June/72. Agriculture at the time of the Conquest and afterwards. The method of farming was not changed by the Normans. There were no small farms, the villagers worked the land collectively. Each farmer or villein had strips in the common fields according to his status. The strips were not always side by side, as the soil differed in quality in various parts of the field. The lord of the manor may have had his land or part of it together round his manor house, this land being known as the demesne. The villeins or their underlings worked the lord's land. This was the condition of holding their own strips. The ploughing was done communally and the heavy plough needed a team of four,six or eight oxen to draw it. Each farmer had the right of grazing in the wastes and heaths, the number of his animals according to the size of his holdings.

Ploughing with oxon was carried out for centuries;much later than might be supposed, right into the eighteenth century. The writer of these notes had the interesting experience of handling an iron shoe of an ox. This was ploughed up in 1966, when a field of turf was broken to the plough on the farm of Mr.Wightman of Brascote House Farm. Oxen shoes can be seen in collections of old farming implements and utensils.

July/72. De Verdon,Verdunm Verdone. One of the barons who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror was Bertram de Verdun. Like Hugh de Grantmesnil he took his surname from the place in Normandy from which he originated, Verdun, the place where centuries later the battle of Verdun was fought during the Great War. To quote from "Everday Life in Medieval Times" by Marjorie Rowling: "William the Conqueror, accustomed to sending donations to the Abbey of Verdun, whose abbot had been his father's friend, stopped sending gifts there on hearing that its discipline had grown lax. Laymen regarded monastries as salt essential to the preservation of the rest ofsociety; by their intercessions eternal salvation for the souls of their benefactors and their kin could be ensured. A lax monastery was failing in these duties".

Bertram de Verdun fought at the Battle of Hastings and his name is inscribed on the roll of knights in Battle Abbey. He was present at the coronation of the Conqueror and presented a glove for the right hand; supporting the right arm during the time the King held the royal sceptre, and today a glove bearing the arms of Verdun is still presented to the monarch by the Duke of Norfolk, one of whose titles is Baron Verdun by right of descent.

At this period Newbold belonged to Hugh de Grantmesnil and had no connection with De Verdun until a hundred years later. However Bertram de Verdun held lands in Leicestershire notably Lutter worth. "Secular History of Lutterworth" by James Thompson has a very detailed account of how Bertram bought Lutterworth; from whom; the price he paid, also the names of witnesses of the transaction. His castle was at Alveton or Aulton in Staffordshire (Alton Towers in modern times) but no trace of the fortress can now be seen.

Aug/72. De Verduns. Bertram de Verdun, lord of Aulton, Staffordshire,time of Wmn.1st.

1139
Norman de Verdun married Luciline, daughter of Geoffrey de Clinton of Warwickshire, founder of Kenilworth Castle and lord chamberlain and lord treasurer to Henry 1.

Bertram de Verdun	Thomas de Verdun died in Ireland 1199.	Nicholas de Verdun afterwards Abbot of Burton.

Norman de Verdun paid 100 shillings to King Stephen for the transfer of his father's possessions in Leicestershire which he held until 1192, when he was succeeded by another Bertram de Verdun who was for several years sheriff of the counties of Leicester and Warwick. He it was who first became connected with our own village. About 1140, in the reign of King Stephen, he married, for his first wife, Maud, daughter of the Earl of Ferrers and received as dowry Worthington and Newbold. "Worthington and Newbold ½ a fee he father gave her in frank marriage." So states Nicholls. There is no way of sorting out the Newbold near Worthington from our own village. If this is how our village came to Bertram de Verdun then the question arises, how did it come into the possession of the Earl of Ferrers?

Frank marriage was a kind of special estate tail. Lands given in frank marriage with a wife (she being the child or cousin of the donor) were freed from all services except fealty until the fourth degree.