WYCHWOODS HISTORY

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Contents

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Foreword

Villages are sometimes described by historians as being remote and cut off from the outside world, particularly in earlier times. Their populations are thought to have been inward-looking and confined to one place. This can hardly be said of the Wychwood villages.

Jack Howard-Drake's article about John Foxe talks of sixteenth-century travel, contact with the Tudor elite and aspects of a wider political world over two and a half centuries. Joan Howard-Drake's study of the eighteenth-century poor law records of a small place like Leafield, a forest village, shows knowledge and acceptance of new ideas such as vaccination. The story of the Hartley family, compiled by Trudy Yates, gives an account of how a farmer and his men moved in the nineteenth century and became well-established in a new community. It also relates countrywide sporting achievements by family members and has an entertaining picture of one particular Hartley 'hunting' man. Keith Chandler has identified a local musician who in the nineteenth century played the fiddle for morris and other dancing in the towns and villages of this area. James Longshaw must have had knowledge of other parts of the world from his father's travels as a soldier. John Rawlins describes the constant movement of people in the twentieth century into local parishes as a result of war. The first to come were Basque children refugees from the Spanish Civil War followed during the Second World War by London and Essex children, evacuees escaping from bombing in south-east England. Others who came were British and American servicemen and women, land girls and other war workers and German and Italian prisoners of war. The article about the Ascott turnpike tollboard is a reminder from Wendy Pearse of the impact of better roads improving people's ability to move about.

Wychwoods History Number Sixteen shows, as did our Millennium Exhibition and the book *That's How It Was* – the story of women in the Wychwoods in the Second World War – that this area is not and never has been a backwater remote from the wider world.

Sue Jourdan, Joan Howard-Drake and Trudy Yates

Hartley Heritage
Part One

Trudy Yates

The discovery of a print in a London antique shop by a family friend was a happy coincidence for little was previously known of the 'sporting miller', Richard Hartley from Wigginton, hereafter referred to as Richard I. He was the progenitor of the local Hartley farming, sporting clan and his history was gleaned from the records of Wigginton Church.

He was born about 1812 and died in Wigginton 27 July 1877 aged 65; his wife Matilda (maiden name unknown) died in 1900 aged 85 and was buried in Swerford where she had been born. She did live, however, in

Shipton for eight years and probably died here.[1] Our Richard I was a fitting ancestor for the succeeding generations of athletically endowed farmers. His first child was not born until he was 32 years old. While we do not have a firm wedding date for the couple, we can assume that they did not marry much before the groom's 30th birthday. There were a number of carefree years for this 'man of parts' to distinguish himself in equine horseplay and other delightful country pursuits. After that he settled down to his family responsibilities. They were many and often sorrowful.

Richard and Matilda had seven children (three daughters and four sons) who were christened at Wigginton Church on the following dates:

Matilda	William John	Richard (II)	Sarah Ann	William Bloxham	Ellen Sophia	Arthur John
6 Jan 1844	27 Feb 1846 died 1847	25 Jan 1848	28 Mar 1850	14 Nov 1852 died 1861	18 Nov 1855	13 Sep 1857

The coloured print found in a London antique shop showing Richard Hartley I hunting c.1832

I remember seeing some famous fun in Tussmore park one 'show morning' that the hounds met there, with a man of the name of Hartley, a sporting miller, well known with the Duke of Beaufort's and Mr. Drake's hounds.

In addition to his grinding propensities he is a bit of a horse dealer and has always the best horse in England under him. He is quite a character in the Bicester country, and last season Lord Norreys, Alesford and some more of them, rigged him out in a huntsman's cap and scarlet coat, to which he added a pair of white cords and boots with the tops painted white. Having no beauty to spoil, a set of good nerves and a horse to ride for sale, he used to rasp away at a famous pace across a country whenever he got anything like a start, but if the miller was left behind he 'shut up' immediately for he knew it was no use going when there was no one to look at him. However, this morning at Tussmore park a party of men got about him, and, by the lure of a half crown bet each time, persuaded him to charge some considerable flights of rails, on a half broke grey brute that he was riding with a switch tail and a head like a fiddle-case, and really he showed great skill in handling his horse, and none of the 'three hundred guinea' men would accept his invitation to follow him. It was a most laughable sight to see this queer looking tiger ramming his horse at the rails, the animal going up in the air as if he would never come down again, the miller's coat tails flying out the sides like wings, showing more 'the parts of man' than 'the man of parts' and to hear his satisfied chuckle as he landed on the other side and won his halfcrown.

Nim South's Tour, New Sporting Mag. Nov. 1832, p.15

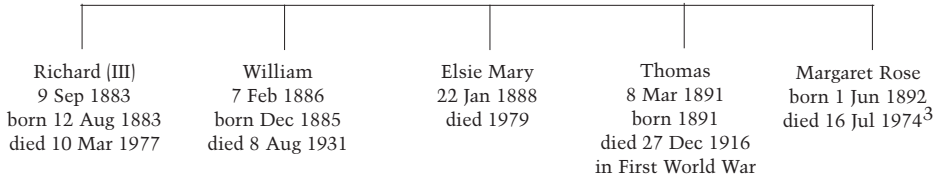
The extract from *New Sporting Magazine* that appears beneath the print

The three burials are recorded under scarlet fever deaths. Of the four children who survived, two daughters married in Wigginton; Matilda (aged 25) married William Ogle Gardner of Adderbury 28 January 1869 and Sarah Ann (aged 20) married John Stambra of Wigginton 12 January 1870. There is no record in Wigginton of Arthur John's marriage so it is assumed that he moved elsewhere.[2]

Richard II was a farmer as well as a miller and an astute businessman. It

Richard Hartley II

Richard II married Rose Barrett Fenemore in about 1880 and the couple followed Richard I into the business of local miller. Their address was Wigginton Mill when they brought their first five children for baptism at Wigginton Church.



Richard Hartley II, his wife Rose Barrett Fenemore Hartley and their son Richard III, at Wigginton Mill not long before the family moved to Shipton in

was, perhaps, at Banbury market that he heard about Grove Farm in Shipton under Wychwood. The tenancy was available from the Yapp estate and the almost 600 acre farm was an appealing prospect. He decided to make the move.

The progress from Wigginton to Shipton in the autumn of 1892 must have been a sight to behold. The couple and their five small children – one a babe in arms – with all of the family's personal goods and chattels, 32 horses, numerous cattle and 15 men made the journey, some travelling by wagon, the less fortunate on foot.[4] Two families in particular came with the Hartleys and their descendants are still in the area – the Dales and the Powells. Mark Dale was the carter and Joseph Powell the stockman. Dulcie Arundell, the granddaughter of Joseph Powell, remembers her mother's story about the arrival here.

'There was a row of cottages along the green in those days that belonged to Grove Farm,' Dulcie said. 'Grandfather was not at all pleased with the accommodation assigned to him and he went to Mr Hartley immediately to complain that his house in Wigginton had been far better. Mr Hartley investigated and found that this was so. He moved his widowed mother Matilda into Grove Farm house with the family and gave the cottage at 11 High Street, still known today as Grove Farm Cottage, to the Powell family'. It had been designated originally as Matilda's home.[5]

'Grandfather must have been quite ambitious,' said Terry Hartley. 'He hadn't been here long before he started taking the tenancies of other farms. First it was Lower Farm in Upper Milton (later farmed by Ernest Hartley and, still later by his son Terry), Lingerman's Farm, later called Paget's Farm (given up in the 1930s), then Manor Farm in Upper Milton (farmed by Richards III, IV, V and VI) and, eventually, White Hill in Burford (now the Ramping Cat Nursing Home).

'Uncle Dick (Richard III) farmed at White Hill before he was married and Aunt Elsie, who never married, lived with him and looked after him. After Uncle Dick married, she cared for her parents until they died.' Every nineteenth and early twentieth century family needed, and seemed to have, one of these selfless maiden ladies to minister to them. 'The other daughter, my Aunt Margaret, married a local farmer and publican, Ken Strong.'[6]

After Richard II and his family settled down at Grove Farm, two more sons were born to them: Ernest 1895–1965 and Frank 1896–1965. Grandson Dick Hartley (Richard IV) of Green Acres in Upper Milton, chuckled when he recalled, 'Granny was married for ten years before her first child was born. Then she had seven in 13 years!'[7]

Terry Hartley provided the stories that gave life and personality to his long dead grandfather. 'Grandfather liked things done "proper",' Terry said with a huge grin. 'Old Mark Dale was supposed to roll the wheat field and, in order to get to it, he cut across the corner of an oat field. (Oats do not

Richard (II) Hartley (1848–1927)

The Hartley family of Grove Farm, Shipton, in about 1904. Standing (left to right): Ernest, Richard III, Elsie Mary, William, Margaret Rose. Seated: Thomas, Richard II, Frank, Rose Barrett Fenemore Hartley

require rolling and may even respond poorly to such treatment) Anyway, Grandfather said, 'Mark, what did you roll those oats for?' 'I didn't sir, I just cut across the corner,' came the reply. 'You've spoilt 'em,' Grandfather thundered. 'You've spoilt 'em!'

Another story which Terry tempered by calling a 'family legend' described the progress of the Hartley family to divine worship in Shipton Church. 'Grandfather sat to the right of the big pillar in the centre of the church. His children sat in front of him so that he could assure their good behaviour. (Several sets of Hartley initials carved in this pew presumably mean that the vicar, rather than the children held Mr. Hartley's undivided attention.) 'However, when the vicar droned on too long or the discourse became too boring, Grandfather would open the little drawer under his seat (it is still there to this day!) take out his whisky or gin bottle and pour himself a little tipple before returning the bottle to its hiding place. Of course the vicar couldn't see him from the pulpit because he was behind the pillar!'

'When my father (Ernest) was courting my mother (Winifred Gantlett), he brought her over to meet Grandfather.' Terry said, clearly enjoying the tale he had to tell. 'Grandfather was blind by his time. Father had brought Winifred's younger sister along as well. She was an equally attractive young lady. Grandfather shook hands very properly and then proceeded to feel the girls all over. Mother told me he made a good job of it, too! He finally gave his considered opinion. 'You're two fine wenches,' he declared.' Ernest and Winifred were soon married. [8]

Dick Hartley (Richard IV) has inherited his grandfather's sword which he won in the Oxford Yeomanry for swordsmanship. 'I understand he could have had £10 instead which was a lot of money to him in those days. It has been used to cut the family's wedding cakes.' The most recent occasion was the marriage of Richard James (Richard VI), Dick's grandson, to Rachel Robb from Nottinghamshire in the spring of 2000.

Richard Hartley II died in January 1927 aged 79 and Rose Barrett Fenemore Hartley in March 1944 aged 92. Grove Farm was given up upon Richard's death. Richard III took on Manor Farm and Ernest took Lower Farm in Upper Milton. The Hartley sons harboured the genes of Richard I; sport was an overriding passion with the boys. John R. (standing for Richard, of course) Hartley, son of Frank, believes that a concrete strip still visible in the middle of the grass behind Grove Farm was the first concrete wicket ever put down in the country.[9] The Hartley lads played cricket almost every night and it didn't stop there. 'I think my grandfather was always keen on sports. All of them were extremely keen. Grandfather encouraged it,' Dick Hartley explained.

Richard Hartley III

The gentle thwack of willow on leather produced in the Hartley family a

string of statistics impossible to record in their entirety. A wonderful piece of source material is a book of reminiscences written by Richard III, eldest son of the Grove Farm Hartleys. He was born in 1883 and wrote down his memories in 1974 at the age of 91. He died in 1977.

'My father was always keen for us boys to do well in sport,' he wrote. 'He played cricket himself and was a very good shot.' He added that his father preferred 'walking up' and didn't do quite as well when the partridges were 'driven' and the guns stood still. The Hartley boys played cricket as youngsters in the village but Richard III remembers his first 'out of town' game at Ascott and even his score – '28 the first innings and 52 the second.' To his great joy he hit a ball over onto the railway line.

On the first page of his book, he recalls going with his father to Banbury market and seeing the boys of Bloxham School on the playing fields. He looked forward to the time when he could go there for the sport but the family moved from Wigginton to Shipton where his younger brothers Ernest and Frank were born. At Burford Grammar School cricket continued to obsess him. 'One particular time playing stump cricket in the playing ground, I was in for three days and, at last, the master came and took the bat away from me!' he recalled with satisfaction.

The first 17 pages of the book describe cricket games. After recalling many successful outings he cryptically recorded his last appearance at the crease. 'My last game was played for Shipton at Carterton. I managed to get 74 after going in first. I had hoped to make 100 but it was not to be. I found that I couldn't hit the ball like I used to do and thought it was about time I called it a day.' Richard Hartley III was then in his 65th year.

The First World War interrupted the years of sporting prowess for the Hartley boys. Ernest and Frank served in France and returned safely. Tom died and was buried in France. William, who had served in the merchant navy, never recovered from his war experiences and died in the l930s. Richard III remained at home on the farm throughout the war and, when his two brothers returned, sporting life resumed.

'I know that my parents were very proud of my two brothers Ernest (father of Terry) and Frank (father of John),' Richard III continues in his reminiscences. 'After all, they had every right to be. I don't think any two brothers have ever captained England at soccer and hockey on the same day before or since their time. Frank played for Oxfordshire at cricket, hockey and soccer. I played for Oxfordshire at cricket and hockey. I was captain for Oxfordshire for several seasons at hockey and several for cricket. Ernest was captain for several seasons at hockey. Although I played several times for the South at hockey, I was never quite good enough to get an England cap.'

Terry Hartley added to these memories. 'All three (Richard III, Ernest and Frank) were natural athletes. Any sport they played was executed to a very high standard. I was very proud of my father.'

The Hartley boys lined up for their favourite sport in 1923. Back row, left Ernest; right Frank. Front row, middle Dick (Richard

John Hartley continued the story. 'All three played cricket at Burford Grammar School initially. Then they played on Oxford college grounds for Oxfordshire. My father Frank was the main footballer of the three. He had a number of international amateur caps and he played professional soccer for Tottenham Hotspur for several seasons.' The beautifully made velvet caps are carefully preserved by John and Margaret. An agreement between Tottenham and Frank Hartley of 24 April 1929 was signed for the princely sum of £6 a week. Frank curtailed his football career when he married Phyllis Wakefield in 1931.[10]

Richard III did not include family details in his book of reminiscences. His son, Richard IV of Green Acres in Upper Milton provided these over a cup of tea in his sunny garden room. 'The Guv'nor went to Burford Grammar School where his love of sport intensified. He had dreamed of attending Bloxham but, while his dream never came true, future generations of his family did go there. At last count there were eight: me (Richard IV), my cousin John, Richard V and Michael, my sons; Vanessa, Richard VI, Sarah and David, my grandchildren.

