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## Preface

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This, the first journal of the Wychwoods Local History Society, illustrates two major facts in profusion. First the energy, enthusiasm, enterprise and wide-ranging interests of the members of the Society, and secondly the historical richness of the territory they have set out to explore.

It is a large tract, described in different contexts in the contributions of Frank Ware, Sue Jourdan and Gwen Allen, encompassing the sweep of the Evenlode valley and the bare uplands of Shipton Down, and always shadowed by the presence of the royal forest of Wychwood. The forest, both as actual woodland and in its wider legal sense, has put its stamp upon the three Wychwood villages of Shipton, Milton and Ascott and their neighbouring settlements. Even after the disafforestation of the 1850s the fact and mythology remained strong. There was the late development (well into the Middle Ages) of settlements like Leafield and Finstock, cleared from the woodland; the strong royal presence and legal separateness of the forest; its distinctive economic activities and occupations; its wild and lawless reputation; and its relative impenetrability and isolation.

Understandably the forest, its lore and the many references to it in central government records, have intrigued the few previous historians of this area, as readers of John Kibble and Muriel Groves will know. Whilst recognising the importance of these themes the Wychwood historians of the 1980s have identified the many aspects of the life of their villages and parishes that remain relatively unknown, and have also looked afresh at the antiquarian accounts provided by earlier local historians. For example, having read this journal, none of us can say as Muriel Groves does in her History of Shipton under Wychwood (1934), that Domesday Book tells us that, "The village of Shipton was evidently in existence well before 1066, but there is little more to be deduced about it"

The range of subjects, periods and sources of information treated here will also impress the reader. W.G.Hoskins and his successors have taught all local historians the benefits of a wide-ranging perspective, of getting mud on our boots, of looking at the evidence of landscape, buildings, objects, maps and documents alike, and of knowing "our patch"

and relating it to both general trends and specific local circumstances. The work of the Wychwoods Society represents this approach put into practice.

The research has been guided by an admirable overall sense of priorities, as the account of the Milton graveyard survey makes clear - deciding what needs doing most urgently, who will find it useful, how to record it and how to make the information available. The members have set about acquiring the necessary knowledge, whether palaeographical, geological, linguistic or botanical, with determination and success. They have grasped the nettle of publication, giving others the chance to know, discuss and add to their work. As one of the "professionals" on whom the Society has called from time to time and who has gained much from its members' interest and generosity in making available their own work, I hope that their journal will prove an encouragement and an example for other local historians in the area and further afield. Apart from the virtues I have already mentioned it provides a vivid example of the shared enthusiasm which makes local history such an absorbing pursuit.

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## Introduction

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In April 1981, Margaret Ware and Mike Linfield called a public meeting to see what support there would be for setting up a local history society. The response was immediate. Nearly 100 people attended and several signed on at once. An ad hoc committee was formed and the Wychwoods Local History Society was born, with 87 members in the first year.

Under the Society's first chairman, Geoffrey Giles, programmes of lectures were arranged and were well attended. In January 1983 we held an exhibition and members' evening which attracted a very large number of people and firmly established the Society among the village organisations. Our meetings have continued to attract large audiences.

At the inaugural meeting in April 1981, John Steane of the Oxfordshire Museums Service emphasised the importance of research and practical work as part of a society's activities. We have been fortunate in that some of our members have been able to act on that advice and this journal brings together some of the first results.

Our work has been largely concentrated on the two Wychwood villages of Milton and Shipton and has been conditioned by the fact that very little printed material is available to us. Amateurs as we all are, we have been driven to primary sources and pioneering field work. This has been good for our education and will, we hope, enable us to make an original contribution to the history of an area of Oxfordshire so far little recorded.

A valuable addition to the Society's work has been a series of lectures by Kate Tiller on "Sources for Local History". These were held during the winter of 1983/84 at the Wychwood School and introduced some of our members and others from further afield to the wide range of material awaiting research. They were followed in 1984/85 by a local history workshop on Shipton and Milton in the nineteenth century which is making its own contribution to the history of the area.

The material in this journal represents no more than a modest beginning but the work is continuing and we hope to publish further results from time to time in future numbers of this journal and in occasional papers on particular subjects.

Jack Howard-Drake  
Chairman

# The Hedge Survey of Shipton and Milton under Wychwood

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SUE JOURDAN and GWEN ALLEN

## Introduction

Shipton under Wychwood and Milton under Wychwood are adjacent villages in the river Evenlode valley in West Oxfordshire. Shipton parish has an area of approximately 2,520 acres (1020 hectares) and Milton parish 2,080 acres (842 hectares). They stretch from the river valley at about 300 feet (90 metres) and rise to the south and west to 680 feet (210 metres) above sea level. Milton was formerly a daughter parish of Shipton; one of the several small tributary streams of the Evenlode forms part of the boundary between the two parishes. They are bounded by the parishes of Ascot under Wychwood, Leafield, Swinbrook, Fulbrook, Taynton and Bruern.

The geology is varied and consequently so is the soil type. In the Evenlode valley bottom is a fairly wide band of Lias clay, then up the sides of the valley a rapid succession of narrow outcrops of Middle Liassic marlstone, Upper Lias clay, Inferior Oolite and Fullers Earth to the Great Oolite Limestone which underlies most of the plateau, locally capped with Forest Marble. The lower ground in the north of both parishes is patchily covered by valley alluvium, river terrace gravels, boulder clay and glacial outwash deposits(1). The agricultural land classification is mostly Grade III with a strip of grade IV along the valley bottom. The areas of alluvium and Lower Lias, being adjacent to the river and up to approximately 400 feet (122 metres) and heavy to cultivate, are mostly grassland, while the lighter more easily cultivated oolitic limestone and Forest Marble, from 400 to 600 feet (122 - 183 metres), are arable. The present grassland areas have been used as pasture and meadow for some centuries, while the higher area of limestone was the natural site of the open arable fields, hedged only after the Enclosure Awards of 1850 (2) and 1846 (3). The area above 500 feet (150 metres) constitutes the land itemised as "common or downland" in the Tithe Awards of 1839 (4) and 1842 (5) and, showing the importance of the sheepwalks, Shipton had 1150 sheep common allocations in the 1839 Tithe Award. The area of poor quality boulder clay in

Milton was heath until the Enclosure Award of 1846. Three of the farm houses of Shipton, Home Farm (formerly Upper Farm), Springhill Farm and Newbarn Farm are on the spring line between the Lias and Oolite. Manor Farm, Springhill Farm and High Lodge Farm in Milton are similarly located, the last two being of nineteenth century construction.

### The background to the hedge survey

At the formation of the Wychwoods Local History Society in 1981, one of the first talks was on "Hedges and Historical Puzzles" by a member who had some experience in hedge surveys. As a result a number of people from both parishes offered their help in the initial survey of the hedges.

There were several reasons for beginning our study of village history by recording the hedges. Little previous work had been done on the sources for local history of the area and a practical study to enable us to become familiar with the locality seemed appropriate. Both villages have a variety of boundaries including hedges and walls, the latter on the uplands called downs, where stones are plentiful. Casual observation suggested some variation of hedge content, which from work done elsewhere might lead us to significant features that could be the result of changes in village life over the years. Also as hedges were tending to disappear, a record at this stage could prove invaluable. Features that we felt to be significant might then be confirmed by investigation of records such as Estate, Tithe and Enclosure maps and Awards, records of sales and mortgages, censuses and records of births, marriages and deaths and certainly not least from the memories of the villagers which, through parents and grandparents, could stretch back for 150 years.

### Survey methods

Beginning in the 1960's a variety of studies relating historical documents to the structure of hedges had led to a realisation of their significance as pointers to countryside development. The idea was finally put forward by Dr Max Hooper when he wrote an article "Hedges and Local History", published by the Standing Conference for Local History. He worked out a potential method of dating hedges by the shrub species they contain. He found that while hawthorn was the basic species in most hedges especially throughout the Midlands, the older the

hedge the greater the number of species found. As a rough estimate he found that the average number of different shrub species found in 30 yards of hedge gave the approximate age of the hedge, one new species for every hundred years, with a possible range of 200 years either way. This theory was publicised by W. C. Hoskins and other historians working in the field, and, with an awareness of its limitations, has facilitated the surveys of hedges by local historical societies, individuals and schools.

Members of the Wychwoods Local History Society interested in working on the project met for discussion and decided to follow Dr Hooper's 30 yard survey unit. A practical meeting was held beside a hedge known to have a large number of species, to rehearse the techniques of plotting distribution and to help with identification. Permission was sought from local landowners to walk fields where hedges were not accessible from public rights of way.

Milton and Shipton were surveyed separately but in close liaison. Three pairs of walkers in Shipton and four in Milton surveyed the hedges: working with a partner gave confidence in species identification as well as possibly more reliable results. Each pair was provided with an Ordnance Survey map 6 inches to 1 mile which had many field boundaries marked. The County Museum at Woodstock provided a choice of survey forms - we chose that which appeared the clearest. The completed forms were returned to the Museum.

Though the numbering of the fields and hedges was initially left to individuals doing separate sections, these had finally to be transcribed into consistent numbering throughout. In hindsight it would have been simpler and more logical to number each hedge at the beginning. Shipton had 147 hedges and 13 walls: Milton had 160 hedges and 16 walls. The walls were nearly all around downland fields. (The walls in the villages were excluded as these were either modern around new gardens or possibly remnants from old closes but impossible to date.)

Each hedge was walked and the shrub species in 30 yard lengths, chosen at random, counted. In hedges with few species two or three counts were noted. In hedges with more species additional counts were recorded, and care taken to cover all species present in that hedge. Shrubs at corners or in gateways, where results might be misleading, were not recorded. Notes were made in the field to be transferred to the forms later (figures 1 and 2).

A note was made also about relevant ditches, banks, hedge management (e.g. whether the hedge had been layered, machine cut, hand trimmed or neglected), standing trees, new plantations, walls and fences, and ridge and furrow fields. Attention was paid to herbaceous woodland species

Bushes plotted along 30 yard lengths.

Hedge 57b: Parish boundary and bottom of some Frog Lane Closes

Hw Hw Hw Eld Willow Hw Eld DR Hw Hw / 4  
Hw Eld DR Hw Hw DR DR Hz DgWood Eld / 5  
Hw Ash A Hz Eld Hz A DR / 5  
Hw Privet Hw DR A Black T Dg W P Tall Maple / 7  
occasional white violets and Dog's Mercury

Hedge 57a: from boundary along straightened brook south to swing gate and footpath

Hw Elder Hw Hw Hw Eld BT BT Maple tree Hw Hw Hw DR DR /  
4 + 1 M at end near boundary  
Hw Hw small Holly Hw Eld Hw Hw BT Hw DR Hw DR Hw Hw BT  
Eld Hw DR / 4 + 1 small Holly  
Hw Hw BT Eld Hw Hw Hw Spindle Hw Hw BT BT / 4 3 + 1  
spindle  
BT Eld BT BT BT Eld DR Hw Eld Hw Hw BT BT Eld Hw Hw Hw / 4  
patches of dog's mercury and white violets

Hedge 59: remaining hedge along straightened brook

Hw / Hw DR / Hw 2 Elders / Hw DR 1 spindle / Hw Eld DR /  
2/3  
no significant flora

All originally layered. 57a does not appear to have recurring significant species of a mixed hedge.

FIGURE 1: field notes

growing under a hedge, e.g. dog's mercury, bluebell, primrose. Corrections were made to the map where necessary, e.g. hedges removed or added. Any species identification problems were referred to local botanists.

The majority of the field work was completed between September 1981 and November 1982, and the survey finished by Spring 1983. Obviously species identification was easier when the leaves were on the hedges.

