

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



SHIPTON COURT SPECIAL ISSUE

Number Nineteen, 2004



WYCHWOODS
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

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ISBN 0 9544887 1 7

Designed and produced by Bibliofile, Chipping Norton 01993 830122
Printed by Clouds Hill Printers, Chipping Campden

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Foreword

'SHIPTON COURT. Built c.1603 by the Lacey family, and one of the largest Jacobean houses in the country. The interior was gutted in a drastic restoration of 1903 by Perkin and Bulmer, who retained no original work. The mullioned windows are also modern. They replace C18 sash-windows. The entrance faces W. It is elegant and well proportioned, of eleven bays, with five narrow gables with kneelers and finials.'

So begins the description of Shipton Court in Pevsner, 1974. In the summer of 2003 the Wychwood Local History Society marked the 400th anniversary of the building of Shipton Court with an exhibition and a garden party in the grounds.

Over the past 22 years of the Society's researches, little work has been undertaken about the Court, its owners and its place in the community. This edition goes some way to compensate for this omission and in this journal we have brought together a number of articles about the Court and the people who have lived and worked there.

We start with a description of the Court as it is now, with an article which describes the site of the Court in relation to the manor and manor house of Shipton. An account of the tangled history of the Lacy family who were responsible for the building of the Court leads to the sale of the property to the Reade family who retained ownership for 200 years before the last of the family, Sir John Chandos Reade, 7th Baronet died and left his estate to his butler, Joseph Wakefield, in 1868. Wakefield changed his name to Reade and his son sold the estate to Fred Pepper who brought many changes, not least the restoration referred to by Pevsner which could arguably be said to have saved the building from destruction.

Shipton Court has had a number of owners during the twentieth century, culminating in the building being divided, with the front facade as a separate dwelling and six apartments at the rear, in 1978. At the time of writing, as Shipton Court starts a new century, this front part of the building changes hands again and a new chapter begins for the Court.

Producing this journal has been an interesting exercise for the contributors as it is the first that focusses on a single subject. We hope we have told a good story.

SUE JOURDAN, JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE AND TRUDY YATES

Shipton Court Revisited: An Assessment of the Historic Building

JULIAN MUNBY FSA

Shipton Court has rather less written history than might be wished for, and so the historic fabric of the house is of some importance for its part in telling the story. Despite being divided into a series of well-appointed apartments, access was possible to nearly all parts through the kindness of owners and occupiers, which has made possible this brief re-assessment of the building.

The house was very simply described in a 1617 manorial survey of the land of Sir Rowland Lacy, as a 'Manor House', beside which was a 'former court ... inner court ... woodyard ... base court ... , etc.' The present house is likely to have been standing at that date, and indeed has a traditional building date of 1603. The Lacys remained for a generation or two, and the Reade family held it from 1663 to 1868. Fred Pepper, the new owner in 1900 added a new wing (containing the Billiard Room) to the designs of Bertram Bulmer (his brother-in-law), and reordered the gardens. After a series of owners in the twentieth century the house was divided in 1978. The main body of the house has not changed greatly, though comparison with the tithe map of 1839 and later Ordnance Survey maps shows the partial infilling of the edges of an irregular plan.

The plan is one of the curiosities of Shipton Court, but first the elevation. The front shares with its near contemporary Chastleton the ordered symmetry of a gentry house, with an array of major and minor gables, glazed windows on every floor, and the roof and gables bedecked with finials and chimneys. As at Chastleton the exterior says nothing of the layout of the interior, and even the front door is hidden round the corner of the porch projection. The front faces the road across a square court, and the view from the highway was one of order and indeed opulence (while on the other side of the road the pretension to grandeur extends into an avenue pointing directly to the house). The front is of course more ordered than it was, and has lost both its classical portico, and the odd gothic (and sash) window that it had when drawn by Neale in 1824.

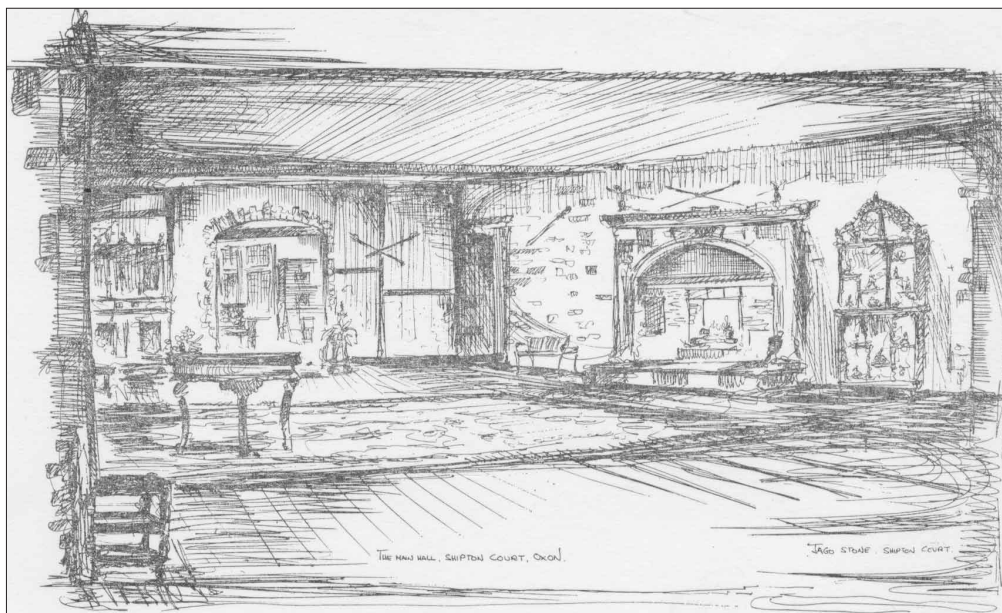
The curiosity of the plan is only revealed at the back of the house, where the more private rooms must have overlooked the gardens to the

east and south. Here there is an almost mannered attempt not to be symmetrical, as the rear wings and turrets step in and out, and indeed it is hard to determine the plan at all. In essence there is one main range parallel to the front range of the house, and linked to it to form an H-plan, but this rear range has gables and turrets facing in all directions. To suggest (as at Chastleton) that an 'architect' prepared the elevation and left the rest to the builder would be unfair (to Shipton). There must have been good reason, either for delight in asymmetry, or in the need for a sequence of additions (for family reasons) that cannot now be determined without fuller investigation. The effect is to make the neat house of the public front view into a grand and rambling house for the private view (a view that was also partly public).

Internally the house has fewer original features than might be expected, but some reasonably attractive fittings from the Pepper/Bulmer era, and a full analysis of the building would require a systematic planning of early and modern fabric. There do not seem to be any surviving probate inventories, so the historic uses of the rooms must largely be guesswork. The front porch enters into a hall, a large ground-floor room with a fine fireplace in the rear wall. Whatever panelling was there has gone, and there is a bizarre mixture of bare stonework and exposed timber-framing, the result of an earlier owner's misguided enthusiasm for a 'medieval'



SHIPTON COURT 1904



THE MAIN HALL, SHIPTON COURT, FROM A DRAWING BY JAGO STONE

aesthetic, happily confined to the hall. The dining room lies to the north, and drawing room to the south. There is a capacious cellar beneath, and on the first floor there is a series of bedrooms, with the Pepper/Bulmer library above the drawing room, having a splendid Edwardian plaster ceiling.

It is hard to see, with the current apartment divisions in place, how the circulation worked, but it would appear that the main rear range overlooking the garden contained a kitchen at the lower level, and many of the rear rooms at the lower levels may also have been service rooms. On the upper floors, as stated above, must have been family rooms overlooking the garden, and these may have been more comfortable (and warmer) than the larger formal rooms at the front of the house. There is an old staircase in the rear wing, but many of the interiors were modified for Pepper.

Whether the attics were occupied cannot be certain: some were no doubt lived in by servants (e.g. the turret room above the library is plastered and whitewashed), but some of the 'attics' may simply have been roof spaces that had windows for appearance's sake. The roof structure is fairly unsurprising for the date, with arch-braced trusses, two collars, and some 'diminished-haunch' joints. The roof of the rear wing has 'slotted purlins', a speciality of Cotswold carpentry where the purlins (horizontal

roof members) were slotted onto free tenons protruding from the principal rafters. This detail again emphasises the essentially vernacular quality of the house, with its rather grand new gentry public face, and a rambling old manor house behind. Much more remains to be found out about Shipton Court, but it will call for a decent plan, lifting a few floorboards, and perhaps removing some plaster and panelling! In the meanwhile, vigilant owners can no doubt continue to piece together what they can find out of the history and archaeology of this intriguing building when opportunities arise.

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The Lacys

JACK HOWARD-DRAKE

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the heralds made periodic visits to various parts of the country to check whether people bearing arms were entitled to do so. Those summoned by an Officer of Arms carrying out a visitation had to satisfy him that the arms they bore were lawfully theirs, either by grant or from established use by an ancestor.¹

In 1634 heralds visited Shipton and enquired into the carrying of arms by the Lacy family then in residence at Shipton Court.² In the course of their enquiries they drew up a pedigree or family tree of the Lacys. Its accuracy cannot be assumed but it appears to show that the ancestors of the Shipton family in the fifteenth century were of Northumberland.

From the early part of the sixteenth century there are sufficient records for us to attempt to draw a picture of the family during the period in which it was associated with Shipton and the Court, bedevilled by a number of uncertainties and by the family's irritating habit of calling all its sons Rowland except for an occasional John or William.

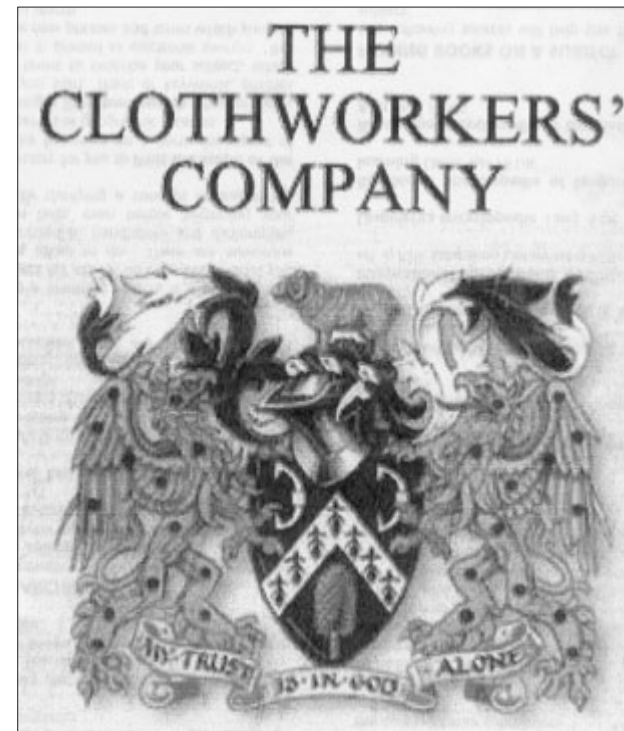
A convenient starting point is the christening of a Rowland Lacy which, according to the International Genealogical Index (IGI), took place in the parish St Mary Magdalene, London, on 16 June 1521.³ (As will be seen the Shipton Lacys maintained close links with London.) He had a wife called Arabella (surname unknown) and they had two sons, inevitably John and Rowland. John, the elder, was christened in London on 15 March 1542 and was married in London on 2 July 1560 to Helen (or Eleanor) Langton.⁴ There is also a record in the IGI of Helen being born about 1543 in Shipton. Although there is nothing in the parish registers to confirm this, it is perhaps the point at which the Lacys became closely involved with Shipton.

We know nothing of the part Rowland and Arabella may have played in the daily life of Shipton or what property they may have held there, if any, but we know from an inquisition post mortem that at the end of the sixteenth century, their son John acquired both land and buildings in Shipton and Milton, 125 acres in Shipton and 50 acres in Milton with various messuages and a cottage.⁵ John is generally assumed to be the Lacy who built the present Court which was completed about 1603.

What sort of man was this John Lacy? We know from the inquisition that he died in Putney on 21 August 1606 and from an indenture dated 1 December 1580 concerning the manor of Hanham Abbots in Gloucestershire, where he had substantial interests, that he was a citizen of London and a clothworker;⁷ but he was no ordinary clothworker. He was a wealthy man and an important member of the Clothworkers' Livery Company.

D.E.Wickham's *Bugpipes: Brief Lives of the Clothworkers*⁸ has the following entry:

John Lacy. Master 1583–84, he had a great house in Putney where the drawing room was ornamented with the Clothworkers' coat of arms. The house was conveniently situated for a pause in journeys to Nonsuch, Hampton Court and Richmond, which is why Queen Elizabeth I is said to have 'honoured Lacy with her company more frequently than any [other] of her subjects'. She is claimed to have been to his house at least a dozen times between 1579 and her death in 1603, sometimes staying to dinner, sometimes remaining for two or three nights. During the Putney Debates of October–November 1647 between the generals and the elected agents



THE COAT OF
ARMS OF THE
CLOTHWORKER'S
COMPANY

of the Roundhead Army concerning proposals for a democratic constitution, Fairfax was quartered in Lacy's old house.

The Lacys had a long and continuous connection with the Clothworkers' Company. Another John Lacy had been Master 1566–67 and in his will left the income from various of the Company's major properties, which he appears to have been sub-letting, to the Master and Wardens for helping the poor and for carrying on the Company's business. In 1625 a William Lacy was 'made Free' and in 1655 a Thomas Lacy was 'made Free by Patrimony'. In 1670 a John Lacy, son of a Robert Lacy gentleman of Crewkerne in Somerset, was 'made Free'; similarly a Robert Lacy (apprenticed to Onasephorus Coleman) was 'made Free' in 1700 and so was Charles Lacy in 1720/21.