'Father met my mother at a partridge shoot at Radford. Her name was

Dorothy Elizabeth Oldham. She was from Snitterfield and was orphaned at an early age. Her grandparents, the Heynes, raised her. They were tenants at Marroway farm.'

The couple married in January 1916 when Richard III was 32 years old and Dorothy 25 years. They went immediately to the tenancy of Manor Farm in Upper Milton owned by Brasenose College, Oxford. Two children were born to them: Richard IV in April 1918 and Diana in 1922. Diana died tragically in 1942 aged 20.

With a large farm to run it seems inconceivable that such a strenuous and time-consuming sports routine could have been pursued by Mr. Hartley over the ensuing years. 'Farmers had a lot of labour available to them in those days,' Richard IV explained. 'Farm jobs provided the only steady employment for countrymen. It was unheard of to commute to nearby towns and cities to work. Because of the number of men available, salaries were relatively low. The Guv'nor was, to put it simply, the overseer or manager of the farm.' The term gentleman farmer springs to mind.

Richard IV always refers to his father as 'the Guv'nor'and his grandfather as 'the old Guv'nor', which is mildly confusing to an investigator determined to set down a faultless Hartley Heritage article. Even more daunting is the family's off-handed way of referring to the six generations of Richard Hartleys. 'Old Richard', 'Little Richard', 'Young Richard' produces a head-spinning effect solved only by the pedestrian numerical sequence used here. Hopefully this personal solution will help the reader as well.

Richard IV served as a pilot during the Second World War and married in 1945. 'Things were tough financially and I was thinking of signing on. We came back to the farm on leave and mother confronted us with the news that Brasenose were going to sell the farm for, I think it was, about £25 an acre. That is a ridiculous sum nowadays but we didn't have it at the time. Mother said, 'Now look, you will have to make up your mind because your father is not going to buy it unless you are coming back to farm with him.' So, we decided to come back.'

Return they did. The farm was purchased just as other family land purchases occurred. By the late 1940s, Richard IV, Ernest and Frank Hartley were all farming for themselves.

Richard III continued to be involved in sport even after his playing days ended. He brought together cricket sides and never lost interest in winning ways. He and Dorothy celebrated their Diamond Wedding in 1976. He was 92 and Dorothy was 85. Richard died in 1977 aged 93; Dorothy in 1978 aged 87. They are buried in Milton churchyard with their daughter, Diana. Richard is described tersely on the tombstone 'farmer'; Dorothy as 'loved and remembered'.[11]

Margaret Rose Hartley (Strong)

Margaret Rose Hartley was born in Wigginton on 1 June 1892 just a few months before the family set out for Shipton. Wigginton church records show that she was christened on 24 July. Since the move to Grove Farm occurred in the early autumn, Margaret would have had no memory of any other home than Shipton. It is interesting to imagine what life must have been like for this dainty little girl growing up with a house full of strapping, sports-loving brothers. Luckily she did have the companionship of her older sister, Elsie, born in December of 1887, but a five year age difference probably limited their relationship during Margaret's early youth. In the family portrait we see a pretty, dark-haired little girl with her hand on her mother's shoulder. It is a gentle, loving gesture and, while it may have been ordered by the photographer, it is still an expression of her sweet disposition.

'She was my second mother when I came to Shipton as a bride,' Margaret Hartley recalled. 'John was away a great deal playing cricket and I would always find myself at Auntie Margaret's door when I was feeling lonely.'

'I can remember her telling us how little she knew about the birds and the bees before she married Ken Strong in June of 1922,' Mike Hartley said. 'They were never allowed to be alone when they were courting. If they walked out together on a Sunday afternoon, her mother followed about three paces behind!'[12]

The Strongs were devoted to each other, however. They lived at Lodge Farm adjacent to the Merrymouth Inn where Ken served both as publican and farmer. Their son Deryk was born in April 1924 only a few days before Terry Hartley's birth. 'Our mothers were pregnant together,' Deryk said in a telephone interview from his home in Somerset. 'They were very close friends and they both liked the name Deryk. They decided that whoever delivered first would use the name. My mother won so I'm Deryk and he's Terry.' Did the Hartley ladies consider the possibility of producing a girl? Deryk Strong turned out to be true to his Hartley roots. He farmed and he played cricket, rugby, football and hockey. For the gentle Margaret Rose, mothering such a child must have seemed very familiar indeed.

Ken Strong had been a chauffeur for Mr. Arthur Young of Daylesford earlier in his life. He was the son of Shipton's schoolmaster. The Strongs retired to live in Frog Lane in Milton. Margaret Rose died in July 1974 aged 82 and Ken died in March 1980 aged 86. They are buried in St Mary's churchyard, Shipton.

Ernest Hartley

Ernest was born in March 1895 soon after his father established the family at Grove Farm in Shipton. He, too, attended Burford Grammar School and

distinguished himself at sport. When the First World War began he was 19 years old and unbelievably lucky, according to his son Terry, to have been assigned to a company of Oxfordshire Yeomanry led by Commanding Officer Arthur Villiers, a younger son of the Earl of Jersey. 'He was a remarkable man,' declared Terry. 'His concern and affection for his men lasted a lifetime. When Dad returned from the war he took over Lower Farm in Upper Milton. It was only about 150 acres but the brothers and grandfather were all in partnership in those days – it was R. Hartley and Sons. Actually, Dad gave up the tenancy pretty quickly because he was asked by Mr Villiers to go and help him with a boys' club he was setting up in the east end of London. This was a wonderful opportunity and satisfied my father in two respects – a chance to continue his relationship with a man he admired and respected and to be involved with young men and sports.'

Ernest continued to work for Villiers until the approach of hostilities again in the late 1930s, Terry recalled. 'Arthur said to him, 'You must go back to farming, Ernest. War is coming. You'll be needed.' And so my father returned and, funnily enough, Lower Farm became vacant at the same time because the man who had it was left a farm by an uncle up in Berkshire.'

By this time Ernest Hartley was married with two children – Ernest Terence (Terry) born in April 1924 and Jane in 1934. Terry told the story of his parents' union with obvious relish.

'The Hartleys were steady as you go,' he explained, 'but my mother's family, the Gantletts, were considerably more flamboyant. Winifred Jane was a farmer's daughter from Fairford and she had had quite an interesting life before she met Dad. At 21 she met and secretly married a Mr Whatley who was a Rhodesian policeman back in England on leave. When she told her parents that she planned to follow her lover back to Rhodesia, they quickly arranged a church wedding. Having been married twice, the young couple set sail for Africa. Shortly after their arrival in Rhodesia, Whatley died of a fever and my mother found herself pregnant and alone. Denman Whatley was born in 1914 but, because the war curtailed all travel, she couldn't return to England with the baby until 1919 after the armistice. She met my father soon after her return and they were married in 1923.

'My half-brother Denman was born in 1914, I was born in 1924 and my sister Jane came along in 1934,' Terry mused. 'So mother had her three children over 20 years. Jane was born in Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London. When Dad came to fetch them home, matron said, 'Goodbye, Mrs Hartley, Goodbye, Jane. See you again in ten years!'

'My mother was called Queen,' Terry continued. 'Jack Kempster, an old friend who had a music store in Witney, sent her a card on her 80th birthday which said, 'Congratulations on your 80th birthday to the only Queen ever to be born in Fairford.' Winifred lived to achieve venerable

stature, dying in 1983 aged 92.

Denman Whatley is now dead. Terry felt that his half-brother had inherited more of the Gantlett flamboyance than he himself had done. 'He was a pilot in the navy most of his life but he did marry eventually to Joan Haythorn-Thwait, a woman with a chapel background. They had a daughter Sarah, who is head of Arts and Drama at Coventry University and a son who works with the Tote and loves racing.'

Ernest Hartley died in September 1969 with the spirit of his First World War Oxford Yeomanry Company still playing an integral part in his life. Terry Hartley explained this unique relationship which lasted over half a century. 'Arthur Villiers was an outstanding man, benevolent and

Ernest (right) with brothers Tom (left) and Frank, Oxfordshire Yeomanry Company, First World War

extraordinary. He kept in touch with all the old soldiers that had served under him. He used to contact Dad and say, "I would like you to go and see old Joe Bloggs. He's getting on a bit and isn't in good shape. Could you go along and give him some money? I'll reimburse you." When Arthur died in 1968 he left a trust for his men. There were only a few of the old boys left by then. All of these ex-First World War soldiers arrived and marched to the church to honour Arthur and they did the same thing when my father died. At Dad's funeral a friend of ours who knew Arthur gave the address. He said "Arthur has been in heaven about a year now and has discovered all the things that need to be improved. Ernest has just arrived and no doubt Arthur is letting him know what's got to be done."'[13]

Frank Hartley

Frank, the youngest son of Richard II and Rose Barrett Fenemore was born in July 1896. While his brother, Richard III and Ernest are both associated with farms in Upper Milton, Frank eventually became a full-time Shipton resident at Coldstone Farm. This did not occur early in his lifetime, however. After his education at Burford Grammar School and a sporting career which covered football (both amateur and professional), hockey, cricket, hunting and shooting, it is probably fair to say that during his youth, Frank worked on his father's farm only when sporting obligations did not take priority.

During the First World War Frank served in the Oxfordshire Yeomanry Company with his brothers Ernest and Tom. Again the towering figure of Arthur Villiers provided a lifelong influence on a young Hartley lad. At the end of the war Frank was granted a postwar commission as a second lieutenant. When his brother Ernest left the Wychwoods for London to assist Mr. Villiers with his boys' clubs, he asked Frank, then working half-heartedly in a bank, to join him. Both young men had lived through such horrors on the battlefields, including brother Tom's death, that they were forever unable to share their experiences with their families. 'He would now and then speak about the mud on the battlefields and in the trenches but nothing else,' John Hartley recalled. 'I think it was all too horrible to discuss.' However, instead of wishing to expunge completely all of their harrowing memories, both Ernest and Frank chose to continue close association with their Company Commander. Ernest stayed with the London boys' clubs until 1938. Frank elected to remain until 1944. Steadfast loyalty and affection for Arthur Villiers lasted a lifetime, John Hartley asserted.

'Dad married my mother, Phyllis Wakefield, in 1931,' John continued. 'She was from a large farming family from Signet Hill Farm, Burford. By this time Dad had given up most of his sporting activities except for cricket, which he continued to play until the mid-1950s. Of the three brothers, he had been the main footballer. He played for the Corinthians

(ex-Oxbridge players), Oxford City, Reading and then for three seasons for Tottenham Hotspur. He told me that his old Corinthian teammates were not at all pleased when he turned professional. He was one of only six amateurs who played for the full England professional eleven.'

After Frank and Phyllis were married they lived in Hackney where Frank was managing the Eton Manor Boys' Club. It was here that Roger Frank was born in July 1934 and John Richard in August 1936. During the Second World War, Frank feared for his family's safety and evacuated them to Aston Rowant where, despite all the protective measures he had taken, tragedy struck. On the 4 March 1943, eight and a half year old Roger was hit and killed by an army lorry which was making its way down the narrow lane near the Hartley home. Frank and Phyllis were devastated. They advertised for a companion for Phyllis to help her during the week while Frank was in London.

'A Mrs. Wilson answered the ad,' John said, 'and that fact had the strongest possible influence on the lives of Richard IV and Terry Hartley.' It seems that Mrs Wilson was a widow who had sadly lost her vicar husband. She was looking for somewhere to settle with congenial people, adding only the proviso that her grown daughters could join her for holidays. Her daughter Mary was already working and Rachel was a student at Bedford College. Phyl Hartley and Mrs Wilson became friends at once and a comfortable relationship resulted.

'Then Dad decided that he needed to spend more time with us and that we should move back to Shipton,' John explained. 'Mother and Dad decided to have another child so my sister Jennifer Mary was born 21 May 1944. I'm sure the advent of a new baby helped Dad decide to return home. Mrs Wilson had become such an important part of the family by then that she came with us.'[14] Coldstone Farm had become available and, in September of 1944, the Hartley entourage returned to the Wychwoods. Frank took up farming in earnest at the age of 48.

Terry Hartley takes up the story of the 'Wilson girls'. 'One day Dick (Richard IV) was home on leave from the Air Force and I was at home with nothing much to do when Auntie Phyl rang up and said, 'I've got two lovely young ladies down here. Can you two lads come and take them out somewhere?' So we went down to the Shaven Crown. In the end, Dick married Mary and I married Rachel. Dick and I never argued about which of us would have which girl. We just knew! Mrs Wilson eventually bought a little cottage by London House so the girls had their mother close by them until she died.'

Coldstone Farm which had belonged to University College, consisted of 305 acres when the Hartleys took it over. In the 1960s it was up to 330 acres with land purchased at the Prebendal House sale. In 1965–66, the 500 acre Grove Farm came up for sale which Dick, Terry and John purchased and split. Frank had died by this time. This was the farm that

Ernest, Richard III and Frank Hartley in c.1960

had brought Richard II to Shipton in the first place. Mr Holloway, the tenant, retired and the Hartleys experienced great satisfaction by recovering and owning nearly all the land that their grandfather had farmed as a tenant in the 1890s.

Frank Hartley was a churchwarden at St Mary's almost from the day he returned to Shipton until he died in 1965 – a total of 21 years. John remembers his father as 'quiet and modest'. He never talked about what he had done in sports even though he continued to play cricket to a high standard when he returned to Shipton. John mused, 'I very nearly played with him.' Frank was about 58 when John returned home from Bloxham.

Frank's untimely death in 1965 left Phyllis Hartley a widow for 30 years. When John and Margaret were married in 1968, Phyllis moved to Fiddler's Hill where she named her bungalow Signet after her childhood home. Frank Hartley's farming career lasted a scant 21 years but that he was very good at it is not questioned. 'He had a late start and Dad helped him a bit at first,' said his nephew Terry, 'but in the end, he was probably

a better farmer than any of us.'

It has been interesting to research the history of the Hartley family at a time when farming in general has suffered a devastating year. According to an article in *The Times* at the end of 2000, '24,000 agricultural workers of all kinds have left the land, there were 83 suicides and the average farm income is now an unsustainable £4,000 a year.'[15] It takes more than hard work and love of the land to succeed in such a climate. Canny decision making and financial acumen can be bred in the bone along with athletic ability. Richards I and II had all three in abundance, along with love of family and a strong sense of community service. They bequeathed these qualities to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The next issue of *Wychwoods History* will bring the Hartley Heritage up to date in the new century and millennium.

