

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

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Number Thirty, 2015



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

Foreword

After thirty years the formal Howard-Drake connection with the WLHS Journal is coming to an end. Joan and her co-editor Trudy Yates have decided to step down as editors, and I have taken their place. Joan's late husband, Jack Howard-Drake, was Chairman of the Society and Editor of the Journal from 1985 to 1992, and after Margaret Ware had been editor for five years, Joan, Sue Jourdan and Trudy took on the job in 1997. Sue left in 2012, since when Joan and Trudy have been joint editors.

They have presided over a fascinating series of Journals, and have also regularly contributed articles of their own. The Society's gratitude and debt to them is immeasurable. It will not be easy – especially as a recent incomer to the Wychwoods – to follow them. In this, my first Journal, I have received infinite help and doses of wisdom from them both. We offer them our best wishes for the future and hope that they will continue their research and share the results with the members of the Society.

In this, the 30th volume in the series, all three of the Wychwood villages are represented, with articles covering a chronological span from c.1300 to the present day. Joan Howard-Drake reports on leases granted in Shipton and Milton by Brasenose College from the early fourteenth century. Wendy Pearse writes about the foundation of the Ascott Charity c.1480 and takes the history of its properties down to the twentieth century.

Wendy Pearse also contributes an article on the Charity's financial support for Ascott boys going into apprenticeships in the nineteenth century.

Michael Ralston, who lives in Gloucestershire, is descended from George Gorton, a Baptist minister in Milton in the mid-nineteenth century and the father of Robert Gorton, who was a baker, and, judging from his photograph portrait, made a comfortable living from it. Michael sent us the obituary of George Gorton from the Baptists' publication, *The Gospel Standard*, which is of great interest. We reproduce it here together with the account written by George's wife Eliza, of her own awakening to the Baptist movement.

Trudy Yates's account of the Townsend/Avery dynasty and their shop in Shipton brings us down to our own era, since the shop flourishes today as Elaine Ireland's flower shop, named after her grandmother, Ivy Avery. Trudy has managed to identify several of the people who appear in the photograph on p.00, but if anyone can recognise others, please let us know.

Finally, last year, the Journal tried to inspire the house-proud; this year it encourages vegetable gardeners, with Nigel Braithwaite's account of vegetable gardens in Milton and Shipton in 1963, which he wrote as a project for his Geography A-Level.

BRASENOSE LEASES

Joan Howard-Drake

Many years ago members of WLHS spent time in Oxford looking at the leases granted by Brasenose Hall and Brasenose College on property in Shipton and Milton under Wychwood. Notes were made about the transactions; the Society does not have full copies of the leases but from the notes it is possible to learn something about some of the people and properties involved.

Brasenose College, Oxford was founded in 1509 by William Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln, and Richard Sutton, a wealthy businessman. Originally the site was that of a sanctuary Hall with a brass nose knocker hanging on its door. Anyone holding the knocker and gaining access to the hall meant that they were free of molestation. The Hall and College took their names from the doorknocker. The College, like many others, owned and leased out land and property in many parts of Oxfordshire including Shipton and Milton. The documents show some estates that are impossible to connect accurately with properties that exist today. However sometimes it is possible to make some connections and two main properties are considered here, one on Shipton and one in Milton.

The first lease given by Brasenose Hall in which the village of Shipton was named is undated, but it is possible to follow the property through the following years. It consisted of a virgate of land with a messuage being passed from Robert the son of Walter of Shipton to his uncle Axell. The price was Axell's homage and service, and for this, with various other conditions, he was to pay 20s a year. The witnesses were Walter le Turk with his son William and Robert of Shipton with Doilley his son, presumably named for the important D'Oylie family which had connections to a part of Ascott under Wychwood.

The second lease on this property, dated 3rd May 1316, was granted by William son of Jaceus Mustel of Shipton to William Boner, his wife Cristine and daughter Isabella. This included a messuage, gardens, curtilage, a croft and tenements¹. The names of witnesses followed; at this date many still included the French 'de': Drugo de Alne,

Walter de Fisia, Baldwyn de Comon, Nicholas de Ascote and Richard of Lyneham.²

Leases for the above property in following years begin to give extra information, for example, that it had seven acres of arable land and two acres of meadow. On 28th October 1376 Walter Barrow of Shipton passed the property to Sir Richard Wylkyne, 'vicar of the church of Shipton, and John

de Fipwell chaplain'; it referred back to Isabel Boner and named a field called Gosesplace. For this they paid the rents and services due to the Lord of the Manor. Among the many witnesses to this signing was one whose name is noteworthy: Eustache Rokayle. A document in Trinity College, Dublin, says that William Langland, the author of *Piers Plowman* was the son of Eustace [Stacy] Rokayle of Shipton under Wychwood, a man of gentle birth who served the Spenser family.³ Lord Spenser held Shipton Manor in the fourteenth century and William was reputedly born about 1330. The Dublin document does not say William was born in Shipton, only that he was the son of Eustace.

Familiar local names begin to appear as witnesses in the next few leases, such as John Mirie or Merye of Lyneham; there is still a site called Merriscourt near Lyneham. Others were Richard Milton, Thomas Hacker, Thomas Townsend and Richard Harris, all names to be found in the parish registers and other documents of later centuries. The leases all repeat the same parts of the property, each one adding a little more information. In 1398, when John Perkyn and Alicia his wife had it from Robert Webbe, the lease talked of the site as being between the tenement of John Faytour and that of Isabell Rammesden. In 1416 the messuage, curtilage and croft adjoining, called Bottesplace, was between the close of Lady le Despenser and the Royal High Road. Later the property included the furlong called Grashey.

In 1442 there is a change of what was called the 'Superior Lord', presumably when Shipton Manor became part of Warwick lands. The property now lay between 'a garden of Henry, Earl of Warwycke on the north and the Royal Way on the South'. A month later a lease taken by William Perrotte and his wife Isabell of Westcote said the property was now called Robin Webbs, which confirms that it was the same as in the 1398 lease. While the Warwick garden was still there, now a tenement of Walter Shiryngton stood on the South, perhaps a new building? The Royal Way is now the A361 Burford to Chipping Norton road.

No name was given to the estate when William Perrot passed on the lease in 1455 to John Smith of Milton and Marion, his wife, but the way now led to Cowbrigg. Yet more familiar names appeared as witnesses on this document: William Whyting with Thomas and William Sessions [Sessions]. Thirteen years later the croft was called Pithey; five years later still the furlong mentioned before was given again as Grashey and this time it is 'on the West side of 'high strate' between the tenement of John Perkyn and the Royal way'. The whole property was now called Bothesplace or Bottesplace; Lady Spencer had a house which was next to the high 'strete'.

From 1547 the Principal of Brasenose College is named as the giver of the leases. The lease was granted to Georgie Cooke of Shipton. This was for 30 years, the rent was 20s paid half-yearly and the property consisted of a house,

a close and a garden place. Cooke had to pay the quit rent and do all the repairs. Neither he nor any of his assigns could cut down trees, and if the rent was behind by six weeks he could be evicted. Further details were added in the next lease to Cooke: the property had commons feeding for thirty years for 6s 8d, the repairs to be done, the tenant could have loppe⁴ and offal with the college to provide great timber, heriot⁵ of 5s was to be paid in the 27th year of the lease and eviction could follow if rent was behind one month. In 1566 George Cooke and his son James extended the original lease by 21 years. This time the heriot was to be 20s.

The Cooke family's holding of the leases passed on through the generations. After James came Alexander, Dorothy, another Alexander and Elizabeth, his wife; James and Elizabeth, his wife; Elizabeth and John; finally James Cooke of Kingham, butcher. A valuation of the property by the Reverend John Davis made in 1787, with James Cooke as lessee, reported that the house, homestead, stone and slatt were in decent repair. It had a garden adjoining pasture land, ground consisting of 4 acres worth £12 and was subject to tithes.

This is the property mentioned in the 1316 lease from Brasenose Hall, which cited a messuage, garden and croft. Members of the Wychwoods History Society were able to pinpoint this place as the one that the local Cooke family occupied from 1547. In a study of the 1662 Hearth Tax returns done in 1995⁶ it was shown that Dorothy Cooke, widow of James, was tenant of a house, orchard and garden. It is now called Bank House and Bank Croft and is on Shipton High Street. James was a husbandman and butcher.

In 1563 a lease for a different tenement and garden was given to Richard Willett on the same terms as the lease for George Cooke and it was renewed in 1580 again for another 21 years on the original. An addition to this lease was that the tenant was to do suit and services, all repairs were to be made including to fences and the tenant had to plant 6 young trees yearly. Finally he could not assign the lease. The later leases show that the charges for the property increased over the years. The first part of the study of the 1662 Hearth Tax,⁷ published in *WLHS Journal*, 9 (1994), also shows the location of Richard Willet's property. It was the Red Horse Inn, given to Brasenose College soon after its foundation in 1509; the Willet family were tenants of the Inn until 1780.

The College also owned property in Milton. The leases name many places. The first document to name Milton is a Letter of Attorney, dated 1453/4, which states that John Halyday, lately of Witney, a piper, appointed Thomas Smyth of Shipton and John Styndon, lately of Stanton Harcourt, to resign his right to and in a messuage and a virgate of land, with appurtenances in Milton in the Lordship of Shipton.

On 21st May 1482 a grant of land was made between 'Thomas NORRYS, of Curtelyngton in the Countie of Oxenford, gentylman and Alice his wife and John ALEYN of Sarsden, housebondman and Margarete his wife.' The grant was for the Aleyns to have Brekespere's place with its land, meadow, leeways, pastures, woods, water and commons with all other things pertaining to it from former times. They were to hold it for seven years at a rent of 26s 8d payable quarterly. The terms of the grant were to repair all thatched houses, with all mounds such as walling, ducking and hedging. It looks as if Thomas Norrys and his wife agreed to repair the 'sclatted' ⁸ houses, but the tenants are to find the workmen and provide meat and drink for them. There was a clause about the shrouding of trees between December and March and one that when Thomas Norrys came to receive his rent he got food.

Those tenants stayed only two years: on 24th September 1484 another grant of land from Thomas Norrys and his wife, Alicia was made to William Sesson of Shipton under Wychwood and John Sesson, clerk. What is interesting here is that Alicia is given as the daughter and heiress of Rogger Brekespere otherwise Rogger of Milton. The witnesses were Peter, Abbot of Bruern, Thomas Osbaldeston, knight, Thomas Sesson, John Somerby, Thomas Shepherde of Shipton, William Bayly, Thomas Hunt, Richard Smyth and many others. These are all names that are in the later registers of Shipton parish; however the name Brekespere, or Breakspear as it now is, does not appear in the baptism or burial registers but only in those of marriages. The first entry is for 2nd November 1585 when 'Roowland Breakspeare, shepherde of Shipton, married Marryan Collatt of Burforde. In 1723 a couple from Northleigh, Thomas Ring and Sarah Breakspeare were married in Shipton, as were Philip Green and Rose Brakespire, both of Milton, in 1773. In 1794 the banns of marriage between Samuel Paget of Milton and Mary Breakspear of Salford, Oxon, were read in Shipton church. So even if the name disappeared there were still descendants of the early Breakspear family living in West Oxfordshire in later times. (The 12th-century Pope Adrian IV, the only English man ever to be Pope was Nicholas Roger Brakespeare. Unfortunately he came from Abbots Langley in Hertfordshire, so Milton cannot claim him as a son.)