Name of Recorder G.P.A., Group \_\_\_\_\_; Date May 1982

Locality of hedge Parish boundary, bottom of Frog Lane (lower

Plot 30 576; County Oxon; Grid ref. 269 7/125 2; Road/track side \_\_\_\_\_

Age of Hedge (if known) \_\_\_\_\_; Origin of hedge \_\_\_\_\_

Sources of Information \_\_\_\_\_

Parish boundary hedge ; Trees present ; Hedge to wood \_\_\_\_\_; Wood near \_\_\_\_\_

Pure hedge (One kind of shrub predominant) \_\_\_\_\_

Mixed hedge (Several kinds of shrub equally predominant)

Management: Hand Clipping \_\_\_\_\_; Machine Clipping \_\_\_\_\_; Laying ; None recent

Soil: Clay \_\_\_\_\_; Sand or Gravel \_\_\_\_\_; Chalk or limestone \_\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_

Bank: Both sides \_\_\_\_\_; One side \_\_\_\_\_; None \_\_\_\_\_; Hedge across/down slope (ring)

Hedge Damage: Burning \_\_\_\_\_; Spray \_\_\_\_\_; Dutch Elm \_\_\_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_

Further Comments: follows the boundary stream, immediate

Shrubs & Trees Present in 30 yard length samples of hedge - Please tick

Ash			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Horse chestnut				
Beech							Oak				
Blackthorn			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				Privet				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cherry							Rose (Dog)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Crab Apple							• (Field)				
Dogwood		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				Spindle tree				
Elder		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Wayfaring tree				
Elm							Whitebeam				
Field maple				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Willow			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Hawthorn (hedge)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Yew				
" (wood)							(Others)				
Hazel		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
Holly											
Hornbeam										<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Woodland herb species present: white violet

Bluebell							Wood Anemone				
Crested Cow wheat							Wood melick (grass)				
Doas mercury	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					Wood spurge				
Primrose							Yellow Archangel				

FIGURE 2: a completed survey form

As the fieldwork progressed, the results were colour-coded and recorded on a master map for each village (maps 1 and 2). Definite similarities within the hedge samples quickly emerged and it was decided that narrow bands of number of species occurring confused rather than clarified, so three broad bands were chosen and colour-coded:

1-4 species per 30 yard sample	green (.....)
5-7 " " " " "	orange (- - -)
8+ " " " " "	red (.....)
walls	black (_____)
fences	black dash (-----)

## Results

Elementary analysis of the hedge survey forms was done with block graphs to show the major species for each category (figures 3 and 4).

Hawthorn was the predominant shrub in all hedges and many appeared to have been originally layered. Nearly every hedge has been invaded by the rapidly growing and spreading elder, blackthorn and dog rose, but the hedges with eight or more species per 30 yards show a regular appearance of many species including spindle, privet, wayfaring tree, holly and guelder rose. The significant species of the 5-7 species hedges, field maple, hazel and dogwood, are only spasmodically present in the 1-4 species hedges.

The variation in species numbers from 1 to 4 in the 1-4 category could be the result of hedge treatment as well as indicating the newness of the hedge. Some farmers meticulously clear elder from their hedges. In some instances the farmers can say when their families planted the hedges after the Enclosure Awards of 1849 and 1850 e.g. the Hartleys at Lower Farm, Upper Milton. In Milton some hedges are clear of elder but were planted at around the same time as hedges in which elder abounds.

Occasionally a hedge containing only one or two specimens of spindle, dogwood or hazel in its length will be shown by records to be a post-enclosure hedge. For example, in Milton a hedge planted after the straightening of Simmons Brook at enclosure, containing one spindle and one field maple, is near the mixed Milton/Shipton boundary hedge and shrubs may have been used from it or spread to the new one. The area which was heath in Milton has 1-2 species per 30 yards, suggesting more recent enclosure or subdivision.

Hazel and Midland hawthorn have been suggested as woodland indicators (6). Hazel is absent from 1-4 species hedges but occurs



NUMBER OF SHRUB SPECIES PER 30 YARDS

- ..... 1-4 SPECIES
- - - - - 5-7 SPECIES
- 8+ SPECIES
- ..... FENCE
- WALL

MAP 1: the survey of Shipton

in 71% of 5-7 species hedges in Shipton and 74% in Milton, and 94% of 8+ species hedges. Apart from little hazel on the alluvium there does not appear to be any particularly significant distribution. Midland hawthorn was most easily recognised when in flower in May and instances were found where it had been missed. It is present in a few 1-4 species hedges, particularly when near to more mixed hedges but is frequently found in 5-7 species hedges and most frequently in 8+ species hedges.

No herbaceous woodland species such as dog's mercury, bluebell, primrose, yellow archangel or wood anemone grow under the 1-4 species hedges but they did tend to be found under both 5-7 species and 8+ species hedges. No wood anemone was found at all but one 5-7 species hedge near Langley has a lot of yellow archangel. It is known that the fields nearby were cleared of wood at the end of the nineteenth century. There are only three woods in Shipton and none in Milton. Cowcommon Plantation is post-enclosure. Shipton Court had a pleasure garden across the main road from the house with two nineteenth century ponds (probably on the site of an earlier pond) surrounded by trees contained within a bank, with the rest of the wood growing on ridge and furrow. Grove Wood has an uninvestigated mound. In the Domesday Book, the woodland of the manor of Shipton is said to be "in the King's enclosure" (7) and is known to have been between Ramsden and Leafield, formerly parts of Shipton parish but now at some distance from the present parish (8). Likewise, Milton's woodland is thought to have been at Langley, and later assarted. On Shipton's Tithe Award map, Lower and Upper

NUMBER OF SHRUB SPECIES PER 30 YARDS

- 1-4 SPECIES
- - - 5-7 SPECIES
- ..... FENCE
- WALL





MAP 2: the survey of Milton



Woodway are converging tracks across Shipton's West Field towards Langley from Upper Milton. Therefore we can assume that Shipton and Milton were cleared of woodland prior to 1086 and thus will show few woodland indicators.

Nearly all Milton's hedges are in the 1-4 species category and stretch from the heath in the north, then west of the village to the hills in the south, labelled on the 1:25,000 map as Milton Field and Milton Down. The boundary on the downs between Taynton and Milton is pure hawthorn. The sheep were folded with hurdles and even in the early 1900s, there were still three hurdle makers in Fifield using ash and willow from Foxholes and Taynton woods. In Shipton the 1-4 species hedges are mainly in two blocks separated by the village. North of the village they lie between the river and its tributary, Littlestock Brook: the larger area is east and south of the village labelled Shipton Field and Shipton Down on the 1:25,000 map.

It is known that both villages had open field systems. The Tithe Award map and schedules of 1839 for Shipton and of 1842 for Milton predate the Enclosure Acts of 1850 and 1846 respectively, and the maps contain great detail of land division. Both villages had two-field systems with meadow and pasture on the lower lying land. Shipton has 30 separately assessed closes (by definition, land enclosed) ranging in size from two at 8 and 9 acres down to a few perches, all lying near to the farmsteads and the village, and designated as pasture. Some of these close names continue to the present day and, although these are now larger units, many are bounded by hedges with 5-7 species. "New Closes" is an area enclosed before the Tithe Award map, possibly out of



Dog rose



Field rose



Elder

the edge of the East Field. It totals 32 acres divided into 15 strips with one larger than the rest at 9 acres. Again there are 3 hedges of 5-7 species following these old divisions. Milton had 9 closes in Frog Lane itemised, and although now a residential area there are still remains of several hedges containing shrubs characteristic of 5-7 species hedges.

At the time of the Parliamentary Enclosure the arable strips in Shipton and Milton open fields were grouped into blocks of land allocated to a few owners, and presumably divided by them into rectangular fields so characteristic today. Some of these retain names of furlongs listed in the Tithe Award schedule which they replaced. (The Enclosure Award instructs fences to be erected and maintained between the new properties and adjoining roads where applicable.) The area of 1-4 species hedges in Shipton between the river and the brook was included in the reallocation - on the Tithe Award this is called Town Meadow.

With the reallocation of land and the deletion of access tracks on the old strip headlands, the Enclosure Commissioners were able to plan new roads across the open fields. The hedges that bound these roads and tracks must have been planted after 1849 and 1850 and they do fall into the 1-4 species category. The Commissioners replaced Upper and Lower Woodway which traversed the West Field, and designated a new straight road to be called Milton Elms Road, continuing into Upper Milton where a new crossroads was made. This road is still called New Road (map 3).

Surrounding the field, now part of Milton allotments, are hedges with 5-7 species per 30 yards, ditches and streams. On the Tithe Award map 1840 this field is designated as the Pools Allotments. At Enclosure the area was split into two, the third nearest to the brook and the village was awarded to the churchwardens and overseers for distribution to the "labouring poor" chargeable with a rent charge (total £13 18s 3d). The larger portion to the north was "divided into lots not exceeding three chains and let, free of charge, in lieu and full compensation for their right to cut furze in the said land". It appears that this field was enclosed at an earlier time.

As yet no earlier local maps have been found although there are surveys and terriers. A comprehensive survey of the Demesne lands of Sir Rowland Lacye, Knight, was carried out in 1617 by Henry Bransby, just after the completion of Shipton Court (9). Most of this land is in Shipton, a little in Milton and a proportion in Ascott under Wychwood North and South Fields. There are 19 named hedges in Shipton, 1 in Milton and 19 other references to hedges. The Milton reference is to

MAP 3: the new road alignments from the Tithe Award and Enclosure maps



Grange Hedge which is the name used for the Milton/Bruern boundary hedge. It is incorporated in a number of field names (on the Tithe Award map) along its length. The hedge has 5-7 species. Grange Hedge is also mentioned in terriers made for Brasenose college lands\* in 1622 and 1746 (10).

Likewise the 1617 survey mentions Milton Hedge, presumably the boundary between Shipton and Milton, a hedge which follows the stream and has 5-7 species, increasing to 8+ along Mill Ground. This field

bounds the site of Pollmer's Mill, (later Hawcutt's Mill) which was burnt down and demolished in 1930.

Bell Hedge is presumed to be the hedge which bounds the field called Ball Acre at the Ascott/Shipton boundary following Coldwell Brook. "Belle" is middle English for a landmark set up as a boundary mark. This hedge has 8+ species, but reduces to 1-4 species above Ball Clos.. As the hedge bounds Shipton East Field, perhaps, as Sir Rowland Lacy had land in Ascott South Field, this part was planted at a later date. Other names like Square Hedge and Gill Hedge have yet to be located. The survey also notes the "new coppice or grove" - perhaps this was when the wood was planted on the ridge and furrow which became the Court

Pleasure Garden or Grove Wood.

Shipton still has several ridge and furrow fields, close to the village and bounded by either 8+ species or 5-7 species hedges. In two instances the ridge and furrow are crossed by 5-7 species hedges which indicate they were planted after the ridge and furrow became permanent pasture.

There are two related surveys, one made in 1547 (11) according to Gloucester Record Office index as a survey of the possessions of Thomas Seymour of Sudeley and the other made in 1552 for Edward VI by the King's Surveyor General after purchase from John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (12). They list holdings in Shipton in the East Field, West Field and meadows. Several closes of small acreage are noted but as yet are unidentified.

8+ species hedges occur only in Shipton and Langley, the majority of them bordering roads and tracks. The road from Shipton to Ascott has particularly rich species hedges, as does the trackway called Dog Kennel Lane. This lane still only leads to fields as it did on the Tithe Award but may perhaps have continued further, across to Upper Milton at an earlier date. Two 8+ hedges curve concurrently down the hillside in Shipton. The easterly one follows a stream which reaches the river at Langley Mill. The other has a deep ditch until it changes direction and then becomes 5-7 species. This hedge as marked on the Tithe Award map also continues as a curve to the Ascott road. Both may have been old boundaries about which there are no known records.

The north parish boundary hedge also has 8+ species, and bounds a large area of meadow. This is the only land in either parish north of the river.

The hedge around the fields and woods of the hamlet of Langley, part of Shipton parish, are also rich in different species, mainly 5-7 with some 8+. The two parallel 8+ species hedges, adjacent to a wood, may have possibly been a trackway although it is now a narrow strip of pasture. Langley, now only a farm and a few cottages next to Leaffield Radio Station, is the site of a deserted mediaeval village with 19 households in 1279 (13) and a hunting lodge for the king and his rangers. Langley Mill, 2 miles distant from Langley, has several 5-7 species hedges around pasture closes.

