

WYCHWOODS
HISTORY

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The observations and opinions in the articles and notices in the Journal are those of their authors and not necessarily those of the Society

Foreword

We who live in a time of rapid change sometimes forget that, as Disraeli said in 1867, change is constant. This view is amply supported by the articles in this our fourteenth journal.

In the turbulent sixteenth century John Chapman of Milton foresaw the possibility of religious change. His story came to light from the discovery of the Shipton churchwardens' accounts for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which have surfaced after 300 years in the Lambeth Palace Library in London.

Emigration, both imposed and voluntary, brought change to many men, women and children in the nineteenth century. 'A Sad Tale of Wychwood Men' tells the story of two men convicted of burglary and sentenced to transportation to Australia. The terrible conditions suffered for months on prison ships, the misery of the prisoners and those left behind are brought home to us in this article. The horror of fire on an emigrant ship described in 'The Cospatrick Tragedy' put an end to hopes of change to a better life in New Zealand for those on board. The picture on the front of this journal is of the memorial on Shipton village green to the Cospatrick victims from Shipton.

'The Agricultural Ladder' shows the changes in farming and in the lives of farmers and their families after the enclosure of land in Milton in 1849 and Shipton in 1852. The article looks at the difference between the two villages in the mid-nineteenth century. The railway was a great catalyst for change. 'Memories of Shipton Station' describes the station in its heyday. It is just still there with a reduced passenger service only – a shadow of its former self.

In spite of change there is always continuity. There are many who live quietly at home, getting on with their daily lives and supporting their community. Their changes are those of family events, employment, births, marriages and deaths. 'A Bouquet of Roses' is the story of one such family.

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE, SUE JOURDAN & TRUDY YATES
January 1999

Crime and Punishment in 1790

A SAD TALE OF WYCHWOOD MEN

WALTER HENRY TOWNSEND

Henry Townsend went to Australia in 1791. Very few had gone before him and he did not go willingly. Bound in chains as a convict, Henry was forced to leave his home, his family and everything he had become familiar with in his forty years in the Wychwood area, to cross the unfamiliar and terrifying domain of the seas to an unknown land on the other side of the world. He was transported to the primitive, pioneering colony of New South Wales, which was in its infancy just two years old in 1790, to serve out his sentence.

I came across Henry Townsend, born in Milton under Wychwood in 1749, as I researched my family history, and he turned out to be the most researchable of all my ancestors. The family historian who finds an ancestor who was a pauper or a criminal counts himself lucky as there are bound to be some interesting records hidden away in dusty archives. Henry was a day-labourer finding employment as the seasons and weather permitted; he was also, at various times, a pauper and a criminal. He married Sarah Shayler of Coldstone in 1774 when he was living at Langley Mill in Shipton under Wychwood.. At her wedding Sarah signed her name Sarah Shailer, but Henry had not acquired the necessary skill and could only make his mark X. The couple had six children, the youngest being baptised on 17 January 1790. After that baptism Henry's name does not appear again in the parish registers; they contain no record of him being buried. Sarah was buried in Shipton in 1826, but what became of Henry? Fortunately for us today, but not so fortunate for Henry in 1790 when they chronicled his downfall, documents relating to his whereabouts and events in the latter part of his life still exist. They are preserved in 200-year-old bundles of papers and parchments in the archives at Oxford and the Public Record Office at Kew. This is the story those documents reveal.

Henry Burson describes a crime

Henry Burson made this statement to a Justice of the Peace in Gloucester on 26 February 1790

Early in January in the year 1790 I met Henry Townsend as we walked across open greensward near the village of Shipton-under-Wychwood.

Our conversation turned to the subject of robbery and I asked him whether he had ever been involved in any. Henry Townsend told me that apart from one occasion when he went with John Wilkes and stole a ram lamb from Mr. Harris' field in Bruern he had stolen nothing.

Having denied being a robber, Henry Townsend then asked me if I would like to join him, John Wilkes and William Perkins in a burglary. They were planning to go to Burford next Saturday night to rob Haynes the Grocer and needed a fourth man to keep watch at the front of the house. When I said I would go Townsend told me to come to his house on Saturday night, which was the 9 of January. I arrived at half past ten that night to find Townsend up and waiting for me and together we called on William Perkins and John Wilkes. We all set off at a brisk pace and arrived at Mr Haynes' house in Burford at about midnight. As agreed, I took up my watching position at the street door while the others disappeared round the side of the house.

Henry Townsend's three partners in crime were Henry Burson (26), a labourer of Milton, John Wilkes (36), a labourer of Shipton and William Perkins (34), a cordwainer who lived in Shipton. It would seem that the burglars had inside information; they must have been expecting Mr Haynes to be away from home, otherwise it would have been too hazardous an undertaking. They would be well aware of their fate if they were caught, a death sentence being mandatory for armed robbery or if goods worth more than £2 were stolen, but that knowledge didn't stop them. Were they habitual thieves, just reckless, or in great need, to put their lives in jeopardy? The latter may have been the case. Henry Townsend is shown as a 'pauper of the parish' unable to pay the required tax of three pence at the baptism of his child William in 1785. A village labourer made a precarious living at the best of times, his existence being dependent on his ability to find day-work on the farms or in the forest in the different seasons of the year. That winter season may have been particularly hard for the family men; both Henry Townsend and William Perkins had children born around Christmas 1789, Townsend already having five others to feed and Perkins three.

Henry Burson's confession continues:

After I had been standing at the front door for some time I was startled when a window was thrown open and I heard a woman's voice calling for 'Mercy'. On hearing the commotion, I rushed around to the back of the house where I did not have long to wait before the others emerged with booty under their clothes. We all ran off through Burford churchyard and over Burford Bridge to the turnpike where we split up, I went direct to Milton and the others, Townsend, Wilkes and Perkins headed for Shipton.

Their plans had gone a little awry since Mr Haynes' house, far from being unattended, was occupied by at least two women servants, one of whom

gave the following account of her experience to the Oxfordshire Justices of the Peace, Edward Witts and Francis Penyston on 27 February 1790.

Elizabeth Cassell's adventure

On Saturday the ninth day of January the Dwelling House of my master Benjamin Haynes of Burford, a grocer, was burglariously [sic] broke open and two persons entered the room where I and a Mrs. Lively slept. One of them had a white stick in his hand, and a black scarf over his face, who was a lusty man who stood and looked at Mrs. Lively some time before she said, 'Who is it, who are you?' I immediately cried out, 'Murder', and the lusty man ran to Mrs. Lively and began to huddle her up. The other was a little man who went to the drawers and open'd them, while I still continued to cry, 'Murder'. The little man turned himself towards me and said, 'Damn your soul if you won't hold your tongue I will blow your brains out', then as he turned and swore I had sight of one side of his face, and by the size of his person, and seeing his face, and by his voice, which I had often heard before, I recognised the little man as Henry Townsend of Shipton-under-Wychwood in the County of Oxford, a labourer. Immediately on the little man saying to me that he would blow my brains out if I did not hold my tongue, the lusty man repeated the same words and threw the bed cloaths over me and Mrs. Lively and shut us in our room.

Elizabeth Cassel (Casell or Castle) did not give this statement to the Justices until after the Wychwood four had been arrested, which almost certainly means that had there been no arrest she would have remained silent about the identity of the burglar. In 1790 there was no police force to conduct on-going investigations into individual crimes and until someone came forward with an eye-witness account or to make an accusation there was little hope of solving a crime. Elizabeth Cassel told the JPs that she knew the little man, Henry Townsend, by sight and well enough to recognise his voice. It is likely that she too came from the Wychwood villages where the name Castle was not uncommon. She may have been the Betty Castle who was baptised there in 1761, in which case she could have known him very well, reason enough to have remained silent, for fear of retaliation, until the robbers had been identified by another person.

Henry Burson's confession ends

The next day was Sunday and by arrangement I met Henry Townsend in Shipton churchyard where he told me that what we had stolen was silver plate and asked me if I would be willing to take it to London to dispose of it. I refused because I had no idea where to sell it, but Townsend was persistent and tried to persuade me by telling me that there was ten

guineas in it for me and he had heard there was a shop near Drury Lane, for which he could get directions, where it could be sold. I didn't like the idea at all, fearing that I would be hanged if the silver was found on me. Henry Townsend decided that they would have to find some other way to dispose of the plate and, showing me his knife, threatened to cut my throat if I told anyone about the matter. I have no idea what happened to the stolen property.

A week later Henry Townsend's youngest son was baptised at Shipton Church. It is unlikely that Henry was a regular churchgoer as very few labouring men were except under compulsion by vicar, employer or wife, but was he a vicious criminal? Was crime endemic in the villages at that time; did an agricultural labourer, far removed from the environment of crime in a big city, really have knowledge of a fence in London's Drury Lane? We only have Henry Burson's word for it and he confessed to save his own skin – successfully as it turned out. It is, however, possible that Henry Townsend may have been familiar with the layout of London if he had worked in one of the gangs that went each summer from Oxfordshire to London to mow the grass in the public parks and on the Middlesex dairy farms, before working their way back home in time for harvest.

Capture

Henry Townsend and Henry Burson parted company on Sunday 10 January 1790 and were not to meet again until all four men involved in the robbery appeared in court at Oxford Assizes in July the same year. They must have felt safe at first when no one came after them but their downfall came about because Henry Burson continued his criminal activities in Gloucestershire. He was arrested at Stow-on-the-Wold on suspicion of being involved in a burglary at the house of Anthony Cooper in Sherborne on the 23 February and taken to Gloucester gaol. There, on 26 February he went before a Justice of the Peace, Charles Hayward, and signed a confession which described the robberies he had been involved in, giving the names and abodes of all his partners in crime.

After the authorities had been alerted by Henry Burson, retribution came very quickly. The very next day, 27 February, a posse of John Harris, grazier of Bruern whose ram lamb Henry Townsend had stolen, George Cooper, farmer of Sherborne in Gloucestershire whose relative Henry Burson had burgled, and Thomas Higgins and Charles Hawkins, both of Chipping Norton, apprehended Henry Townsend, William Perkins and John Wilkes. John Harris and George Cooper, both probably parish constables, had earlier been involved in the arrest of Henry Burson at Stow and were on hand to receive instructions to arrest the Wychwood men and carry the confession from Gloucester to the Oxford JPs. The prisoners were taken to Oxford gaol and handed over to the keeper there on 28

February 1790. The Treasury later reimbursed the Undersheriff of Oxford, Henry Hodgson, £120, a veritable fortune, to be paid to those doughty yeomen for their time, effort and expense in bringing the criminals to justice. That the law enforcers of the day, the Justices of the Peace, were able to act so quickly in finding the witnesses, taking their statements and making arrangements for the arrest of the criminals, bearing in mind the distances to be covered between Gloucester, Chipping Norton, Shipton and Oxford, and the difficulties of travel and communication in winter, demands admiration. The agents must also have gone to Burford before the suspects were arrested because the Justices had to obtain from Benjamin Haynes a recognisance of £100 that he would prosecute them in court and if he failed to do so he would forfeit his money. £100 was a great deal of money, so once the document was signed there was little chance of the prosecution not going ahead. At the same time the JPs had to get Elizabeth Cassel to agree to give evidence in court, which she did on her own recognisance of £50, an amount she was unlikely to be able to find if she defaulted. No doubt considerable pressure was put on Elizabeth, a servant-girl, by her master and the JPs to ensure the outcome that Mr Haynes wanted. Elizabeth was in a 'no win' situation; as soon as she had made her statement it was clear that she had known the culprits all along but had chosen for her own reasons to remain silent.

The Trials

Our three Wychwood criminals appeared at the 1790 Lent Assizes in Oxford, just four days after their arrest and only six days after Henry Burson had first confessed. They were charged with the felony of armed robbery and burglary in which they stole a silver tankard valued at £8 and other silver plate, worth in all about £24, but their trial did not go ahead on that occasion. The complainant, Benjamin Haynes, swore an affidavit to the effect that a material witness, Henry Burson, then on trial in Gloucester, was not present and he could not plead the case without him.

The prisoners went back to gaol until the next Assizes on the 14 July 1790, at which all three pleaded 'not guilty' and put themselves at the mercy of the jury (or as recorded in the court documents, 'po se'; that is 'ponit se super patriam, meaning 'puts himself on the country'). The trial was probably a short affair; there were many cases tried that day including that of Thomas Franklin of Shipton who was found guilty of stealing a shirt worth 3s from a hedge where it was drying and sentenced to one month in gaol 'and within that time to be privately whipped'. Henry Burson put in an appearance as a witness for the prosecution, having already faced his own trial at the Lent Assizes in Gloucester and been discharged by proclamation for turning king's evidence and helping to bring the defendants to justice. The case went first before a Grand Jury of nobles and gentlemen from Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties who found it to be a true bill worth prosecuting, after which it was handed

over to the judge, Sir Richard Perryn, 'Knight one of the Barons of our Lord the King of his Court of the Exchequer at Westminster', and a petty jury of local landowners to decide. Henry Townsend, William Perkins and John Wilkes were duly tried and two of them found guilty of a felony and burglary and sentenced to death by hanging. John Wilkes escaped conviction and was found not guilty and discharged; he had, however, already spent four months in gaol. What went on in court we do not know but the might of the prosecution with its eye-witnesses, Henry Burson and Elizabeth Cassel, was ranged against the three Wychwood men who appear to have had no defence.

A Royal Pardon – with harsh conditions attached

Before the judge left Oxford at the end of the Assizes he issued reprieves for Henry Townsend and William Perkins, who returned to their cells in Oxford gaol. On 30 September 1790 they each received a conditional pardon from King George III, the condition being that they were to be 'Transported Beyond the Seas for and during the respective terms of seven years to the Eastern Coast of New South Wales or some one or other of the Islands adjacent.' It seems that the judges of the day had a quota of transportees to find since most of those condemned to death were reprieved in this way, not only at Oxford but at other assizes. The death sentence was awarded freely for a great many of what we would nowadays call minor offences but very few actual executions took place. Although the judges were bound to award mandatory death sentences they generally believed that they were too severe and most were commuted to transportation or lesser punishments.

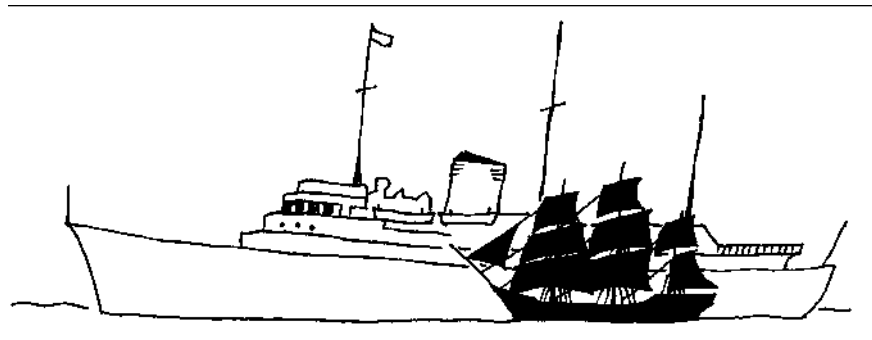
William Perkins languished in Oxford gaol from 28 February 1790 until 8 February 1791. As they were being held at the Government's behest prior to transportation the treasury paid for their maintenance, rather than the county, but they would have been required to earn their keep by hard labour. David Fell, the County Sheriff, sent a bill to the Treasury for a refund of the cost of feeding Henry Townsend and William Perkins from 14 July 1790, the date of conviction, to 8 February 1791 when they left Oxford; he claimed it had cost him £7 10s 0d but William Pitt, the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, allowed him only £3 10s for 30 weeks subsistence for the pair. In October 1790 two Oxford JPs were instructed to contract with the transporters for the prisoners' safe delivery from Oxford gaol to one of the ships of the Third Convict Fleet lying in the river Thames. This was to be the third fleet of ships carrying convicts to the infant colony of New South Wales; the first, which also carried all the government officials and employees, arrived in the wilderness that was Australia in 1788 and the second in 1790. The Third Fleet had originally been ordered to be ready to sail by 31 January but it was the 27 March 1791 before the ships finally cleared Portsmouth and Plymouth.