The Sesson family continued to hold the property from Brasenose until 1511 and in these leases the amount of land and some names appeared. In the 1486 lease the messuage called Brekesperes had two and a half virgates of land [120-200 acres]. A Memorandum of Entry of 1496 gives details of the Sesson or Sessions family holding the property - Thomas Sesson of Over Milton, son and heir of William Sesson lately of Nether Milton, and William Sesson, priest, brother of Thomas; William Sesson was given as a Chaplain in an earlier grant of the property. It said the land is in Nether Milton and the witnesses were Thomas Sesson of Shipton uncle to the three brothers with Thomas Tettenhale

of Over Milton, Richard Smith of Nether Milton and Sir William Reynold, priest of Chipping Norton, with others unnamed. In the same year a quit claim to the messuage names John Sesson, Rector of Westcot Barton, which was lately held by Bartholomew Sesson, a mercer of London, and names William Sesson as chaplain to his brothers. It was Bartholomew that passed on the property to Michell Dormer, a mercer of London and ended the Sesson possession there. After this date the leases spoke only of property in Milton, with the name Breakspear not appearing again.

Continuation of the leases above is given in Brasenose Ledger No. 1. (vii) Its folios show that over the period 1596 to 1717 the Bank House messuage and close in Shipton was leased to James Cook; Dorothy Cook; Alexander Cook; then Alexander Cook and Elizabeth his wife. The Red Horse Inn messuage and garden lease was given to Richard Willett; Catharine Willett; Richard Willett; Peter Willett; Nicholas & John Willett; then finally to John Willett and Martha his wife. The last mention of the Cooke family is in a Brasenose ledger entry on 1st October 1794 when Mary Leonard had the property '*late in the occupation of James Cooke, butcher*' and she had to pay 13s 4d, two bushels of wheat, one quarter of malt yearly. A £1 heriot was due in 1795 and a terrier was to be supplied.

This Ledger also contains entries for Milton. The Breakespeare property of a messuage and two yard lands and a farm called Hinton Lillies and Fishams with six yard lands were demised to the following people: John Seacole, Henry Couer; John Trinder; William Foden; Deb. Culme; and Edmund Pleydell with William Playdell who held the Breakespeare property only. Later in the 19th century there are mentions in the notes of incursions made into the property by Mr Alfred Groves whose property today adjoins the present Breakespeare House. These entries appear to show where at least part of the area of the land given in the Brasenose leases was situated. It would be interesting to know if the present Breakespeare House is on the site of the original.

Property in Shipton was sold in 1909, but owing to renovations in Brasenose archives the college has not been able to provide details. The Breakespeare property was sold on 16th December 1921 to Thomas Alfred and Samuel Edwin Groves. The property was described as ... *a piece or parcel of land in Milton containing half an acre with messuage, outbuildings and premises there.* This confirms that part of the original site of the early Breakespeare premises were where Groves' land and buildings now stand.

References

1. Messuage – a house; croft – land around a house; curtilage – barns etc.; tenements – dwellings.
2. Brasenose College Archives, Oxford, *Hurst vol. 22, no. 2*
3. Trinity College Dublin, TCD MS D.4.1[212], DNB.
4. Loppe – cutting of buds or small branches from trees but not the whole tree.
5. Heriot – Payment due to the landlord on the death of a tenant . It could be in the form of a beast or cash.
6. A. Jones, S. Jourdan, T. McQuay, J. Howard-Drake, 'Shipton under Wychwood, 1662: A Hearth Tax Study - Part 2' *WLHS Journal*, 10 (1995).
7. A. Jones, S. Jourdan, T. McQuay, J. Howard-Drake, 'Shipton under Wychwood, 1662: A Hearth Tax Study', *WLHS Journal*, 9 (1994).
8. Sc latt ed – with slates.

‘ALL CHRISTIANS FOR EVERMORE’: THE ASCOTT VILLAGE CHARITY

Wendy Pearse

When on 28th November 1480 (or 1483; see Appendix II) Thomas and Agnes Robins of Sibford decided to come to an agreement with eight Ascott villagers concerning some property which they had acquired in the village, little must they have dreamed that the remains of that agreement would still exist more than 530 years later. The original document survives in the Oxfordshire History Centre, together with a second one dated partly 1691 and partly 1694; transcriptions of both texts are printed at the end of this article.¹ On the later document is an endorsement reading, ‘N.B. This paper should be kept very safe.’ It certainly has been.

The property which Thomas and Agnes sold was valued at £16, of which the villagers (the Foeffees) were to find £9, while Thomas and Agnes gave £7, which presumably would be used as the basis of the Charity. In return masses were to be said once a year in Ascott church for the souls of Thomas and Agnes ‘and of the ancestors afore them and all Christians for evermore’. John Chaundyth and his heirs were to pay Thomas and Agnes 4s. rental for the rest of their lives for the property, which consisted of two messuages [dwelling houses] and two closes. The settlement was to be administered for all time by the Foeffees. The site of the property was what is now Church View, west of the churchyard, together with the Orchard behind, which once stretched from Heritage Lane to Shipton Road. Unfortunately, by the 1540s and the Reformation, Thomas and Agnes lost their chance of ‘easing the passage of their souls through Purgatory’, as the use of masses was discontinued. In those days all charitable works were considered to shorten the amount of time the soul spent in the terrors of Purgatory before reaching the gates of Heaven. Pilgrimages to various shrines could serve the same purpose.

Nevertheless, the Charity survived. In 1512 Cutts Close at the back of the future Tiddy Hall had been donated by John Selwood and by 1688 Nicholas Perry added more property: Church House, which until the turn of the 20th century stood in Church Close, east of the churchyard. By 1819 it had been converted into a Poor House or House of Industry – seemingly a village workhouse; but after the Poor Law amendment Act of 1838 Chipping Norton Union Workhouse was built and the poor and destitute of the surrounding villages, including Ascott, were sent there. Nineteen Ascott villagers died in

Chipping Norton Workhouse between 1846 and 1917. They were brought back to Ascott for burial, and although most of them were elderly one was a young girl of sixteen, named Hannah Townsend. Her father, Philip, a butcher living in London Lane, had died in 1843 aged 42, leaving a wife and seven children. Hannah was then aged eight. What sad story could these facts conceal?

In 1809 an amusing incident occurred concerning a Charity cottage in Church View on the corner of Heritage Lane. A certain Edmund Busby was the lessee, it having been the home of his father and grandfather for nearly a century. Apparently Edmund was 'ill advised by acquaintances and relatives' that, as the premises had been in the possession of his family for so long, he must now be the owner. He refused to pay rent to the local agent, re-enlisted in his former profession as a soldier and left his wife in possession. When the agent visited the wife and informed her that goods must be taken in lieu of rent, he noticed a stack of hay in the yard. When he returned the next day to seize the goods the hay had disappeared. During the night the wife and her friends had thrown all the hay over the wall on to adjacent land. The agent ordered that all the hay must be thrown back again so that he could seize it, together with a few other goods that were left in the house. Six months later the agent went back again to collect the rent, but all he could find this time were a few old apples in a tub. He advised the Foeffees to pay the woman £2.12s.6d to get out. This was quite a good sum at the time; the Foeffees got their property back and soon leased it to a reliable tenant. The agent, however, had a few nightmares, since he lived in dread that such an 'evil disposed person' as Edmund Busby might return and challenge the legality of the lease. The inhabitants of Ascott then asked the agent to inquire into what was done with the Charity money. He was told by the Foeffees that most of it had gone into repairs to the property, but what was left they spent on beer.

The lower (northern) row in Church View, formerly known as the Row or Raggs Row, was bought in the 1960s by Don Fletcher. There was one stand pipe, earth closets, and back gardens out of alignment with the appropriate houses. There were no doors to the street, only windows, but renovation revealed that doors had once existed, and they were reinstated. It seems that at an earlier time some people had been averse to seeing the inhabitants on their doorsteps. Census figures give a possible clue: in 1841 the fourteen houses of the Row contained a large number of children, including sixteen under twelve. By 1891 these numbers had increased considerably, with 29 under twelve. Peace and quiet must have been in short supply.

In 1889 the property comprised nineteen cottages, an orchard, the blacksmith's house and shop, Cutts Close, Lower Green Close (added by Lord Churchill), some garden land, and Church House, which had been converted into five cottages. There was also a small field on Chipping Norton Hill named

Charity Piece.

The Charity provided not only cottages for rent by the poor of the parish, but revenue and relief to the needy over many centuries. During the 19th century many village lads were set up in seven-year apprenticeships to all manner of trades (see Apprentice Boys, below, p.000), and girls were supplied with clothes to go into service. The school was given an annual donation; in 1884 income was granted towards the 'Advancement of Education of Children attending the Public Elementary Schools'. The Charity gave prizes and help towards children's education together with hospital and convalescent aid, and donations for unexpected loss or sudden destitution.

Most of the Charity property was sold in 1932, and the money invested into an Educational Trust. In 1951 money was used from the Trust to buy the land for the village playing field from Vernon Watney of Cornbury Park. A small investment still exists, together with the close known as Lower Green: these two comprise the 'Poors' Estate' and 'Lower Green Charity' today.