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Shipton and the Foxe Family

Jack Howard-Drake

The earliest reference to a church in Shipton under Wychwood is in a charter of Henry I about 1115 in a list of churches held by Arnold the Falconer and conferred on Salisbury cathedral as prebends. This meant that the income from Shipton church, its buildings and lands, went to the cathedral for the support of a canon there. The canon or prebendary became the rector of the parish and as such had the advowson or right of presentation to the living. The Shipton prebend was in the gift of the Crown and when it fell vacant in 1563 it was granted to John Foxe.

John Foxe was born at Boston in Lincolnshire in 1516. A prolific writer in the protestant cause, he was one of those known as the Marian exiles, protestants who sought refuge on the continent after the accession of the catholic Mary Tudor. While there he was much involved in theological controversy among the various factions and wrote the Latin version of his great work which is usually known as *The Book of Martyrs*. After his return to England in the autumn of 1561, Foxe was chiefly engaged in translating *The Book of Martyrs* into English and it was published on 20 March 1563. It was an immediate success and at the suggestion of Jewell, the Bishop of Salisbury, Foxe was rewarded by the Queen with the Shipton prebend.

He was appointed on 22 May and instituted on 31 May by proxy giving the usual security of £50. The prebend was valued at £39 6s 4d and the first year's income or first fruits was due to the crown. Foxe paid the tenth part of this on 21 July, giving as was customary two sureties for the remainder. He appointed as vicar William Master who had been with him on the continent and whose close involvement in the life of Shipton is described in *Wychwoods History* Number Two. Foxe was a generous and easy going man and was usually short of money. The payment of the security money and the tenth of the first fruits was a heavy burden and Master also had difficulty in meeting the payment of his own first fruits. Foxe petitioned the Queen asking that they should both be excused further payment. Lately, he says, she has graciously given him the prebend of Shipton and he has appointed Master as his vicar, a man perhaps not unknown to her majesty. Both of them now stick in the payment of the

first fruits for neither has a farthing to pay with. Dare he be bold to ask her to remit the payments? She would readily pardon this request and grant it did she but know how the life work of both of them was hampered by debt. It is not known whether his plea was successful.

Foxe was less than punctilious in carrying out his duties as a canon of Salisbury Cathedral. There is no record of his ever visiting Salisbury, not even at the Pentecostal Synods of 1564–65 when every prebendary was supposed to appear under pain of excommunication, nor at the election of bishops and deans, nor at Bishop Jewell's visitation. In 1568 he was declared contumacious for refusing to devote a tenth of his income to the repair of the cathedral. Nevertheless, he held the prebend until his death in 1587 in spite of an attempt by Bishop Piers to deprive him of it in 1586 when his health was rapidly breaking down.

There is no direct evidence that Foxe ever visited Shipton but he may well have done so. He was educated at Magdalen College and had a number of Oxford connections. About 1576 the President of Magdalen, Lawrence Humphrey, wrote to him asking 'why have you put off your annual journey? Why do you not visit us your friends? ... Oxford desires to hear you and Shipton seeks knowledge at your mouth. You have here something to do, you have obtained your Sparta, that is the prebend. Your sheep desire to hear your voice. You have a son to talk with, to teach and to admonish'.

William Master also pressed Foxe to come to Shipton in, for example, a letter written in Latin which he sent him in 1568; but the letter is primarily interesting in showing the close relationship at an intellectual level which existed between rector and vicar in Shipton to an extent probably unusual in most parishes. Master is troubled by the 'unhappiness of these and earlier times' and thanks Foxe, 'his honoured patron', for 'his most delightful letters'. He is conscious of his own inadequacy in carrying out God's purpose, especially in contrast to Foxe's distinguished work, but asks Foxe to bring his own small writings to the attention of the Bishop of London and to arrange a meeting for him with the Archbishop. There are various classical allusions in the letter and references to contemporary theologians, marking the correspondence as that of educated men who had shared the dangers of religious struggles at home and abroad; but there is also the human touch of everyday life. Master writes 'As to your generous offer to me not only of trees but of all the timber on your estate, I perceive your goodwill and how much I owe to your kindness yet I perceive also that it was not a bad thing that you put Mr John Randall in charge of your business; he will perhaps be more careful of your affairs though they are not his own and will save you from wasting all in lavish profusion and coming to ruin. But indeed (to speak seriously) I have taken as yet none of the trees for they ought not to be cut down at this time of the year ... Next year ... if the season is right and our necessity demands it, we shall be content with a few ... I and my wife desire greatly to know whether God has blessed you with yet another child ... I beg that you and the Randalls will visit us this coming spring. It will be a delight to us, not to say good for your own health'.

The Prebendal House Copy of *The Book of Martyrs*

The canons of the church of England in 1571 decreed that Foxe's book and certain other books should be kept in the halls and dining-rooms of archbishops, bishops, deans, canons and archdeacons, and in cathedrals, colleges, halls of London livery companies and so on. The only books which had to be kept in parish churches were folio bibles, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Book of Homilies*; but many clergy included Foxe's among parish books. Master's close friendship with Foxe and Foxe's position as rector of the parish would no doubt have been sufficient reasons for him to have a copy in his church. There has been a local tradition that Foxe wrote the English version of his book in the Prebendal House but he wrote it before receiving the Shipton prebend and so could not have done so.

There has for some time been a copy of the book in the Old Prebendal House. It was bought by the then owner of the house at an unknown date in the twentieth century from an unknown source and has no obvious historic link with sixteenth century Shipton. It was examined in 1989 by Paul Morgan, the diocesan adviser on books and the Bodleian representative on the books and manuscripts committee of the Council for the Care of Churches. He identified it as a third edition printed in London by John Day in 1576. It is bound in late seventeenth or early eighteenth calf, probably Oxford work, and has been rebacked and defective leaves have been repaired. A dozen or so pages are missing.

The Tenants of the Prebendal or Parsonage Farm

For the most part the prebendaries would have had little direct interest in the affairs of Shipton parish, regarding it simply as a source of income from the farming of the prebendal lands, known as Parsonage Farm, and from the great tithes, namely all grain, wool and hay. (The other, lesser tithes, went to the vicar.) The prebendaries leased the prebend to tenants for a sum of money leaving them to collect the tithes in kind and to make what profit they could from them. It was frequently the practice in Shipton for these primary tenants to further lease the Parsonage Farm to sub-tenants who actually worked the land and collected the tithes.

Having been appointed to the prebend Foxe granted a lease of it to his brother-in-law, Thomas Randall. (He had married Agnes Randall in February 1547.) Her other brother John is the Randall referred to in Master's letter quoted above and had been Foxe's proxy when he was instituted canon in 1563. There is no copy of the lease to Thomas but it

John Foxe, engraving by George Glover, 1587
'Foxe John' Britannica® CD 2000 Deluxe. © 1994–2000 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

was probably on the same lines as the lease granted in 1541 by the then prebendary, John London, to William Fermour. This granted Fermour the prebend and parsonage of Shipton under Wychwood with the mansion place of the same prebend and the lands and tithes belonging there and in Ascott. (Ascott, although it had acquired the status of a separate parish, was still technically a chapelry of Shipton, and Shipton parish included Milton, Lyneham, Leafield, Ramsden and Langley.) The lease was for 50 years at £40 a year, the prebendary to pay the King's taxes and the tenant to pay the ecclesiastical dues. It contained a provision that sufficient of the house and stables was to be available to London and succeeding prebendaries if they chose to visit it, a provision which was carried through over the years for the benefit of both prebendaries and primary tenants.

When Thomas Randall died in 1585, Foxe gave the lease to his (Foxe's) son, Samuel, who had been studying abroad and who returned to England in June 1586. Samuel had been at Magdalen College from 1574 to 1581 and was the son that Lawrence Humphrey thought his father should visit. He did not take up residence in Shipton on a permanent basis but may have visited his prebend while taking his degree of Master of Arts at Oxford in 1587. He would have had little opportunity for a visit in the

years following his acquiring of the lease. He entered the service of Thomas Heneage in 1587 and was sent to Hamburg. In 1588 he was put in charge of the royal palace at Havering in Essex and in 1589 he married Anne Luson of Estwell in Kent. He had a number of properties in various parts of the country and spent most of his life in the parish of Waltham Abbey in Essex. He was, however, in Shipton in 1590 when he recorded in his diary 'Anno 1590 ye last daye of ye month and year, being New Year's Eve, and the same day 30 years whereon myself was born into this world my liefest daughter at Shipton in the parlor chamber in ye parsonage house between two and three of the clock in the morning, whose godfather was Sir Moyle Finch, godmothers my Lady Heneage and Mrs Barrett'. Anne's baptism is recorded in the parish registers on 10 January 1591 as 'Anne daughter of Master Samuel of the Courte'. The description of the Parsonage House as the Court may be accounted for by the fact that William Master was ill (he was buried a month later), and that the baptism ceremony was carried out by someone who did not know the parish.

In 1593 Samuel granted what is described as a lease of the tithe to Richard Wisdom, who had been a sub-tenant of Thomas Randall's, the terms of which show one aspect of the part which the Prebend played in the day to day life of Shipton. Wisdom was required to observe a covenant in the original lease to Samuel about the entertainment of the poor, viz., 'And further yt the said Samuell Foxe, his executors and assigns shall and will every Sunday and festivall day during the saide terme, invite, entertaine and have to his table at dinner and supper two couple of honest and neediest persons (being dwellers within the said parish) allowing them sufficient meate and drinke for their relief. To the intent of good hospitality may be kept and mainteyned within the same mansion place'.

In his will dated 29 June 1622, some eight years before he died, Samuel Foxe left £5 to be distributed to the poor of Shipton and Ascott. His interest in Ascott is shown by a note associated with the will – 'the ij daye of October, anno domini 1593, received of Mr Samual Foxe my mayster the some of V£, for my half yeares wages due to me at Mycaelmas last. Be me, Jhon Deabant, curat of Ascot'. Samuel left his lease of Shipton for the payment of his debts and to cover a number of legacies. 'Out of the rent of Shipton, Askot, Lina (*sic*) or Milton' £10 was to be paid every six months to his son Robert for life, with a further £100 a year for three years. Out of the proceeds of the next sale of wood from Stockley Coppice, which formed part of the prebendal lands, £20 was to be paid to each of his daughters, Ann Boteler and Ursula Wollaston, £20 to his grandson Edward Wollaston, and £20 to his brother Simeon. The unexpired time of the lease of the prebend was to go to his executors who were his wife, his eldest son Thomas and his brother Simeon. His wife died a few months after Samuel and there is no record of his brother Simeon taking an active interest in Shipton.

Thomas, like his uncle Simeon, was a physician. He, too, was at Magdalen College, but there is no record of his ever having lived in Shipton. He is known to have leased 'the tithes of Shipton' to Thomas Skay, a yeoman who, it is noted, was bound by the requirement to entertain two couples of poor people every Sunday and festival day at the parsonage house. Thomas Foxe was primary tenant when the prebend was surveyed during the Commonwealth 'by virtue of a commission ... grounded ypon an Act of the Commons of England assembled in Parliament for ye abolishing of Deans and Chapters, Canons, Prebends and other offices and Tithes belonging to any Cathedrall or Collegiate Church or Chapell within England and Wales.' Thomas is shown as holding the tenancy on a lease from Dr Zouch, 'one of the late prebendaries of the Cathedrall Church of Sarum'. It seems that the prebendaries did not interfere at any time to prevent the primary tenants passing on their leases to their descendants and when Thomas died on 20 November 1662, he left 'his lease and executoriall right of the said parsonage of Shipton, with all its members and appertainances to his only daughter and sole executrix Dame Alice Willys, wife to Sir Richard Willys of Shipton in the county of Oxon, knt. and bart.' The government's proposal to abolish prebends and other offices was not followed through.

Richard Willys and his brother Thomas were prominent royalists and were both created baronets by Charles I, Richard in 1642 and Thomas in 1646. Richard was colonel of a regiment of horse and colonel-general of the counties of Lincoln, Nottingham and Rutland and governor of the town and castle of Newark. After the battle of Naseby he quarrelled with the king and retired to Warlies in Waltham Abbey where he died in 1690.

His estate passed nominally to his son Thomas but Thomas was said 'to be bereft of his wits' and died unmarried and a lunatic in 1701. Anne, Richard's other surviving child, inherited Warlies Park and his other possessions including the Shipton prebend. The lease of the prebend passed from Anne, who married Christopher Davenport, 'a gentleman from London', to her daughter Frances, who married Richard Morgan, and thus stayed with the descendants of John Foxe until her death in 1761.

Although these descendants of John Foxe all had extensive properties in Essex and elsewhere they maintained a special interest in Shipton. Richard Willys was Sir Richard Willys of Warlies but is described as of Shipton in Thomas Foxe's will and Willys' son Thomas and daughter Anne both adopted the surname of Foxe-Willys. When Richard granted a three year lease of the Prebendal House to Mary Brookes in 1739 one of the rooms listed in the inventory attached to the lease was called Sir Richard's room showing that Foxe's descendants made full use of the provision that sufficient of the house and stables was to be made available to prebendaries and primary tenants if they chose to visit Shipton.

Christopher Davenport inherited Warlies from Richard Willys by

virtue of his marriage to Anne Foxe-Willys and became steward of the manor of Waltham. A court baron was held at Waltham after his death when details were given of his copyhold lands at Waltham amounting to just over 180 acres. Nevertheless he and Anne, and their daughter also Anne, were all buried in Shipton and there is a memorial to them in the church on the south wall of the chancel. All three are described in the parish registers as of St Clement Danes, Middlesex.

Anne, Christopher's wife, died in 1703 and when Christopher died in 1714, their daughter Frances, who was unmarried, inherited her father's properties. In 1718 or 1719 she married Richard Morgan described as of London but also having property in Gloucestershire and Southampton as well as acquiring Warlies and Shipton prebend through his marriage. He too was buried at Shipton, on 27 September 1740, being described as of the parish of Waltham Abbey, Essex.

Frances inherited all her husband's possessions and although she lived at Warlies decreed in her will that she should be 'interred in the vault by me erected at Shipton in the county of Oxford'. She was buried in Shipton on 18 April 1761 being described in the parish registers as the widow of Richard Morgan of Warlies in Essex; but there is no evidence that there was ever a Morgan vault in Shipton church. There is, however, a tomb in the churchyard described by Jennifer Sherwood in *A Guide to the Churches of Oxfordshire* as a 'three-decker bale tomb to the Morgan family, lavishly carved with garlands and cherubs'. The only names that can be read on it are those of two Henrys, a Rose and a Robert, all of Bruern, and they and other members of the Morgan family are recorded in the parish registers. Clearly the family valued their links with Shipton and maybe Frances's vault, which she 'erected', is the tomb, or the tomb was built over a vault in the generally accepted meaning of the word.

