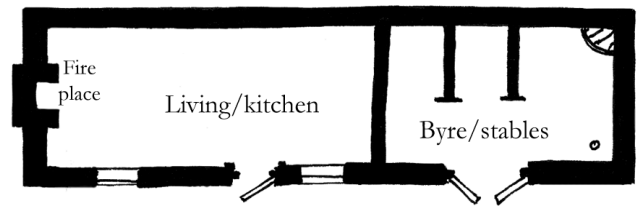


The wife of this low status farmer is a storyteller and knows a great deal about the fae folk of the forest. She tells lively tales about elves, faeries and goblins, and a lot more besides. Some of the other peasants suspect her of being a witch, or in communication with the evil spirits of the dark wood. They even make signs to ward off the bad spirits behind her back. But she is a lovely person, and harms no-one with her fanciful tales, unless it is the village priest, who tries to suppress old fashioned 'superstitions.' But these are not actually fanciful nonsense; there really are elves and faeries in the woods and goblins in the Underworld...

LONG HOUSE

In some regions, especially in cold northern countries, where the animals (cows, sheep, pigs) need to be under cover to survive harsh winters, this variant of the one roomed cottage is common. Instead of adding a second room for habitation by people, a byre, or stable, for farm animals has been built onto one end. The living/sleeping/cooking room (or cott, hence cottage) is roughly the same as in a one-roomed cottage, both in size and shape. In later versions there are attic spaces (not really rooms, since there are no stairs, windows or doors) above both sides of the long house. Often the attic above the byre is used to store hay or other animal feed, or perhaps as sleeping space for a farmhand or servant.

The farmer who occupies this longhouse is thin and tough, as is his wife. They herd long-haired cattle in cold, hilly country. He is a dour, silent and brooding sort of fellow. Secretly he would love to leave the steading, move to a town in the 'soft' lowlands and never see the back end of a cow again! He would never openly admit this, even to his wife.

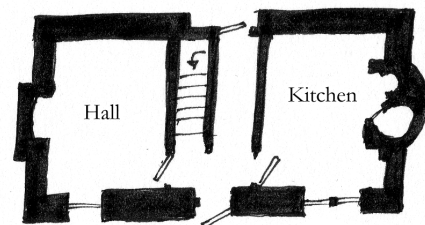


The cattle farmer drinks a lot of home-made hooch, which is a rough kind of whisky. He rents his farm, for a cash rent, from the local landowner. His wife milks the cows and they sell off some of the young calves for meat and beef each year. The cattle are tough and lean, spending a great deal of time wandering the high pastures and rocky slopes. These animals are not fenced in; they wander as they will over the moors. The stony-faced farmer knows the high ground very well, for he has to gather in his beasts regularly, either for milking or to stable them at night during the winter.

PASSAGE HOUSE

This is a 'passage' house, with fire places at either end in the gable walls, and a central passage from front to back, with a staircase to the second floor attic bed rooms. The hall is a fairly 'grand' space, imitating the Great Hall of this farmer's betters perhaps. The kitchen has a good fireplace and its own chimney and even a bread oven. There are several windows and doors, front and back. This is definitely a house rather than a cottage. Maybe the attic rooms (bedrooms) have little windows of their own, topped by dormers. A comfortable small farmer's residence. The walls are made of stone and the roof is thatched.

The farmer who lives here is a jolly, stout, red-faced and rumbustious fellow. He works hard and respects others who do the same. He hates idleness and would think nothing of beating a lazy farm-hand with his heavy walking stick, if he caught the man not pulling his weight. The farmer's wife is short, fat and rosy-cheeked. She also works hard to feed her husband, her children, and the farm-hands, well.



The farmer's eldest two sons have left home, both to seek their fortunes. One has gone off to be a soldier (mercenary to you and I) and the other to be apprentice to a merchant in a market town nearby. The farmer is disappointed that neither son wants to stay on the farm. He is especially unhappy with the son who is away soldiering, whom he sees as a 'lazy good-for-nothing.' There are half a dozen younger children about the place; playing, laughing, eating and helping out on the farm or in the kitchen.

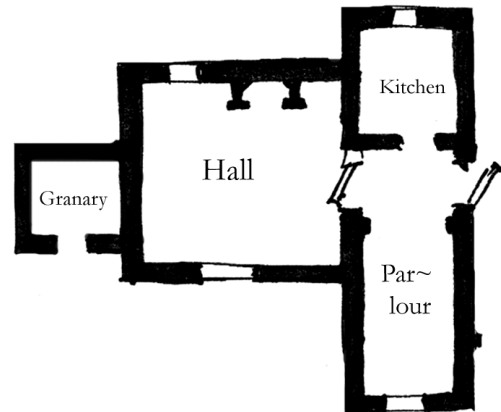
YEOMAN'S HOUSE

A modest yeoman has his home here, calling the main room a hall is a little pretentious, perhaps ~ but it is a good sized room and does have a stone fireplace. This yeoman farmer obviously grows crops, rather than herding animals, for he has a modest granary in which to store the fruits of his labours. The small kitchen is indicative of this small farmer's modest means, although he does have a parlour, where he and his family can relax.

In all likelihood the farmer grows wheat, which is milled (ground into flour) at the Lord's mill. He has to pay a fee for this service, and a share of the flour too. He can then sell the flour to a baker who makes it into bread. Many small farmers like this one live an almost subsistence existence with little actual money. In years of a bad harvest, this yeoman and his family could well starve, unless he has something put aside from previous, better, years.

He might sell his surplus grain at a local 'corn exchange' to corn merchants. They would then transport the grain to towns or cities where it is used to feed the townspeople and citizens. But the merchants need to make a profit, so the price they can pay would be low. Being a farmer at this level is very hard, with everyone taking a share of the hard won crop. His Lord (or Landlord) the miller, the corn merchant and, finally, he has to give a tenth of his grain to the church in tithes!