APPENDIX I

The texts of the documents

A.S.P.E.C. I/1/ii (?1480/1483)

Thou John Whiting sen: John Honyborn Walter Whiting John Whiting

This indenture made between Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife of Sybford in the County of Oxenford of the one part and William Cote the elder Gyles Poole Robert Whiting John Gardner Robert Austin John Selwood Richard Poole and William Hall of yerllys [earls] ascott in the county of Oxford on the one part baring witness that the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife have Justly and truly sold to the aforesaid William Cote Gyles Poole Robert Whiting John Gardner Robert Austin John Selwood Richard Poole and William [Hall] two mesuages with two Closes belonging and appertaining to the said mesuages with all other the appurtenances in the said town of Ascott and also an annual Rent of four shillings by the year to be had of John Chaundyth of Ascott aforesaid and his heirs for the sum of sixteen pound thereof four pound and ten shilling paid in hand to the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife and the other four pound and ten shilling to be paid to the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife the Sunday next after all-Hallows day next after the date of this present writing Without any utter delay and thereupon the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife gave seven pound to the aforesaid William Cote and the other her heirs and Her assigns by those present in peasable possession and estate and the said Thomas Robins and his Wife for to have yearly of the said

mesuages and closes with all the appurtenances an annell Rent of four shilling by year yearly during the termes of the lives or which of them liveth longest truly to be paid thereof yearly to the said Thomas Robings and Agnes his wife or which of them that liveth longest or to their assigns at the feast of St Michas the archangel or within twenty days after without any utter delay and else it shall be lawfull for the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife to reinter again into the said mesuages and closes with all the appurtenances and to take into their own hands again without any contradiction of the said Willm Cole and the other her deed nether their estate notwithstanding hit by those present writing also the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife to have a masse of Requiem done in the church of Ascott one tyme in the year and the ancesters afore them and all Christians for ever more at the Cost of the said William Cote and the rest and their heirs by these present writing In witness thereof every party to other indifferently have put their seals to these present writing: Witness Edward Beckingham Gent John Lee William partridge William Collings Joh Freeman and other moe given at Ascott the 24th day of November the year of King Edward given the fourth after [the Conquest the 23th year] ²

A.S.P.E.C. 1/1/i (1691/1694)

Charcheth

The Gardians of the Church of Ascott Doe hold by soccage Teure certaine lands (viz) two messuages builded with two Closes adjoyning to the same, conteyning by estimacon Two acres; and one other litle Close severall called Cutts Close, by estimacon one acre of the gift of John Selwood of Ascott by his writing dated on the feast day of St Michaell the Archangel in the Third year of the Reign of King Henry y^e Eight

John Honiborne Walter Whiting Jno Whiting Junr & John Sellwood the Younger and their Heires ffeoffees

Ascott John Whiting John Hunnyborne Walter Whiting John Whiting Jun feoffees of the land in Ascott two the use of the Church there as it is said brought A certain Indenter in these words

This indenture made between Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife of Sibford in the County of Oxon of the p[ar]te & William Cote the elder Giles Poole Robt Whiting Jno Gardner Robert Austin John Sellwood Richd Poole & William Hall of Earles Ascott in the county of Oxon of the other p[ar]te bearing witness of the said Thomas Robins & Agnes his wife have justly and truely sold to the said Willm Cote Giles Poole Robt Whiting John Gardner [in the margin: In consideracon of (?) pd by ye feoffees] Robert Astin John Sellwood Richard Poole + Willm Hall Two Messuages with two Closes belonging and Appurteyning to the said Messuages w[i]th all other Appurtenances in the said town of Ascott And also an annuall rent of four shillings

by the year to be had of Jno Chaundy of Ascott & his Heires & c And also the said Thomas Robins and Agnes his wife to have a Masse of Requiem done in the church of Ascott one time in the yeare for them & for the Ancestors aforethem and all the Christians for evermore at the Cost of the ffeoffees

Dated at Ascott the xxviii of November

In the year of King Edward ye fourth

After the Conquest the xxiiiith

On the back of this document is written:

The sd 2 closes w^{ch} were bought of Thos Robbins and Agnes his wife by the feoffees within named ye 18th of Edward ye 4th & also 4 shillings per annum to be pd by Jo Chaundy & his heirs, w^{ch} was 214 years ago this p[re]sent year 1694

182

1512

And the s^d Cutts Close w^{thin} named was given by John Selwood in the 3^d year of Henry y^e eight; w^{ch} is 182 years ago this p[re]sent year 1694.

April y^e 17th 1691

This day did Edm[und] Busby take these words (verbatim) out of a certaine writing then had of John Poole & deliv[er]ed againe to him the same day.

N B

This paper should be kept very safe

J H

APPENDIX II

A note on the dates

The date of the gift noted in the 15th-century document is the 23rd year of Edward IV (1461-83) after the conquest (Edward's assumption of the throne in 1461). This indicates a date of 1483. The document of 1694, however, states that the agreement was made in the 18th year of Edward IV (1478), but also notes that it was made 214 years before 1694, which indicates 1480. The only date that seems secure is that of John Selwood's gift in 1512.

References

1. Oxfordshire History Centre, A. S. P. E. C. I/1/I and I/1/ii.
2. Written alongside the text at the beginning of the document.

APPRENTICE BOYS

Wendy Pearse

In the latter part of the 20th century the long-established firm of Farrant and Sinden Solicitors of Chipping Norton uncovered a chest of documents relating to the Ascott Poores' Estate Charity. The chest's contents were catalogued by the Oxfordshire Record Office (now Oxfordshire History Centre); brief summaries of the documents were typed on to catalogue cards, copies of which were handed to the Ascott Parish Council and the Charity Trustees. One set of copies is kept in the Tiddy Hall at Ascott-under-Wychwood.

The Poores' Estate Charity of Ascott-under-Wychwood (see 'All Christians for Evermore': The Ascott Village Charity, above p.00) helped the needy in several ways: during the second quarter of the 19th century one of its aims was to help with apprenticeships for poor boys. These apprenticeship indentures cast some extra light on Ascott's inhabitants at that time.

Between January 1823 and July 1848 the Charity trustees arranged twenty-one apprenticeships for Ascott's youths. Exactly what criteria were required to apply is unknown, but only eight families are represented, with two families having four sons apprenticed and two families having three. The first Indenture was made in 1823 for Luke Quarterman, who was sixteen and apprenticed to the trade of shoemaker. In fact, sixteen of the applicants were bound to training as shoemakers, including in 1841 another Quarterman, William, and later the two sons, Israel and George, of Sarah Quarterman, a young widow. They were both thirteen at the time of their Indentures in 1846 and 1847. Sarah's family lived in High Street, then known as Upper Street, as compared to Lower Street (Shipton Road), which was nearer the river.

With the consent of his father William, Luke of the earliest Indenture was to be bound to John Parrott of Charlbury, Shoemaker, for five years from 14th January 1823. The Trustees of Ascott Charity – James Ansell (solicitor), Thomas Chaundy, James Hyatt, John Chaundy and John North (all farmers) and C. R. Henderson (solicitor) – signed the document in consideration of the sum of £14. Half the sum was paid to John Parrott at the binding and half two months later, while another £2 was paid to Luke's father at the time of the binding to be laid out in clothes for his now-apprenticed son. Among the earlier Indentures the consideration sum varies between £12 and £14 (later rising to £16), but in three cases it is only half that. This smaller sum may partly be explained by the situation concerning George Venville, one of the three apprenticed sons of Hannah Venville, a widow living in one of the

Charity properties in the vicinity of Church Close. William, the eldest, had been apprenticed in 1833, aged sixteen, to a mason at Burford, when Hannah, already widowed, was aged thirty-two. In 1834 Charles, aged apparently only nine, had been apprenticed for seven years to a pipemaker in Burford. George himself was apprenticed at sixteen to George Groves of Kingham, shoemaker, in 1843. William and Charles's considerations were for £12, whereas George's was £16 for five years. Two years later, however, George was reapprenticed to John Adbury of Adlestrop, shoemaker, for £6 for three years and two calendar months. Presumably George Groves died and the Trustees made other arrangements.

A number of Indentures are for six or seven years. Apart from shoemakers, two boys were bound to blacksmiths, two to tailors and one to a mason. I know the ages of only twelve of the applicants, which vary from twelve to seventeen years, Charles Venville being an exception. It is to be hoped that his lot was not as dire as we might imagine for a child taken from his home so young. At least Charles was only in Burford, whereas some of the others went to Witney, Eynsham, Faringdon, Hook Norton and Bourton-on-the-Hill. Only two of the youths were able to sign their names on the Indentures, but, surprisingly, Hannah Venville signed all her sons' Indentures despite the boys' inability to make more than a mark.

There is one unusual case when in 1833 a £7 consideration was arranged for William Baughan for a five-year apprenticeship to a cordwainer (shoemaker) in Bristol. It appears, however, that his mother, Mary, was living in Bristol; perhaps William had been born in Ascott and therefore qualified for a certain amount of assistance.

I can follow only one boy in Ascott into later life. Two of the sons of Richard Weaver of Upper Street were bound to apprenticeships: Charles in 1844 to a shoemaker in Eynsham and John in 1848 to a cordwainer in Hook Norton. Charles actually returned to Ascott in the 1850s to ply his trade. He married Mary Ann, from Somerset, and together they produced a family of six, living at the eastern end of Upper Street until at least the 1880s.

A STUDY OF THE VEGETABLE GARDENS IN SHIPTON-UNDER- WYCHWOOD AND MILTON-UNDER- WYCHWOOD IN OXFORDSHIRE TO ASCERTAIN THEIR ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Nigel Braithwaite

Nigel Braithwaite wrote this Geography Field Study as an 18-year-old schoolboy in 1963, as part of his A-Level Geography course. It gives a fascinating picture of gardening patterns fifty years ago, and it would be interesting to compare the same gardens today. Nigel's family had moved to Shipton a few years earlier, and he has lived in the area ever since. We reproduce the text exactly as it was written, except for a few minor editorial changes.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to try and discover the economic significance of vegetable gardens in a rural Cotswold community. This has been done in two stages – firstly by making a careful survey to find out what types of vegetable are grown in what quantities and secondly by attempting to ascertain their financial value to their respective cultivators.

The field work involved visiting each of the houses marked on the map in red, and noting down all their produce. It was carried out in early September, because most of the vegetables are still in the ground then, and of the fruits, only the varieties such as raspberries, and blackcurrants have been picked. The original intention had been to include all the gardens from the two villages – but it soon became obvious that this would be impractical. (The original time allowance had been ten minutes a house, but most people in their enthusiasm insisted on accompanying me round, and without being rude it was impossible to get away without spending at least an additional ten minutes talking, and the final average time per house was about 25 minutes.) During a fortnight's fieldwork a hundred and two gardens were surveyed, and these represent as far as possible a fair cross section of the two villages. They range in area from 4 acres to 10 square yards. (The average size was 962 square yards.)

Once the fieldwork was complete, and the figures had been tabulated, the second stage was started – this involved visiting the local greengrocers to find out the average retail price for each of the vegetables throughout the year, which made it possible to work out the value of the produce in each garden, which established in financial terms the annual productivity of the garden.

The layout of the study will be as follows. After a description of the area there will be a summary of the vegetables which have been grown with various introductory remarks, then the gardens will be divided into six groups, which will be dealt with individually with reference to the factors affecting them, and their economic significance. Finally there will be a conclusion at the end.

Description of the Area

Milton-under-Wychwood and Shipton-under-Wychwood are two villages in the north-east Cotswolds, on the main road between Chipping Norton and Burford. They lie on small hills and were originally separated by the valley between them but recent building has almost joined the two villages, and they are now effectively one.

Historically this was purely an agricultural region, and although agriculture is still of primary importance increasing numbers of people from the villages are going to work in the watch and blanket factories at Witney, and at the Morris works in Oxford.

The map shows this area in great detail – it contains about 325 houses with a population of about 1000. During the last fifty years three large housing estates have been put up – and single houses are still being built in some places.

(Please see the map attached)

This area presents in all a perfect picture of rural settlement. Chipping Norton – which is the nearest shopping centre lies six miles away – and Oxford the nearest cultural town is fifteen miles away. Although the effect of the neighbouring industry is becoming increasingly felt in the community – it would be true to say, it is predominantly an agricultural settlement.

