

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

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Foreword

As we write this, WLHS is celebrating its 25th anniversary. We are justly proud in being a thriving Society with many achievements to our name not least the volumes of Wychwood History of which this is the 21st. The articles in this volume again cover a wide range of periods and people in the Wychwood villages.

Reginald Tiddy who lived in Ascott was very much a man of his time, the beginning of the 20th century. A man of great sensibility and, though physically unsuited, he felt it his duty to enlist to fight in the First World War. He died on the Somme aged 36 years. There is also an article of a much earlier period in Ascott based on a court book covering 16 years in the later part of the sixteen century.

In 2003 *Wychwoods History 19* was devoted to a number of articles about Shipton Court. An article, based on correspondence and oral history, continues with more information of one of the Court owners, Graeme Thomson and his groom, William Walker. At the same period in quite different circumstances, Gordon Carpenter was born in a two-up and two-down cottage in Frog Lane, Milton where he grew up with his nine brothers and sisters. An article based on oral history records Gordon and his wife Jean's lives.

Two articles record a builder and a building in the centre of Shipton both written by the present owners of the properties concerned. In 1865 James Baggs built himself a house but left his little black notebook under the attic floorboards giving a glimpse of his work and accounts. The owner of Kelcot in Church Street was intrigued enough by the quirkiness of the exterior to want to find out more.

And we also have a good bit of gossip from Lyneham in the seventeenth century when the inhabitants were exercised by the alleged defamation of Dorothy Collett by Henry Hyatt.

As always we are pleased to receive articles for inclusion in future editions of Wychwoods History.

SUE JOURDAN, JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE AND TRUDY YATES

Reginald Tiddy

ANNE PEDLEY

On Yonder island, not to rise,
 Never to stir forth free.
 Far from his fold a dead lad lies
 That once was friends with me

Lie you easy, dream you light,
 And sleep you fast for aye;
 And luckier may you find the night
 Than ever you found the day.

From *A Shropshire Lad*, A.E. Housman

In the 'Golden Days' leading up to the Great War of 1914-1918, Reginald John Elliott Tiddy, born on the 19th March, 1880, at Margate in Kent, epitomised the late Victorian-Edwardian intellectual that so easily moved from glorious schooldays to the life of a don at an Oxford college still reminiscent of the 'dreaming spires' immortalised in the poetry of Matthew Arnold.

So typically English was Tiddy, or Reggie, as he was always known to his friends, that he could easily have stepped out of the pages of an E.M. Forster novel, so it is not surprising to learn that Tibby, the brother of the Schlegel sisters in *Howards End* was based on Tiddy himself, who had been friends with Forster whilst at school at Tonbridge. On the surface, this is certainly a Tiddy that his many acquaintances would recognise, but scratch a little below the surface and a far more interesting character emerges, whose personality still has the power to fascinate people nearly a hundred years after his death.

Those of you that know, and perhaps use, Tiddy Hall in the small Oxfordshire village of Ascott under Wychwood, may have looked up at the portrait that stands in the new hall and pondered about the life of the original benefactor of the building. A gentle, be-spectacled face looks upon those who still use the hall and the stone plaque informs the reader why it was erected and that his life story ends, not in a peaceful Oxfordshire graveyard, but on the battlefields of France. In between the year of his birth in 1880 and that fateful year of 1916, the story of a true Englishman

emerges who has never been forgotten in the village that he loved so much.

Reginald Tiddy may have been born in Kent, the 'Garden of England', but he developed his love of the Oxfordshire countryside through his mother's family who were local farmers from Ramsden, a small village not far from Ascott and part of the old ecclesiastic parish of Shipton under Wychwood. It was here that he spent many holidays exploring the surrounding countryside in the company of his father and his brother. William Elliott Tiddy, an academic, was also the part owner of the Albion House School at Margate. Reggie himself was a pupil there until leaving to take up a boarding scholarship in Park House at Tonbridge School, nearby, in 1893.

Tonbridge School, founded in 1553 by Sir Andrew Judde, was, and still is, a public school with a sound academic background that also encourages its students to partake in the traditional school sports of cricket, rugby and soccer. Reggie, who suffered from asthma and poor eyesight, chose the academic route to glory and within a few years of his arrival, he had won several academic prizes for his expertise in Greek and Latin prose and verse competition. By the summer of 1896, he was 2nd in the Upper Sixth and the following term became School Praeposter and Head of the Upper Sixth, an exceptional achievement when you consider that Reggie lost his mother, to whom he was very close, in the same year.

In 1897, Reggie took over as Head Boy from Maurice Llewelyn Taylor,



REGINALD TIDDY 1912

who also lost his life on the Somme battlefield, sixteen days after Tiddy. Further academic glory followed, as well as winning Gold Pen prizes for Classics, he was also awarded a Leaving Exhibition worth £80 to study at Oxford. At least one speech of acceptance was given in Latin!

The academic prizes followed Reggie when he left Tonbridge for University College, Oxford. He took first class honours in both Classical Moderations and 'Greats' and was elected to a prize fellowship at his own college in 1902. His heart, however, and perhaps the first signs of some rebellion, was set on teaching the relatively new academic discipline of English Literature, somewhat frowned upon by the Classicists as a lightweight subject. As there was no opening in Oxford to enable him to teach the subject at this time, he began his career lecturing on Classics at Trinity College, where he was elected a Fellow in 1905. When finally a new School of English was established, Reggie, with his love of Anglo-Saxon and Early English texts was thoroughly qualified to teach the subject.

Early during his Oxford days, Reggie had become fascinated with his own roots and a trip to Cornwall in 1906 enabled him to establish links with various aunts and other members of the family who still resided in the area. In a letter to a friend, he writes excitedly that he managed to trace some 'Tiddy's (sic) back to the middle of the eighteenth century, when they seem to end in the usual *cul de sac* of illegitimacy.'

At around the same time, Reggie began to take a serious interest in the folk-lore and literature that, with the march of progress, was fast being forgotten in the small villages of England. His particular interest lay in collecting, before they left living memory, the recollections and particulars of Mummings' plays that had always been traditionally performed over the Christmas festivities and the practice of which was now slowly dying out in the villages around Oxford.

Soon, Reggie began to merge his interests in folk-drama with dancing and, with his fellow Trinity colleague, the composer George Butterworth, was part of the revival in folk dancing, and in particular the Morris, which was launched by Cecil Sharp. Both Tiddy and Butterworth were members of Sharp's English Folk Dance Society Demonstration Team and often danced locally and further afield in such places as Stratford-upon-Avon.

Reggie was a founder member of the Oxford branch of the English Folk Dance Society and when the group was asked by the Oxford University Dramatic Society to help in a production of Thomas Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*. Reggie quickly agreed, as he thought it would be the perfect recruiting ground for new members to join his dance group.

D.R. Pye, in his *Memoir* of Tiddy, who initially had misgivings about the co-production, claimed it was a 'triumphant success' that was 'doubly encored at each performance'. Such was the accolade heaped upon the dancers that Tiddy, for a short while, became quite famous as 'The Dancing Don'!

If Reggie was enjoying himself dancing and collecting plays, he also took his responsibilities as a lecturer seriously. In a letter, he recounts how his 'brilliant Trinity men are reducing me to a mental imbecile and a physical shadow and will probably end by leaving me a moral rake.' Matters, however, and his own dedication to ensuring his students were well prepared for their studies, must have improved immensely when he wrote shortly afterwards that 'Everything is turning out gloriously for me nowadays and I almost expect to hear "Thou fool, tomorrow thou shall die".' Perhaps a slightly dramatic, but somewhat ominous prediction, for world events that would later have such an impact on everybody's lives.

By this time, Reggie had moved to Ascott under Wychwood with his father and set up home firstly, at Ascott End and later at Priory Cottage. Initially, it seems that the move was instigated to escape the damp Oxford climate that aggravated his asthma, but it is likely that his deep love of the area, and its past associations with the Morris, also drew him to exchange college rooms, and the rigid social strictures of living in hall, for a country life that offered the chance to integrate with the village. When Reggie moved to Ascott there was no surviving Morris group. Typically, he set about visiting the older inhabitants of the village, or inviting them to tea at his cottage, to learn more about the dances and music that had, until comparatively recent times, been an important part of village life.

Central to the revival of a new Morris group of dancers was Reggie's friendship with the Honeybone family. It is likely that Reggie entertained William Honeybone at his cottage in order to learn more about the old dances and that it is around this time that his friendship with Ralph began. Doris M. Warner, who was William's grand-daughter, recalls the impact that Tiddy and his friends had on the village: 'Then a great change came to Ascott. Mr Reginald Tiddy came to live at Priory Cottage with his Father and Brother... Mr Cecil Sharp often came to Ascott collecting old folk songs and dances. My sister had a shilling for singing for him.' In later years, Doris would recall the Morris Bells that were borrowed by Sharpe and wrote: 'I still treasure these bells and like to think of my Grandfather dancing with them over a hundred years ago, and of them being handled by Cecil Sharp, William Kimber and Reggy Tiddy, three men who gave so much happiness to others.'

1912 was an extremely busy year for Reggie, not only did he dance regularly with Sharp's Demonstration Morris side, but he also became chairman of the English Folk and Dance Society. He began a series of lectures that would result in a book, published posthumously, as the *Mummings' Plays*, but by far his greatest achievement was to purchase some land in the village in order to erect a village hall that could be used not only for dancing and folk music, but also for education and the general good of the village. This seems to have been the direct result of meeting in 1911, Henry Sanderson Furniss, later Lord Sanderson. Both Furniss and



ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD TEAM WITH TIDDY THIRD FROM LEFT IN BACK ROW.

his wife were committed to improving the lives of the ordinary working man and his family and had been involved with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), founded by Albert Mansbridge for some years.

Once the land for the village hall was acquired and a building erected, it became the natural choice of venue for recreational activities that were instrumental in breaking down 'social barriers' within the village. Within a short time Mrs Furniss had started a 'Margaret Macmillan' school clinic in the hall, one of the first social experiments of the time that provided free medical treatment for those who could not afford doctors' fees and it was not much later that the hall, with Reggie's support, was used for WEA classes.

Furniss recalls his friendship with Reggie in his autobiography *Memories of Sixty Years*, and the effect the hall had on village life: 'There was folk-dancing out of doors in the summer, and weekly dances took place in the hall throughout the winter for many years to come... It has undoubtedly been a great resource and recreation to the people, and has done much to ... break down the aloofness and lack of fellowship which is so common in village life.'

Reggie's natural altruism did not stop at establishing a village hall at Ascott. It was a time when the ordinary working man found it almost impossible to pursue a university education. Reggie's financial support of Ruskin College, where this was possible, clearly shows his desire to help less fortunate men realize their ambitions. For everyone, however, time was beginning to run out and events in Europe in the next few years would see the world that Reggie was trying to create fall apart. Few people, in the



MORRIS DANCERS, ASCOTT ABOUT 1913 WITH TIDDY STANDING WATCHING.

gloriously hot months of the summer of 1914 could have foreseen the impact of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on the 28th June 1914. Within weeks, all the main powers had mobilised their armies and when the Germans marched through Belgium on their way to France, Britain's fate was sealed when old treaties were evoked and war was declared at midnight on August 4th, 1914.

A natural pacifist, Reggie was no supporter of the jingoistic brigade who took the war fully to heart and little understood the impact it would have on the country should it go on indefinitely. He quickly realised that he could not stand by and allow others to go off to war to fight. In a letter to his friend, a former tutor at University College, Lieutenant-Colonel Farquharson, who urged him to accept a transfer to the Intelligence Corps, he made this clear: 'I don't agree with you that any one kind of person ought to risk his life any more or less than any other. If war has any justification at all it can only be a moral one, and if so there can be no distinction of persons.'

At the time of writing this letter, Reggie, although totally unsuited to army life with his asthma and shortsightedness, had already joined up, although it took him several attempts to pass the medical boards. By the 29th July, 1915, Reggie was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant with the 2nd/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and, after



LIEUTENANT REGINALD
J.E. TIDDY, 2ND/4TH
OXFORDSHIRE AND
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT
INFANTRY.

completing instructional duties at Broomfield, was accepted for overseas service, joining his battalion on March 8th for training at Salisbury Plain, where he still managed to dance for the troops and to collect some local Mummings' plays.

On the 6th May, 1916, the battalion was inspected by the King, a sure sign that they were due to be sent overseas and indeed, Lieutenant Reginald Tiddy of the 2nd/4th Ox & Bucks left the shores he loved for the last time only a few weeks later.

The battalion arrived in France and found itself in the Somme region. His first letter home, addressed to L. Pearsall-Smith, another author and writer on the English language and literature, informs him that although they are not yet in the trenches, he is in demand as an interpreter and within the 'sound of the guns and bombs.' The following month, apart from some instruction from a more seasoned battalion in the trenches, his time was spent almost idyllically in support lines at a charming house owned by two French ladies who made a fuss of him and provided him with 'excellently cooked and served meals.' He also managed to befriend a local chemist who bought and sold excellent dessert wines and introduced him to the delights of drinking 'Granache'.

By June 21st, however, a spell of six days in the trenches begins to impress upon him the realities and dangers of trench warfare. During this time, one of his platoon soldiers, Private Albert Randall of St. Ebbes, was killed by a sniper. The incident moved Reggie to tears and in a letter to the President of Trinity College he asks: 'Would you go and see sometime the widowed mother of one of our kids who has been killed, the third son to

perish in the war? Her name is Mrs Randall....a charming boy her son was. I have felt nothing so far so keenly as his death, and the poor mother is broken-hearted.'

In July, at the height of the Somme battle, the battalion was detailed to hold the original front line whilst the 61st Division made an advance on German trenches. This was Reggie's first true taste of warfare and in a letter to Pearsall-Smith he writes: 'I guess you will have gathered that I have been through some adventures since I wrote to you last. It seems an age, and I expect you will have wondered about it. I don't feel quite sure how much I ought to tell you, but I'll say this, that we were detailed to hold the original front line of a trench from which an advance was made, and that we held the line and did the clearing up afterwards. It was fearfully fatiguing and depressing and unwholesome work, and it got on my nerves a good deal, and a good deal on the men's too. But I won't dwell on it.'

On July 26th, 1916, he wrote to recently-wounded Lieutenant W.H. Moberly, who had excelled himself in going out into No Man's Land at night. The letter is chatty and informal, but informs him of the death of another one of Tiddy's men, Corporal Upfold, whose death 'is the worst thing that has happened to me so far.' A letter shortly afterwards to his friend, D. R. Pye, reiterates the point that 'I have lost some of my best friends among the men, and it is the most painful thing that can happen to one; but there, too, it might have been worse.'

The battalion, after some rest, returned to the trenches in August, it is unlikely that Reggie had heard the sad news of George Butterworth's death on the 5th. Only five days later, on the night of August 10th, whilst tending to the welfare of his men, Lieutenant Reginald Tiddy was himself killed by a stray shell. Ralph Honeybone, who had been his servant throughout their time in France, wrote immediately to Pearsall-Smith informing him of the nature of Reggie's death: 'I went down to see what could be done but found he was dead. He was hit all down the back and must have been very close to the shell when it exploded. He was buried the next day. I went down to it. I saw him before he was buried and he looked very peaceful and lovely as his face was not touched. It is hard to think that we shall never see him again as he was my best friend, it has nearly broken my heart as he was more than a brother to me.'

By the time the Great War ended on the 11th November 1918, there were hardly any Ascott Morris dancers left. Ralph Honeybone returned home, but his brother Victor, of the 5th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment, was killed on the 2nd December 1916. A further twelve names are commemorated on a memorial plaque on Ascott church gates.

Of Cecil Sharpe's Demonstration Morris Team, George Butterworth, Reginald Tiddy and George Wilkinson all met their deaths on the Somme. Butterworth's haunting music, so redolent of the English countryside has

become a musical memorial to a generation of men who lost their lives in the Great War and Reggie Tiddy, who did so much for Ascott under Wychwood, lies in his 'corner of a foreign field that is forever England' at Laventie Military Cemetery, La Gorgue Nord, somewhere in France.

This article could not have been written without the kind help of the following people: Martin Kirk, Wendy Pearse, Doc Rowe and Nick Saloman.



REGINALD
TIDDY'S
GRAVESTONE
IN LAVENTIE
MILITARY
CEMETERY.

The Thomsons and the Walkers of Shipton Court

Introduction: How it *can* happen and seldom does by Trudy Yates

When the Publications Committee decided to devote Journal nineteen to Shipton Court in conjunction with the 400th birthday celebration of the house, the three of us met to divide up the research. I opted for the first two owners of the house in the 20th century – Fred Pepper and John Graeme Thomson.

I had discovered a series of photographs taken before, during and after the extensive Pepper renovation in 1902 and it seemed a good opportunity to debunk the commonly held view that Mr Pepper had 'destroyed the integrity' of an important Jacobean stately home. Besides, Fred Pepper's daughter Elsie had written a family history in a book called *Portrait for a Grandson* which Mary McNeill had handed on to me. The article on the Peppers fairly wrote itself. The eleven year tenure of the Thomson family was quite another story. We had little information other than some taped conversations with Dor Thomson when she came to address the WLHS in 1988. These were helpful but the material was thin.