In the granary there are sacks of grain and seed. In the hall there is a good oak table, one chair (for the Yeoman himself) and a couple of wooden benches where his wife and children sit at meal times. In the kitchen there are a few metal utensils, lots of crude pottery and a rough deal (or pine) table. The parlour is the most comfortable room, with an exotic (but tatty) rug on the floor, a couple of stools, and a chest full of papers. The Yeoman's wife can play the lute, and sings beautifully. So they have 'entertainments' in the parlour, inviting their friends and neighbours to an evening of singing and story telling a couple of times a week. It is a happy house.



The Yeoman has an excellent long bow and he is a good shot with it. He also has a dagger and a leather pouch containing sixty or seventy silver coins. This is usually hidden in a little void up the chimney of the 'hall' fireplace. He served his Lord well in a recent campaign, which lasted many months, much longer than the obligatory forty days of military service he is supposed to complete. Although his family were pretty deprived whilst the Yeoman was away, he came back with fifty silver pieces; his share of the loot from an enemy town the Lord's army sacked on the campaign. So things have been good for this family of late.

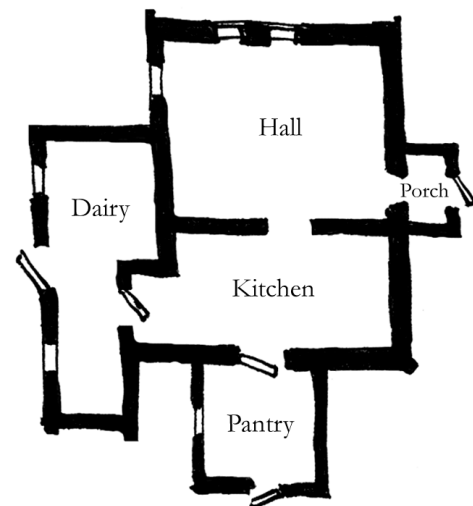
MIDDLELING FARMHOUSE

A substantial hall is the main living and eating room; here the yeoman, his wife and children, and maybe a couple of farm hands, all eat together. This farmer clearly has cows, for the dairy is large and significant. His wife, perhaps helped by a milk maid, processes the fresh milk into cheese, butter and so on here. The kitchen is likely to be the heart of an establishment like this; always full of action and the smell of cooking. The pantry in this farmhouse is used to store all sorts of food, not just bread.

This small farmhouse is the home of a 'yeoman' farmer. He is free of the ties that constrain a serf or peasant, though he still may still have a few feudal obligations, such as performing military service for his lord, for up to forty days a year. He is a 'free' man and can manage his holding as he pleases. Yeoman farmers sometimes own their land. More usually they hold it under a long lease, this could be for one, two or three 'lifetimes.' Assuming this one is for three, it would mean the lease would last until he, his wife and his son have all died, at which time the property would revert back to the noble owner or lord. If they are all long-lived then this could be a hundred years or more. The yeoman will have purchased this lease (from the lord) in the first place, so the (ground) rent is relatively low and might be in produce, cash, or a mixture of both. It could be a suckling pig and half a crown, every St. Swithin's day, or two bushels of wheat a year, for example.

In medieval England the yeoman farmer came to be seen as the backbone of the country, a kind of rural middle class. Somewhere in status between the nobility (anyone with a title) and the peasantry; who were not free, and were very much tied to their lord and his land.

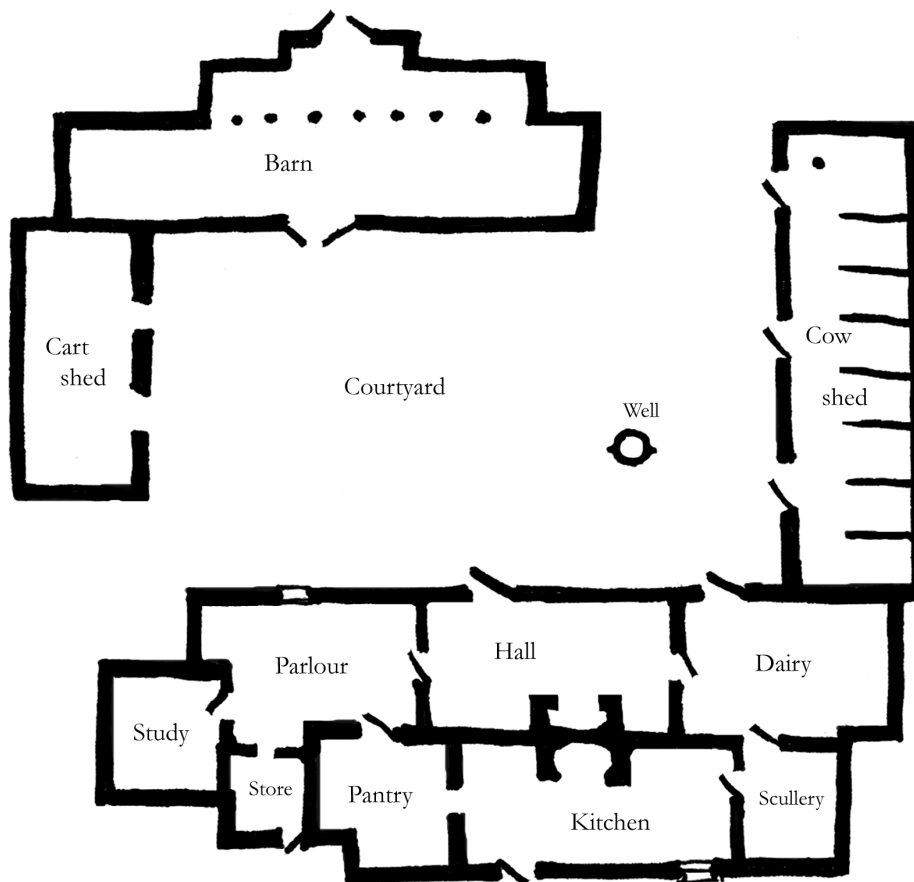
Yeomen (literally 'young man' in Anglo Saxon times) worked their own farms, which could be anything from a smallholding of thirty or forty acres, to a large farm of many hundreds of acres. They might employ farm hands, especially for harvest and at other busy times.