The Factors Determining the Productivity of the Gardens

For the purposes of this survey the gardens can be considered in two basic categories – those that are self-supporting – and those that are not. These two groups can be split up into six subdivisions – which are as follows – those that grow more vegetables than they need – those that grow enough for their needs – those that grow everything but potatoes – those that grow most of their vegetables – those that grow a few of their vegetables, and those that grow no vegetables. It is possible from the map to see the distribution of these various groups – and before dealing with them individually it is important

to try and discover the general factors which determine to which group a particular house belongs.

The agricultural tradition of the two villages which has resulted in so many of the people still looking to the land for their livelihoods ought to act as a “gardening stimulus”, to the agricultural section of the community – but it does not seem to do so. While it is true the five farm gardens included in the survey were all fully productive – and did provide the families dependent on them with all their vegetables, the cottage gardens of the farm workers and the other agriculturalists were proportionately similar to all the other houses. Which shows the tradition of the land does not play any part in deciding to which group a particular house belongs.

The quality of the soil and the situation of the gardens are factors one would expect to affect the productivity of the gardens – but there is no evidence to support this theory. On the contrary, there are in fact several examples of gardens which completely ignore their soil and situation. The gardens in the normally wet, marshy valley between the two villages are carefully drained, while the dry areas on the hills make full use of the ample local water supply – which enables them to water their gardens even in periods of extreme drought, while modern fertilisers, and the locally available manure quickly raise the level of productivity in the most barren soils. So these two physical features have no bearing on the erratic distribution of the different groups of houses.

Convenience is another factor which one might expect to affect the gardens considerably. It would be reasonable to suppose that the houses furthest from the shops would grow more vegetables than those close to the shops – in order to avoid carrying – and collecting the extra load. (There are three greengrocers’ shops in the two villages – and many people have $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to go to reach them.) It is easy to tell by glancing at the haphazard distribution of the various classes of gardens on the map however that convenience does not play any part in deciding the productivity of a garden.

The elimination of these environmental factors leaves the human agent as the all important factor in determining “what grows where”, and this will be considered later on when the garden groups are dealt with individually. While mentioning this “human” element it is interesting to note the proportion of garden area which was under flowers. Of the 39 acres which represented the total garden area which was surveyed – 19 acres was under vegetables – 9 acres was under flowers, and ten acres was lawn or uncultivated. This double representation of vegetables to flowers clearly represents the stress which is laid on vegetables.

The Gardens Which Are Self-supporting

The general factor in deciding the distribution of this group of gardens lay in the age and inclination of the occupants. Most of these gardens belonged to elderly people, through necessity rather than personal choice. They complained bitterly about the inadequacies of their pensions, and explained that by growing their own vegetables they were able to economise, while some of them grew more than they needed and tried to sell the surplus to supplement their income.

Most of the young couples are also included in this group especially if they have small children. Some said they grew their own vegetables to ensure the children got everything fresh, while for the rest it represented a very useful way of economising.

The remainder of this first group generally belonged to the enthusiasts, for whom gardening was not a means to an end but a source of pleasure, and they were particularly proud to be able to say they were self-supporting.

Those That Grow More Vegetables Than They Need

Of the total number of gardens 12% grew more vegetables than they needed. The explanation of their distribution lies almost entirely in the age of the occupants. Eight out of the twelve belonged to old age pensioners, of whom six tried to sell their surplus though they said it was very difficult to do so. Of the remaining four two belonged to young couples who sold their excess, while the remaining two belonged to “enthusiasts”.

On an average the general garden yield of this group was worth £65-15-3, and 33 people were dependent on it, which works out at £23-18-2 per person. From the gardens which grew just enough to supply their own needs it was possible to calculate that one person spends £14-7-6 on vegetables and fruit a year. So the people in this group had an annual surplus of £10-10-8 per head, which makes a total surplus of £313-5-6.

This group of 33 people, who worked in 12 gardens produced £789-3-0 worth of vegetables and fruit, which would be of great economical significance to them.

Those That Grow Sufficient Vegetables for Their Needs

This group was the largest of the six, and contained 39% of the total number of houses which were surveyed. Of these 22 were owned by couples with young children, while 12 belonged to elderly retired people, and only 5 belonged to people who regarded gardening purely as a hobby.

The total sale of the crops raised by the people in this group amounted to £1869-0-0, at an average of £14-7-6 for each person. This may seem little

to spend on fruit and vegetables for a year, and the table below represents the produce of an elderly lady’s garden, with its value, and is a copy of a field work sheet. She was entirely self-dependent, and her total produce was worth only £14-18-0.

A basic feature of the produce of these gardens was the restriction of their vegetables to those that were necessary: the basic greens and fruit like apples, and raspberries. They did not, as the gardens lower down the self-sufficiency tended to do, grow luxury vegetables such as asparagus, and sweet corn, or fruit like melons, peaches and cherries, which although they rate higher as cash crops than the more common vegetables, they also have little effect on the amount of green stuff which their cultivators have to buy.

This section, productively speaking, represents the backbone of all the gardens, with 130 people dependent on it, and with an annual income of £1869-0-0, which is a sum of great financial importance, not only to the people who grow it, but also to the local greengrocers, in loss of potential profit.

A copy of the “Field Sheet” of a single elderly lady, who was completely self supporting off £14-18-0 worth of vegetables a year, showing what she grew, and its value

Fruit trees	Yield	Value
1 Pear	10 lbs	10s-0
1 Cooking Apple	15 lbs	5s-0
		15-0-0
Vegetables	Yield	Value
Onions	6 lbs	3-0
Shallots	5 lbs	2-6
Beetroot	10 lbs	2-0
Carrots	40 lbs	6-6
Broad beans	20 lbs	15-0
Cabbages	120 plants	2- 0-0
Broccoli	32 plants	1-12-0
Curly Kale	40 plants	10-0
Sprouts	24 plants	8-0
Carrots	20 lbs	13-0
Potatoes	200 lbs	2-10-0
Lettuces	60	3- 0-0
Runner beans	60 lbs	2- 0-0
Marrows	6	3-0
		£14-3-0
Total. £14-18-0		

The Gardens Which Are Not Self-supporting

This group contains gardens with a wide range of productivity. Some grow almost enough for their needs, buying perhaps only a few potatoes, while others grow no vegetables at all. Practically none of the gardens were abandoned, however, – some people devoted their whole garden to flowers – while the majority preferred to grow flowers in the front garden only – and they often found their back gardens too small to produce all the vegetables they needed.

Some people bought their ordinary fruit and vegetables so they could use their gardens for cultivating special plants, such as asparagus and celery or strawberries and melons, which take up a lot of room and require a lot of attention.

Altogether these gardens can be divided into four sections – those that grow all their vegetables – except potatoes –, those that grow most of their vegetables; those that grow only a few vegetables – and those that grow none at all. These four need to be studied in greater detail. (Their distribution can be studied on the map.)

Those That Buy Potatoes Only

This is the largest group of “Non Self-Supporting” division, and represents 16% of the total number of houses. All of the gardens in this group did in fact grow potatoes (with the exception of one tiny garden, in which there was not an inch of spare space.) at an average rate of 268 lbs per house or 68 lbs per person – but as people eat an average of 500 lbs of potatoes a year, the gardeners in this group have to buy £280 worth of potatoes a year – between them all. Compared with this their total vegetable crop had a value of £562-17-2.

Many of this section are elderly people – or people with “Bad backs” who find digging potatoes too physically strenuous for them. The other factor which decided that a particular garden should belong to this category was the size of the garden. Potatoes average 3d a pound a year, and consequently they are the cheapest vegetables to buy. They take up a lot of room, if they are to be grown in sufficient quantities to enable a house to be completely self-supporting – and a family of four would require 200 sq. yds. of garden under potatoes to meet their need. In the smaller gardens this land could be used with more economical efficiency, if alternative, and equally necessary greens were grown.

Although the average annual income from the produce of these gardens was only £9-2-0 per person as opposed to the £14-7-6 of the self-supporting group, the “land use” of these people was generally – through necessity –

far more financially sound than that of the others, and their gardens were obviously of economic significance to them.

Those That Grow Most of their Vegetables

This group had a total annual income of £475-6-4, and contained 14 of the 100 gardens which the survey covered. The produce of them (on which 51 people were dependent) was of greater average value per person than the “potato group”, with an income of £9-6-4 – so they each have to buy £5-1-2 of vegetables a year.

Neither the size of the gardens – or the age of their occupants, seem to have had any part in deciding their haphazard distribution, and it is impossible to find any satisfactory explanation for their scattered positioning, which must ultimately be the result of the inclinations of their owners.

Again, and for the last time, it would be true to say that the average income of £34-0-0 from each of these gardens would be of considerable importance to their owners.

Those That Grow Few Vegetables

There are fourteen gardens in this category whose average annual output is £16-17-0, which works out at £4-8-2 per person [This figure is blotted and not wholly legible. Ed.]. From the map it is easy [to see] that 11 of these 14 gardens lie in the Milton “main street”, where they are close to the shops. They also only have front gardens, which, like the cottages, are very small, and consequently most of them belong to elderly people who do not need a lot of room.

Size is a large factor, when this group is being considered. Only 3 of the gardens exceed the average garden area of 962 sq. yds. While the other eleven had an average size of only 348 sq. yds. As these were front gardens they were usually half under flowers and half under vegetables. The nearest village allotment is unfortunately almost a mile away (in Shipton) and as a result of the proximity of the shops most of them are happy to buy vegetables.

These fourteen houses whose total produce is worth only £216-3-6, find it more convenient to buy their vegetables from the shops which are close at hand, so their small gardens were of little financial significance to them.

Those That Grow No Vegetables

Only five gardens fall into this last category, and in fact between them – even they grow £20-6-6 worth of vegetables, but this is obviously a negligible amount in comparison with the groups higher up the scale.

Three of these five gardens belong to enthusiastic flower growers –

whose land was carefully looked after, and all the possible “bedding” space was used. Of the other two – one belonged to a family which had only just moved into the house and so had not had time to plant anything, and the other was all given over to lawns. None of these gardens was especially small, and the sole factor which accounted for lack of edible produce, was that their owners were not interested in growing vegetables.

To sum up before considering the conclusions, it should be said that although an effort has been made to prevent the presentation of the facts from becoming a mere catalogue of irrelevant matter, it has been impossible to completely forestall avoid this. In this survey it is essential to state all the facts and then to draw the conclusion from them, and this did unfortunately necessitate what might be considered a mere catalogue of facts, but none of these have been irrelevant, and they all ultimately play an integral part in establishing the conclusion.