The first breakthrough arrived when I received a telephone call from John Rawlins. He had travelled to Bampton at the request of Kate Wylie to take possession of a number of Thomson family photographs which had belonged to Dor. Kate was clearing the house in order to move into a small apartment and Dor was settled permanently at the Mill House Residential Home in Witney. John brought the photographs to me and passed on Kate's telephone number with the suggestion that I get in touch. 'I think she may be a valuable source of Thomson information for you', he said. He was right. Several telephone calls and at least two tea parties later, Kate and I were fast friends. I learned a great deal about her life with Dor which began after World War II and was also given Joan Thomson Rein's address and 'phone number in Oslo. The introduction to the younger Thomson daughter added a new dimension to the Court's horse-centred years that Dor had described so enthusiastically. It wasn't long before I realised that this was a multi-faceted and deeply intriguing family saga.

I was delighted with Joan's letters which brimmed with interesting Shipton Court stories – beautifully told. Even more satisfying was her visit



WILLIAM WALKER AND JOHN GRAEME THOMSON IN THE SAHARA DESERT. JOAN REIN WAS DELIGHTED WITH THIS PICTURE WHICH SHE HAD NEVER SEEN. HER RESPONSE TO JGT'S SARTORIAL CHOICE FOR THE DESERT WAS ONE OF AMUSEMENT. 'HE CHOSE TO DRESS AS HE ALWAYS DID WHEN NOT IN HUNTING CLOTHES. HE IS EITHER WEARING SPATS WHICH HE FAVOURED OR SILK SOCKS.' COULD WE NOT ADD THAT THERE IS EVIDENCE OF A GENEROUS DAB OF BRILLIANTINE?

to England in April 2004. Her memories tumbled over each other in response to her surroundings when she lunched with us in her old school room (our dining-room). These recollections were too late for Journal nineteen but were published as 'Joan Rein Remembers' in Journal twenty. This might well have been the end of the story but it most certainly was not.

In late March 2005, our Secretary Wendy Pearse received a generous contribution to the Society's coffers and a fascinating letter from Graeme C.D. Cairns of Alloa in Scotland. He informed us that he was the grandson of William Walker, John Graeme Thomson's head groom and the 'Walker' referred to in the account dealing with JGT's journey across the Sahara Desert. 'I was named after Mr. Thomson', he added.

Wendy handed the letter on to me, knowing that I would be delighted. Mr Cairns had somehow obtained a copy of Journal nineteen and was appreciative enough to send the contribution to the Society and to share an outline of the Walker family history with us.

I wrote back immediately and we have carried on a brisk correspondence ever since. He told me he had received the Journal from Ken Tullis, a descendant of JGT's sister Jean and Major Ramsey Tullis. Kate Wylie had sent copies to the Tullis family.

Graeme Cairns knew Dor Thomson well. He saw her at least once a year when she travelled to Edinburgh for the festival in August. 'The Tullis family always invited me to dinner during Dor's visits and she and I had lunch together at a local hotel'. Dor talked often of her father and of Walker. 'She always spoke lovingly but she had no illusions about JGT's excesses', Graeme said.

When I received his article 'The Thomsons and the Walkers of Shipton Court', I mentioned that he had failed to relate the history of his immediate family except for describing his parents' wedding in Shipton and the fact that they returned to live in Scotland. This omission was swiftly remedied and Graeme gave me permission to add the information at the conclusion of his article.

Graeme Cairns was born in 1930 and attended Alloa Academy. He worked in the offices of a local shipyard for 17 years and then moved on to one of the local breweries. (There were nine at one time making Alloa second only to Edinburgh in beer production) Here, he prospered and became office manager responsible for the intake of millions of pounds of barley. He took early retirement after 25 years of service. His story comes alive when he describes the real pleasure of his life – the theatre. 'All my life I have worked in the theatre in my spare time and when I retired I became a full time director for the next eleven years, retiring when I was 71.

During that time I directed three large scale musicals and an opera together with dozens of plays. I have directed a large number of American plays including all of Arthur Miller's early works, several by Tennessee Williams, Inge, Wilder and Albee. Alongside this I do a lot of writing concentrating on history, the theatre and opera'.

Graeme is also interested in medieval architecture and monasticism and he once spent seven consecutive years as a guide and sacristan at Iona abbey. He loves travel and journeyed to Istanbul and Rome last year. He has added immeasurably to the rich tapestry that is the history of both the Thomson and Walker families and of Shipton Court itself.

The Thomsons and the Walkers of Shipton Court by Graeme Cairns, with additions by Joan Rein

The Thomsons, edited by Trudy Yates

John Graeme Thomson was born at 'The Loaning', Grange Road, Alloa, in 1882. In the same year his parents, David Thomson and Jane Durham Scott built their new home, 'Greenfield House', a large mansion just north of the town.

The Thomsons were connoisseurs of the fine arts so in time their house



GRAEME C. D. CAIRNS,
WILLIAM WALKER'S
GRANDSON, IN HIS ALLOA
HOME.

became filled with priceless works of art and antiques. These included Louis XIV furniture, drawings by Michelangelo, a Raphael, several Canalettos, Henry Raeburn, Alan Ramsay, William McTaggart seascapes and sculptures by Canova.

The family name is actually Thomson-Paton because David Thomson and his brother John, whose mother was a Paton, both had their

surname changed by deed poll to Paton as did others. This was to continue the Paton dynasty in name; otherwise it would have ceased to exist. The family firm, the largest wool manufacturers in the Empire, had factories in Canada, South Africa and Australia. The name of the firm was John Paton, Sons and Co Limited but when they amalgamated with the Baldwins of Halifax the name changed to Paton and Baldwins Ltd. By the 1970s it had become Coats Paton Ltd, then Coats Viyella Ltd. By 2000 the company had ceased to exist.

When John Graeme Thomson moved to Shipton under Wychwood in 1919 he was no longer a working director of the company but was on the board and attended meetings in Halifax every six months. The Thomson-Patons would have been by today's standards multi-millionaires. As it was, JGT's father was one of Scotland's first millionaires. David Thomson never used the double-barrelled name and ordered his sons not to do so either; none ever did.

JGT was the second eldest of a family of six – four sons and two daughters. The eldest son William was packed off to Australia in 1926, having brought disgrace on the family; he never returned. The eldest daughter Margaret married James Maitland-Gardiner a wealthy furniture manufacturer. His firm was eventually to become the House of Fraser, one time owner of Harrods. Jean married Major Ramsey Tullis of Tullis-Russell, paper manufacturers. Albert and Moffatt the two youngest sons became Borders farmers and were never involved with the family business.

MARY CATHERINE (BAY)
THOMSON WITH HER FIRST
CHILD DOROTHY (DOR). THIS
PICTURE WAS TAKEN BY AN
EDINBURGH PHOTOGRAPHER
BEFORE THE FAMILY MOVED TO
SHIPTON.

JGT married Mary Catherine McLean known as 'Bay' in 1909.¹ They had known each other from childhood since the McLeans lived next door to the Thomsons – their home being 'Bedford House' built by their uncle Lord Blanesburgh. Bay had three sisters, Janet, Annie and Edith none of whom married.²

JGT became seriously interested in Bay McLean when the two of them were involved in an amateur theatre production in Alloa.³ He was already a heavy drinker but he was also enormously charming, attractive and very wealthy. He proposed to the pretty Miss McLean and she accepted him. Walker family history maintains that Bay held JGT to a drunken, spur of the moment proposal and that the marriage was one of convenience and extremely unhappy.

Joan Thomson Rein, the couple's youngest daughter, vigorously disagrees.

She recalls that JGT's pet name for his wife was 'Hattie', the name of the character she played in the show that brought them together.

However, the marriage was destined to be stormy with the wayward, self-indulgent husband firmly in control.

JGT's uncle John Thomson-Paton, had no family and left his house 'Norwood' (long since demolished) to his nephew. This large Alloa mansion was the house where the Thomson's three children were born – Dorothy, David and Joan. As the family grew, JGT's lung condition worsened and his health deteriorated to the point that he was given only three years to live. Furthermore this brief period was promised only if he left the mill and moved south.



Bay was distraught. She was devoted to her three older sisters and spent most of her time with them. When JGT found 'Shipton Court' where he could indulge his love of horses, racing and gambling, she must have been filled with foreboding about the move. She disliked horses, cows and dogs and was not particularly interested in travel. Still, she loved her husband and was determined to indulge him during his three remaining years of life. The family moved to Shipton where JGT was to live life to the full for eleven years.

Bay Thomson's sisters visited Shipton Court every year and it was during those weeks of close companionship that the 'Lady of the Manor' was happiest. The four women shopped in Cheltenham and Oxford where, according to the Walker family's version of events, the ladies from Scotland were always 'kitted out' for the following year.

JGT bought a caravan to take his family on summer holidays to Wales. Bay enjoyed these camping trips as much as the children did. Their flamboyant father was always in rare form – often wearing outrageous costumes and speaking foreign languages to baffle the natives and delight his family. Graeme Cairns had first hand knowledge of the caravan in its vintage years. It was inherited by his grandfather, William Walker, JGT's stud groom, when Thomson died in 1929 and served young Graeme Cairns as a play house until it disintegrated.

Although the Thomsons entertained, the guests were invariably friends of JGT's. Bay often declined to accept invitations – even to hunt balls at 'Blenheim Palace'. These were enormously aristocratic events hosted by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and attended, not infrequently, by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII), Lord and Lady Redesdale with their famous daughters the Mitford sisters and Oswald Mosley. Graeme Cairns was told by his grandfather that the only time Mrs Thomson appeared at the Heythrop Meet was on Boxing Day when it was traditionally held at the Court. 'Walker knew them all', his grandson writes. 'He was once given a fifty pound note by the Duke of Marlborough for finding him a more suitable mount – a king's ransom in the 1920s.'

JGT indulged in badger hunting and coursing - now illegal – and in cock fighting which was also illegal but more easily concealed. He gambled and had a great deal of success with race horses which he bred – especially one named Belle Fleet. He regularly attended all the fashionable and important race meetings such as Cheltenham, Ascot, Goodwood, the Derby and the St. Leger. In short, he indulged himself in all of his favourite pastimes – sweetening each activity with a liberal dose of alcohol.

Joan Rein reminisced about her parents' fraught relationship in a letter from Oslo.

'To the end they were devoted to each other – in spite of all father's sidesteps. Mother always said that if you want to keep someone you

love, you must give them freedom. If you tie them to you, you will lose them. This was her advice to me when I married'.

Joan remembered vividly the only time she enjoyed a normal family life with her parents. She went with them on a six week cruise at the end of January 1929.

'I spent all day with them and had all of my meals with them. They were very loving and enjoyed each other's company. It was idyllic'.

Sadly, five months later JGT was dead.

At Dor Thomson's memorial service, Kate Wylie referred to Mary Catherine as an 'inadequate' mother. This was not meant to be cruel. It was simply a statement of fact as she saw it – through Dor Thomson's eyes. Graeme Cairns also described the Thomson marriage as 'one of convenience and unhappy one at that'. Both opinions were coloured by those who sided firmly with JGT.

Joan Rein's comment –

'At my father's death my 'inadequate' mother was left with that huge house, 30 staff, horses, an enormous overdraft and total chaos. She had lived for several weeks in a home with oxygen cylinders stacked outside the bedroom, four nurses, George V's lung specialist visiting and Dad's mistress installed for the last few days. I was sent to stay with her husband and niece who lived with them. What kind of woman would have been 'adequate' in those circumstances? After my visit to you I have remembered so much. Since my own memoirs for my children (in Norwegian) are completed I have decided it is time that someone records what my mother's life was like. I shall try to do justice to a very tragic and underestimated woman.'

As Joan Rein reminded me, an honest family history is not a straightforward statement of birth, marriage and death dates. It is a complicated interweaving of personalities, family backgrounds, intellectual and spiritual longings, duty and love.

'My mother's life was hell but she decided that for his sake and that of her children, she would hold out. Eleven years just about killed her. She was punctured – lost her spirit. When Dad died, he left us more or less penniless. Of course all of the horses were sold at once and Dor's life was completely changed. Mother had given up all of her interests – all her love of music and opera, her love of the sea and she lived with a sick man while hating illness – nurses and doctors in the house. I don't know who was to be pitied most'.

Joan went on to confide what was perhaps the saddest fact of Mary Catherine's life.

'Mother loved children but told me that she had been deprived of her own. We were always cared for by nannies and governesses while she

had to be the hostess. I can ONCE remember her bathing us which was such a boisterous occasion that the bathroom on the floor below had to be redecorated. Mother's sister Annie was my mother. I saw her for a month each summer. I was never on intimate terms with Bay although we really had a lot in common. I never knew what to say to her if we sat at lunch or dinner alone. But again – when I got engaged to Sascha and intended to get married in 1940, she sat for hours in the Foreign Office to get me an exit permit. There was no transport between Norway and the U.K. then as we were at war. She was not allowed to come with me. She had never been to Norway nor met Sascha's family but she understood that we were serious and she thought he was a good man for me. So, once again, she put others first and was willing to send her youngest daughter to a strange country during a war because she believed that it was right for me. Of course I did not get there in 1940 – the Germans invaded Norway on the day I was to fly but I have since (after having children of my own) understood how unselfish she was'.

Graeme Cairns concludes his article on the Thomsons in an even handed paragraph:

'JGT died tragically in June 1929 probably because he didn't look after himself properly. He was a heavy drinker – frequently drunk – and rode every day all year round. He also gambled to excess. He was heavily in debt by 1926 and it was said that if he had not died when he did he would have become insolvent. As it was, his three children were protected by trust funds which had been created for each of them at their birth. JGT's father died in 1917 and left his vast fortune, his house and its contents in trust to his widow; thereafter his estate was to be divided among his six children. As fortune would have it, Mrs David Thomson outlived her husband by 33 years and JGT by 21 years. Because of these circumstances, JGT's family inherited a very large sum. By this time Dor was a successful market gardener, Joan was married and independent and David was also earning a reasonable living. This allowed them to support their mother comfortably until her death. Although in an impossible marriage, Mrs Thomson was a good mother and protected the children in so far as she could from the excesses of their father'.

The Walkers

William Walker and his pets

William Walker was born in Biggar, South Lanarkshire, in 1872, the son of a forester. His wife Barbara was born on the South Ayrshire coast in 1875. They married in 1892. Both were of the servant class.

Walker started off as a stable boy but by the time he was employed by

JGT he had become an expert horseman, horse breeder and an authority on gun dogs. The Walkers' family of four were all born in Johnstone, Renfrewshire; in order of age – my mother Annie, Thomas, Jane and James.

The reason for the Thomson connection was that Walker's brother-in-law was coachman to JGT's parents and so it was easy for Walker to know that JGT was moving South, required a stud groom and someone who was willing to move with his family to Shipton. In the event none of the family returned to Scotland except my mother when she married. Thomas married a Birmingham girl, Jane an Oxford man and James a girl from the village of Churchill. All made their homes, variously, in Birmingham, Oxford and Radley. None are now alive nor do their children live in Oxfordshire except one great grandson who settled in Cowley.

Only my mother was employed in Shipton as a clerk for Franklin the grocer who was also the bank agent. Since the business never closed at lunchtime, was open until 8pm week nights and 10pm Saturdays, my mother had to serve in the shop as well. There was one other shop girl named Corona Coombes. Thomas worked as a mechanic at Moats Garage in Chipping Norton, Jane helped her mother to keep house and James stayed in Scotland until his engineering apprenticeship was complete. He was briefly employed by JGT as a groom but eventually went to work at the MG car factory in Abingdon.

The Walkers settled into village life remarkably quickly considering the fact that none of them had ever been out of Scotland in their lives. In 1919 Shipton under Wychwood in Oxfordshire might have been the other side of the world. Their only real difficulty was with the local rural Oxfordshire



WILLIAM WALKER IN THE STABLEYARD AT SHIPTON COURT WITH HIS PET FOX CHARLIE AND PET BADGER BILLY.

accent. Of course the natives had difficulty as well since they in turn had never been exposed to Scottish accents. Most of the Scots employed by JGT lasted only three or four years. Only Small the gardener and his family and the Walkers remained until JGT's death. The Smalls moved to Cowley in 1930.

The Walkers lived in a cottage on the main road to Burford on the corner of Plum Lane.⁴ It looked from the outside like a substantial house but was in fact two houses. Both had, nevertheless, three bedrooms, two public rooms, a kitchen and bath room – luxurious by 1919 standards and certainly lavish for servant accommodation. The Walkers lived on the Plum Lane side with a gate into the stable yard and with the large dovecot in the garden which they used for visitors. Both houses had hot and cold water, flush toilets and electric lights because the Court had its own water supply, drainage system and electric generator. Most of the villagers at that time had to be content with outside dry lavatories, oil lamps for lighting and oil stoves or coal fires for cooking. Walker's conditions of employment were exceptional for he paid no rent, was provided with free fuel and was allowed two suits a year plus all of his hunting clothes and boots free of charge and made by JGT's London tailors.