This yeoman might be termed a 'serjeant' when fulfilling any service obligation to his lord. He is a solid, down-to-earth, sort of a chap who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty. He could be quite wealthy and is likely to be strident about maintaining his hard-won freedoms and rights.

Yeomen make excellent archers and men-at-arms, often having their own equipment; longbow, arrows, canvas or leather jack, dagger and so on. It must have been fairly difficult for nobles and kings to persuade these hardy men to leave their beloved farms and go to war, especially if a prolonged campaign is on the cards.

LARGE DAIRY FARM



This farm is about as big as it is possible for a farm to get in medieval times. Farms would be limited in size by the walking distance from the farmstead to the furthest fields. Nobody would want to walk very far, carrying a heavy sack of seed and tools, at the beginning and end of a long, hard day! Horses extend the possible size but they were relatively rare in early medieval times and mostly reserved for noblemen and gentry. Oxen might be used for ploughing but they walk even slower than a man! Great Lords with extensive estates would divide them into a number of smaller farms of a size that could be easily managed by a tenant farmer (paying rent) or a vassal.

This farm is nicely arranged around a large central courtyard which is also the farmyard. So twice a day the entire herd would be brought in for milking. There would need to be a dung hill (or midden) in the yard too, preferably at a good distance from the well! A farm such as this one could be a modest manor, owned by a squire or low ranking knight. In this case it is the (leasehold) property of a prosperous yeoman farmer. His hall and kitchen are both large and comfortable rooms, with substantial stone fireplaces and solid oak furniture.

The parlour is cosy and has a carpet over the stone flags, as well as chairs and tables. There is even a study, where this well-to-do farmer reads books and does his paperwork, this would be called the estate office if it were a gentleman's estate rather than a farm. The pantry is well stocked with preserved food of every sort; pies, hams, cheeses, bread, jams, pickles and so forth. The scullery is where the washing of dishes and some food preparation is carried out, probably by a scullery maid, for the establishment is big enough to have one. The dairy is clearly an important room, and the production of milk is on a large enough scale for there to be surplus each day. This is sold to the nearer villages or in the town market and includes milk, cheese, cream, and butter.

This is a mixed farm; the farmer growing crops as well as keeping a herd of twenty to fifty cows and other livestock. The barn is used for storing grain, hay and straw. The cart shed might contain farm wagons and carts, as well as a pony trap for the farmer and his wife to drive to market. Since this farmer is so prosperous, he may well have a riding horse as well as a pony or two.

LARGE 'TITHE' BARN

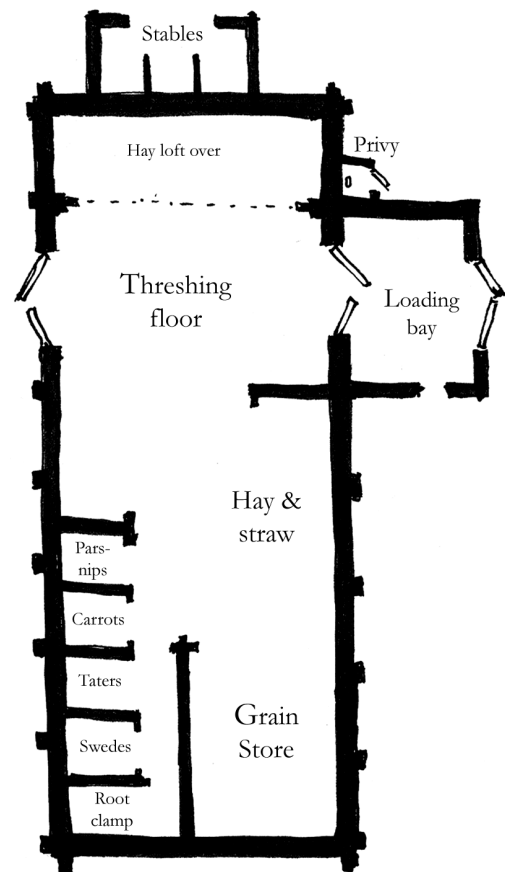
This large stone barn is used for storing farm produce of every sort. It could be part of a large farm, a noble's estate or a religious establishment such as a monastery.

Heavily laden carts or wagons enter the loading bay piled high with 'stooks' (bundles) of wheat, barley, oats or some other kind of grain. The grain is manually 'threshed' and then 'winnowed' on the threshing floor. Basically the dry plant (it is dried in the fields by the wind and late summer sun) is beaten with a jointed stick to separate the grains from the stalks. The stalks become hay (if grass) or straw (if wheat or corn) and are used as animal fodder (food) and bedding. The hay and straw will naturally rise to the top of the pile and can be lifted off with a pitch fork and stored. Next, the large barn doors at both ends are opened to create a strong draft. Now the grain is tossed up into this draft to separate the 'wheat from the chaff.' Chaff is the inedible husks or shells of the grain, and any other rubbish that might have gotten picked up or mixed into the heap. The grain is often sieved as well, to remove any small impurities.

This type of barn and its contents would be very important in medieval times. The food and animal fodder it contains are effectively the wealth of the owner; about a year's supply of food for the whole farm or community. In agricultural (rather than money-based) economies such a barn is really the most important building on the farm or estate. The internal partitions are made from wood, and therefore can fairly easily moved when the farmer's needs change.

A great barn such as this example would be kept secure against theft; both by people and rats or other vermin. In times of famine the Lord might have to place an armed guard on the barn.