The Economical Importance of Vegetable Gardens in Shipton and Milton-under-Wychwood

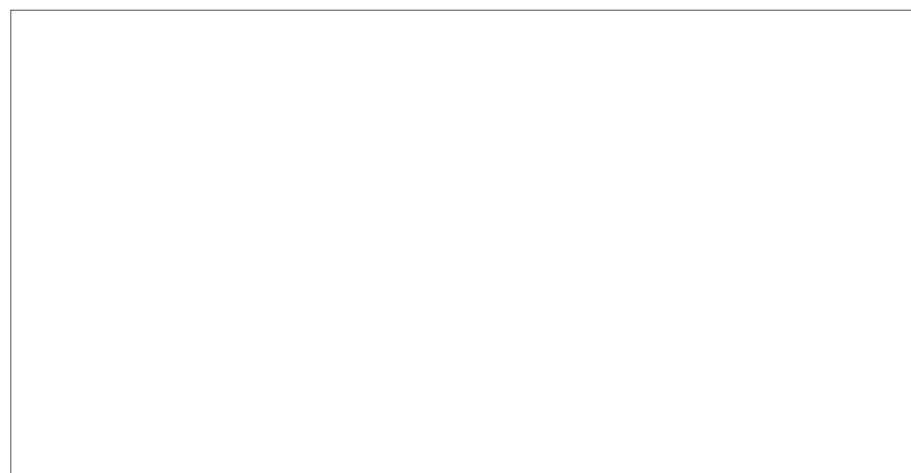
While considering the conclusions of this study it is essential to bear in mind that garden produce is always vitally effected by the weather. The figures on which these conclusions are based were obtained in 1962, which was in all aspects “the ideal year” for vegetable growing and so the results paint a rather over-optimistic picture of the general position, as it would be over a number of years.

When one realizes that the 100 gardens are growing produce worth £3932-16-6 a year, which means that 146 people are entirely self-supporting, while a further 107 are almost self supporting and only 66 people buy most of their vegetables there can be little doubt as to the importance of vegetable gardens in the economy of these two rural communities. All the facts illustrate clearly that a garden can be, and in many cases is, a paying proposition, and not an area of wasted land, which would be better employed in more conventional agricultural ways in England’s constant efforts to retain her rate of vegetable production.

THE GORTON FAMILY OF MILTON AND ODDINGTON

Michael Ralston and Joan Howard-Drake

Doing research into his family history, Michael Ralston of Cirencester came across a connection with Milton-under-Wychwood, details of which he kindly sent to Joan Howard-Drake. They form the basis of this article, together with an obituary of his ancestor, George Gorton. George Gorton (1798-1876) was a shoemaker in Oddington, Gloucestershire, who became a noted Baptist preacher, based in Milton. He was, however, not a General but a Strict (or Particular Baptist), member of a breakaway denomination that believed in the Calvinist doctrine of Predestination. The Strict Baptists had flourished in Chipping Norton from the 1780s, but about thirty years later the General Baptists took over, and Strict chapels were established in several local villages, including Milton. George Gorton seems to have first visited Milton in the 1830s, and he was based there until he became pastor of Providence chapel, Cheltenham, in 1868. He was, however, a charismatic preacher, travelling considerable distances much of the time. He is recorded as the Strict Baptist pastor in Milton in 1841;¹ there was evidently little love lost between Gorton’s congregation and the General Baptists of Milton, since the Rev. Davidson’s



Gorton family tree

account of the Milton Baptist church does not mention Gorton's name.²

When George Gorton was not on his travels he seems to have spent much time in Milton, although his family were living in Oddington. It was in Oddington in 1820 that George married Martha (aka Patty) Midwinter, who was thirteen years his senior; and his son Robert was born there in 1832, as was another son, Charles, in 1837. There was also a daughter, Louisa.

The census returns for 1841 and 1851 show Martha living in Oddington, while George was in Milton: in 1841 George was with John Hawkes, a farmer, and his family, and in 1851 he was living with the family of William Gilson, a baker and grocer. However, in the census of 1861 George and Patty (as she now was) were together in Milton in a private house next door to their son, Charles, who was by then a butcher, while Robert and his shop were further along the High Street. After Patty's death in 1863 George Gorton married Eliza Clare (1799-1872), a woman of fervid religiosity, with whom he moved to Cheltenham in 1868. More details of George's life as a preacher are given below in the (abridged) obituary reprinted from *The Gospel Standard* of 1877, and Eliza's account of her youthful discovery of the Baptist movement follows it (p.00).

Meanwhile, on 24 November 1857 Robert Gorton had married Fanny Brookes, daughter of Peter Brookes, by licence in Milton Parish Church and in so doing married into a well-known and important local family of Shipton. He became a successful baker and grocer, employing two men, and owned a property in Shipton now known as Monks Gate.



Robert Gorton

He and Fanny had two daughters: Elizabeth Brookes, born in 1859, and Fanny Tabitha in 1860. Elizabeth married Frederick Bailey, a hat manufacturer of Cirencester, on 29th May 1879, and on 2nd August 1887 Fanny married Walter Smith, a farmer of North Cerney, both men of Gloucestershire.

In the 1901 census only Charles' daughter Eliza was still in Milton. Robert and Fanny had gone to Cirencester to their daughter Elizabeth, and they died there, Fanny in 1909 and Robert in 1910. They were buried in Cirencester cemetery; their headstone says 'late of Milton under Wychwood'. Their daughter Elizabeth was eventually buried nearby. At his death



Elizabeth and Frederick Bailey

Robert was worth £388-4-6; he bequeathed his house and shop in Milton to Elizabeth, and his shop in Stow to Fanny. The Milton property had a right of way running across its yard for the benefit of the inhabitants of the adjoining cottage, also owned by Robert; the plan of the plot was sketched in the Will. Robert's executors – his son-in-law Walter Smith and his grand-daughter, Fanny Bailey, each received £100, but Fanny's brother Frederick had to make do with £50. Fanny's two daughters inherited £214 17s 2d.



Robert Gorton's house in Milton

George Gorton's obituary in *The Gospel Standard* (1877)³

George Gorton. – On June 19th, 1876, aged 77, Mr. George Gorton, minister of the gospel, Cheltenham.

My esteemed friend and brother was born into this vain, sinful, and dying world in 1798, at Swell, Gloucestershire. His father, being a God-fearing man, undoubtedly offered up many prayers on behalf of his son, as well as gave him a godly example, and took him to the house of God.

I believe they then attended at Stow-on-the-Wold...When or by what means the dear Lord was pleased to make known his ancient purposes towards my esteemed brother, in quickening, convincing, and bringing him to a knowledge of himself and his God, I know not; but about 1823, he and the late Mr. Roff were both under the sentence and condemning power of God's righteous law. Both of them travelled together, fearing and dreading the consequences of their guilt. After many trials and conflicts of mind, his soul was set at happy liberty in reading a work by the late Mr. Gadsby, called "The Perfect Law of Liberty; or, the Glory of God Revealed in the Gospel."⁴ This glorious deliverance enabled our friend to run in gospel commandments. He was baptized with Mr. Roff at the General Baptist Chapel, Stow, in 1824, in the 26th year of his age. They were much thought of by the church and its ministers, but in process of time, through reading Mr. Gadsby's works, the Holy Spirit's teachings and the testimony of God's word gave them to see the inconsistency of the preaching, which was sometimes free-will and sometimes free-grace. They began to speak of these things, which caused a great stir, and brought upon them a storm of persecution. In 1830 six were excluded from this church for nothing more than advocating the doctrines and precepts of the gospel.

After this, they took a room, in which they met for worship. Here the truths of the gospel were preached; and the dear Lord blessed the persecuted, and gave testimony to the preached word. Thus began the cause of truth at Stow, which continues to the present time...About this time, Mr Gorton began to tell to sinners round what a dear saviour he had found. Fired with love to souls and the power of the precious truths he had felt in his own soul, he travelled from village to village, causing, in those days, no small stir amongst the people. Many of the old saints at Milton well remember his coming there the first time, over 40 years ago, his first sermon being fresh in their memory. His first text in the village was: "Thy brother is come." Here the lord owned the word spoken by him to the hearts of many now gone home. Several that are tottering upon the borders of the grave have spoken to me of the many sweet times they had together.

Here my beloved brother laboured for many years, the Lord honouring the Word spoken by him...Not only did the dear lord own the word spoken by my brother here, but also in Manchester, London, Bath, Trowbridge and other places. As I have been amongst the churches, I have heard many speaking of being blessed through him as an instrument, especially at Zoar, London.

It was in 1859 that I first became acquainted with him. He was at Bath

supplying at that time, and came up to Corsham, and spoke in a cottage on a weekday evening. We had no chapel at that time, but were passing through much persecution. The word was made a blessing to many. His text was Isa. xxv. 4. "For thou hast been a strength to the poor," &c. From that time an attachment was formed, and a union sprang up, which continued through the remainder of his sojourn in the wilderness. In 1860 he, with Mr Ferris, opened our chapel; and many times afterwards came to our anniversaries and helped us, both with administration of the word and in temporals. Many times after the services he would sit at my house and talk of his younger days, when he frequently walked nine miles from home on a Lord's day morning to preach the word, and then after the evening service home again in the rain, snow, and mud, often with his feet blistered and bleeding, and sat down by the side of the road to take his shoes off to ease his feet. He would then go hobbling home, at eleven and twelve at night, weary and worn, and sometimes get a scolding from his wife instead of sympathy, she in bed and the door locked. But no more bleeding feet now; for the former things have with him passed away.

In July, 1875, he went to Zoar, London, for two Lord's days. Being very weak, his daughter accompanied him. Returning by way of Milton, he wanted to preach to them once more, though very ill at the time. He entered the pulpit, and with the assistance of the deacon, who read for him, he was helped to preach his last sermon. He had hard work to get into the pulpit. Several thought he would have died in the pulpit. His text was Col. i.12: "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The chapel was full on the occasion, all feeling persuaded it would be the last time they would see him in the flesh, or hear that voice they had with pleasure heard, more or less, for over 40 years. "Never shall I forget," says a dear friend, "the affectionate sight of the parting, with sobs and tears. Some were unable to say Goodbye; and to give the hand a press was all that many could do, all seeking and reaching to shake hands with their beloved pastor."

He was taken from the chapel to the house of his son-in-law, and went to bed, where he lay for some time, his friends expecting that he would die there. After a while, recovering a little, he was anxious to be taken home to Cheltenham to die. A chaise was brought, and he was taken from his bed and laid in the chaise, his daughter fearing he would die on the road. When they arrived at Cheltenham, he was carried at once to his bed and never after left his room till brought out a corpse.

In March last I went and spent a week with him, and found him very comfortable in his mind. Several times he said, "If it were the Lord's will, I should like to go round and visit the churches, and tell them of the goodness of the Lord to me in this affliction." When I left him, it was with the conviction

that I should not again see him in the flesh. After leaving, I received several letters from his daughter, informing me of his rapid declining and apparent dissolution...On the morning of June 19th he yielded up his redeemed spirit into the hands of his glorious Redeemer. Thus ended the conflicts, trials, sorrows, and afflictions of my beloved brother, and he went to be where he longed to be, in the 78th year of his age. He was buried by Mr. Farvis, of Tetbury, on June 24th....

[His funeral sermon was preached on July 2nd] On the following Tuesday evening, I went to Milton and spoke to the people who were formerly under the pastoral care of my beloved brother. There was a large congregation. I was helped to speak from 1 Thess. iv. 13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." I believe it to be a long time remembered. Many were weeping and sobbing through the service.