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James Longshaw of Shipton, Musician

Keith Chandler

In 1925 the Travelling Morrice, a revivalist dance team based in Cambridge, were touring in the Cotswolds when they encountered a 'Mr Langshaw' at Chipping Norton. He revealed that he had formerly played the fiddle to accompany morris dance sides at both Shipton under Wychwood and Milton under Wychwood.[1]

The recorded history of Milton's morris dance team dates back to around the 1780s, while that of Shipton is confirmed only from about the 1830s onwards. In an unpublished manuscript compiled in 1885 or earlier, John Horne gave a long account of the annual 'Jubilee' (i.e. Whitsun Ale) held at Milton under Wychwood about 1780, 'where Morris Dancing was one of the chief attractions, as many as three sets would attend there and prizes were given to the best dancers'.[2] Given that morris dance sides were always a feature of Whitsun Ale celebrations at this date, one can assume that one of the attendant dance sides would have been local. Morris dancing was a feature of the festivities held to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales in March 1863[3] and, again, this seems likely to have been the village-based set.

It was probably the first half of the nineteenth century to which Horne referred when he noted 'Shipton in Oxfordshire was formerly a very noted place for Morris-dancing, as many as four sets have been seen to attend the Club there, and some come from long distances.'[4] Henry Franklin, a dancer at Leafield who left the village in 1858, remembered that there had been sets of dancers at Shipton and Milton under Wychwood, and Finstock, and was perhaps recalling sides which were contemporaneously active with his own. He claimed 'Shipton [was] a lad's morris, one man whistled to 'em', suggesting perhaps a younger side which remained after the set of older men had given up.[5]

It may have been this latter side for which 'Mr. Langshaw' had played. Given the complete absence of biographical details in the Travelling Morrice records, the first task was to identify Mr Langshaw. The 1925 Register of Electors for Chipping Norton recorded no-one by the name of Langshaw but listed the following inhabitants called Longshaw:

James	2 Goddard's Lane
Francis, Julia & Ethel Annie	31 New Street
Henry & Amelia	15 Middle Row
Arthur & Grace	62 West Street

This offered four possibilities. If, as claimed, he had played for the dance sets at both Shipton and Milton there was a good chance that he had been resident in one of those adjacent villages. From the 1881 census only one household featured any of the 1925 names. The enumeration entry was as follows:

NAME		AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH
James Longshaw	head	62	Chelsea Pensioner	Leafield
Elizabeth	wife	56		Sunderland, Durham
James	son	22	carpenter	Shipton
Jane A	daughter	25		Sunderland, Durham

James the younger is the most likely candidate for the fiddle player. Parish registers revealed that James Longshaw was baptised at Shipton under Wychwood in July 1858, the son of James and Elizabeth Longshaw. His father's occupation is described as 'Soldier (retired)'. In time the family would also include Phoebe and Elizabeth, both born in Shipton. By the 1891 census, James was a carpenter aged 32 and the Shipton under Wychwood marriage register in May 1891 records his marriage as a bachelor aged 40 to Sarah Longshaw, daughter of Joseph Lanfear.

The official sources reveal only a bare outline of his life. Already by James' birth in 1858 his father had retired as a professional soldier on a pension, and continued to receive payment until the age of 72, at least. His unit, given as '1st 3rd Foot', may probably be identified as the First Battalion of the Third Regiment of Foot, otherwise the East Kent Regiment, known since 1782 as The Buffs. As a soldier in this unit he may well have seen action in India during the Gwalior Campaign of 1843,[6] a far cry from his native Oxfordshire. His wife and first child were born in Sunderland, in County Durham.

At some point between the birth of daughter Jane Ann and son James, the family had moved to Shipton under Wychwood. At this time the forest itself was being cleared extensively under the 1857 Act of Disafforestation. In fact, if the elder James Longshaw had, as the sources suggest, been away for some time, he would scarcely have recognised the region of his birth.[7] So, we may observe that James Longshaw, the fiddle player, was brought up in what was, for the place and period, a relatively cosmopolitan household. Not only had his father travelled well beyond the bounds of his home area, but his mother, born in the north-east of the country, would have spoken with an accent uncommon in the Wychwood region.

In 1871 James was enumerated as 'Scholar'. It was rare at this date for

a boy to remain at school much beyond the age of twelve, and at some point during the next decade he became a carpenter and he continued in this trade through 1891 and, in fact, until retirement. He lived with his parents until at least the age of 32, and probably until the date of his marriage in 1898. From the entry in the marriage register his wife's surname differs from that of her father; further research showed she had been married before. There is no record yet found of James' death.

My next informant was Mr W F Martin, in Iffley, Oxford. 'The fiddler? We've come across him on my wife's side. (She) knows of a fiddler at Shipton under Wychwood. "Jimmy" she remembers him as. She seems to have a childish, vague memory of an old gentleman'. Here, at last, was confirmation that the identification of 'Mr Langshaw' as James Longshaw had been correct. He would have been of an age to have played during the 1870s but probably not much before this. There was also a hazy memory among other family members of James Longshaw having been known locally as a fiddler who apparently played for dancing although not specifically morris dancing. Mrs Martin's sister, Mrs G B Farrar in Kirtlington recalled seeing a volume of music written by James Longshaw which at one time was in the possession of Mrs Truman, a daughter of Sarah Longshaw, who lived in Hurst Street, Oxford, for many years. Using the parish registers the Martins had drawn up a family tree. George Longshaw (1856-97) had married Sarah Landfeare (sic), who died in April 1916, and this couple were Mrs Martin's grandparents. They had three children, two girls and one boy. The son, George Henry William Longshaw (1888–1954) was her father, and her mother was a Stroud, who were a 'big family' in the Wychwood area. After George Longshaw's death Sarah remarried, to James Longshaw. Given Sarah's death in 1916, Mrs Martin's memory of James Longshaw would have been when she was 'very small', aged about four or five. It is possible to confirm that Sarah Longshaw, daughter of Joseph Lanfear, had remarried to James Longshaw a year after the death of her first husband.

Another local fiddler, Charles Benfield of Bould

Was it possible that the manuscript tune book belonging to James Longshaw might still exist? Mrs Farrar thought that James Longshaw probably did play for the morris dancers. He did have a music book, but she was only aged about five at the time she remembers seeing it, in about 1915. He also had an old violin hanging on the wall of 'granny's kitchen'. She remembered a cottage on the Bruern Estate, where James was employed as a carpenter. 'We called him Grampy Jim because we knew he wasn't our real grandfather' being her grandmother's second marriage. Longshaw was considered to be fairly well up in the servants' hierarchy. The estate carpenter and the stud groom had facing cottages. 'Grampy Jim had a very nice workshop, away from the house. He was the only carpenter on the estate, and did all the carpentry there, as well as making bits of furniture for the kitchen, if another bench was needed for example.' She thought that he had a beard; the two sisters used to try and curl it while sitting on either side of him after supper. At the time she had never encountered beards before, her own father being clean-shaven. James was very good to the two sisters, they used to play in the workshop amongst the shavings and thought it great fun. Mrs Farrar's mother had gone to Bruern to act as a nurse to Granny when she was dying of cancer, and she and her sister went along. They were there several weeks. While her grandmother was dying the two sisters used to sit on the landing and listen to the conversation below, trying to find out what was happening. They heard something about Grampy Jim going into the workhouse. She did not know whether this was true or not.

At the time she remembers it, the music manuscript was covered with sheepskin, was very smelly and dirty, and was 'going sticky', which made her loath to touch it. It was quite a thick book, with the pages a bit like vellum. It was definitely a hand-written manuscript, as she recalled having taken a look at a page or two. Mrs Farrar did not know what had

happened to either the violin or the manuscript book

It seems from Mrs Martin's and Mrs Farrar's evidence that James Longshaw had played for dancing other than morris, given that he had such an substantial tune collection. Certainly the village benefit societies continued to celebrate their particular feast days until the end of the nineteenth century and beyond, and dancing remained a common, if not ubiquitous feature. We may never know what prompted him to take up the fiddle, at what age, whether or not he had a formal teaching, how he acquired the tunes which he committed to paper and what prompted him to choose those in particular, how much he earned from music making, and a score of other questions. Despite failing to locate the music manuscript, which would certainly have been a find of the greatest importance, stories and memories in the family oral tradition had illuminated at least some aspects of the life of yet another working man otherwise destined for obscurity.

For further information on traditional music – www.mustrad.org.uk

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Care in the Community Eighteenth-Century Style

Joan Howard-Drake

At the beginning of the twenty-first century much is being written about 'care in the community'; but the concept is not new. It was the basis of pre-1834 poor law. Did it, in the eighteenth century, provide anything akin to care as envisaged today?

At that time the laws providing for the relief of the poor applied throughout the country but were administered by parishes for their own people. The help to be given was decided by parish officers and varied from place to place. In large parishes the various villages could administer their own poor law affairs and this is what happened in Shipton under Wychwood which then included not only Shipton itself but also Langley, Milton, Leafield, Lyneham and Ramsden. This article looks at the surviving poor law account books of Shipton and Leafield for 1740 to 1760 and for Leafield from 1790 to 1810 to see how the local overseers helped those in need.[1]

'Outdoor relief' was the help given to people living in their own homes. It took the form either of money or of help in kind or a combination of both. The amounts of money given as regular weekly payments during the time under review ranged between sixpence and six shillings. Widow Jordan of Leafield received two shillings and sixpence a week for 18 years. More typically, Edward Becket, an old man in Shipton, who received regular cash payments varying between 6d and 2s 6d for more than eight years, also received many items of food and clothing including coats, shirts and shoes. In his last months he was nursed and washed and his burial was paid for by the parish.

The help in kind to Becket was characteristic of what was provided. It included not only the food, drink, clothing and nursing which he received, but also fuel, household goods, medical treatment, unemployment pay, payment of rent, board and lodging, apprenticeships and other forms of help.

Not a great deal of food was given; for the most part it was bread and flour. Leafield on one occasion paid Mr Taylor of Witney £11 9s 6d for flour. Early in the century the bread would have been a coarse rye or barley loaf; later it was wheaten bread. Peter Mathias in *The First Industrial*

Nation says that from mid-eighteenth century even the poorest were eating wheaten bread, the cost of which was used for estimating wage rates later in the century.[2] One loaf could weigh up to twelve pounds, the equivalent of six large loaves today, and was given as a week's supply.[3] Meat, milk, sugar and butter were rarely provided, but in 1795 Mr Pratt, a local farmer was paid for 'bacon for the use of the poor.'

In mid-century a great deal of cloth for making clothes in the community was bought. Shoes, coats, shirts, caps, breeches, shifts and petticoats were the items most mentioned. Later in the century some items were bought, an indication perhaps that cheap made-up goods were becoming more readily available. Household goods such as beds and bed linen, rugs, brooms and candles were provided, with fuel such as faggots and wood. In Leafield at the end of the century William Ferriman was paid to build ovens for two of the poor and the overseers gave them candles with which to light them. An expensive way of fire lighting as small candles cost 10d a pound, nearly a day's wages at the time.

Medical treatment is not specifically mentioned in the poor law acts, only 'the care of the sick'. However as medical practice improved parishes arranged for treatment which was paid for in two ways, either by a yearly payment to a doctor or by calling one in as and when necessary. Shipton and Leafield used the latter method in mid-century and there are entries in the accounts for the treatment of the poor by Doctors Wisdome, Andrews and Minchin and by an apothecary, James Pujolas. By the end of the century Leafield was paying a doctor £4 4s a year for all his services. Three women were paid to attend the sick in Shipton in the 1740s, Nurse Matthews, Nurse Lewis and the Old Nurse. In Leafield in 1741 Mother Midnight attended Ann Busby at her lying-in and in 1754 a man nurse was employed, while between 1794 and 1797 the overseers paid a midwife. Women receiving relief were also paid to attend women in childbirth and to lay out the dead.

Leafield sent the Eeles family to the 'Pest House' in a smallpox outbreak in 1792 and paid Dr Hunt for their treatment. Often those attending the sick in smallpox epidemics were those who had lost family in earlier attacks, but had survived and were therefore immune themselves. It was not unusual for the village poor to be employed to sit up with and nurse other sick poor without losing their regular relief. In 1795 Leafield paid Dr Dix £9 1s 6d for 'cowpocks', that is vaccination against smallpox. Vaccination was being carried out in this part of Oxfordshire by 1768 as advocated by Dr Batt and Dr Hunt of Burford.

Shipton's overseers paid for two young men to go to Bath for treatment. One of them, Thomas Quarterman, aged 19, who was receiving weekly relief, went there in 1757 to have his hand seen by a surgeon. On his return he continued to get weekly relief and in addition was given medicine and clothing. In January 1759 he was sick again and was being

nursed. He died in March and was buried by the parish at a cost of 19s 10d.

Funerals were paid for and in both Shipton and Leafield paupers were given a decent burial. Shrouds, burial caps, coffins, grave digging and bell ringing all appear in the accounts.

Under the poor law acts parishes could apprentice pauper children. Between 1740 and 1760 Leafield spent £34 19s 6d to apprentice two boys and two girls. The two boys, John and William Dipper had cost the overseers of Leafield a great deal of money particularly in clothes and footware. John was apprenticed to George Edwards in 1742 for £7 7s with another £1 10s 3d for clothes; in 1745 William was bound to William Cockril for £5 4s. Shipton only spent £1 18s 2d on three boys and five shillings for 'Trotman's boy going into service'. Later in the century Leafield provided clothes for girls going to service.

In 1795 the Leafield overseers had apprenticed William Palmer to Mr Turtle in the parish for £4 4s. By 1804 he was being given bread and money and had men sitting with him and 'garding' him day and night. In February of the same year Elizabeth Brown was paid 4d for fetching a bedlam jacket for him. He was sent to a well-known asylum, St Luke's Hospital in London, in late March. He was provided with new clothes and it cost £6 for him and a man to go to London in a cart from Charlbury. In April Mary Pratley was paid for washing his bedlam jacket. He was moved to Mr Talbot's in Bethnal Green in 1805 and Lankford Harris was paid to go to London to move him and take new clothes. By 1810 when the account book ends he had already cost the parish £166.

Housing was a problem for parishes and they dealt with it in several ways. Rents were paid, people were boarded out and lodgings were paid for. Orphan or deserted children were boarded out with families in the villages. Some of those taking in boarders and lodgers were those on poor relief but no reduction was made in their regular relief. 'Keeping' was also used. This was the sending of men and boys to farmers in the area to be housed and given work.[4] The overseers paid the farmers an allowance but even so the system helped the parish to keep down the cost of housing and employment pay.