The Third Fleet

This consisted of ten mainly old and small vessels, namely, *Active*, *Albermarle*, *Atlantic*, *Barrington*, *Britannia*, *Mary Ann*, *Matilda*, *Queen*, *Salamander*, and *William and Ann*, provided by a firm of contractors of doubtful reputation, Camden, Calvert & King. They had previously been engaged in the slave trade and their aim was to make as large a profit as possible out of a venture that was to pay them £17 7s 6d to carry each convict to New South Wales. One of the owners, Mr King, had been charged on several occasions with killing slaves and crew members but had never been punished. The contract was loosely drawn so that the contractors suffered no penalty if the convicts arrived at their destination in poor condition, and they proved to care little about the prisoners' welfare, keeping them short of food and clothing throughout the voyage. They took advantage of the fact that on most ships there was no independent person to look after the interests of the convicts. The ships' former role was in all probability that of carrying slaves from Africa to work on plantations in the Americas. Their new role was little different, except that the length of the voyage was four times greater and, whereas a slave was a valuable commodity, a convict had no commercial value.

The fleet was dispersed by heavy weather shortly after leaving port and doubtless there was a great deal of sickness and fear among the convicts as they experienced for the first time in their lives the wild strength and movement of the open seas. Most of them had probably never seen the sea before. From our position of relative warmth and comfort we would be hard-pressed to comprehend the suffering of the convicts on one of those small transports as it rolled and pitched its way slowly across the oceans of the world on that 15,000-mile voyage, through the heat and humidity of the tropics and the cold stormy waters of the southern seas. The chosen route was via Tenerife to Rio de Janeiro, then eastwards to the Cape of Good Hope and on to Australia, taking advantage of the prevailing winds

THE CONVICT SHIPS WERE SMALL. HERE THE *BRITANNIA*, 1791, LIES ALONG SIDE THE ROYAL YACHT *BRITANNIA*, 1991, DRAWN TO SCALE



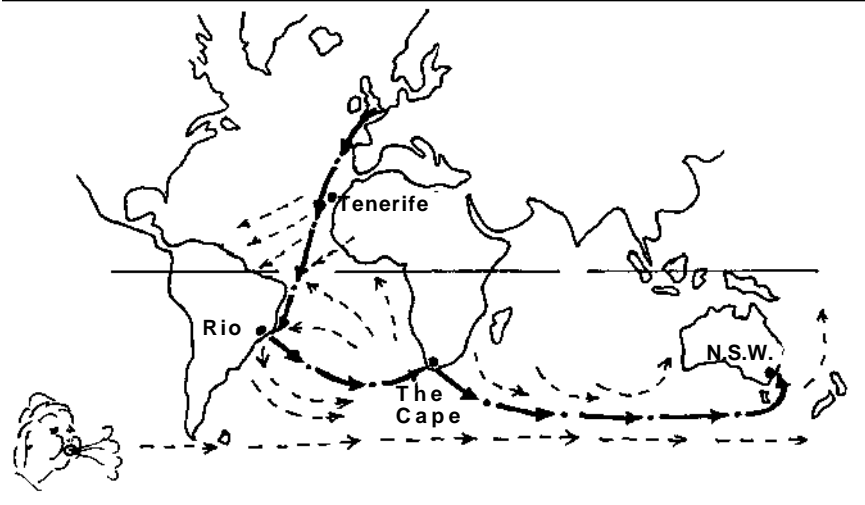
and currents. The transport ships were such a varied lot, capable of widely different speeds, that there was little hope of them keeping together. The scattered fleet arrived in Port Jackson, Sydney's harbour, between 9 July and 16 October 1791.

Britannia, the ship which carried the Oxford convicts, together with 150 other prisoners and fourteen soldiers of the New South Wales Corps, took seven months to reach its destination, months which the convicts spent in chains below decks, with only an occasional hour in the open-air under guard. Henry Townsend and William Perkins had to cope with shackles, meagre rations, bad drinking water, few clothes, negligible sanitation, rats, lice, fleas, cockroaches, little fresh air or exercise, plenty of sickness, cruelty from soldiers and crew and a mind-numbing boredom.

Because there was a threat of war in Europe with a promise of rich pickings for owners and captains of well-found ships, the transport ships were the oldest and cheapest available. They were usually small, about 30 metres long and 10 metres broad, two-decked and square-rigged on two or three masts. Those ships that had been engaged in the slave trade were equipped with slave shackles, nine-inch rigid bars between the ankle irons which prevented more than a shuffling gait and constantly chafed. In addition the convicts were always chained together two by two. The height between decks on the smallest ships was often no more than 1.5 metres so the convicts could not stand upright. They were fed a diet of bread or, when the weather was too rough to bake bread (the ships had brick ovens on deck), wheat flour made into a gruel, and a small ration of salt-beef. The ration to be issued to each convict was set by the government at half that of a Royal Navy rating, but they seldom received the full amount, more often than not having to make do with half. Any of the rations not consumed on the voyage could be sold to the Governor of New South Wales at inflated prices; that was incentive enough to starve the convicts. Hunger was often so severe that if a convict died, his death would not be reported until the smell became unbearable. In that way the rest could share his rations. The water supply, two pints a day, was always foul. In rough weather the lower decks were awash with sea and foul bilge-water for long periods. Some of the ships were so old that, even when the hatches were battened down, the sea found its way in and the prisoners spent many days and weeks sloshing around in filthy water, sometimes up to their waists. The threat of flogging was used to keep the convicts in order, but many of them had grown up in the hard school of life and were used to being punished for the least actual or imagined misdemeanour; 50 to 200 lashes were normal and many survived having their bones laid bare by the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Arrival in the Unpromising Land

New South Wales was a land of mystery, known only to its native inhabitants, and the British Government had no certain knowledge that it



THE CONVICT ROUTE 1791

would support a colony. Even Botany Bay, discovered and described by Captain Cook as suitable for settlement, was found to be totally unsuitable, with a poor harbour and thin sandy soil. The first arrivals had to search hastily for a better anchorage and settled on Port Jackson. This speculative attempt to create a colony in unknown territory using convict labour had never been tried before and was a desperate measure to empty the English and Irish gaols and prison hulks, which had filled to overflowing since transportations to America had ceased with the American War of Independence. By the time the Third Fleet arrived in the colony the total population of immigrants was about two thousand, mainly convicts, who were trying to build a settlement and get crops to thrive, an activity not helped by a prolonged drought. The convicts were not the easiest men to control and those in charge of the project, the Governor, his administrative staff and a few building tradesmen, his gaolers and a small number of soldiers, were making slow progress in developing the colony.

Many of the 2,041 convicts transported in 1791 died on that voyage to Australia. The Governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip, told of the arrival of the fleet in his official report to the Colonial Secretary, sent as a letter dated 5 November 1791. It arrived in Whitehall on 23 April the following year and, although many pages long, contained only the following brief mention of the newly arrived convicts:

Of the convicts mentioned to be sent out, 1695 males and 168 females have been landed with six free women and ten children. It appears by the return from the transports that 194 males and 4 females and one child

died on the passage and although the convicts landed from these ships were not so sickly as those brought out last year, the greatest part of them are so emaciated, so worn away by long confinement, or want of food, or from both these causes that it will be long before they recover their strength, of which many never will recover.

The surgeon's returns of this day are, 'Under medical treatment and incapable of labour 626 – 576 of whom are those landed from the last ships.'

Governor Phillip also asked, bitterly, how he was supposed to build a colony when the labour being sent out to him was of no use, being too ill to work and needing extra rations, which he could not afford, to bring back to health.

The Third Fleet had arrived. The *Britannia*, the ship carrying our two convicts, had taken 201 days and suffered the highest death rate of all the ships; 14 per cent, one in seven, of the convicts aboard died on the voyage. The shortest time taken by any of the ships was 127 days and the shorter the passage the more survived. The resident chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson, sent home to a friend a letter describing the dire condition of convicts arriving in Sydney (named after the Viscount Thomas Townshend Sydney). He was deeply shocked and moved by what he witnessed. The letter was sent on to the Colonial Office by his friend where it caused some consternation and rightly so as the following extracts show:

...went down amongst the Convicts where I beheld a sight shocking to the feelings of Humanity, a great number of them laying some half and others nearly quite naked without either Bed or Bedding, unable to turn or help themselves – spoke to them as I passed along but the smell was so offensive that I could scarcely bear it... some of these unhappy People died after the ships came into Harbour before they could be taken on shore – part of these had been thrown into the Harbour and their dead bodies cast upon the shore and were seen lying naked upon the Rocks... a great number of Tents, in all ninety or a Hundred were pitched, in each of these Tents there were about four sick people. Here they lay in a most deplorable situation, at first they had nothing to lay upon but the damp ground, many scarcely a Rag to cover them... when come on shore many were not able to walk, to stand, or to stir themselves in the least and in this situation were covered almost with their own Nastiness... Scurvey was not the only, nor the worst Disease that prevailed amongst them – one man I visited this morning I think I may say safely had 10,000 Lice upon his Body and Bed – some were exercised with violent Fevers and others with a no less violent Purging and Flux... a great number have died – [I] have buried not less than eighty six since they landed, eighty four Convicts, one Child and one Soldier...

So much death and suffering among the convicts was totally unexpected

by the Colonial Office since there had been few deaths and little sickness among the convicts in the First Fleet which had been under the control and supervision of the Royal Navy, but it was decided to keep the matter quiet. After all nothing could be done about past events and they were only convicts. It was, however, the last time that the transport contracts went to the firm of Camden, Calvert & King, though they were never brought to book for their crimes against humanity. It was decided that future convict transports would be provided by the reputable East India Company but the threat of war intervened and for a decade the convicts were to suffer hardship and high death rates at the hands of less reputable contractors.

Among all the documents preserved at Kew none was found confirming that Henry Townsend or William Perkins survived the transportation voyage. As they were aboard the ship with the highest death rate they may well have been among those buried at sea. Then Henry's great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter sent a postcard from America where she was on a touring holiday

September 1997. We've been to the family history library in Utah today & I've dug out the following on our family convict! I wasn't sure if Dad had found it yet (I hope it's the right one!). Henry Townsend sailed into Sydney on the 'Britannia', a convict ship (150 men) on the 14th Oct. 1791 & was buried on the 2nd December 1791.

The Mormon Church Family History Library in Salt Lake City, part of the organisation created to gather information on births and marriages world wide in an endeavour to include the world population in its faith through baptism by proxy, and whose International Genealogical Index has helped numerous family historians, had somehow found the information that provided the sad ending to the tale of Henry Townsend; the story of what became of William Perkins must also be 'out there' somewhere. Henry Townsend had overcome the horrors and suffering of the seven-month voyage to the ends of the earth and set foot on dry land again, 15,000 miles from his native home. Though he survived the voyage he must have reached Australia's shore in very poor physical condition, one of the 576 incapable of labour mentioned by the Governor, for he was buried in Sydney less than two months after landing.

Conclusion

Henry Townsend was a labourer, a man of small stature, the seventh of eight children born to a yeoman father. Most of his siblings died before they reached the age of 30, probably from disease, probably cholera, but he chose a more dramatic way of making an exit. He committed armed robbery, stole some silver plate, was caught and tried, sentenced to death and reprieved, spent eleven months in Oxford gaol, was transported to Australia as a convict spending seven months at sea in conditions every

bit as bad as those in the slave trade, and arrived in New South Wales to die at the age of 42. He paid dearly for breaking the law one January night in 1790. No doubt he oftentimes wished, as he lay suffering the drawn-out torture that was to be his fate, that he had shaken hands with the hangman in Oxford. England's harsh laws, created solely for the protection of property, had been harshly applied. Henry Townsend and William Perkins suffered the worst of punishments while their partners in crime got off relatively scot-free.

But of course Henry was not the only one to suffer. Spare a thought for those left at home. What happened to Sarah and the children in 1790 when Henry was suddenly plucked from their midst, how did they manage, who looked after them? It was not, perhaps, unusual for a widow and children to be left to be supported by family and parish when a young husband died, but Sarah would be expecting Henry to return when his term of transportation was over – though that may have been a forlorn hope because there was no provision made for returning prisoners when their sentences were completed. They had to make their own arrangements and many, perhaps most, did not bother. However, if he was a 'bad-un' she may have felt well rid of him. One wonders if the Home Office kept the family informed about their transported relatives; did the family ever find out what happened to Henry? Sarah, it appears, was a tough character for, whatever hardships she had to face in the ensuing years, we know that she struggled on to the ripe old age of 79. She had her family around her for support and two of her sons, William and Limborough, provided her with nineteen grandchildren, one of which was my great-great-grandfather.

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John Chapman's Legacy

JACK HOWARD-DRAKE

John Chapman of Milton made his will on 29 May 1557. He left the bulk of his estate equally between his father, his two brothers and his two sisters; but remembering his christian duty, he first left (?30)¹ shillings to be given to the poor of Shipton² at his burial and a further ten shillings to be given to them at his 'month's tide' or month's mind, the requiem mass celebrated thirty days after death or burial. In addition he instructed his executors to provide twenty sheep from his estate, the profits from which were to pay for masses and dirges for him and his friends to be said at Easter and Christmas, any money left over going to the poor.

Chapman wrote his will when the catholic Mary Tudor was on the throne and his wish to be remembered at his month's mind and by masses and dirges, reflected the official religious policy of the day; but Chapman saw what was coming. If, he said, the law in the future will not permit masses and dirges all the profit from the sheep is to go to the poor. Eighteen months later Mary Tudor died and Elizabeth I came to the throne, official policy reverted to protestantism.

The only John Chapman whose death is recorded in the parish registers of the time was buried aged sixty on 30 August 1567. This is probably our John Chapman since one of the witnesses in the court case described below said in 1603 that he 'died above forty years ago'.³

It was not unusual for legacies to the poor to take the form of sheep or cows which the churchwardens would promptly turn into money. Ralph Willet, the then vicar of Shipton whom John Chapman made overseer of his will, was rector of Kingham when he died in 1575. His legacy to the poor of Shipton was twenty shillings in cash but several of his many legacies to relatives and friends were in the form of sheep and cows. He also left to each of the almshouses of Chipping Norton, Burford and Stow on the Wold a cow for the maintenance of the poor people there on condition that two or four honest men of each town undertook to maintain the cows for the relief of the poor. Otherwise they were to go to his brother Richard and his children.⁴ In 1591, William Master, Willet's successor as vicar of Shipton, left twenty good new milking cows for the relief of twenty poor householders in the parish. The churchwardens turned the cows into £53 6s 8d.⁵ They turned Chapman's twenty sheep into a capital sum of £2 13s 4d. (Chapman had specifically charged the

churchwardens with seeing that his wishes were carried out if his executors failed to do so.)

The usual way of managing sums of money acquired in this way was to lend it to suitable parishioners at interest and to use the income for the benefit of the poor. It is not surprising that various difficulties arose and that occasionally the capital sums disappeared. The churchwardens seem to have lost control of Chapman's legacy from the beginning. There is no mention of it in the churchwardens' accounts until 1602 when they spent fourpence for writing out a copy of the will.⁶ The copy is in the accounts certified as such on 1 March 1602 by the then vicar, Henry Mills, and by James Cooke, one of the churchwardens. It was presumably prepared for use in the case against William Michell of Milton which was taken in 1603 in the Bishop's Court in Oxford by three churchwardens, Richard Cooke, John Toms and William Whitlow.