Walker was, strictly speaking, a servant but within two years he and JGT became close personal friends. By today's standards their relationship would have been considered homosexual. Whether it was or not will always remain a mystery. At any rate they became inseparable and went everywhere together. Walker was made a member of the Heythrop Hunt by JGT and so he remained until his death in 1946. This was done to assure Walker's participation in all hunt activities not open to non-members.

JGT travelled abroad extensively several times a year for months at a time and always accompanied by Walker. The two men shared accommodation in such places as the Kempenstzi in Berlin, the Bristol in Vienna and the Ritz in both London and Paris. Once returning from Oxford in the Austro-Daimler and driving at high speed, they had an accident. Just outside Shipton on the Burford Road there was a difficult right angled bend (at 'Tall Trees'). Walker warned JGT who was driving – 'You'll never take that bend at this speed' but the squire paid no attention. Of course the car hit the wall, Walker was catapulted through the windscreen and over the wall where he landed in a field. JGT was flung onto the road just before the car exploded and burst into flames.⁵ Walker sustained broken ribs, a broken right arm and leg and a gash to his left cheek which extended from his ear to the corner of his mouth. JGT having suffered only scratches staggered down to the stableyard shouting at the top of his lungs 'I've killed Walker!'. He very nearly did. The other grooms and the chauffeur in the Rolls – Harry Hailey by name – rushed to the scene of the accident. Walker was taken to Chipping Norton Hospital where JGT never



JEAN WALKER (LEFT) AND ANNIE WALKER (RIGHT) WITH THEIR DOGS OUTSIDE THE COACH HOUSE AT SHIPTON COURT. THE DOGS ARE ALL NAMED, OF COURSE. LEFT TO RIGHT: RAGS, VIXON, WONDER, GLORY, VETA, VEXA, OLD BILL, MIDGIE, BADGER AND IN ANNIE'S ARMS, BROWN, A POMERANIAN.

left his side for three days and nights. Eventually Walker was allowed home but was confined to bed for two months. JGT visited him three times a day. After his recovery, JGT whipped Walker off to the Venice Lido for a month's holiday without ever saying 'Would you like to come too, Mrs Walker?'. Needless to say Mrs Thomson was not consulted.

During JGT's last illness Walker, in turn, never left his side. In his will JGT left Walker £500 – worth 50 thousand pounds today, all of his clothes, his hunting gear and his silver hunting horn. An additional £500 was included in a codicil which JGT had not signed before he died. It could have gone to probate had Mrs. Thomson agreed but she would not hear of it. She hated Walker and the day after JGT's funeral Walker was given notice with two weeks to vacate his house.⁶ Fortunately the house on the opposite side of Plum Lane was vacant at that time and for rent. This property (Coldstone Farm) was always referred to by the family as 'the farm' and they lived there until 1932. By this time Walker had built his own house called 'Dunroamin' one and a half miles from Chipping Norton just off the main road to Shipton and Burford known as the Old London Road. He also purchased ten acres of land from Sarsden estate. This is where Walker lived until his death in 1946 and his widow remained until 1950. Thereafter she moved to a house in Oxford for the remainder of her



'DUNROAMIN', NOW NAMED SHEPHERD'S HILL, THE HOUSE WALKER BUILT WITH THE LEGACY LEFT TO HIM BY JGT. JEAN WALKER BESIDE THE TREE. GRAEME CAIRNS BELIEVES THE LAST TIME THE HOUSE WAS ADVERTISED FOR SALE IT WAS FOR 'OFFERS OVER £1,500,000.

life. By 1950 the house had been extended and a very large garden with a swimming pool had been added. All this was achieved because Walker had become a successful pig breeder and hen farmer. In 1940 part of the land was quarried for much needed Cotswold stone to build runways for the various airfields being constructed all over Oxfordshire – including RAF Chipping Norton. In the 1990s Walker's former property hit the headlines when the owner Lord Caithness, the government Minister for Agriculture at the time, was thought to have murdered his wife. As it turned out she had in fact committed suicide.

Mrs JGT who later called herself Graeme-Thomson died in 1960. She was not buried beside her husband but elsewhere. One can understand her bitterness in the circumstances. For instance, Walker could have sold her horses which would have been much to her advantage. She would not allow this and she instructed JGT's solicitors to employ an agency to do so. She never spoke to Walker again and if she met him by chance in the village she ignored him. The Thomson children all visited Walker in his new home several times over the years.⁷

The village in the first quarter of the 20th century was quite insular and isolated except for the Worcester branch of the GWR railway which ran through the Cotswolds. Villagers lived mostly off the land as farm labourers. There were a few who were servants in the larger farms,

country houses and vicarages but the largest employer was the Court. Many families intermarried and some of the common names were Weel, Hapgood, Mitter and Greenaway – gentlemen farmers all. Other names were Strong, Coombes and Clifford. The vicar of St Mary's in the 1920s was the Rev. Ernest Freeman. Social life centred round the shops during the day and at other times St Mary's which was High Anglican in those days. Also an important venue was the Beaconsfield Hall, named after the home of the Victorian prime minister Benjamin Disraeli. This was the site of annual dances held at Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, Easter, Whitson, Harvest Festival and Midsummer.

The event of the year was Hospital Saturday when there was a pageant generally on horseback. The biggest centre of life was Shipton Court especially during the hunting season. There wasn't anything that took place at the Court that the village didn't know about. It was said that they knew more about the family activities than the family did themselves. On one occasion JGT was indiscreet enough to take a village girl home after some event. On asking where she lived the answer was – 'Same place as you – I'm your kitchen maid'.

There was a tennis court and a cricket ground at the Court which were open to villagers. The church ran the Girls' Club and the Mothers' Union. The church had no electricity so the organ had to be pumped by hand. This was the job of 'Matey' Wiggins⁸ who regularly went to sleep so a village boy had always to be on hand to poke him awake. This lad was known in the village as 'the poker'. All went to church in those years and all took up seats according to rank – the Court pew in the front and so backwards – the poorest being at the west side of the nave. The church was always beautifully decorated because flowers were regularly supplied by the Court. The Walkers all became members of the Anglican Church but not the Thomsons. Mrs Thomson's father had been a strict Calvinist minister and so she remained loyal. JGT couldn't have cared less although when he died a requiem mass was held at St Mary's.

My mother's oldest friend was a village girl named Olive Strong – actually Olive Lee but she was separated from her husband. She had one son named Desmond who was only seen in Shipton during his school holidays. Occasionally Olive in her own words would 'pop up to town to see a little friend'. This made her very mysterious and therefore the cause of endless village gossip. Both my mother and her sister Jean visited Olive in Shipton until she died sometime in the 1970s.⁹

My mother was married to Andrew Cairns in St Mary's, Shipton on 27 May 1927 and their reception was held at the Shaven Crown. I myself lived with my grandparents in 1938 and '39. During this time I attended Chipping Norton Junior School and then again in 1944 during the war, I attended Chipping Norton High School. The last time I visited Shipton was in 1990 to visit my grandparents' grave and that of JGT which is just



WEDDING OF GRAEME CAIRNS' PARENTS IN 1927. THE RECEPTION WAS HELD AT THE CROWN INN, SHIPTON. LEFT TO RIGHT: CHRISSIE CAIRNS, COLIN CAIRNS, SR., COLIN CAIRNS JR., ANDREW CAIRNS, WILLIAM WALKER, ANNIE WALKER, BARBARA WALKER, CHRISTINA CAIRNS, JAMES WALKER AND EVA CUNNINGHAM (HER FATHER WAS COACHMAN TO JGT'S PARENTS).

behind. It was my grandfather's wish to be buried as close as possible to his former employer and close companion for eleven years. This wish was honoured by the Walker family and his wife Barbara lies beside him.

My father, Andrew Dempster Cairns, was born in Alloa in 1896, the son of a wealthy joiner and builder. The family business was responsible for building much of Victorian Alloa and many of the local authority housing estates in the years before the Second World War. My father too was a skillful builder and cabinet maker. Alas, like so many of his generation, he was severely injured during the third Battle of the Somme in 1917 and thereafter was hospitalised from then until August, 1919, both in London and the famous Craiglockart Hospital in Edinburgh, where he knew both Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. He suffered from the condition known then as 'shell shock', actually psychasthenia, which could develop into schizophrenia and could cause alcoholism, which of course was unknown at the time. This happened to my father. Unfortunately, his cousin, Betty Cairns, also became alcoholic, so between them, both the family business and fortune were lost.

My mother, Annie Walker, who was also born in 1896, met my father



BARBARA WALKER IN OLD AGE WITH HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW BRENDA WALKER BESIDE WALKER'S GRAVESTONE. MRS. THOMSON'S FEELINGS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JGT AND WALKER ARE WELL DOCUMENTED. DID ANYONE EVER ASK HOW BARBARA WALKER VIEWED IT OR HOW SHE FELT ABOUT HER FINAL RESTING PLACE IN THE SHADOW OF THOMSON'S GRAVESTONE?

at Greenfield Lodge when they were teenagers. My mother's uncle, James Cunningham, was coachman to the Thomson family and my father was a friend of their son, David Cunningham. My parents had an unhappy marriage. It was thought that my father's condition and total irresponsibility might improve if he became a father, and so I was born in 1930. Far from this happening, it only made the situation worse. Therefore there were no more children. My father died in 1974, not from alcoholism, but from cancer of the throat. My mother lived until 1980. They are both buried in the family plot in the local cemetery. Although by 1956 all assets and property had gone, the family house which had been home to four generations of the Cairns family, was intact. In 1975 the whole area where the house stood was redeveloped and consequently our home was demolished. This was a blessing in disguise for it was far too big for my mother and me and we had no funds to modernise it either. The sum of money we received for its sale allowed us to buy my present home, in which I still live, alone, because I never married.

Like the Thomson-Patons, who never used the double barrelled name, I too do not use the Dempster-Cairns, only Cairns.



THE GRAVES OF WILLIAM WALKER AND JOHN GRAEME THOMSON IN THE CHURCHYARD OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, SHIPTON, 2006.

The other connection with the Thomson family is that my grandfather Colin Cairns saved Greenfield House from complete destruction, when a severe fire broke out in June, 1914. JGT's parents were in Stirling being presented to King George V and Queen Mary who were on a visit to Stirling Castle. Thereafter, my grandfather was invited to become clerk of works for Greenfield and to rebuild the fire damage, a position that was retained by the next two Cairns generations, until the family firm ceased to exist, by which time Greenfield had been sold to the local council.

(Graeme himself works for the National Trust for Scotland mainly at Alloa Tower. He does, however, give conducted tours of Greenfield House, the home of John Graeme Thomson's parents.)

Footnotes

- 1 Graeme Cairns thought the nickname was Beth but Kate Wylie corrected this misconception. 'Bay' was short for Baby and was what Mary Catherine's three older sisters lovingly called her.
- 2 There were three older McLean sisters according to Joan Rein – Graham Cairns named only two. The eldest was called Janet but was known to her Alloa neighbours as Miss McLean. The second was Annie who was called T'Annie - short for Aunt Annie – by her Thomson nieces and nephew. The next in line was Edith – again referred to in the shortened affectionate way as T'Edith. In Alloa they were always Miss Annie and Miss Edith. Miss McLean (Janet) was the dominant personality in the household. She was associated with the local hospital and her

word was indisputable to her sisters. Annie was a talented artist but with no opportunity to express herself. She loved children and ran a small creche to help working mothers. Edith was an expert pianist and once accompanied Dame Nellie Melba when the soloist gave a concert in the area.

The three women had a large garden and marketed their vegetables. They also trained the young daughters of a neighbouring family in housekeeping and culinary skills. They had no money of their own due to the improprieties of their uncles after Mrs McLean's death. Their talents were never realised nor were they free to marry. It took the three of them to run Bedford House and gardens.

- 3 Another slight error on Mr Cairn's part – he believed the couple met at a dance.
- 4 This property is now called 'Court Cottage' and is owned by Peter and Jane Hills.
- 5 Joan Rein recalled this event. She was sitting in the Morning Room with her mother when suddenly Bay cried out in alarm 'There has been an accident. I know it, your father is hurt'. Moments later the alarm was sounded.
- 6 Bay moved her family to this cottage soon after the Walkers moved out.
- 7 I wonder if Joan Thomson visited Walker. In a letter to me dated 14/10/'05 she wrote
'I am glad you have good contact with Graeme Cairns. He seems to know a lot about my father and what he says explains even more clearly why my mother so hated Walker. I disliked him too as he never missed an opportunity to pinch my bottom! He was quite well off whereas we had to sell books to pay grocer's bills. David and I were looked down on by the Walker family since we – particularly I – didn't like riding. Dad, too, didn't think much of that. As Mum said to me 'He had no use for you'. When he died and David was fetched from Stowe, Mum was sitting surrounded by ladies in mourning. One of them said to David 'How sad for a boy your age to lose his father!' and David replied ' You can't lose what you've never had'.
- 8 'Matey' Wiggins was the 'Keeper of the Avenue' (Wild Garden) from the time of the Peppers in the early part of the century. He is pictured on p.85 of Journal 19 and described on p.70 of the same issue
- 9 Olive Lee was buried at Shipton on 12th September 1974 age 77.



James Baggs and his Little Black Book

MARGARET WARE

In November 1869 James Baggs of Shipton, a 37 year old bachelor, married Elizabeth Gillett of Westcote, just over the border in Gloucestershire. Originally from Kingham, he was by trade a plumber and glazier - a very useful man in the community. Four years earlier he had purchased a plot of 'manorial waste' land with an old cottage from Robert Gorton for £100, a plot in the centre of Shipton, just down the road from the Crown inn, and had built himself a substantial three-storey stone house in front of the cottage, facing on to the High Street. Although he had to mortgage the property in 1868, he managed to repay the loan by 1874 when the property was once more in his name.¹

ABOVE: THE HOUSE BUILT BY JAMES BAGGS ON THE LEFT, AND THAT BUILT BY WILLIAM COOMBES ON THE RIGHT. (2006)

In 1871 the census records James and Elizabeth living at the house but gives little other information. Ten years later Mrs Baggs is described as a dressmaker and, although the same age as her husband, they had no children. In the adjacent three-storey house to the north their neighbours were Walter Coombes, a carpenter's assistant and his family; he was possibly a nephew of the William Coombes who had built that house some years previously and was married to the village postmistress. In the little cottage to the south, on the other side of the Crown lane, lived Elizabeth Townsend, her brother and her granddaughter.

One hundred and twenty five years after James and Elizabeth Baggs started their married life the house, by now known as Monks Gate, was undergoing some renovations, when a little black notebook was discovered under the attic floorboards together with a long clay pipe. The book contained business accounts for five years from 1854 written by the young James Baggs, then aged 22, carefully listing materials bought and time spent on jobs and contracts, many sections ending with 'settled James Baggs' or 'paid J Baggs'. The entries provide a fascinating glimpse of the range of work he was undertaking at the time.

He seems to have charged 4s for one day's plumbing, that is 6d an hour for an eight-hour day and only twice mentions a second person working with him. Typical jobs included 'Baggs 1½ days at Church Soldering and fixing Windows..7s-6d, Solder and Bands ..6s-4d'; for the Revd. Lockwood 'Solder & time 2 Men to Repairing Left Pump new Leather in Do & Stuffing Box & Cleaning Brass Work..18s-0d' and 'Puttey to Cucamber Lights..1s-4d and Soldering Watering Can..6d'; 'Repairing & Stuffing Beer Hingin..5s-6d' for Mr Baylis of the Red Horse; 'Repd Lead on Roof..2s-0d and Putting Down Pump..£1-5-0d' for Mr George Groves and for Mr Kimber Esqr 'Forcing Pipes 3 times..5s-0d'. For Mr Pratt, Bruern he fixed '1 Sqr [pane of glass] in Stare Door..2s-6d, 2 Sqrs Play Room..4s-6d,' and carried out '2 Days Plumbings & Opening Ground..8s-0d, 30 ft of Lead pip..£2 & 1 3/8 Brass tap..3s-6d, 4 lbs of Solder to do..6s-0d'.

But Mr Baggs seemed to carry out as much painting and decorating work as plumbing and glazing :- 'painting 12 Windows at 6d per Window'; 'frunt Gate 11-11 feet Oak couler at 2-0d per yard..£1-2-11d'; '1 Fire place painted Black & Marbled..£1-1-0d'; 'painting Chimney Peace & Skurtin & Doors..8s-0d'; 'Painting Parlour Esterer [extra?] 2 Colous..£1-0-0d'; 'Whitening Closett Cealing..3s-0d'; '5 Peces of Papper at 9d pece for Bordering Room..3s-9d'; '2 Doors painted & Oak Grained..15s-0d, Varnishin Doors in side..6s-0d, Clock case Varnished..1s-6d', 'Varnishing Bedstid & Sheffener [chiffonier - a cupboard or chest]..3s-6d, Varnishing Swing Glass & Wash Stand..1s-9d'. The notes give an impression of dark interiors with varnished wood everywhere. Paints did not come ready-mixed as now; the tints were bought by weight and mixed with oil probably as required, thus: '-2 lb Light Brunswick Green..10d, 1 lb Mineral

Green..1s-6d, 1 Gallon of turpentine..5s-10d, 1 do of Linced Oils..3s-6d'; '1 Pound of Red pt..6d, 5 Pound of yallow at 5 per lb..2s-1d'; '4 lb White paint.. 2s-4d'.