John Lacy's interests in Gloucestershire included holding for life the manor of Bytton, part of the manor of Hanham. He held it by an indenture of 1565 of which two John Reades of Hanham Abbots, father and son, were one of the parties,⁹ showing an involvement of the Lacy and Reade families at least a hundred years before Sir Compton Reade bought the Court in 1663 from one of the many Rowland Lacys.

John Lacy also held the 'custody, wardship and marriage' of a William Lacy, the son and heir of yet another John Lacy, this time of Hanham Abbots. In 1580 the Shipton John granted William the reversion of the manor of Bytton, subject to certain financial conditions, and to John keeping his fishing rights on half the river between his manor of Brislington and his manor of Hanham Abbots. He also released to William, *gratis* because of his affection for him as his uncle, but subject to certain outstanding payments being made, 'the value of his marriage'.¹⁰

While Shipton Court was being built John's son Rowland was busy building his own court at Hanham some four miles from Bristol. Hanham had been a property of Keynsham Abbey and came to the Crown at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. From 1553 it was in private hands and in 1570 it was bought by William Lacy of Hartrow in Somerset who granted Rowland a lease of the manor for 100 years and Rowland built Hanham Court there. The Lacys sold it in 1663, the year in which they sold Shipton Court.¹¹

John Lacy was succeeded by Rowland, who was about 40 years old at the time of his father's death.¹² A survey of his estate 1617 shows the very wide extent of his interests in Shipton manor; and we can catch a glimpse of his involvement in the daily life of the parish in a case in the Oxford Church Courts.¹³ When Henry Mills preached his controversial sermon in Shipton church in Lent 1615, in which he told the story of a Turkish lady travelling a long journey who made water in her hand and gave it to her dog to slake its thirst, and for which he was accused in the court of obscenity, Sir Rowland Lacy, Master Christopher Lacy and Master John

Lacy were among those 'of good worth and understanding' who had found nothing objectionable in it. Christopher Lacy was buried in Shipton in November 1638 and was described as 'an old man who made a will'. (Unfortunately the will has not been traced.)¹⁴

Eight of Henry Mills' children were baptised in Shipton church and he called one of them Rowland; in due course this Rowland called one of his own children Rowland, suggesting a close relationship between vicarage and Court.¹⁵

Rowland Lacy had married Constance Lucas, the daughter of Thomas Lucas and Mary Farmor, in December 1594 in London. She was born about 1567 and baptized in London.¹⁶ During the Civil War, her nephew, Sir Charles Lucas, the son of Thomas Lucas and Elizabeth Leighton, was a Royalist who was taken prisoner at the battle of Marston Moor in 1644, but was nevertheless a Lieutenant General of the King's cavalry in 1645. He played the leading role in the defence of Colchester and when the town surrendered in 1648 he was condemned to death by court martial with the approval of Thomas Fairfax, the general in command of the Parliamentary forces. According to Lucy Hutchinson 'the General shot Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle to death upon the place and reserved Goring, Capel and others to abide the doom of Parliament'.¹⁷ A very different link with the Lacy family from Fairfax's use of John Lacy's house in 1647.

When Constance was buried in Shipton in April 1613 she was described as Lady Constance, the first reference we have to Rowland having a knighthood,¹⁸ perhaps acquired when he became High Sheriff.¹⁹ He died in 1629 and was buried in Shipton.²⁰ He was succeeded by John, his only child and presumably the Master John who was present at Mills' sermon. It has not been possible to find much about this John beyond the fact that he too was at one time High Sheriff and acquired a knighthood. He was baptised in London in 1598, married Mary Wythypool and had three children, Rowland, John and Frances.²¹ He was buried in Shipton in January 1652 and was succeeded by another Rowland, who had been baptised in Shipton in January 1620.²² This Rowland was always described as esquire showing that his father and his grandfather were not baronets as has been suggested, otherwise he would have carried the title which is hereditary.

At this point we enter the realm of speculation. On one reading of the evidence this Rowland esquire first married Frances Lenthall, daughter of William Lenthall, one time speaker of the House of Commons, in Fulbrook in 1641.²³ They had one child, Mary, who was buried in Shipton on 28 September 1643, closely followed by her mother on 9 October.²⁴ In May 1677 he married Arabella Fettiplace in London and there were two children both baptised in Shipton, Rowland in June 1678 and John in February 1689.²⁵

He died in 1690. In his will,²⁶ proved on 2 December 1690 by Arabella, he left many properties in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, including Ascott, Shipton and Milton, to his brothers-in-law Edmund and Charles Fettiplace and to Arabella, the income from which was to be used to pay his debts and to provide legacies to Arabella, his daughter, to Elizabeth Cockayne his mother, and to his sister-in-law, Sophia Fettiplace. Everything else was left to his son, 'his manors and royalties of Earls Ascott, Shipton, Milton Spencer and Milton Sandbrook, and all my other manors and royalties whatsoever in the county of Oxon together with my hundred of Chadlington ...'. He confirmed a deed of settlement dated 11 April 1689 whereby he left other properties to his son, viz., 'all that capital, messuage or tenement called Pudlicote House in the parish of Charlbury' together with property in Charlbury, Chilson, Ascott, Langley, Coldstone ('Coulston'), Shipton, Milton Spencer, Milton Sandbrook and Lyneham'.

Although he left the bulk of the estate to his son, he hedged the bequest with a long list of entails in case his son should die without heirs. At the time his son was a minor and his wife was appointed his guardian with responsibility for the estates until he should come of age. Meanwhile she was to provide for the education and maintenance of the child to the tune of £20 a year until he was eight years old, then £40 a year until he was twelve, then £80 a year until he was fifteen, then £120 until he was eighteen and then £160 until he came of age. Similar provision was made for his daughter. The only reference we have to the son's birth gives it as 1678 which, if accurate, means he was about twelve years old when his father made his will. He was to have the silver tankard which his father won at Chipping Norton and his silver monteith [a large bowl for cooling punch glasses]; his daughter was to have his silver tankard which he won at Melson (was he a racing man?). His daughter was buried in Shipton in September 1691.²⁷

All apparently straightforward but there is a complication. There was a Rowland Lacy who in a will of 1667²⁸ refers to his 'reputed son' Rowland Lacy *alias* Carr *alias* Wilson, the son of Elizabeth Lacy *alias* Carr *alias* Wilson whom he married in London on 8 December 1664. (There is nothing to show why Elizabeth and her son are referred to as *alias* Carr *alias* Wilson.) The IGI reference to his marriage, which is based on a parish register, gives his date and place of birth as about 1639 in London; another gives his father as John Lacy, his date of birth as 1 December 1638 and his baptism as 21 December 1638 in Shipton although this is not supported by the Shipton parish registers. In his will, which was proved by Elizabeth on 15 December 1678, Lacy left the bulk of his estate to her and to his reputed son. He gave the reputed son not only all his very substantial household stuff in his houses in Pudlicote and Lincolns Inn Fields but also 'all my leases, lands and terms for years and estate which I bought and

purchased of [blank] Osbaston and all other my leasehold lands, tenements and hereditaments ... and I do confirm and ratify a settlement of several manors, lands, tenements, hereditaments which I have lately made to ... my reputed son ...'. This probably refers to a deed of 9 September 1668 between Rowland Lacy and the Hon. John Lovelace esq., Hon. Lord Lovelace, Baron Sudeley, Sir William Walter of Sarsden, Sir Timothy Tirrell Bt., and Henry Heylyn esq. of Minster Lovell, which shows Lacy making a comprehensive settlement of numerous properties including the manors of Shipton, Milton Sandbrooke and Milton Spencer. It also included details of the property to be settled on the reputed son and his heirs, on Elizabeth Lacy *alias* Carr *alias* Wilson, and of sums of money to be paid to the son as he became first fifteen and then eighteen, a disconcertingly similar provision to one in the will of the Rowland Lacy esquire who died in 1690. It also provided that Elizabeth should be the reputed son's guardian and if she should die, that the guardianship should pass to Henry Heylyn.

There is also a reference in Wood's *Life and Times* to the death of the Rowland Lacy who died in 1690 which adds to the problem – 'Sept 27, Sunday (sic- Saturday) 1690, Sir Rowland kt., natural son of Rowland Lacy, esq., died in his house in Pudlicote neare Cherlbury: buried at Shipton Underwood, Friday following: Borne but not begotten, in lawful wedlock. His mother was a [blank!]²⁹ This suggests that the Rowland who died in 1690 was the reputed son and that it was he who married Arabella Fettiplace in 1677 and not the Rowland esquire who was born in 1620. (It would have been helpful if his mother's name (or was it a description?) had appeared in Wood's journal.) The evidence currently available is not, however, sufficient to confirm this beyond reasonable doubt and the question must remain open.

After her husband's death, Arabella married William Yate of Lincoln's Inn and died in 1695. In her will³⁰ she referred to herself as late wife of Sir Rowland Lacy of Pudlicote. She was much concerned with the future guardianship of her son until he was of an age to choose his own guardian by law, and that her Fettiplace relatives should not cause her second husband, William Yate, any problems. She wrote, '... and I do make this earnest request to my brother Sir Edmund Fettyplace and Master Charles Fettyplace that they as they have any love for me do show all possible kindness to my now husband who has deserved so well of me and that they do not only not give but endeavour all they can to prevent any suit or trouble or disturbance to him on and account of my late husband's personal estate or upon any other account whatsoever since he was so kind out of respect to me and my son and to avoid displeasing them that he did forbear to sue for any share of my daughter's portion though he had advice under Sir William Rawlinson's hand as well as from other able lawyers ...'

An incidental provision of the will is that she left £20 to the poor of Charlbury, Shipton and Milton which she desired 'should be laid out in good books or otherwise disposed of and distributed among them as my executor shall think fit'.

Arabella's son married first Susanna Diston of Churchill in 1710 and secondly Elizabeth Dyer in 1743. He had no children by either marriage, died in 1746 and was buried in Shipton.³¹ By his will dated 20 April 1744³² he left all his manors to Elizabeth. After her death his manors of Shipton, Milton Spencer and Milton Sandbrook and 'such waste lands belonging thereunto as I can claim as lord of the said manors', with Widley Cope in Widford, Gloucestershire, were to go to John Reade esq., son of Sir Thomas Reade; and this has always been the received view locally of what happened; but there are two codicils to the will. The first, dated 15 May 1746, revoked the legacy to John Reade and gave the manors to his wife, Elizabeth. These manors included those '... I was possessed of before the decease of my said late uncle Sir George Fettiplace as such I can claim or challenge by reason of any affinity to the said Sir George Fettiplace or in descent from him.'³² When Arabella died they were to go to his cousin, Thomas Bushell of Cleve Prior, Worcestershire; and this is what happened.

The explanation lies in a will of 1689 of Sir Edmund Fettiplace³³, father of George, who died a bachelor and who left the Fettiplace estates in entail in succession to his three sons, all of whom died as bachelors, and then to their sisters. Of the sisters, Arabella was married to Rowland Lacy and Diana to Robert Bushell, Thomas Bushell's father. They and their husbands and Edmund's other sisters all died before the last of the brothers and Arabella's son, Rowland, and Diana's son, Thomas, inherited the Fettiplace estates as co-heirs. Thomas Bushell then took the name of Fettiplace.

To add to the tangle another Rowland Lacy appears in 1712 – Rowland Lacy of Churchill, lord of the manor of Chadlington. He obtained a gamekeeper's licence for Peter Heborn of Shipton 'to kill and destroy the game within the several townships, liberties and precincts of Chilson, Shorthampton, Milton Sandbrook and Swinbrook'. One of the witnesses to the grant of the licence was a William Diston. By his will dated 1742 and proved in 1744, Heborn is shown to have been on the staff of the Reads of Shipton Court.³⁴

With the death of the Rowland Lacy who died without heirs in 1746, the involvement of the Lacys in the affairs of Shipton came to an end. We do not know exactly when they were first established in Pudlicote but the Rowland Lacy whose estate in Shipton was surveyed in 1617 was described as Sir Rowland of Pudlicote when he became High Sheriff in 1622; and we do know that with the death of the Rowland Lacy without heirs in 1746, the Pudlicote estate as well as the Shipton estate passed to the Fettiplaces.

This has been a confused and confusing story and there is much still to discover about the involvement of the Lacys and the Fettiplaces in the life of Shipton. The wills and deeds referred to above contain much detail about the personal relationships within the families, about their finances and about their possessions in Shipton and the surrounding district all of which it would be well worth exploring further.

Acknowledgements

I have acknowledged my debt to Dr. Buchanan in the endnotes. I am also indebted to Sir Frederic Bolton, who read an early draft of the article, suggested the possibility that it was Lacy *alias* Carr *alias* Wilson who married Arabella Fettiplace and provided information about the Lacys' residence in Pudlicote; and to Anthea Jones for her help with the research and for comments on an early draft.