These barns are often called 'tithe' barns in England. This comes from the fact that the medieval church received a tithe (or tax) of one tenth (ten percent) of all the produce grown by the entire rural populace and that produce was stored in this type of massive building.



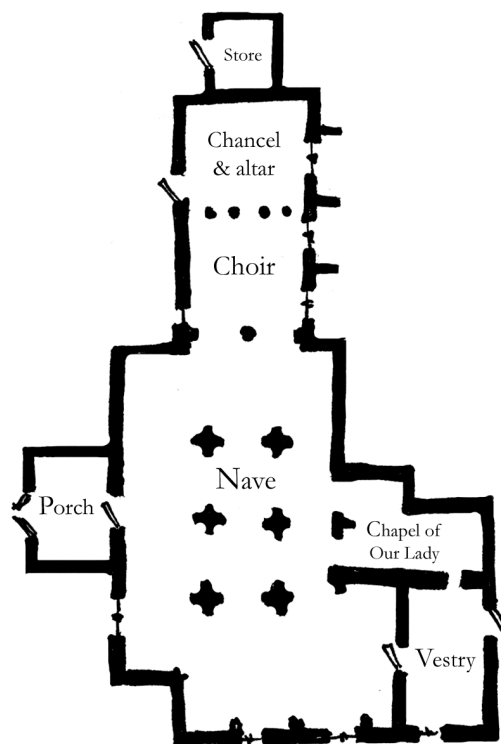
SMALL CHURCH

This modest church has no tower or spire. The porch is the main entrance and the only door where non-clerics can enter the building. The nave is the main body of the church, here the congregation of villagers and farmers sit on long benches or pews.

The chapel of 'Our Lady' is a shrine dedicated to Mary, and houses a brightly painted statue, made from wood covered with plaster, of the mother of Christ. This chapel has been paid for by the local Lord and his forbears; so he and his family rather see it as their own personal chapel, within the church.

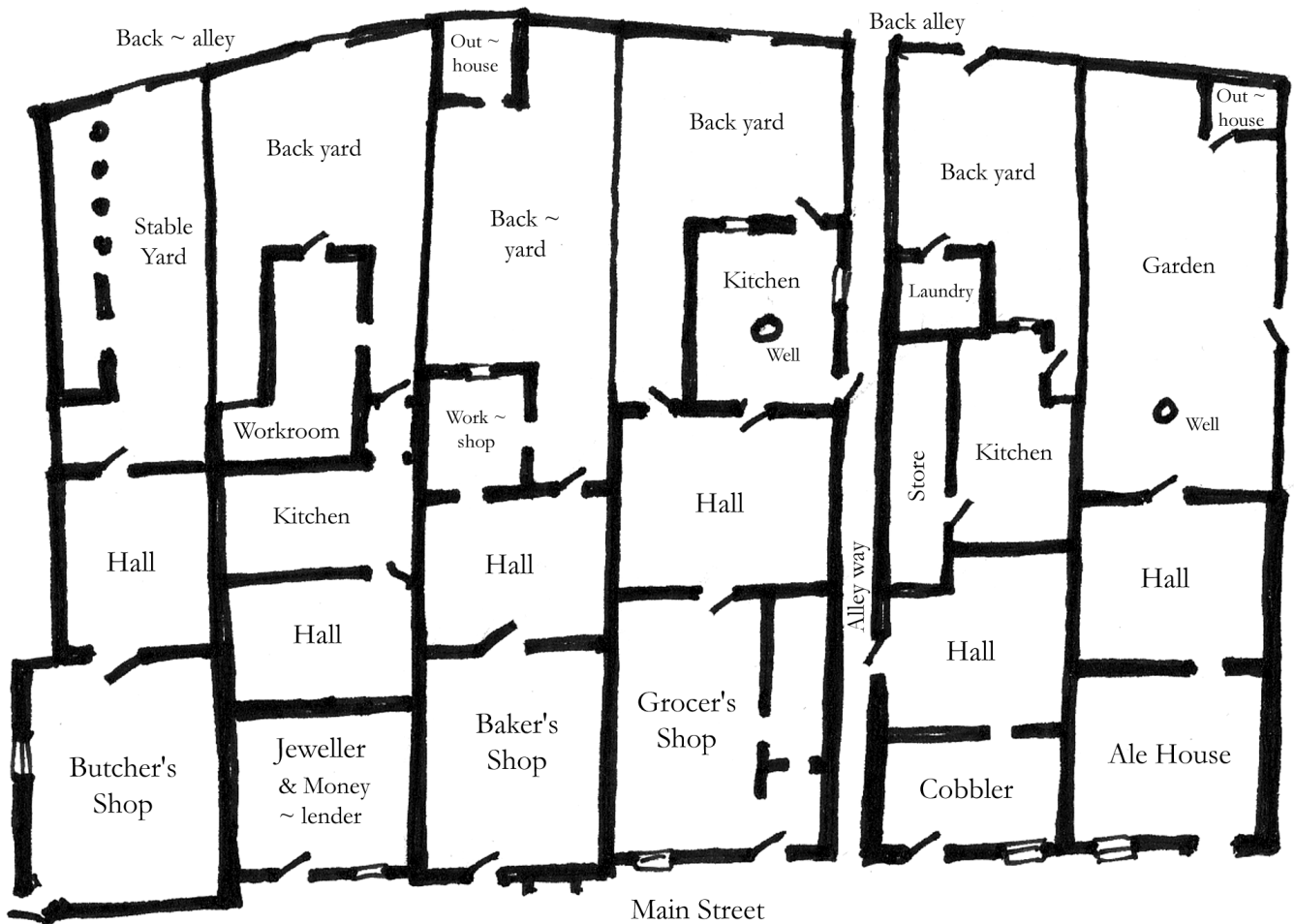
The vestry is where the vicar or priest puts on his 'vestments' or ceremonial robes if you prefer. There are different robes for different types of service. Also in the vestry there is a very ancient carved oak chest, in which the church plate is stored; gold and silver alter crosses, a couple of silver platters (for the bread wafers) and silver ewers and salvers for the communion wine, which is sipped by the congregation at mass. These valuables are locked away here whenever the church is unattended. At the back of the church, near the vestry door, is a font, which is a large stone bowl for anointing and baptising infants in water.