Baggs also carried out a variety of smaller odd jobs, no doubt keen to build up his client base e.g 'Painting Dog Carte & Varnishing..£1-10-0d'; 'Staning & Varnishing Bucks hornes..1s-6d'; 'Painting Bath Chare..18s-0d'; 'Painting & Guilding Picture Frame..5s-0d'; 'Varnishing tea Box..3d'; 'painting Meat Safe 3 Coats inside & Out..3s-0d'; 'Writeing 3 Name Plates..3s-6d'; '1 Day 1/4 Bell Hanging..5s-6d'. Some pages of the notebook contain rougher jottings and at the back there is a note about 'Laxtons Book of Prises' with a reminder that these are 'London Prises'. Altogether the book details work carried out for ninety different local clients including Sir John Reade, several vicars, farmers, shopkeepers, innkeepers, householders and fellow artisans, in Shipton, Milton and Ascott, Langley, Lyneham, Bruern, Sarsden, Kingham, Bledington and Broadwell.

James Baggs died in 1903 aged 71 but his widow retained the High Street property until 1915, when she sold it to Ernest Harold Dee, grocer of Shipton, for £200. She died four years later aged 87.

The house today (2006) still displays some of the glazier's art. The front sash windows originally had narrow side panels glazed with different coloured panes: sadly only two examples remain. But the lavatory window is divided into fifteen small panes showing a riot of differently coloured, patterned and frosted glass. Are these surviving examples of James Baggs' own work, perhaps using up left-overs from other jobs? Maybe he installed a pretty window in the 'smallest room' to celebrate the installation of indoor plumbing, over a hundred years ago? Another mystery remains. The book twice refers to a 'sociable': Mr Pratt, a farmer at Bruern, had a pane of glass fitted in his sociable for 3s, while the Revd Lockwood had his painted and varnished for £1-1-0d. The original thought that it was a sitting room or parlour is not borne out by the O.E.D. which defines a sociable as 'a four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage with facing side seats'. This seems unlikely to have been a closed carriage with windows, but may have had a glass windscreen to afford some comfort? Further information on the subject would be welcome!

Reference

- 1 Frank Ware, 'A Cottage on the Waste', *Wychwoods History* 7, 1992, 53.

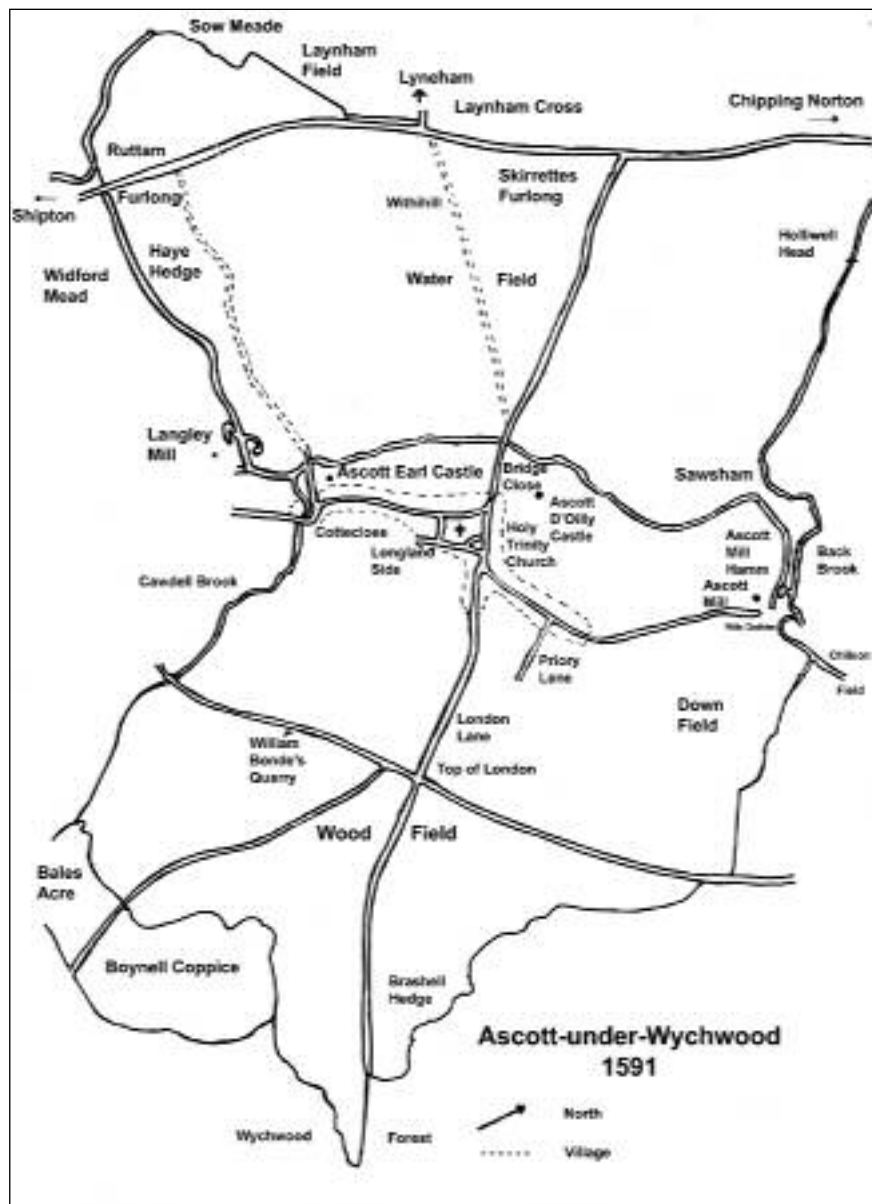
The Manor Courts of Ascott D'Oilly

JACK HOWARD-DRAKE

This article is based on a court book for the manor of Ascott D'Oilly covering the period 1587-1603.¹ A note by W.O. Hassall attached to it says that he found it in a box of papers relating to the Charlbury property of Mr Watney of Cornbury. The full text of the note is at appendix.

The book records the proceedings of the courts baron and courts leet. A manor existed in law only where a landlord had acquired the right to hold a court baron for his tenants.² This court was presided over by the lord or his steward and presentments were made by officials or by the manorial jury or homage, a group of usually about a dozen tenants. The court baron enforced the customs of the manor relating to land tenure and land use. It therefore dealt with such matters as admission to or surrender of a holding, the payment of a heriot, that is the tenant's best beast, when a holding was surrendered, the admission of an heir, the ordering of all customary services, rights and payments, the detailed regulation of agriculture and the election of the lord's officials. The landlord might also hold a court leet which exercised certain judicial rights delegated by the Crown. This court was often described as the view of frankpledge, one of the court leet's more important original functions, namely an enquiry into the observance of the system whereby males over the age of twelve were placed in groups of ten or tithings responsible for each other's behaviour. The expression tithing was still used in the sixteenth century though by then it was an anachronism and had come to mean no more than the tenants of a manor in a particular village or hamlet; and the court had lost its power to deal with indictable offences. There was also an increasing overlap with the justices of the peace; but in general the court leet continued to function and to deal with minor offences, with the assize (standards) of bread and ale, with the appointment of constables and other officials, and with various other matters. There was a clear distinction in law between the courts baron and the courts leet but in practice the distinctions were not always observed and sometimes the records confuse the two.

A manor was a unit of jurisdiction, not primarily a territorial unit, and its boundaries could not be fully defined by a map. There was often an overlap and interlocking of manorial lands within and across parish



boundaries. Ascott under Wychwood was, however, a parish which was broadly coterminous with manorial jurisdiction. It had its origin in the two Domesday manors of Ascott D'Oilly and Ascott Earl, but there was a

survey of the 'parish and manor of Ascott D'Oilly' in 1591 which equated that manor with the parish and included the lands of Ascott Earl.³ It seems that the jurisdiction of the manor of Ascott D'Oilly had been extended to include the manor of Ascott Earl and that the parishioners could no longer distinguish clearly between them because the survey says 'that where the manors of Ascott Doyley and Ascott Earles lye bordering one another and their land intermingled they can not without very great deliberacion certainlie distinguishe the seyde Mannors by anie demonstracion by wordes only, but by some other descripcion'. The text of the perambulation is at appendix.

The general description of the manor in the 1591 survey was (modernised) that 'it stands in a valley the arable whereof is something barren. There is a proper river running through the same, yielding divers sorts of fish. The meadows upon the river are very fertile. It is situated upon Wychwood Forest which yields the inhabitants both common pasture and wood'. With what sounds like a countryman's estimate of distance the description ends 'it stands east 3 miles of Burford, from Oxford 9 miles'. The total acreage, excluding wastes, was given as 1243 acres. There were in the manor two coppices of forty acres and twelve years growth belonging to the Crown, known as Great and Little Bonnell. There were various timber trees in them which were of no great value. The coppices were said to be leased but no names of lessees were given and the jurors did not know on what conditions or at what rent they were let as they had not seen the leases.

Although the manor of Ascott D'Oilly was substantially a unitary area there was some interlocking with other manors. A survey of Shipton manor in 1547⁴ noted that its tenants paid at Easter a rent called the common fine and listed the amount which each tithing paid. Ascott was included as one of the tithings and paid 12d. The survey also listed the freeholders of Shipton manor whose holdings were in 'the village of Ascott' and who held their lands 'by service of socage tenure', that is free tenure which was inheritable. There were five named freeholders plus the churchwardens of Ascott, who held various buildings and land and were shown as owing suit of court in Shipton, that is an obligation to attend the manorial court there.

The 1547 survey noted that 'it is to be remembered that there be no customary tenants in Ascott belonging to the manor of Shipton ...'; but a survey of Shipton in 1552⁵ recorded seven freeholders and one copyholder there. A copyholder or customary tenant was someone who held a copy of the entry in the court rolls recording his or her entitlement to their holding. A survey of Langley manor of the same date⁶ recorded two copyholders in Ascott Details of all these various holdings are at appendix.

At a meeting of the Ascott manorial court in 1590 it was noted that 'the three acres of land is parcell of our purchase within the Erledome of

Warwick' which suggests that Ascott may have held some land in Shipton from the time of Henry VIII when the manor of Shipton was in the hands of the Warwick family.

There are some notes at the end of the court book which cannot be dated or attributed but which read (modernised) like instructions from one of the lords of Ascott D'Oilly to his steward and illustrate his interests in land outside Ascott, viz. 'sell such lops and bushes in Ramsden Heath and Burnt Wood Coppice as my woodwards think fit for to be spared' and 'sell such dead bushes and pollards or dottrell or others in Langley or Milton upon the copyholds there or the fields'.

The Lordship of the manor

Ascott was part of the Duchy of Lancaster, one of the 'counties palatine' and although held by the Crown, it was administered through the Duchy, unlike Shipton and Milton which came directly under the Crown. The 1591 survey was conducted by John Worth, deputy to Sir John Poyntz, Surveyor-General of the Duchy, by order of Sir Thomas Heneage, Chancellor of the Duchy. It stated that the manor of Ascott was granted to Anthony Gate, gentleman and Master of University College, Oxford, under the seal of the Duchy dated 20 February 1588, for a term of thirty-one years at an annual rent of £22:1:2. It carefully noted that 'the lease itself was not seen and therefore the certainty of the covenants, articles and promisors (undertakings) cannot directly be set down'.

Anthony Gate was the first lay Master of University College⁷ and his relations with his manor of Ascott appear to have been fraught. The tenants took the opportunity of the survey to complain about him. They said that there was a church house and another house next to the churchyard which were built by the inhabitants on the Queen's waste and were in the possession of a copyholder, unnamed. The houses had been enjoyed by the manor from time immemorial but Gate was now trying to expel the occupants or impose an intolerable rent on them, more than they could bear. They were willing to pay their old rent of 6d a year and were 'praying herein lawful favour'.

The tenants also pointed out that Gate was not only the farmer of the manor. that is, he had leased it from the Crown, but that he also exercised the function of 'High Steward'. They thought it 'unnecessary that he should be lord and steward and expect by virtue of his said stewardship that which was never demanded heretofore, viz. for the making of every copyhold 10s where heretofore it hath been 2s, wherein also he pretendeth to be their judge which they think not to be indifferent being their lord also and therefore humbly craved remedy.' There is nothing to show whether they obtained any redress.

After Gate's death in 1597 the lordship was held by his widow, Judith, then, when she remarried, jointly in her name and that of her husband,

John Gostwick, and later by Gostwick alone.

The grant of the manor to Gate in 1588 did not include the mill or the demesne lands, that is those parts of the manor normally managed by the lord himself and not by a tenant. These lands were held by William Peisely at a rent of £12 on a lease from the Crown. The mill was held by Richard Andrews, also on a lease from the Crown, at a rent of 40s. A cottage was held by John Taylor on a lease from Gate at a rent of 12d. The remaining properties were held by copyhold, the total of whose rents was £26:6s:5½. Details of all these holdings as listed in the survey are at appendix.

The Courts 1587-1603

The court book covers meetings held in 1587, 1589, 1590, 1592, 1593, 1594, 1598, 1602 and 1603. The records distinguish between the courts leet and the courts baron, whose meetings were, however, held on the same day. In 1587 and 1590 the juries were sworn twice, once for the court leet and once for the court baron. At other meetings they were sworn once for both courts except in 1594 and 1603 when there were no courts leet.

Proceedings of the courts leet were recorded in Latin; so, too, were those of the courts baron dealing with tenancies. Orders concerning the day to day affairs of the inhabitants were in English except in 1597, 1589 and 1598 when they were in Latin.

Courts leet were all held in the name of the Crown; courts baron were the lord's courts and were held in his name. In 1587 the manor was in the hands of the Crown and the court baron met in the Queen's name. In 1589 it met in the name of Anthony Gate. He is not mentioned in the records of the next three meetings when single juries were sworn for the courts baron and the courts leet and the courts were in the name of the Queen; but Gates was given as the farmer of the manor in the 1591 survey. The court baron of 1594 was held in his name. The court of 1598 was held in the name of Judith Gate, that of 1602 in her name jointly with that of her husband, John Gostwick, and that of 1603 in Gostwick's name only. Stewards were appointed for all courts except that of 1589; their names are at appendix.

The jurors

A jury of tenants was sworn at each meeting of the courts. In the nine meetings between 1587 and 1603 the juries varied between a maximum of nineteen tenants and a minimum of eight who were all drawn from a group of thirty one. The complete list is at appendix. Five members of the group were from the Whiting family.

The courts leet

At the court leet of 1587 Richard Andrews was the constable and John Henlow and John Hickes the tithingmen. Hickes and Andrews were

appointed affeerors, that is the jurors who were sworn to fix the amounts of fines. In accordance with custom these appointments were made at the end of the court's other business.⁸

Richard Andrews as constable presented Thomas Fletcher for a breach of the peace in attacking Helen Fletcher, widow, on 20 February, with a stake of little value. This seems to be an echo of the *deodand* whereby an object, whether animal or inanimate, which contributed to someone's death, was believed to share in the guilt of his death. The value of the object was forfeited to the Crown. Thomas had drawn blood and Helen was in fear of her life. Thomas was *in misericordia*, that is he was at the mercy of the Lord, and he was fined 3s 4d. Otherwise Andrews reported '*omnia bene*', all well.

Henlow and Hickes confirmed that they had paid cert money, *dant de ... certudine*, of 7½d. Cert money is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'a common fine paid yearly by the residents and tenants of a manor to the lord or the hundred *pro certa Latae*, for the keeping of the Leet'. P.D.A. Harvey in *Manorial Records* (British Records Association, 1984) defines it as an agreed sum paid by manors for potential penalties that might be imposed if offences were presented in court, and absolving them from further obligation'. There is nothing to indicate the sense in which it is used in the Ascott records.

Henlow and Hickes also reported that two stray sheep worth 12d. had come into the jurisdiction of the manor and had stayed there for a year and a day. When an animal for which no owner could be traced was found wandering in the manor, proclamations were made of its finding and if no owner claimed it within a year and a day it became Crown property, usually in the person of the lord. Henlow and Hickes said that proclamations had been made on three separate days and the sheep were now the property of the manor. Otherwise '*omnia bene*'.

The jurors swore on their oaths that their presentments were true and further presented Thomas Cantwell, servant to Willian Bonde, for a breach of the common park. Again all was otherwise well. George Peisley was elected constable in place of Richard Andrews and Lawrence France was elected tithingman in place of John Hickes.

At the court leet of 1589 George Peisley as constable reported all well. The tithingmen, John Henlow and Lawrence Frances, also appointed in 1587, presented that they had paid cert money of 8d. The same jurors were appointed except that Richard Hickes replaced William Northcott, John Henlow replaced Thomas Smith and Nicholas Perry was added to the jury. Bartholomew Harris was elected constable and Edmund Winchester and Nicholas Perry affeerors.