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- 1 The Lacy arms are 'gules two bars wavy ermine'. The crest is 'out of a ducal coronet or, a lion sejant ermine'.
- 2 William Harvey ed., *The Visitations of the County of Oxfordshire Taken in the Years 1566-1634*, Harleian Society 1871.
- 3 The International Genealogical Index (IGI) is an index to the records of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The entries are of two kinds. One is of submissions by members of the church, which may or may not be accurate. The other is from original parish registers and is more reliable. Most of the references in this article are of the first kind.
- 4 IGI.
- 5 Series ij. Vol.296, no. 131.
- 6 Jennifer Sherwood and Nicholas Pevsner, *The Buildings of Oxfordshire*, 1979, p759.
- 7 Somerset Record Office, DD\BR\tb/1.
- 8 For this and all other references to the Clothworkers Company I am much indebted to Dr Alexandrina Buchanan, the Company's archivist. The word 'bugpipes' in the title of D.E. Wickham's biographies of Clothworkers refers to a story about Victor Hugo, who in exile in Jersey, discovered a musical instrument much played by the islanders and called a 'bugpipe'. When it was politely pointed out to him that the word was bagpipe, he is said to have bellowed, 'If I, Victor Hugo, say it is bugpipe then it is bugpipe'. Wickham uses the story to suggest that speakers at Clothworker functions will find his brief lives a source for genuine stories and will not have to rely on such doubtful anecdotes.
- 9 Somerset Record Office, DD\BR\tb/1.
- 10 Wardship was the lord's right to have the care of the lands of an heir who inherited before attaining his or her majority. The lord also had the lordship 'of the body of the heir', which meant he should see to his or her maintenance and education. He was entitled to select a marriage for the heir and because large sums of money or exchange of property were often involved in arranging suitable matches, this right could be very valuable.
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- 12 Inq. post mortem, op. cit.
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The Site of Shipton Court and the Manor House

ANTHEA JONES

The main features of the architecture of Shipton Court are recognised as later Elizabethan or early Stuart, and the building is therefore associated with ownership by the Lacy family; it seems certain that it was the manor house of Shipton at the time that Sir Rowland Lacy commissioned a survey of the manor in 1617. This was the very year that King James I 'annexed' Shipton prebend to the Oxford professorship of Civil Law,¹ so removing it from the Salisbury cathedral canon to whose income it had contributed for centuries. This may suggest that the king, who was always short of income, was prompted at the same time to review his ownership of Shipton manor (and probably his lease to one of the Lacy family), and to sell the manor to Sir Rowland Lacy, so prompting this survey. Was Sir Rowland Lacy's Shipton Court on the site of the earlier manor house or was it built on a new site? It may not seem to be in the most obvious position for the manor house, as it is neither next to the church, as many medieval manor houses were, nor associated with a group of village houses; on the other hand it is in the middle of Shipton between Upper End and Lower End.

The medieval 'manor and lordship' of Shipton was a large one; at the end of the 13th century, as detailed in the Hundred Rolls, the manor comprised not just Shipton township but Ramsden and Leafield, Walcot, Shorthampton and Swinbrooke, and parts of Chadlington, which were called 'members' of the manor; notably it did not include Ascott, Lyneham nor Langley, which were in the medieval parish of Shipton.²

In the mid-16th century it appears that Shipton manor also extended into Milton and to a smaller extent into Ascott. The 'lordship' related to most of the administrative area of Chadlington hundred, which comprised west Oxfordshire. The lord of the manor drew income not only from his own farmland, but from many tenants of land within the manor and the hundred. His manor house would in all probability have reflected this status and wealth.

A large manor such as Shipton was often in the hands of one of the king's great noblemen or of the king himself, as it was in 1086, and the manor house was likely to have been occupied by a tenant, a farmer or



AERIAL VIEW OF THE COURT IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

steward, who perhaps had little motive to enlarge or rebuild the house. Only when the king sold the manor was there a strong stimulus for an outright owner to build on a generous scale. Either Sir Rowland Lacy or a recent forbear was such a purchaser. The personal circumstances that may have enabled the Lacys to buy Shipton Court are described by Jack and Joan Howard-Drake elsewhere in the journal.

The manor house, often called a mansion, court or hall, was where the court of the manor met once every three weeks to deal with minor nuisances committed by land-holders in the manor, and to arrange the cooperation necessary for the agriculture of the area. It was also the centre for the husbandry of the manor's own lands or 'home farm', which was known technically as the 'demesne'; this land might be farmed directly for the king or lord by a steward, or leased to a husbandman who would pay rent to the lord.

Five documents dealing with the manor and lordship of Shipton between 1532 and 1617 are the basis of the following discussion of what is known about the site of the manor. They are:

- (i) a lease of 1532 to Thomas May
- (ii) a second lease of 1545 to Simon Perrett

- (iii) a survey of 1547 for Lord Seymour
- (iv) a survey of 1552 for Edward VI
- (v) a survey of 1617 for Sir Rowland Lacy

In the period prior to the Lacy's purchase, Henry VIII had leased the manor of Shipton at least twice: in 1532 to Thomas May for 21 years, and before that lease expired, in 1545 to Simon Perrett, the king's steward of the manor who was himself already an independent landholder here. We know of these two leases because of the survival of a survey of Shipton manor made in 1547 which recites them in full. In fact, two almost identical copies of this survey exist, both in Gloucestershire, because at that date the king had granted Shipton manor and lordship to Lord Seymour of Sudeley, though remaining the ultimate owner.³ Sir Thomas Seymour had been created Baron Seymour of Sudeley and Lord High Admiral by Henry VIII in February 1547; he married Queen Katherine Parr after the king's death, but she died in September 1548 and Seymour was executed on 20 March 1549. Shipton then reverted to the crown again. This is the context for the two surveys so close together in date.

The terms of the lease from King Henry VIII in 1532 were copied exactly in 1545.⁴ Both began with 'the site of our manor of Shipton and gardens there as well as 4 acres of land there and divers lands, meadows and pastures belonging to the demesne of the said manor'; then the leases listed the meadows and pastures in detail, amounting to approximately 58 acres, but Simon Altoft the Reeve had to attest the extent of the arable land. The leases illustrate how valuable grassland was, that so much care was taken that none should be lost to the manor: it provided the fodder for winter feed and the grassland grazing for the oxen which ploughed the land and the sheep which manured it. Listing the arable lands was a long and complicated business, consisting as they did of many strips in the great common or open fields. The king did not surrender to Thomas May or Simon Perrott his rights to wood and underwood or to the produce of the quarry, nor the occasionally lucrative right while an heir was under age to custody of the estate (wardship) and to arrange his marriage. The lessee, however, was entitled to take firewood from the manor, and timber to repair the house for which he was held responsible (housebote) or to supply his needs for making fences, ploughs and carts.

A terrier or list of the arable strips, made in 1545, follows the copy of the leases. It refers first to the garden and apple orchard adjoining the mansion, the first clear reference to the manor house, and to six closes of pasture, then to strips totalling approximately 59 acres in the East field, and 49 acres in the West field. These acreages cannot be equated exactly with the modern 'statute acre'; later it can be seen that the traditional acreages were often close to measured acreages, but could differ quite

widely. But the figures give an impression of the extent of the land. It seems possible that the listed strips were those in cultivation that year, and did not include the fallow; when ownership rather than practical cultivation was at issue, the total amount of land, assuming half lay fallow, was twice that. Each strip in the fallow fields, greened over and grazed by oxen and sheep, might have been difficult to distinguish.

The 1547 survey refers briefly to Simon Perrett's tenure of the site of the manor with 'the houses builded within the precinct, with all arable land and meadows thereunto belonging'.⁵ There seems to be a hint of a medieval house not yet 'modernised' according to 16th century style in the use here of the word 'houses'; it implies that there were several separate buildings on the site, and this would be typical of a larger medieval house where, for example, one separate building was a Great Hall and another was a Kitchen. Later these buildings were usually linked together. 'Precinct' also implies a large and clearly defined area, perhaps with hedges, fences or walls round it. The survey then proceeded to details of the tenants of the manor - a roster of landholders.

The second survey of Shipton manor only eight years later was made by Michael Causewell, Surveyor General to the lord king Edward VI.⁶

SHIPTON COURT BY J P NEALE



Thirteen landholders from the various townships in the manor provided him with information on 10 June 1552. The lease of the site of the manor to Simon Perrott was noted, with garden and 4 acres and once again the meadows and pastures were carefully recorded.

Sir Rowland Lacy Knight in 1617 commissioned Henry Bransby to make an even more detailed survey of Shipton manor.⁷ The first item was the manor house, the 'grounds it standeth upon' (stated to be 0.75 acre), the former court, the inner court, woodyard, base court, rick yard, hopyard, lower orchard, old orchard, parlour garden and kitchen garden. Altogether this site amounted to 9.25 acres. Here is evidence of the husbandry supporting the manor house. An earlier house is implied by the reference to a 'former court' and the 'old orchard' echoes the orchard in the leases of 1532 and 1545. This seems to answer the question about whether Shipton Court today is on the site of the medieval manor house. Not far away was the 'new coppice or grove', the bowling green, and a ground 'where the dog kennel standeth', a reminder that hunting in the Wychwood was close at hand. Adjoining the dog kennel ground was the mill ground, the millhouse, grounds on the north side of the Millbrook and the dam 'some part within Milton'. The land with the fine avenue of trees and the woodland around the stream feeding the mill seems to be here. Pastures and meadows, and shares in the lot meadows appropriate to holdings of yardlands in Shipton's open fields are noted. Some of the manor's land in the meadows was shared with the Parsonage.

Mr Bransby's task was not just to record the acres, half acres, headlands, lands, butts and farthingdales which were the customary units in the open fields but to measure each one of the 49 separate plots in the East field, 41 in the West field, and 50 in other smaller named fields and furlongs, and to give the names of the holders of the adjacent strips. The amount in the East field, 135 acres, is very close to the 130 acres of 1552; there were fewer acres in the other fields. Most important, in the intervening years between 1552 and 1617, a considerable change had taken place in the overall structure of the manor and of the Court estate.

The site of Shipton Court was extensive though not placed so that an ambitious owner could easily develop a park round the house - there was no need while the Wychwood existed to supply game for the table and hunting for leisure. It was, however, an important house and under the Lacy's probably became much more imposing.

References

- 1 Anthea Jones, Puzzles over Shipton Prebend 1: Seventeenth Century. *Wychwoods History* No. 10 (1995).
- 2 *Rotuli Hundredorum* Vol. II (Record Commission 1818).

3 The first three documents listed are all in Gloucester Library, Phillips Collection NV21.6 (shortly to be transferred to Gloucestershire Record Office (GRO), and in GRO/D621/E1; I owe knowledge of the surveys which form the substance of most of this article, together with copies of them, to J.Howard-Drake, who has most generously made them available to me, together with some transcripts and analysis.

4 Pages 42 & 44. page references are to the Gloucester Library copy of the document.

5 *Ibid*, page 25.

6 P.R.O./LR2/189.

7 The survey of 1617 is Bod.MS Top Oxon d.169. Sue Jourdan spent many hours transcribing this survey, and she also has generously made the material available to me.

Shipton Court Doveloft

ELIZABETH MITCHELL

Shipton Court Doveloft

Now at Court Cottage, Plum Lane. Listed Building (1988) II, 7/86.

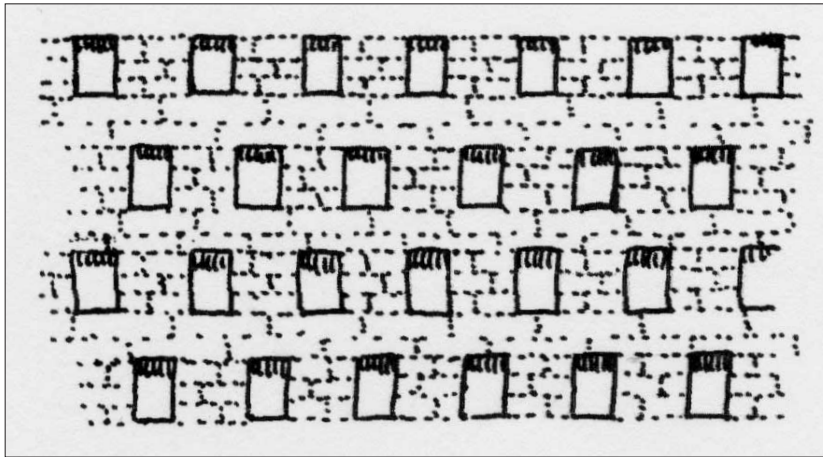
An extract from a gazetteer of dovecotes in West Oxfordshire with kind permission of Elizabeth Mitchell.

SITE: 7m northeast of Court Cottage and immediately south of (but now walled off from) Shipton Court stable court. The Court's water garden is nearby.

PLAN: 5.75m square. Elevation: of coursed and dressed rubble with ashlar quoins, the ground floor is a stable with opposing carriage doors. Its tiled floor slopes down to the north door under a segmental arch. At the southeast corner a 20th century outside stair and landing of iron give access to the first floor entry of the old dove loft. This has been changed for domestic use: another floor inserted, most walls plastered and modern conveniences introduced. A three-light window with 'Tudor' hood mould has been built into the south wall beside the entry door, breaking the string course. In the four cross gables the south and east openings have been given leaded panes, the north and west 'windows' are still blind with ashlar. A continuous double string course runs round the building 0.5m below the kneelers, and there is another string course on west and east at c.4m above the courtyard level, in line with the top of the garden wall. The east elevation has a further drop of 2m into a terraced garden.

ENTRIES: The original entry to the dove loft, though not the present elliptical-headed doorway, was probably near it and possibly so small that it was below the string course. A pre-1900 photograph shows a four-gabled lantern on four posts at the central crossing of the roof ridges. As the north and east windows are shown blind (as well as the west), the lantern may have been the sole means of entry for the birds, but it is also possible that there were a half dozen entry holes above the upper string course in the south wall. It is now pigeon-proof.

NESTS: At present six nests in diaper pattern survive inside the north gable and the ghosts of others, infilled with brick and stone, survive here and in the lower east wall. They measure about 0.15m x 0.1m, are L-shaped, plastered internally with the twist to left or to right alternating with each tier. The nests are built of three courses of red brick laid in Flemish bond but separated by two horizontal courses of brick laid rat-trap (on edge) and limestone. There are no surviving alighting courses, presumably chiselled off. Originally there would have been several hundreds of nests.