Mr. Gorton often related that after he had read Mr. Gadsby's work, *The Gospel the Believer's Rule of Conduct*,⁶ he had an increasing and immovable desire to see Mr. G. He spoke to the late Mr. Smith, Baptist minister [Association], Cheltenham, about it; but Mr. S said, "He won't see you; or, if he does, you will find him a gruff, austere, disagreeable man." This stopped him going, for a time. But it was of no use so eventually he had to start. He got to Birmingham and slept at a coffee-house. He had very little more money in his pocket than would carry him to Manchester, and often wondered how he was to get back. In the evening he had some conversation with the coffee-house keeper, and had his supper, and in the morning his breakfast. To his surprise his host would not take a farthing from him, but, on the contrary, gave him half-a-crown. On arriving at Manchester he made for Mr. Gadsby's chapel, as he understood it was preaching that day (Wednesday). He called at a watchmaker's, to inquire where the chapel was; and was answered, "I attend there; but the service was last night. Mr. Gadsby, however, is to preach to-night at Pendlebury, about five miles from here." Mr. Gorton started off, walking to Pendlebury, and went to the room. The people waited, and waited; but Mr. Gadsby came not. At length they said to Mr. Gorton, "You are a preacher; you must preach." He objected; but was at last compelled to give way. When service was over, they said, "Now you have done Mr. Gadsby's work, you must have Mr. Gadsby's bed." In the morning, a friend went with him to Mr. Gadsby's house. He was sitting in his arm-chair, very poorly. The friend introduced Mr. Gorton, and then mentioned what had occurred at Pendlebury. Mr. Gorton then gave an account of the Lord's dealings with him, and how Mr. Gadsby's writings had been blessed to his soul. "Instead of finding him that gruff old man that had been represented to me" said Mr. Gorton when relating the circumstances, "the tears rolled down his face; and he said to me, 'Now, mind; while you stop in Manchester you must

make my house your home; you must not go anywhere else." Of course Mr. Gorton had no difficulty in finding the means to return home.

D. Kevill.

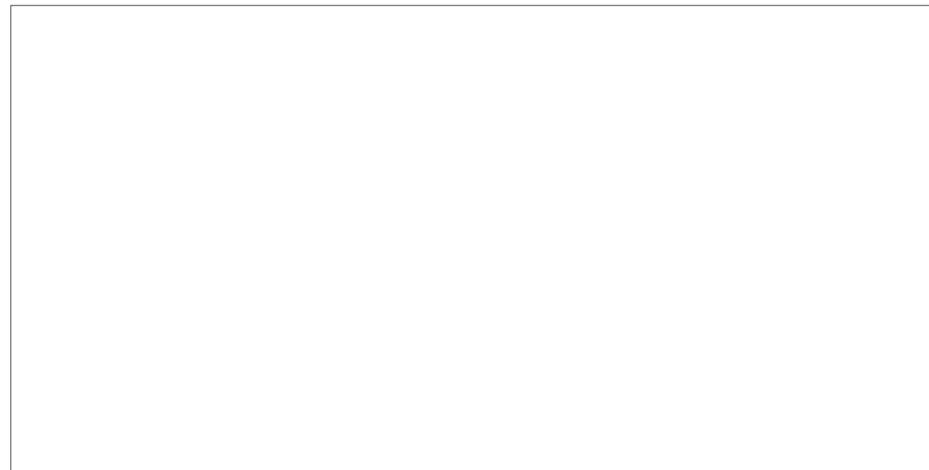
On April 11th, 1876, accompanied by my wife and Mr. Eden,⁷ I went to see Mr. Gorton. We found him in a good resting frame of mind. Amongst other things, he said, "When I came to Cheltenham, I came in a carriage and pair. I have no carriage now; but when I leave I shall leave in a chariot of fire, paved with gold, and lined with purple; the way the King's sons travel." – J[ohn] G[adsby].

References

1. R. W. Oliver, *The Strict Baptist Chapels of England, V, Wilts and the West* (Falconberg Press, 1968); M. Greenwood, *Pilgrim's Progress Revisited: The Nonconformists of Banburyshire, 1662-2012* (Wychwood Press, 2013), pp. 82-3.
2. Rev. G. W. Davidson, *A Brief History of the Baptist Church, Milton, Oxfordshire* (1889).
3. A slightly abridged version, reprinted by kind permission.
4. William Gadsby, *The Perfect Law of Liberty; or, the Glory of God Revealed in the Gospel* (2nd ed, Manchester, 1819). William Gadsby (1773-1844), a prominent Strict Baptist, founded *The Gospel Standard* in 1835. Its first editor was his son, John, who befriended George Gorton and his second wife, Eliza.
5. The Baptist Chapel in Zoar Street, Southwark, London SE.
6. Untraced. Ed.
7. Possibly the Rev. Thomas Eden, b. 1802, Baptist minister of Chadlington, who helped out alternate Sundays at Milton from 1837 (Davidson, *Brief History*, p.9).

Eliza Gorton

Eliza Clare (1799-1872) married George Gorton (above, p. 00) soon after the death of his first wife. They lived for a short time in Milton before moving to Cheltenham in 1868. After Eliza's death George Gorton printed in *The Gospel Standard* her own account of how she became a Baptist. It was reprinted in February 2009, and a copy sent to the WLHS by Michael Ralston. An abridged version is printed below.¹ Passages in italics are additions by the editor of *The Gospel Standard* (1872) and comments in square brackets are those of George Gorton. The endnotes were added by this editor.



Eliza Gorton family tree

George Gorton (1798-1876) was one of our best-known ministers. He was pastor in the beautiful Cotswold village of Milton-under-Wychwood and later at Cheltenham. There seems to be no account of how he and his wife met.

My dear wife, Eliza Gorton, was born in Jamaica on April 21st, 1799. Her mother died about a month after her child was born. In about a year the child had the smallpox. Her father thought he should lose her, but she got well, though she was weakly. Her father consequently sent her to England, but never lived to see her return to Jamaica. He died about five years after his wife. Eliza was then sent from England to Jamaica to live with her uncle, Sir M. B. Clare,² and it was in Jamaica that the Lord was pleased first to convince her of her state as a sinner. This was when she was about twenty-three years old.

I now refer to what she wrote in her own hand: “ Dec., 1823, I was on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Page, who resided in a low mountain in Jamaica, where it never was too hot in the hottest season of the year; and on that account my uncle used to send me there every year to escape the greatest heat of the climate, I being in a bad state of health. When there, I never attended a place of worship, because the distance was too great, but Mr. Page used to read the Church Morning Service; and one Sunday...he observed to me that there was one thing in the Apostles’ Creed he could not give his assent to, viz., the resurrection of the body. I was surprised, for I had never given a thought whether I believed it or not, supposing that repeating it was all that was required.

“I was no Bible reader; for about twelve years I do not remember opening it; but one Sunday night, before the Lord met with me, I read a chapter, and I thought I should never arrive at the end of it, it seemed so dry and uninteresting. However, I told Mr. Page that I did not know, but I thought it must be the body that was raised, for the soul never died. Still, not placing dependence on what I thought, I said I should like to see a book that treated on the subject. His wife, his wife’s mother, and his own mother were present when I made the remark. His wife’s mother went shortly after to visit a relative who lent her a book.

“But I should say in the meantime, the weather being unfavourable for walking, I was obliged to remain in the house; and lighting upon a Bible...I began reading it. But I had not read far when I was obliged to put it down, my sins flashed upon my mind, and my Babel-building was all thrown down, and I was convicted as a sinner against God. I had often confessed myself in church a miserable sinner with my lips, but at this time I felt myself to be one in deed and of a truth, and the sense of it filled my soul with dismay and trouble. I paced up and down the dining-room like a mad creature, and every now and then ran to my room to weep, sad evil thoughts assailing my mind the while...and while I was in this state Mrs. Page’s mother put the book into my hand, saying, ‘You will find in this book what you wished to see respecting the resurrection of the body’; but I was too distressed to look into it at that time.

“One day these words came to me as if a voice had spoken them: ‘I will cleanse thee from all thine idols.’ The words seemed to portend trouble, and I ran from room to room to try to get rid of them, but still they followed me, and I did not know till four years after that they were in the Bible. Mr. Page took me down to Spanish Town, and when I arrived at my uncle’s, my aunt came to meet me and kissed me. I burst into a flood of tears. I could not bear kindness – it overwhelmed me– and when my uncle smiled upon me, if he had taken a knife and thrust me through I could not have felt more pain...I ran into my room to escape a recurrence of his kind looks towards me, and while I was

paced up and down my room, my aunt came in, and said, ‘Eliza, what is the matter? It is evident that something weighs heavily on your mind; it appears on your countenance.’ I replied, ‘I am a sinner against God.’ She told me I was nervous, and that I should work or read. I told her I could do neither. She asked me if I had done anything more than usual since I had been at Ranger’s Lodge. I answered, ‘No...’ She then asked me if they had been kind to me. I replied, ‘No one could have been kinder’.

“She then left my room, and having a pain in my side, I lay down on the floor, thinking the bed was too good for me...My aunt...made me get on the bed and began to speak kindly to me...I did not close my eyes for ten days and ten nights, owing to the anguish of my mind, because I was a sinner against God...The thought of hell never once occurred to me.

“The doctor’s shop was next door to our house, and I could send for any medicine I liked without it being observed; and I sent from time to time for a little red lavender, lest by having a large quantity at a time I might excite suspicion, as I had heard my uncle say that a pint was sufficient to kill a person, and I intended when I had procured it to have taken it to put me out of my misery.

“But the Lord was graciously pleased to prevent me...by enabling me to look in the book that had been put into my hand. I did not read far before He opened up to my mind the way to salvation, of which I had no more even head-knowledge than a newborn babe; and He caused me to hope in His mercy and spoke pardon home to my soul through the blessed blood of atonement...

“It was like a new world to me. Old things seemed to have passed away, and all things become new. I felt that I had been among them that sit in darkness and the region of the shadow of death, but a great light had arisen upon me, and I was rejoicing in the forgiving love of God. Yet I felt my inbred corruptions so strong, and I had such a sight of my heart as a sink of sin, that I cried out with the apostle, ‘Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?’ I felt great self-loathing, while at the same time I rejoiced in the Lord...

“Shortly after this I came to England, and stayed with Mrs. Rees, the captain’s wife, until my aunt arrived from France to take me over there...After my aunt Clara arrived we were detained in England some time longer than we intended by pecuniary affairs that required settling. At this time the steeple [the claims of the Church of England] cleaved to me, and I would not go where I could hear the gospel, because it was a dissenting place of worship, though my aunt wished me to go. I did not sit under the gospel for four years after the Lord met with me. There being no gospel in the place where I resided with my aunt in France, I went on Sunday mornings for a time to the French Protestant chapel, but I heard so much of the dignity of man that I was quite disgusted...