The jurors presented that Samuel [Spe...], William Northcott junior, Ralph Peisley and Claxton were in default of fealty, that is had not paid suit of court, and were therefore *in misericordia*, fine not stated. Any

tenants of the manor who failed to wear felt caps on the sabbath according to the statute should forfeit 8d. An Act of 1571 '... for the Continuance and Making of Caps' required among other things that '... all above the age of six years ... shall wear upon the Sabbath and Holy Days, one cap of wool knit, thick and dressed in England, upon the forfeiture of 3s 4d...'. At a later court the jurors cheerfully presented that 'we are all offenders in not wearing of caps', but failed to fine themselves anything.

The court of 1590 conducted very little court leet business. John Hickes was elected constable in place of Bartholomew Harrys. Henlow and Frances presented that they had paid cert money of 6½d. They also said that they had paid cert money of 15d for two years, presumably to cover outstanding payments. The court of 1592 conducted no leet court business though it was designated as such.

There seems to have been something of a mutiny at the court leet of 1602 when some thirty four tenants failed to turn up to pay suit of court and were fined either 1d. or 2d. Richard Fletcher had assaulted John Major and had drawn blood, something the Fletcher family seem to have made a habit of. He was fined 2s.

The courts baron

The main business of the Ascott courts was conducted in the courts baron. Conveniently the jury of the court of survey, which was technically a special meeting of a court baron, set the scene by describing certain customs of the manor. The tenants and all other inhabitants had free common for all their cattle, horses and pigs in Wychwood Forest without stint. There were areas in the forest where the tenants could pasture their sheep. They lay between Shaken Hoofe corner eastwards to a merestone called by the name of hoarstone, and from the hoarstone eastwards from merestone to merestone leading between Kingswood and Boynell Coppice to a merestone lying by the Brashell hedge, adjoining Ascott field.

The lord of the manor could grant by copyhold any land in the manor which was copyhold land for two lives and no more, that is to the holder and to his or her immediate heir only. The widow of a copyholder could continue to enjoy the copyhold during her widowhood while living alone and chaste. A copyholder could let his or her copyhold or part of it for a year less a day and not otherwise without licence. Breach of this custom would lead to forfeiture of the holding. Any copyholders who felled timber trees, oak, ash or elm, would also forfeit their copyholds. On the death of a copyholder or surrender of a copyhold the lord should have his or her best beast as a heriot. The Crown was entitled to the royalties of the manor and therefore to all wayves (abandoned stolen goods), estrays (stray animals) and felons' goods etc. There was a fishing in the manor in the River Thames belonging to the Crown, the profits from which went to the tenants.

The jury noted that a 'little new house' had been erected on Her Majesty's waste ground by Thomas Winchester who had devised it to John Taylor, but they did not know at what rent. They presented that William Bonde, gentleman and freeholder, had encroached on Her Majesty's land in the tenure of (no name given) a tenant of Her Majesty by copyhold, and had made a quarry there without showing any authority for so doing. They attached a map 'more plainly to demonstrate the injury done to Her Majesty'.

Free tenants

Among the tenants mentioned in the 1591 survey were the free tenants, who were not named there but whose total rents amounted to £26:8:0. Freeholders were not subject to the customs of the manor or the will of the lord, but they owed suit of court and were expected to attend meetings or be represented.⁹ Those not attending were obliged to obtain a formal excuse or *essoin*. The free tenants listed at the various courts as either attending, being represented or *essoined*, were Brasenose College, Oxford, William Bonde, Bartholomew Chawney, Fulke Chawney, John Chawney, John Busby (son and heir of Thomas and in the right of his wife Margaret), William Busby, Richard Rowright, and John Hammond.

The only recorded failures to attend or be excused were in 1589 and 1593 when William Bonde was absent and was fined 2d on each occasion; and in 1594 when Bartholomew Chawney was absent and was fined 4d. In 1598 Bonde was excused because he was sick at home. We know from a court case about tithes in Ascott in 1572, when Bonde sued Alexander Gardner and Bartholomew Chawney, that Bonde was then living in Nether Worton and that John Henlow was his bailiff in Ascott.¹⁰

At the court of 1590 the jurors presented that Bartholomew Chawney's rent was 2d a year and that the rents payable by Rowright and William Busby were half a pound of pepper each. In 1592 William Busby paid half a pound of pepper as a relief, that is an entry fee, for a tenement in which Robert Hickes was living. That year the jurors made the opaque remarks that 'we present that all freeholders at every change do double their rent', and that 'we ordain that Bartholomew Chauney shall leave from caring of the farm ground upon Candlemas [2 February] in pain of 3s 4d'. In 1593 Chawney paid 4d for two years' rent. In 1598 the jurors presented that Chawney had died since the last court and that his holding was in *socage*. His heir (his 'son and' was deleted), Fulke Chawney, was said to be over twenty one and inherited the holding. Fulke was Chawney's cousin.¹¹

The copyholders

The records of the courts baron show the workings of the copyhold system. In almost all cases the transactions were in formal Latin and were fully detailed to establish that the correct procedures had been followed.

At the 1589 court Helen Fletcher asked for the copyhold currently in the hands of her son, Richard, to be transferred to her to hold during her widowhood. Richard surrendered it and paid a heriot of a cow worth 30s. The steward granted the holding to Helen during her life at an annual rent of 10s. Helen did fealty and was admitted on payment of an entry fine of £5. The copyhold would pass to Richard as the second life on Helen's death. This occurred two years after Richard had been fined 3s 4d for attacking his mother so that she was in fear of her life.

Helen immediately asked for agreement that in the event of Richard's death the copyhold should pass to his brother Peter and this was granted even though, as was explicitly stated in the record, it was contrary to the custom of the manor to do so; the lord of the manor could grant a copyhold for two lives and no more.

The Fletchers were back in court five years later. This time Helen surrendered the copyhold on payment of a heriot of her best beast worth 30s and at her request the holding was passed to Peter on payment of an unspecified entry fine. Perhaps she had fallen out with Richard again; he seems to have been a bit of a troublemaker.

They were there again in 1602 when Peter Fletcher surrendered the copyhold on payment of a heriot of a capon worth 18d and it was granted back to him for his life and for the life of his son, John, after him on payment of an entry fine of £3:6s:8d. Richard was there, too, surrendering a copyhold on payment of a capon as heriot but of one worth only 14d. At his request the copyhold was granted back to him and his son, Robert, in succession at an annual rent of 16s 8d.

Nicolas Perry appeared before the court in 1589 and claimed a cottage and two acres which were in the tenure of Thomas Smith, but doing fealty was postponed until the next court. Perry's case does not figure in 1590 when the only copyholders who appeared then were members of the Whiting family. Margery Whiting surrendered the copyhold of a cottage and a quarter of land which was granted to George Whiting in the usual way. Similarly Ralph Whiting surrendered a copyhold 'to the use of' Christopher Whiting'.

In 1592 Thomas Whiting was admitted to a copyhold on the death of his father, Edmund, and on payment of a heriot of a bull worth 40s. Nicholas Perry was granted a copyhold which had come into the hands of the lord of the manor by forfeiture because the grant to Margaret, John and Edmund Whiting had been contrary to custom, again because it had been granted for three lives and not within the limit of two. William Seleye was admitted to a copyhold which the court roll showed to have been granted to him in July 1586. Perhaps this was the copyhold which he had inherited in 1589 on the death of his mother, Elizabeth, on payment of a fine of £6:13:4.

The jurors reported in 1593 that George Perry had died in possession of

a messuage and a virgate and a quarter of land and that a heriot of a horse worth 40s was payable to the lord of the manor. His widow, Agnes, who was in court, was admitted to the holding while living alone and chaste. She was back the following year and surrendered the holding; her son and heir, Richard, who was the second life, was admitted to it.

In 1602 there seems to have been a rush by fathers to turn their single life copyholds into copyholds for themselves and their sons. As recorded above both Peter and Richard Fletcher did so and so did John Henlow with his son George (a heriot, a fine of £4 and a rent of 6s 4d); Nicholas Perry with his son Bartholomew (a heriot of an 18d capon, fine not stated, rent 10s(?); Edmund Whiting with his son Edmund (a holding called the Top of London in the tithing of Mary Bond, a heriot of an 18d capon, a fine of £4:6:6, rent 8s 6d); and John Smith with his son Thomas (holding included common pasture for a cow, a heriot of an 18d capon, a fine of 10s, rent 4s).

Elizabeth Francis, the widow of Lawrence Francis, was in the court of 1603 with William Fletcher. Elizabeth was the copyholder and William was the second life. They surrendered their copyhold on the payment of a heriot of a capon and it was granted to Edward Dunford and to William, his son, at an annual rent of 10s.

Other inhabitants

On two occasions the courts noted the status of certain inhabitants. In 1590 the jurors presented that so far as they knew Thomas Parry had no estate in any copyhold in the manor; and in 1592 that Condrod Lyons and Peter Fletcher were under-tenants 'within our town' and 'had so dwelt and continued since the last court'. They also presented that there were no other tenants in the town house except 'those we have usually kept'. In 1590 they had reported that Richard Cooke had a poor woman in his house for a month contrary to the statute. He was fined 10s.

Encroachment and Trespass

Several cases of encroachment and trespass were dealt with. As the 1591 court of survey recorded William Bonde had made a quarry without licence in a part of the Queen's land occupied by a copyholder, and his servant, Thomas Cantwell, had breached the common park. There is no record of the outcome. In 1587 four members of the homage reported that they had inspected certain lands of Edmund Winchester and Peter Poole and that there was some encroachment between the free and customary tenants of the manor. This encroachment was to be put right before next All Saints' Day [1 November] under penalty of 10s. In 1589 Bartholomew Chawney was fined 20s for having encroached on the Queen's land in Ascott Earl by making a stone wall 18 inches beyond the old boundary. He was fined 20s. and ordered to move it back to its old position immediately under penalty of 10s(?20s.). These last two cases were dealt with as court



A VIEW OVER MANOR FARM, THE SITE OF ASCOTT D'OILLY CASTLE. 1930s. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE MANOR COURTS MET IN THE MANOR HOUSE.

leet business. At the 1593 meeting, which did not distinguish between the courts, there was a general order that the inhabitants should 'leave a merestone between party and party in all the Waterfields' (sic) before the next court under penalty of 6d for each default.

At the end of the 1603 sitting of the court baron it was ordered that on a day before Whitsun at the summoning of the foreman, the jury should meet to consider the cases of encroachment and trespass between William Peisley and Roger Poole and between Christopher Whiting and William Seley, 'and all others' and to determine and end them. Anyone who was absent after being summoned would be fined 10s. for every absence.

Control of agriculture

An important preoccupation of the courts baron was the control of agriculture and their authority in this area is shown in a variety of ways. The courts took a dim view of anyone who exceeded their stint, defined in *The Local Historian's Encyclopedia* as the number of cattle which a holder of common right was allowed to put on the common pasture. As noted earlier the people of Ascott had free common for all their cattle, horses and pigs in Wychwood Forest without stint; but elsewhere the stint was controlled. In 1590 the younger Edmund Whiting was presented for having 'one beast in the common contrary to our order'; in 1592 it was ordered that no one should fetch any beast out of the forest into the common until the end of harvest under penalty of 12d for each animal and that everyone who brought a young animal down before Sunday next

should 'put it up', that is enclose it for fattening, under the same penalty. In 1593 it was ordered that no one should put sheep on the common pasture after Whitsun under penalty of 3s 4d for every sheep so pastured and that no one should keep any kind of cattle above their stint under penalty of 3s.

As with the stints the use of the hitching was closely controlled. Strangely hitching in an agricultural sense is not defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In the *Local Historian's Encyclopedia* (1974) hitched land is defined as 'part of the common arable field used especially for a different sort of crop such as turnips etc.' A witness in a church court case in Salford in 1618 said that 'there was a country term, hitching, which meant that one year peas were grown on the field and the next year, barley, so that it never laid fallow'.¹² The encyclopedia definition seems nearer the mark for Ascott. In 1602 it was ordered that the whole of Waterfield should be a hitching 'for everyman to sow at his pleasure whatsoever he will upon his own land for a year'. In earlier years control was tighter. In 1587 it was ordered that no one should pasture sheep in the hitching before the end of harvest under penalty of 3s 4d, that no one should glean any grain there before the harvest had been carried home under penalty of 12d, that harvest in the hitching would take place in the two weeks before the Feast of St John the Baptist (28 August), and that crops (*herbas*) growing there should be maintained until the grain in the hitching was in, penalty 3s 4d. These orders did not apply to the miller. In 1592 it was ordered that no one should 'gather' (crop unspecified) in any part of the hitching other than his own under penalty of 12d and that no one should put any animal 'in the hitching in the new mead or in the hannes (hain = hedge or fence for enclosing cattle) until the harvest was in and then only put cattle there, except that the miller could put his load horse there, penalty 3s 4d.

The harvesting of peas in the hitching seems to have been a sensitive issue. In 1587 and 1593 it was ordered that no one should gather peas there until harvest was in under penalty of 12d. In 1590 the jurors presented no less than fourteen men and women for gathering peas 'contrary to the order' but the record does not say what, if any, penalty was imposed. They ordered, without reference to the hitching, that no man should gather peas except from his own ground, penalty 12d. In 1592 they reported that the order for the 'getting of pulse' had been well kept but ordered that no one should gather peas in the part of the hitching 'on the right hand of the mill way towards Chilson' under penalty of 3s 4d. In 1594 the order was that no one should gather peas in the hitching between Lady Day (25 March) and the end of harvesting.

The control of agriculture was by no means confined to the stints and the hitching and was exercised throughout the manor. In 1593 the jurors issued a warning that no one should plough his neighbour's land or cut

any of his neighbour's corn, grass or hay. If the aggrieved party complained to the offending neighbour and to two or three other neighbours about the harm done to him, then, if the offender did not recompense him, he would forfeit 3s 4d for every offence. In 1592 it was ordered that no man should keep more than two horses on a yardland under penalty of 3s 4d for every extra horse so kept after eight days from the sitting of the court; and no one was to keep sheep 'in the green' between Holyrood Day and Michaelmas, that is between 14 and 29 September, under penalty of 2d per sheep. In 1593 Nicholas Perry, William Bonde and William Northcott were presented for breaking the order not to keep more than two horses on a yardland. Perry and Bonde had kept four horses on a yardland, and Northcott three. Perry and Bonde were fined 13s 4d each and Northcott 6s 4d. It was ordered that no one should keep any animals in the mead after it was mown until thirteen days after midsummer, that no animals except plough cattle (?oxen) should be kept in the cornfield after Lammas (1 August) and that no sheep should be put on the common pasture until a month after Whitsuntide, all under the penalty of 3s 4d for each animal.

Similar orders were made in 1602. Everyone was to mow their grass in the Waterfield by St James's Day (25 April) and in Woodfield by Lammas (1 August) and anyone who cut grass after these days would be fined 10s. No horses or other animals were to be kept in the Waterfield until Lammas, except that the farmer could use his own ground between the burge (*sic*) and a high bush in the middle of the field until St James's Day, but all animals then to be ridden away until Lammas. No cattle were to be kept in the pulse field except horses and then only with the agreement of the overseers, under penalty of 3s 4d. No horses or cattle were to be kept in the Woodfield Down Field or new mead or the hannes until Michaelmas except that the miller would be allowed to keep his loading horses in his own two hannes, under penalty of 3s 4d; but in 1603 the miller was warned not to go over any grass or corn with his loading horses but to keep to the horse ways under penalty of 3s 4d.

In 1590 nine people were in trouble for 'leasing (gleaning) corn and cutting of the ears of wheat contrary to the order'. Of the nine, one was a man, two were women and six were children.

In 1587 it was ordered that all pigs should be ringed within the next week under penalty of 4d and that any pigs not properly ringed would involve a similar penalty. In 1603 it was ordered that no one should keep pigs in the fields until the harvest was in under penalty of 12d for each day; and that for every unringed pig taken in the Green, the owner should pay the hayward 1d.

The 1591 survey noted that stray animals became the property of the Crown and in 1587 the jurors had reported that two stray sheep worth 12d. had come into the jurisdiction of the manor and had stayed there for a year and a day. Proclamations had been made on three separate days and

the sheep were now the property of the manor.¹³ In 1590 the strays were one wether sheep, not valued, a tegg valued at 16d, two ewes and a lamb valued at 6s and two ewes valued at 6s 6d.

In 1587 the court ordered that everyone should pay the mole catcher ('le wontkiller') on demand under penalty of 12d. In 1592 the payment was fixed at 2d a yardland to be paid by All Saints Day (1 November) under the same penalty.

Timber

The use of timber was a sensitive issue. As noted above, George Peisley's lease of the demesne lands only allowed him underwood for necessary repairs, and 'great timber' with the consent of the steward; copyholders who felled trees would forfeit their copyholds. This apparently blanket prohibition on copyholders clearly meant if they felled trees without the consent of the steward. In 1589 the court ordered that no one should fell or pull up willows or other wood in Beynoldes except for 'making the mounds', nor dig up the crabtree stocks there at any time under penalty of 5s. George Peisley was given permission to take six oaks to repair his house and the tenants were given permission to take one oak to repair the bridge. In 1590 provision was made under the heading '*in custodia ballivi*', that is in the keeping of the steward, for Richard Lord, Richard Fletcher, William Washington, John Hickes, Henry Browne, and Richard Cooke, all copyholders, to have one or two trees each. It looks from the record that George Perry wanted timber but was not granted any. In 1593, fifteen copyholders who 'wanted great timber for reparacions' were granted one or two trees each 'which ever hath been allowed by the Queenes steward of this Court'.