DRAWING OF THE RUBBLE AND BRICK FAÇADE OF NESTS

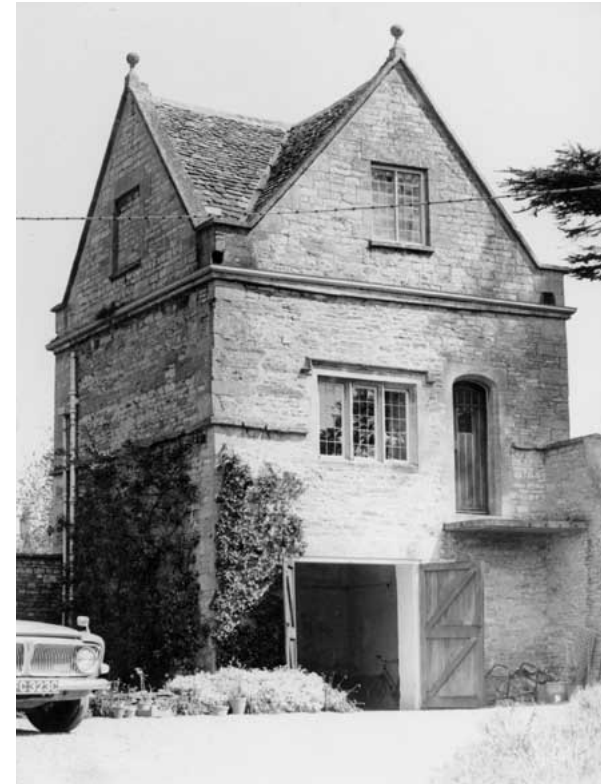
ROOF: Four-gabled, it is well made with triangular copings, four ball finials at the apices and kneelers to the four gables. The kneelers meet to form low corner-parapets pierced to vent rain water (see Chastleton built 1762). Graded stone slates cover all eight slopes. Inside, a couple of wood braces in the northeast corner are visible with iron reinforcements; the rest of the roof timbers have been plastered over.

HISTORY: The dovecote is comparable with the one at Tackley Manor, built in 1616. The use of brick for the nests is unlike that at Stanton Harcourt Manor and at Quenington, Glos.

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Jekyll, G. (1918), *Garden Ornament* (London) p 233, b/w photograph of dovecote from the north-east.

Country Life Illustrated 3.2.1900, 'Shipton Court' b/w photograph of dovecote



SHIPTON COURT DOVELOFT FROM THE SOUTH

from the north-east.

Notes

The pigeons were used for food when the eight week old squabs were produced between May and September, and also for the nitrogen-rich manure which had a number of uses as well as for the land. Up until the early seventeenth century saltpetre (potassium nitrate) was obtained from the manure for the government monopoly powder mills at Carshalton and Windsor. The manure was also used in home remedies and for leather tanning.

The rock pigeons needed copious amounts of water which they would have found at the Court ponds and local streams.

The human entrance to a dovecote was usually overlooked by the keeper's house so perhaps the present Court Cottage supersedes an early building.

The Reade Family of Shipton under Wychwood

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

*A Record of the Redes*¹ written by Compton Reade in 1899, the main source used in this article, gives the history of this widespread family; they had property in Hertfordshire, Shropshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire from medieval times. The Shipton under Wychwood family were descended from the Reades of Barton Court in Berkshire and the *Record* gives an account of the family from the beginning of the 16th century, but it is now clear from other sources that they were in Berkshire long before 1500. In the *Record* there are several lists of ancestors of Reade wives from royal and important families. If these are true it appears that the Reades were one of the rising Tudor families of the 15th and 16th centuries who added to their fortunes and status by making good marriages.

Early Reades

The early Reades were landlords and lords of several manors in Berkshire and in the late 1400s Thomas Reade and Mildred (née Cecil) lived and had children in Barton. One of these was William born about 1494, who married Dorothy Beaumont; they were the parents of a 'Thomas of Barton Court'. This Thomas Reade, who died in 1556, married Ann Hoo whose family went back to King Alexander of Scotland and who claimed links with the Boleyn family of Hever, Kent and thus to Queen Elizabeth. Barton Court had been the property of Abingdon Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries and when Thomas bought it and the many manors and land attached to it from Sir Richard Lee for £40 13s 4d Thomas became an important landowner in Berkshire. The family prospered and Thomas and Ann had at least five children, one of whom was another Thomas born in 1545. He married Mary Stonehouse and continued the social rise of the family serving as High Sheriff of Berkshire in 1581 and 1599. He received a grant of arms in 1597.

Sir Thomas Reade 1575–1650

Thomas and Mary's eldest son Thomas, was born in 1575, went to The Queen's College in Oxford and later to the Middle Temple. He married Mary a daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Brocket, a wealthy landowner



THE READE COAT OF ARMS

in Hertfordshire. On her father's death Mary inherited a fifth of his large estate. Her pedigree starts with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the third son of Edward III, another example of a Reade marrying money and influence. Thomas was High Sheriff of Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire in the early 1600s and was knighted on 21 July 1619. Entertaining Royalty when required to do so was one of the conditions of owning Barton Court and Thomas did this at least three times. It was at Barton Court that King Charles I was said to have seen Queen Henrietta Maria for the last time before she left for France.

Sir Thomas Reade 1606–1685

From the union of Thomas Reade and Mary Brocket came Thomas born in 1606, said to be of Barton Court and Appleford in Berkshire and of Ipsden in Oxfordshire; and there were still Reades in Ipsden as late as the 19th century. On the 8 September 1624 Thomas married Mary daughter of Sir Thomas Cornewall, 'The Great Baron', of Burford Castle in Shropshire. Her descent starts with King John and includes kinship with the Earls of Oxford and Viscount Cobham among others. She was six and a half years older than Thomas; he was seventeen when they married and the marriage took place without his father's consent. He lived with his in-laws at Burford Castle where his nine children were baptised.

Thomas took an active part in the Civil War but seems to have come out of it unscathed. In April 1645 Cromwell at the head of the Parliamentary Model Army was advancing north over the Chilterns. The Royal cavalry was at Islip in Oxfordshire, and the King wanted them to confront Cromwell. Sir Thomas Reade and Lieutenant Denton were sent with his orders to the Earl of Northampton who was in charge of the cavalry but they were captured and it was reported by Lieutenant-General Crawford in a letter to Cromwell that '... We have Sir Thomas Reade and one Lieut Denton. We took this night two letters, one from the King, subscribed by Secretary Nicholas, calling us Rebels, another from L. Hatton to the Earl of Northampton, of great consequence. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke further states these letters were found on Sir Thomas Reade.' Sir Thomas was taken to London and the Council of both Kingdoms ordered him to be taken in custody to St Albans for the Hertfordshire Committee to examine him. Sir Thomas had property and many friends

in that county, including some on the Committee, namely the Earl of Salisbury, Sir John Reade of Brocket Hall, Sir Thomas Reade's own third son, Sir Brocket Spencer his nephew and Sir Rowland Lytton his wife's cousin. It is odd that Sir Thomas was sent for investigation to a county where some of the Committee were his family and friends. He somehow made peace with the Parliamentary side for he does not appear on any list of delinquents and in April 1646 Parliament nominated and approved his appointment to the Committee for Oxfordshire and the House of Lords agreed. He had something in common with the Vicar of Bray who turned his coat so many times. It also sheds an interesting light on peoples' attitudes and behaviour during the Civil War and shows a certain amount of shelving of principles and turning a blind eye to opposing loyalties. His eldest son Compton was a strong Royalist as were many of the family and as Sir Thomas had been at the beginning of the conflict. Compton can hardly have enjoyed seeing his father on a Parliamentary Committee particularly as the Cromwellians had burnt down the family home.

Sir Compton Reade 1st Baronet 1626–1679

Sir Compton was baptised at St Mary's, Burford, Shropshire on 24 January 1626; he matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford in 1642 and is given there as of Duns Tew in Oxfordshire where he married his cousin Mary Cornwall in 1650. She was the daughter of Sir Gilbert Cornwall and was also born in Burford, Shropshire. Compton Reade's two sisters married his wife's brothers, Anne to Major Thomas Cornwall, Baron of Burford, Shropshire, and Mary to John Cornwall, Esquire of Rochford, Hertfordshire. Compton and Mary had two sons, Thomas who died young, Edward who married Elizabeth Harby, and three daughters, Anne, Mary and Elizabeth. Anne married Cornelius Vermuyden on 18 April 1679 in Shipton parish church. He was a Dutchman, an active Parliamentarian and a friend of Cromwell. His family drained a large part of the Fens and it was said of Cornelius that he 'was a considerable figure in the 17th century'². Elizabeth married Sir Fairmedow Penyston, a Royalist, whose descendant of the same name was on the list of Tories and a covert supporter of Prince Charles Edward in the Oxfordshire election of 1754.³ The two sisters marrying into families from both sides of the Civil War suggests that the scars of the time may have healed.

Sir Compton is recorded in the Record as 'first Baronet, third creation, Lord of the Manors of Beeden and Barton, Berks, Denford, Northants, and of Shipton Court, in the parish of Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxon, High Sheriff of Berks, 1663, and patron of Beeden, 1672 ...'. At the Restoration Sir Compton had been created a Baronet, (for which he paid £1,095), for his services in the Royal cause in the Civil War, and was placed first on the list of the Knights of the Royal Oak for Berkshire. A family story is that



SIR COMPTON READE, 1ST BARONET 1626–1679, THE PURCHASER OF SHIPTON COURT IN 1663, AND MARY NÉE CORNEWALL, HIS WIFE. THEY WERE THE FIRST READES TO LIVE AT SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD

he fought at the battle of Worcester, raised his own troop of horse and defended the family home at Barton Court until it was burnt over his head by the Parliamentarian General Browne. Because Barton Court and Beeton, his other Berkshire property, were destroyed, the King granted him permission to live outside the county when he became High Sheriff of Berkshire in December 1663. Presumably this is why he bought Shipton Court from Rowland Lacy in that year. Sir Compton purchased 'three messuages, three gardens, three orchards, thirty acres of pasture, and one acre of wood, with appurtenances in Shipton under Wychwood' for which he paid £100. From now on this branch of the Reade family's main estate was in Shipton. After the sale Rowland Lacy retained the manorial rights, land and properties in Shipton and Milton; the Reades never held the manor. Rowland left these rights and property to 'John Reade, Esquire, son

of Sir Thomas Read', in his will of 1744 but the bequest was revoked in a codicil of 1746.⁴ The Lacys and Reades would have known each other well, they were both staunch Royalist families, had fought for the King in the Civil War and both families had property in Hanham in Gloucestershire in the 16th century.

When Sir Compton died in September 1679 he left to 'his loving wife as much of his best household goods (plate and jewels excepted) as shall be worth £100 ... 'and gave her 'my Best Coach and my Six Coach horses and their coach harness'. Apart from giving £50 to Lucy, his niece and godchild, daughter of his brother Thomas, £5 each to his two daughters, and £20 to John Jordan, his executor, everything was left to his son John. His wife, Mary, died in April 1703 and both were buried in Shipton.

Sir Edward Reade 2nd Baronet 1659–1691

Since Compton's eldest son Thomas died unmarried when he was 22, the second son Edward became the next baronet. He was born in June 1659 and was baptised in July at St Mary's, Burford, Shropshire. He married Elizabeth the daughter of Francis Harby and they had four sons, Winwood, Thomas, Edward and George. Edward senior died in 1691 at the young age of 32 and was buried in Shipton. Elizabeth, Edward's widow, married Henry Farmer but always described herself as 'Dame Elizabeth Reade alias Farmore' and was buried in Shipton in 1730.

Sir Winwood Reade 3rd Baronet 1683–1692

Winwood, who was named after '... Mrs Winwood, of Ditton Park, his grandsire's munificent aunt ...', was born in Shipton in 1683 and died there in 1692. Edward junior had died as an infant in 1686 thus Thomas the second son became the next baronet.

Sir Thomas Reade 4th Baronet 1684–1752

Sir Thomas was born in 1684 and at the age of 35 he married Jane Mary Dutton, the youngest daughter and co-heiress of Sir Ralph Dutton of Sherborne, just over the border in Gloucestershire. Sir Ralph was an important, wealthy landowner and a member of parliament. Jane Mary died in June 1721 giving birth to John, their only child, and Thomas never remarried. He was a man of business, a politician and courtier, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to George I and First Clerk of the Green Cloth to George II. He failed to be elected as a member of parliament for Oxfordshire in 1705 when he was beaten by the Tory Sir Robert Jenkinson of South Lawn in nearby Swinbrook. Jenkinson was a known Jacobite and Thomas Reade of Shipton was widely referred to in the area as 'the Whig interloper'.³ There were many gentry in West Oxfordshire who were thought to be Tory and Jacobite supporters. Thomas entered Parliament

later as member of parliament for Cricklade in Wiltshire being elected several times between 1713 and 1741. Both Sir Thomas and his younger brother George were supporters of Walpole and were confirmed Whigs. Thomas was also active in Abingdon, then in Berkshire, the county of his ancestors, among other things being a Governor and Master of Christ's Hospital there. However even though he inherited Shipton Court and the estate, because of his Royal court and parliamentary interests, he lived in Golden Square, London, and left the running of the Shipton property in the hands of his brother George. In his will Thomas left his sister-in-law Mrs Jemima Dutton £6,000 and some of his furniture in his house in Golden Square and all the rest of his possessions to his only son John who was a minor when the will was made. George Reade and Thomas Fettiplace were named as trustees to pay his debts and legacies and to hold everything in trust for his son. He left specific instructions in his will about what lands his son could use as a jointure for his wife, if he married. They were in Beeden and Stanmore in Berkshire except for the two woods there which she must not have 'for fear of waste or spoil thereon'.