A copy of will is at appendix. There is no copy of the original among the Oxfordshire wills in Oxfordshire Archives. Perhaps the churchwardens borrowed it from the diocesan registry and never returned it; and whoever copied it (or wrote the original) was no Latin scholar as the introductory Latin words are misspelt.

Because of the way the records of the church courts were kept it is not always possible to be sure of the exact details of a case. The plaintiff's case was set out in a series of numbered articles and witnesses gave their evidence in the form of depositions by reference only to the numbers of the articles and not to their substance. The articles and depositions were filed separately and as so often happens, the articles in the Chapman case are missing. Consequently the exact terms of the churchwardens' action and the meaning of the witnesses' statements are not always clear. Similarly the sentences were filed separately and since these too are missing, the result of the case is not known. We have to draw what conclusions we can from the depositions on their own.

Much of the evidence in the Chapman case was concerned with establishing that the legacy was left specifically for the use of the poor and not for any other purpose. The witnesses emphasised that the sum of £2 13s 4d was commonly called the poor stock and was never part of the church stock even though the churchwardens had 'the handing and setting out of it'. The main cause of the action seems to have been that the churchwardens believed the Chapman legacy to be in Michell's hands and were seeking to recover it.

Michell's defence was that he had handed the money over to Thomas Howse of Milton. He said that some five years previously Ralph Wollinge of Lyneham had brought £2 13s 4d to one of the churchwardens, John Coxe, saying it was the money for the sheep belonging to the poor of Shipton, Milton and Lyneham. Michell had asked for it to be passed on to

him and Coxe had let him have it as a loan at a rate of interest of 6s 8d a year (12 %) to be paid for the maintenance of the poor. He had kept the

¹/₂ money for about four years and had then handed it over to Howse with the consent of householding parishioners.

Ralph Wollinge confirmed Michell's story. He said he had brought the stock of £2:13:4 to the church at Christmas five or six years previously when the churchwardens were making their accounts. He had handed the money over to them and had received in return the bond which his father, William, had put in when he had taken over the stock. William had had it from John Wollinge who Ralph thought was the first to have had it and to have been responsible for turning the sheep into money. Ralph added that after Thomas Howse had died he had heard Michell say that he had handed the money over to him. This somewhat throw away line in the evidence may explain the churchwardens' problem – did the money disappear when Howse died?

In addition to confirming the main facts about Chapman's legacy and its administration the evidence of other witnesses adds various details. (It is one of the useful features of the records of the church courts that they often throw up interesting snippets of incidental information.) One of the witnesses whom Michell called on his behalf, his uncle, Thomas Chapman of Milton, gave an account of the circumstances in which the handover to Howse was agreed which shows how these affairs were managed. He said that two years previously on St Andrew's day (30 November) when the churchwardens and parishioners were at the church accounts, Michell had laid down 6s 8d on the communion table saying that it was for the use of the poor's stock which was in his hands. Michell then said (spelling and punctuation modernised) 'Here I have the poor folk's money and am desirous to part with it, are you content that Thomas Howse should have it'. Howse then asked that he might have it, paying interest on it to the poor as others had done. 'Then', said Thomas Chapman, 'the neighbours and parishioners being or a great part of them together in the church of Shipton about the church accounts, some of them said let Howse have the money, others held their peace and spake not, but he heard no man deny that he should have it'.

William Smith who, we learn, was a day labourer aged about fifty-six who had lived in Milton for most of his life, recalled being with Michell some two years previously when Howse sent Mistress Willet's son to Michell for twenty shillings of the legacy which had not yet been passed on to him. Smith had himself received some of the legacy. He was a poor man when he had been married about thirty-two years ago and the money had been given to him at Christmas, the time when it was usually distributed. He also recalled the occasion when John Alder of Fines Court was ill and had all the income from the legacy for himself.

Francis Camery was a weaver aged thirty-three who had lived in Milton for ten years and in Chipping Norton for the previous twenty-two. He had been born in Sarsden. He remembered talking to Howse 'by the waterside which ran by his house in Milton' when Howse told him the he had had part of the 'poor stock' from Michell in the shape of a white horse.

The story of Chapman's legacy not only illustrates the problems which this sort of legacy created for the churchwardens. It also shows the way in which the care of the poor in the sixteenth century was the responsibility of the local community and not, as now, of the state. Chapman was only one of many in Shipton who left legacies for the poor of the parish. The vicars, Willet and Master, have already been mentioned. Others gave what they could in cash or kind. Wills of the time show gifts of money from fourpence to a pound or more, while Arthur Ashfield gave six bushels of barley and John Norton gave a load of wood for the benefit of the poor.⁷ There was a poor box in the church for day-to-day contributions. Furthermore the care of the poor was not only a matter of charity. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries various responsibilities for looking after their poor were imposed on parishes by statute. Collectors for the poor, later overseers of the poor, were appointed in each parish with the duty of maintaining the poor and with the power to raise taxes for the purpose. This they did by laying a tax on all landholders at so much a yardland. There is unfortunately little detail about this in the churchwardens' accounts for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and there are no poor law books for the period; but the poor law book for 1740–1763 shows Shipton levying the tax at the not inconsiderable rate of four shillings in the yardland.⁸

All the evidence we have about the care of the poor in Shipton over the years is of a local community which took its responsibilities readily and sympathetically.

References

- 1 Text partly illegible.
- 2 In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the parish of Shipton included Shipton, Milton, Lyneham, Leafield, Ramsden and Langley.
- 3 Oxfordshire Archives, MS.DD. Par. Shipton under Wychwood d.1.
- 4 P.R.O. Prob 11/57.
- 5 The story of William Master's charity can be read in J. Howard-Drake, 'William Master, Vicar of Shipton under Wychwood', *Wychwoods History*, Number Two (1986).
- 6 See the note about the churchwardens' accounts on page 55 of this journal.
- 7 Oxfordshire Archives, MSS. Wills Oxon.
- 8 Joan Howard-Drake, 'The Poor of Shipton under Wychwood Parish 1740-62'. *Wychwoods History*, Number Five (1989).

Appendix

Anno Domini 1557

The will of John Chapman verbatim as Followeth

In Die nomene (sic) Amen the xxixth of May in the yeare of our Lord God one Thousand five hundred Fiftie seaven: Witnesseth that I John Chapman of Shipton under Wichwood in the countye of Oxon beinge sike in bodye but hole of mynd and in good remembraunce Doe make & ordaine this my last will & Testament in manner & Forme Followinge, First I doe give and bequeth my Soule to Almightye God my onely redeemer & Saviour to be of the Companye of his Blessed mother St Marye and all the holye Companye of heaven & my bodye to be buried in Christian buriall. Item I will that mine Executors shalle bestowe at my buriall amongst the poore of the paryshe of Shipton T... shillings I will allsoe that there shalbe bestowed amongst the poore of the parishe Tenn shillinges att my monethsyde. Alsoe I will that mine Executors shall put forth a score of sheepe within the parishe of Shipton to the ... mainteyninge allwaies the stocke to keepe masse & diriges twice a yeeare for mee & my Frindes that is to saie at Ester & at Christmas and the ... that remaineth over masse & Diriges shalbe bestowed allwaies amongst the poore. And if it Fortune that the law will not permitt this to be done hereafter to have masse & diriges then I will that the hole profit that [remaines] of my sheepe shalbe bestowed amongst the poore of the paryshe. Allsoe farther I will that the Churchwardens of Shipton yf myne Executors nor Assignes Doe not keepe this for ever then I will the said wardens of the same Church for their tyme shall see it Done. Alsoe the rest of all my goodes shalbe [Devided] in Five partes Equally amongst my two Bretheron my two Sisterne & my Father allsoe I make John Chapman [my] Father & Robt my brother myne Executors to Fullfill this my Last will & Testament. allsoe I make Sir Rauffe Willatt our vicar supervisor and Overseer of this my Last will to be Fullfilled as my truste is in [him] ... Witnesses of the same Robt Wessington & Robt Huckes

*Examined by Henrie Mills vicar and James Cooke
Martij primo Anno Domini 1601*

A Bouquet of Roses

TRUDY YATES

Delivering the 1997 Phillimore Lecture at the British Association for Local History at Stationers' Hall in London, Dr David Hey, Professor of Local and Family History at the University of Sheffield, told his audience that 'until the 1840s many families stayed within their ancestral neighbourhoods or 'countries'; a fact of huge significance for local and family historians.' Here in West Oxfordshire there is a family which has kept to this pattern until the close of the twentieth century, a family of five (one brother is deceased) ranging in age from 71–81, who still live close to each other and meet every fortnight for lunch at alternate residences to chat and reminisce. To join their gatherings gives one a marvellous grasp of domestic history and the way closely interrelated families feel, think and behave.

The children of Thomas Alfred and Lilian Emily Buxton Rose have been an integral part of community life in Churchill, Milton, Fifield, Ascott and Shipton, pillars of their churches, involved in local government, leading lights in area agricultural organizations, active in the WI, Mothers' Union, Local History Society, Red Cross and always available to lend a helping hand to newcomers, the sick, bereaved or disabled. This particular variety of Rose has deep roots in West Oxfordshire and blossoms so abundantly that one is tempted to do a bit of digging around the base of the plant to find out why.

No sturdy spade is needed, only an opening question to the assembled 'bouquet' of Roses, R T (Dick), Anthony (Tony), Daphne, Monica and Vivienne plus spouses. We are sitting in Monica Badger's comfortable living room on a chilly late afternoon in winter. The family have been recalling happy memories of their childhood when an extraordinary thing happens. Dick, the eldest brother, is describing their bathtime ritual as little children, hot baths and, while still in the steamy warm bathroom, prayers at their mother's knee. 'I still remember the prayer we said,' Dick says quietly and then, without a pause, he repeats it:

*Lord, our heavenly Father, teach me how to pray
Make me sorry for my faults
Forgive me for all I have done wrong this day.
May the precious blood of Christ, your son
Cleanse me from all my sins.
Make me thankful for all your mercies*

*For my health, my food and clothes;
Keep me from sin and danger
Give me quiet rest and sleep.
Bless, oh Lord, my Mummy and Daddy
My brothers and sisters
And all whom you have given me to love.
May thy holy angels watch over us
And take us all into thy holy keeping this night.
Amen*

There is a long silence before Dick adds 'Then after the bath and prayers, the maid brought up bread and milk with cubes of sugar.' 'And,' Daphne adds quickly, 'all the medicine was in the bathroom too. Brimstone and sulphur, tincture of rhubarb, camphorated oil and goose-grease took care of most ailments.'

I simply had to know more about Tom and Lilian Rose.

THE FAMILY OF URBAN AND JANE COOK ROSE. STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: MAY, TOM, CLARA, JOHN, LILY, RICHARD. SEATED: VIOLET, URBAN, BOB AND JANE. MRS WEBB WHO WORKED FOR THE ROSES IS LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW



Thomas Alfred Rose, born in 1884, was the fourth child and second son of Urban and Jane Cook Rose. Urban farmed 222 acres (a further 96 acres was cleared from woodland later on) at Churchill Heath, which was part of the Sarsden Estate originally owned by J.W.Langston. Langston, the Liberal MP for Oxford in the mid-19th century, owned thousands of acres of land from the borders of Gloucestershire (Bledington) to Sarsden, Churchill, Lyneham, Chadlington, Kingham and Milton.

Tom attended Churchill School and then went on scholarship to board at Burford Grammar School. When he returned home at the conclusion of his education, Tom joined his father with the job of raising dairy shorthorn cattle. There was a long tradition of shorthorns at Churchill Heath. Langston himself had had a fine herd and George Garne, who preceded the Roses on the farm, was an outstanding breeder. Urban Rose and his sons extended the reputation of excellence in this field.

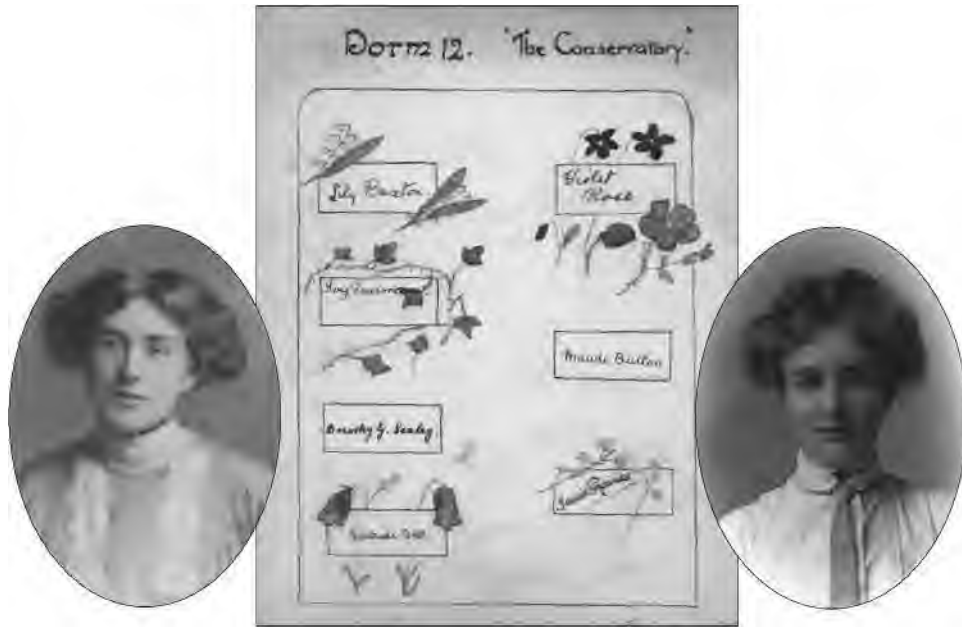
When Tom Rose was 25 years old, his mother died. From that day until the end of his life he wore a stiff collar and a black tie.¹ Six years later at the age of 31, Tom married Lilian Buxton.

Lilian Emily Buxton was the second daughter of Henry and Emily Packwood Buxton. She had an older sister, Nellie, and a younger brother, Richard. The family lived on the Duke of Bedford's estate at Woburn where Henry was the local schoolmaster, organist and choirmaster. Emily was also a teacher. The chances of a meeting between Tom Rose and Lilian Buxton could have been dismissed as virtually impossible but meet they did.

As a young man, Henry Buxton had attended a Church of England teacher-training college at Cheltenham called St Paul's. He and Emily decided that Lilian was an ideal candidate for its twin institution for women, St Mary's. Upon her arrival in Cheltenham, Lilian found that her dorm mate was Violet Rose, Tom's younger sister. A page from Lily's autograph book confirms that the relationship between the girls was close.² It was not long before Lily was invited to spend a school holiday with her friend at Churchill Heath.

Whether it was love at first sight between Tom and Lilian will never be known. Besides they were such serious and sensible young people that there was no untoward haste. Lilian concluded her studies at St Mary's and taught for two years in Liverpool before the couple married on 13 November 1915.

After their wedding, Tom and Lilian returned to Churchill Heath as the virtual heads of household. Tom's mother Jane had been dead for six years and his father, Urban, while still active, has passed the management of the farm to Tom. By this time Clara Rose was married, John was farming on the Heythrop estate, Richard was a banker in Worcester with a farm in Chedworth and Robert had died. However, two sisters, May and Lily



LILIAN BUXTON ON THE LEFT AND VIOLET ROSE ON THE RIGHT, TOGETHER WITH THE PAGE FROM LILIAN'S AUTOGRAPH BOOK

remained at home and were well entrenched as the chatelaines of Churchill Heath. The first months of her marriage were a trial of Lilian's resourcefulness and diplomacy.