Ditches

The court baron kept an eye on the scouring of ditches. In 1587 they ordered that all ditches were to be thoroughly scoured in the usual way before the Festival of All Saints (1 November) under penalty of 12d for every default, and in particular that the ditches between Waymore and Downfield should be scoured as necessary from time to time under penalty of 10s. In 1594 the order was that everyone who had any ground on the 'More ditch' should scour the ditches by Lady Day (25 March) and that thereafter they should scour them at three days notice when necessary under penalty of 3s 4d. In 1602 the court ordered Edward Dunford and William Whiting to scour their ditches down to Dunsford's Close two feet deep under penalty of 12d for every day's default from the day the court met; and ordered John Taylor to scour the ditch down to Norris's part of it under the same penalty.

Miscellanea

Various other items of business are scattered through the records. Three actions for debt between tenants were settled in the court baron of 1589 and another in 1598. In 1589 John Lane was fined 2d for not paying his share of the cost of repairing the Park and in the same year the jurors took the opportunity of confirming their immemorial right to the Church House for which they paid the Queen 6d in rent. In 1590 they confirmed their right to other property. The lime pit, they said, had always belonged to the farmer of the manor. Nicholas Harris knew it had been the farmer's for at least the last 60 years. The bridge close had always been part of the common; so had the Town House for which they paid the Queen 6d a year. In 1592 they declared that the stocks and butts were in good order as required by the law.

Other court books

There are two other court books, one covering the period 1616 to 1690 and the other the period 1818 to 1924, the provenance of which is not known.¹⁴ For some reason the first of these contains a copy of the record of the 1594 court in the book covering 1587 to 1603. For the rest it records meetings in 1616, 1661, 1664, 1666, 1668, 1669, 1670, 1671, 1674, annually from 1676 to 1685, 1687 and 1690. The business transacted at these meeting mirrors closely that of the 1587 to 1603 courts.

From 1818 to 1924 the courts, both leet and baron, met regularly every year and the homage and jury were sworn; and until 1851 they transacted a few items of the usual court business. In 1821 it was agreed that a bridge should be built by the overseers. In 1831 there was a problem with disorderly persons playing skittles on roads and waste land and it was ordered that they be taken into custody. In 1852 John Hunt and William Pratley were in trouble for making dung heaps by the side of the road in London Lane and were ordered to remove them within seven days under penalty of 20 shillings. From then on the courts only appointed officers, constables until 1856, tithingmen throughout and bailiffs and stewards from 1916 to 1923. In 1916 Vernon James Watney, lord of the manor of Ascot D'Oilly, appointed Albert Edward Mace his steward with authority to hold 'all courts baron, courts leet and courts customary'. The last business transacted was on 18 April 1922 when the jury expressed their condolences at the death of John Young, bailiff, and decided that in the future the court should meet at 11.00 a.m. instead of 12.00 noon. The last meeting was held on the 27 April 1924.

The theme running through the two earlier court books is of a closely knit community taking responsibility for the management of its own affairs. The juror's oath¹⁵ imposed a solemn duty on the jurors:-

"You and each of you as jurymen shall inquire and true presentments

make of all such matters and things as shall be given to you in charge. You shall present nothing out of hatred or malice nor conceal anything through fear, favour or affection but in all things shall true and just presentment make according to the best of your understanding. So help you God'.

The records suggest that they carried out this duty to the best of their ability.

Appendix

The court book

The following note is on the front of the book:-

Acc 696

Ascot

Manor Court book of Ascott, Oxon, 30 Sept Eliz 29 – 26 April 1 James (1587-1603)

This court book was found in a box of papers relating to the Charlbury property of Mr. Watney of Cornbury. I asked the lawyer in whose charge the book was kept if I might have it and he said he would ask the lawyer who had recently been appointed steward if he had any objection. Mr. Watney was ill.

No answer was received to this enquiry. As I had agreed to keep the document until an answer was received the keeper of W. Mss. [Bodleian Library] accepted this court book as a deposit from me on 9 July 1949.

W.O. Hassall

Misc Watney

I/i/1

MS dep.c.90 Transferred to the C.R.O.

Text of the perambulation, modernised

'They think it most apt to begin [with] Holliwell Head, as the hedge leads to the highway coming from [Chipping] Norton, and from thence westwards as the same way leads to a cross there called Laynham Cross from which it returns westwards to the end of George Peeslie the elder's land's end, abutting upon Laynham Field, to a merestone and from merestone to merestone westwards to Sow Mead; and then southwards to a hedge called Ruttam Hedge, following the same hedge westwards to the river lying between the meadows of Ascott and Shipton, following the same river south-eastwards to Haye Hedge and so as the bank lies by Widforde Mead, eastwards to the ford

side which is the end of Water Field, and the meadow there, from the same ford in the Wood Field southward, by the brook called Cawdell Brooke to the hedge in the bottom, which divides Ascott and Shipton compassing an acre called Bales Acre, adjoining the aforesaid hedge, abutting on [Suacimer?] house, and as to the forest hedge leads eastwards until it comes to Ascott hedge dividing Chilson and Ascott fields, and so following the same hedge northwards extending into the river, from thence to the same river eastwards, to a ditch that divides Wilgosthim and Ascott Mill Hamm, northwards by the brook called the back brook; and thence to Saws Hamm; by the same brook, and thence over the same brook northwards to the well head where it began'.

Tenants of the manor in 1591 survey

The demesne lands:

George Peisely by indenture from the Queen under the seal of the Duchy of Lancaster dated 12 June 1583, the site of the manor of Ascott with all houses, lands and buildings on the site; all the demesne lands of the manor except all woods and underwoods; to hold from the Feast of the Annunciation [25 March] before the date of the indenture for 31 years, at a rent of £12 a year by equal parts at the Feast of the Annunciation and the Feast of St Michael the Archangel [29 September]; with covenants to repair every part of the premises, taking sufficient firebote, ploughbote, cartbote and hedgebote, and sufficient great timber for the premises by the assignment of the steward; provided that if the rent be unpaid for two months, the indenture to be void.

Indentures:

Richard Andrews by indenture dated 25 April 1579 holds under the seal of the Duchy of Lancaster for 21 years from the summer before the date of the indenture, at a yearly rent of 40s., one mill pool with its watercourses, one half yardland viz. the first share of two enclosures (hammes) known as Ascott mill enclosures adjoining the mill, the first share of four vegetable (wayre) plots, six acres of arable land abutting the mill, one acre called Little Brasirie in Woodfield, one acre of arable abutting the west side of the mill, one acre of? called Little Brasirie in Woodfield, one acre of arable abutting the Leaze hedge, two acres of arable upon Withihill, one acre of arable land in the furlong next to Blowe Black hedge furlong, one acre of arable at Come Hed, one acre of arable at Skirrettes, one acre of arable abutting on the south side of Laynham Field.

John Taylor holds one cottage by indenture dated 31 March 1589 from Anthony Gate, Master of University College in Oxford, farmer of the customary tenants of the manor, for 20 years from the summer before the date of the indenture, rent 12d.

Copy Holders.

The list of copyholders gives the name of the holder, the lives included in the copyhold, the holding, the annual rent and 'fines' (payments made on entry to a holding).

Margaret Whiting, widow, copyhold of 27 August 1554, herself, John Whiting, Edmund, John's son, one messuage, one yardland, rent 20s, fine 40s; copyhold of 6 July 1586, herself and son William, one messuage, one yardland, rent 13s.4d.

Christopher Whiting, copyhold of 27 August 1590, himself, three and a quarter yardlands, three closes called Two Hammes, a close and orchard, two closes at Long Land Side, rent 43s.4d, fine £5.

Henry Brown, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son Henry, one messuage and two yardlands with closes, rent 26s.2d, fine 53s.4d.

John Henlow, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son Arthur, one messuage and half a yardland with closes, rent 6s.8d, fine 13s.4d.

Richard Hickes, by copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son, Thomas, one messuage and one and a half yardlands with closes, rent 20s, fine 40s.

Robert Seleye, copyhold of 6 July, himself and son, William, one messuage, three quarters of a yardland, three closes of pasture, rent 12s.1_d, fine 24s.3d.

Richard Lord, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and Richard Gale, one messuage and one yardland with closes, rent 13s.4d, fine 26s.7d.

Thomas Waldron, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son, John, one messuage, one garden, one close, one orchard, rent 3s, fine 6s.

George Peisley, copyhold 6 July 1586, himself and son, John, one tenement, one and a quarter yardlands and closes, rent 16s.8d. fine 33s.3d.

George Ryman, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son William, one messuage, half a yardland and closes, rent 6s.8d, fine 13s.4d.

George Peisley, copyhold of 6 July 1586, one messuage, four yardlands, rent 6.9d.

Bartholomew Harris, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and daughter Anne, one messuage, one yardland, rent 13.4d.

Edmund Whiting, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son Thomas, one messuage, two yardlands, rent 26s.8d.

Thomas Smith, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son, one cottage, two acres of land, common pasture for one cow, rent 3s.

Lawrence Frances, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son John, one messuage, three quarters of a yardland, rent 10s.

John Hickes, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son Edmund, one messuage, two yardlands, rent 26s.8d.

George Pawsey, copyhold of 6 July 1586, himself and son Robert, one messuage, one and a quarter yardlands, rent 16s.

George Whiting, copyhold of 27 August 1590, one cottage, quarter of a yardland, rent 30s.4d.

William Washington, copyhold of 6 July 1585, himself and son, one messuage, half a yardland, rent 6s.8d

Richard Cooke, copyhold of 6 July 1585, himself and son, one messuage, one close, one acre of land, rent 22d.

Tenants of Shipton and Langley manors with holdings in Ascott

Robert Cokkes and Thomas Moody – messuage, close of 6 acres, 8 acres arable in the common field on the north side, 8 acres arable on the south side, 17 acres arable in the common field of Shipton on the east side; rent 6s 4_d.

Thomas Cowbourne – by grant of 4 April 1547 – tenement, 2 closes, _virgate land and meadow – formerly in possession of John White of Kidlington on the Green; messuage, close of , 6 acres or arable, 2_ acres of meadow; rent 2s.

Peter Poole – certain lands; rent 3s 4d.

Richard Beckingham esquire – certain lands- rent 12d.

Churchwardens of Ascott – John Whiting, John Hunnybourne, Walter Whiting, John Whiting jun., John Sellwood jun. - 2 messuages, 2 closes of 2 acres, close called Cutteclose of 1 acre by socage and suit of court; rent 16d; by grant from John Sellwood of Ascott dated Michaelmas 1511

Jurors – Courts leet and courts baron. The date 1598 is speculative as the year is not clearly recorded. The court of 1591 was a court of survey.

Andrews, Richard	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1594	-	-	-
Brown, Henry	1587	1589	1590	-	1592	1593	1594	1598	1602	1603
Cooke, Richard	1587	1589	-	1591	1592	-	-	1598	1602	1603
Fletcher, Peter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1598	1602	1603
Fletcher, Richard	-	-	-	1591	-	-	-	1598	1602	1603
France, Lawrence	1587	1589	-	1591	-	1593	1594	-	-	-
Harris, Bartholomew	1587	1589	-	1591	1592	1593	1594	1598	1602	1603
Henlow, John	-	-	-	1591	-	-	1594	1598	1602	1603
Hickes, John	1587	1589	1590	1591	-	1593	-	-	-	-
Hickes, Richard	-	-	1590	-	1592	1593	1594	-	-	-
Hickes, Thomas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1602	1603
Lord, Richard	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1594	1598	1602	1603
Northcott, William	1587	1589	1590	-	1592	-	-	-	-	-
Parrett, George	-	-	1590	-	1592	-	-	-	-	-
Pawsey, George	-	-	-	1591	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peisley, George junr.	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	-	-	-	-
Peisley, George senr.	-	-	-	1591	-	-	-	-	-	-
Perry, Nicholas	-	1589	-	-	-	1593	-	1598	1602	1603
Ryman, George	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	-	1598	1602	-
Seely, William	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1598	1602	1603
Smith, John	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1602	-
Smith, Thomas	1587	1589	-	1591	1592	-	-	-	-	-
Waldron, Thomas	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	-	1598	1602	1603
Washington, William	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	-	-	1598	1602	1603
Whiting, Christopher	-	-	-	1591	1592	-	-	1598	1602	1603

Whiting, Edmund	1587	1589	1590	1591	-	1593	1594	1598	1602	1603
Whiting, George	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1602	1603
Whiting, Ralph	-	-	1590	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whiting, Richard	1587	1589	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whiting, Thomas	-	-	-	-	-	1593	-	1598	1602	-
Winchester, Edmund	1587	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	-	1598	1602	-

Stewards

1587 William Allcock
 1590 George Calfield
 1592 John Dechin
 1593/94 John Hollins
 1598 Thomas Wentworth
 1602/03 John Hollins

Free tenants (es. = essoined)

1587 The Principal and Scholars of Brasenose College, Oxford, William Bonde, Bartholomew Chawney, John Busby (son and heir of Thomas and in the right of his wife Margaret).

1589 Brasenose College (es. by William Northcott and Bartholomew Chawney), Bartholomew Chawney, John Busby, Richard Rowright ; absent William Bonde, fined 2d.

1590 Brasenose College, William Bonde, Bartholomew Chawney, John Busby.

1592 Brasenose College (es. by Robert Hickes), William Bonde, Bartholomew Chawney, William Busby, Richard Rowright .

1593 Brasenose College (es. by William Northcote), William Busby (es. by Robert Hickes), Richard Rowright (es. by Richard Hickes), Bartholomew Chawney, (who paid 4d. for two years rent); absent William Bonde, fined 2d).

1594 Brasenose College (es. by William Northcote), William Busby (es. by Richard Hickes(?)), Richard Rowright (es. by Richard Hickes), William Bonde (es. by John Hammon); absent Bartholomew Chawney, fined 4d.

1598 Brasenose College (es. by Edward Northcote), Richard Rowright (es. by Thomas Hickes), William Busby (es. by Robert Hickes), William Bonde (es. by John Hammond).

1602 Brasenose College (es. by Nicholas Perrye), Richard Rowright (es. by Bartholomew Harris), William Busby (es. by Robert Hickes), John Hammond, Fulke Chawney, John Chawney.

1603 Brasenose College, Richard Rowright, William Busby, John Hammond, Fulke Chawney, John Chawney (all es. communally).

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Wendy Pearse and Alan Vickers for the map of Ascott.

References

- 1 Oxfordshire Record Office (O.R.O), M120/1/CR1.
- 2 The description of manors and manorial courts is based on Eric Kerridge, *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century and After*, 1969, and on P.D.A Harvey, *Manorial Records*, British Records Association, 1984, (henceforth Harvey).
- 3 The National Archives (TNA), Public Record Office (PRO) DL.42/117, ff. 67-77.
- 4 Gloucester County Library; Gloucestershire Record Office D621/E1
- 5 TNA:PRO LR.2
- 6 TNA:PRO LR2/189
- 7 Hibbert, Christopher ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Oxford*, p.475.
- 8 Harvey, p.50.
- 9 John Richardson, *The Local Historian's Encyclopedia*, 1974.
- 10 Jack Howard-Drake, *Oxford Church Courts, Depositions 1570-1574*, pp. 66-7.
- 11 Barbara Adkins, 'The Chaundy Family of Ascott under Wychwood', *Wychwoods History*, No. 11 (1996), pp. 41-5.
- 12 Jack Howard-Drake, *Oxford Church Courts, Depositions 1616-1622*, p.42.
- 13 When an animal for which no owner could be found was found wandering in the manor, proclamations were made of its finding and if no owner claimed it within a year and a day it became Crown property, usually in the person of the lord.
- 14 O.R.O, M120/1/CR2 and M120/1/CR3.
- 15 The oath is written out on a loose sheet in the third court book where there is a similar oath addressed to the foreman of the jury

Gordon and Jean Carpenter

JANET WALLACE

Anthony Gordon Carpenter is, as they say, Milton born and bred, arriving on 22 October 1915 in a cottage in Frog Lane (now known as Robins Acre) Milton under Wychwood. He was the sixth child of ten born to George Carpenter who came from Henley on Thames and his wife Elizabeth (née Pittaway) who had been born in the Wychwoods at Blenheim Cottages, Burford Road, Shipton under Wychwood in 1880. Elizabeth had three brothers and four sisters, most of whom continued to live locally at such places as Leafield and Tangley. At the age of 13 Elizabeth went to work at Blenheim Palace in Woodstock where she stayed until about 1900. It was during this time that there was army manoeuvres in the Park and staff from the Palace, including Elizabeth, went to watch the church parade and it was here that they first caught sight of each other as he was a member of the Horse Artillery. George and Elizabeth were married in Henley and lived at Nettlebed until 1905 where Bill, their first child was born. Coming to Shipton for a holiday with Elizabeth's parents, George, who was by then discharged from the Army, decided to stay in the village as there was building work available at Shipton Court.