George Reade was a Lieutenant-General in the Army, and a member of parliament for Tewkesbury. He lived in Shipton Court and represented his brother's interests in Oxfordshire. The will of Peter Heborn of Shipton



SIR THOMAS READE, 4TH
BARONET 1684–1752,
COURTIER AND

(Heybourne in the Shipton burial register in 1744), a gamekeeper, shows some of the staff then at the Court and includes several servants with local names to whom he left money.⁵ There is a mystery about Peter Heborn's employment. In 1712 a gamekeeper's licence for him was obtained by Rowland Lacy of Churchill.⁶ However Peter's will shows that he was working for General George Reade when he died in 1744, but so far no licence for the Shipton employment has been found.

George married Jane Nowes; they had no children. The General was one of the few Reades to live mainly in Shipton and it is more than probable that John, the next baronet, lived there too. His mother had died when he was born and he was said to have been spoilt by his uncle and aunt. General George's wife Jane died in 1744 and he died in 1756; he left a generous income and some of his furniture in the house in Golden Square to Mrs Jemima Dutton. He gave money to members of his mother's Harby family and £300 to his cousin John Reade of Ipsden to be deducted from the £1,400 owed him on a mortgage on John's estate. He names one servant, Ann Hamerton, to whom he gave £100; (Peter Heborn left her a guinea). The rest of General George's indoor servants were given £10 each, day-labourers £5 each and £5 was to be shared among the poorest families in Shipton. The bulk of his property went to his nephew John.

George's burial instructions were very clear – 'I desire to be buried in day-light and in the privest manner as my brother was, and that Mr Goodwin will see me laid in the vault as near to my Brother as conveniently can be, and perform the Burial service only at my Funeral.' Mr Goodwin was to receive £5 for his trouble.⁷

In 1732 Sir Thomas and his brother George had asked for and were granted a faculty by the Bishop of Oxford to take over a scull house under Shipton church. A 'scull' house was where the bones of the dead were placed and the brothers were to provide another one for the old bones. The scull house was under the private pew of the family in the south aisle and was to be made into 'a Dormitory or place for Buryall' in which family members could be laid. It had to be kept in 'constant and decent repair' at the Reades' expense.⁸ The private pew was screened off from the rest of the church and had a small door in the south wall for the family to go through unseen by the rest of the congregation. In 1905 during renovations to the church the vault was opened and the position of the numbered coffins with the names of those buried there were sketched. Number one was that of 'Dame Elizabeth Reade alias Farmore' who was first buried in Shipton in 1730. Where had her coffin been for the two years before 1732 when the vault was built? When Sir Thomas died on 25 September 1752 and George Reade on 28 March 1756 they were both buried there. W. Whitaker who made the sketch of the vault stated that there were 20 coffins with room for six more.⁹

Sir John Reade 5th Baronet 1721–1773

Sir John Reade was born in Golden Square in 1721. He was an only child, reportedly spoilt by his family and, being a wealthy young man, became very much a man about town. He had inherited money, land and property from his father and later his uncle and had little inclination for politics. This reputation is confirmed by a comment of Lady Susan Keck an active Whig supporter in the 1754 Oxfordshire election addressing the Duke of Marlborough. She deplored the inactivity of 'those 'broken Reeds' of Shipton, Sir John and General George'. Man about town John might have been but he could also be generous in time of need. Some of the money received by Burford at the time of the small-pox outbreak in 1758 and reported in Jackson's Oxford Journal was a 'Donation of Twenty guineas (The Moiety of which is the liberal contribution of Sir John Reade, Bart... sent from the village of Shipton'...)¹⁰ The paper also reported in 1770 that Sir John paid £2 2s to the new Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford so that Shipton's poor could be treated there.¹¹

Evidence that he had at least one mistress before his marriage is shown by his will of 1773; he left £500 each to John and Jane Reade, children of Jane Day, 'spinster', whom he acknowledged as his children and in a later codicil he increased the amount to £3,000 to be shared between them. Jane Reade, a minor, was apprenticed to Mr Mason 'a miliner or haberdasher' and John Reade, a minor, was on a man of war, the Panther, at the Newfoundland Station. Sir John married Harriott, the daughter and heiress of William Barker of Sonning in Berkshire in 1759. They had twin boys, John and Thomas, in 1762 and Mary born in 1768. There was common talk that the boys were the children of Mrs Mary Mason and not Harriott's who was reputed to be barren.¹² There is no evidence for the rumours about the twin boys' parentage and the fact that they were born in London and baptised there is not surprising since it was where the family spent much time and where John himself was born and baptised. Was there a relationship between the Mr Mason to whom Sir John's daughter was apprenticed and Mary Mason? And was she the Mrs Mason who appears in Peter Heborn's will as one of General George's servants? It is possible that she was John's nurse, his mother had died when he was born and he almost certainly lived in Shipton Court. If she was his nurse this may account for the care he took of her in his will. He left Mrs Mason, then called his housekeeper, money and the right to reside at Shipton Court until her death and to be buried at Shipton as she was on 26 March 1773. Sir John died in that year and was buried on 21 November.

Sir John bequeathed to his wife Harriott all his lands and Shipton Court for her use during her life time if she remained a widow, kept the estate in good order and the house in good repair. She could take timber from the estate to repair the house and buildings but was not to cut down

the avenue. It seems the Reade males were worried about their womenfolk despoiling their woods. Harriott also received an annuity of £200, £500 in cash and 'all her jewels, etc, and carriages and horses, etc.' There is an article about her in *Wychwoods History* Number 12.¹³ She was very eccentric and spent much money and time on birds and animals which she was well able to do since she was a wealthy woman in her own right being the last and only child of the Barker family of Sonning. Harriott left a long will with many bequests of money, jewellery and her much loved pets. The Duke of Marlborough was one of the legatees and one of the trustees was the Reverend Thomas Leigh of Adlestrop, a relative of Jane Austen. She also endowed a charity to help local children with their education. Her will of 1804, had nine codicils added before she died in December 1811. The article about her bequests elsewhere in this journal makes it clear that while she may have been eccentric she was well able to conduct her own business. There is a large elaborate memorial to Sir John in Shipton Church with what purports to be his likeness carved at the base. Lady Harriott is commemorated on another part of the memorial naming her 'Dame Harriot'. Sir John left all his other lands and manors in Oxfordshire and Berkshire to his son John. Thomas, Sir John's twin brother, who lived in Gloucestershire, was left all the manors and land in Huntingdonshire. Mary, Sir John's daughter, married Sir Elijah Impey, the Indian Judge who features in the trial of Warren Hastings. She was remembered in both her parents' wills but did not receive any large inheritance; primogeniture was practised in this family from earliest times.

Sir John Reade 6th Baronet 1762–1789

John Reade was eleven years old when his father died and would have lived in Shipton Court or London with his mother until he went to Magdalen College in Oxford, graduating in 1783. In 1787, because his mother still lived at Shipton Court, Sir John bought Oddington House in Oddington in Gloucestershire about six miles north of Shipton. To do this he sold the manors of Beedon and Barton with its ruined Court. He married Jane daughter of Sir Chandos Hoskyns in 1784. They had two sons John Chandos and George, and four daughters, including twins, and the family was brought up at Oddington. John was not any more active in politics than his father, the family leading the social life of wealthy landowners with estates in several counties, and spending much time in London.

A report in *The Times* of 24 November 1789 states that 'Died. Wednesday at his house in Harley Street, Cavendish Square, Sir John Reade, Bart, of Shipton in Oxfordshire and Oddington in Gloucestershire.' Six days later *The Times* reported 'The premature death of Sir John Reade has been pronounced by Mr John Hunter, who opened the body, to have been entirely owing to the pernicious use of Acids, which he took with an

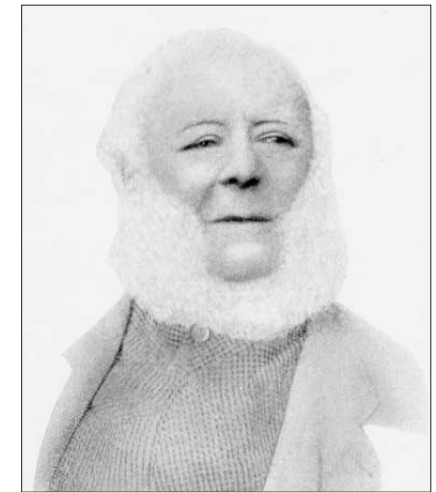
intention of reducing his corpulency.' In trying to lose weight Sir John was following what had become fashionable in the later eighteenth century. Medical men were warning that gross eating and drinking and little exercise was making 'England a nation of fatties' and suggesting ways of slimming, with disastrous effects in some cases.¹⁴ Finally on January 26 1790 the following notice appeared in *The Times*, 'The Duchess of Chandos, Lady Saye and Sele, and Lady Reade are three sister mourners; the ties of relationship and long habits of intimacy had before united them; the sympathy of sorrow has since added a still stronger cement to the seal of friendship.'

Sir John's will records household goods, china, furniture, books and pictures at 'his houses', with carriages and horses and shares in the Sun Fire Office. After his wife's death he wanted 'all the gold and silver plate at the mansions in Shipton, Oddington and London to remain as heirlooms and an inventory to be taken.' The large memorial in Shipton Church shows likenesses of Sir John and his twin daughters, one died a few days before him and the other shortly after.

Sir John Chandos Reade 7th Baronet 1785–1868

When his father died in 1789 John Chandos Reade was only four years old and he inherited both Shipton Court and Oddington House with their estates. He had a younger brother, George and a sister Julia Jane who was born in 1790 after her father's death. Lady Jane, John Chandos' mother and the children lived in Oddington because Lady Harriott was still resident at Shipton. John Chandos came of age in 1806 and in 1810 rebuilt Oddington House and landscaped the gardens employing Lewis Kennedy who was gardener to the Duke of Devonshire. He moved to Shipton Court when his grandmother Harriott died in 1811 and married Louisa Murray in 1814; she was grand-daughter of the third Earl of Oxford. His mother, Lady Jane, continued to live at Oddington and died there in 1847, having been a widow for 58 years.

Sir John and his wife, Louisa had five children but despite this when he died in 1868 he had no competent heir to follow him, Emily who died in 1897 was incapable of managing business because of ill-health. The



SIR JOHN CHANDOS READE, 7TH

eldest son Compton was born in 1814, he died without children in 1851. He left his property to his two surviving sisters, Emily and Clara; John Chandos was born in 1816 and died in 1818; Louisa Jane was born in 1817 and died in 1837; Emily was born in 1819 and died in 1897; Clara was born in 1821 and Louisa, John's wife died when she was born. Clara married John Talbot Rice and they lived in Oddington; they had no children. Clara and Emily shared the Oddington estate and Clara died there in 1853. John Chandos left Clara's share of the Oddington estate to John Talbot.

An old village story told how Sir John Chandos and his butler, Thomas Sinden said to have been heavy drinkers together, came back from Milton rather drunk. Joseph Wakefield, a footman, was reputed to have witnessed a violent incident in which the butler died and because of this Sir John left Joseph all his possessions on his death in 1868. His will shows just how determined John Chandos was to leave everything he had to Joseph Wakefield on condition he changed his name to Reade. He bequeathed to Joseph all his manors, lands and properties and itemised his goods 'all moneys, securities for money, family and other pictures, paintings, prints, books linen, plate-glass, china, wearing apparel, carriages, horses, live and dead farming stock,... snuff boxes, watches, watch and other chains, seals, rings, pins and in particular the watch that belonged to King William the third... ...' There is an article in *Wychwoods History* Number 10, which discusses the incident and gives an account of the whole affair.¹⁵

Sir Chandos Stanhope Hoskyns Reade

Sir Chandos who was John Chandos' great-nephew and grandson of his brother George, tried to have the John Chandos' will set aside suggesting that its terms meant that Sir John was not in his right mind. Sir Chandos was the heir of his great-aunt Emily, John Chandos Reade's daughter who had been certified unable to manage her own affairs, and who died in November 1897. It was ostensibly on her behalf that he tried to have the will overturned. Sir Chandos offered to buy Joseph Wakefield out but he refused and the will was contested. The Judge of the Probate Court found for Joseph Wakefield and probate was granted to him. It appears from a footnote in the *Record* that a further court case was mooted but came to nothing. One interesting note is that when Compton Reade died in 1851 James Wickens was his executor and was granted probate for the will. James Wickens was also named as executor to John Chandos' will but refused to act, perhaps this suggests he was not happy with the bequest away from the family. The will was proved by Joseph Wakefield and James Scarlett Price in June 1868.

Sir John Chandos seems to have had no strong attachment to Shipton maybe because until he was an adult he did not live there, he and his siblings had spent their childhood with their mother in Oddington. He

must also have had bitter memories of Shipton with the deaths of his wife and all of his family but Emily and he may have been aware of the stories gossiped about him in the area and grown to dislike everything about the place and the people there. In the circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that Sir John Chandos left his property to someone who had served him well for many years when he was alone. In another village story he was supposed to have haunted the Court, the Crown Inn and other places in the area until his spirit was 'laid' under the bridge on the Chipping Norton road by a group of clergy.¹⁶ Sir John's dislike of Shipton is borne out by his wishes about his funeral. He asked to be buried in any parish in which he died but if in Shipton to be buried in Little Rollright where he also had property; he had presented his cousin's son John Reade to the Little Rollright benefice. He was buried in Little Rollright where he has an elaborate grave, and not in the Reade vault at Shipton.