Some anomalies in the species distribution were clarified on document investigation. For instance, in Shipton a 1-4 species hedge along the old Town Meadow changes to 5-7 species, with tall oak and ash trees. This section runs along a boggy area surrounded by banks. On the Sites and Monuments cards at Woodstock this was identified as a mediaeval fish pond.

The hedge on the corner of Mutton Lane and Ascott Road is pure hawthorn but continues with 5-7 species in either direction. Although at first this was thought only to be because of road widening, the Enclosure Award mentions the stopping up of Sinnels Gate. The hedge bounds Sinnels Field, a name that exists in surveys from 1552. A plan made of the earthworks in this field (14) before development, shows sunken ways and tofts (house plots) and a track leading to this corner. Perhaps then the hawthorn marks the site of Sinnels Gate. The plan also indicates the ridge and furrow in Sinnels Field lining up with the ridge and furrow across Mutton Lane, the hedges of which have 5-7 species.

The survey of one 5-7 species hedge in Upper Milton identified a mill no longer in existence. The remains of the leat edged by large ash trees and the documentary evidence from the Tithe Award map 1842 when the adjacent fields are named as Mill Close and Mill Furlong indicate the site. The field is still called Mill Field although the date when the mill was demolished is not known.

The field work was much enjoyed by the participants. Those of us who were hesitant at species identification were pleasantly surprised how quickly one became adept at recognition of the species - and of yet another boring hawthorn hedge. From the point of view of the management of the paperwork, a proper hedge numbering system at the outset would have saved considerable extra work though this would have had to be modified as the survey progressed. The field numbering system became too complicated when one hedge continued along several fields and was clearly one unit. Of course the reverse happened too,



Wayfaring tree



Oak



Hazel

when a hedge that appeared continuous changed its character along its length. In Shipton, by luck, the simpler and repetitive hedges were surveyed first; enthusiasm might have waned had they come at the end. Working in pairs also proved valuable.

Analysing the results of the survey with the limited historical documents available, we cannot positively date the 5-7 and 8+ species hedges. However our assumptions are supported by Dr Hooper's theory of hedge dating. The three categories do seem significant and the pattern that emerges corresponds with a Midland open field system. The soil type has influenced the land use for many centuries and the species count of the hedges indicates this. The 1-4 species hedges are post-enclosure and the 5-7 species hedges belong to the period of private enclosure and consolidation of parish boundaries. As a major Royal Manor in 1068, and probably earlier, the richest species hedges are consistent with tracks and boundaries in an area cleared of woodland and supporting a large estate and population. (The exact bounds of the estate are not known). The enclosure of Shipton and Milton open fields was late. The reason for this and for only a small amount of earlier enclosure is uncertain but is characteristic of other parishes in this area.

The project has given the Wychwoods Local History Society a useful framework on which to build the local history of Milton and Shipton-under-Wychwood. It has given us familiarity with the ground and layout of the villages and the limited conclusions drawn can now be extended by further study.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Geology from Geological Survey of England and Wales, sheet 236, Solid with Drift.
- (2) Enclosure Award, Shipton under Wychwood, 1850. C.R.O.
- (3) Enclosure Award, Milton under Wychwood, 1849. C.R.O.
- (4) Tithe Award, Apportionment of the Rent Charges in Lieu of Tithes in the parish of Shipton under Wychwood, 1839. C.R.O.
- (5) Tithe Award for Milton in the parish of Shipton under Wychwood, 1842. C.R.O.
- (6) E. Pollard, M.D. Hooper & N.W. Moore, Hedges, New Naturalist Series, 1974, page 90.
- (7) D.B. Oxfordshire.
- (8) Beryl Schumer, The Evolution of Wychwood to 1400: Pioneers, Frontiers and Forests, 1984.



Elm



Yellow archangel



Dog's mercury

- (9) Bodleian Library, MS. Top Oxon d169, Survey 1617.
- (10) Brasenose College, Milton under Wychwood 25 and 32 terriers.
- (11) Gloucester Record Office, D 621/Ei, Survey 1547.
- (12) PRO LR2, Survey 1552.
- (13) Deserted Medieval Research Group: Langley.
- (14) Sites and Monuments Cards, Woodstock County Museum.

#### The Hedge Survey Group

Jill Chown and Jenny Mattingley  
 Peggy and Jack Chapman  
 Billie and Gerry Hatton  
 Alice Delattre and Gwen Allen  
 Eileen and Norman Frost  
 Doris Linfield and Joyce Barrett  
 Rachel Grant and Sue Jourdan

With thanks to James Bond of the County Museum Service for help and advice.

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#### Common Names and Latin Equivalents

Ash	<i>Fraxinus exelsior</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i>
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
Dogwood	<i>Thelycrania sanguinea</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Elm	<i>Ulmus procera</i>
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crateagus monogyna</i>
Hawthorn, midland	<i>Crateagus laevigata</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>
Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Rose, dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Rose, field	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>
Spindle tree	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
Wayfaring	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>
Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
Willow	<i>Salix viminalis</i>
Willow, goat	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>

#### Woodland herb species:

Bluebell	<i>Endymion non-scriptus</i>
Dog's mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Wood anemone	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>
Yellow archangel	<i>Galeobdolon luteum</i> ,

## Review

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Beryl Schumer, The Evolution of Wychwood: Pioneers, Frontiers and Forests, Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, Third Series No. 6, Leicester University Press, 1984, 72 pages, £5.95.

Those who have heard Beryl Schumer lecture on medieval Wychwood will be delighted that she has written up some of the work contained in her M.Phil. thesis (deposited at Leicester University) and that the University Press have published this, assisted by a grant from the Twenty-Seven Foundation.

She defines the Wychwood region as the large part of West Oxfordshire which was covered by the forest of Wychwood in the thirteenth century, that is the area bounded by the rivers Glyme, the lower Evenlode, Thames and Windrush, the county boundary to the west and the Sarsbrook. During Henry II's reign, Forest Law was applied over an even wider area. After the Perambulation of 1300, the application of Forest Law was cut down to three separated pieces of land - Wychwood Forest as it then remained until disafforestation in the nineteenth century, Woodstock Park and Witney Chase. The first two were Crown Land, while Witney Chase was on the estate of the Bishop of Winchester. All this was detailed by V. Wickham Steed in 1961 (Top. Oxon. No.7).

Miss Schumer's concern, however, is with the location of woodland, not the area to which Forest Law applied (the two things were by no means the same). Behind her paper lies painstaking detection and research, and no doubt a good deal of intuition as well. Domesday, the Hundred Rolls of 1279, and the Perambulation of 1300 are the basic sources, coupled with a large number of court and other records, and for instance the Taynton Saxon Charter of 1059. The references given at the end of her paper are a veritable gold-mine for any local historian interested in this period.

From these sources, Miss Schumer has located very precisely not only the bounds of the hardcore hunting forests (Wychwood, Woodstock and Witney), which date back to the Saxon period, but also of the woodlands belonging to the manorial estates which lay adjacent to them. Some of these woodlands were separated from the estates to which they belonged by a considerable distance. The Taynton woods were in the north of the

modern parish of Swinbrook, those of Milton were probably next to the Forest at Langley, the Shipton woods lay over the Forest between Leafield and Ramsden. More dramatically the woods belonging to the Bishop of Lincoln's estates at Banbury - at the time of Domesday at any rate - lay at Charlbury, Finstock and Fawler (before long he gifted these to the Abbey at Eynsham). This explains why in later maps these three parishes are shown as part of the Banbury Hundred, from which they were separated by a considerable distance.

Outside these close-knit woodlands, medieval agriculture presented the sort of prairie landscape that some now accuse modern agriculture of creating. There were no woods in the modern parishes of Shipton, Milton or Sarsden - those there now, and most of the hedgerows, are later plantations. Indeed, during the period from Domesday to 1400, there was a remarkable stability in the amount and location of land which was wooded, quite regardless of the extent of the application of Forest Law. Some assarting took place, more in some places than others: in the Evenlode Valley and the west end of the Forest it amounted to much less than has been supposed.

She points out that her conclusions are opposed to the view, widely held at one stage, that "the great majority of the English settlers faced a virgin country of damp oak-ash forest", to quote Professor Hoskins in his seminal book, The Making of the English Landscape in 1955, and it is from that book that she takes the phrase "pioneers, frontiers and forests" for her title. More recent work has led to this view being sharply revised, as Professor Hoskins subsequently recognised. Some authorities now hold that the Romano-British population exceeded that of Domesday England or even of the fourteenth century peak. Most of the land was exploited in Roman times, and the Wychwood woodlands were probably the result of a reversion during the early Saxon period rather than of a survival of primeval forest, for the most part at any rate.

The enforcement of Forest Law involved many clashes between the authorities and the people, which crop up in various records, and this was by no means confined to the peasants. In 1272 the offenders included the abbot of Eynsham and the steward of the Countess of Gloucester, while the receivers of the stolen venison were the parsons at Kiddington, Eynsham, Charlbury and Great Tew. In 1331 the Forester himself, Thomas de Langley, was in trouble and had to pay relief for "95 acres of assart in divers places in the Forest".

This is hardly a book for the coffee-table. The production is a little mean, with small unjustified print. At £5.95 for 72 pages the price will seem excessive to some. No doubt this is governed by hard

economics, and to cavil is churlish. There are fourteen maps, which are very clear, though the one that covers the Evenlode valley is printed on its side, which makes orientation difficult. There is a question mark over the accuracy in it of the forest bounds around Langley. But all in all, this paper is a formidable achievement on Miss Schumer's part, and it would still be a "must" for serious local historians interested in the period or in the forest, even at twice the price.

Frank Ware

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INQUEST REPORT; SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD  
(Extract) The Oxford Times, Saturday, 12 September 1885

Fatal accident: On Saturday afternoon last, a melancholy accident befel a man "George Harris" of Taynton in the employ of Mr George Groves of Milton as Quarryman.

It appears that deceased and a carter named William Newman, were sent to Shipton station with a load of stone some 5 tons weight. Newman was walking beside his team and the deceased rode on the waggon until the rise near Mr Hawcutts Mill, Shipton.

It is supposed that in endeavouring to get out of the waggon the unfortunate man fell under one of the front wheels, the heavily laden waggon passing over his chest and both arms. The carter was able to stop the horse before the hind wheel reached the poor fellow but fearful injuries sustained were such as to kill him instantly. Mr Hawcutt had the unfortunate man removed in a cart to the "Red Horse", Mr Haigh and the police constable being in the meantime summoned.

Mr Haigh's services, however were of no avail as the deceased was undoubtedly lifeless when taken from under the waggon.

On Monday an inquest was held at the Red Horse Inn before F. Westell Esq., Coroner and Jury, when the only witness called was William Newman the carter. After hearing evidence the jury unanimously returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

Both the witness and the jury handed over their fees to the widow. The deceased was 49 years of age and leaves a widow and nine children.

This rather sad story was sent to us by Mr J.L. Harris of Brockworth, Gloucester, the grandson of the unfortunate George Harris of Taynton. Mr Harris is anxious to trace the home of his grandfather in Taynton. Should any of our readers be able to help, the Secretary would be pleased to put them in touch with Mr Harris.

## The Society's Archives

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A history of Shipton under Wychwood, published by the Shipton Women's Institute, won the first of two prizes offered by the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes for the best village histories to be presented in 1933. It is now out of print but the Society has a photostat copy in its archives and copies are in the County Library and in private hands elsewhere.

Apart from this no published history of the area is known to exist and scattered references have to be looked for in the general volumes of the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, in the Calendars of State Papers and other lists, in the publications of antiquarians like Plot and Skelton and in Oxoniensia and similar journals.