“My aunt Eliza was very anxious to convert me to the Romish religion, and had I gone to France before the Lord met with me, I believe she would have succeeded, for the change in her disposition was so evident that I should have thought it was the religion that had effected it, and that would have been my strongest inducement to join that communion. My aunt Eliza took me to mass twice, and lent me Romish books to read, but I often offended her when I told her my opinion of them. Amongst others she lent me the *Life of Madame de la Motte Guyon* [Madame Guyon, much admired by William Cowper] who, I believe, was a good woman, though hampered with many errors.³ I had the Lord’s presence all the time I was reading her book...

“About this time my uncle wrote to say that he wished us to go to Havre de Grace. When we were there I seldom went to church, it being only a legal ministry, or at most only an attempt at preaching the gospel; for I thought it more profitable to read the Morning Service and Lessons, with a portion of *Theron and Aspasio* [James Hervey’s renowned book on imputed righteousness].⁴ We were about a year and a half at Sanvie before the gospel was brought to Havre, and some time before I was very dark in my mind, and I had entreated the Lord several times to restore the light of His countenance, without receiving any answer. I thought it was useless to pray, yet I thought I would pray once more, and when I had finished, I opened my Bible at Luke 18, about the unjust judge avenging the poor widow because of her importunity... and such light flowed into my mind...that I had a revival in my soul and a most sweet time.

“A little after this the gospel was brought to Havre by Mr. Dallas. He opened a sailors’ reading room, and Mr. Palmer was engaged to come over from Honfleur to lecture every Tuesday evening. I never remember missing one of these opportunities, though I had about three miles to walk. I suppose if it had rained torrents I should have gone. The Word of God was precious in those days. I have often sat with my shoes full of water, and the promises of God flowing sweetly into my mind.

“After this, with the exception of going once to church, I used to go over to Honfleur to hear Mr. Palmer on the Sunday. I went over on the Saturday, and stayed at the inn till Monday....Once...they asked me to stay a month with them. As I had a bad cough, they thought the change might be beneficial. So, my aunt having no objection, I went, and I had a very happy time, for I heard much of the scriptures expounded, and there was nothing to me at that time like the Scriptures.

“Shortly after this my aunt and uncle arrived from Jamaica, and we went to reside...in Honfleur...which I was very glad of, because I had so many more opportunities of hearing the Word. We were often invited to drink tea at the clergyman’s, and...he would frequently expound portions of Scripture very

sweetly; but if trifling conversation prevented, I came away disappointed...

“I left France because our minister had been disabled from preaching about five months, and there seemed no prospect of another coming to Honfleur...When I came to England I went to board with Mrs. Swallow for a week...Instead of asking for the nearest church, I asked where I could hear the truth, and I was directed to Shouldam Street Baptist chapel.

“I was so delighted to find myself once more in a place of worship where I could hear the gospel that I wept for joy...Mrs. Swallow and I went to hear together almost every night in the week. I had not then lost my first love. I was never so happy as when I was with the Lord’s people. I would rather have had the company of a few God-fearing, old women than the most courted worldly society that could be.

“One day Mrs. Rowe, a Christian friend, said she wished I would go to hear Mr. Irving [the famous Edward Irving, who fell into serious error], he was such a powerful preacher. She said he was preaching from the first chapter of John’s gospel, and he would take the fourteenth verse for his text. I said I would go, for if he held the doctrine I had heard he did (but which he denied in a printed letter signed by himself and elders) he would be sure to broach it on that text; but before I set out to hear him, I prayed the Lord that if I was going to hear error He would show me the fallacy of it from his own Word. Mr. I. spoke of Jesus taking upon him a fallen, sinful nature, and he said if He had not, where was the merit of His understanding? And many other such blasphemous assertions; and he had recourse to heathen mythology to support them. He spoke of Hercules and the serpent, and he leaned over the pulpit and said, ‘Is this dishonouring God?’ I would have said, ‘Yes’, if I durst.⁵

“I had some distance to walk home, and all the way passages of Scripture flowed into my mind, proving the fallacy of what he had said; and when I arrived at the house, I opened the book I was reading, where I had left off. The book was Dr. Owen, *On Communion with God*;⁶ and it was as if he had heard Mr. Irving and was refuting him...

“I felt a presentiment that I was going to lose all my relations, and I told Mrs. Swallow so. I received a letter just after from France, announcing the death of my aunt Eliza. One morning when I got up, my knees knocked together about my uncle, having a dread on my spirits respecting him, and I expected every packet to hear of his death. However, he lived to come to England, and to go to Scotland. My aunt Clara died about eight months after my aunt Eliza...

“The week before I heard of my aunt Clara’s death I was baptized at Shouldam Street. While my uncle and aunt were in England, my aunt...perceived I approved of adult, or rather Christian, baptism. She said, ‘I hope,

Eliza, you do not mean to be dipped.' I said it was my intention to be baptized. She said, 'Your uncle will be so grieved.' I answered, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me'. She said, 'They all say that.' However, I never heard any say so. She said it was not essential to salvation. I said I should not do it because I expected to be saved by it, but because I believed I was saved. She said, 'You were christened when you were a baby, and confirmed when you arrived at a certain age.' I said, 'No; I never was confirmed by man, or I should have been confirmed in unbelief.' She said if everybody saw as I did the Church of England would fall."

"Here our conversation was interrupted by my uncle coming into the room. My aunt informed him of my intention. He said he hoped not, for my chest was so vulnerable that a cold bath might prove fatal to me...I thought I would not be foolhardy; so when I applied for baptism, I proposed having the water warmed, and Mr. George laughed at it, for he said he had known people in the last stage of consumption baptized, and no ill consequences ensue. I was very much tried about the water after I spoke for baptism, though not many months before I had longed to bathe in the sea when the water was very rough. I begged the Lord to take away that dread, which he was pleased to do; and some who knew how much I had feared were surprised to see me go down the steps so boldly; and when I came out I joined in singing the words which I had chosen:

"Glory, honour, raise and power,
Be unto the Lamb for ever."

The account continues with many changes, sometimes difficult to know whether she was in France, England or Scotland.

There is a final paragraph, and the account ends, with a postscript by George Gorton describing her death.

She died on February 10th, 1872.

References

1. Article reproduced by kind permission.
2. Michael Clare (1777-1832).
3. Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte-Guyon (1648-1717), a mystic.
4. James Hervey (1714-58), theologian and preacher. His *Theron and Aspasio; A series of letters upon the most important and interesting subjects* was published in 1755.
5. Edward Irving (1792-1834), born in Scotland, a Presbyterian and charismatic preacher, who settled in London and formed his own church. Eliza must have attended in the late 1820s, since the sermon on Jesus and sin to which she alludes was preached in 1828. In the mid-1820s he was attracted by prophecy and speaking in tongues. The controversy around his sermon led to an accusation of heresy in 1830, and he separated his church from the London presbytery.
6. John Owen (1616-83), *Of Communion with God* (1757).

THE TOWNSEND-AVERYS OF CHURCH STREET, SHIPTON

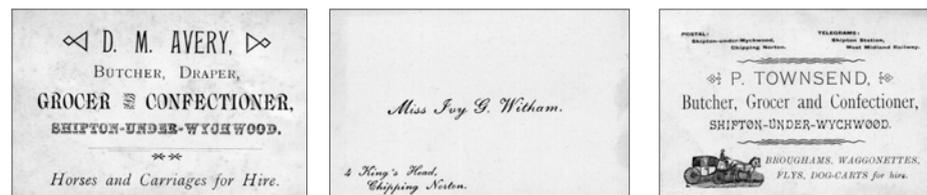
Trudy Yates

It did not take long after the turn of the year to realise that 2015 was unique. It is a year of special commemorations and of birthday celebrations.

First, we were reminded of the 800 long years since the signing of Magna Carta; then articles began to appear about the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in

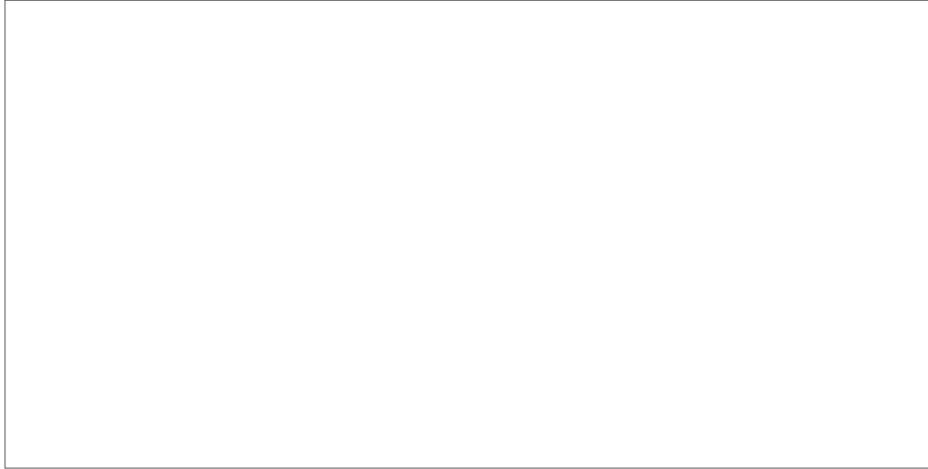
1815 – 200 years ago. This was quickly followed by the re-enactment of Churchill's final journey on the Thames and a reminder of the Selma Civil Rights march, both fifty years ago. All this within the first two months of the year. Who knows what will come next? Well, actually we in WLHS know perfectly well. If a national contest were held, we might have the winner right here in Shipton. St Mary's church became a prebend of Salisbury Cathedral a rather spectacular 900 years ago in 1115. Several special events have been scheduled throughout the year, beginning with a lecture on the history of the venerable old lady on 19th February by our renowned area church historian, Tim Porter.

Meanwhile, at the top of Church Street, a more modest but still fascinating celebration is going on: in March Elaine Ireland reached her tenth anniversary as our local florist. She and her extended family of Averys and Townsends have been in business at no. 8 High Street for 125 years. A close look at the Townsend/Avery history in the family Bible



Business Cards of Peter Townsend and Ivy Avery

and the census records, coupled with Elaine's memories and those of other locals produced a quite remarkable story; one that brings to light once more the strength, determination and hard work of our female ancestors, along with the men. It can be traced through five generations, to the grandparents of Percy and Ivy Avery; the latter are well remembered in Shipton.



2: Townsend/Avery family tree

Elaine and her sister Marie grew up in Church Street at No. 6, where they lived with their parents, Victor and Gladys Avery. Elaine was born in 1958 and Marie three years later, in 1961. They attended St Mary's Church School as little girls and helped Granny Ivy by doing her housework on Saturdays while she ran the family store on the corner. They matriculated to Burford to finish their education and then began to live rather separate lives. Elaine went to Oxford, where she worked as a florist's assistant in the covered market. Marie remained in Shipton and helped her grandmother in the shop. Both girls married: Marie to Peter Luska in 1979 and Elaine to Richard Ireland in 1982. Each had one child, Elaine a son, Trevor, and Marie, a daughter, Zena. Both girls divorced and now live with partners: Elaine with Andrew Key here in Ivy's former cottage in Shipton, and Marie with David Clanfield in Witney, where she is a long-term employee of the Co-op.