It is difficult to gauge the influence that the Reades had in Shipton and the surrounding villages; how did people see them, as squires or as distant occasional visitors? General George Reade and Sir John Chandos Reade appear to be the only members of the family who were in Shipton most of their time. Dame Harriott was probably a source of constant interest and discussion with her birds and animals and eccentric ways. The drinking and flamboyant behaviour of John Chandos would have caused a lot of comment.¹⁷ They were a family which had property in London and spent much time there as many wealthy landowners did in the eighteenth century employing staff to manage their estates. However in their wills the Reades gave Shipton Court as their principal home, had a private pew in the Church and were buried in the family vault. There are many memorials to the them on the walls of Shipton church.

This was not, of course, the end of the Reade family; many descendants still live in the British Isles and around the world. The history of the early Reades' connection with Shipton Court ended when John Chandos died in 1868. However there was another Reade who followed and owned the Court, the servant, Joseph Wakefield who changed his name to Reade.

Joseph Wakefield (Reade)

Joseph Wakefield, born in Yorkshire, served Sir John Chandos Reade at Shipton Court for many years. His wife, Caroline was born in Brill in Buckinghamshire: there is no record of their marriage in Shipton. There are, however, under the name of Wakefield, the baptisms of daughter Ellen on 20 November 1860 and son Joseph on 6 April 1863. In both cases his occupation was 'steward' but in the Shipton 1861 census returns he is given as butler. After he inherited Shipton Court Joseph Reade chose not to live in the house but moved to Shipton Lodge with his family and left the Court. He died in Shipton in March 1893 aged 77 and his wife died at

Frogmore (now Forest Gate), Frog Lane in Milton in May 1895.

Joseph Reade, continued to buy land and properties and build cottages as Sir John Chandos Reade had before him. In 1872 he bought the lordship of the manor of Shipton from John Kilby, a Banbury lawyer, for £100 and in 1873 Joseph is said to own about 2000 acres in the area.¹⁸ When Joseph senior died in 1893 his son, Joseph inherited the estate and continued to buy land and properties as his father had done. He sold most of the early Reade family portraits but allowed General Meredith Read to buy those of Sir Compton Reade, his wife, Mary and Sir Thomas Reade.

Joseph Reade junior went to Brasenose College, Oxford and became a barrister and local justice of the peace. He lived in Shipton, and took part in village affairs. He was elected a parish councillor in the first election in 1894 as did his tenant in Shipton Court, David Reid.¹⁹ Joseph served again in 1896 but was defeated in 1897. He was on the committee of Lady Reade's Charity until 1900. He was said to be a charming fellow and had been a good landlord '... kind and considerate in every way to his tenants and did all he could for them'.²⁰ Joseph sold Shipton Court, the estate, the lordship of the manor of Shipton and the right to the aisle and pews in Shipton church to William Pepper in 1901.

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I am most grateful to Mrs Joan Williams who has helped me with information about Peter Heborn.

The Will of Peter Heborn – gamekeeper

In the name of God Amen I Peter Heborn of Shipton under Whichwood in the county of Oxford being Weak of Body but of sound and perfect mind and memory praises to God for it but considering with my Self the uncertainty of this mortal Life and that all Flesh must yield unto death when it pleases God to call do therefore make this my last Will and Testament to dispose and settle these Earthly Blessings it hath pleased the Lord of his Mercy to lend me in manner following First I give my Soul into the hands of Almighty God who gave it and my Body to the earth from whence it was taken and to be buried in a devout and Christian like manner at the discretion of my Executor

First my Will is that all my just debts if any and funeral expenses are fully discharged

next I give and bequeath to Susannah and Mary daughters of Robert Williams of Brewern the sum of Twenty Pounds now in the hands of General Read equally to be divided between them

next I give to Susannah Boulter servant to the said General Read one guinea and a half

next I give to Mrs Hamerton one guinea

next I give to Mrs Mason one guinea

next I give to the cook and dairymaid servants to the said General Read ten shillings and sixpence being half a guinea

next I give to Alice Pooge half a guinea

next I give to my godson Charles Spruce one guinea

next I give to Charles Boulter two (?fustian) coats and one Westcoat and one pair of britches and two shirts and one hat

next I give to John Turtle of Charlbury half a crown to finish and put up my gravestones

next I give to Ann Egerton two shillings and sixpence

next I give to Thomas Crose(Cross) the sexton five shillings to bryar [use] my grave every year during his Life

next I give to my Brother Anthonys son one guinea

next I give to my Brother Anthonys daughter five pounds

next I give to robert Williams five shillings

next I give to John Hawkes five shillings

next I give my fellow servants James and Isaac five shillings each
 next I give to the General Reads three servant men each five shillings
 next I give to James Hope two shillings and sixpence
 next I give Henry Cole two shillings and sixpence
 next I do give to Robert Smith Robert Ward John Russell Edward Becket Henry
 Barrick John Boulter William May to carry me to Church and do hereby give
 them two shillings and sixpence each for their Trouble
 all the rest of my goods chattells whatsoever I give and bequeath to my kinsman
 Edward Hughes of the City of London and do make him my whole and sole
 executor of this my last will and testament he paying my just debts and Legacies
 and funeral expenses revoking all other wills before by me made

In Witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal this second day of
 March in the Year of Our Lord 1742 Note before signing and sealing hereof I
 desire for conveniency that Robert Williams may have the ordering of my
 burying PETER HEBORN signed sealed published and delivered by the within
 named Testator in the presence of Richard Willett and Jno Busby THIS WILL was
 proved at London the twenty second day of February in the Year of Our Lord one
 thousand seven hundred and fortyfour before the Worshipful Robert Dale Doctor
 of Laws and Surrogate of the Right Worshipful John Butterworth also Doctor of
 Laws Keeper or commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully
 constituted by the Oath of Edward Hughes the sole Executor in the said will
 named To whom Administration was granted of all and singular the goods
 chattells and credits of the deceased being first sworn only to administer. RD

Peter Heybourne/Heborn was buried in Shipton on 2 October 1744.

Legatees and Servants from Shipton under Wychwood parish register transcripts

Susannah Williams	d of Robert, bap 28 Aug 1721
May Williams	d of " , " 28 May 1725
Robert Williams	father of the above, of Bruern, bur 1757
Susannah Boulter	maybe dau of John
Mrs Hamerton	no trace in registers but appears as Ann Hamerton in General George Reade's will of 1756- he left her £200
Ann Egerton	d of John, bap 1698, no further information
Mrs Mason	no more information but was she the Mrs Mason of the village story, could she have been John Reade's nurse
Alice Pooge/Pogue	dau of Thomas bap 1722, mar John Franklin in 1776
Charles Spruce	s of Charles bap 1691, mar Susannah Cross in 1734, bur sometime after 1749 (family sometimes called Pruce)
Charles Boulter	s of John bap 1727, probably related to Susannah above
John Turtle	nothing in registers but Benjamin Turtle mar in Shipton 1722
Thomas Crose	the sexton Thomas Cross could be bap 1680 or 1703. Well known local name
John Hawkes	s of John bap 1701, mar Hester Pruce 1721, bur 1778
James ???	too many James to guess who this is

Isaac ???	there are two Isaacs baptised, Isack Taplin, 1669 and Isaac Potter in 1690, there are no further entries for them in the registers. Isaac Potter seems to be the most likely to be the servant but who knows
James Hope	s of James bap 1681, maybe mar Anne Townsend 1707, bur 1749
Henry Cole Lardner	s of Mary Cole & Robert Pinder bap 1707, mar Anne 1740
Robert Smith	no bap, a Robert of Milton, mar to Elizabeth Barrett 1704, bur 1754 then of Shipton
Robert Ward	s of William bap 1685, mar Anne Webstraw 1716, byr 1752
John Russell	s of Thomas bap 1706, mar Sarah Goodenough, ?bur 1788
Edward Becket	s of Samuel 1670, mar Mary Webster 1707, bur 1748
Harry Barrick	no bap, mar Grevil Becket 1728, no burial
John Boulter	born about 1690, mar Elizabeth Townsee 1711, bur 1747
William May	s of William bap 1667, mar Grevil Morton 1728, bur 1752

Witnesses to the will were obviously local Willett and Busby families

Peter Heborn – gamekeeper's licence

*Know all men by these presents that I Rowland Lacie of Churchill in the county
 of Oxon Esq Lord of the Hundred of Chadlington in the said county and of all
 Royalties Libertys and priviledges therein and thereto belonging have
 nominated constituted and appointed and by these presents do nominate and
 constitute and appoint Peter Heborn of Shipton under Whichwood in the county
 of Oxon to be my Gamekeeper and as such to kill and destroy the Game within
 the severall Townships libertyes and precincts of Chilson Shorthampton Milton
 Sandbrooke and Swinbrooke within the said Hundred*

*Given under my hand and seale this one and twentieth day of April Anno
 Dom 1712*

[Seal is on original document]

[signed] Row.Lacy

Sealed and delivered in the presence of – William Diston; Richd Draper

The Most Mature Reflections

SUE JOURDAN

Dame Harriott Reade died at Shipton Court in 1811 two days before Christmas aged 84 years.¹ She had been a widow for 52 years. The only anecdotal evidence about Dame Harriott comes from the journals of the Revd Thomas Symonds, vicar of Eynsham and antiquarian who, in the early nineteenth century, recorded in nine manuscript journals notes about the history, people and places of Oxfordshire.² His information and dates where they can be verified are not always accurate.

Dame Harriott was the only child and heiress of William Barker of Sonning, Berkshire. Symonds reported that she 'is represented as having been proud & high-spirited' and that her portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.³ In 1759 she married Sir John Reade, 5th Baronet, of Shipton Court when she was already 32 years and he 38. Sir John had lost his mother when he was born and was apparently a spoilt child, brought up in London with his father, Sir Thomas, Member of Parliament and courtier. Before marriage, Sir John had had two illegitimate children, Jane and John Reade, whom he recognised as beneficiaries in his will. He apparently hoped that Harriott's 'failings' of being proud and high-spirited would soften and ameliorate.⁴ After three years of happy marriage, Harriott was 'unfortunately for both' delivered of twin boys, John and Thomas.

'From that hour a ridiculous idea of the Indelicacy of having twins filled her mind with such phantasies, that the advice of her dearest Friends was not powerful enough to induce her to reside with her husband, & a separation accordingly took place! The effect of her rash vow upon her future Happiness was strikingly [*sic*] lamentable, & she that had been the Admiration of the County of the Beauty of her Person, & the Elegance of her manners, retired in Disgust from the polished circle of Society in which she had been reared. And from this period a marked change in her temper, manner & Habits was observed. She became attached to Birds & monkeys [*sic*], & from purchasing a few, she went collecting, resolved to possess the finest collection of Birds in England, & being unsparing of money, she realised her intention, & formed a most magnificent Aviary. Having obtained, sometimes as presents, but more frequently purchased specimens of the most beautiful or scarce birds from every quarter of the world, from the largest to the most minute. And to keep alive the gaudy natives of the Tropics she had stoves constructed that kept the air of the

Rooms at a proper Degree of Heat. Lady Reade is said frequently to have given 150 guineas for a single bird! In passing thro' the apartments where these feathered prisoners were confined, the noise of the different species of Macaws, Cockatoos, Parrots & Parroquets was absolutely deafening. And the air was so foul, notwithstanding every thing that care & Regularity could effect in cleaning their cages, that it was quite noxious. The pale cheeks, & the dim eye of the Bird Maid, as the female was called who exhibited the collection to strangers, sufficiently proved the ill effects of the Effluvia they occasioned.'

These days, after the birth of the twins, perhaps she would have been diagnosed as having puerperal depression although her eccentricities continued for the rest of her life. For all the comment by Symonds, she had another child, Mary, six years later in 1768 who later married Sir Elijah Impey.

In 1773 her husband, Sir John, died⁵ and Dame Harriott inherited all his lands and properties, including Shipton Court for her use during her life as long as remained a widow. She also had a large inheritance from her parents and her uncle Marriott. 'I stand possessed of some property in the public Funds left me by my late Mother & eldest uncle Marriott in which I have been blessed with success'. The arrangements for the disposal of her wealth seem to have much preoccupied her, making many bequest of presents and annuities to her friends and her staff. In her will she thanked George Burley of Lincoln's Inn, one of her lawyers and executors, 'for his trouble & very great care & attention to my concerns.' Her extant will was signed and witnessed on 3 April 1804 in the presence of three of George Burley's clerks and one can imagine her being driven in her carriage to Lincoln's Inn to sign the document after many months of thought and of discussion with her lawyers. As she was already 75 years it is likely that there had been an earlier will.

The will was 16 pages long and, as she lived nearly another seven years with the members of her family dying and her staff changing, she added nine codicils including one signed on the same day as the will, that her estate was to pay all taxes due on the bequests she had made. Four of the codicils were in February, March, May and September 1811 before she died in December. The total value for probate was £45,000. She left many personal bequests but, as her son was already dead, the bulk of her fortune and possessions she left to her grandson, Sir John Chandos Reade, 7th Baronet, of Oddington House, Gloucestershire.

Her son, Sir John, the 6th Baronet, had married Jane Chandos Hoskyns in 1784, and bought Oddington House. They had two sons, John Chandos, later the 7th baronet and George, and four daughters including twins. He died at his house in Harley Street aged only 27 years and his twin daughters, Harriet and Louisa, both died within a few weeks of him. He

DAME HARRIOTT, WIFE OF SIR JOHN READE, 5TH BARONET, BY SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY. Courtauld Institute of Art

was buried in the family vault under St Mary the Virgin church, Shipton although he never lived here. The burial register recorded that he was 'of Oddington House'. In the chancel of St Mary the Virgin, Shipton is a large wall monument erected to the memory of 'an affectionate husband, tender parent and lenient master' by 'his disconsolate widow'. As the monument is adjacent to and similar in format to that of his father's, one wonders if his mother was instrumental in its erection.