Children began to arrive two years later. Three sons were born between 1917 and 1920; three daughters followed in 1921, 1924, and 1927 – six youngsters in twelve years of marriage. During this period Lilian also lost her mother in 1919.

'It was an idyllic childhood,' Vivienne Prentice, the baby of the family recalled. 'We had the forest and the river to play in and picnics to enjoy. The boys fished, collected birds' eggs and went squirrel hunting.' Dick, Peter and Tony attended Churchill school; the girls travelled at first by train and later by bus to Chipping Norton. 'We enjoyed being in plays,' Vivienne continued, 'and Mother was always on hand to help us with our homework.' 3

As little children the Roses dearly loved to creep into bed with their mother in the early morning. They would share a warm cuddle and Lilian would give them a cough lozenge to begin the day.

'We didn't have regular chores,' Vivienne remembered. 'We just did what needed to be done.' She admitted that Dick was the devoted farmer

even as a child while Tony and Peter hurried to get up and out before the tasks were assigned. 'Daphne always cleaned up after Mother in the kitchen when she baked and Monica was the shoe polisher – no rubber boots in those days.' Vivienne failed to recall ever having been overworked herself.

The Rose children were allowed to build their own tennis court and invite friends over to enjoy games. Their parents played bridge for recreation but Lilian also was extremely active in the village of Churchill. She was secretary of the WI, a member of the PCC and in 1934 wrote *The History of Churchill*. She never lost contact with her schoolmistress friends. One joined the family for Christmas each year and another from Wales sent the children lavish holiday gifts which were anticipated with great excitement.

'Mum had beautiful handwriting,' Vivienne concluded. 'She was loving, God fearing, thrifty and very interested in history.'

Daphne Edginton described her mother as 'sound, sensible, a good Christian, helpful, hospitable and always, pervading everything, exhibiting a wonderful sense of humour. Waste not want not was a proverb heard often in our home.' 4

'There were always extra people in the house,' Daphne explained. 'Grandfather Rose [Urban] spent six months of the year with us and six months at Chedworth with Uncle Richard. Auntie Pat lived with us for years and during the war we took in paying guests.' Memorable among these were an elderly lady and her daughter from Hythe who were evacuated to Chipping Norton. The daughter had Hodgkins disease, died while at Churchill Heath and was buried in the local churchyard. 'The old lady was 90 and very deaf,' explained Daphne. 'We called her Granny Gill-Ballard and were very fond of her. Eventually her care became so time consuming that her niece Dorothy, a ladies' maid at Luton Hoo, moved in with us to help look after her. We also had an army officer and



LILIAN ROSE WITH RICHARD (LEFT) PETER (RIGHT) AND TONY ON HIS MOTHER'S LAP, AUTUMN 1920

his wife and several others.' Obviously none of the six bedrooms at Churchill Heath were ever empty!

'She was a wonderful woman,' Dick Rose said of his mother. He remembered especially how tireless she was and how little sleep she needed.⁵

'Her mother (Emily Buxton) died very young and her father married again' Dick said. 'I have three aunts who are younger than I am. Can you believe it? We all keep in touch. Ever so nice, they are.'

The beehive of activity indoors at Churchill Heath mirrored what was going on outside. Tom Rose and his sons were now working for themselves. The huge Sarsden estate was broken up and sold. 'Father bought Churchill Heath in 1922,' Dick said. 'I think he paid three or four thousand pounds for it. We had a very good herd of cattle and my father was a fine judge. All the breed societies had a judges' panel. Father was put on about 1930. During the Second World War he was also on the War Agricultural Committee. He had to travel around the area to get farmers to produce more. 'We had never grown potatoes in this area but we just had to set to and grow them!' Tom was also churchwarden at Churchill. When he died, his son Dick replaced him in this position.

During his latter years Tom Rose suffered from severe bronchitis following a bout of pneumonia and Lilian had the care of him. By this time, Dick Rose and his wife Sheila were living at Churchill Heath and sharing the responsibilities of day to day living at the farm. Dick had followed in his father's footsteps and embarked on his own career as a shorthorn judge which was to take him to all corners of England and Wales, Ireland, Holland, Australia and South Africa. Dick and Sheila's sons, Richard and David were born in 1943 and 1945 and so, once again there were little children at Churchill Heath.

Tom Rose died in 1959. Lilian missed her husband of 44 years but was never lonely with Dick and Sheila's family around her. However, when Sheila's parents, Lily and Harold Prentice, also moved to a cottage at Churchill Heath, she had a companion of her own generation and experience with whom to visit and reminisce. The Prentices had farmed at Cold Ashby Northants, retiring to Foxholes. When Harold's health deteriorated they came to Churchill Heath to be near their daughter. 'There was never a moment's discord in the house,' Sheila Rose declared. 'Lilian and my mother thoroughly enjoyed each other.'⁶

Lilian Rose never lost interest in life. She enjoyed lectures and concerts, local organizations, friends and most of all her family. She visited her daughter Vivienne and son-in-law John Prentice twice when they were in Germany with the RAF. Central to her existence was her church and her faith in God. She gave each of the six Rose children a prayer book and underlined the passage... 'not only on our lips but in our



LILIAN ROSE IN THE SITTING ROOM AT CHURCHILL HEATH. THE MIRROR ON THE LEFT AND THE PLATE TO HER RIGHT ARE NOW FEATURES IN DAPHNE EDGINTON'S LIVING ROOM.

lives.' This was her credo. It gave Lilian a purpose and pattern for life that never failed either her or her family. The sons and daughters who have grown up and grown old live by it still.

Lilian died in 1977 at the age of 87, tenderly cared for at the end of her life by her daughter, Daphne Edginton.

R.T. (Dick) Rose

Dick Rose is the eldest son in the family and he has always lived up to that responsibility. Farming and cattle raising were learned from his father at a tender age. He remembers slipping into the barn at eight years old to try his hand at milking a cow. Flushed with success, he presented his father with the brimming pail as evidence of his ability. Tom Rose, who wasn't given to effusiveness simply said 'Well since you can do it, I'll buy you a bicycle so you can get home from school in time to do it every day.' That was the beginning of a long, extremely successful career.

'I was a good milker,' Dick admits. 'I could do 40-45 cows by myself in around three hours.' The Roses delivered milk to Kingham Station (then known as Chipping Norton Junction) at 7.30am to catch the first train to London at 7.40am. Large 17-gallon churns had to be put on trolleys and pushed across the track because the train stopped at the other side of the platform. 'In those days there were as many as sixteen horses up at the

station bringing milk to the train. Now there are none,' Dick said.

'I was the youngest man ever to be put on a Shorthorn judging panel' Dick admitted. 'My first show was at Badminton. Since then I've judged every major show in England and Wales. I've also worked in Holland, Belfast, Dublin, Melbourne (1970) and South Africa in 1970, '74 and '78.' In 1970 Dick was made president of the Shorthorn Society and, during his tenure he instigated an experimental cross-breeding programme which was a great success. He was chairman of the resulting breeding company and also the shorthorn committee. So valuable was Dick's service that he was awarded an Honorary Life Presidency of the Shorthorn Society of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1997. Only four other men have ever received it.

Dick's 57-year marriage to Sheila Prentice has been a durable and loving partnership. The wedding was in 1941 and was described by Dick as 'a poor do.' There were no coupons for food or clothes. His brother Tony was Best Man. Tom Rose was ill and Dick couldn't be away from the farm so their two night honeymoon was spent with his sister, Daphne Edginton and her husband Brian at Crow's Castle. 'Daphne took good care of us,' Dick grinned.

Dick was struck down with polio in 1953 and was unable to walk for two years. Sheila cared for him and their two sons – 10-year-old Richard and 8-year-old David. 'Of course Granny Rose was a great help with the boys,' Sheila said. 'Dick recovered eventually and we got on with life.' Their son Richard graduated from Cambridge and is a partner in Barrington Accountancy in Bourton. He has three children and four grandchildren. David lives in Lyneham and does farm contract work. He and his wife have four children.

Tom and Lilian Rose and Harold Prentice had all passed away when Dick and Sheila sold Churchill Heath and retired in 1984. However, Lily Prentice was still with them when they moved to a bungalow in West Wales. The three of them enjoyed the lovely new cottage in an idyllic setting. They settled well into the community and were involved quickly in the local church. Very soon however, Lily died and Dick suffered such severe health problems that only Oxfordshire and the care of Dr Scott offered a ray of hope for the future. They came home. It was the right decision. A bungalow was vacant next to High Lodge. Relatives by marriage were on either side – Pat and Mary Prentice Edginton in High Lodge itself, Ralph and Drucilla Badger Edginton in their retirement home next door.

And so for the first time in 43 years, Dick and Sheila Rose were living alone. They have enjoyed it. Children, grandchildren and now great-grandchildren come to visit. Rose family get-togethers are a fortnightly pleasure. Until recently they were in church every Sunday; now they

depend on radio and television services. They miss their regular weekly afternoon at the Sue Ryder Shop but 'we understand that it is time to slow down now' Sheila concluded.

Peter John Rose

Peter was number two son in Lilian and Tom Rose's extraordinarily well planned family of three sons and three daughters. He was born in January 1919 and was seventeen months younger than Dick and seventeen months older than Tony, who arrived in 1920. The three little tow-headed boys were a good insurance policy for their busy farmer father. As it turned out Peter was not destined for the farm. He caught the flu as a baby in the 1918-19 epidemic and it left him with severe asthma.

Peter attended Churchill School. He and his two brothers walked – rain or shine. For recreation the three enjoyed the Evenlode river. They loved to fish and during August had the fun of cray-fishing. Lilian Rose described this sport in her *History of Churchill* as 'an excellent excuse for small boys to stay out late, for it is not until dark that they can be caught.'⁷

Peter also enjoyed collecting birds' eggs. This is not a hobby to be encouraged these days but in the 1920s it was totally respectable. Sometimes Dick and Tony joined Peter in his search but more often they were off squirrel hunting, a far more strenuous activity.

Dick Rose took up Peter's story 'Mother's father's brother lived in Birkenhead and we used to go there sometimes during the holidays. Peter saw the merchant navy training ship, the *Conway*, moored on the Mersey and he decided to train as an officer. It seemed a good career to keep him where the air was pure and clean.'

His training completed, Peter joined the Blue Funnel Line and travelled to Japan, China and India. During the Second World War he served on the *Union Castle* which went to America to fetch meat. 'They didn't go in a convoy,' Dick explained. 'They were alone and it was a very dangerous crossing. Peter was gunnery officer and he carried a machine gun on the deck morning and night.'

Then he was made Chief Officer on the *Union Castle* going to South Africa. Not long afterwards he got his captaincy.

Dick received a letter from Capetown one August morning in 1974. Peter was on his way home. He enjoyed fishing and hunting and asked his brother to 'get something organized.' The next morning the phone rang and it was Pauline, Peter's wife saying that he had died and was buried at sea. 'That was a big shock. It was a heart attack. He was only 55.'

Peter had married Pauline (Bill) Harper-Brown in 1942. She and their two children Jeremy and Elizabeth survived Peter, living at Purley. Jeremy eventually emigrated to Australia for a time where he became an expert sheep shearer. He returned to England and appeared as a shearer at the

Royal Show. He was a farm manager near Swerford before his untimely death in 1991. His mother Pauline now lives at Diss in Norfolk near her sister and daughter.

Anthony Robert Rose

The Roses' third son Tony was just the right age to be involved in the Second World War. Born in 1920 he was 19 years old when England declared war on Germany. He joined the army and trained in northern Scotland where he met a pretty Scottish lassie who stole his heart. When Tony was sent overseas they corresponded and Daphne, ever the helpful sister, also wrote to Jean although the two had never met.

Tony's service in an anti-aircraft unit is not his favourite topic of conversation. He was in the North African campaign, the Monte Cassino battle in Italy and ended up in Vienna. When he returned and the war was over he married his Scottish sweetheart Jean Stevenson Scott-Law and brought her to England.

For a time the young couple lived in London where Tony worked for the State Assurance Co. but, as elder brother Dick put it, 'They came home to a cottage at Churchill Heath. Tony couldn't stick London.'⁸

'It's a funny thing' Dick continued, 'a lot of people came to my father for advice. I don't know why but anyway this Mr Bulkeley Johnson from



LEFT TO RIGHT: Tom
Rose, MoNica,
LiLIAN, ViVIENNE,
Dick AND DApHNE,
1938

Churchill, who used to be a secretary to the Rothchilds, came to father and said 'Tom, I need a farm manager.' Luckily, Tom Rose had one to spare and Tony got the job. He managed Mount Farm at Churchill until he retired.

Three sons were born to Tony and Jean – Rodney who is now a local builder and district councillor; Angus a vending machine installer who lives on the Swinbrook Road with his wife Claire, who is a caterer and Thomas, who lives in Ipswich and is a refrigeration expert on Felixstow boats.

Tony and Jean retired to Fifield where they were active in the church and local activities. They took in paying guests at their home for whom they provided excellent facilities. They had many return visitors and have kept in touch with many people from overseas. Jean is a well-known seamstress, flower arranger and keyboard player in the area and is generous with her skills. She is always available to play for local organisations and even further afield. Tony was 'the handy chap in the village' according to his sister Daphne. 'He was always fixing something in the village hall.'

When Tony's eyesight deteriorated to the point that he could no longer drive, the Roses moved to Wychwood Drive in Milton. Here they continue to play a quiet, supportive role in the community.

Daphne Viola Rose Edginton

Tom and Lilian Rose's first daughter Daphne has always been as aware of her position of seniority and responsibility in the family as her brother Dick. By the time she married Brian Edginton in 1940, one day *before* her nineteenth birthday and one day *after* the harvest was in, 'Mother's little helper' as sister Vivienne called her was an accomplished cook, housekeeper, seamstress and farm assistant. This prepared her for life at Crow's Castle, a farm at the extremity of Milton parish 'over the top of the Stow Road, down the other side and there it is', Daphne explained.⁹

Brian's family had moved from Temple Guiting to High Lodge in 1914 when it became available for tenancy. It too belonged to the Sarsden Estate and was purchased by the Edgintons at the same time the Roses bought Churchill Heath (1922). They paid £4200 for 326 acres. Crow's Castle was acquired for tenancy from the Barrington Estate in 1928.

Researching for a talk she gave to the Wychwoods Local History Society in 1993 Daphne leafed through her husband's diaries to discover what he had said about the day they became engaged. His entry for 17 December 1939 read 'Went to Churchill Heath. Most memorable.' Perhaps the 31 year old farmer had heard about the sinking of the Graf Spee that day and had saved his enthusiasm for small naval victories. More likely Daphne Rose had pledged her troth to a man whose reticent temperament greatly resembled that of her own father. And speaking of keeping

everything in the family – the Rose and Edginton roots already were entangled. John Rose, Daphne's uncle and her father Tom's eldest brother had married Brian's aunt (his mother Ella's sister) Gertie Wells. This couple had four children who were both Brian *and* Daphne's first cousins.

There was no electricity or telephone at Crow's Castle but a rather unpredictable waterpump ram produced marvellous spring water. 'The house was in a wonderful position with beautiful views over the Barrington Estate,' Daphne said. She made a garden, bore her two children at home, cooked for Italian and German POWs housed on the farm, plucked poultry, skinned rabbits, made her own and her children's clothes, nursed baby lambs in the kitchen, cooked for the haymakers and threshers, raised chickens, sold 60 dozen eggs a week and shot pigeons in the winter.