The choir is literally where the choir of singers sit. In a monastic church, these would be monks; singing Gregorian chants, perhaps. Between the chancel and the choir is an ornate wooden 'rood' screen which creates a feeling of sanctity between the holiest part of the church (the high altar) and where all the peasants sit. The chancel (which contains the altar) is also a place of sanctuary. It is said that criminals fleeing justice can take 'sanctuary' in this holy place and avoid been taken prisoner. Claiming such sanctuary would require the co-operation of the priest, if the criminal hoped to slope off later, when the mob have all gone home, perhaps. The store at the far end of the church (which is only accessible from outside) contains the tools of the grounds men and grave diggers. There is a crypt under the stone floor of the church, here prominent people and priests have been interred in stone coffins. Access is by way of a stone trapdoor, which opens onto some narrow stone steps, near the font.



The priest who runs this church is an odd little man, and is a bit creepy, in fact. He is the younger son of a distant relative of the lord of the manor, who gave him the 'living' of the parish without having met the man beforehand. The priest, or vicar, has blond hair and wears black robes and cassocks all the time. He has long nails, pale skin, and rubs his hands together as he smiles in a most disconcerting way. There really is something odd and peculiar about him. But it is hard to put a finger on what it is that makes him seem so unsavoury. He spends a lot of time in the crypt, for some mysterious reason.

ROW OF MEDIEVAL SHOPS



This row of shops, and the dwellings behind, are arranged in a typical medieval form. Each plot is about the same size and runs parallel to the others and away from the main street. In the shop the trader or artisan not only sells his or her wares, but also makes or processes the things they sell. The 'shop' is also the sleeping quarters of any apprentice/s who might serve the owner or master. The theory was that these young lads would get to know the tools of their trade better by sleeping amongst them. The apprentices also make a useful security measure. Behind the shop is the hall, which is where the eating, socialising and even cooking (if there is no kitchen) is carried out. If the building is only one storey, then the master and his wife might sleep in this hall, or above it in an attic. Later versions of these shops would have several floors and fireplaces too.

Other shops you may find in a medieval high street could include; blacksmith's, cloth merchant, weaver, silver or gold smith, pots and pans maker, potter, candle maker, pie shop, fishmonger (if near the sea) and carpenter/joiner; who would also make coffins and probably be the undertaker too!

All of the shopkeepers pay cash rents to the Lord of the Manor, and some even pay a small share of their profits on top! The father of the present Lord laid out this 'town' so it is very new. He staked out 'messuages,' or pieces of land with permission to build a house on them, and soon had sold the lot to keen new leaseholders. He also managed to obtain a Royal Charter (from the King) giving permission for weekly markets and an annual fair. These will not only bring in good rents but will also ensure the long term prosperity of this 'new' town.

TRIBAL ROUNDHOUSE

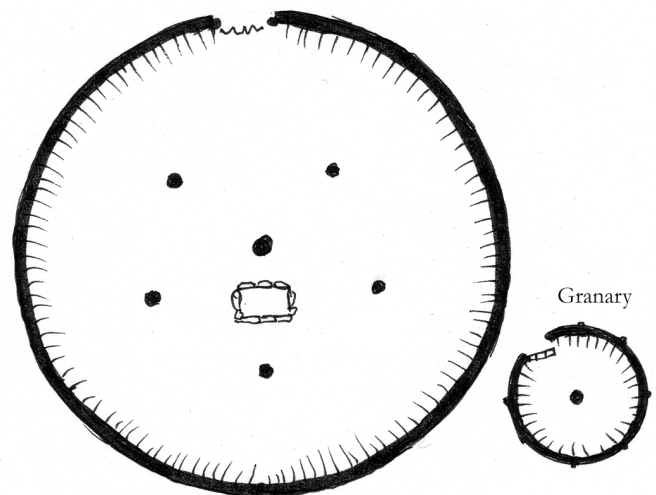
In many cultures round houses are big; up to thirty or more feet across, and the whole clan lives, eats and sleeps inside. Sometimes there is a separate granary (food store) nearby. The walls are built using wattle and daub, or dry field stone (stones picked up from the fields and stacked up to make a wall without mortar) these low walls support the bottom ends of the roof poles. There is a large central post, and four or more smaller posts supporting the wide spans, half way in. An off-centre hearth and a hanging, either woollen cloth or animal skin, over the entranceway are both features. This could be called a Bronze or early Iron Age dwelling, in northern areas at least, and is a favoured type of home for Hill men and the like. There are no windows or doors, and the smoke from the fire (which is used for cooking, heat and light) escapes by seeping through the thatch.

A brave hill chief and his tribe of warriors live in this large particular roundhouse. There are ten or twelve warrior/farmers, a similar number of women, about twenty children, and half a dozen elders, all living in here. So at night they snuggle up together, and must be very cosy, for sure.

There are many wool blankets, straw pallets and bundles of clothes around the outer walls. Near the fire are stacks of clay cooking pots and eating bowls. A few small canvas sacks of flour, nuts and other dried produce are stored here. Finally there are a couple of Quern stones; these are fairly small roundish stones which are used to grind grain into flour, by hand. In later medieval and feudal societies, Quern stones were banned; forcing the peasants to get their grain milled or ground at the Lord's mill and thus earning him some more income!