Symonds reports the local gossip that 'With her daughter-in-law, the widow of her son, she held no intercourse whatever, but was reported to feel, amidst all her singularities, towards her grandson a strong affection'. At one time her other son, Sir John's twin brother Thomas, lived just over the county boundary at Bourton in Gloucestershire but by the time of Dame Harriott's will he lived at Littlestoke, near Checkendon, Oxfordshire.

Dame Harriott was obviously much exercised about the disposal of her money and of her properties, in particular of the house on the north side of Curzon Street near St George's, Hanover Square where she lived most of the time. '...after the most mature reflections I am convinced [it] is too large to be suitably kept up by any of my Family with their present Incomes. Therefore in order to prevent the ruinous consequences that might ensue from their inhabiting it, 'the remaining lease of 985 years was to be let for 21 years' together with 'the plate china Household Linen Furniture Pictures & Prints', and the rent to be invested in government stock and real estate. Only at the expiration of the 21 years was her



grandson, Sir John Chandos Reade, to be allowed to have the 'enjoyment of my house and furniture'. He did inherit immediately the family pictures, books, some china including a china jar and two fine small cabinets from the Blue Room at Curzon Street and 'my Green Emerald Ring which was my late husbands'. He was also the beneficiary of a trust administered by her executors of most of her properties at Shipton and the contents of Shipton Court. Originally he was to inherit all her farm stock at Shipton but in the codicil of 1806 this was changed to the stock being sold and her grandson receiving the income from invested proceeds.

A number of bequests were also made to her son Thomas but he died in 1806 so these bequests were revoked in the 1806 codicil. He was to have inherited the rest of her Shipton properties and several annuities together with 'my miniature picture of my late husband set with diamonds & my Locket of his hair also set with diamonds & annexed to the picture with a chain together with my set of China distinguished by the Leicester Arms' and 'my Topaz Ring set round with small Diamonds'. He was also to receive her copy of Chamber's Cyclopaedia, Middleton's Geography, Ashburton's History of England and Bishop Juxon's Bible together with any two of her horses he chose with their saddles and bridles.

For all the transfer of, particularly Reade, property to her son, it would appear she did not trust him; later in the will was a long and forthright statement that if he tried to alter her will or in any way use the capital sums upon which the annuities or interest that were his inheritance were based, then he was to be assumed to be 'naturally dead'. In the codicil after his death his son, John, was to receive part of the annuities intended for him but not until he reached the age of 24 years, and his widow received the 'mock' locket set round with diamonds.

She also left pieces of her jewellery as well as annuities to her granddaughters. Julia Reade received 'my pearl Breast knot & three small pearl knots, three large pearl pins & one pair of pearl Earrings', 'Miss Elizabeth Reade daughter of her son Thomas Reade of Littlestoke one pair of small pearl earrings & a pearl cross' and Susan Reade 'my Gold watches & the chain annexed which were my Mother's, my small chased Gold watch with its chain of mock pearls & Trinkets & the other ornamental Chain & ornaments worn with it & the picture of my Grandfather set in a snuff Box & my small blood stone snuff Box which was my Mother's'. Only one of her servants, many of whom were named in the will, received jewellery; 'my servant Mary Leech if she shall be in my service at my decease all my Garnets whether set or strung Also my old repeating Gold watch & its gold case & my miniature picture of myself'. All the rest of 'my Jewels Trinkets & Toys of all sorts & my watches & Gold & silver coins & Medals' were to be sold and the proceeds invested. Her grandson, George, received several annuities as did her namesake, her granddaughter

and goddaughter, Harriott, from the money that Thomas Reade would have received.

There was also a bequest of annuities to Miss Jane Reade aged 60 and Miss Jane Reade 'now living at Mr Searles No.7 Philpot Place, Edgeware Road'. Was one of these the child of her husband's liaison, with Dame Harriott showing a care for an illegitimate daughter of her late husband?

The first part of Dame Harriott's will is taken up with the disposal of her properties. Next in importance to her, before her money and possessions, were the bequests of her birds and animals. In 1768–71 Joseph Banks sailed around the world with Captain James Cook collecting plant and natural history specimens. On his return he was feted by London society and travelled the country lecturing on his adventures and discoveries. With Dame Harriott's interest in exotic animals and birds of the tropics, one can imagine her attending a lecture and perhaps even entertaining him at her house in Curzon Street. The birds she itemised for bequests were her parrots, macaws, cockatoos, mandarin ducks of China, American drakes and ducks, Indian widgeon, golden eye, henrys, King Botany Bay birds, pheasants and water fowls as well as her 'three beautiful tame mocoeks',⁶ a mongoose and a small ring-tailed monkey. There were also three or four other foreign quadrupeds. In her will most of her menagerie was left to Lady Penryn together with the pens and nets but several friends including the Duke of Marlborough were also left birds. In her codicil in 1808 Lady Penryn was still to receive most of the birds but she left to 'her Royal Highness the Duchess of York if she will do me the honor to accept of them all my Mocoeks & Mongoose & any other of my little quadruped animals that may be in my possession at the time of my decease as I am convinced they will receive the greatest attention & care'. She left her 'little dog Rosie & the picture drawn by Mr Chalon' to her servant Mary Leech.

Much of Dame Harriott's money was invested in bonds and consols. She had £5000 in Old South Sea annuities and £15,000 in 3% consols as well as bonds of the City of London and 3% and 4% bank annuities. These she divided between her family, friends, servants and charities.

Dame Harriott was extremely well connected and had many titled friends who received gifts and annuities. William Boscawen of Baker Street, one of her executors and trustees, was a son of General George Boscawen. His sisters, Charlotte and Ann, received annuities and small birds; Ann had been a maid of honour to Queen Charlotte. William died just before Dame Harriott in 1811 and the codicil of 29 May 1811 replaced him as executor with Robert Harry Inglis MP for Oxford University. Her other executors and trustees were Daniel Moore and George Burley of Lincoln's Inn and John Francis Le Cointe of South Sea House, Brunswick Square; they were all to receive annuities and gifts as well as their fees.

Lady Willis and Lady Crespigny received birds; the Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Inglis, Lady Frances Wilson and Mrs Mary Spilsbury, a neighbour in Curzon Street, each received 100 guineas with which to buy a ring as a small remembrance of her great regard for them, similarly Lord Teynham and William Donaldson. In a codicil she left 'to the Honorable Mrs Dutton of Barrington if she will do me the honor to accept of them all the small Orange Trees which I have lately purchased of Mr Hurley together with the Tubs which contain them & six small stands & Myrtles in pots'. Hon Mrs Dutton was probably her sister-in-law or niece. Her 'respected Relation Mrs Vyner' received a Dresden Tureen with a cut Lemon on the top' while Mrs Vyner's sister Mrs Mary Carter had 'two China High Jars with blue insides'. She gave them both fifty guineas for a ring. And she gave all the pictures placed in the Blue Room in Curzon Street the greatest part of which were painted by Mrs Charlotte Styles, to Mr Robert Styles of Waterringbury, Kent.

THE MEMORIALS IN ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, SHIPTON TO SIR JOHN READE, 5TH BARONET, DAME HARRIOT'S HUSBAND, AND SIR JOHN READE, 6TH BARONET, HER SON



The longest list of legatees in the will was of her servants, with particularly generous bequests to Mary Leech and James Curtois. They were both beneficiaries of large annuities that were increased with each codicil together with properties for them to live in at Shipton. James Curtois also received dogs, horses, all her stuffed birds,⁷ liveries of red and scarlet and 'also all the Books contained in my Escretoire in the back parlour of my House in Curzon Street'.

All her staff at Shipton and Curzon Street were to receive a month's wages and a suit of mourning clothes as well as annuities; many are mentioned by name. Her 'yearly servants' were to receive a year's wages and mourning clothes. She particularly mentions 'my late Groom Edward Stade & his wife' who were to continue living in the house recently built for them on the waste land of Shipton with provision that if they were ever dispossessed they should have the house and garden occupied by William Wheeler in Shipton. George Brown, her late husband's old servant, received several annuities. Mary Franklin was her bird maid, Antony Shaler was her gardener, Joseph Bunting was her coachman and John Smith her bailiff. Two other people were of importance to her: Jane Smart, wife of her grocer John Smart 'for long and faithful service', and John Baggott her apothecary.

Throughout her life Dame Harriott was known for her generous and discreet charitable gifts. In her will she left money for the setting up of charities to benefit poor children in Shipton and in Sonning, Berkshire, her family home. John Langston of Sarsden House and Revd Hipplesy Coxe of Stowe were to be the trustees for Shipton. She also left money and an annuity to the Radcliffe Infirmary. She obviously was a devotee of the theatre; she left cash and annuities to the Theatrical Funds belonging to Drury Lane Theatre Royal and Covent Garden Theatre Royal for the support of 'decayed actors'.

Dame Harriott had a horror of being buried alive and in her will she instructed 'that my body may not be removed from my bed until forty eight hours after my decease & also that my coffin shall not be soldered up until evident signs of putrefaction appear which I should imagine would not take place under ten days at the soonest but if such signs shall not then appear my will is that my Body shall remain unclosed up until they do appear'. Her funeral was to be performed in a like manner to that of her late husband with 'an Inscription of my name place of birth & age be engraved on the present blank side of my own dear husband's monument in the parish church of Shipton left by me there for that purpose'. The monument had been chosen by her from a design by Mr Westmacott, architect. What ever had been the relationship between Sir John and herself, throughout the 52 years of her widowhood, she still mourned him and remembered him with his miniature and locket of his

hair. Also recorded on the monument was the information that with her death her ancient Barker family became extinct and that 'her long life was distinguished by active munificence and her benefactions at her death to this and her native parish of Sonning will be gratefully and affectionately remembered by the poor'.

Her will also contained financial provision for her funeral. Twenty pounds was to be given to Dr Brooks the vicar of Shipton if he performed her funeral service; this was increased in a codicil by an additional 50 guineas. As well as mourning suits for all her staff, 'the six poor Labourers who carry me to the Ground shall have a mourning Coat, Hatband & Gloves' and nine guineas to be divided among them. She asked to be interred 'as near the Body of my own dear husband as can be in the vault at Shipton'.

Her final codicil was witnessed three months before she died, not this time by her London lawyers' clerks, but by two of her tenant farmers, John Young and John Gomm, summoned to Shipton Court. From the detail in her long will it is possible to picture the life Dame Harriott led in Georgian England with a smart and well-furnished London house, her country house, her many servants, her large circle of family and friends and her interest in her menagerie and the theatre. Regardless of the gossip about her and her family, she sounds a competent, aristocratic and autocratic lady, well in command of her affairs, caring for her staff and trying hard to control the destiny of her family from beyond the grave.

References

- 1 The National Archives (TNA), PROB 11/1529, will of Dame Harriott Reade 1812; TNA, IR 26/555 1812 tax return for probate, Dame Harriott Reade.
- 2 Oxfordshire Archives, Symonds vol 4.
- 3 *Wychwoods History* No 12 (1997), Lady Harriet Reade of Shipton Court 1727-1811.
- 4 *Wychwoods History* No 13 (1998), 'Mother Shipton' - A Cruel Irony? Anthony Cronk suggests she was painted by Sir William Beechey, a copy of which is reproduced in the article together with that of her husband also by Beechey and her son by George Romney.
- 4 Symonds. *Ibid*.
- 5 See 'The Reade Family of Shipton under Wychwood', Joan Howard-Drake, elsewhere in this Journal.
- 6 OED. Moccock, a form of macaco, a species of brown monkey from Brazil with a most beautiful tail.
- 7 Many of her birds had been asphyxiated in the fire in her aviaries and their bodies stuffed and exhibited at the Court in the room between the Great Stair Case and Drawing Room. They were said to be borrowed by artists to copy in their paintings.

Local Country Houses during Victoria's Reign

ANTHEA JONES, SUE JOURDAN

There are three large houses in the immediate vicinity of Shipton which might have been termed 'smaller country houses' in the way in which *Country Life* used the words: Shipton Court, Burford Priory and Bruern Abbey. Burford Priory, where Elizabeth I may have stayed, had been the largest of the three until the demolition of several wings at the beginning of the nineteenth century; in 1665 the constable recorded 36 hearths to be taxed, which gives some indication of the house's size because each hearth heated an important room. The occupant of Shipton Court had fewer hearths to pay for, 25 in 1662, and the occupant of Bruern Abbey 20. Burford Priory and Shipton Court both still retain elements of the structures built about 1600; both have subsequently had many additions and alterations; Bruern Abbey, on the other hand, was an early eighteenth century house, though much had to be rebuilt towards the end of that century after a fire, and was renovated 100 years later. An extensive reconstruction of Burford Priory was started in 1908, when the tea merchant E.J.Horniman purchased it. This was close to the date when Shipton Court was also reconstructed.

On 16 June 1870 the North Oxford Archaeological Society made an excursion which included Shipton, an account of which was published by the society.¹ The Court was included in their itinerary, 'a mansion singularly picturesque in its ground and sky lines. It is massive and has variety'. The occupant, Mr Hall, was described as the master of the Heythrop hounds. The party was particularly impressed by the grounds:

It has green terraces and bright waters, clipped hedges and flowers in beds on one side, and stately avenues and grassy lawns on the other. [Mr Hall] takes great interest in the good work going on in the parish and assists the painstaking hard-working vicar of a Sunday by reading the lessons.

It is noticeable that no comments were made on the interior; nor was there when the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society visited Shipton in July 1897.² The occupier then was Mr Reid. 'The beautiful grounds, and the interesting old stables, dovecot and brewery were somewhat hurriedly visited, but time did not allow of an inspection of the interior of the house.'