Brian's farming career was in partnership with his brother Ralph. Cattle were raised at High Lodge, sheep at Crow's Castle. One hundred and fifty ewes plus all the lambs to care for was a time consuming job. In her talk to the WLHS Daphne described going round the fields three times a day to right the animals that had rolled over onto their backs and were unable to move. Death followed very soon for these sheep if they lay undiscovered. 'Still to this day if I see a field of sheep I look to see if there is one on its back. If there is, I'm through the gate to turn it over,' Daphne maintained stoutly.

In 1968 Brian and Daphne left Crow's Castle, moved to Frogmore House in Milton and began their second career. Before his death in 1992 Brian was chairman of the Oxfordshire branch of the National Farmers' Union and later a county delegate to the National Council. He was parish councillor, in 1970 chairman of the Chipping Norton Rural District Council, and in 1973 chairman of the newly formed W.O.D.C. He represented the Council on the Thames Water Authority, was a member of the Oxfordshire County Council and chairman of the Environmental Committee. One year he was also president of the Moreton in Marsh Show.

Daphne served Milton, Shipton and surrounding villages in her own way and did it so well that she was awarded the MBE in the 1997 New Year's Honours List for 'services to the community.'

Her support of the Red Cross was unstinting. As Centre Chairman for Chipping Norton for fifteen years she raised record amounts of money through jumble sales and Christmas bazaars. Her loft was the storage facility for medical aids such as wheel chairs and crutches, which could be borrowed at any time. She served as Vice President of the Oxfordshire Red Cross and was awarded the Badge of Honour of the British Red Cross Society.

Frogmore House has been known for years as the 'convalescent home.' Many local people have spent a week or more with Daphne. Their

recoveries from operations or serious illnesses were quietly facilitated by good food, care and friendly companionship. She also invited several people without families to enjoy a Christmas Day dinner at Frogmore House.

Daphne has helped at the Blind Club and War Memorial hospital in Chipping Norton, been active with St John Ambulance in Milton, served as Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and recorded local rainfall for the Meteorological Office each morning. Milton WI, Wychwood Singers, Mothers' Union and Wychwoods Local History Society are organizations to which she has given commitment and support.

Since the end of the Second World War she has helped two former Latvian POWs who chose to remain in this country and settled in Milton. They turned to Daphne for assistance in every aspect of their lives, including foot care! One of the men died in 1996. When the other decided to return to Latvia, Daphne made his travel arrangements by telephone and packed his boxes for the journey although she herself was recovering from a broken hip.

Words to live by for Daphne Edginton – 'Waste not, want not' and 'Not only on our lips but in our lives.' She is her mother's daughter.

The Edgintons' son Anthony is a vet in Cheshire; daughter June Stilgoe is a nurse and lives on a farm near Adderbury with her family. By the time this journal is published, Daphne will have sold Frogmore House, moved to the Stilgoe farm and embarked with enthusiasm on career number three!

Iris Monica Rose Badger

Monica Rose married Arthur John Badger in 1945 at the age of 21. She took her homemaking and farming skills to Crown Farm at Ascott, where her husband lived with his mother Fanny as tenant of the 350-400 acre Crown property.

The same familiar pattern of community participation and church support that she had known all of her life emerged in Monica's new home. John was churchwarden at Holy Trinity for many years; Monica played the organ and was on the PCC. She has been president of the Ascott WI and on the committee, arranged the church flowers and helped with the church fete, serving as organiser at one time.

In 1950 the Badgers were host to Monica's sister, Vivienne and her husband John Prentice, who was in the RAF. The Prentices lived for some months in a flat at Crown Farm.

The Badgers had three children: Christopher who followed his father as tenant of Crown Farm; Peter who is a housemaster at Gresham School in Holt, Norfolk; and Diana married to computer wizard Ian Charters and living in Ilkley, Yorkshire where Diana runs a nursery school and play

group. There are eight grandchildren in all.¹⁰

Since the death of her husband in 1993 Monica has assumed a carer's role in the community. While her sister Daphne brought patients into her home to recuperate, Monica has made it possible for many seriously ill people to remain in their own homes for much longer than otherwise would be possible. With no fanfare Monica goes where she sees the need. She is quiet, gentle, unobtrusive and loving.

John and Monica Badger moved to Crown Cottage on the Green in Ascott in the early 1980s. Many a pleasant Rose get together has been, and will be held in middle sister's welcoming home and beautiful garden.

Vivienne Rosemary Rose Prentice

Vivienne, the sixth child and third daughter of Tom and Lilian Rose, met her future husband on the school bus and studied in the same class at Chipping Norton School. It happened this way. In 1939 after war was declared, John Prentice Sr. and his wife Jessie who lived in London, wrote to John's brother and his wife who lived at Foxholes near Foscot, asking if they could possibly provide a home for their two sons until hostilities were over. Auntie Lily and Uncle Harold Prentice wrote back from their retirement cottage and invited John Jr. and his brother Michael Prentice to live with them, indefinitely.¹¹

Do you remember Harold and Lily? They were the parents of Sheila Prentice who had married Vivienne's eldest brother Dick and lived at Churchill Heath. It was all too convenient and easy to fall in love.

In 1942 at the age of only fifteen John joined the Royal Airforce Apprentice Scheme to train as an Aircraft Engine Fitter and in 1943 Vivienne began to train as an SRN at Dudley Road Hospital in Birmingham. Now properly launched in the world the young couple married at All Saints' Church in Churchill on Easter Monday 1949. After an Eastbourne honeymoon the Prentices lived with John's parents in London for a time while Vivienne worked at Hillingdon Hospital. Their next move was to a flat at Crown Farm, Ascott, while John worked from RAF Yatesbury in Wiltshire. Throughout John's career and the birth of four children Vivienne made 24 houses or married quarters into homes for their growing family. They were based in Gibraltar and Germany.

Retirement brought them home to the entangled roots of the Rose family tree. By this time John and Vivienne's eldest daughter had confused family genealogy further by marrying Pat Edginton, son of Ralph and Drucilla Badger Edginton (Drucilla is a sister of Monica's husband John; Ralph is the brother of Daphne's husband Brian.) Confused? In this family saga there is no example of first or even second cousins marrying. It is simply a matter of putting every available member of the Rose, Prentice,



R.T. (DICK) ROSE, DAPHNE EDGINTON, A.R.(TONY) ROSE, MONICA BADGER, VIVIENNE PRENTICE. 1998

Edginton and Badger families to the best possible use. If there is a Rose for a Prentice or a Badger for an Edginton it is probably a very good thing. By the way, in case you had forgotten, Pat and Mary Edginton farm at High Lodge having taken over from Ralph and Drucilla.

Vivienne and John's son Michael is a partner in Hillyer-Parker Commercial Estate Company. He and his family live at Berkhamstead; Robert is a farm contractor and works locally; Lesley Anne married Guy Canning son of the former vicar of the United Benefice of Shipton, Milton, Fifield and Idbury. The Cannings with their two sons, Tom and Joe, have recently moved to a new home in Cornwall. Guy is head of the English Department at the Mount School in Tavistock, Devon.

John and Vivienne's retirement activities are of the now familiar Rose variety, church and community. John is the back-up organist at St Mary's Shipton and plays often at Fifield and Idbury. He sings in the St Mary's choir and helps to transport local patients to Oxford hospitals. Vivienne is on numerous church rotas and is in charge of the presentation of the elements at communion services. She is also a member of Mothers' Union, along with her two sisters and two sisters-in-law. It is at the Prentices' home that most new members of the church congregation enjoy their first cup of coffee or tea and an introduction to other couples with whom they may share interest. Lilian Rose would approve.

As of September 1998 there are 72 descendants of Tom and Lilian Rose - six children, 16 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren and nine great-great-grandchildren.¹²

Five of their children are still living within a few miles of Churchill Heath, seven of their grandchildren live locally, along with nineteen great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren, 35 in all. Two of the three sons of Tom and Lilian became local farmers; two of the three

daughters married local farmers. This is a remarkable record in an age when a mobile society scatters people with abandon around the globe.

And what makes this Rose garden grow and flower so abundantly while gently resisting transplantation? Rural historians immediately would point to the fact that the Roses, Edgintons, Badgers and Prentices formed part of the deep tap root of the agricultural base of this country. They sought each other out in marriage because in so doing they preserved and promoted a way of life and a rural heritage in which they fervently believed. This is certainly true.

But to a close observer there is more to this 'bouquet of Roses.' They have grown and flowered because of the strong sense of family and of community, fertilized with deep religious conviction and concern for others learnt through the nurture of Lilian Rose some 75 years ago – 'Not only on our lips but in our lives.'

References

- 1 Oral history interview with Dick Rose, 7 February 1995
- 2 Lilian Rose's autograph book owned by Monica Badger
- 3 Interview with Vivienne Prentice 1997
- 4 Interview with Daphne Edginton 1997
- 5 Interview with Dick and Sheila Rose 7 February 1995
- 6 Interview with Dick and Sheila Rose August 1998
- 7 *The History of Churchill* by Lilian Rose, J. Smart and Co., Northants (1934), p74
- 8 Oral history interview with Dick Rose 7 February 1995
- 9 Talk to the WLHS by Daphne Edginton 9 November 1993
- 10 Rose family interview 1997
- 11 Interview with Vivienne Prentice 1997
- 12 One son (Peter) and one grandson (Jeremy) are deceased

All Saints' Church, is a small, originally Norman, church in the hamlet of Shorthampton, near Charlbury. The interior has eighteenth-century box pews, a simple font which may be even earlier than 12th-century and a number of 13th- and 15th-century wall-paintings, uncovered in 1903.

Shorthampton was once a much larger community of around 18 households in 1200 when the church was built and even in 1833 there are numerous houses marked on the first OS map. The Oxfordshire Way which passes right by the church probably enables more people to visit the church than have done for some years.

The church is currently (January 1999) undergoing extensive exterior and interior repairs by Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd. When this has been undertaken the important wall-paintings themselves can be stabilised and restored. The Society is grateful to the firm for its donation towards the cost of producing this issue of *Wychwoods History*, and to the architects J. Alan Bristow and Partner for their help.

A Roman Villa at Upper Milton?

FRANK AND MARGARET WARE

In October 1998 Sue Jourdan and Janet Wallace organised a fieldwalk at Springhill Farm, Upper Milton, with the kind permission of David and Nick Reynolds. Eighteen members took part, including six first-time field walkers. The field was walked with a 15m interval between rows, as in all previous walks except for 1996. The method employed in 1997 at Honeydale Farm of changing bags at fixed intervals along each row gives a more accurate picture of the spatial distribution of objects in a field, but is possibly an over-elaborate procedure unless it is suspected beforehand that the site is potentially rewarding. In 1998 we reverted to our original method of collecting into only one bag per row, thought to be adequate for any preliminary investigation.

Just over 1,000 items dating from the Late Stone Age to the present day were recovered from an area of 35 acres (14 ha), representing a similar density of objects to that found in several other fields. We were fortunate to have the Roman and Medieval material checked by Paul Booth of the Oxford Archaeological Unit.

At least two, and possibly four, flint scrapers 1-2cm across were found, dating from the Neolithic (New Stone Age) or Early Bronze Age, up to 8,000 years old, while numerous small fragments of flint may represent knapping debris from flint working. Wherever we have looked, Stone Age tools and debris are widely but thinly scattered over our area, with only occasional concentrations.

At the other end of the time-scale, dating from the last 200 years, the most abundant pottery at Springhill was as usual the locally-made 'Leaffield' glazed red earthenware, with white 'china', stonewares and other earthenwares the second most numerous. These included a fragment of cup or mug inscribed in flowing letters 'Eliza' or 'Elizabeth'. There were the usual pieces of modern and older glass, brick and slate, various metal objects and pieces of bone and coal. A more unusual find was a coin of King George IV (1820-1830).

The field yielded five probable pieces of Medieval pottery, which represents a rather lower density than other fields walked by the Society to the east of Upper Milton. Such thin but widespread scatters are attributed to manuring (pottery having been thrown away on the midden which was then spread on the fields), and suggest that all these fields were

ploughed in Medieval times. During the Middle Ages the parish of Milton was divided between two manors, one belonging to the Cistercian Monastery at Bruern and the other held by secular lords of the manor, at one time the de Langley family who were connected with Wychwood Forest. The Medieval village was located in Upper Milton, the site of the present village being unoccupied. The Cistercians often used their land as sheep-runs, which were probably not manured so that pottery would not be found except in pockets around sites like shepherds' bothies or wayside shrines. Was their Milton estate used in this way? This hypothesis has not been tested yet by walking fields in the north and west of Milton which were probably definitely in the Cistercian estate, and it would be interesting to do so and perhaps locate the approximate boundary between the two estates by the presence or absence of Medieval pottery. Meanwhile, it seems likely that this field at Springhill, along with those previously walked in Upper Milton, formed part of the de Langley manor.

Another interesting feature of this field was the relative abundance of Romano-British material. Fourteen pieces of pottery were recovered, and six pieces of building material. Although most fields we have examined yield at least two or three RB pieces, representing a manuring scatter, the higher density at Springhill suggests that there was a RB settlement nearby. Paul Booth suggested the pottery was consistent with occupation in the first to third centuries AD. In addition to three fragments which may be RB brick or tile, two of the finds of building material are pieces of box-tile from the flues of a central heating system, while another may be a curved roof-tile (imbrex). These suggest that at some time in the Roman period, a house of some status with at least one heated room was built in the vicinity. Such buildings are commonly referred to as 'villas'. There was no local density of finds in the field walked to suggest that the building was located there, but it is possible that the site of the present Springhill Farm house on a shoulder of land on or above the spring line may have been occupied in Roman times, and the whole area would repay further investigation.

from the *Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine*, February 1891

Milton. Our most kind and long talked of Reading Room. We indefatigable friend Mrs. Samuda trust that now there is little doubt has been giving again a series of that by next winter, at all events it entertainments at Shipton and other must become a tangible fact. places, for the establishment of the

The Cospatrick Tragedy

MARGARET WARE

On the village green at Shipton under Wychwood, next to the war memorial, stands a stone drinking fountain with a distinctive tall, conical spire. It was erected in 1878 in memory of the seventeen members of the Hedges and Townsend families from Shipton who lost their lives in the South Atlantic in a fire on the emigrant sailing ship, the *Cospatrick*, bound for New Zealand.

The brass plaque on the north side lists Richard Hedges aged 56, Sarah his wife (53); John Hedges (24) and Sarah his wife (22); Thomas Hedges (27), Charles Hedges (18) both sons of Richard and Sarah. That on the south lists Henry Townsend aged 62, Ann his wife (53); George Charter (31), Jane Townsend his wife (35) and their two children, Henry Hedges (30) and Mary Townsend his wife (30) and their three children. All the men were agricultural labourers.

In late Victorian England many agricultural workers and their families led desperately hard lives. They laboured by hand for long hours in harsh conditions for low wages, earning on average only half as much as industrial workers. Rural tied housing was often poor and insanitary, with no security of tenure. The country way of life was strictly regulated by the landlords and tenant farmers, the squire and the Church, with harsh administration of the Poor Law and of penalties for poaching. These conditions were made worse in the 1870s by a run of bad weather and poor harvests.

The early 1870s saw the newly formed National Agricultural Labourers Union beginning the fight for better wages and conditions, but many people emigrated to start a new life in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, a substantial number of these coming from Oxfordshire. During this period the New Zealand government provided free passages to assist over 50,000 English people to emigrate, while the Agricultural Union and others set up funds to buy clothing and equipment for the long and arduous journey, with Union officials often acting as emigration agents. The voyage under sail in an iron clipper usually took about fifteen weeks, although newly-commissioned steamers were completing it in half the time. Animals, chickens and geese were taken on board for food but seasickness and epidemics of scarlet fever, measles and typhoid took their toll and many people, especially children, died on the journey. However



THIS ENGRAVING OF THE *COSPATRICK* APPEARED IN THE *ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS*, 9 JANUARY 1875. Reproduced by kind permission of Mr R.R. Williams.

once the survivors had arrived and settled in, they frequently sent back enthusiastic reports of their improved conditions and of the many attractions of the 'new country'.