The surprise appearance in 1983 of Rain and Ruin, the diary of John Simpson Calvertt who moved to the Crown Estate holding of Fairspear and High Lodge Farms in Leafield in 1875 was, therefore, particularly welcome because of its many references to Shipton and the surrounding district. Published by Alan Sutton at £8.95, it was reviewed in the March 1984 issue of the Society's newsletter.

The other recent publication to have provided valuable material for the study of our area is Beryl Schumer's The Evolution of Wychwood: Pioneers, Frontiers and Forests, reviewed elsewhere in this journal.

Shortly after the Society was formed, several members transcribed the 1851 census returns for Shipton, Milton, Ascott, Leafield and Langley, Lyneham, Fifield, Bruern and Tangle, Idbury, Foscot and Bould, Chilson, Pudlicot and Shorthampton, and Salford. The Local History Workshop which has been studying nineteenth century Shipton and Milton under the direction of Dr Tiller has transcribed the 1881 census returns for those parishes.

Members of the Society have also transcribed the Ascott and Shipton parish registers. The work on the Ascott parish registers which cover the period 1569 to 1869 for baptisms, 1570 to 1977 for marriages and 1572 to 1917 for burials is complete and they have been fully indexed. Work on the Shipton registers, which cover Shipton itself, Milton, Leafield, Ramsden, Lyneham, Great Langley, Little Langley and Bruern is still proceeding. So far baptisms and burials have been transcribed for the period 1538 to 1759 and marriages from 1538 to 1812. Further transcription is in hand and the transcripts will be indexed.

Both the 1851 census and the parish register transcripts are available in the Society's archives.

The archives also contain miscellaneous reference material such as air photos and maps of the area, a considerable amount of information culled from a large number of leases, conveyances and other documents lent to the Society by the Shipton Parish Council and others, local history journals and various other publications.

All this material is available to members on application to the archivist who may also be able to put members in touch with other sources if the Society's records cannot help.

Joan Howard-Drake

# **SACRILEGE!**

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**TEN POUNDS REWARD.**

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WHEREAS some wicked and daring villains did in the course of last week, effect an entrance into the

## ***Belfry of the Church***

AT SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD,

and did feloniously steal, take, and carry away three

## **Clappers of the Bells.**

This is to give notice, that the above reward will be paid to any person who shall give such information as will lead to the detection and conviction of the offenders.

**Robert Phillimore, Vicar.**

**William Bould, Churchwarden.**  
**Richard Bould, Churchwarden.**

Shipton, 10th February, 1840.

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SMITH, PRINTER, CHIPPING-NORTON



## The Milton Graveyard Survey

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JACK CHAPMAN

From the first days of the Society the committee considered possible field projects, priority being given to the recording of features that could conceivably suffer damage, or even disappear completely in the not too distant future. These included the village buildings, the hedgerows and the graveyards.

Nowadays the evidence for vanished hedges is all too clear and frequently smouldering heaps of branches show that it is a continuing process. The threat to our graveyards may not be so imminent, but locally we have examples at Shipton, where many old headstones have been removed and leant against the walls, and at Churchill, where in the 1960s the P.C.C. planned to remove all the memorials and grass over the churchyard. In fact this did not happen, but the plan led to a survey of the graveyard being prepared. A survey of the Shipton graveyard has also been made, although not before the old stones were removed.

These considerations, and the Society's "equipment" by way of pairs of hands (and eyes!) and any necessary expertise, allowed the recording of the hedgerows and of Milton graveyard to be completed in the first two summers of its existence. Preliminary results of both were shown at the Society's exhibition in 1983. What follows is the first written report of the graveyard survey.

For the recording we formed a group of eight volunteers who worked as four pairs. Each pair was allocated a section of the graveyard and they recorded the monuments in it as time and weather permitted. A further advantage of the priority given to the project was that the inscriptions were likely still to be legible, the oldest stone being less than 130 years old, and in the event it proved that virtually all of them were.

However, before an actual start could be made on the recording, two preliminaries were essential. The first, which was readily forthcoming, was to obtain Mr Lindley's permission for the survey. The second took rather longer!

It will be noted that the project was "to survey and record Milton graveyard" - not just the gravestones. Thus the project can be divided into two parts: one, making a plan that shows with some accuracy the

shape and dimensions of the churchyard, with the position of walls, fences, gates, paths, trees and flowerbeds etc, the church itself, and, most importantly, the position of the marked graves. On this plan each memorial is given a number by which it can be identified subsequently. This and the plan enable a grave to be unambiguously located should the memorial subsequently be removed. Evidently, until such a plan has been prepared and the graves on it numbered, part two, the recording of individual monuments, cannot begin.

In this project we have used How to Record Graveyards by Jeremy Jones as our guide. This is a small volume published jointly by the Council for British Archaeology and The Trust for British Archaeology (Rescue): it thus has the stamp of authority. It will be noticed that the emphasis is on archaeology, and clearly the first part of the project is, in the long term, of main interest to archaeologists. However it seemed to us unlikely that a mid-nineteenth century church and churchyard, almost certainly built on a "green-field site", would subsequently be excavated. Whereas a mediaeval site probably contains successive layers of burials, and in excavation of such a site a knowledge of the precise position of the "top-layer" burials could be of great value.

With these considerations in mind we have given pride of place in our graveyard survey to phase two of the project. The record of the history of Milton embodied in the names, ages, dates of decease and inter-relationships of past villagers is evidently of immediate interest, in conjunction with the study of the parish registers, census returns and similar documents now being undertaken by the Society. All the inscriptions on the churchyard memorials have now been transcribed and are available in alphabetical sequence of summaries, and in numerical order of graves. In both cases the grave is to be found on the plan of the graveyard that has been prepared: this plan is sufficiently accurate and detailed to enable any individual grave to be located unambiguously. However, it has not been prepared with the precision suggested in How to Record Graveyards, but will be further refined as time permits. (This refinement is essentially a Part I exercise.)

What have we found in the graveyard? There are a variety of memorials, some rather quaint but all modest - not one family vault. Many of the names recorded are still familiar in the village today. But before going into detail, a short history of the site, even if well-known locally, may be of interest.

The church, dedicated to St Simon and St Jude, was built in 1854, to quote Kelly's Directory for 1883 "... by the late James Haughton



View of Milton church from the south before the graveyard was extended in 1930 showing the vicarage (now the old vicarage)

Langston Esq. M.P. assisted by the Ven. Archdeacon Huxtable ... a handsome edifice in the Decorated or Geometrical style, and was one of the early works of the late G.E. Street Esq. R.A." (Kelly's for 1907 adds the information that James Haughton Langston was "of Sarsden", the Archdeacon was "of Sarum" and adds the words "gift Bishop of Oxford"). Up to that date Milton had no church, but had "three dissenting places of worship", as indeed it still has (Gardner's Directory of Oxfordshire 1852).

The adjoining vicarage (now the "Old Vicarage") was not built until 1897, according to Kelly's 1907 at a cost of £2,000. Up to that time I believe the incumbent lived further up the Lyneham Road at the house on the crest of the hill now called Heath Farm. No Heath Farm appears in the 1881 census, but "The Parsonage" does.

The original graveyard was surrounded by the low stone wall that still exists on three of its sides. Apart from the lych-gate, there were gates into the grounds of the vicarage (by the church hall) and the school. The latter was blocked up during the recent conversion of the old school. The original south wall can be seen in the photograph above.

In 1930 the graveyard was extended southwards by taking in some 60

feet of the vicarage grounds. On Church Road the stone wall was extended to the new boundary (presumably using materials from the former south wall). The new wall can readily be distinguished from the old by the different pattern coping stone. The rest of the extension was bounded with the present iron railings. Inside the new stone wall and now almost hidden by a hawthorn bush is a plaque that reads:

Ad majoram Dei gloriam  
This extension of God's acre was  
consecrated by the Right Reverend  
Thomas Banks Strong DD GBE  
Lord Bishop of Oxford  
on Friday June 6th 1930

The Rev Norman Hayward  
Vicar

Henry Knight  
Norman Roberts  
Churchwardens

The boundary of the old graveyard was marked by planting a row of horse-chestnuts, now full-grown trees, and there is a grassy path between the old and new graveyards.

The earliest marked graves record two burials in 1855, Alfred Groves in March and Mary Foden in December. It is perhaps appropriate that the first should be a name so celebrated in Milton, although this is not the Alfred Groves, but a young man of 25.

There are 242 marked graves in the churchyard, many multiple burials, giving a total of 414 names. However, a cursory examination of the ground reveals the sites of many unmarked graves, and the registers for the parish record no less than 1364 burials. There were three burials registered in 1854, the earliest being of Joseph Howes, who died on 6 December, aged 86. There have been no burials inside the church although there are a number of memorial plaques, including those commemorating the dead in two world wars.

I understand that the proportion of unmarked graves is by no means unusual - indeed in older churchyards the proportion may be as high as 10 to 1.

Of the familiar names in the graveyard, the record is comfortably held by Miles, with 22 burials. Groves is some way behind with 14, followed by Dore with 10 and Timms with 9. No doubt the Groves total would have been much higher, but many past members of the family are in the Baptist graveyard.

As might be supposed from the history of the village, the great majority of both christian and surnames are "plain English" but a few

exceptions have come to light. In 1881 was buried a Sophie Selina Cerndt, aged 2 years. Selina may be an unusual christian name, but we also have a Selina Parsloe who died in 1941 and may well still be remembered by some readers. Perhaps the most unusual combination of names was Zilpha Stark who died in 1949 and is buried with her mother Sarah Dore. Zilpha was an aunt of Malcolm Dore who lives at Heath Cottage in Milton, but he can throw no light on the origin of her christian name.

The best-known of the unusual surnames is, no doubt, Samuda, owners and occupiers of Bruern Abbey for a period including the First World War when the house was converted to a hospital. During the war Mrs Samuda died, and their son, Major C.M.A.Samuda died of wounds received in action in France. As well as two graves near the south wall of the church, they are commemorated by plaques on the west wall inside the church.

The only family that appears to have had an area set aside for their interment is the Groves: their graves are concentrated near to the eastern boundary, immediately south of the church.

As already mentioned there are few remarkable memorials: perhaps the most interesting mark the graves of children. Close to the north wall near the oil tank is a rustic memorial over the grave of Charles Andrew Edginton, who died, aged 8 months, in 1890. Probably the least noticed are two adjacent bodystones in the Groves area. One is over the grave of William Groves who died in 1870, aged 4. The inscription on the adjoining grave is one of the few undecipherable ones and I should be glad to hear from anyone who knows who is buried there. It is evidently a child and likely to be one of the Groves family. These are the only bodystone memorials in the graveyard.

In an area so much concerned with quarrying and stonemasons a most appropriate monument is the upright rough-dressed stone near to the Church Road wall, somewhat south of the lych-gate. It bears an inscription on a dark slate plaque commemorating William and Winnie Palmer, who died in 1976 and 1961 respectively.

About 10 years ago the churchyard no longer had space for fresh graves and in February 1973 the new cemetery in the Bruern Road was opened. Since then there have been a only small number of burials in the churchyard, all in existing graves.

The plan, which was exhibited at the Society's exhibition in 1983, is 45 x 60 cm and unfortunately contains too much detail to reproduce satisfactorily here. It shows the positions of all the marked graves, each coloured according to the twenty-year period (up to 1950) in which the first interment was made. "Contours" have been drawn showing how

the graveyard filled up in these successive 20 year periods. Of course one can only speak of marked graves, but from them it is obvious that a free choice of grave site was permitted, as long as space allowed, and that there was no very marked preference shown. For instance, in the years to 1870 when the graveyard was almost empty, burials were made close to the northern and southern boundaries of the churchyard, and one near the west wall: the most popular position was near the south-east corner of the church. In the following periods the trend was, perforce, to the south and west where most ground was available. I can see no indication that the north side of the church was shunned - perhaps reserved for the unbaptised etc, as is sometimes suggested.