Parishes had a legal duty to provide work for the unemployed. This caused them problems throughout the centuries. In rural areas men, women and children were sent round to farmers for day work and if none was available they were paid out of poor law funds. Parish work was also provided for them, such as digging stone, mending roads, building walls, collecting wood, carrying goods, people and messages. Leafield gave William Marcham two days work in 1795 'after being refused by farmers' to be set on work'. Throughout the Leafield account book for 1790 to 1810 there are many entries for payments to 'yardland' men and women. There is no clue as to what yardland means in this context and no yardlands are named on any maps. However there was obviously provision of employment

for some, perhaps on the Field of Industry, a large area to the east of the village.

In mid-century each village paid for two marriages. For one of them Shipton paid for a ring costing 12s 6d, for 'the marrying' and for the ale afterwards. The bride and groom were Ady Eden and Charles Willett from Milton and there is no explanation as to why Shipton paid the expenses.

By the end of the eighteenth century new items are being recorded in the Leafield account book. The Radcliffe Infirmary had opened in 1770 and Leafield paid a guinea a year so that they could send patients there for treatment. To discourage dependence on poor relief, savings clubs were set up but sometimes subscriptions had to be paid by overseers. In 1808 Francis Fyfield was helped to pay his two shillings for the 'Club' so that he did not lose his membership. From 1798 payments of £5 4s yearly were made for a Sunday school and other teaching.

The militia service cost the parish money, for if the family of a man serving in the militia fell on hard times the parish was bound to help them. The story of Thomas Puffett shows this clearly. In 1795 he and his wife were receiving regular relief with occasional small additional sums and they had their rent paid. In that year he joined the militia and served in Ireland. As a result many more costs fell on the parish. There was the continued maintenance of his family, their rent was paid, his wife was helped at her lying-in and shoes, clothes and food were provided for the children. Later the overseers gave money to Puffett's children because as the accounts say 'they being left without bread by their father and mother'. These children were boarded out and even when Thomas and his wife returned to the village the family continued to receive constant help. Altogether they cost the village over £100.

'Indoor relief' was the name given to the provision of help in a poorhouse or workhouse. These workhouses should not be confused with those set up on an area basis under the 1834 Poor Law Act where regimes were designed to be harsh. Before 1834 the parishes ran their own. The poorhouse in Shipton was an old cottage next to the Crown Inn, now the site of Ivanhoe and Church View. It had been used from earlier times and was sometimes called the Church House housing old people and women with illegitimate children. Shipton continued to use its old poorhouse or workhouse as it was then called, until it was sold to Sir John Chandos Reade in 1854. The site of the workhouse in Leafield is not known but in April 1746 Thomas Wickens was appointed for £40 to keep it for a year. This arrangement only lasted two years but by 1790 a workhouse was well established in Leafield and between 1790 and 1810 four men were paid yearly salaries of between £6 and £18 as masters. Spinning and weaving equipment such as wheels, combs, hemp and flax was bought in order to provide work for those in the workhouses. Leafield overseers paid Mr Early, the blanket maker of Witney, for spinning material for the

The Crown Inn with Shipton Workhouse on the right Bodleian Library, Oxford

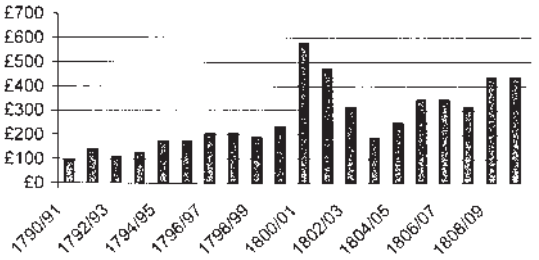
workhouse inmates. They also paid for other items such as soap, brimstone and ointment for 'the itch' and there are several entries in the accounts for the 'cleaning' and washing of the people in the workhouse.

There is a hint in the accounts to support the view that life for the inmates of the parish workhouses was less hard than it was for those who were sent to the post-1834 workhouses. In the latter part of the century not only were beds provided in the Leafield workhouse but also pillows, sheets, blankets and rugs. Tea was expensive in the eighteenth century but there is one record of it being bought, when Leafield bought four pennyworth for 'Shus Hunt' who was in the workhouse.

The money which the overseers needed to carry out their poor law responsibilities was raised by a tax on land. This meant that the farmers and landholders, who were the people who mostly filled the office of overseer, were in reality taxing themselves. In Shipton the tax was levied at 4s in the yardland, a yardland being about 30 acres. Each levy raised £12. The basis of Leafield's tax is not known but each levy came to £15 13s 4d. Money was raised as and when needed and about 78 levies were raised in the two villages between 1740 and 1760 amounting to £936 in Shipton and £1248 in Leafield. Between 1790 and 1810 when conditions worsened Leafield needed to make 340 levies to raise £5400 (see graph page 38).

The help given to the poor in the eighteenth century may not seem generous today but relating it to wages in rural areas and to the value of money at that time it was not inconsiderable. In the years before the act of 1834 the old poor law was doing a much better job than it has been

Income Raised by the Overseers of the Poor for Leafield, 1790–1810



credited with. The eighteenth century was a time when life was hard for the vast majority of the population and the standards expected today cannot be the level by which eighteenth century efforts can be judged. The early part of the century was one of relative stability in wages and prices but from about 1760 the whole country was under great pressure from inflation, the rise in population, unemployment and later the war with France. The dearth years of 1795, 1800 and 1801 added greatly to the overseers' problems. By 1810, Leafield was recording in its account book, 'Gave Thomas Bedle on account of his family being starved – 5s'.

These then were the ways in which the overseers of Shipton and Leafield tried to alleviate some of the poverty they saw in their own communities where they were in day to day contact with those in need. As today there was a legal entitlement to relief and the law could be invoked to get it. Appeals against overseers' decisions could be made to justices of the peace as appeals can be made to tribunals today. Regular cash relief, occasional one-off payments, medical treatment, help with housing, unemployment pay and work schemes were all there. Keith Snell, writing in *The Annals of the Labouring Poor* says 'In looking at the economic benefits to recipients under the old poor law one can be surprised by the generous and widely encompassing nature of relief'.[5] That this was the case in Shipton and Leafield can be seen from the accounts of the overseers of the poor, truly a case of care in the community.

References

[1] Shipton under Wychwood MS DD Par/236/05/f1/1; Leafield MS DD Par/62 Oxford-shire Record Office
[2] Mathias, Peter, *The First Industrial Nation* (1969), p.218
[3] David, Elizabeth, *English Bread and Yeast Cookery* (1979), p.230
[4] Webb, S. & B., *The Old Poor Law*, Part 1, Vol. 7 (1927), pp.198,400
[5] Snell, Keith D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor* (1985), p.105

Ascott Tollgate Board

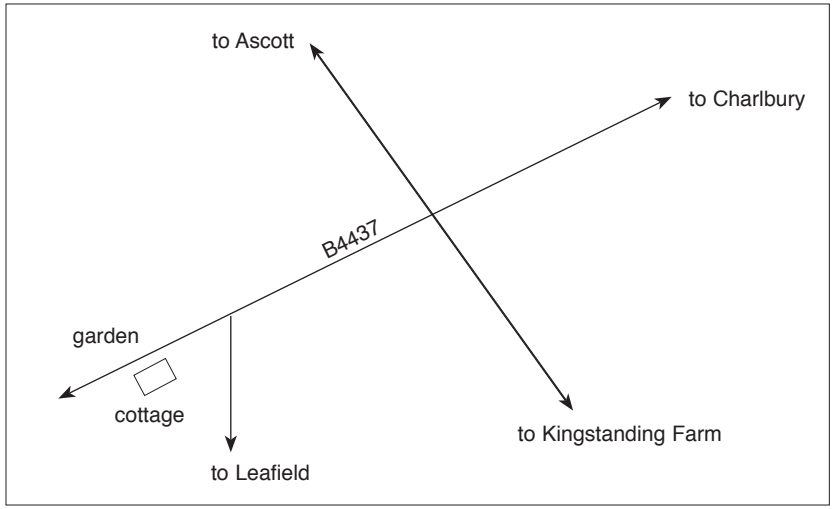
WENDY PEARSE

In 1800 the road from Burford to Charlbury became a turnpike. This ensured better maintenance of the surface and was financed by the imposition of tolls on travellers with vehicles and animals.

The tollboard with the keeper's cottage and gate was situated on the road just west of the turn to Leafield.[1] Many years ago several large stones lay on the verge indicating the site of the cottage and one stone still remains today. It was in this cottage that the maternal grandfather of Lily and Cyril Edginton was born, a member of one of the many Moss families of Ascott. A rose used to bloom in the hedge across the road where the gatekeeper's garden was and the stump of an old ash tree marks the spot.

When the railway age arrived, the days of the turnpikes were numbered. Chadlington Highways took over in 1860 and eventually the collection of tolls was discontinued.

How long Ascott's toll board remained on site is unknown but it hung



THE ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD TOLL BOARD AND COTTAGE WERE SITED TO THE WEST OF THE LEAFIELD TURN. THOSE WHO PASSED THROUGH THERE DID NOT HAVE TO PAY AGAIN AT DYERS HILL, CHARLBURY; THOSE JOINING FROM ASCOTT OR LEAFIELD DID.

for many years in the workshop of Jack Young the local wheelwright, near Priory Lane, before coming into the hands of Ivor Warner of College Farm.

A few decades ago, it was rediscovered in a barn in College Farm farmyard, now Meadow Bank Close. Rescued from neglect, it hung in Ascott School for many years but when the school closed in 1987 the late

ASCOTT GATE TOLLS

	S	D
For every Horse or other Beast drawing any Coach, Chariot, Chaise, Chair or other light travelling or Post Carriage.		4
For every Horse or other Beast not being Oxen or neat Cattle) drawing any Waggon, Wain, Cart, or other such carriage with the wheels of the Breadth of Six Inches.		4
Do drawing any Waggon, Wain, Cart or other such Carriage with wheels of four Inches and an half or less than six Inches		4
Do drawing any the like Waggon or other such described Carriage with wheels less than four inches and an half		4½
For every horse mare gelding, Mule or Ass not drawing		1½
For every Ox. or neat Cattle.		1
For every Calf, Pig, Sheep or Lamb.		½
NB. Two Oxen or neat cattle drawing to be paid for only as one horse		
For every Carriage with four [wheels] not having Goods therein other than the Harness thereof and the necessary articles for protection affix[ed or] secured to any waggon or the like sum payable for two Horse[s] drawing any four wheeled carriage of the like description.		
For every Chair, Cart or Carriage with two wheels only having the Goods as aforesaid and so affixed or secured the like sum pay [as] One Horse drawing any two Wheel Carriage of the same description But for such carriage with four Wheels or two Wheels so affixed [or] secured having Goods conveyed therein then they as aforesaid do [pay as] the last above mentioned Tolls respectively.		
DIERS HILL GATE cleared [pro]ducing a ticket denot[ing] Pay[ment of] Tol] here		

TRANSCRIPT OF ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD TOLL BOARD. DYERS HILL IS THE APPROACH INTO CHARLBURY AND PAYING A TOLL AT ASCOTT MEANT THAT NO TOLL NEED BE PAID THERE.

Charlie Smith of Maple Way placed the board on loan for safekeeping in Woodstock Museum and it is now stored in the museum store at Standlake.

The board, which appears to be the original dating from 1800, measures 86 x 130cms and is made of pine with painted letters and numbers. After much discussion at the Wychwoods 2000 Exhibition when the board was displayed, the consensus view was that the paint had acted as a preservative while the rest of the board had weathered, leaving the letters and numbers now standing proud of the surface. Perhaps some type of canopy constructed above the board also helped to preserve it.

Reference

[1] Oxfordshire Museum Store, Oxfordshire County Council. OXCMS:1987.71.1

See also The Burford to Banbury Turnpike Road in *Wychwoods History* No. 15, p.55

The Millennium Fieldwalk

MARGARET WARE

The 2000 fieldwalk nearly did not take place at all, due to weeks of wet weather from late summer onwards, giving a very late harvest with subsequent ploughing much delayed. But Bob Barrett came up trumps again and gave us the opportunity to examine a field on the corner of Fernhill Lane and the B4437 late in October. The usual stalwart walkers were joined by a few brave souls, and we all battled against cold and drizzle to cover the 32 acres. Apart from the usual predominant post-medieval detritus, a thin scatter of probably Romano-British pottery sherds, much worn, suggests that this area was cultivated in Roman times. The results from any one of our fieldwalks may not be spectacular in themselves, but all contribute to the long term wider historical picture of the Evenlode valley.

Assigning Quarters in the Wychwoods 1939-45

John Rawlins

This article deals with the billeting (the assigning of quarters or lodgings) of evacuees and how it was carried out in the Wychwoods area during the Second World War. Most of the material concerns Milton under Wychwood as it has the better records surviving. However other places are mentioned where there is either documentary evidence or written or oral history from those individuals concerned with the evacuation and billeting.

When this country had feared invasion there have been various schemes to move the civilian population. The first was during the Napoleonic Wars (c1803) when plans were made to move not only the civilian population out of certain regions, but also to move or destroy anything that might have been of use to the invaders. One such area was the vulnerable coast of Essex, which was again identified during the First World War. In 1914 it was proposed to move the civilian population on foot via minor roads, skirting London to designated centres in Oxfordshire. This plan did not materialise, but some soldiers, mainly wounded servicemen, were billeted in the large houses like Bruern Abbey, Shipton Court, and The Old Prebendal House, before returning to the horrors of the Western Front.

Another horror appeared in the First World War – enemy aircraft dropping bombs which meant that it was not only the coastal areas which were under threat. Based on the number of casualties for each ton of enemy bombs dropped in the First World War, and the subsequent increased development and strength of air power, successive governments anticipated the wholesale flight of the civilian population, with possibly some panic, from the large cities in the event of another war. In the event the calculations proved to be over pessimistic.

In 1931 the Imperial Defence Committee appointed a sub-committee to define what measures would be necessary to evacuate the civilian population and still maintain law and order. In July 1935 the Chipping Norton Rural District Council (CNRDC) received Circular No. 9 from the Home Office 'to consider precautionary measures which might be necessary to safeguarding the civil population against the effects of air attack'. This, in effect, was the beginning of local civil defence, with

Oxfordshire divided into six civil defence areas based on the old administrative centres like P1oughley and Bicester, Witney and Chipping Norton, with the Wychwoods forming the southern part of CNRDC. All had a railway station.