A wizard lives nearby, in a tree house in the forest. He is being harassed by a clan of goblins who have recently moved into the forest and he would very much like to get the chief and his tribe to drive off the goblins. The Hillmen love glass beads and trinkets and the wizard has a small casket full of these which he plans to offer the chief in the hope of persuading him to lead his warriors in an attack against the goblins. He also thinks that, if he stages a minor atrocity against the Hillmen, then the goblins will get the blame and be driven off or destroyed by the chief and his tribe exacting their revenge. This could be a dangerous and risky tactic!

This wizard is actually quite powerful but for some reason prefers not to use his own magic to dispel the mischievous goblin clan from 'his' woods.



NORTHLING LONGHOUSE

A door opening in the only gable end, a central ridge supported by poles and the chief's area at the rounded end, (defined by hangings of cloth, furs or animal skins) are all key features of this building. It also has a long central hearth and thatched or grass turf roof. An entire clan of Northlings sleep, eat and store their belongings in this one hut, perhaps as many as fifty individuals, including men, women and children.

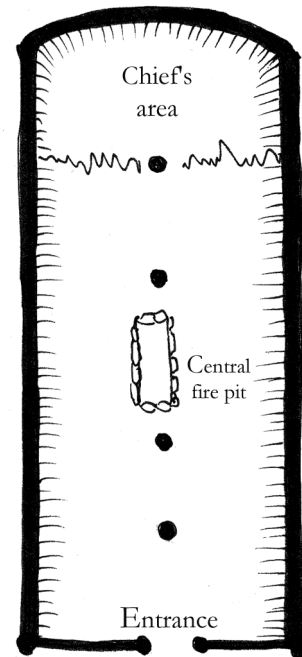
Most Northlings are farmers or fishermen, they herd sheep or long-horned cattle, plough fields to grow oats and barley, or trawl the seas for herring and mackerel. But there is a shortage of arable land around their fjords, so brave and footloose young warriors delight in going raiding south in long ships. This stops them fighting amongst themselves and has the effect of their developing into tough, hardened warriors. The cold climate and weeks spent at sea no doubt contribute to the renowned vigour of the Northling warrior.

A Northling settlement consists of roughly five to twenty longhouses like this one, each is occupied by a clan. One of the clan chiefs will also be the lord of the whole settlement, perhaps with the title of earl or high chief. A settlement like this would be able to man and equip two to four long ships; enough to attack and raid a village or small town easily.

As well as their sea-going long ships, the Northlings have smaller fishing boats, because they eat a lot of fish! Northlings can be surprisingly wealthy, for although their lands tend to be poor quality for agriculture, they do accumulate considerable spoils, tributes and treasure and have little to spend it on at home. All Northlings are aggressive and brutal warriors and enjoy a good fight.

Every year, as the sap rises in the trees, so the urge to go raiding makes itself felt in the chest of every Northling. They set sail, generally in small fleets of six to twelve long ships, in the late spring. The Northling raiders sail hundreds of miles south and then suddenly descend on some poor and unsuspecting settlement on the coast. They often attack at night or dawn, and favour surprise attacks whenever possible.

They are not just after loot and spoils when raiding. The Northlings also seek prisoners, particularly women, whom they can enslave. At home in the far north, these slaves are called 'thralls' and may spend the rest of their lives in servitude to some cruel Northling warrior. Entire villages are de-populated in this way by the Northlings; every man, woman and child either being enslaved or slaughtered.



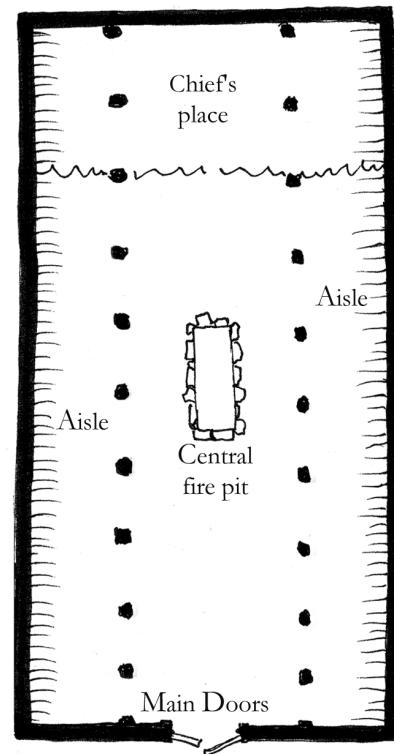
AISLED HALL HOUSE

In some ways this is a development on from the Northling Long House, and is a typical Gothar (or Iron Age) homestead. The clan chief has his private space at the back and the long hearth is in the centre of the hall. This hall has two gable ends and also, by having two parallel rows of posts supporting the roof, it becomes possible for the hall to be very much larger. The stronger roof structure also allows stone slates on the roof, as an alternative to thatch. As houses (with chimneys and windows) develop this form of building survives as barns, especially tithe barns, some of which can be enormous.