Apart from this the only remarkable feature in the distribution of graves is their scarcity in an area stretching eastwards from the south side of the lych-gate. Suggestions have been made that this area contains mass burial that became necessary when an epidemic struck the village - a 19th century equivalent of a "plague-fit", although at that time the most likely disease would be smallpox. However, the burial registers and population figures based on census returns give no support to these suggestions, and one can only suppose that by chance this area contains a high proportion of ordinary, unmarked graves.

In addition to the Phase I work already mentioned, there still remains:

(i) the completion of photographing selected memorials (according to Jones it is essential that we photograph them all)

(ii) to record the material of all the stones, for which purpose the assistance of someone with adequate specialist knowledge will be necessary

(iii) to put all this information on to the standard report forms approved by the C.B.A. and Rescue - one for each memorial, or for each part of a memorial if inscriptions occur on more than one part, e.g. the headstone and one or more kerbstones, or a footstone.

Evidently the limiting factors to (i) and (iii) are money and man-hours respectively. Even black-and white prints are expensive today, and the proper completion of about 300 forms will take time!

The data that we have on Milton graveyard are available to anyone who might be interested in finding a relative's grave, or tracing their ancestry. At present they are in the possession of Jack Chapman at Vicarage Field, adjoining the south boundary of the graveyard (telephone 830498).

The eight volunteers who carried out the survey were: Tom and Joan Barrett, Jill Chowns and Jenny Mattingley, John Daish and Norah Ellis, Jack and Peggy Chapman.

## Cotham Cottage, Milton

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NORMAN FROST

Due to the kindness of the present owners, Mr and Mrs Mattingley, two members of the Society were invited to inspect this cottage when the interior was stripped down to the bare walls, prior to renovation.

Without interior partitions and the upstairs floorboards which were obviously later additions, the building itself was just a rectangular 17th century structure. However surprises were to follow.

Firstly the walls were indented in about forty places with recesses about 18 inches deep and very much wider at the back than at the front or entrance. Reference to the archives at the County Museum showed their purpose; they were roosting holes for doves. The structure was built as a dovecote and perhaps its very name was trying to tell us this in the first place. The museum authorities were most interested in the building as this was only the second example of a square dovecot to be discovered in the county. Most dovecotes are of the familiar round style.

Steven Mattingley had also discovered a child's shoe hidden in one of the roosting holes when the walls were plastered to convert the building into a dwelling. The shoe was in very good condition for its age and the sole still bore the mud with pieces of straw embedded, exactly as it was when the child came into the house, wearing it for the last time.

Our search for answers led us a little further afield this time - to Julia Swann at the Boot & Shoe Department, Guildhall Museum, Northampton. The shoe, she told us, was a boy's shoe made sometime about 1750. For the period it was a very good quality article and very well preserved. In the style of the period shoes were made to be worn on either foot, so that by swapping the shoes around they would last longer. Miss Swann also pointed out a piece of stiff leather stitched around the heel, suggesting that the little boy who wore it did not unfasten his shoes before putting them on and that the leather had been stitched on to prevent him breaking the heels down. The shoe was fastened by two tongues of leather passing across the instep and through a buckle which was not attached to the shoe in any way. The act of holding the two leather tongues firmly together kept the shoe in place.



Cotham Cottage

Concealing a shoe or indeed any other personal article within the walls of a house was a common practice about this period. Almost every old dwelling has or has had some article buried within its walls. There are many reasons for this practice. It could be a good luck symbol, it was thought to identify the occupant with the dwelling and sometimes when the article was buried in the bedroom wall it was thought to ensure the arrival of many children.

I suppose it is logical therefore to assume that this building was built in the 17th century and that about 100 years later the owner converted it to a cottage for one of his workers, a use which has continued ever since. A point of interest does arise however. A dovecote was the right of the farmer and no one else. His pigeons were for his benefit and could not be touched even when they ate his neighbours crops. Was this range of buildings part of an old farmstead? We know that the old dovecote at the end of the Terrace in Milton was part of Hawkes farmstead and we have records of twenty-one of these old farms or homesteads within the old village. There are more than likely many more to be discovered.

# The Royal Manor of Sciptone and Neighbouring Estates in Domesday

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FRANK WARE

## Part One: Shipton, Milton and the Forest

The Domesday Survey, which was conducted for William the Conqueror in 1086, is the first documentary evidence we have for most of our locality. There are Saxon Charters for Witney, Spelsbury and Taynton, but elsewhere earthworks and archaeological finds are the only available sources of earlier information (1). Yet the picture given in Domesday seems to be one of settled communities with their roots well into the past. The Saxons had been here for over five centuries. Nearly all the place-names recorded in Domesday can be recognised on the Ordnance Survey map today. We have reason to believe that most of the names not so recorded were nevertheless established by 1086, leaving only a few of them to be attributed to later events like the foundation of Bruern Abbey.

The area selected for this study - comprising the Royal Manor of Sciptone (Shipton under Wychwood) and its neighbouring estates - stretches from the Shire boundary in the west, to Spelsbury and Ramsden in the east; from the River Windrush in the south, to the upland just short of Chipping Norton in the north. All of it lay within the division of the Shire which was later called the Chadlington Hundred. The Evenlode valley with its relatively heavy lower lias clays runs through the middle of it, while the uplands are mostly oolitic limestone. The agricultural value is mostly Grade III, with some Grade IV in the valley.

The Royal Manor of Sciptone dominated this area. By eleventh century standards this estate was large and well equipped, and the centre of what local administration there was. It was bigger than Witney, Burford or Chipping Norton in terms of population and agricultural activity - indeed it was the largest estate in Oxfordshire west of the River Cherwell and south of the Royal Manor of Bloxham with Aderbury. Yet the small area studied here had other large estates too - at Sarsden and Taynton in particular. For its time this area showed a relatively high density of population and agriculture. Like most of

England, it was comprised entirely of rural estates (the borough of Oxford was the only "town" in the Shire).

But the impression of stability, conveyed by the continuity of place-names and the precise information attributed to them in Domesday, may be misleading. Continuity there certainly was, but it related to agricultural estates rather than to villages. Some authors suggest this continuity can be traced back to Roman or earlier periods. We can speculate that the iron-age Lyneham fort was the centre of an estate over a millenium before from which the Domesday estates of Shipton and Sarsden were carved. What we dare not conclude - though it is possible - is that there was a nucleated village called Sciptone with a recognisable lay-out in terms of Shipton under Wychwood as we know it. The people recorded in Domesday as working an estate may well have lived in a number of small hamlets scattered throughout it and in isolated smallholdings. Building materials were not durable - mostly wood, thatch and mud - and it is now recognised that settlements shifted about a great deal over the centuries, often until well after Domesday, but within the bounds of the long-established estate (2).

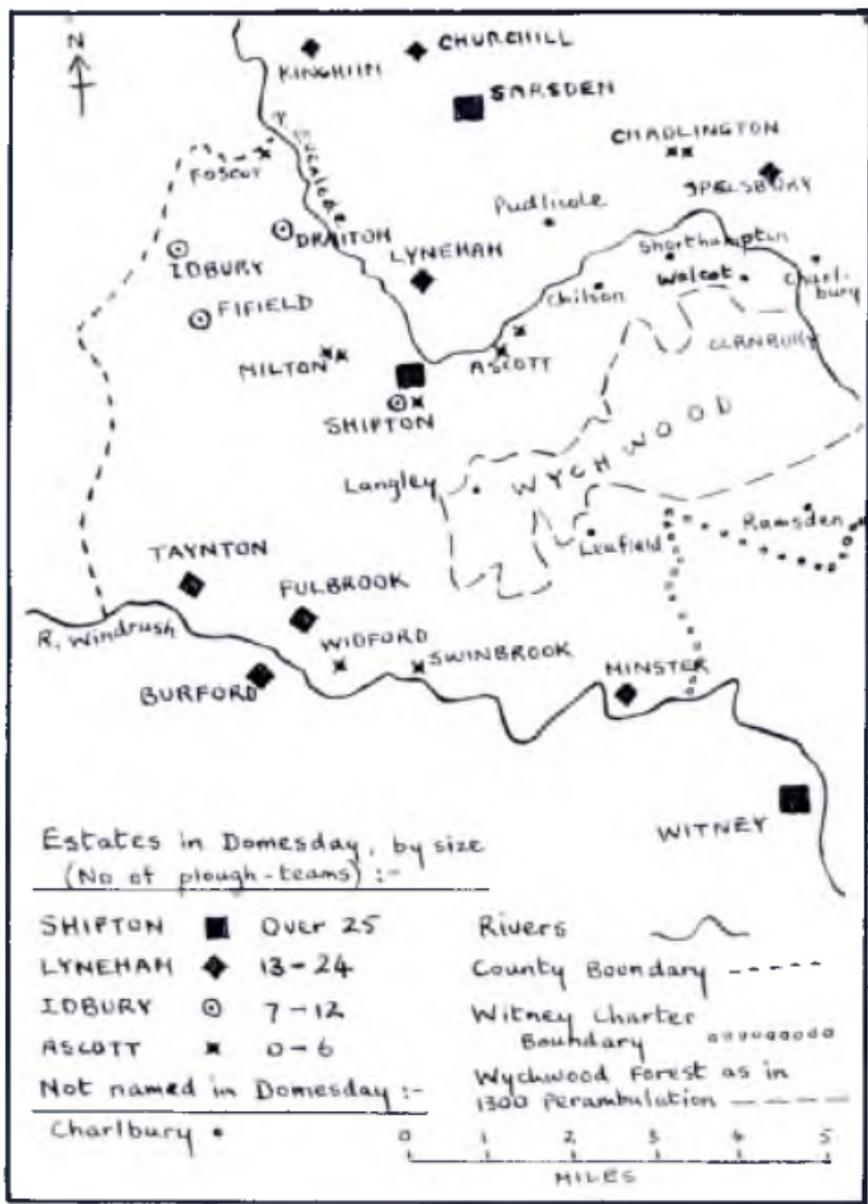
#### The Royal Manor of Sciptone

The Domesday entry for the Royal Manor reads as follows (3):

"The King holds Sciptone. 33 hides and 3 virgates of land. In lordship 10 ploughs. 54 villeins with 64 smallholders and 6 slaves have 43 ploughs. 6 mills at 55s; from the meadows, pig-pasturage, rent and other customary dues £12.17s; from the year's corn £15; the Woodland is in the King's enclosure, it paid 50s before 1066. The Jurisdiction of three Hundreds belongs to this Manor. In total it pays £72 at face value."

The significance of these concise Domesday entries is not self-evident, and needs further explanation.

"The King holds Sciptone..." This is a Royal Manor, the others in Oxfordshire being at Benson, Headington, Kirtlington, Wootton, Bampton and Bloxham with Adderbury. These were ancient Saxon institutions, dotted throughout the countryside, being the early focal points of royal control and residence; the easiest way to collect rents and dues was to visit and consume them. In Oxfordshire they belonged originally to the Kings of Mercia, passing to the new English Crown of the House of Alfred in the early tenth century after the Danish Wars. We do not know when a King last stayed at Sciptone, but may hazard the guess that it could



Map showing the estates in the neighbourhood

have been more than two centuries before Domesday, before the fall of Mercia. What we do know is that they frequently stayed at Woodstock, from which they hunted.

The word "Manor" itself needs comment. This was a Norman term meaning an estate or land-holding. Some were large, but some very small. There is no connotation of a lord's residence or chateau. As in the Royal Manor, the lord was usually absentee, and unless he was in the habit of visiting, there may have been no hall or grand house at all. The largest domestic house in Sciptone may have been the home of the steward or bailiff, a class not mentioned in Domesday but whom we must presume to have been there, with considerable weight in the local community.

"33 hides and 3 virgates of land..." The hide was an old Saxon unit of assessment, a virgate or yardland being a quarter of a hide. Military duty (the "fyrd"), tax (the "geld" - e.g. "Danegeld", collected by Ethelred the Unready to buy off the Danes) and other obligations like building, manning and maintaining the borough walls, had all been assessed in hides. By the eleventh century a hide was supposed to be standardised at 120 acres of arable (presuming that with this went the meadow, pasture and woodland necessary to support that arable). In Domesday the assessment in hides is clearly arbitrary; the number of ploughteams is a better indication of agricultural activity and capacity. But on the count of hides, the Royal Manor had over 4,000 acres of arable.