Emigration rose to a peak in 1873 and 1874, and during this period at least 160 people are known to have left for New Zealand from Milton and Ascott, many to settle in the Hawke's Bay area, but until the autumn of 1874 only three folk had ventured from Shipton. Then Richard Hedges and Henry Townsend with their wives and families joined 400 other emigrants and 44 crew on the *Cospatrick* which sailed from Blackwall Dock in London on 11 September bound for Auckland.

The *Cospatrick* was a two-decked, full-rigged wooden ship of about 1,200 tons, owned by Shaw Savill & Co, which had transported thousands of people during the previous nine years without incident. It had recently been inspected and pronounced sound. In addition to the passengers and their stores (which included coal for cooking and heating), it now carried iron rails and cement, and an inflammable cargo of linseed oil, turpentine and varnish, candles, rum, brandy, wine and beer. Fire precautions were strictly enforced, fires and lights being lit only by the cook and stewards

while the emigrants themselves carried out fire-watch duty. Nevertheless fire broke out just after midnight on 17 November near the boatswain's locker, and spread quickly. Panic ensued and most people died in the inferno or drowned when they jumped from the blazing ship, which sank after two days. Only two of the ship's four lifeboats got away, laden with emigrants and crew. They were over 700 miles from the Cape of Good Hope and without food or drink, mast, sail or compass. After three days one boat drifted out of sight. The other was sighted by a passing ship after ten days but only four people, three of them crew members, were still alive. The remaining emigrant died after being rescued.

This appalling tragedy shocked the nation. The Board of Trade enquiry later concluding that the fire probably started as a result of someone attempting to raid the liquor store. It was one of the worst maritime disasters of the century and probably contributed to the waning of interest in emigration thereafter. The steady drain of the labour force had also begun to concern farmers at home, and was providing a stronger bargaining position for the Agricultural Union to secure better wages and working conditions for its members, so there was now less incentive to leave.

In 1877 a committee in Shipton under Wychwood raised £70 towards a memorial to the local victims of the disaster and the fountain was erected on the green a year later. As time passed the carved stone lettering weathered and faded, and brass plates bearing the original inscriptions were fixed on the north, south and west sides on 17 November 1934, the sixtieth anniversary of the tragedy. A fourth brass was also added, on the east side, recalling the original tragedy, and to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1901.

The inscription on the west side reads:

*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again but whosoever
drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.*

John, Ch. IV v. 13 and 14

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The Agricultural Ladder

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE, ANTHEA JONES AND SUE JOURDAN

The farming landscape surrounding Milton and Shipton under Wychwood was redrawn about 150 years ago. The fields growing wheat, rape and linseed, which cover the top of the hill to the south of the villages now, were permanent pasture before this time, the downs grazed mainly by sheep. Lower down on the hillside were the open arable fields of the villages, with meadow to the side of the river Evenlode and pastures close to the houses, then as now. The Heath in Milton was a small remnant of grazing ground which stretched into Bruern. These old arrangements of the land may have been 1,000 years old, but in Milton in 1849 and in Shipton in 1852, they were revolutionised by the process of enclosure. It was unusually late here; in much of the Midlands the open fields had been enclosed before 1800 or in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Farmers no longer had to co-operate with each other once the land was enclosed; each could use his own as he wished, independent of the rest of the community.

A small research group of the WLHS has investigated the farmers of Milton and Shipton during this period of change. Were the farming families stable? Did son succeed father or did a new set of farmers come in once the land was enclosed? Did farmers move up or down the agricultural ladder? Did farms become larger, with correspondingly fewer farmers? Who took over the new farms created from the Downs? Were there any differences between Milton and Shipton? And did farms cross township boundaries?

The new valuations of properties liable to poor rates made for Milton (undated but 1849) and Shipton (1852) shortly after enclosure formed the starting point for this study, together with the census enumerators books (CEBs) from 1841 to 1861 and the Tithe Awards for Shipton (1839) and Milton (1842). Shipton's Enclosure Award schedule (1852) survives, detailing the allocations of land made to each landowner in respect of holdings of strips and common rights. Milton's award schedule is lost but the map survives on the wall in Milton Village Hall and the rating list uses the same allotment numbering. A vestry minute book for Milton survives from 1849, and provided the date for the rating list. The Vestry, a meeting of local ratepayers which dealt with poor relief and maintenance of the highways, met in the Butchers Arms on 25 June 1849 to consider the new

Table 1: Milton and Shipton farmers with more than 20 acres in 1849/52

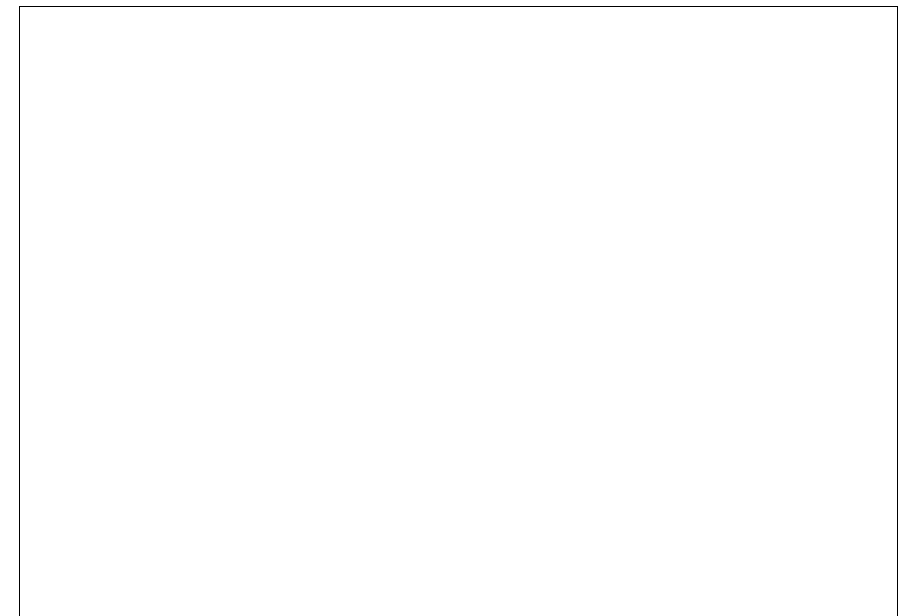
NAME	ACRES	NAME OF PROPERTY
MILTON		
Brookes Thomas	60	Parsonage Farm, Shipton
Ellis James	21	in Milton High Street (Eliz. Ellis by 1851 census)
Foden John	375	Frog Lane first, then Lower Farm, Upper Milton
Gardener Anthony 291		Manor Farm, Upper Milton
Gilbert Richard	245	Breakspears
Huckin John	153	Crows Castle Hill
Stokes Robert	56	in Frog Lane
Hulbert Robert	186	Poplar Farm (Lewin Hulbert by 1851 census)
Langston James H.	464	Sarsden House
Pratt Mary	62	Tythe Farm, Lyneham and end of Green Lane, Milton
SHIPTON		
Bould Wm	290	on corner of Ascott Road
Bould Rd	329	Grove Farm, possibly later in Church Street
Brookes Th	99	Parsonage Farm
Bunting Eliz	103	Langley
Ellis Thomas	20	
Franklin Rob	59	Old Forge House
Gomm Jh	28	Coldstone by Ascott
Howse	27	
Kimber Jabez	354	possibly Coldstone Farmhouse, High Street
Maddox Jh.F.	149	Court Farm
(Reade Sir John	51	Shipton Court)
Maddox Th	372	Upper Farm
Reynolds Stephen	22	Langley Mill
Simms Rd	33	
Spencer Rbt	134	Red Horse Inn
Smith Jh	143	Crown Inn
Willsden Geo	36	Langley
Young Th	150	Coldstone Farmhouse, then possibly Lane End Farmhouse

valuation for the poor rate made by Mr Washbourne, and 'to receive and examine the map and award for Milton Inclosure'.¹

The first question which had to be answered was what acreage could be called a 'farm', so as a working hypothesis, 20 acres or more has been regarded as such. This article is, therefore, concerned with 26 'farmers' with more than 20 acres in the rating lists for Shipton and Milton. This definition was largely confirmed by the 1851 CEBs. Only two men with

less than 20 acres, both in Milton, called themselves 'farmer'. John Hawkes was aged 70 and died in 1853. On the rating list and in the 1851 census he had 3 acres, and his son, William, an agricultural worker, 9 acres. In 1841 John was a 'farmer' and in 1851 Anne, his wife, was a 'farmer's wife'; both came from Gloucestershire. Their name is preserved in 'Hawkes' Yard', the row of cottages off Milton High Street. James Pratt aged 57 had only a close of 2 acres, one acre of arable and a barn in Milton. The 1851 census stated that he was born in Lyneham and had 5 acres. In all other instances those with up to 20 acres had other occupational descriptions: in Milton a cowleech, a beerhouse keeper, an agricultural labourer, a mason's labourer and Thomas Groves with 15 acres called himself a mason/farmer; and in Shipton, two innkeepers, a miller, a shepherd, a baker, a gardener, a farm labourer and a malt labourer, three men variously described as 'Landed gent', 'landed property' and 'House proprietor' and the vicar, Revd Phillimore with 5 acres. Sir John Chandos Reade's 51 acres were Shipton Court gardens and grounds so he has been excluded from the list of farmers. The 619 acres owned by him were tenanted by the Bould brothers, two of the Shipton farmers. The Shipton

THE MAP ILLUSTRATES THE MAIN SHIPTON AND MILTON PROPERTIES IN THE RATING LISTS. IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO LOCATE 25 PROPERTIES OCCUPIED AT SOME DATE CLOSE



rating list has one entry, Howse with 27 acres, with no christian name given, whom it has not been possible to trace.

Five men with over twenty acres were not described as farmers. Robert Spencer was rated on 134 acres and was a maltster; he came from Coln St Alwyn in Gloucestershire and his sister came too when she married Thomas Maddox, a Shipton farmer. Richard Simms had 33 acres and was a butcher. John Smith, from Newbold in Worcestershire was given as publican at the Crown Inn when his children by his first wife were baptised in the 1830s. In 1851 he was entered as farmer in the census and was rated for 143 acres in 1852. By 1861 he was a grocer and farmer with 14 acres. He was a member of the vestry, overseer of the poor and clerk to the trustees of the Crown Inn Charity. Thomas Ellis was a baker and rated for 21 acres in Shipton where he died aged 84 in 1865. He was a member of a very large local family who were mainly bakers, including James Ellis who had 20 acres in Milton. James died in 1849, but his widow Elizabeth carried on his business as baker and grocer; she lived on the east side of Milton High Street and served as overseer of the poor in Milton that year. Although uncommon, women did from time to time serve as parish officers.

Enclosure

The advantages of enclosure were well established by 1800 and there must have been much talk among the farmers of Shipton and Milton on the merits and problems involved. In Shipton the valuable hay meadows by the river were shared between farm holdings, and each year the particular area to be mown by each farmer was allocated by drawing lots; hence the name 'lot meads'. The lots were given names carved on wooden balls, one symbol for each holding which had an entitlement. In 1806 Shipton farmers made their first steps to enclosure by ending the lot meads:

Shipton Farmers met & agreed to know their own land in future or rather each to have the same Land every Year for the Benefit of mutually manuring to cut more Hay & improve the Common which answer'd extremely well.

For the next few years the arguments must have continued. A note in the diocesan documents records the intention in Shipton and Milton in 1820 to apply to parliament in the ensuing session for a bill dividing, allotting, enclosing and discharging from tithes the open and common fields, Downs and waste ground, but this came to nothing. Consequently the tithe commutation maps of the late 1830s show the old open field systems with their multiplicity of strips. And, although the process of enclosure must have already been under discussion in 1848, the farmers

of Shipton still acted together to insert the following notice in Jackson's Oxford Journal:-

Saturday 2 September 1848
 3 We the undersigned proprietors and occupiers of lands in the above parish hereby forbid all persons from shooting or sporting thereon until 5 September now next: any person found thus trespassing will be prosecuted as the law directs.

Shipton-under-Wychwood August 22 1848

signed

Sir John C Reade

William Boulton

Thomas Maddox

John Fowler Maddox

Thomas Young

Robert Frankling

Richard Boulton

John Smith

Thomas Brookes

Mark Pratt

This was probably the last occasion when the downs and commons would be open to the local inhabitants; after enclosure, they would become walled, hedged or fenced private property. The 'proprietors and occupiers of land' named were the resident landowners and tenants, with Mark Pratt the parish clerk. All but one served as an overseer of the poor, and six also served as constable or Crown Inn trustee. Robert Franklin was the census enumerator in 1851, transcribing the information on the household schedules into the books which have been preserved and are studied by historians. Only two significant rate-



JOHN FOWLER MADDUX, ESQ., J.P.
 (from *Oxfordshire Leaders, Social and Political*, Ernest Gaskell, c.1900, p218)

payers, including Stephen Reynolds at Langley Mill, were not on this list.

The picture of farm sizes from the rating lists is of a small number of larger farms, over 200 acres, and relatively few small farms. Looking further back, the 1814 tithe survey provided a comparison.⁴ In 1814 Shipton and Milton together had nine farmers with up to 100 acres compared with 13 in 1850; those with over 100 acres in 1814 had increased from 12 to 14 by 1850, although this ignores the fact that some had land outside the two townships. This modest increase in farm size can partly be explained by the inclusion of the newly enclosed Downs which had not been titheable and therefore not included in the 1814 survey. The 1843 tithe award for Milton gave 688 acres as Down and common or 'waste'; the rating list indicated 200 acres of Down allotments still designated as pasture, and 150 acres of heath. In Shipton the tithe award included 500 acres of Downland. Because of the radical changes in land use after enclosure, it is impossible to make any exact comparisons, but overall it is clear that, in the 40 years prior to enclosure, there had not been any major change in farm sizes.

Nine of the farmers in 1850 came from families farming in 1814, as indicated by the same surname, two in Milton and seven in Shipton. But there was no continuity in farm size, apart from Thomas Brookes' Parsonage Farm. Five had much smaller acreages in 1850 than in 1814 but three had much larger farms. Richard Gilbert, Elizabeth Bunting and the father and son, John and Thomas Maddox, had notably risen up the agricultural ladder within the parish.

Table 2: Analysis of farmers' acreages from the tithe survey 1814 and from the rating lists 1850

	Milton 1814	Shipton 1814	Milton 1850	Shipton 1852
21–50 acres	3	4	1	6
51–100 acres	0	2	3	3
101–200 acres	5	2	2	4
200+ acres	2	3	4	4
	10	11	10	17
Acreages dealt with	1476	2052	2079	2300

Farming across township boundaries and non-resident farmers

Comparing the acreages as given by themselves in the census record with their rating assessments showed that several farmers lived and farmed land in more than one township. Elizabeth Bunting was rated in Shipton on 103 acres belonging to Lord Churchill but was not in the Shipton census. The Buntings lived at Langley which comprised 299 acres all owned by Lord Churchill. In the 1846 Langley tithe award survey, the brothers John and David Bunting farmed 96 acres there; in the 1851 census they lived in a household with their sister Elizabeth. None was married and together the three of them were stated to farm 180 acres. Also living at Langley was George Willsden with 198 acres in Langley and 36 acres in Shipton.