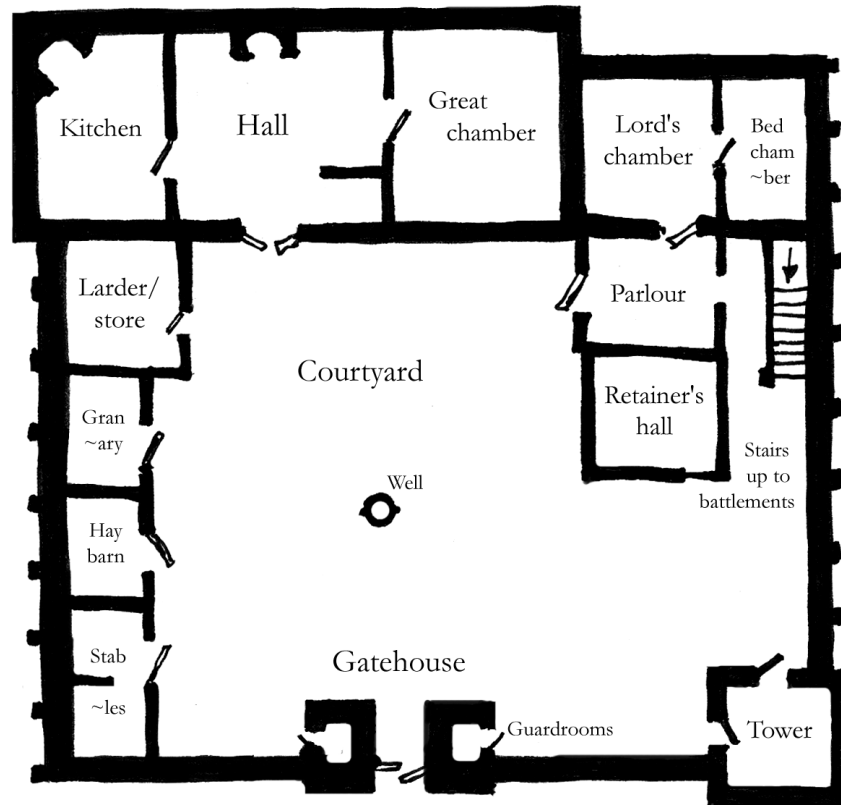
The clan who lives here are Gothars; a tough people who are mainly farmers and warriors. All of the mature men, about sixty or so, live in this large hall with their wives and children, they are fierce and heroic fighters. These Gothars are variously armed with bronze-headed axes, spears, short bows and long iron swords. They use shields and helmets but have little other armour.

The lord, or chief, of this hall is a powerful Gothar warrior chieftain. He and his people are quite similar to Anglo Saxons in many ways. This particular chieftain has had enough of the constant Northling raids on his and the neighbouring Gothar territories. So he has made pacts with other chieftains to work together to defeat the Northling raiders.

A long running feud between this clan and the Northling raiders has developed into a stalemate. The long ships come back, in most years, and the Gothars are often ready and waiting for them; spoiling all the fun! The chieftain of this hall is the brains behind the Gothars' constant vigilance. They even set traps and ambushes for the Northling raiders, who would be very glad to see this troublesome chieftain dead...



FORTIFIED MANOR HOUSE



This manor house is strong and easily defendable; with heavy stone, buttressed, walls on all sides and a very solid gatehouse. Clearly it is the home of an important squire, and the centre of a working country estate. There are good stone fireplaces in the hall and kitchen. The hall has trestle tables and sideboards, on which the 'plate' of the Squire is stored and displayed. The great chamber is where the master conducts most of his business and it has a good oak table and several chairs, as well as a couple of wooden chests full of papers; deeds and the like.

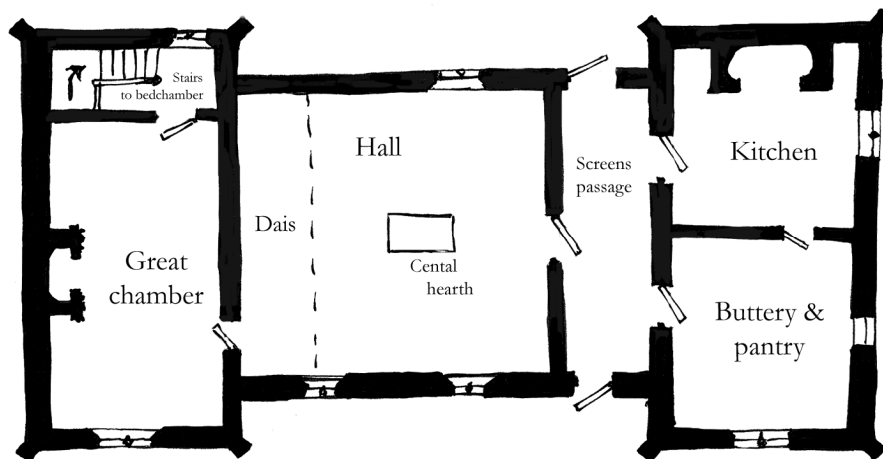
The Squire has a number of tenants; farmers, smallholders and cottage dwellers; who pay him rents, both in money and produce. He is clearly a 'gentleman' ~ literally a man who has gentle hands; meaning he does not work for a living or use his hands for rough or manual labour. This is not to say he is a dandy or soft, just that no 'gentle' man would get his hands dirty; unless it were in battle or hunting! There are no barns or other agricultural buildings in the complex, a clear sign that he does not farm, being happy to leave that to his tenants. But there are outbuildings for storing food and fodder (animal feed) including the larder/store, the granary and the hay barn. These are filled by the Squire's tenants, rather than with the fruits of his own labour.

The hall and great chamber are relatively 'public' spaces where business is transacted and guests entertained. Servants and even a few retainers sleep in the hall and kitchen at night.

The Squire has his own private apartments where he and his family sleep and relax. The Lord's chamber is comfortable and spacious, and the parlour is, perhaps, for his wife's use; a female servant (the nurse or nanny, if you like) and the Squire's children sleep in this room at night. The bedchamber is a private space, for the Squire and his wife's use only. Under the bed he secretly keeps a couple of small, iron bounded chests, both full of silver coins.

The retainer's hall is where vassals of the Squire sleep, whilst fulfilling their military duty and obligations to serve him and defend the manor. So this room has a number of wooden beds and chests full of personal belongings and clothes. In peaceful times there would be no retainers or men-at-arms staying here and manning the battlements. In times of unrest or war there could be up to a dozen retainers here. If necessary, all of the Squire's tenants might take refuge in the manor, sleeping in the courtyard and any space they could find. This would only happen if there was an invasion or major raid by some powerful enemy.