Vic Avery in his little red car in the garden at Percy and Ivy's house

The girls' parents, Vic and Gladys, were well known in the village. Vic (1929-2011) was a brilliant electrical engineer, who worked on such distinguished properties as Glympton and Gatcombe. He had grown up on Church Street as the rather solitary only child of Ivy and Percy. A big man but light on his small feet, Vic enjoyed dancing as a young man – Elaine has lost count of the number

of women who have told her he was their dancing partner – and it was on such an occasion in Chipping Norton that he met his future wife, Gladys Habgood.

Gladys (1928-2007) was born in Swindon and lived in Chipping Norton. The Habgoods were strict Methodists, but there seemed to be no taboos on dancing. The couple married in Chipping Norton Methodist church in June 1957. They lived with Ivy for a time until Gladys was expecting Elaine. Vic purchased no. 6 from the Baldwins. The family lived here together until two life-changing events coincided. Vic's mother Ivy became ill with cancer and Vic and Gladys's marriage came to an end. Vic simply moved into no. 7 with his mother to help care for her and life went on as before. Many villagers did not realise the couple had separated until Ivy died in 1980 and Vic remained in her house. He lived as a virtual recluse, never throwing anything away, his accumulated possessions obvious to all who passed by.

Gladys, meantime, was a loyal W. I. member and an avid gardener and flower arranger. She often prepared arrangements for St Mary's, although she continued to worship as a Methodist in Chipping Norton. Like Ivy, Gladys developed cancer in her later years, and received kind support and palliative care from Katherine House Hospice. Vic's health, too, was failing. Malcolm Cochrane was a loyal friend to Vic. As the older man became more and more reclusive Malcolm would leave a note identifying himself and call again until Vic opened the door. Since he was never invited in, Malcolm would stand outside and share village news, which Vic seemed to enjoy. Malcolm also helped Elaine and Marie to make a partial clearance of Vic's hoarded possessions so that



Percy and Ivy Avery

carers could visit. Vic spent his last few years in a Chipping Norton nursing home, Elaine selling her mother's house, no. 6, to pay for his care.

Vic's parents were Percy Avery (1900-1951) and Ivy Witham Avery (1902-1980).

Percy was the second son of David and Annie Marie Avery. His brother Richard, three years older, ran a successful butcher's shop located in the Lamb Inn. He also served in the army during World War I. Percy



Richard outside his butcher's shop at The Lamb



Richard Avery in uniform in his parents' garden

provided a taxi service for the village from the garage next to the shop. He was not, however, a particularly good businessman, being more interested in smoking, drinking and gambling. It fell to Ivy to keep the family afloat. She was well used to responsibility.

Ivy Witham was born in Chipping Norton; but Mr and Mrs Witham soon divorced. Ivy's mother (whose first name may have been Alice) then married a Mr Adams, with whom she lived in Littlemore, Oxford, and bore eleven more children! Ivy herself was brought up by her grandparents, who ran the King's Head pub in Chipping Norton. There is some reason to believe that she and her mother stayed in touch (see Postscript, below), but the lovely young Ivy remained at the King's Head until she married Percy in 1928.

Ivy Avery is a village legend. When I taped a series of oral histories among Shipton's older residents in the 1990s most people mentioned going to the shop as children and spending a precious penny or two on sweets which Ivy would dole out with a smile in a twist of blue paper. Ivy's fish and chips, available on Tuesdays and Saturdays, was another memory. This was a family



Ivy Witham. Her lustrous black hair was passed down to Vic and Elaine

treat, served up on the odd occasions when Mum was too busy to cook.

When Percy died in 1951 Ivy ran the shop on her own for almost thirty years. She smoked the bacon in her own kitchen in no. 7, a room Elaine described as 'pretty basic...There was an old tan Rayburn stove, a Belfast sink, a couple of shelves and a small corner cupboard, not a lot else.' There were no windows: with the door closed the room was snug for the bacon smoking; but what this process did to the walls and floor we cannot imagine. Ivy had covered the floor of the kitchen and sitting-room with linoleum in her favourite colour, green; when Elaine and Andy remodelled the cottage and took up the lino they uncovered a lovely stone flagged floor.

Sue Hissey Hoey has special memories of Ivy's kindness. 'In 1966, aged 18, I had completed my training and was looking for a place to do my hairdressing,' she said. 'Ivy heard about it and offered me a room upstairs over the shop. The only problem was that my clients had to get up there through Ivy's house. She, of course, was busy in the shop so she had to leave her front door unlocked so that my customers could get up to me. I really worried about this,' Sue continued. 'Ivy had some lovely silverware displayed and I could just see someone tempted to pick up a piece on their way out. I told Ivy of my concerns and she just smiled and said, "Oh well, if they do they probably need it more than I do."'

Sue also remembered what happened when Ivy ceased doing the fish and chips. 'She couldn't stop ordering the fish. It was too much of a habit. So she began to sell wet fish and then she'd fry up the remainder for lunch. She'd bring me up a steaming hot plate when I'd been working all morning. It was delicious. I told my mother that Ivy made the best fish and chips I'd ever eaten. She didn't like that!'

Sue found a way to repay her friend for her many kindnesses. 'When Ivy became bedridden with the cancer I asked her one day if there was anything at all I could do for her. She paused for a moment and then said quietly, "I do fancy just a drop or two of whisky now and then." She wasn't comfortable asking either Vic or Gladys for spirits so I bought a small bottle which we put under Ivy's pillow. I was always so glad I could do that for her. She was such a hard-working, lovely lady and she was suffering so much. It didn't seem fair that she had to end her life this way.'

Ivy's husband Percy was the son of David Avery (1865-1921) and Annie Marie Townsend (1864-1929). The 1901 census provided proof of some accepted facts about the couple, but a rather important surprise as well. It reads:

	Place of birth
Avery, Richard, 36, grocer, shopkeeper, employer	Westwell
Annie Marie, 36, shopkeeper, draper	Shipton
Richard, 3	
Percy, 9 mo.	

Elaine had no idea that Richard had been born anywhere other than Shipton. She knew only that the entries in the family Bible held no Avery generations further back.

It is here that the continuity of family business at no. 8 High Street turns to Annie Marie's family, the Townsends. The 1891 census reads:

Townsend, Peter, 55, grocer	Ascott
Mary, 52 (maiden name unknown)	Long Compton
Annie Marie, 26, grocer's assistant	
Thomas, 23, groom	
Ernest R., 18	
Rose B., 13, student	



Peter Townsend with his horse and trap

Peter Townsend's business card is a delight. There are few services he doesn't seek to provide for Shipton residents. The garage at no. 8 must have been chockablock with vehicles of every sort as well as horses and dogs.

We note from the census entry that Annie Marie was established at her father's right hand. By 1901 she was listed as a draper as well as a shopkeeper.

Going back another ten years to the 1881 census, Peter, then aged forty-six, was a bootmaker. His wife Mary was forty-three. Annie Marie would have been sixteen at this time but she is not mentioned as living in the household. The following children were mentioned:

Eliza, 19
George, 14
Thomas, 12
Ernest, 8, scholar

We will never know whether Peter Townsend's bootmaker's business was located at no. 8; we can only assume that it was, since the family appeared in the census record. If Mr David Avery visited Shipton from Westwell one summer day in the early 1890s he might have stopped at the corner grocery in the centre of the village and noticed a busy, efficient young woman in charge of things, and cast an admiring glance. However it happened, David and Annie Marie were married in March 1896 at St Mary's church in Shipton. Only two years later Peter Townsend died. Elaine and I visited the front churchyard at St Mary's on a misty afternoon in February. The Townsend memorial stone stood tall among the masses of snowdrops. Elaine had brought some kitchen paper to wipe the stone clean enough to see the dates. We learned that Annie Marie was indeed in full charge of the shop in 1901, because her father died in January 1898 aged 63, and her mother followed soon after, in 1900, aged 62.

In 1913 Shipton Court and all farms, cottages and businesses owned by the Pepper family were sold. The Townsend/Averys had been renting no. 7 and no. 8, and at this juncture they purchased the properties. Interestingly, the purchaser is recorded as A. (Annie) Avery, not David. Of



Annie Marie and David Avery with their sons Richard and Percy in front of no. 9 High Street (home of Colin and Barbara Pearce)

all Peter Townsend's children Annie seemed to be the one with the business ability. This Peter recognised and rewarded. Annie provided the money for purchasing the two properties.

David and Annie Marie formed a partnership that proved to be very successful. They owned their own property after 1913 and prepared their two sons to be successful in turn. This proved to be the case with Richard; perhaps less so with Percy, but then he had the wit to marry Ivy Witham. She ensured that the buildings were passed on to Vic and Gladys and, subsequently, to Elaine and Marie.

The presence of Ivy's in Church Street is a reminder of days long past when Church Street was Shipton's High Street, a time when no.8 would have been one of many small businesses located there fulfilling the needs of Shipton's residents. All the others are gone and mostly forgotten with the exception of the Old Post (Rosemary Hitchcock's house), which is remembered by a few old-timers. Ivy's is, indeed, a Shipton landmark. Five generations of a Cotswold family have served their community well.



Outside the Averys' shop in the 1930s

Standing in the shop doorway: Ivy and Percy. Others in the group have been identified as: Mrs Ken Miles with the perambulator and her two daughters; Mrs Jim Harris, wearing the checked coat and, behind her wearing a hat, Tommy Hopkins; Stella Strand, with long plaits; and one of the two boys in the right foreground could be Vic Avery.

POSTSCRIPT

Whether or not Ivy had any relationship with her mother in later life would have remained an unsolved mystery had Elaine, at our last interview, not remembered a little wooden box of her grandmother's, which held a few precious mementos. Among these we found a letter from one of Ivy's admirers, who lived in Lyneham. In it he worried openly about a certain 'Percy' intruding into his territory. Also in the bottom of the box was a tiny scrap of paper cut from an account book. The paper was only 5½ in. by 4 in. and the message was written in pencil – so faint now that reading it required a strong light and a magnifying glass. It read as follows:

My dear Ivy,

Have just received your letter. Could you come for a month or two with me before you settle down. "Perc" could come and see you any time and stop the weekend if he could. You could have my machine and do all your sewing up. Try and let me know what you can do. I should love to have you for a time.

*With best love,
Mother*

What a welcome discovery! As children Elaine and Marie were taken by Vic to visit great-granny Adams at her house in Littlemore. Here is her picture, since she is now in our good books!



Great Granny Adams

Wychwoods Local History Society

Publications in Print

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

All the Society's past Wychwoods History journals are in print. Journal 26 is out of print, but is the first to have been digitalised. An Index of articles, contributors, personal names, farms, maps and subject in journals 1-19 is available free on receipt of a self-addressed C5 9229 x 162mm) envelope with two first class stamps. Names from Journals 1-29 are indexed on the Society's website: www.wychwoodshistory.org

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Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Paula Nielson.
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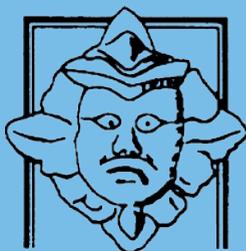
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