The couple were able to rent a cottage (the one above-mentioned) in Frog Lane, Milton from Mr Rawlins, by which time Arthur their second child was born. The rest of the family namely, Cyril, Alf, Betty, Gordon, George, Nancy, Ramsay and Nellie were all born in this cottage. There were two bedrooms upstairs, a small one where the older boys slept and the second room which was eventually divided by a curtain for the parents, the girls and the younger boys. There were two similar sized rooms downstairs.

Gordon has no early memories of his grandparents from Henley although his grandmother later married again to a Mr Saunders and eventually she came to live with the family for a while after they moved to live in Meadow Lane, Shipton. Of his Shipton grandparents he recalls grandfather Anthony Pittaway who was a carrier. He had a horse, trolley and cart and did all sorts of jobs, picking up and delivering parcels, traveling frequently between Shipton and Burford and carrying medicines from Dr Cheatle in Burford. Grandma Pittaway used to walk from her home in Shipton going across the fields on Tuesday to help her daughter

with the washing. Gordon remembers going to meet her across Dog Kennel Lane. He was expected to 'pull his weight' and to that end was given two small buckets in which to collect the water to fill the copper and the big metal bath ready for washday. One of his mother's Monday tasks was to brush all the Sunday suits before carefully putting them away, after they were worn the previous day when everyone was expected to look very smart. The ironing and most of the work was done in the big room downstairs. There was a grate with a small boiler on one side, but by that time gas was available from the gas works at Shipton, although this service was somewhat erratic.

Gordon's earliest memory is of waking up when in his cot, and seeing shiny buttons and a penny bar of Nestles milk chocolate. Father was home on leave. And there was the day when the R34 Airship passed over on its way to America, and happy holidays with his uncle who worked with the horses at Tangley Hall Farm, the Co-op baker who delivered 13 loaves at a time, cooking sausages which tipped onto the fire, and which were rescued but despite being 'well cooked' were nonetheless hastily devoured by his hungry brothers and sisters.

All boys were expected to help on the family allotments and kitchen gardens and Gordon was no exception. However as Gordon's father, George, was again away in the Army and did not much like gardening anyway, most of the work fell onto his mother Elizabeth, who was fortunately a keen gardener and a good one at that. On the whole they were a healthy family although during the big flu epidemic of 1918 both Gordon and his mother were very ill and somebody sent for Dr Cheatle to visit. In those days families had to pay for doctor's visits, however if he was called by a person outside the family that person would pay the fee; Gordon thinks their benefactor was Mrs Sam Groves.

Besides the work which he was expected to do Gordon remembers leisure times playing out in the fields and by the stream, family card games and the like with outside toys mainly being the well documented whip and top and bowling the hoop, trying to drive the latter all the way from home to school. Gordon's first school was the one for the Infants at the top of the High Street (now the Baptist Chapel Room), which he first attended at the age of three 'to get me off mother's hands.' Miss Salter (Mrs Bacchus) was his first teacher. When he was older he moved to the school next to the church with Mr Birch as headmaster. He remembers that Miss Silman (Mrs Gwen Morgan) and Olive Griffin were teachers in the junior school. There was also Miss Hall who came from Oxford to teach in the small class. After a while she married Ken Rawlins who were to become the parents of John. The school building consisted of the big room which was divided into two and one smaller classroom. Gordon took sandwiches to school but many children who lived nearer to the school went home for lunch. Football was played on the Green and there were occasional treats

and holidays such as a Sunday School outing to Wembley to see a great Exhibition, Magic Lantern Shows with Mr Willis and others, fairs and, a little later, cycle rides to Chipping Norton to the cinema, and there were the celebrations and parades for King George V Silver Jubilee and the Coronation of King George VI. Gordon joined the Boys Brigade, as did many others in the Wychwood villages between the ages of 14 to 18. They had a busy schedule most evenings during the week. Monday was Drill, Tuesday PT, Wednesday was Band Practice night, Gordon played the drums, Thursday, not sure, Friday recreation at Forest Lodge, Saturday was football and Sunday there was Bible Class.

One or two children left Milton school each year to continue their education at Burford Grammar School, but most left at the age of 14 to start their working lives. While still at school the Carpenter brothers had earned a little pocket money helping at the shop of Miss Dangerfield in Milton High Street (now London House) where they were sent on errands, collected and delivered parcels and helped to keep the place clean. When he got to the 'right age' Gordon did this job as well as helping at the Giddins brothers boot and shoe shop opposite (currently Wychwood Surgery) where he did the same sort of work and also learned about repairing and making boots and shoes. As they grew up most of his siblings found work and married locally. Between the ages of 12 to 14 Gordon had a Saturday newspaper round and due to this contact he was asked by Mr Wiggins and Mr Coombes of Shipton if he would like to take over the round when he left school. He had several choices for future employment, one was to work on the land (9 shillings a week), the saw mills and Groves Yard (9 shillings a week) or the till yard (7 shillings and sixpence a week as apprentice). The paper delivery round was 10 shillings a week so he went for the latter for two weeks and was there for six years, taking delivery of Ascott papers as well two years into this time. A typical normal day was: - To Ascott at 6 o'clock on push-bike to collect papers off the train. Deliver at Ascott. Back to Shipton, pick up hand cart, walk up to Shipton Station and collect papers off 8 o'clock train (about 13 bundles, but the papers were not very thick in those days.) Messrs Wiggins and Coombes would sell papers at the Post Office at Shipton after 9 o'clock but they used to pack the papers for delivery, and these were then taken to be distributed by Gordon from a cart to Shipton and Milton between 9am and 1 pm.

It was sometime during this time that he met Jean Treweeke. Mildred Jean Treweeke was born on 15 December 1918 at The Mount, Churchill, and was the daughter of Alfred George Phillips Treweeke (born 15.11.1888) and Edith Anne nee Thompson (born 20.9.1893). Grandfather William Alfred Roberts Treweeke (born 13.5.1856) and his wife Jane nee Philips (born 12.7.1860) came from Dunwallow in Cornwall where his father was a draper. William Alfred was a commercial traveler dealing in

cloth, so that he settled in the Chipping Norton area where he dealt in cloth with Bliss's Mills. However he wanted to be a farmer and bought Rynehill Farm near Kingham. Later he went on to purchase The Mount at Churchill and Sarsgrove Farm.

Alfred George (Jean's father) did not always get on well with his father and decided to go to America and Canada where he spent several years working at different jobs, labouring and the like. It was during this time that he met his future wife, Edith Anne, in a post office in Canada where she was helping out and he was purchasing a postage stamp. They came to know each other and he evidently impressed her parents sufficiently for them to give consent to the engagement of the young couple. Edith Anne's father had been an engineer in Wellingborough where one or two children were born before he moved his family to Canada. Alfred George returned to England in 1915 but was unable to join the army because during his childhood he had injured his foot whilst playing rugby at Burford Grammar School where he was a boarder. Unfortunately this affected him badly and left him very lame. His father agreed that he could send for his fiancée and after a difficult and dangerous passage from America the boat docked safely in Liverpool and Alfred George was there to meet Edith Anne. Unfortunately she was not allowed to disembark as she had only got an American passport which meant she was refused permission to enter the country, however Alfred George went off into the city and returned with a dual passport, and so they were able to come to Churchill, and after their marriage, to make Sarsgrove their home.

Jean was born at The Mount, her grandparents' house, because her grandfather insisted that, 'No grandchild of mine shall be born anywhere but in my house'. Jean's mother had to move into the guest room next to her parents-in-law, so that 'I will know what's going on'. Sadly he died before the birth. Jean had a wonderful childhood on the farm with her two brothers Douglas and Norman. There were plenty of animals around, endless games to play on the hayricks and in the fields and woods close-by and a generous father who gave them plenty of toys to play with. Schooling was at first at Churchill Primary School but later changed to the school in Chipping Norton where her aunt was a teacher. It was a long walk across the fields to school each day in all weathers on her own, with galoshes being the order of the day when wet and muddy. At the age of 11 all this changed as, like so many other farmers at the time, things were very difficult and they had to leave Sarsgrove. This was a blow to Jean who had hoped to get a scholarship to the school at Chipping Norton. Her family had instead to move to a smallholding in Bruern Road, Milton under Wychwood. Sent to the Intermediate School in Priory Lane, Burford Jean obtained a scholarship to Burford Grammar School.

Due to circumstances she had everything free, which the other children resented very much at first, but after a while she was 'taken on

board'. Jean's mother was an excellent seamstress and instead of getting the school uniform from the shop she sent to Webbers in Oxford High Street, for patterns and the best serge and cotton materials and made all of her daughter's school uniform which were of a much better quality than those of her peers. She did well at school academically but as she wanted to become a teacher in domestic science she had to stay on at school an extra year, as she was too young to go to college. She took part in exhibitions of needlework, and was chosen to embroider the school shield onto a quilt being made for The Princess Royal by other members of the school needlework classes, and she was responsible for the padding and presentation. She also recalls having to bury a chicken and then exhuming it after all the flesh had rotted so that she could do a complete examination. She went on to win a scholarship to college, the only one in the county in her subject that year, despite the derision of other candidates who mocked her when she said she came from Burford.

By this time, Jean must have become well acquainted with Gordon. They played tennis together with friends on a court belonging to the Barretts in Green Lane. Gordon was also doing his newspaper rounds and Jean recalls that when she got to know when Gordon was due to deliver papers to her parents' house, she would busy herself with an outdoor job such as cleaning the windows so that she could see him. 'I liked him because he didn't whistle like all the other boys,' she said, and, 'We must have had the cleanest windows in the village!'. She had to go off to college in Bath and it was about this time that they became engaged. After two years at Bath, Jean was expecting to do a third year but unfortunately, due to the war and the requisitioning of the college buildings by the Navy, this was not to be and so she had to find some employment. The first two jobs offered were not to her liking, to put it politely. Also due to the onset of the war Gordon had enlisted in the RAF, so they decided to get married before Gordon was sent abroad. This they did in late 1940, a trip to Oxford to get a special license from the Bishop of Oxford, a dash to Chipping Norton for photographs after the ceremony and a journey by car in the snow (the car nearly skidded off the road) to High Wycombe where they were to honeymoon at the home of one of Gordon's uncles. A rushed affair as were so many at that time. She had work to do and he had to go off to war, which he did by sailing off to an unknown destination on 15 December, Jean's birthday.

Jean obtained a post at a school in Bampton teaching domestic science. The classroom was a miserable, cold dreary nissen hut. The girls were very unpleasant and rebellious to their new young teacher, but after a horrid start, but with hard work, firmness and persistence, she trained them and 'turned them round'. After a couple of years she had made such an impression on and in the school that the Director of Education thought she could do the same elsewhere. But Jean had other thoughts and took a

THE WEDDING OF GORDON CARPENTER
AND JEAN TREWEEKE. 1940

post at Cannock which was a lovely modern school with beautiful classrooms. Jean enjoyed it there and did not leave until Gordon returned from overseas.

After nine weeks at sea not knowing where they were going and during which time there were enemy attacks and loss of life, Gordon's ship arrived at Durban in South Africa. However Gordon was destined to go to Egypt where he was to drive a variety of vehicles including the large ones, and had one or two lucky escapes. He recalls spending one Christmas time on leave visiting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and said that it snowed which was quite rare. Later he went to Ceylon and whilst there the Japanese came to bomb the harbour, but the radar group he was working with spotted the planes early so that the ships were able to move out in time, although there was some damage to installations. Five hurricane planes shot down 44 enemy aircraft. Gordon eventually came back to England and was stationed at Down Ampney loading up aircraft ready for the invasion. He was supposed to take part in the raid, but Jean protested, so he was posted to Eynsham instead. Because of this Jean wrote to the headmaster of Eynsham School asking if there was a post for a domestic science teacher there. Although not trained for general subjects, like history, geography, maths, this was the only post available, so Jean swotted up on various subjects. She had the unenviable and unnerving task of having to teach in the headmaster's classroom while he was sitting beside her at a desk doing his own work. There was a cane on the desk and on one occasion, and only once, she had to use it, in fear and trepidation, on an unruly and disruptive pupil. The boy was the son of the local butcher from whom Jean bought their tiny ration of meat, but he was pleased that she had disciplined his naughty son, and the quality of the meat was as before.

Jean became pregnant and recalls a terrifying journey to Thetford in Norfolk to visit Gordon who had been posted here. She said she had never



been so frightened in her life, there were no sign posts anywhere, someone had recently been murdered when giving a lift to a stranger, petrol was rationed, but thanks to her father's farming occupation she was able to use a little of his, however she managed it. After Gordon was de-mobbed there was one bad day at 'the dogs' where Gordon had hoped to make a fortune, but this was not to be.

Jean and Gordon were now living in a little cottage at Swinford, one in a row which Gordon had managed to rent from a local farmer. It had been the base for the local Home Guard during the war, so they had to clean it all and decorate it. The farmer was impressed and gave Gordon more work and then he took on a job with the Water Board. It was while they were living there that their eldest daughter Sue was born at the Radcliffe Infirmary in 1946.

At the end of 1946, Gordon and Jean then heard that Mr Wiggins back in Shipton, wanted to sell his newspaper business. Family and friends rallied round and Gordon was able to buy the business on 18 January, 1947 just before the start of a most horrendous winter which many will remember as snow arrived on 21 January and continued until the end of March. Gordon and Jean left their cottage and moved in with Jean's parents at Hill Crest, Bruern Road, Milton where Gordon started off his new career working out of the garage throughout the bad winter until he was able to rent a small shop in Shipton Road, Milton, which belonged to Eric Meecham (now replaced by the Owl's View, the home of Mrs Connie Meecham). This was an extremely difficult time for Jean as when Sue was about eighteen months old she was joined by the twins, Jane and Wendy. Jean was very unwell at this time and it was difficult sharing the small house with her parents.

In 1947-8 however plans were being made to build some council houses on the field opposite St Michael's Home in Shipton, and they were most fortunate to get the first house available, although this was not without some bad feeling amongst some villagers as Jean and Gordon were from Milton, although his mother was living in Shipton by this time. Gordon continued with his paper rounds and worked in the little shop in Milton until the time came when they were able to get planning permission to build a shop on the side of the house. When the shop was completed one person was heard to say that she didn't know what they wanted such a large place for and how would they ever fill it! 'Carpenters' was a very busy and popular shop selling a great variety of items, including magazines, newspapers, comics, toys, wool, domestic items and a good deal more. Besides organising her three girls Jean also worked hard in the shop and said that if somebody wanted something and it was not in stock, she would make sure it was there by the next morning. Because of the business, Jean had to train her daughters to look after themselves some of the time, with strict domestic arrangements which were carried out from

GORDON AND JEAN CARPENTER WITH SUE BETWEEN THEM AND HOLDING THE TWINS, JANE AND WENDY. 1947



a very young age.

Jean and Gordon continued to run their businesses at the shop until they decided to retire in 1976. Looking for somewhere else to live Gordon heard that The Elms, a property in Green Lane which was previously the home of Mr Beck, was for sale by auction at the Quart Pot. They went along and were the successful bidders. But the council would not give them a grant for improvements to be carried out as they said the house was not worth repairing. The house was demolished, but the stone was saved and cleaned. Jean designed a new house for which Peter Townsend drew up the blueprints and their new home Broadstone was built by Bill Dore. They moved in and stayed there for several years enjoying their retirement with the family, traveling and playing golf, and the girls all went off to train at the Oxford and County Secretarial College in Oxford. By this time Jean's father had died and her mother was becoming rather frail so she went to live at Broadstone. After a while she became unhappy as she said she wanted to live in a home of her own. As she was having difficulty with the stairs and needed somebody nearby, she was fortunate enough to have an empty flat in Greenlands for a while.

Gordon and Jean realised that the house would not be suitable for Jean's mother to return to and Gordon managed to buy a plot of land in Frog Lane from Jack Smith. Jean designed another home for which Roger Rawlins drew up the plans. It was to be mainly on one floor but with large area above which the family used as a games room. When the actual building was complete Jean took over and did all the woodwork, tiling, painting and decorating need to complete the home. Gordon worked outside with the garden. Following a stroke Mrs Treweeke moved into Gordon and Jean's new house, Crowtrees, and remained there until her



GORDON AND JEAN CARPENTER PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE TIME OF THE RECORDING. 2002

death. Gordon and Jean were still able to continue enjoying their retirement, but with the addition of the next generation as Sue, Wendy and Jane were all living close by.

From an early age it is fair to say that both Gordon and Jean worked very hard. Apart from the business Jean was always ready to try some new skill, for example cake baking and decorating, she became an accomplished photographer, weaving, (she started weaving her own stair carpet, but had to give it up as she was too busy), and she also tried a little printing business for a while, and Benny Townsend commended her on her tiling of the new house. Recently with an eye to the future, they finally left Milton and are now happily settled in a very pleasant bungalow in Over Norton Road in Chipping Norton, close to the golf course and family.