HALL HOUSE



This could be a substantial farmhouse, or a small manor house, or both, depending on the status and occupation of the inhabitants. The house is built on the classic 'H' plan; two wings have been built on each end of the old hall. The central range, basically the great hall, is open for the full height of the building. In the left hand wing are the Lord's private rooms; the Great Chamber (or withdrawing room,) on the ground floor and sleeping chamber(s) for him and his family above. The kitchen is open two storeys high (to disperse the heat and fumes) and there are servants' quarters above the buttery/pantry. Other servants would sleep in outbuildings; above the stables perhaps.

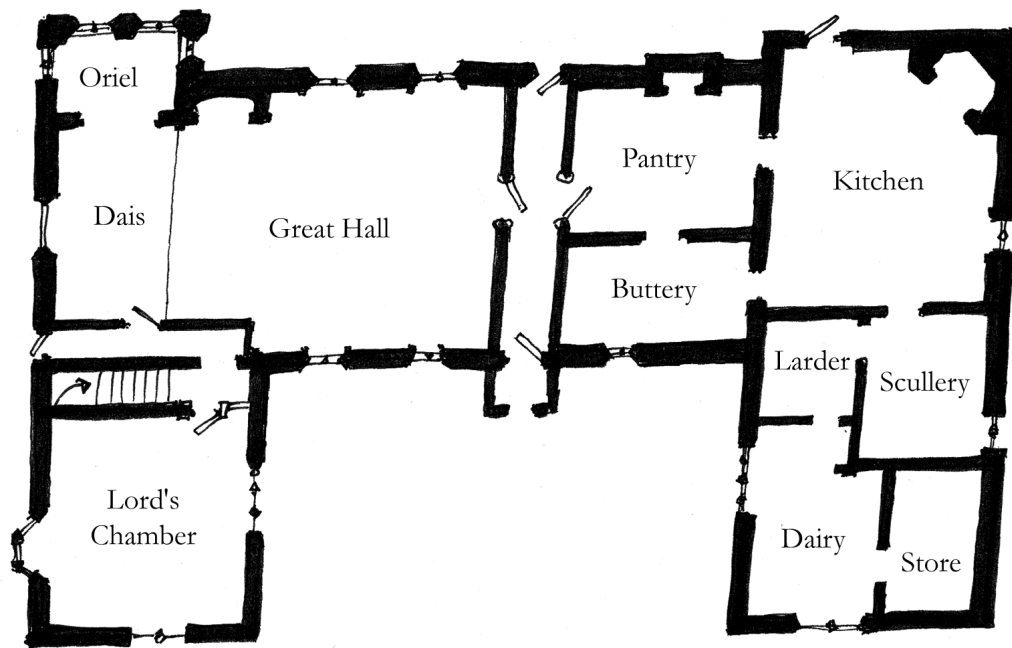
The squire here is not a military man and would not know one end of a sword from the other. He has a good sized estate, most of which is rented out to tenant farmers and yeomen. Money rents, plus farm produce and livestock, from these tenants are his main income and livelihood. He has leases which say things like; 'and the tenant shall pay five shillings and a live chicken every quarter day (i.e. four times a year) and a bushel of wheat or barley on St. Cuthbert's day, every year.' The income and produce he receives enable the squire and his ancient, wrinkled old mother, to live fairly comfortably. They have six or seven servants, who are paid wages and fed. The squire can call on his tenants occasionally for help with larger tasks on the estate.

The Squire, who lives here with his old mother, is a weak and ineffectual man. He has never married and his mother despises him for this. She is the real mistress in the house; an absolute tyrant who loudly demands whatever she wants, and she usually gets it, too.

Much of the Squire's business involves his tenants; collecting rents from them, for example; they queue up at the big window of the great chamber every quarter day to pay their respects and their rent. Higher status tenants might be invited in for a glass of wine. He also resolves disputes between his tenants and sits as a magistrate in the local court. Lastly he gets involve in managing the estate lands; discussing with the tenants which crops to plant where, what fields to leave fallow and so on.

The Squire, despite his weak will and unpleasant mother, is a fair master and fulfils his duties responsibly and with care. He has a hobby; collecting butterflies, moths and mayflies; which is another reason for his mother to despise him!

LARGE MANOR HOUSE



In this good-sized manor house there are plenty of windows, so it is not fortified and must be in a relatively safe area where attack is unlikely. Above the Lord's (withdrawing) chamber he has his own sleeping chamber (or bedroom) where he and his family can sleep in privacy and peace. It is worth noting that the Lord and his family are the only residents who have access to a staircase ~ a clear indication of status. Above the kitchen wing, the sleeping quarters of the servants and other retainers are located, they get up to the upper floor by way of a wooden ladder.

This is a good-sized manor house and includes an oriel (a room, or bay, in which to enjoy the sun and the view) as well as a screens passage so that servants can go about their work without disturbing the lord and his guests in the great hall. This passage also keeps out drafts from the hall when the front and back doors are opened, which they would be often. The servant's rooms and ancillary kitchen areas are numerous, so this was once the home of an important lord. He will have had a large retinue of servants and followers, all of whom needed to be fed and watered!

The true Lord of this large manor house is really a duke. But he has many manors and a castle, which is where he lives most of the time. As a consequence this estate is run by an impoverished knight who has been given the role of bailiff by his Duke.

The Knight is in his late middle age; he is portly and poor. His armour is rusty and his warhorse has arthritis. The Knight's wife is a bit of a shrew, she has never been blessed with children and blames her husband. He, on the other hand, has taken a shine to a pretty young laundry maid...

So long as the poor knight pays his rent, the Duke leaves him be, and does not demand military or any other service from his old retainer. This household is poor; there are only three servants, and a few sub-tenants pay rents to the knight, which is his only income. But he is a jovial fellow, he enjoys his port wine and his roast beef and doesn't let his wife spoil his enjoyments of the good things in life. The large and rambling manor house is dusty and a bit 'flaky' and run down.