By March 1937 the Wychwoods Womens' Institute (WI) recorded in their minute book 'the serious housing conditions in Milton and Shipton and propose to try the County Council as the Rural District Council has failed to improve matters'. Little was done to improve matters but the poor quality housing was to be much needed. In May of that year SS Habana docked at Southampton with nearly 4000 Basque refugees, most of them children. Originally it was intended that they would stay in this country for about six months until the Spanish Civil War was over, but about 500 never went back to Spain and the others were housed in some 92 camps or houses scattered in mainland Britain. One group was housed in Shipton for a short time in St Michael's Home, a house built as a college for young ladies and from 1900 until the late 1930s owned by the Waifs and Strays Society.

Due to the worsening situation in Europe with the Czech crisis, Circular 1742 was sent to all local authorities by the Ministry of Health in September 1938 asking for the number of evacuated persons who could be accommodated in each district. This information was to be collected by billeting officers in the parishes in each rural district, collated by the clerk to the rural district councils, then passed on to the county council and thence to the Ministry of Health, the government department now responsible for evacuation and billeting.

On 27 September 1938 the Wychwoods WI held its monthly meeting earlier in the day than usual, at 6pm, as the normal venue, the British Legion Hall in Milton, was already booked; the Wychwoods British Legion had also called an emergency meeting 'owing to the feared imminence of war'. Two days later the Wychwoods WI held an emergency sub-committee meeting 'to arrange for the possible reception and care of babies and small children to be evacuated from London. We decided to take the Parish Hall, Shipton for a creche, to make palliasses and to find helpers'. A day later the prime minister, Neville Chamberlain flew back from Munich with the promise of peace in our time.

On 10 October Wychwoods WI noted a letter received from the county executive of the Oxfordshire Federation of Women' s Institutes 'thanking us for our valiant efforts during the past anxious days'. The 'valiant efforts' must have been more than preparing the parish hall, Shipton, as on 25 October the WI noted another 'letter from Mr S Groves and Mr E Berridge thanking us for our help in arranging billets for the people to be evacuated from London in the event of war'. The 'arranging billets' was a reference to a rather hasty survey carried out in early November for CNRDC when the villages were asked 'what improvements could be made for any future

Basque refugees at St Michael' s Home, Shipton during their short stay in 1939

billeting survey'.

Chief Billeting Officers for CNRDC were F.W. Hieate in 1939 and later L.A. Impey. In rural districts the officer was usually a volunteer from the council, but it is not known if these men were volunteers but the person was to be known and respected by the parishioners. Although Milton, at least, seems to have already appointed its billeting officers and carried out a billeting survey, on 3 January 1939 all rural district councils, including Chipping Norton, were asked to submit names of possible billeting officers for their parishes. Three weeks later the CNRDC notes that the following persons would be approached with a view to becoming billeting officers in their parishes.

Ascott	not listed but later known to be Colin Chance
Fifield and Idbury	Miss C Winter
Lyneham	A.J. Catling
Milton and Bruern	S.E. Groves and E.W. Berridge
Shipton	H. Coombes and G. Hambidge

They would 'be sent forms and instructions' and it was noted that 'they would approach members of the Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence (WVS) who have expressed a willingness to assist'. To make sure that the public knew what evacuation and billeting meant Walter Elliott, Minister of Health, broadcast to the nation on 6 January 1939. By

then locals could see the effects of war when Basque refugees were billeted in St Michael' s Home, Shipton.

In the parish of Milton under Wychwood the billeting officers were S.E.Groves, the owner and managing director of Alfred Groves and Sons, Milton, then a fairly large firm with over 200 employees, and E.W.Berridge, their company secretary. In those days of 'hire and fire' they possessed considerable economic clout and knowledge of many of the locals. Samuel Groves also had the backing of an energetic and indomitable wife, Muriel, usually known as 'Mrs Sam'.

'Mrs Sam' had founded the Wychwoods Infant Welfare in 1931, very early for a rural area. From this she must have gained both the respect and knowledge of local mothers and homes. Both were probably enhanced by her energetic stewardship as secretary of the Wychwoods WI. It was probably from this organisation that she enlisted the 'visitors' needed for the billeting officers to carry out a more comprehensive survey than that conducted in November in the previous year. The 'visitors' who, after initial briefing, were to visit all residences in the parish, making an estimate of the accommodation available on the basis of one person per habitable room. They were also instructed to be tactful as they made their survey. They were not allowed to enter any home but they were to make sure that the home was suitable for children who would be welcomed. They were to make note of any empty buildings, especially the large ones, farms where evacuees might have hindered vital food production and houses which were more than two miles from a suitable school.

Mrs Muriel Groves was a major figure in the Wychwoods throughout the war years. Afterwards she compiled the *Record of Milton and Shipton under Wychwood During the War*.

It was the duty of the billeting officer to collate the information from the 'visitors' and so make an assessment of the accommodation available which could be used in the event of war. Their other responsibilities were to arrange the allocation of evacuees to billets, and thereafter to make checks on the success or otherwise of the billeting,

and the arrangements for paying foster parents.

A small emergency committee meeting of the Wychwoods WI met on 13 February 1939 when the billeting officers 'again needed our help in procuring information regarding the evacuation of women and children from London in case of war'. The committee comprised: President Miss Batt (probably Margaret Batt), Secretary Mrs Sam Groves, Vice President Miss Harris with Mrs Jim Groves, Mrs Wally Groves, Mrs Charles Wilks, Mrs Mawle, Mrs Hautin (Mrs Hawtin), Mr Rex Hambidge, Mrs Jack Baker, Mrs Frank Waters, Mrs Geoff Rathbone and Miss Inman. Although the Wychwoods WI covered both villages, all those named were from Milton, apart from Mrs Sam Groves, who lived at Four Winds just into Shipton, and her brother Rex Hambidge who later moved to Milton. Each was given an area of Milton to cover as a 'visitor'. Probably by now all the ladies would have been members of the WVS set up nationally by Lady Reading in July 1938.

The next reference to billeting was on 12 June when the president of the Wychwoods WI 'told us of a meeting to be held on the 15th June to consider evacuation plans and asked for committee to meet children, to mind and entertain them'. There are no more references to billeting in the minutes of the Wychwoods WI until after the first evacuation had taken place on 1 September; presumably the WI and WVS were now too busy to write minutes. The next local reference to billeting appears in the minutes of the CNRDC at their meeting on 11 July following receipt of Memorandum M/S from London County Council, about buildings earmarked for billeting of handicapped and small children at Great Tew Park, Ditchley and Bruern Abbey among others. Part of Bruern Abbey had already been offered to the Wychwoods WI in October 1938 by the owners, Mr and Mrs Crompton Wood 'to house 20 refugee babies' who subsequently arrived in 1939–40.

In July 1939 another public information leaflet was published and distributed to all householders – Leaflet No. 3, *Evacuation. Why and How?* The pamphlet states that 'the scheme is entirely a voluntary one' and that 'There is room in the safer areas for these children; householders have volunteered to provide it'. As the war progressed some evacuation, particularly from coastal areas, and some billeting became compulsory.

Local schools which had closed on 4 August for the summer holidays should have reopened on 6 September, but that was not to be. No records were made in the local schools' log books or admission registers, but the log book of Upton Cross Infants School, Plaistow, West Ham, in the east end of London recorded on 1 September 'school closed indefinitely from today owing to Evacuation of children according to the Government's Evacuation plans in the view of declaration of war'. There are no more entries until January 1940. The girls and boys departments of the same school also closed, as did those of St Anthony's and New City Road and

WHY EVACUATION?

There are still a number of people who ask "What is the need for all this business about evacuation? Surely if war comes it would be better for families to stick together and not go breaking up their homes?"

It is quite easy to understand this feeling, because it is difficult for us in this country to realise what war in these days might mean. If we were involved in war, our big cities might be subjected to determined attacks from the air—at any rate in the early stages—and although our defences are strong and are rapidly growing stronger, some bombers would undoubtedly get through.

We must see to it then that the enemy does not secure his chief objects—the creation of anything like panic, or the crippling dislocation of our civil life.

One of the first measures we can take to prevent this is the removal of the children from the more dangerous areas.

THE GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME

The Government have accordingly made plans for the removal from what are called "evacuable" areas (see list at the back of this leaflet) to safer places called "reception" areas, of school children, children below school age if accompanied by their mothers or other responsible persons, and expectant mothers and blind persons.

The scheme is entirely a voluntary one, but clearly the children will be much safer and happier away from the big cities where the dangers will be greatest.

There is room in the safer areas for these children; householders have volunteered to provide it. They have offered homes where the children will be made welcome. The children will have their schoolteachers and other helpers with them and their schooling will be continued.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Schoolchildren

Schoolchildren would assemble at their schools when told to do so and would travel together with their teachers by train. The transport of some 3,000,000 in all is an enormous undertaking. *It would not be possible to let all parents know in advance the place to which each child is to be sent but they would be notified as soon as the movement is over.*

If you have children of school age, you have probably already heard from the school or the local education authority the necessary details of what you would have to do to get your child or children taken away. *Do not hesitate to register your children under this*

EXTRACT FROM CIVIL DEFENCE PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET NO.3 *EVACUATION WHY & HOW?* ISSUED FROM THE LORD PRIVY SEAL'S OFFICE IN JULY 1939

the rest of the schools in West Ham.

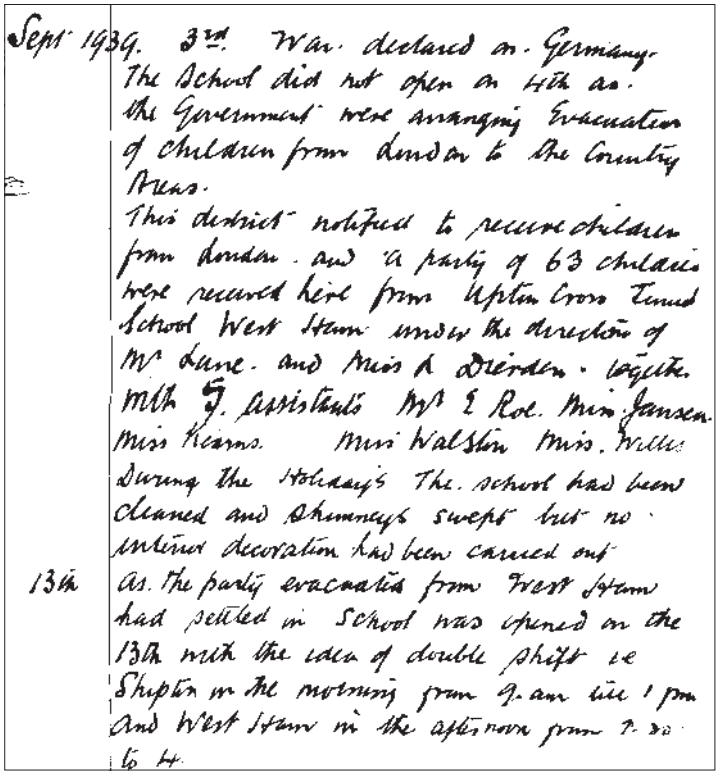
When the children, teachers and helpers left West Ham that day, 1 September, they did not know where they would eventually be accommodated. In a letter sent to all West Ham schools the destination of the children is given as 'between Lands End and The Wash'. It was only when they climbed aboard the 12.55pm train at Ealing Broadway Great Western Railway station that anyone could predict from the train's destination that the children would be billeted somewhere near Chipping Norton. One assumes that the billeting officers in Chipping Norton knew they were coming.

There are no known documents of the events of that day but with the help of local newspapers and oral history it is probable that the 12.55pm from Ealing Broadway arrived at Chipping Norton station at about 3.30pm. Children from New City Road School were billeted in the Borough of Chipping Norton, and the others, from St Anthony's and Upton Cross schools, were taken by bus or coach to the parishes in the rural district.

Those children destined for Milton were taken to the Baptist schoolroom at the top of Milton High Street. Here they were met by the WI and the WVS and were given refreshments. Then began the task of trying to match the requests of the prospective foster parents with the wishes of the evacuated family groups and friends who wanted to be billeted together, although this was not always possible. My parents had offered to take in two boys of my own age, and two boys (albeit slightly younger) were brought by Mrs Sam in her open-topped Morris 8. Two neighbouring homes had offered to take in two girls each, and these were duly delivered. Most evacuees were walked to their billets by the helpers. Not knowing the numbers to expect, the palliasses prepared by the WI and WVS for a night's sleep in the Baptist schoolroom were not needed.

The above method of matching evacuees applied to Milton in the first evacuation on 1 September 1939. In other places the billeting seems to have been less well organised; in Churchill, the evacuees (also from Upton Cross) and the prospective foster parents formed two lines in front of a table in the playground. As the first in each line reached the table so evacuee and foster parents were paired off. The 'sharper' of the evacuees could work out the more friendly looking foster parents. Then, by shifting their position in the line the evacuee could be paired off with his/her 'choice' of foster parents.

In many places the matching of evacuees to fosters homes has been described as a 'cattle market' with the evacuees lined up and the prospective foster parents then taking their pick, with the prettier girls and stronger boys chosen first. The former chosen in the possibility of causing less trouble and the latter of use as physical labour. This method



Sept 1939. 3rd War declared on Germany.
The School did not open on 4th as
the Government were arranging Evacuation
of Children from London to the Country
Areas.
This district notified to receive children
from London. and a party of 63 children
were received here from Upton Cross Council
School West Ham under the direction of
Mr Lane. and Miss A Dierden. together.
With 5 assistants Mrs L Rod. Miss Jansen.
Miss Kearns. Miss Walston Miss. Willis
During the Holidays The school had been
cleaned and chimneys swept but no
internal decoration had been carried out
13th As the party evacuated from West Ham
had settled in School was opened on the
13th with the idea of double shift i.e
Shipton in the morning from 9 am till 1 pm
And West Ham in the afternoon from 2 pm
to 4.

The Shipton School log book record of the evacuation from London in September 1939

of selection is referred to in many books on the evacuation including *I'll Take That One*. Milton farms took in no officially evacuated school-children and only one of my contacts was chosen in the above manner. Frank Newman was 'chosen by a large lady in jodhpurs and wellies' in Aldsworth just over the border in Gloucestershire. He was chosen with his younger brother and sister which he later described as being when 'our lucky star was shining on us that night'. Another way of placing evacuees was when the billeting officer walked round with the evacuees and handed over the evacuees to the designated foster homes as they moved along the street or road. This method was certainly used in Oxford and might well have been used in Milton during the third evacuation.