Since writing this article, the amalgamation of oral histories of both Gordon and Jean, sadly Jean died in May 2005.

The recent history of Kelcot, a house in the centre of the village

ALAN VICKERS

Kelcot is not the largest and certainly not the most imposing house in Shipton but, even at first sight, it has a quiriness which makes the viewer want to know more of its past – why does it have a cut stone front for example and why a Georgian bay window and a rather elaborate Victorian one as well? What was its past relationship to Rose Cottage to which it is joined?

Since buying the house just over two years ago, I have tried to uncover part of its history, at least back to about 1830 and this is the basis of this brief article.

Clearly the house is much older than this. It stands, in Church Street, almost in the centre of a box formed by the Shaven Crown, the Red Horse Inn, the Parish Church and Shipton Court, all very old buildings. Church Street itself (formerly Main Street) would seem to have been developed slightly after the building of the Court in 1603. According to one unsubstantiated report, the house may have been the first school in the village and the slightly ecclesiastical style of the entrance might support this.



In the 18th century the house is reputed to have been William Hambidge's tea and coffee shop and the name William Hambidge can still be discerned very faintly over the main entrance. Was he responsible for putting

KELCOT, CHURCH STREET, SHIPTON WITH ROSE COTTAGE ON THE LEFT. 2005



THE OLD WOODEN LINTELS VISIBLE ABOVE THE GEORGIAN BAY WINDOW.

the cut stone front and the Georgian bay window on the building? The wooden lintels of earlier windows can still be seen poking out from behind the top of the Georgian bay. At that time Kelcot and Rose Cottage were one building – the internal communication was apparently via a door which is now a bookcase in our front room.

The 1839 tithe map shows the whole building as belonging to John Davis of Bedwardine Worcestershire. The main house fronting on to Church Street was occupied by Richard Sedgley, saddler and harness maker, who also occupied a house on the "waste. Richard Sedgely

was married to Mary. Between 1815 and 1824 they had one son and three daughters. Mary died in Shipton in 1845 but Richard outlived her to die at 77 years in 1855 in Chipping Norton workhouse.

A legal agreement of 1842 suggests that John Davis bought the freehold of the property in 1833 from Richard Sedgley and Richard Cross.

What now forms the rear of the property (the present dining room and kitchen plus the rooms above) then comprised a separate cottage, probably with an entrance out on to the lane which ran where Licence Cottage now stands (the 1839 tithe map shows a gap). This cottage was occupied in 1839 by William Pugh, gardener and florist (born in Sarsden) and his wife Caroline, dressmaker and milliner (née Gibbs), whom he had married in Shipton in 1832. Recent work uncovered a lintel in the kitchen and the arrangement of beams points to the presence of a steep stairway upstairs at this point (there is evidence of a balustrade under the floorboards of the room above).

In the 1841 census Richard Sedgley was 56. His wife Mary was also 56 and their son Thomas was 23. Their daughters had apparently left home. In the same year, William Pugh was 29, Caroline was 27, their daughters Fanny and Emily were 6 and 4 respectively and their son Walter was just 2.



POSITION OF A FORMER STAIRCASE AS SEEN FROM THE ROOM ABOVE.

Louisa, Walter's twin sister had died in her first year.

In 1842 the agreement, already referred to, sold Rose cottage to Thomas Groves of Milton and was signed by John Davis, Thomas Groves and Edward Upstone. The original document is today held by the owners of Rose Cottage but there is a

complete transcript in the Society's archives. It is interesting to note the signature of Edward Upstone on this agreement in view of the subsequent occupation of Kelcot by Philip Upstone throughout the second half of the 19th Century and then by his niece, Frances Jones during the first half of the 20th Century.

The census of 1851 shows that William Pugh and Caroline still lived in their part of the house. They now had another son, William, aged 7 and had been joined by Thomas Pugh, 77 born in Oddington in Gloucestershire, who had also been a gardener, but was now blind. He was given as a lodger but could have been the father of William Pugh. The front of the house was occupied by Philip Upstone aged 42, described as a "proprietor of houses", his second wife Cecilia, 48 and his sister Elizabeth, 54. Philip had come from Leafield. He was the son of a blacksmith in that village, Robert Upstone and his wife Martha and had worked as a coach wheeler before acquiring property.

The Pugh's had gone by the 1861 census and so too had Cecilia Upstone, who had died in 1858 aged 55. Philip now had a new, younger wife, Jane 39, whom he had married in Shorthampton just a few months after Cecilia's death in 1858. They had a young son, Philip just three months old.

The tithe map of 1863 shows that Philip Upstone now owned both parts of the house. He also owned an allotment in the common fields (possibly the site of the future Mount Pleasant houses – certainly by the early 1900s (Source: The Tax Survey of 1911) his son, the Reverend Philip Upstone would own both Kelcot and Rose Cottage as well as the house next door to Kelcot occupied by the Bartletts, another cottage in Gas Lane and the Mount Pleasant terrace on the Swinbrook Road.). It is presumed that during the 1860s the two houses ie front and back were joined and occupied solely by the Upstone family. The 1860s would have been a busy

decade for the Upstones. The building of the Gas Works, shortly after the arrival of the railway, must have entailed some alteration to the lanes off Church Street. It is possible that the line of the present Gas Lane was laid down at that time, replacing the former lane, which had run past the right hand side of Kelcot and along the cottage at the back. The cottages on what is now the Green followed the line of the old throughway. The Upstones then took the opportunity of the diversion to develop the gap by building a cottage, subsequently occupied by the Bartlett family. One consequence of this development was the anomaly of the inclusion of the rear of the outhouse of the older cottage with what became the Bartletts' house although within the curtelage of Kelcot's boundaries. Outhouses were important in Victorian times and one can imagine the decision being made by Philip Upstone to give the new cottage its outhouse simply by splitting up the existing building. Most of this of course is supposition.

The Upstone's were still there in the 1871 census. Philip senior was now 60 and is now described as a grocer. His wife Jane was 49 and there were two sons, Philip ten and Robert seven. Also living there was Amilia Purser, a relative aged 15.

Ten years later, in the 1881 census, Philip was 72 and still described as a grocer. His wife Jane was 59. Their sons seem to have left home but there was a boarder, Emma Thackwaite, school mistress aged 42. On the day of the census they also had a visitor, Mary Purser described as an annuitant. Rose Cottage was mentioned separately for the first time and was occupied by Maria Humphrie a widow aged 61. A very large scale map of the early 1880s does not show the Victorian bay window but I have seen photographs of an almost identical window built in the Oxford area during the decade and estimate that the grocers of Kelcot had this built around the mid 1880s. According to tradition, this window was built by Groves with masons who had worked on the Oxford colleges hence the rather elaborate decoration cut into the unfortunately soft stone, probably from the Milton quarries.

Philip Upstone died in January 1885 aged 75 (his tombstone is about the only one still legible among those used to form a pathway in the churchyard). He did not live to see his eldest son, Philip, now the priest of Wooton under Edge marry a Shipton girl, Mary Savidge, in 1891.

In the 1891 census, his widow, Jane Upstone was 69 and was continuing the grocery business. Her income must have been limited. She had two boarders Charles Halford aged 47, a sack contractor and corn dealer and George Mason, 15, a Railway Clerk. On the day of the census there was a visitor, Mary Wilsdon, a widow of 79. Rose Cottage had new occupants, the Miles family, comprising Alfred Miles, carpenter aged 32, his wife Naomi (formerly a Longshaw from the Red Horse) aged 33 and their sons Alfred eight, Harry six and Robert four.

The latest Census available, that of 1901, still recorded Jane Upstone,

now 79 as a grocer. Two of her nieces lived with her, Frances Kate Jones aged 44 and Fanny Jones aged 42 both unmarried. There was a boarder, Joseph Shepherd, a farmer's lad. The Miles family still lived next door and their son Alfred, now 18, had become a carpenter like his father. A photograph of Church Street taken around 1900 suggests that the shop was behind the Georgian Bay and not the relatively new and larger Victorian window and this is supported by fragments of old paint probably from advertising slogans now barely visible below the Georgian bay.

The niece of the Upstones, Frances Kate Jones, lived on in the house until her death on 1 April 1939 when it was acquired by Mrs Phyllis Smith. Frances Kate Jones is buried close to her former neighbours, the Miles' in the new Church cemetery.

Dulcie Arundel, who was born in 1917, has memories of the inhabitants of Kelcot in the early 1920s. Her father worked for Mr Foster the butcher at Salisbury Place in Church Street and, when he moved to Charlbury, her family rented Salisbury Place from the Dee family. She remembers that Kelcot was lived in by a Mr and Mrs Jones (on the left side) and Frances Kate Jones on the right side ie the Victorian bay window side. At this time, Kate Jones still maintained the very basic grocery shop. The old lady would knock on the window as Dulcie passed to get her to run errands to the village shop run by the Dees. She could still remember her Grandmother talking about the Upstones and she believed they had been friends. Alfred and Naomi Miles, from Rose Cottage, eventually moved into the Old School House next to Mrs Arundel's parents at Salisbury Place. The married Jones's had a daughter, Gladys, who married a Mr Goodman one of two partners operating a travelling shop. They later went off to live in Headington in Oxford. The daughter of the Bartlett family (who lived in the house next to Kelcot), married the other partner, a Mr Hawks.

From 1939 the house was occupied by Mrs Phyllis Smith and her mother, Mrs Siford. Phyllis Smith had been employed by the first cash till company to open in Shipton – The United Woodworking Co in Station Road. After the Second World War, she started the Wychwood Manufacturing Co with her second husband, Frederick Smith. The site for this was at the back of Kelcot where there had been the workshop of Alf Miles, the lad of eight at Rose Cottage in 1891. It closed in 1975.

In the Summer of 1939 the ownership of Rose Cottage also changed. It was sold by Charlotte Elizabeth Jones to Samuel and Agnes Moss. Their daughter, Miss Muriel Moss, became the owner of Rose Cottage in February 1959 and lived there until her death in 1989. There is an evocative photograph in the Society's archives showing Phyllis Smith, her mother Mrs Siford and Miss Moss at a street fair in Church Street in 1959.

The house was bought by John Kellett and his wife Dorothy from Phyllis Smith in 1962. They gave it the name of Kelcot based on their own



MRS SIFFORD, MISS MURIEL MOSS AND MRS PHYLLIS SMITH AT A STREET FAIR IN CHURCH STREET 1959.

name (so far it has not been possible to discover what the house was known as prior to that apart from references to "the cottage on Church Street" in legal documents). The Kelletts lived in their main house, named Kelbrook further down Church Street. Kelcot

was to be the home of their gardener. He lived there until the 1970s. The house was then rented out, often to American military personnel before being bought by Bruce and Jackie Finlay in 1985.

The right of way across Kelcot's garden, allowing the occupants of Rose Cottage to bring in wood and coal, was suppressed in 1987 and a road access negotiated for the first time to the rear of both Kelcot and Rose Cottage along the bank of Trots Brook. The Finlays also opened up and converted the attic floor exposing very ancient bough beams still showing evidence of their original leaves and typical of the early construction methods of estate builders. After the Finlays sold it in 1998, the house passed through several owners but did not undergo any significant changes.

In September 2005 we began a project to knock through the kitchen wall and join the existing

THE BRICK BAKERY
OVEN UNCOVERED
DURING WORKS IN
LATE 2005.



kitchen with the utility room. It had been suspected that hidden somewhere in the house was a brick oven. According to the Wychwoods Album, published by the Society, the house is remembered as "the place where people took their Sunday joint to be roasted in the baker's oven". After some exploratory chisel work to the right of a former hearth, an opening was revealed. A torch illuminated a domed structure built of soot covered bricks. Unfortunately the entrance from the hearth had been damaged in the past when the hearth itself had been filled and it was not possible to preserve the oven in any meaningful way – it would have been a small black hole in the middle of a mass of masonry. We took measurements and photographs as the masonry was demolished. The floor of the oven was 41 inches from the ground. From what remained of the front opening to the rear of the oven was approximately 34 inches. The widest point across the oven floor in the other direction was 33 inches. The height of the interior walls was 11 1/2 inches and the dome at its highest point was 14 inches. Half bricks were used in the construction of the dome.

The research into the history of the house so far has given us a feeling of continuity and an understanding of the people who occupied the house and of the lives they led more than one hundred and fifty years ago. The real challenge is now to penetrate beyond the 19th Century and finally get to meet Mr Hambidge in his tea and coffee shop!

Sources

Census data 1841 -1901
Shipton parish registers

Gossip in Lyneham

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

In April 1632 there was a case in the Oxford diocesan church courts between Dorothy Collett and Henry Hyatt in which Dorothy sued Henry for defamation and they and the witnesses she had called had to go to Oxford to give their evidence. Henry was a young man, second son to James Hyatt of Lyneham, baptised in Shipton under Wychwood Church on 23th April 1604. Dorothy Collett was a young woman also of Lyneham.

At this time the people of the village where you lived took a very close interest in all aspects of your daily life. Any smear on your character affected your standing in the community and could spoil employment chances and damage marriage prospects or marital relationships.

The first witness in the case, Katherine Walters of Lyneham, was examined on the 4th April 1632; she was a servant in a house in Lyneham. She said that about a fortnight before Christmas Henry came to her Mistress's house about nine o'clock in the evening and spoke to her with no-one else there. Henry asked her whether she was with Dorothy Collett when Dorothy had, due to a miscarriage brought on by lifting a pail of water, given birth to a child 'unlawfully begotten'. Katherine answered that she had never heard such a thing, not surprising perhaps because the birth was alleged to have taken place in the house of John Hooper last year. Henry said that he had been told so by two or three people.

John Hooper gave his evidence on the same day. He was 46 years old, born in Broad Rissington, Gloucestershire, who had lived in Lyneham for 20 years and who said his estate was worth 'above 300 pounds'. He said that he had met Henry Hyatt in the street in Lyneham early one morning before Christmas 1631 and Henry had told him there was a story going the rounds that Dorothy Collett had had a child in his house in 1631 when in his service. John said that Dorothy had been his maid in 1631 but had left last Michaelmas. John told Dorothy what Henry had said. Later with her brother Richard, who now lived in Bould, near Idbury, they went to Henry's home where they found him in his father's barn. Henry agreed that he had said the words and now said that he had been told the story by Richard Baker, the younger and John his brother, two young men born in Lyneham in 1612 and 1614 respectively.

John Hooper, a man of some importance in Lyneham seems to have

been very incensed by the allegation against Dorothy. Perhaps he felt it reflected on him since she was his maid when this was supposed to have happened. He told Richard Millen another witness, that if Dorothy did no good in this court 'wee will goe to the common laws', which implies that he was supporting her very strongly.

The case appears to have been taken to a justice of the peace before being brought to the church court. On Candlemas day (3rd February) Katherine, Henry Hyatt with his father James, Dorothy Collett and her brother Richard, John Hooper, John Baylis and the two Baker brothers with others from Lyneham as well went to the house of Sir Robert Jenkinson, justice of the peace in Walcot, Charlbury. In the hall of the justice's house, which must have had been quite crowded, Henry Hyatt 'confessed' before them all that Katherine had repeated their conversation truly. At this point Henry added that either he or Richard Haynes or Robert Brookes were suspected of being the father of Dorothy's child.

The witnesses in the church court all said that Henry had not spoken in anger but had repeated the story as it was told to him but nevertheless Dorothy was an unmarried woman and her good name had been much impaired by the allegation. Was he repeating silly chatter between young men or were the Baker brothers winding him up maybe because they knew he had something to hide? Whatever, he sounds a worried young man with reasons of his own for asking such questions. Little could be hidden in such a small community and no doubt the people of Lyneham had plenty of views on the subject.

Unfortunately there is no indication of what the court decided or what penalty, if any, it imposed.

The Society's Publications in Print

Wychwoods History, an Index to Journals 1-19. (2004)

All the Society's past *Wychwoods History* journals are in print. An *Index* of articles, contributors, personal names, farms, maps and subjects in journals 1-19 is available free on receipt of a self-addressed C5 (229 x162mm) envelope with 2 first class stamps from Graham Nelson, History Bookshop, Unit 1A, Fosseyway Business Park, Stratford Road, Moreton In Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 9NQ, or see www.wychwoodshistory.org for the personal name index.

Wychwoods History 20 (2005) £3.50.

Joan Rein Remembers; Milton Church; Roman Activity at Swinbrook; Shipton and the Church Courts; One of Yesterday's Heroes – Albert Oliver; The People of the Wychwoods 1881; 'Tripping The Light Fantastic Toe': Traditional Dance Musicians of Finstock.

The Shipton under Wychwood Constables' Book 1807-1851 (2006) £3. ed Margaret Ware.

Transcript with comprehensive introduction and personal name index.

That's How it Was: Women in the Wychwoods During World War Two (Originally £5.50 now 50p)

An illustrated record of life in the Wychwood villages in World War Two, as recalled by the women who lived and worked there.

The Second Wychwoods Album

(Originally £5.00 now 50p)

Eighty photographs illustrating life in Milton, Shipton and neighbouring villages, particularly between the wars.