The residents of Langley Mill and Coldstone Farm, both by Ascott, were confusingly entered in documents for Shipton, Ascott and Langley. Stephen Reynolds, the miller, and John Gomme were entered in the 1841 census for Langley hamlet. In 1851 they were entered in the Shipton census. Stephen Reynolds was from Little Rissington and employed 24 men. He was a widower aged 41 with three children and was rated for 22 acres. John Gomme, born at Milton, lived at Coldstone Farm by the brook at Ascott and was rated for 28 acres that were technically in Shipton parish. He was stated in the census as farming 185 acres so presumably most of his land was in Ascott. He served as a member of Shipton vestry and as a Shipton overseer. His daughter Jane's baptism in 1839 was entered in both Shipton and Ascott registers but her burial two years later was only entered in Shipton register. When her brother John was born in 1842 his baptism is only recorded in Ascott. When John senior died in 1884, he was buried at Ascott. Also non-resident in Shipton in 1851 according to the census was Howse, already mentioned, and Jabez Kimber; by 1861 he was living locally and had the largest farm in Shipton and Milton.

In Milton there were four non-resident landholders. Thomas Brookes was rated on 60 acres but lived at Parsonage Farm in Shipton where he had another 99 acres. At enclosure in Milton, Parsonage Farm was allocated land in Bruern Road which became the site of Milton school and church built in 1853–4 immediately after enclosure. Mary Pratt farmed Tythe Farm in Lyneham but had 62 acres in Green Lane in Milton. John Huckin was rated on 153 acres of pasture at Crows Castle Hill where there was a small group of buildings but there is no trace of him in other documents for Milton. James Haughton Langston lived at Sarsden House and farmed directly 2,000 acres in the area with the help of a bailiff, including 464 acres of Milton land. Another 291 acres belonging to him in Upper Milton were tenanted by Anthony Gardiner. Squire Langston had inherited 6,000 acres in Milton, Lyneham, Sarsden and Churchill in 1812, when he was only 16, and became a model farmer, landlord, MP and philanthropist.⁵

In Milton he not only largely built the church and the school, but also provided a water supply to the village which was apparently 'once constantly affected with fever and much sickness'. After enclosure, two new farmhouses, Springhill and High Lodge, were built on Langston land.

Many of the surnames of the farmers in the rating lists for both Milton and Shipton had long been associated with the area, with entries in Shipton parish registers. Four farmers apparently had no earlier family links; John Huckin in Milton, Jabez Kimber in Shipton and the Bould brothers, William and Richard who came from Oddington, Gloucestershire, to Shipton as tenants of Sir John Reade who owned the Oddington House and Manor estates.⁶ William also had a connection with Shipton through his wife, Mary Ellis, and farmed her inherited land. They lived on the corner of the Ascott Road almost opposite Richard at Grove Farmhouse. Both men were involved in the running of the village as members of the vestry and trustees of the Crown Inn and taking their turns as overseers of the poor and constable.⁷ Both brothers died childless, Richard aged 63 in 1856 and William aged 87 in 1875.

HIGH LODGE, MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD, ABOUT 1910-15. BUILT AFTER THE ENCLOSURE OF THE MILTON OPEN FIELDS IN ABOUT 1860 FOR ONE OF SQUIRE



Resident Milton Farmers

Despite sharing a surname with families recorded in the parish registers, the farmers of Milton were apparently not local men themselves; none was baptised or married there. Only Mary Pratt had children baptised in Milton and John Foden was eventually buried there in 1905 aged 80 but by then of New Barnet. Of the ten farmers, six were resident in the township – John Foden, Anthony Gardener, Richard Gilbert, Robert Stokes, Robert Hulbert and James Ellis, baker, who has already been mentioned.

John Foden was born at Oddington in Gloucestershire in about 1803 and married Mary Anne who was born in Shipton. In 1841 they lived in Frog Lane but by 1851 they lived at Lower Farm, Upper Milton with 375 acres, paying £255 in rates. John Foden was involved in running Milton as a member of the vestry, overseer of the poor, constable and allotment warden. He was the census enumerator in 1841. Anthony Gardiner, from Little Tew, lived at Old Manor Farm in Upper Milton and was a tenant of 291 acres from Squire Langston. Richard Gilbert came from Bledington and was the tenant of Brasenose College, Oxford which owned Brakespear House with 245 acres. In 1841 William Powell was the BNC tenant and so Richard had taken over sometime in the 1840s when he was already nearly 60. By 1861 he had retired in favour of his son, also Richard, who had married Tabitha Gorton, daughter of the Baptist minister. Robert Stokes was from Ashton under Hill in Gloucestershire and farmed 56 acres. Aged 60 in 1851 he was unmarried and lived with his neice, Sarah aged 32, as housekeeper in Frog Lane. She came from Willersey in Gloucestershire and by 1861 her brother Henry, aged 42, who was also unmarried, had joined them. Robert Hulbert with 186 acres was entered in the rating list with a homestead but does not appear in the Milton census although Lewin Hulbert aged 27 was in the 1851 census with 196 acres. From the enclosure allocations it can be seen that they lived at Poplar Farm. Three of the resident farmers seem to have had some continuity in Milton for a few years. The Fodens, Gardeners and Stokes were all resident in 1841 and 20 years later they were still there.

Messrs Foden, Gilbert and Gardiner were among the six men attending Milton Vestry under the chairmanship of Squire Langston to consider the new poor rate valuation in 1849. Over the three years, 1849 to the end of 1851, a total of 15 men attended one or more vestry meetings. Women ratepayers probably avoided the male-dominated meetings in the Butchers Arms. The Vestry was not dominated by the farmers as in Shipton. Apart from Squire Langston and Thomas Brookes of Parsonage Farm, there were seven farmers or farm bailiffs, five tradesmen and Philip Groves, stonemason, attending at some time. Eventually in September 1852, Mr Washbourne was paid £35 9s for his new poor rate survey by the poor law overseers, John Foden, William Gibson and Lewin Hulbert.

Shipton

It was in Shipton that there appear to be direct descendants in the farming families. Of the 15 resident farmers of Shipton, six were born in Shipton although the baptism of one, Thomas Young, was not recorded in the parish register, and three were born in Milton. Interestingly all but two were born before 1801. They must have represented a formidable old guard by the time of enclosure in 1850.

Robert Franklin, born in Shipton, had a notably long connection with the village. He appears to be the direct descendant of Richard Franklin who was entered in the burial register for 1638 for Shipton as a servant to Sir John Lacy Kt. Our farmer Robert was born in 1798 as the tenth and youngest child of John Franklin and his wife Kitty. When the first of his children was baptised in Shipton in 1830, he was given as a schoolmaster but by the fifth child he was given as a farmer. He lived in Upper High Street and was rated in 1852 for 59 acres. By the 1861 census he was described as a farmer of 142 acres and innkeeper of the Lamb Inn. He was a moderately successful climber up the agricultural ladder. He took an active part in local affairs as the census enumerator in 1841 and 1851, member of the vestry, overseer of the poor and constable.

Thomas Brookes came from a family that had lived in Shipton and Milton since the sixteenth century. Baptised in Shipton in 1797, he took over from his father as tenant of Parsonage farm. His wife, Sophia, died in childbirth with her fifth child in 1839. In his turn his son, Thomas junior, inherited the tenancy at his father's death in 1869 and was able to purchase Parsonage Farm in 1892 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Thomas senior also farmed 60 acres in Milton and was much involved in the affairs of Shipton as a member of the vestry, constable, overseer of the poor and trustee of the Crown Inn.

Another of the old guard of Shipton farmers was Thomas Young who was a member of a family that also had associations with Shipton since the sixteenth century. He lived in Coldstone Farmhouse in High Street in 1839 with an 'old rick yard' at Five Lane Ends, but by 1851 he appears to be living at Lane End Farm. When at Coldstone he was a tenant of Miss Webb, but at enclosure he himself owned 75 acres at Fernhill by the Ascott boundary and 25 acres by the Milton boundary, and the Webb tenancy had been taken over by Jabez Kimber. Thomas Young appears to be moving from a tenant to a freeholder; by 1861 his son John had succeeded him. The intermarrying of farmers' families was well demonstrated by the Youngs and Gommes of Coldstone by Ascott; Thomas Young married John Gomme's sister Anne and John Gomme married Thomas's sister Sophia.

The Maddox name appeared in the registers at the beginning of the eighteenth century and Thomas and John Fowler Maddox, with a total of

521 acres between them, were the only father and son on the rating list. At John Fowler's baptism Thomas was given as a maltster and by 1861 he had retired to be described as 'house and land proprietor' and his wife Amy as a 'fund holder'. John Fowler Maddox lived for 74 years in Shipton and then retired to Milton. He was 'a practical agriculturalist'; but was also a noted public figure, serving on the Board of Guardians of the Poor, chairman of Shipton Parish Council, a JP and a noted radical.⁸ He was also a prominent baptist who built the chapel in Shipton. John Fowler Maddox owned only three acres at enclosure but he bought 113 acres of the downs for £2,500, the sale of which paid the expenses of enclosure. Presumably he then built Downs Lodge farmhouse and it seems likely that he was another man establishing himself as a freeholder. The only other new farm buildings built as a consequence of enclosure in Shipton were Hill Buildings, on land allotted to Sir John Chandos Reade.

Although 11 of Shipton's farmers were in their fifties, Jabez Kimber was a good example of a young man climbing fast up the agricultural ladder. Aged about 28 in 1851, he was not entered in the census, so it seems he moved to Shipton sometime between that and the date of the rating list, when he had one of the the bigger farms with 354 acres. By 1861 he was farming 620 acres with 50 men and seven boys. The enclosure allocations show that he was a tenant of the Fettiplace heiress, Miss Elizabeth Frances Webb of Norton Court, Gloucestershire, who had an allotment at enclosure of 296 acres. He was from Great Tew and his wife, May Ann was from Little Rollright; there were no Shipton parish register entries for either of them.

1861

There was a significant change in the farming scene in the decade following enclosure, of which Jabez Kimber with more than 600 acres was a sign. Using the 1861 census, the indications are that the number of farms of less than 100 acres in Shipton had fallen sharply between 1851 and 1861, and the nine farms over 100 acres had correspondingly grown larger. As well as Jabez Kimber, William Baker was another newcomer to Shipton since 1851, a young man of 24 with 360 acres. John Fowler Maddox's 460 acres presumably brought the earlier holdings of father and son together. But seven of the 'old guard' still remained.

In Milton, the change was less noticeable. There were fewer farmers, but even so, William Mace, farming 500 acres, had moved into Milton after the 1851 census was taken. Born in Windrush, he was already 51 years old and he seems to have had a different eye on the ladder. None of his sons was married in Milton but his four daughters were and all married farmers. In 1861 Caroline married Samuel Guy of Over Norton; Mary Louisa married Samuel's brother Frederick of Chipping Norton in



LANGSTON ARMS HOTEL, KINGHAM. BUILT ABOUT 1870 AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE BRANCH LINES TO CHIPPING NORTON AND BANBURY AND STOW ON THE WOLD AND CHELTENHAM. SQUIRE LANGSTON USED THE HOTEL FOR FARMERS' MEETINGS.

1868; in 1877 Amelia Jane married Henry Brian Edginton of Kirtlington and Maria married Edward Gillet of Tangley in 1879. With William and his son, also William, farming in Milton, William senior's sphere of influence covered a large part of north and west Oxfordshire. On a small scale, Shipton and Milton enclosures seem to have favoured the capitalist farmer which Squire Langston looked for in his tenants.

This study has again shown the differences between the two neighbouring villages of Milton and Shipton. Milton had a more mobile population with no longstanding farmers, several were non-resident and no Milton farmer resident in 1851 was born there. Having many of the characteristic of an 'open' village, no resident squire or vicar, non-conformity and many small landowners, Milton came to be dominated by one man, Squire Langston. In contrast, Shipton had an old guard of similar-aged farmers mostly born locally. At the end of the period of this study, with the great changes caused by enclosure, the next generation of enterprising young men was beginning to take their place. Again our studies have shown Milton to be more like a small town, with Shipton firmly anchored

as an agricultural community. It has also shown the extreme difficulty of assessing the farming community in a parish or township at any one date – mobility between farms was frequent, farms crossed township and parish boundaries and farm size frequently changed.

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Memories of Shipton Station

IAN MATTHEWS

I admit I have very happy memories of Shipton station, where I spent many hours as a small boy aged ten during the long warm summer of 1940. I had been away at prep school at Swanage on the South coast, but due to the threat of Hitler's invasion, father took me away and I was able to enjoy 16 weeks summer holiday.

At 7.50am as a Castle class engine drew out of the station with its powerful exhaust, it was time to get up, and at 1.27pm just after lunch I would be at the bottom of our garden to see our grand train of the day, that condescended to stop at Shipton. Again it would be a Castle with nine or more coaches, including a restaurant car, which made its explosive start from the road bridge.

The line was built by the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway Ltd, the section through Shipton opening on the 4 June 1853. In its early years it was always at loggerheads with its big brother, the G.W.R. (Great Western Railway). The O.W.W.R. had poor rolling stock and a nondescript stud of second-hand engines that were very liable to break down, so its nickname Old Worse and Worse was apt.

The original engineer was the famous Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the chap you see seated on the lawn at Paddington Station, but he was too busy to stop long and John Fowler took his place in 1852. It was built to the standard gauge 4ft 8 in despite the O.W.W.R. having agreed with

parliament in 1845 that it would be built to allow Broad Gauge (7ft in) trains to travel on it. To allow the opening to take place at all, a third rail was quickly laid for the Government Rail Inspector with his Broad Gauge Engine and Coach to travel from Oxford to Evesham. It was in fact the only known occasion a Broad Gauge engine passed through Shipton. Fortunately the Government Inspector passed the mixed gauge line, and business could commence, albeit with narrow gauge stock as the O.W.W.R. owned no other. After a few years in 1858 this third rail was dismantled and relaid for more productive use.

In the 1850s, the G.W.R. line from Oxford to Paddington was Broad Gauge, but fortunately the line from Oxford to Banbury was Mixed Gauge, so the O.W.W.R. and G.W.R. were able to put in a junction at Wolvercote (about 2 miles north of Oxford Station) and the O.W.W.R. could reach Oxford, where all the passengers would have to change.

This may appear straightforward, but relations with the G.W.R. were



PIKE HOUSE BY THE ROAD BRIDGE WAS ONCE THE TOLL HOUSE FOR THE TURNPIKE ROAD – NOW THE A361. IAN MATTHEWS LIVED AT OAK LODGE FURTHER UP THE HILL, THE GARDEN OF WHICH (BY THE 1930S) RAN BEHIND PIKE HOUSE AND RIGHT UP TO THE RAILWAY LINE. THE STOCK PENS ARE NEXT TO THE GOODS SIDING.

strained with many misunderstandings and legal battles regularly taking place, more often the fault of the O.W.W.R. than the G.W.R. However the O.W.W.R. found an ally in their battles versus the G.W.R., in the London and North Western Railway (L.N.W.R.), who built a mile and a half connecting line from North Oxford golf course, just South of Kidlington silo, to Yarnton in 1854. This enabled Handborough to become a junction, where L.N.W.R. engines were put onto O.W.W.R. trains and taken via the Yarnton connection to Bicester, Bletchley and so to London Euston. Also, whilst arguments with the G.W.R. continued, O.W.W.R. trains were allowed to take the spur at Yarnton to join the L.N.W.R. Bletchley to Oxford line and to terminate at Oxford L.N.W.R. station at Rewley Road.

I was always intrigued why when I purchased a ticket to go from Shipton to Oxford, there was plainly printed 'via Handborough', as if there was any other way to go, obviously a relic of when the L.N.W.R. was a

strong ally of the O.W.W.R. I once travelled back from school in Oxford via Banbury and Kingham, and enjoyed the route. I wish now that I had done it more often.