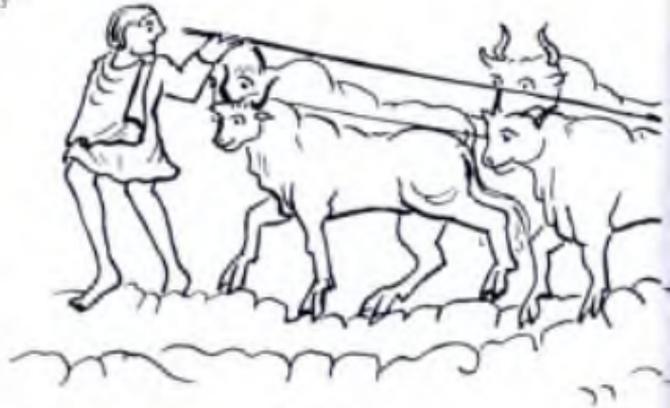
"In lordship 10 ploughs..." There are ten ploughteams on the demesne farm, the land farmed in hand directly for the occupier of the estate, here the King. This does not tell us how large the demesne land was, because the villeins also brought their ploughteams to work on it.

### Peasant Households

"54 villeins with 64 smallholders and 6 slaves have 43 ploughs..." These are the peasant householders who work the estate and occupy the rest of the land.

The villeins are the highest class of peasant. They probably owned the 43 ploughteams between them, and each farmed a virgate or so of arable, about 30 acres. They had rights of access to the meadows, pasture and woodland for their requirements, to the hay for wintering the plough-oxen, to pasturage generally (including acorns in the wood for the swine), and to the timber - used for construction, implements,

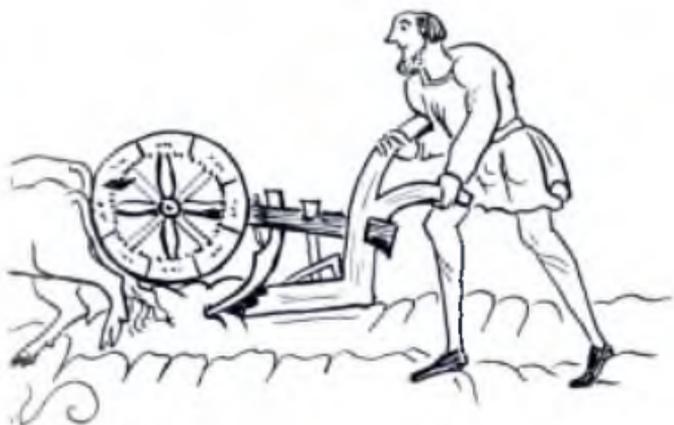
Eleventh-century plough team  
drawn from a contemporary  
calendar



hurdles and fuel. They used the lord's mills for grinding their corn. For all this they owed a mixture of obligations and dues, some in kind but mostly by way of service. For a proportion of the year they worked the demesne land, providing their own ploughteams for the purpose. They gathered hay for the lord, reaped his harvest and brought in his fuel and timber. These obligations were later commuted to money-rents. They also owed a variety of tithes or scot to the church, usually paid in kind at different times of the year.

The smallholders, or "bordars", may have included craftsmen, like millers, smiths and carpenters - possibly even the priest - there is no separate mention of such people in the Oxfordshire folios of Domesday. They would be paid in kind, by the villeins if not the lord, and would each have a smallholding to grow vegetables and keep livestock. But some craftsmen may have had holdings large enough to rank as villeins. The rest of the smallholders were poorer peasants than the villeins, with holdings of five acres or so, grubbing a living as best they could. They had obligations to work for the lord - but probably for less time than the villeins - and supplemented their living by working for a wage in kind for the villeins, often to meet the obligations of the latter to the lord. Some authorities suggest the bordars often lived in outlying hamlets, or on smallholdings scattered apart from the main settlement (4), and certainly the Royal Manor has a far higher proportion of smallholders than is usual, which may be a feature of a large and dispersed estate.

The slaves belonged to the lord and worked the demesne land for



their keep, often as ploughmen in charge of the teams "in lordship". Many scholars prefer the word "serfs" as a translation of the Latin word "servi". But slavery had a long history as a Saxon institution - it disappeared within a century of Domesday. To me the word "serf" has a much wider medieval meaning - that of any peasant (including the villein) who was not free to leave the land, but was not servile. He is the successor to the Saxon "ceorl", who stood below a Freeman, but above a slave (5).

In all there are 124 households. It is generally thought reasonable to apply a multiple of 4 or 5 to arrive at the population, suggesting a total of up to 600 souls living on this estate.

### Oxen, Mills and Meadows

There is a total of 53 ploughteams. It is thought that each team comprised eight oxen, perhaps less on lighter soils. Thus there are up to 424 draught oxen on this estate. These beasts had to be brought alive through the winter, fit for the spring ploughing, so access to the meadow for hay was vital. This was a vast herd and would have needed the hay from a very large acreage of meadow, as well as considerable pasture.

An earlier Saxon source tells us that a team could plough more than an acre a day (6). There was autumn as well as spring ploughing, and between a third and a half of the arable land was fallow each year. I

suggest that one team could account for about 100 acres of arable (including the fallow), and on this count the Royal Manor could have had over 5,000 acres of arable.

Other livestock - swine, poultry, sheep, even bees - were undoubtedly important in the agricultural economy, but are not specified in the Oxfordshire folios of Domesday.

"6 mills at 55s..." These are water-mills, small by later standards. They would often have been on side-streams, without races, perhaps only operating during the wet season. Six is a large number - the Royal Manor of Bloxham with Adderbury is the only other estate in the Shire to have as many (7).

"From the meadows, pig-pasturage, rent ("gablum") and other customary dues £12.17s..." In the Oxfordshire folios, most estates give details of meadows in acreage - the Royal Manors do not, only reporting revenue, which presumably is what King William wanted to know. This does not help modern researchers. The meaning of the rest of this entry is not at all clear to me - the sum mentioned is large, more than many estates were worth. Who paid it, and whether in cash, kind or service, is obscure.

"The woodland is in the King's Enclosure..." This is an unusual comment, but found also on the Royal Manor of Wootton. I take it to mean that the estate's woodlands lay within the King's demesne hunting forest of Wychwood.

"The jurisdiction (soke) of three Hundreds belongs to this Manor..." Literally, the Manor derives the profit from the fines imposed in the Courts of three Hundreds. A Hundred was a sub-division of the Shire, originally comprising 100 hides. It is generally accepted that the three Hundreds in question, which are unnamed, were later amalgamated to form what was known as the "Chadlington Hundred", which did cover about 300 hides in Domesday. This entry implies more, that the rural administration of these three Hundreds was centred on the Royal Manor. This must have been the responsibility of the steward or bailiff of the estate - though not mentioned in Domesday, he must have been a very important man locally.

"In total, it pays £72 at face value..." This is the annual yield from the estate for the King (other estates say "the value is"). £72 is much more than the sum of the figures mentioned above, though we are not told what the court fines netted. I suggest most of the difference is the value of the produce from the demesne farm. It is difficult to relate Domesday values to current money after nine centuries of economic progress and stop-go inflation. If we take £500 (1985) as equivalent to £1 Domesday - with a very large pinch of salt - then this estate

yielded £36,000 a year in today's currency. That may sound a lot, but it is only £6 to £9 (1985) an acre of arable, ignoring the supporting acreage of meadow, pasture and woodland, and the incidental sources of income like mills and court fines. Even that was only achieved by dint of the peasants living at a subsistence level which we would regard as quite impossible. By modern standards, the yield from this agriculture was very poor indeed, but in 1086 it was the prime source of national wealth.

### Alsi, the King's Thane

Two other Domesday entries at Shipton and one at Milton are of particular interest (8):

"The King holds Sciptone. 8 hides. Land for 12 ploughs. Now in lordship 2 ploughs, 8 slaves. 18 villeins with 5 smallholders have 7 ploughs. Meadow 36 acres. The value was £10, now £9. Earl Harold held these two manors. Now Alsi of Faringdon holds them at a revenue."

"He (Alsi) also holds 2 hides in Sciptone. Land for 2 ploughs. He has them in lordship. The value is and was 40s. Earl Harold held it."

"Roger holds 1 hide in Midelstone, and Alwy from him. Land for 1 plough. He has it in lordship. Meadow 2 acres; woodland 1 league long and 4 furlongs wide. The value was 20s; later 15s; now £7."

The Earl Harold referred to is Harold Godwinson, the last Saxon king killed at the Battle of Hastings. Norman propaganda insisted he never was, nor had any right to be, King. Apparently the Sciptone entries here were part of the estates of the Godwin family, as opposed to those of the Saxon crown; so was Langford, which is the other estate referred to in the first entry, also held by Alsi.

The name Alsi is English - Aethelsige - and he held other estates, including one at Windrush in Gloucestershire, where he is described as a "King's Thane". By Domesday the Saxon aristocracy - the earls and thegns - had been almost completely replaced by Norman barons. Those not killed in the battles of 1066 were involved in later insurrections, had fled into exile or died out naturally. Alsi was one of the few

survivors, remarkably in view of the evident Godwin connection. Note that he holds his two major estates "at a revenue" (i.e. paying rent) instead of by feudal tenure.

Alwy of Milton was Alsi's son. A later document records that towards 1200 one Robert of Astrop granted to the Abbey at Bruern all the land in Milton which belonged to his grandfather, Alewi the son of Eilsi of Faringdon. Sir Frank Stenton commented that the descent of a Saxon estate so late was indeed unusual (9).

Note the absence of peasants on the 2-hide estate at Sceiptone and on Alwy's estate at Milton. This is unusual, but is also found on another estate held by Alsi some distance away at Rycote (10). It may be an error - or an under-declaration made by Alsi - in the Domesday recording, but I have assumed it is correct. There are signs that the larger estate at Sceiptone is run down; land for 12 ploughs, only 9 there; it was worth £10, now £9. Most authorities assume that the sharp recorded rise in the value of Alwy's estate - from 15s to £7 - is also an error: it should be 7s, in which case that estate too is very run down.

Beryl Schumer has theories about this. She thinks that Alwy's estate - with its large area of woodland - passed very soon to the de Langley family, who were the hereditary Foresters of Wychwood based at Langley. The woodland would not have been in modern Milton, but adjacent to the demesne Forest at Langley. The £7 may not have been an error, as it is the same sum as is recorded as payable to the King elsewhere by the Forester. She suggests that Alsi's 2-hide estate was at Langley Mill, and also passed to the de Langley family. If this is right, the land which Alwy's grandson gave to Bruern Abbey could not have been Alwy's Milton estate as recorded in Domesday. Miss Schumer suggests it was Alsi's 8-hide estate, attributed in Domesday to Sceiptone, but which was nevertheless located in the modern parish of Milton. The suggested link between Alsi's family, the forest and the de Langley family is fascinating - it could help to explain this unusual survival of a Saxon family. I do wonder - this is pure speculation on my part - whether the de Langleys were related to Alsi.

#### Flambard - an ambitious rogue

There are two other small estates recorded at Shipton and Milton (11):

"Geoffrey (Goisfrid) holds Swinbrook (Svinbroc) and Sceiptone from the King. 4 1/2 hides. Land for 3 ploughs. Now in

lordship 1 plough with 1 slave. 2 villeins with 4 smallholders have 1 plough. Meadow 3 acres; woodland 3 furlongs long and 1 wide. The value was 60s; now 40s".

"Rannulf Flambard holds 4 hides in Mideltone from the King. Land for 4 ploughs. Now in lordship 1 plough, 2 slaves. 4 villeins with 2 smallholders have 1 plough. Meadow 6 acres; pasture 2 furlongs long and 1/2 furlong wide. The value is and was £3."