Many of Milton's foster homes were small cottages, where the maximum number of evacuees that could be housed was two, possibly three. Of the known evacuees to Milton more than half of them came as singles with no brothers or sisters. This made billeting a little easier as the singles could be fitted into the odd spaces. It was the accommodation of the family groups which presented a problem. Small cottages could cater

for the pairs, that is two children from the same family, but not always. Of the eleven pairs billeted two pairs were separated as they were not of the same sex. Three of the family groups of three were lucky as they were billeted together in the same billets, but the other groups of three were separated according to sex. This sex segregation, with girls fostered in families with girls and boys with boys, also seems to have applied to the larger family units of four and five which were split among three billets each. In this first evacuation, although brothers, sisters and friends were sometimes separated into different homes, most of them were close by geographically and were all from the same school and home area. With them were their teachers and helpers from West Ham to help them adjust to a new life.

In the main the evacuated children found themselves in homes of about their own social position. Those who found themselves in billets without WCs, the visits to the outside bucket toilet and the use of a 'gazzunder' at night came as a bit of a shock. One or two evacuees found themselves in far superior homes, some with servants. No doubt the foster parents were making a public spirited gesture in offering to take in evacuees, but maybe it was mistake on the part of the billeting officers to accept. The children in such homes did not stay long as they had great difficulty in adjusting to the big social change. As one evacuee said, 'The Captain and his wife did their best to be kind', but the evacuee and her sister were not sure how to deal with the social structure where 'we were put into the care of the servants'. How were they to address the Captain and his wife or the servants when most evacuees addressed their foster parents as 'aunt' and 'uncle'? Others recall difficult times when evacuated and when returning home. Betty Wright née Hopgood, who attended Milton school, was evacuated to Sarsden. The foster father swore at the new arrivals, told them he knew all about lying

George Lane and James Simpson (both from Upton Cross) billeted together at 4 Pear Tree Close. James was a single but George was separated from his two sisters billeted together in another house in Milton.

Londoners and informed them that they could only come into the house for meals and to go to bed as he did not want them wearing out his furniture. She returned home with her father to Dagenham, Essex for Christmas, before moving on to Walsingham in Norfolk, but the air raids were so awful there that she felt the option of even Sarsden seemed more attractive than the bombs or yet another strange place.

In some foster homes sleeping space and beds were limited. Bedrooms had to be shared, and the WI or WVS supplied extra beds of the canvas stretcher type and blankets. I was banished to the attic until such time as sleeping accommodation was improved by the purchase of two single beds when the Basques moved out of St Michael's Home at Shipton.

Those responsible for billeting may have thought of the financial benefit which would be brought to the poorer foster homes. The foster parents may have also borne this in mind when offering to take in evacuees, or they may have been merely altruistic. I don't know my parents' motives when taking in two evacuees, but, with a billeting allowance of 10s 6d for the first child and 8s for each subsequent child my father's income rose by 47 per cent. Billeting allowances were to change as it was soon noticed that the l0s 6d allowance did not differentiate between a 5-year-old and the hearty eater of 14+. Later the allowances were made on a sliding scale according to the age of the evacuee.

By and large the billets chosen were those with small families and with foster parents who could be trusted to make the evacuee welcome. But, of course there could be no guarantee and some foster parents proved to be inadequate. In many of the chosen billets in Milton the foster parents held strong religious beliefs and habits. This may not always been successful, but the children very often accepted it because 'that's the way it was', and, of the children who stayed the longest, all were from such foster homes.

However, religion was a problem elsewhere – in the type of school the children attended. Most local schools were Church of England, and if not, they were like Milton, Kingham and Burford which were council schools where a broadly-based Christianity was followed. As a result Jews were allowed to arrive late when religious assembly began the day. The evacuated Roman Catholic children from St Anthony's School billeted in Idbury and Fifield were not allowed to attend the local Church of England school. Presumably they were re-billeted elsewhere, nearer to a council school like Kingham which did already have pupils from St Anthony's.

The number of evacuees who arrived in Oxfordshire was less than anticipated. FG Scott, billeting controller for Oxfordshire, quoted in the *Oxford Mail* of 6 September 1939 gave the figures of 18,000 expected and 9,830 who actually arrived. Of these, Chipping Norton (Borough and Rural District) had expected 2,400 and received 1,826. These figures covered the three days of evacuation from 1–3 September.

The *Chipping Norton Advertiser* noted on 8 September that 900 children for the rural district detrained on Friday (1 September). This figure is perhaps rather high as it was a 12 coach train designed to carry 800 passengers. The same paper noted that 321 children, accompanied by 40 teachers and helpers, were received within the Borough of Chipping Norton. This leaves 439 children, teachers and helpers who were billeted in the rural district, assuming that it was a train with 800 passengers which arrived that day.

How many children arrived in Milton on that day is not known either, nor is it known where they were first billeted as the only documentary evidence known are the log book and admission register of Milton school which opened twelve days later on 12 September. The log book stated that 86 evacuees arrived, but the admission register lists 85 children together with their billets. Neither book gives any information on the number of teachers or helpers. Some of the children who arrived on 1 September may well have been taken back home by their parents before school opened on 12 September, and some of the children had changed billets in those twelve days, or whenever the admission register was written up.

Joan and Beryl Woodman (evacuees from Upton Cross) at Forest Lodge (now Forest Gate), Frog Lane, probably soon after their arrival in Milton on 1 September 1939. The Milton school register records that they were billeted with Mrs Keene (sic), High Street. With them is Nancy Mawle, daughter of the owners of the house.

There is some local evidence of this movement of billets in those twelve days. Henry was mentioned in the book *Records of Milton and Shipton under Wych-wood During the War* as being 'with our first evacuees in September 1939'. Due to his unorthodox behaviour he became known as 'wicked Henry' and had to change billets. He does not appear on the list of evacuees in Milton admission register dated 12 September. The two evacuees in the photograph were standing in front of Forest Lodge (now called Forest Gate) in Frog Lane, Milton, probably soon after their arrival. By 12 September they were listed in the admission register as billeted with Mrs Keene (sic), High Street, Milton. Also, from my memory, I am certain my grandfather and his wife took in six girl evacuees on the 1st, but only three are listed on the 12 September in the register.

The checking, sorting and changing of billets was probably done by the combined efforts and requests of foster and natural parents working with the evacuated and local teachers and helpers. Billeting officers were presumably told of the changes as they had to keep records so that the billeting allowances could be paid to the correct foster homes and stopped when the evacuee returned home. On 3 October the evacuation sub-committee of West Ham county borough reported 'staff spent time locating billets before proceeding with educational matters.' During the train journey whole school units had been able to be kept together as were family groups and friends. When split among the coaches at Chipping Norton, school and family groups were separated as were friends and consequently arrived in different villages. When this occurred, much time was spent cycling around tracking those separated and where possible re-arranging billets. Four more children from Upton Cross School are listed in Milton school's admission register sometime after 12 September, who, presumably had moved from other villages to Milton.

On 9 October and 13 November the WI and WVS reported checks on the billets and the need for blankets, beds and shoes. By the middle of October the 50th Northumbrian Division arrived in this area and they too needed billets which were arranged according to rank. The lower ranks were billeted in requisitioned buildings – barns, stables, club rooms – and the larger empty houses like St Michael's at Shipton and Sunset House, Jubilee Lane, Milton. Non-commissioned officers and officers were billeted in private homes that were not used for evacuated children or requisitioned houses like The Old Malt House, Shipton.

Since the outbreak of war until the end of 1939, Milton's admission register recorded the arrival of at least 16 private evacuees. With them came at least five adults and possibly more children under 5 or over 11. All the Wychwoods villages took in private evacuees as well as men and women drafted into this area for military service with the Army and RAF, and those who came for war work, like the Women's Land Army and also those who worked on the many local airfields. Although the billeting officers had no real responsibility to billet such persons they may have helped as they must have known from the earlier surveys which homes did not want officially evacuated children but were prepared to take in people who were a little older.

The billeting officers were kept busy with their official duties for there was a steady return of evacuees back home to West Ham. Thirty-one out of Milton's original 85 evacuees (36%) had left before the end of the winter term 1939. The billeting officers had to cancel the billeting allowance for each, as and when he became aware of the evacuee's return. In Shipton, 37

out of the original 63 official evacuees (59%) who had been noted in the log book as arriving at the school, had returned home by January 1940. In that same month 24 of those who were left in Shipton were taken to Launton, near Bicester where they were re-billeted. Was this due to 'the unsuitable and insanitary conditions pertaining to this old building' the reason recorded in the school log book on 4 January 1940? Or were there personality problems between Mr F.R. Lane, headmaster of Upton Cross School who had overall responsibility for the evacuated children in the area, George Horne, headmaster of Shipton and other members of Shipton community? The local children still had to put up with the conditions regardless of the complaints of the local doctor, Dr Gordon Scott. Two of the West Ham group, Jessie Hunt and Irene Whybrow, were left behind. They have little idea why except the log book states that 'Two children whose parents did not wish them to proceed remained on our strength'.

By February the CNRDC was already receiving circulars from the Ministry of Health referring to a second evacuation if air raids develop, although they suggest that no unaccompanied children would be sent to the rural district. In March the Wychwoods British Legion decided that

Ascott Church of England School c1940 showing local children and both official (Upton Cross) and private evacuees. In the second row from the back and second child from left is Jimmy Munro, a private evacuee who is also shown in the bomb crater in *That' s How it Was*, page 26.

members would not be able to take in city children for their annual holidays, and the Wychwoods WVS held a meeting to discuss further billeting and the supply of clothes to evacuees. As the 'phoney war' continued the drift back of evacuees from Milton slowed down. Thirty one had returned in the last four months of 1939, whereas only eleven left in first five months of 1940, and three of those had reached the school leaving age of 14.

Following the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk many of the soldiers found themselves in the Wychoods area for re-equipping and re-training. They used all the buildings which had been requisitioned in 1939 as well as tents erected in any spare space, especially the village greens and recreation grounds. Dunkirk and the fear of invasion meant that local schools prepared for the second wave of evacuees. None arrived in Ascott or Shipton but Milton school log book records the arrival of 29 children from Eastbrook school, Dagenham on 13 June, and on the 19 June the names of 29 children and their billets are recorded in the admission register. It is not known if any children who arrived on the 13th had left by the time the names were recorded on the 19th.

Some of these Dagenham children had already been evacuated by boat from Ford' s jetty to East Anglia in September 1939. During the 'phoney war' many had gone back to Dagenham and now found themselves re-evacuated to West Oxfordshire. In a similar way, some of the children first evacuated to the Wychwoods villages in 1939 who had returned to West Ham (including some of those who had been removed to Launton in January 1940) now found themselves in a party of 110 from Upton Cross school evacuated to Wantage, then in Berkshire, on 15 June.

Milton' s second reception of evacuees in June 1940 seems to have been carried out by the same personnel and organisation as before but with the more active involvement of Mr A Catling, billeting officer for Lyneham, where a third of the newly-arrived found homes. Very few of the billets in Milton used in the first evacuation were used again this time. The billets chosen would appear again to be the small cottage type where one or two children could share the spare room. As a result the larger family groups of three or four were split among three billets. Of the pairs of brother and sister, seven were billeted in pairs but the other five were split into separate billets to keep the two sexes apart as they were in the first evacuation.

Almost two weeks later, on 27 June, Shipton school log book records 'no special party of the second evacuation was allocated to this school. ... Admitted some evacuees, 3 from Dagenham and 3 from Halifax'. The 'no special party' could imply that Shipton school was still not in a satisfactory state which was the reason given for the move of evacuees from Shipton to Launton in January 1940. Why Shipton should receive three evacuees from Dagenham is a mystery. The three admitted on 27 June were from

During the third evacuation (Sept 1940) the sexes were mixed. Ian Kirk (left) and Maureen Mould (right), both from Peckham billeted with Roger Rawlins' (right) family. Audrey Cant (left), an Upton Cross evacuee was billeted nearby and remained to the end of the

the same school, Eastbrook, from where children had arrived in Milton and Churchill for billeting. It is likely that the three were moved from either Milton or Churchill to be re-billeted in the Old Prebendal House which one of the evacuees noted 'was a bit different to our three-bedroomed council house in Dagenham'. It may have been a little scheme hatched by the owner of Prebendal and the local doctor to annoy the existing establishment or to protest about the state of Shipton school which had been proclaimed to be unfit for evacuees but the locals still had to use it. A little later three more evacuees from the same school, Eastbrook, Dagenham, arrived in Shipton, having been originally billeted in Churchill. It is said that the local doctor had a hand in this move.

Some of the Eastbrook children seem to have been anxious to be home again as over a third had left Milton or Lyneham before the end of 1940. Of the 15 who went back, eleven were from Lyneham, where perhaps its isolation from the larger villages proved to be too much. Nevertheless, one wonders with the threat of invasion and the fact that German bombing had begun, why so many children went back. Some had definite reasons to leave; three of the evacuees had reached school-leaving age and took younger siblings back with them, and three had problems with foster home or parent. Of the 15 who went home at least three of them were back in Milton when the bombing intensified on 7 September.

At the CNRDC meeting on 1 June it was stated that the Queen had

sent a letter of thanks to all householders who had taken in evacuees, and at the meeting of 9 July, thanks had also been received from the Ministry of Health. Two circulars, GES 61 and 2071A, had also been received from the Ministry of Health giving figures for future evacuation of unaccompanied children to the district. This began with Plan B for 200 children to be followed by Plan C (200+200+200). Plan C was only to be brought into operation 'in the event of a grave emergency'. However, the chief billeting officer, Mr LA Impey had already protested to the Ministry of Health against 'the numbers of children allotted to the RDC'. No doubt the billeting officer was worried about the number of evacuees, both private and official, already in the district and that some householders were refusing to take in evacuees, although they had been issued with a Billeting Notice, Form E, which could, in effect make billeting compulsory.

It seems that the billeting in the Wychwoods was achieved by persuasion, as there are no CNRDC records of local compulsory billeting. In fact the CNRDC only recorded the refusal of householders in the Bartons to take in evacuees. As the case against the Barton villagers had not been correctly presented in court the case was dropped. The inadequacies of the powers of the billeting officers in this case led to a change in the CNRDC system when the post of combined investigation and billeting officer was created in January 1941.

Meanwhile it was not all gloom and doom for Mr Impey. At a meeting on 9 July the CNRDC announced that council house tenants 'could take in lodgers without breaking their tenancy agreements...until the end of the war'. This was perhaps a little late as many of Milton's evacuees had been housed in some council houses since the first evacuation.

The concentrated bombing of London, the Blitz, began on 7 September causing a third wave of evacuees to this area. Twenty-one were billeted in Ascott and 29 in Milton with the billeting arrangements probably as before. On this occasion Milton received less singles than previously which may have made billeting more difficult as there were more family units. Most of the pairs were billeted together although it meant no segregation of the sexes. Again, the foster homes were the small cottages and so the family groups of three or more were split up. The groups of four and five were each split among three billets. A family of three brothers seemed to have presented a problem as they refused to be separated. Oral history relates that they were taken round by one of the billeting officers in a last desperate attempt to find a billet for three boys. No one wanted three boys all together, but two neighbours in Pear Tree Close offered to share them. One home took two boys and the other brother was bribed by the foster father with a watch to be separated from his brothers – just for the night – which lasted for four years.