In 1860 the O.W.W.R. amalgamated with the Newport, Abergavenny & Hereford and the Hereford & Worcester to form the West Midlands Company. Then one year later a Heads of Agreement was signed with the G.W.R. and finally the West Midland was absorbed by the G.W.R. in 1863 so Shipton Station was now firmly G.W.R. – God's Wonderful Railway. Already the Oxford to Reading line had become mixed gauge, and it was agreed that Reading to Paddington would become mixed gauge, so that at last narrow gauge trains could travel from Worcester to Paddington.

I now jump many years to 1940, when I first realized the attractions of Shipton Station. I would try to be there by 11am when the down pick-up goods train was due to arrive. It was always a busy station from the freight point of view. In the very early days there was no station at Kingham or at Chipping Norton so it served a considerable hinterland and even principal passenger trains stopped at Shipton. But once Chipping Norton Junction, later renamed Kingham, was built with its lines connecting to

THE STATION IN THE 1930S. THE BRICK STATION IS A STANDARD G.W.R. DESIGN WITH VERANDA OVER THE UP PLATFORM. THE BLACK GOODS BUILDING BEHIND HAS AN ARCH FOR TRUCKS TO ENTER. THE SIGNAL BOX IS ON THE DOWN SIDE.



Cheltenham and Banbury, Shipton had to take a back seat.

The staff in 1940 was eight men and two women. The station-master, Mr Law, was an aloof man and looking back I realise he must have had a difficult and lonely job, being posted to Shipton for three or four years and then moving on. He wouldn't know the local inhabitants very well, nor even his own staff. He didn't approve of small boys hanging about his station, so I kept well clear of him. He must have known I was there, but perhaps didn't wish to offend my father by ordering me off the premises. Father was one of his main customers as we (F.W.P. Matthews Ltd.) had eight flour vans and two coal trucks for our sole use.

The foreman was Harry Newman, a very tall thin man with a twinkle in his eye, who would take me under his wing. He told me when to expect the trains, encouraged me to take their names, and gave me G.W.R. magazines to read. I remember I was particularly impressed by an account of 'Builth Castle' doing 100mph down Honeybourne Bank in 1939. He called me Bim for some strange reason.

The signalman was George Stayt. He opened the signal-box whenever traffic was particularly busy and when the two goods trains (pick-ups) were due to arrive. The down pick-up usually came about 11am and stayed until about 12.30pm and the up would come about 3pm and stay until about 4pm. Occasionally he would allow me into his box. It was always in a spotless condition, and you felt you had to take your shoes off to go in. Most days he had to visit his nine signals to trim their wicks, and to ensure that there was sufficient methylated spirit for the signal lamps.

Harry Newman the foreman had two porters and three lorry drivers under his control. The porters were Bill Hedges and Len Shepherd. They collected passengers' tickets, saw to the luggage, booked parcels in and out, sheeted-up wagons, helped load and unload trucks, and operated the weigh-bridge (a small 20-ton Pooley).

The drivers for the three lorries kept at Shipton station were Ernie Clemson from Milton, Harry Samson from Ascott, and Dai Lewis. Mr Clemson drove the large lorry of about 7 tons carrying capacity used for grain, fertilisers and timber for Groves. Mr Sampson drove a small covered lorry to deliver the 'roadside goods', the parcels and small consignments for local villages. He seemed to go to Hambidges at Burford every day and he delivered the boxes of spirits, cigarettes and barrels of beer for the pubs. Dai Lewis drove a 3-4 ton carrying capacity open lorry. He carried out general work delivering feeding stuffs to local farms and did many of our (F.W.P. Matthews Ltd) local deliveries. Notes would come across from Walter Smith in our office and Harry, the foreman, used to say 'Here's another from Mr Urgent' as they would read:

*E.G. Hartley/Milton
1 ton sharps*



ERNIE CLEMSON WHO DROVE
THE BIG LORRY, C.1945-50

URGENT

or

C.A.Wells/Milton

5 cwts barley meal

URGENT

Dai Lewis also collected wheat for the mill from local farms. I travelled a lot with him and got to know the countryside following the threshing machine.

In the main office in the main building on the up platform under the eye of the stationmaster, worked one or two girls who issued tickets, answered the telephone and

did all the accounts and returns to head office. Miss Shepherd, the daughter of Len Shepherd the porter, worked there for several years. Shipton was known by the G.W.R. as 'Shipton for Burford' and was important to Burford inhabitants, particularly before 1930. In that year the G.W.R. began running a Cheltenham to Oxford coach service via the A40, to connect with the London trains at Oxford, but even in 1940 several taxis would arrive and in particular two from Shipton driven by Percy Avery (Vic's father), and Reg Bradley (Bob's father).

Layout and Buildings

The main station building was on the up or London-bound north side, a solid red-brick standard G.W.R. structure with a veranda for passenger protection built about 1880. It contained the following rooms running from east to west:

1. Porters' room with coal fire, high desk and racks for truck labels. It was Harry Newman's office, always warm and snug.
2. Stationmaster's office. A large room with desks, telephone etc. It was from here that tickets were issued.
3. Large waiting-room with coal fire, a large table in the middle and long seats along two walls.
4. Ladies Waiting Room. Rather small. I never got inside to study it!
5. Gents.

On the east side was sited an old carriage body. This was for handling parcels sent by passenger train, and contained a small set of scales and a desk for making out consignment notes and their copies. Every item despatched had to have its consignment note giving details of the sender, the receiver and what the goods were, with details of who was paying for its carriage. At the back, the north side, there was a lean-to housing a bicycle rack. On the west side of this main building was a sunken petrol-tank and pump, important for refuelling the lorries. On an old map of 1882, I was surprised to see that a weigh-bridge had been sited here only five yards from the main building, so it must have saved them fresh excavation to bury the petrol tank.

About 70 yards to the west was the black wooden goods shed. This was large enough to cover three rail vans, for shipping 'roadside' small items of goods for storage or for putting directly on to two lorries that could fit in also under cover. It had a small crane and a wire-mesh secure lock-up, where the valuable spirits and tobacco were kept. Next to it on the west, the Kingham side, was a shed for storing Silcocks feeding stuffs – pig meals and poultry mashes.

Opposite the Silcocks shed were the old blue-brick stables, with its

SHIPTON STATION C1920-5. A PASSENGER TRAIN IS PASSING THE UP PLATFORM. THE DOWN GOODS SIDING IN THE CENTRE TOOK UP TO 22 TRUCKS. THE SINGLE TRUCK ON RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF PICTURE WAS FOR HORSES BROUGHT BY HUNTING PASSENGERS.



blue slated roof, that was later adapted to storing Bibby's feeding stuffs, so became known as the Bibbys shed. The stable doors used to open to the north towards Glebe Farm, back to front to what you would expect, but I understand it was so that real horses wouldn't be frightened by the steam horses. It has never looked the same since the slates were stolen one night and the roof timbers were then removed to make it safe. The walls still stand. Another carriage body was sited about 50 yards beyond the black shed. This was very seldom used and I think it housed old paper records, books and ledgers from the stationmaster's office. Lying on the right-hand side of the road leading to the goods shed was firstly a small green hut, that F.W.P.M. Ltd used as an office, then three corrugated-iron sheds which they also used, and one small hut known as the salt hut where I think bars of salt were stored for Pratt and Haynes.

The long down platform had a brick waiting shelter with a canopy, but no doors or panes of glass in the windows. It was rather bleak as rightly the G.W.R. did not expect many down passengers, but not so good for those waiting to meet people off the train. Behind the platform there was a gangers' hut with a stone wheel for sharpening their scythes and sickles – useful for sharpening my pen-knife.

At the east end was a smart Great Western signal box, and out in the down yard was the standard small brick-built weigh-bridge, housing Pooley weighing equipment and a small platform that could weigh only very short-wheel-based lorries of up to 20 tons capacity. Any lorry of normal size in the 1950s had to be weighed twice. First the front wheels only and then the back wheels, which gave illegal results as the ground was not truly level.

Other structures included a loading gauge at the mouth end of the down siding which showed the maximum height to which a truck could be loaded to travel safely under bridges and through tunnels. Should any truck strike it, which could happen with loads of straw and hay bales, it had to be reloaded. There were two cranes, the largest sited in the middle of the main up siding. It was of about 2–3 tons capacity and used for loading timber and furniture containers. The other, smaller, one was sited by the up dock, halfway between the station platform and the goods shed and was rarely used.

The cattle and sheep pens were sited at the Ascott end of the up main siding. I don't think they were often used, though I can remember 100 sheep arriving from Scotland. More frequently horses were loaded and unloaded. They would travel with their groom with two horses to a horsebox truck, and were picked up by passenger trains. It always amused me to see the annoyed passengers opening their windows to see what was happening as they were shunted into a siding to collect a horsebox.

There were 3 main sidings – one down, holding 22 trucks, and two up,



PASSENGERS WAITING UNDER THE VERANDA WITH THE EARLY LANTERNS, AROUND 1900.

one by the cattle-pens and one for the goods shed. These two could hold 32 trucks and there were two blocks holding one to three trucks so the capacity was about 58 trucks. As the war years went on, the sidings were frequently full, and the overflow would have to be parked at Kingham or Ascott. Harry Newman would tell me that Shipton was the busiest station for freight between Oxford and Evesham. The down pick-up would spend an hour or two at Shipton placing the trucks correctly for loading and unloading – this was Harry Newman's responsibility. It was much easier to unload from the down siding and to load from the up siding, due to the difference in ground-level.

I was often allowed to have a cab ride in the shunting engine, and sometimes to control the regulator, brake and reversing lever. One red letter day the driver climbed out, took his newspaper to read on the platform seat and left me in charge of shunting, with the fireman to keep the steam-pressure up, water in the boiler and to see that I did not misbehave. They were always scared I would break a coupling, and impressed on me that I must let off the brake when the snatch came.

The signalman had an interesting job when the pick-up goods was

present and the main line was busy with both up and down trains. The pick-up was meant to get out of the way by parking in a siding, but frequently couldn't as there was no room. He would let the fast passenger train on the down at 12 o'clock run through, whilst the pick-up blocked the up, so trains would be waiting at Bruern, Kingham and Adlestrop.

Later in the war there were many special movements, for example troop trains, ammunition trains and hospital trains. The hospital trains, whether loaded or unloaded, had absolute priority and were always of great interest and excitement to me, as it meant all passenger and freight trains had to be shunted out of the way. I watched the 12.22pm up passenger train shunted across to the down and it wasn't long before we had standing trains at Ascott, Charlbury, Handborough and Yarnton, in other words all the way back to Oxford.

There were two amusing incidents I witnessed during the war years. Once the signalman moved the up siding points just as the up pick-up guardsman was clearing them, neatly derailing it. Consternation! However the guard clambered up on top of the last sheeted truck of his train with his flag and pole. He sat there and off went the train to Ascott. I'd have travelled in the cab if I had been him and disregarded the rules.

Another time in the winter with snow on the ground, a snowball fight developed between the signalman on the down platform and a porter on the up. Previously the signalman had opened his box for testing purposes and had put all the signals to danger. Suddenly there was a loud whistle from the 12 o'clock down fast, so he rushed into his box, banged his bells and lowered his down signals. But it was too late, the down fast was coming to a halt at the down home. The driver shook his fist at the signalman, as he had to restart his heavy train uphill. Any delay to a train has to be entered into the register and reasons given. I often wonder what was put down, probably 'cattle on the line'.

I hope that I have given you a flavour of what Shipton Station used to be like, and how I enjoyed myself with all its comings and goings. Catching mice in the goods shed, wheeling sack-carts in Silcocks shed, and even putting two carts together, with my cousin sitting on one end, so we had our own mini bobsleigh! All great fun.

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The Wychwoods Local History Society meets once a month from September through to May. Meetings usually alternate between the village halls at Milton and Shipton. Current membership is £4 for an individual and £6 for a couple or overseas member, which includes a copy of *Wychwoods History* when published. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, Littlecott, Honeydale Farm, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BJ (telephone 01993 831023).

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Cover illustration: THE COSPATRICK MEMORIAL, SHIPTON VILLAGE GREEN. THE FOUNTAIN WAS ERECTED IN 1878 IN MEMORY OF THE SEVENTEEN PARISHIONERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES ON THE COSPATRICK, THE EMIGRANT SHIP BOUND FOR NEW ZEALAND WHICH CAUGHT FIRE IN 1874. (SEE PAGE 40)

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WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Fourteen, 1999

On Thursday the 23rd, the Sunday School Festival was held. There was a Celebration of the Holy Communion at 7-30. The children assembled at 3 for Service at the Church, after which they repaired to the field opposite the Parsonage, which had been kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Lambert, and where a large marquee had been pitched to provide against uncertain weather. Our numbers were somewhat diminished by the absence of the Orphanage boys, who are now on their holidays, but 96 children sat down to tea at 3.45. There was a large contingent of both children and mothers from Lyneham, at which village a Sunday School has lately been established, under the very efficient superintendence of Miss Matthews, of Fifield. Tea and cake having been done full justice to, the children adjourned to the field, where the 'swing boats' that had been provided for them proved a great attraction, each boat being continually occupied by successive inmates, old as well as young, up to, and almost after, dark. The mothers and other invited visitors then sat down to tea to the number of over 150. Cricket, racing for prizes, both for boys and girls, sack races, three-legged races, etc., were then the order of the day, and we believe a happy afternoon was spent by all. The proceedings terminated about 8 o'clock, amid vociferous cheering from many throats, old and young. There will be another Sunday School Entertainment about Christ-mas, when prizes will be given for good attendance and good behaviour. We hope that our numbers will be much increased by that time, and that not only will the children do their best to deserve rewards, but that the parents also will do all they can to ensure regular attendance, and to encourage and enforce good conduct and good discipline.

The Rev. Alfred Shildrick, whom the Bishop has consented to license as Assistant curate, is expected to arrive during the second week in July, it is hoped, indeed, that he may preach his first Sermon at Milton in 15th. Mr Shildrick has been working as Mission Priest in British Columbia for many years, three of which were spent as one of Mr Horlock's Assistant in 'the Parish' of 300 by 200 miles which he had under his charge. We trust that the distinctly 'manly' type of Christianity for which Mr Shildrick is distinguished will find many followers in Milton.

Nine of our Teachers went to the Association Meeting at Charlbury, on the 23rd, the rest were prevented by engagements. A very pleasant, if somewhat long, day was spent and enjoyed.

The Sunday School treat will take place during the month of August.

CRICKET CLUB – There have been two matches during the month. On the 5th with Charlbury; there was considerable delay at the start. The batting on the Milton side was very weak, our score being 23 in the first, 49 in the second innings. Charlbury made 58 in the first, and in the second lost five wickets for the necessary 15 runs, thus winning the match by five wickets. In the 16th, we were visited by the Chipping Norton Club. Milton again made a miserably poor defence in the first innings, only 23, doubling, however, this score in the second. Chipping Norton made, first, 34, second, 24; Milton winning the match by 11 runs. There was considerable excitement at the finish, as almost to the very end it was 'anybody's game'.

Milton is rapidly filling with summer visitors; in a few weeks, we presume 'the Season' will be at its 'height', the truly life-giving breezes of the locality seem to be justly appreciated far and wide, it is undoubtedly one of the most healthful places in England.

BAPTISMS – Mabel Annie, daughter of George and Mary Barnes. – June 24, Harold Arthur, son of Henry and Susanna Mobley.

BURIALS – June 2, Sarah Tripp, of Lyneham, aged 62. – Harriet Louisa Hawcutt aged 5 years.

SOCIETY.