The location of Geoffrey's estate sounds very grand - Svinbroc and Sceiptone - but it was much too small to straddle the down between them. In any case the woods belonging to the Taynton and Fulbrook manors lay between the two modern villages, adjacent to the King's Forest (12). The entry means that Geoffrey's manor lay within Sceiptone as a whole, while Svinbroc locates it more precisely. It is a small estate and apparently poor for its size - land for 3 ploughs but only 2 there, while the value has dropped by a third between 1066 and 1086.

Geoffrey is listed in a section covering "King's Officers".

Whether he was an army man, or served the King in a civil capacity, is not hinted at. The name is Norman, but he is a small man, not a baron.

Rannulf Flambard was altogether different, with a notorious place in history. His estate is listed as a Church holding, but it was personal rather than by virtue of his clerical office, which was not high at this time; officially he was a dean. Yet he held other estates, though not in Oxfordshire. A Norman of low birth but with immense ambition and ability, he was only at the start of his career in 1086. He had selected the Church as the most promising avenue for advancement for such as he. King William disliked him but found him useful in performing services with an underhand tinge to them, and rewarded him with estates. His career took off in the next reign when he became first chaplain and then chief minister to William Rufus. He had a talent for extracting money needed to support that profligate King, and was universally hated for it, but showered with honours and wealth, including the Bishopric of Durham. When Rufus was killed hunting in the New Forest and Henry I came to the throne, Rannulf suffered an eclipse. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London, escaped, joined up with King Henry's elder brother Robert, the Duke of Normandy, and took to piracy in the Channel. When King Henry defeated Duke Robert, Flambard made his peace with the King, and saw out the rest of his long life as Bishop of Durham (he died in 1128). Much of the building of Durham Cathedral took place during his episcopacy. He comes across as

an attractive and humorous rogue, even though he was probably the instigator of the most vicious aspects of Norman exploitation of the conquered Saxons (13). The Milton estate was a small part of the portfolio he was building up at the beginning of his career. It is doubtful whether he visited it much, except perhaps in the early days around 1086.

The estate is small, and the entry seems to indicate yet another manor which is run down; land for 4 ploughs, only 2 there. In particular, 1 plough between 4 villeins is very poor. Yet the estate has not fallen in value - it was worth £3 in 1066 and still is. There is quite a lot of pasture. This suggests that the emphasis of this estate could have been on sheep-farming rather than arable. I cannot believe that Flambard would have allowed any property held by him to be under-exploited for long.

Haymaking



### The Missing Churches

It will be noted that there is no mention of churches on any of these manors, nor indeed of priests (Flambard does not count as such, he comes in as the holder of an estate, not as a local cleric). Indeed, I have found no churches in the Oxfordshire folios of Domesday (outside the Borough of Oxford). This is perhaps surprising, as churches there certainly were, and they were regarded as sources of income. The present church at Shipton dates back to the late twelfth century, so I understand, about 100 years after Domesday. It is reasonable to assume there must have been a church before that on such a large estate as the Royal Manor: the Prebend of it was granted within half a century of Domesday to the Bishopric of Salisbury. The Bishop, Roger, was Henry's chief minister.

Perhaps this gives us a clue to the location of the centre of the Royal Manor. It seems probable that St Mary's was built on the site of its predecessor, which suggests that the main buildings of the Manor were not far away - the Hall, if there was one, the bailiff's house and the main storage barns. Some of the villeins at least probably lived scattered nearby. We dare not presume, however, that the lay-out and alignments of the village would be recognisable in terms of later Shipton, or that it was the only settlement within the modern parish. Almost certainly there were other hamlets on this large estate.

### The King's Demesne Forest

There is one further entry that we should consider, that relating to the King's Forest of Wychwood (Hucheuode) as it touches us very closely and has had a considerable impact on the traditions and culture of our villages. One single entry deals with all the forests in the Shire (14):-

"In Shotover, Stowford, Woodstock, Cornbury and Wychwood are the demesne forests of the King. They have nine leagues in length and as many in width. To these forests belong 4 1/2 hides. 6 villeins with 8 smallholders have 3 1/2 ploughs. From them and all that belongs to the forests Rainald pays £10 a year to the King."

The demesne forest was royal woodland in late Saxon times, reserved for the King's hunting - Edward the Confessor was as much devoted to the chase as to piety. Adjoined to it was woodland belonging to other estates - this is all very particularly described in Beryl Schumer's book (15). This woodland - far from being wasteland - was a very important material-source, carefully husbanded and exploited, as witness the fact that Rainald was willing to pay the King £10 a year for it. We do not know where the arable land within the forest lay.

It is now thought that the boundary of the demesne forest of Wychwood at the time of Domesday corresponded very closely to the boundaries of the Royal Forest laid down later in the Perambulation of 1300, which in their turn survived largely unchanged until disafforestation in 1857 (16). Had Alsi and Alwy been transported through time to the early nineteenth century, the appearance of the forest shore throughout most of the Evenlode valley would have been very familiar to them. Of course, there was some assarting in the intervening years, and perhaps Alwy would have noticed this particularly

in the woods belonging to his own estate and in the adjoining demesne forest at Langley. But on the whole, the continuity of this woodscape over the best part of a millenium is striking.

This statement is contrary to the widely held view that the whole area was submerged under a dense sea of trees, which were only cleared in the later Middle Ages. The evidence of Domesday does not support such a view: the estates around the demesne forest and the other woodlands adjacent to it, were intensively exploited for agriculture.

What the Norman Kings did do was to apply Forest Law over a vast swathe of countryside - at one stage it covered all the neighbouring estates in my study, and more, and is thought to have covered most of them by Domesday (16). Miss Schumer has compared this to the creation of a National Park today - the people living and working in the area found that when Forest Law was applied they were subjected to new rules and restraints, and indeed special courts, not imposed elsewhere. The object was to protect the game, principally deer, and the environment which supported them. Poaching of course was particularly harshly punished and the peasants were even prosecuted if they were caught chasing off deer who were grazing on their growing crops (17). No doubt this was resented and somewhat restrictive on agricultural activity, but in the long term it seems to have had more effect on our folklore (poaching and outlaws in the forest) than on the local landscape or economy. Forest Law does not imply that any new trees were necessarily planted outside the established woodlands, or that one acre was taken out of agricultural production. Domesday itself contains no record of the spreading of Forest Law, nor any hint that it affected estate values.

Kings eventually had to concede to pressures to restrict the application of forest law, and the Perambulation of 1300 crystallised the boundaries of Wychwood Forest around a core of woodland belonging to the Crown. It seems that this core corresponded closely to the demesne forest in Domesday. One difference may be the woods belonging to the Royal Manor. If the Domesday entry is correctly interpreted, they were within the Demesne Forest in 1086 - the 1300 Perambulation excluded them. The reason may be that in 1086 Siptone belonged to the Crown, while by 1300 it was held by the de Clare Earls of Gloucester (16).

#### Locating the Royal Manor

Establishing the bounds of the demesne forest was an important step in locating where most of the Royal Manor, and some of its actual

boundaries, lay. In this I am indebted to Beryl Schumer for personal help she has given me. Most of the clues lie in later medieval records, which I have not yet researched. I hope to do so, and either prove - or amend - the assertions I will now make.

The Royal Manor was much too big to have been contained within the modern parish of Shipton under Wychwood. We have seen the manor could have contained up to 5,000 acres of arable - well over twice the area of the modern parish - and there was meadow, pasture and woodland as well. We know from its Saxon charters that the Witney estate filled four modern parishes. It was a smaller agricultural operation than the Royal Manor - 25 ploughteams compared with 53 - but it did include a lot of woodland (18).

Sarsden was also a large estate which must have occupied more land than is in the modern parish (28 ploughteams). I shall examine in detail the Domesday record for Sarsden in the second part of this study (19). But we do know that in the Evenlode valley, downstream from Shipton, Sarsden and the Royal Manor lay locked together in a fascinating way, which could support the theory that they were split off from a common antecedent estate.

Sarsden stretched from the modern parish of that name, incorporated a large slice of what is now Chadlington, and covered the parishes of Pudlicote and Chilson. The Sarsden woods recorded in Domesday are identified as lying at Knighton Copse in Chilson, south of the B4437 and adjacent to the King's demesne forest - the woodlands now in the parish of Sarsden are later plantations (20). The Royal Manor extended from Shipton beyond the Sarsden estate to another slice of Chadlington, and covered Shorthampton and Walcot (there is the site of a deserted medieval village there not far from Charlbury station). Within this interlocking pair of estates lay a manor of some substance at Lyneham, and two smaller estates each at Ascott and Chadlington, all recorded in Domesday.

The Royal Manor also stretched in other directions. A long arm lay to the east, south of the demesne forest of Wychwood (indeed, the forest - together with woodlands belonging to other estates - was largely surrounded by the two manors of Siptone and Sarsden). This arm included Leafield and Ramsden. South of these lay the Witney manor, the boundary of which is described in two Saxon Charters. Part of this is a straight trackway which forms the modern parish boundary between Leafield and Ramsden to the north, and Crawley and Hailey to the south (18). Miss Schumer identifies the woodlands belonging to the Royal Manor as occupying the triangle of land between this boundary and the forest, and between the villages of Leafield and Ramsden (21). She

thinks there were settlements at both places at the time of Domesday, later medieval assarting hereabouts adding to rather than creating the arable land.

The Royal Manor also had land at Swinbrook, which was cut off from the rest of the manor by the forest and woodlands belonging to other estates. These included the woodlands of Taynton, separated from their main estate - its Saxon Charter mentions the Frethelstone, Fawsgrove and Widley Copse as marker points on its boundaries (22). Elsewhere, the bounds of the Royal Manor are not yet distinct - it may have included land in the parishes of Milton and Bruern, but we have to accommodate the other estates recorded as at Shipton and Milton, together with a probable entry relating to Bruern.

### Looking Forward

So far in this study we met a large estate belonging to the Crown and smaller estates held respectively by a surviving Saxon thegn and his son, a King's officer of some sort and an ambitious Norman cleric on the make. This picture is by no means typical of the landholding generally reflected in Domesday. Crown holdings are of course common - the Crown was the largest individual landholder with about 15% of the total nationally (23) - but what is unusual is the total absence of the Church and the Norman Barons, who between them held the vast majority of estates. In the second part of this study we will look at the other manors in the neighbourhood - at Sarsden, Taynton, Lyneham, Idbury, Ascott and Spelsbury for instance. We shall find that this particular imbalance is to some extent redressed. The Witney Manor had belonged to the Bishops of Winchester since the second Saxon Charter of 1044.

As a later research project, I hope to investigate what happened to these estates throughout the medieval period, up to the end of the Wars of the Roses. Anticipating this, it does appear that the Royal Manor passed away from the Crown fairly soon. The earliest post-Domesday reference to this estate that I have encountered so far is about 1180, when it was held by the de Clare family. This is a grant by Maud de Clare, Countess of Hertford, of a silver mark (6s 8d) to be paid annually to Godstow Nunnery, secured on land in Shipton. The wording suggests that she may have inherited it from her family, the Saint Hillarys, some time before. In 1328 Maud's descendant Isabelle de Clare, Lady Berkeley, confirmed this grant (24). There are other references to the de Clare family holding the Manor meanwhile. It appears this estate continued in being, largely as an entity, until the

end of the Wars of the Roses. By then it had passed, by the process of feudal descent, to the widow of Richard Nevill, "Kingmaker" Earl of Warwick (their emblem, the bear and ragged staff, is to be found in St. Mary's Church). After her death, the estate was forfeit to the Crown, and what happened thereafter involves a new cycle of history in a more modern era. It appears the Royal Manor was broken up at this stage, though traces of it can be recognised in the shape of the Shipton ecclesiastical parish, which included Milton, Leafield and Ramsden until the nineteenth century.