In the Milton school admission register the name of the foster parents was usually given as the wife of the family, but in this third evacuation

With Pear Tree Close in the background with locals Eileen Bartlett (left) and Joan Carpenter (right) on either end are private evacuees Barbara Abithal and Royston Henzell, both from Catford, who spent some time in 1940 in a council house although the taking in of lodgers was not officially sanctioned by

two husbands' names appear. One of them was Mr Catling of Lyneham, who, as billeting officer perhaps felt obliged to take in a brother and sister. Perhaps he took them in on a temporary basis until such time as he had them re-billeted, or there may have been a shortage of billets everywhere.

Before the end of 1940 another six children from Upton Cross and six more from Eastbrook, Dagenham, arrived in Milton – presumably they already knew of someone from their schools living here. These children were listed as official evacuees. To escape from the bombing whole families, except perhaps for the working fathers, now made their way to the Wychwoods to join their evacuated children or friends living in this area. They were usually classed as private or unofficial evacuees. These families found themselves accommodation wherever they could, including the properties whose condition had already been condemned by the Wychwoods WI in 1937. There are several references to these families in *That's How It Was,* a record of women's experiences in the Wychwoods at this time.

Shipton school received no evacuees in the second or third evacuations, perhaps because of the condition of the school. However the log book did record the intake of 13 official evacuees from East Ham on 7 October 1940. Unusually the children, although of school-age, were accompanied by their mothers, having begun their journey on 1 October.

Milton and Shipton did not have evacuated mothers with their children under 5 years old, the category which was the most difficulty to

place. The mothers found themselves in an environment with little to do, apart from looking after their children in a home which was not their own and having to share the limited kitchen and bath and toilet facilities, if any. Because of such difficulties most of the mothers and their under fives made a speedy return home as occurred at Chadlington and Charlbury. By October 1940 mothers were being evacuated with their school age children and the billeting officers may well have had difficulties. Even so they were easier to place than those with under fives. There is no documentary evidence of how many mothers and children arrived in Shipton or where they were billeted and I have had to rely on my only contact from among those children. John O'Connor thinks that there were five mothers and their eleven children, who were met by a male billeting officer and one or two lady helpers. Although he had no complaints about the billet at Lane House Farm, he and his mother stayed in Shipton for only three months before they moved to relatives in Sussex. He recorded that he was one of the lucky ones for his billet had good food and an inside toilet. As he was a Roman Catholic he had 'the enviable benefit of a lie-in every morning, not needing to arrive at school until 9.40am', after Church of England religious instruction.

In Chipping Norton there were billeting problems. By the end of October, the town clerk, F.W.Morris, reported that all voluntary billeting space was filled and on 18 November he wrote to someone looking for a billet that there were 'no more willing householders' to take in evacuees and that 'slum clearance properties' had already been utilised. Perhaps the billeting problem was not so acute in the Wychwoods with perhaps less demand than in Chipping Norton. Most of those who arrived in the Wychwoods already had some contact with a local person who could provide space or assistance. The Wychwoods WVS was still working and on 10 December noted that 'We reported needs of our evacuees in the district and discussed the best sort of Christmas party for them.'

The proximity and ease of access of the Wychwoods to London and other heavily bombed areas meant that in 1941 evacuee children were still arriving in Milton from all parts of the country, and probably Ascott and Shipton as well. In the period between the second evacuation on 26 May 1940 and 27 October 1941 another 54 children appear in the Milton school admission register. Obviously some parents came with them making a total of at least 76 who needed accommodation. There may have been more but the admission register did not record the under fives or children of 11+ or any of the other relatives who came, all, of course, adding to those still in Milton from the earlier evacuations.

Bearing in mind the failure to prosecute for refusing to take in evacuees in the Bartons in September 1940, and the arrival in the district of families who required housing within CNRDC, it was decided to appoint an investigation and billeting officer. Mr T. Beaven was approved by the

Ministry of Health at £4 per week plus travelling expenses. His duties were not given in the minutes of the CNRDC on 28 January1941 but, from later entries it can be assumed that he was to enforce any billeting notices given to householders. From July 1941 the CNRDC listed the amounts to be paid by evacuated families for the properties in which they were housed. Some of the housing had been requisitioned and the investigation officer calculated the amounts payable. Another of his tasks was to adjudicate on those evacuees who had reached school-leaving age. Rather than returning to the bombing, some found work locally. When in employment the evacuee was asked to contribute towards the billeting allowance paid to the foster home, all of which had been previously paid by the government. The amount payable by former evacuees depended upon the amount being earned; approximately half was to be paid towards the billeting allowance, at that time 12s 6d per week, received by the foster home.

From 1942 onwards it becomes more difficult to keep track of who was billeted in the Wychwoods. Milton school admission register is the only known source of names of evacuated children, but, from January 1943, all evacuated children of secondary school age were bussed to Burford. So their names do not appear in the Milton admission register, neither do the names of the unofficially evacuated children of 11+ who arrived before this date. The minute books of the CNRDC show some of the problems of the investigation and billeting officer who had to track evacuees whose movements could not be forecast, and the difficulty of trying to liase with all the different local authorities. Oxfordshire Education Committee listed at least 81 different evacuation authorities. Presumably Mr Beaven would have been informed by the billeting officers in the parishes, and by parish and district councillors. As enemy air attacks decreased some evacuees felt that it was safe to return to the family home or to wherever the family had been rehoused or rebilleted. This was not always safe as there were the Baedeker raids on the 'guide book' towns in 1942 and air raids on London continued through 1942 and 1943 with a 'Little Blitz' in January 1944. Meanwhile other families moved here to join a father in the armed forces or on war work, while some were moved from the coastal areas when preparations for D-Day began.

Two examples show the sort of problems that Mr Beaven had to cope with. A woman from Abingdon, then in Berkshire, brought an evacuee (home unknown) with her when she came to live in Fifield. As the evacuee was in employment the investigation and billeting officer asked her to pay 6s 6d contribution per week towards the billeting allowance. On a subsequent visit to collect the money he found that she was no longer in work. The officer made an assessment for an evacuee of over 14 years in Milton who was then working in the war nursery at Bruern Abbey. From her wage of 10s per week she was asked to pay 3s towards

the billeting allowance. Two months later it transpired that her mother had already been paying 6s per week towards her daughter's billeting costs to her home authority in West Ham.

Although the officer must have wasted much time and fuel on fruitless journeys it appears that he and the CNRDC dealt sympathetically with most cases, especially with those who had real problems. In the situations where evacuees of over 14 years were abandoned by their natural parents the evacuees were asked to pay very little towards the billeting allowance which covered food, board and lodging. It was realised that the evacuee would now have to pay for the other essentials of life such as clothing and travel, costs which the natural parents should have paid. The amount paid for requisitioned properties (between 6s to l0s per week) would appear fair when compared with rents for council houses (8s 6d to 11s per week). Like other tenants and the 14+ evacuees the amount of rent paid often varied according to income.

And there were still yet more arrivals in the Wychwoods. By 1943 Italian prisoners of war were housed in the camp in Frog Lane, Milton, and members of the US military were in the properties requisitioned earlier, like St Michael's and Shipton Court, as well as in the grounds of Bruern Abbey. Late in 1943 Lord and Lady Oswald Mosley were billeted in The Shaven Crown. Attacks by V1s or Doodlebugs on targets in London and southeast England began in June 1944. This caused another wave of evacuees which was accentuated by V2 rocket attacks starting in the September. From June to December of 1944 another 24 evacuee children, aged 5 to 11 years, were recorded in Milton's admission register. With them came at least 15 parents plus an unknown number of friends and family.

In February 1945 the CNRDC was asked by Mrs Gaskell, county organiser for the WVS, for their co-operation with the WVS scheme for the adoption of the blitzed Borough of Poplar which bordered West Ham to the east. The WVS would send small gifts to help those being re-housed after being bombed out. The clerk was asked to decline the invitation. However, the matter did not rest there as various gifts were sent to Poplar by the Wychwoods WI, probably with a little prompting from the local WVS.

By the time the war drew to a close many of the evacuees had returned to their home areas, but not necessarily to their former homes which had been bombed. This meant that families had to be re-housed or billeted in any available building, but not necessarily in the same area. Of the twelve West Ham evacuees who, with their siblings had come here in 1939, and with whom I am still in contact, eight had been bombed out, one of them twice, three returned to their former homes and one, Mary Barnes, née Bond, remained in the Wychwoods.

Of all the West Ham evacuees known to me only three remained in the same billet for the whole of the war. Most evacuees had some change of

accommodation, some more than once. One Upton Cross boy was in Shipton in 1939, but not with his siblings. Then he was moved to Launton, moving from one billet to another, each time separated from his siblings. From Launton he was moved to Newquay on his own and so back to West Ham at the end of the war. His mother had lost everything when her home received a direct hit; the reunited family were found accommodation in an attic flat of two rooms and a scullery. Another West Ham evacuee, one of a family of three, was also billeted separately, first at Shipton and then at Launton. They then went back to West Ham during the 'phoney' war, only to be re-evacuated to Wantage, again in separate billets, before being united back home in West Ham. And a family group of three sisters were first evacuated to East Anglia, then back home again to Dagenham before being evacuated again to Churchill, Oxfordshire, and then re-billeted in Shipton. In all their travels they were never billeted together until they joined their parents, not in Dagenham, but in a cottage at Ascott before another move to Oxford where they remained.

On the second day of the VJ (Victory over Japan) holidays I went to stay with one of our former evacuees, but not in his pre-war home in Claude Road near the Upton Cross school, as this had bomb damage. His family were re-housed on one of the 'plotlands' at Langdon Hills, Laindon in Essex, now part of Basildon new town. They never returned to West Ham.

With the cessation of hostilities those in the armed forces began to be demobilised. Buildings commandeered by the military were slowly de-requisitioned although the release of these larger buildings had little effect on the need for housing by those returning from the armed forces and others who were married during the war or soon after. Most of them found accommodation with their in-laws, tied cottages, or in the condemned cottages vacated by returning evacuees. Some evacuee families remained in the Wychwoods.

On 5 January 1946 CNRDC received circular 225/45 from the Ministry of Health which stated that 'the county council will become responsible for supervision through Welfare Officers to certain classes of children who are unable to return home and who are at present remaining in the Reception Areas.... Billeting notices will remain to be issued by the Billeting authority.' No references appear of the investigation and billeting officer in the minutes of the CNRDC for 1946 although there are references to requisitioned properties in the rural district including some in Ascott, Milton and Shipton. In May CNRDC noted that practically all council house tenants had paid their rents promptly. Rent collected amounted to £8,547 with arrears owing of £3 7s with one Milton tenant owing £1 10s. Perhaps fear of eviction made for prompt payment when there was such a demand for housing. with some squatting in Nissen huts abandoned by the military, and some taking noisy flats in St Michael's Home, Shipton, then throbbing with vibrating milling machinery. Others

settled in caravans and the old prisoner of war camp in Frog Lane, Milton. It was not until April 1947 that CNRDC received Circular 42/47 from the Ministry of Health stating 'all charges in request of billeting shall cease to be borne by the Exchequer from 31st March' and the clerk reported that 'Billeting staff left sometime ago'

War evacuations and billeting may have ceased, but there were still German prisoners of war in the Frog Lane camp and war nursery babies at Bruern until 1946. Some were not able to return to their own country until 1948 as their homes had been on the wrong side of the 'Iron Curtain' when it came down in 1946. But by September 1949 the camp again was in use for the billeting of twenty to thirty displaced persons. These were Latvian men, classified as aliens, whose home country had been swallowed up by the USSR. The camp was run by the Oxfordshire Agricultural Executive Committee who employed the men to work on local farms and at Alfred Groves and Sons. The camp officially ceased in the early l950s and was substantially demolished in the late 1960s, although some men stayed on working in Groves' timber mill, and then into their retirement, until the last left in 1998.

The Second World War had ended in 1945 but the international situation changed again with the Iron Curtain coming down in 1946. In 1948 the Civil Defence Act was passed and the Civil Defence Corps (CDC) was set up to deal with any emergencies. The Welfare section of the CDC was to be responsible for the evacuation of virtually all children and their mothers, the elderly and the disabled from major cities. Assisted by the now Royal WVS the evacuees were to be billeted, for an indefinite period, with families in rural towns and villages. The USSR detonated its first atom bomb in 1948 and, in the 1950s and 1960s, with the advent of more deadly and sophisticated weapons of war like rockets and H-bombs, the government considered that as a nuclear war could break out without any warning, there would be little time to prepare for evacuations and billeting. So, in January 1968 the Civil Defence Corps came to an end when it was placed on a 'care and maintenance basis' only.

There may not have been any evacuation or billeting plans proposed by any government in the last thirty years, but during that time evacuees have still arrived in the Wychwoods. They are Second World War evacuees, originally evacuated, not just to the Wychwoods, but to other parts of the country like the Lake District, Yorkshire, South Wales and Sussex and who eventually made their home in the Wychwoods. There are also former evacuees who did come to this area during the war years, moved away for their working lives and then returned to the Wychwoods in their retirement. Both groups find themselves among former evacuees billeted here during the war who never left the Wychwoods and, together with their families, decided to make this their home.

Postscript

Although I have used a wide range of material in compiling this article there is very little documentary evidence of billeting in the area. The log books of the local schools normally recorded the number of evacuees who arrived on the first day that the school opened after their arrival, but records no details of names of children or addresses. In the admission registers most of the head teachers make no record of the evacuees who arrived in an organised party although most record the arrival of those who came singly. Some heads recorded all evacuee arrivals (Chadlington Mixed and Infants and Leafield) and luckily Mrs Pearce at Milton made separate lists for each of the three evacuation parties. Shipton's admission register for September 1939 and June and September 1940 is missing. So, this article is based on the evidence from the Milton admission register, but with the main contributions coming from individual memories. My grateful thanks to all those concerned.

Apart from some pamphlets and the two books dealing with the war on the home front in general, most of the written sources that I have used or quoted were written some 40 or 50 years after the event, as is this one, during which time much of the documentary evidence has been destroyed or is still hidden away. Many books were given a boost by the fiftieth anniversaries of the beginning and the end of the war. Latterly there have been books written to correct the slant given by officialdom that the evacuations and billeting were a great success.

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Shipton under Wychwood Church of England

Upton Cross Infants, Boys and Girls

School Admission Register

Milton under Wychwood Council School

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