#### Acknowledgements and Footnotes

My debt to Beryl Schumer, who has told me a great deal in private correspondence, will already be evident. I am also grateful to Dr Janet Cooper of the Victoria County History, who read an earlier draft of this paper and gave helpful advice. Committee members of the Wychwoods Local History Society have also made constructive criticisms. Whatever errors and misunderstandings remain are my own. The artwork is by my wife, Margaret.

(1) Professor W.G.Hoskins suggests there is also an early charter reference to Shipton (The Making of the English Landscape, 1955, Hodder & Stoughton, p.101 in the Pelican Edition). What must be the item in question - a grant in 777 by King Offa of Mercia to the Monks of St.Mary's, Evesham - is assumed to refer to Shipton-on-Cherwell, and the extant copy is in any case of doubtful validity (Margaret Gelling, The Early Charters of the Thames Valley, 1979, Leicester University Press, p.125).

(2) See generally Christopher Taylor, Village and Farmstead, 1983, George Philip.

(3) There are two available translations of the Oxfordshire Domesday folios, by Sir Frank Stenton in The Victoria History of the County of Oxford - Vol.1, 1939, Oxford University Press, pp.396-428; and in Domesday Book - Vol.14, Oxfordshire, 1978, in the Phillimore series, ed. John Morris. I have used the referencing system from the Phillimore series. The entry for the Royal Manor is PH 1,5.

(4) R.Welldon Finn, Domesday Book; a Guide, 1973, Phillimore, p. 36 and Raymond Moody, The Landscape of Burford, 1980, Tolsay Papers No. 2, p. 42.

(5) H.P.R.Finberg, The Formation of England 550-1042, 1976, The Paladin History of England, p. 218.

- (6) Finberg, The Formation of England, p. 224, quoting the "Colloquy" of Aelfric, who was later Abbot of Eynsham.
- (7) PH 1,7. E.M.Jope and I.B.Terrett in The Domesday Geography of South-East England, ed. H.C.Darby and E.M.J.Campbell, 1971, Cambridge University Press, p. 225.
- (8) PH 1,9; 58,29 and 59,21.
- (9) V.C.H. - Vol 1, p. 388.
- (10) PH 58,28.
- (11) PH 58,15 and 14,6.
- (12) Beryl Schumer, The Evolution of Wychwood to 1400; Pioneers, Frontiers and Forests, 1984, Leicester University Press, pp. 20/1.
- (13) Charles Bigham, Viscount Mersey, The Chief Ministers of England 920-1720, 1923, Chapter II.
- (14) PH 1,10.
- (15) The Evolution of Wychwood.
- (16) V. Wickham Steed, The Bounds of Wychwood Forest, 1961, Top. Oxon. No 7; and Schumer The Evolution of Wychwood, p. 22.
- (17) Leonard Cantor, The English Medieval Landscape, 1982, Croom Helm, p. 58.
- (18) PH 3,1. Margaret Gelling, Signposts to the Past, 1978, Dent reproduces the first Witney Charter, pp. 202/5. See also Frank Emery, The Oxfordshire Landscape, 1974, Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 60/3.
- (19) PH 32,2.
- (20) The Evolution of Wychwood, pp. 20/2 and 34.
- (21) Beryl Schumer, p. 20.
- (22) Margaret Gelling, The Early Charters, pp. 142/4.
- (23) R.Welldon Finn, A Guide, p. 48.
- (24) A. Clark (ed), The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, 1911, Early English Text Society, pp. 548/9.

## A Curious Find in Shipton

NORMAN FROST

Flight Lieutenant and Mrs Fair of The Hawthorns, Station Road, Shipton are two newer residents in Shipton and in the course of tidying a very neglected garden have made many interesting finds like, for example, Victorian bottle dumps. Recently they made a most interesting discovery. They found about thirty cigar-shaped objects, each 3-4 inches long which tests proved to be calcareous in origin. They baffled every member of the Society who looked at them and were not identified until they were finally matched with a collection in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

It appears they are sea urchin spines (*Heterocentrotus Mammillatus*) which are found in the Indian and Pacific oceans where they were used as a form of coinage or for making necklaces and other decorations.

Pitt Rivers Museum produced a photograph of one of their exhibits - a wooden hat from Polynesia decorated with seashells and sea-urchin spines around the brim. The hat was carved from a single piece of wood and was used as a form of ceremonial headgear by the local kings. It was presented by the King of Sonsoral Island to a visitor when the SS Medora visited the island in 1884.

So at last we know what they are! I hope no one asks how they got here.



The hat decorated with seashells and sea-urchin spines

## The Probate Inventory of William Hyatt, 1587

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SUE JOURDAN

A probate inventory is a list of the goods and chattels belonging to a person, made and valued by neighbours or executors after their death. They were intended to protect heirs from excessive claims, and were made from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century by which time they had become short formal declarations with little detail. But the early ones, often on small scraps of paper and before the days of standard spelling, reveal much information about the lives of individuals. Those people with properties in more than one diocese - that is usually the heirs of wealthier people - presented the documents for probate at the Perogative Court of Canterbury, and those documents that survive are in the Public Record Office. The people in the Wychwoods who had goods valued at over £5 had their papers offered for probate at Oxford, and with the recent move of the diocesan documents out of the Bodleian Library, those surviving are now stored at the County Record Office.

There is a good collection of about 140 inventories from 1587-1730 surviving from Shipton and Milton under Wychwood, sometimes with a will. The earliest one is for the goods and chattels of William Hyatt, mercer, of Milton in the parish of Shipton under Wychwood, 7 July 1587 (figures 1 & 2). No will survives.

By 1587 Shipton parish registers had been kept for 49 years with many entries of Hiatt in Milton and Lyneham but with little detail of kinships. The name of Hyatt is variously spelt as Hiatt, Hyatt, Hiatt and Hyatt. The burial of William Hiatt is registered as 28 June 1587, as "Willaim Hiatt of Milton son of Robert longsmithens (long since) disceased". There is a burial on 22 November 1572 of Robert Hiatt "thelder" (the elder) of Milton "dwelling at the westend of greene there". On 13 November 1545 is registered the marriage of Robertes Hiatt to Alicia Huckes with two Williams christened in 1547, on 20 October and 10 April but with no details of parents. There are earlier register entries for William and Robert Hiatt but it is possible that William Hiatt, mercer, was born in 1547 in a house by the Green in Milton, son of Robert and Alicia, and died aged 40 years. There is no record of his marriage or any christenings but he may have married out of the parish. If his father died in 1572, which would correspond to

the long since deceased, he had had a long wait for his father's legacy of £51 (see the last item in the inventory).

Of the appraisers, the registers give little help in establishing a relationship between William and Simon. The entries concerning Philip Smith are for the christening of four children, Amy, Ann, John and a second An, from 1589 to 1594, and the burial of four children, Emmi, An, Richard and Amy from 1587 to 1596, all sons and daughters of Philip Smith of Milton, pedlar. Perhaps as a traveller, he got his supplies from William and was in the neighbourhood at the time of his death.

In February 1585 John Parrot married Elizabeth Hiatt of Milton. It is therefore possible that the appraiser John Parrot was a son-in-law of William.

The valuations given are often arbitrary with no comparison possible between inventories of the same time but do give an indication of the relative values. The totals are often wrong.

Five of the twelve items seem to apply to his trade as a mercer of small-ware dealer. In the seventeenth century, a mercer was defined as "In the city one that deals only in silks and stuffs; in the country towns, one that trades in all sorts of linen, woollen, silk and grocery wares". It is possible that William travelled to markets with his goods, with his horse, road-saddle (riding saddle), bridle, packsaddle which had straps for fastening in packs and a tange which was a large girth used to fasten the load or panniers on the packsaddle (item 1). He had a pair of hampers and a pannell, a saddle-cloth to protect the horse's back (item 3). The tilt cloth was made of canvas and used as a cover, usually on a cart, but as there is no reference to a cart he may have used it to cover his load on his horse.

His trade stock of £8 6s 10d for the small wares is considerable (item 7). Excluding the £5 from his father's legacy, it is nearly half the value of the inventory. We can recognise the "pynnes" (pins), "poyntes" (needles), "buttons", "thredd", "fringe" and "stockings". The distinction between silk lace and statute lace is interesting. In keeping with the doctrine of the time that everyone was born to a certain station ordained by heaven and should content himself with his lot, laws had been passed in many reigns called Sumptuary Laws. They had traditionally prescribed the degree of luxury permissible to each class, as well as sometimes trying to restrict extravagance in food, drink, dress and household equipment for religious or moral reasons. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth I issued proclamations concerning restrictions on the wearing of rich fabrics and expensive ornamentation, often repeating earlier proclamations made by her father, Henry VIII and



Mylto(n)

This inventorie of all ye goodes moveable & unmoveable of  
Wm Hyatt of Mylton w(ith)in ye p(a)rishe of  
Shipton Under Whichwoode mercer, late  
decessed, p(ra)sed by us Simo(n) Hyatt,  
Phillippe Smithe, & Jhon  
Parret, the v<sup>th</sup>  
of Julye  
1587

Imp(rimus) one horsse, one roade sadle; & bridle, one packesadle & tange	23s
It(em) three fishe barrels, three sope barrels one havinge by estimatio(n) viii li of scope & a litle Boxe containinge 4 pounds of sopē	4s 8d
It(em) on paire of Hampiers, one paire of pottes & on pan(n)ell	2s 6d
It(em) one coverlidd & all his apparrell	20s
It(em) one tylt clo(a)the	12s
It(em) three smale coffers	4s
It(em) certaine smale wares as pynnes, poyntes, buttons, thredd, silke lace, statute lace, spices, frint(?k)e, fringe, Apernige, & Stockinges	£ 8 6s 10d
It(em) one winowe clo(a)the, three sakes, 2 maultsives, 3 litle sives, & one half pecke	6s
It(em) certaine bookes & pap(er)	16s
It(em) in silver	£ 5 3s 2d
It(em) twoe powches	22s
It(em) one legacie due unto him by his fathers last will	£ 5

Summa totalis £23

Exhibit xi July 1587

her sister Mary Tudor. By 1580, with the growth of power and wealth of the middle class, a new Act came on the Statute Book modifying the previous regulations, to allow a certain degree of finery to those who could afford it. It was complained that during the reign of Elizabeth I it was becoming more difficult to identify an individual as belonging to a certain class by his apparel as had been possible previously. Silk was not produced in England and was imported as raw silk or finished fabric from the continent. As this affected the balance of trade restrictions were often imposed. So the silk and statute lace in William's stock was giving choice within the law.

Imported spices must have been in demand to vary or reduce the strong flavour of salt meat as well as preservatives. I can find no meaning for "frinte" (or possible "frinke"). "Apernige" is probably a dialect form of apron.

I wonder what the "certaine books" were. Perhaps the paper for this inventory came from this supply (item 9).

The inventory also lists a few domestic items as well as his "coverlid" (bed cover) and "apparel" (item 4). The making of malt and brewing was carried on in many country homes and William has some of the equipment in sacks and sieves. The winnow cloth was used to create the draught to separate the corn from the chaff (item 8). The three small coffers may have been for storage of his wares or his clothes or household lines (item 6). It is unusual that no table, stools or bed are listed - he may have been living with other members of his family, or it might suggest that he only used the village as a base. It is a pity that we cannot know more about him.

Most of the early inventories I have looked at are for small farmers, and William Hyatt's list gives an interesting glimpse of a different aspect of sixteenth century life. We are lucky to have it as our oldest inventory. He must have been quite an experience to meet with the mixture of aromas!

### References

- Wm. Hyatt, C.R.O. MS. Wills Oxon 297/4/15 Inv.  
The parish registers of Shipton-under Wychwood, MSS. D.D. par Shipton under Wychwood d.1.  
John S. Moore (editor), The Goods and Chattels of our Forefathers.  
Francis W. Steer, Farm and cottage inventories of Mid-Essex.  
Oxford Record Society, Vol.XLIV Household and Farm Inventories in Oxfordshire, 1550-90.  
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