The North Oxfordshire Archaeological Society visited Burford Priory as well as Shipton Court. Here the inside of the house was disappointing; only one remarkable room was commented on which was both large and high ceilinged, approached up a wide flight of stairs. But outside they recorded:

its walled and terraced gardens and lawns sweeping down to the water and trees of great girth and great height. It is a modern ruin, and has an uncomfortable look and gives one the stomach ache. It seems as if it had been, still was and always would be in chancery.

Between 1841 and 1901 it is possible to peer behind the facades of these houses and see how the household and lifestyle of Shipton Court compared with the other two, using the census enumerators' records. There are some notable similarities in their histories during this Victorian period. Much has been made, by the National Trust for example, of the dangers to country houses after the First World War. Less attention has been focused on the rescue of decaying country houses in the later nineteenth century and before the First World War; this period, too, was significant in their history.

During much of Victoria's reign small country houses were often occupied by farmers rather than gentry. Of Bruern, *Kelly's Directory* noted in 1907 that the 'remaining buildings [of the abbey] were utilised until

A DRAWING BY J.C.BUCKLER OF THE EAST FRONT OF BURFORD PRIORY IN 1808, JUST BEFORE THE TWO WINGS OF THE HOUSE WERE DEMOLISHED. Reproduced by kind permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Ref. M.S. Top. Oxon. a.64 no 7.

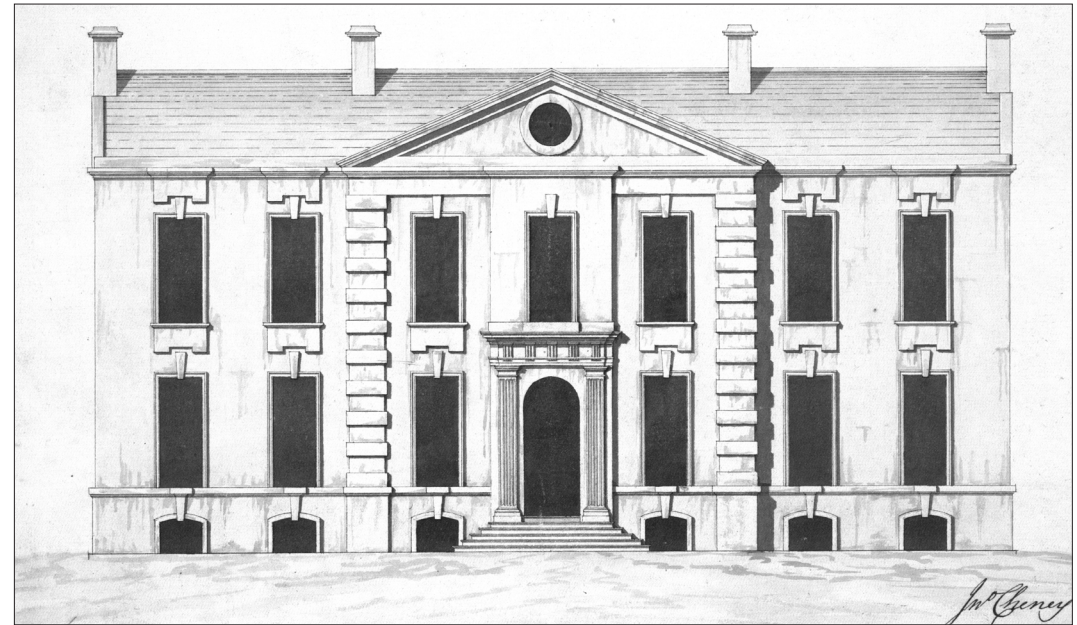


recently for farm purposes' and the census enumerators confirmed the truth of this statement. In 1841, Sampson Pratt, farmer, was living at Bruern Abbey and in 1851 his widow was stated to be farming 340 acres and employing 10 men and 8 boys. In 1861, Sampson and Mary Pratt's son, William, was farming 1008 acres with 27 men, 3 women and 18 boys. The land was not necessarily all in Bruern. The Pratts had gone by 1871, replaced by John Cook, farming 380 acres, who continued there in 1881 at what was then termed 'Bruern Abbey farm house'. In 1891 the house was empty, but in 1901 Cecil Samuda had moved in, a gentleman of means with a large household. He had previously lived at Shipton Court.

The story of Burford Priory between 1861 (the first date at which the house can be clearly traced in the enumerators' books) and 1891 was no more helpful to the maintenance of the large old house; the only occupants were the gardener, John Shepherd and different members of his family. As the house was owned by the Greenaway family of Barrington Grove, Little Barrington, it is interesting to note that John Shepherd was born in Little Barrington. In 1861 he was a widower, but he married again, and his wife was also born in Little Barrington; in 1891 he was aged 81 years. In 1901 the house appears to have been empty. Again the story confirms Kelly's information. In 1907 the house was occupied by Colonel Fenwick Bulmer de Sales La Terrière 'who 'restored the mansion after a neglect of close on a century'. Shortly after this, Mr Horniman bought the property and as Mrs Sturges Gretton wrote in her account of Burford published in 1929 'restored it more thoroughly and extensively, and lives in it still'.³

Shipton Court was more of a gentleman's residence in these years. In 1841, six servants occupied the Court but the owner, Sir John Chandos Reade, was absent. A gardener and

THE CALL BELL
PANEL IN THE
BASEMENT
PASSAGEWAY OF
SHIPTON COURT



A WATER COLOUR OF BRUERN ABBEY BY JOHN CHENEY, DATED 1795. Reproduced by kind permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Ref. G.A.Oxon. a. 117 p.237

agricultural labourer lodged somewhere on the site. Sir John was returned as occupying the Court in 1851; his birthplace was stated to have been Harley Street in London (see Sue Jourdan's account of Dame Harriet in this journal). His butler, Joseph Wakefield, aged 36 and born in Leeds, was listed next in the household, followed by the footman and three more female servants. The cook had her 11 months old child living with her. Sir John Chandos Reade and his butler and the cook, now termed a housekeeper, were all there in 1861, with a footman, another man servant and a visitor. Martha Jackson, the cook, was the only female member of the household. By 1871 Sir John was dead, Joseph Wakefield had become Joseph Reade, and had inherited his former master's property.⁴ He lived in The Lodge with his wife and two children and five servants: governess, cook, coachman, footboy, housemaid and laundress. W.W.Hall had moved into the Court, with a household of no less than 17 people: Alexander William Hall, J.P., D.L., his wife, four children, two nurses, housemaid, kitchenmaid, scullery maid, laundry maid, two housemaids, footman and helper in the stable.⁵

This was much the style of the next occupant recorded in the census, Cecil Samuda, though Sir Morgon Crofton had occupied the house in the interval. Cecil Samuda had married just over three years earlier, when he

was 27 and his young wife, Cécile Mary Isabella Markham, was only 17; his household in 1881 contained his wife and two year old son, three visitors (Sir Francis Winnington and his small family were probably relations) and 12 servants: cook, two lady's maids, two nurses, three housemaids, kitchen maid, butler and two footmen. Samuda was described as a 'landed proprietor'. In 1891 his household comprised 14 people, two of whom were his wife's young sisters. This household was soon to move to Bruern, and a very modest household of Miss Nora Reid, her sister and three servants occupied the Court in 1901. Nearby, in 'The Cottage', was Miss Isabella Reid, 'living on means', and two servants, almost certainly Nora Reid's sister.

The Samuda households were unusual little enclaves of more cosmopolitan society in their rural surroundings. Not only were servants mainly drawn from counties other than Oxfordshire, as they tended to be in all these smaller country houses, but they came from other parts of the British Isles, and in 1881 a lady's maid and a nurse were from Switzerland and Germany respectively, in 1891 a governess was born in France and probably was French, and in Bruern in 1901 a 'companion' was born in India and a nurse in Germany, though both had English-sounding names. Undoubtedly this reflected the background of the head of the household. The Samuda family originated in Spain and Portugal and were Jewish, though they seceded from the Jewish community; in the early 19th century one was an opulent London broker and several were civil engineers, much concerned with railway development and marine engineering. Joseph d'Aguilar Samuda was living in London in 1881 and had served for a while as an M.P. but Cecil Samuda's particular family connections are not known. Cécile Samuda's name may suggest she too had European connections.

Shortly after the 1901 census, the Court was sold to William Frederick Pepper, and a new programme of renovation inaugurated the new century.

References

- 1 'Notes of an excursion to Shipton under Wychwood, Swinbrook, Asthall and Burford' (1870), 9.
- 2 *Transactions of Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 20 (1896-7), 367.
- 3 S. Gretton, *Burford Past and Present* (1929), 210.
- 4 *Wychwoods History* No. 10 (1995), 49-53. There was a descendant of Sir John's alive in 1871, Sir Chandos Hoskyns Reade, Bart., of Carreglwyd, Anglesea, who had 3,764 acres according to the parliamentary returns of owners of land; J.Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (reprinted 1971). Joseph Reade of Shipton Court was said to have 2,018 acres.
5. A man of the same name was said to be of Barton Abbey, in Steeple Barton, Oxfordshire, and to have 2,470 acres of land in the Returns of the 1870s. He was probably the father of the Shipton Court family, who in 1881 were living at Barton Lodge, Steeple Barton.

The Dispersal of the Shipton Court Estate: 1913-1947

FRANK WARE

When W.F.Pepper put the Shipton Court estate on the market in 1913, it amounted to some 2,055 acres. Though not large in national terms – Earl Ducie's estates in Oxfordshire centred on Sarsden House totalled over 8,000 acres in 1873 – the Court estate covered well over half the parish of Shipton, together with two farms in Milton. It was thus the dominant land-holding in our local community, and its dispersal was one of the most significant events in twentieth-century Shipton, from the social and economic points of view.

Pepper's 1913 Disposal

Pepper first instructed auctioneers to offer the whole estate as a going concern for sale by private treaty. They produced a detailed brochure, 'the 1913 Estate Particulars'. This showed that 103 acres were held in hand: 67 acres comprising the Court and gardens, together with woodlands and other plots, many of them spread over the whole estate; and 36 acres in the Home Farm. There were three major farms in Shipton and two in Milton, together with a number of smaller holdings, all tenanted, and a considerable number of cottage properties.

A buyer failed to emerge for the whole estate at an acceptable price, but A.W.Huntingdon expressed interest in buying the Court mansion together with amenity buildings and land. He wanted the Home Farm buildings and some of its land, and the Wild Garden, but very little of the land in hand lying at some distance from the Court. Instead he wanted two plots of adjacent land which were tenanted, possibly for the sporting rights, and the Smithy with a small adjoining acreage, also tenanted. Pepper and Huntingdon struck a deal for the Court and amenity land totalling 94 acres, 'the core estate', which is identified on the map on p. 57, and see Table 3. Pepper then instructed the auctioneers to offer the rest of the estate for sale by public auction, piecemeal, and to prepare a new brochure.

Meanwhile, he also agreed the sale of Shipton Lodge with 15 acres of land, probably to the sitting tenant, the Hon. A.H.Mills; this was the second substantial residence on the estate, previously occupied by Joseph

Reade (formerly Wakefield) when he let the Court. We may presume that Pepper also approached the sitting tenants of the farms to see if they would buy the freeholds, but he still sought a single purchaser for the residue of the estate (which would have saved him trouble with disposing of small bits and pieces). However, with the two main residences excluded – Shipton Court with its amenity lands and Shipton Lodge – what remained was no longer a ‘gentleman’s country estate’, but an investment proposition. No such purchaser emerged.

In its final form the new brochure, ‘the 1913 Sale Particulars’, split the estate into 47 lots, which were again described in detail. The title page states: ‘Lots 3 to 47. To be offered for Sale by Public Auction at the Roebuck Hotel, Oxford... on July 2nd, 1913... unless previously sold by Private Treaty’. Lots 1 and 2, which were excluded from the auction though described in the Sale Particulars, comprised the Court with its 94 acres, and Shipton Lodge with its 15 acres. But the farms were all advertised as for sale at the auction.

The acreages now recorded for the major farms (see Table 1) differed in some cases from those listed in the estate particulars, partly to exclude the tenanted fields which were now included in the core estate. The land in hand which Huntingdon did not want was added to the larger farms or offered as separate lots. Meanwhile, the tenant of Upper Milton Farm had given up his tenancy, which had been taken on by Richard Hartley who was already the tenant at Grove Farm in Shipton. The opportunity was taken to transfer some fields in Milton from Grove Farm to Upper Milton Farm, presumably to produce more compact and viable units for sale. The acreages and rents in Table 1 are based on a schedule in the Estate Particulars, but the figures have been adjusted to take account of these changes.

The most significant thing about the auction itself, according to information recorded by Alfred Miles, is that not one of the major farm properties was sold at it. Grove Farm was bid up to £10,550 and Court Farm up to £6,680, but apparently these figures did not meet the reserve prices. There were no bids for Shipton & New Barn Farms, and Upper Milton Farm. The information on Lower Milton Farm is not clear but no sale is recorded. There were no bids also for a number of the smaller holdings, or they failed to meet the reserve prices. On this basis, the auction must be accounted a complete flop. However, of the cottages and small-holdings, at least 16 lots were apparently sold for a total of £3,135, a material sum for those days. Where known, the buyers were often the tenants.

But we know that Pepper did sell Court Farm in 1913. The 1957 Sale Particulars recite that the title to the properties then involved commenced with two conveyances dated 20 October 1913 and 12 November 1913. The

The centre of Shipton Parish, locating the core estate sold by W.F. Pepper to A.W. Huntingdon in 1913, and identifying parts of other properties offered for sale by W.F. Pepper

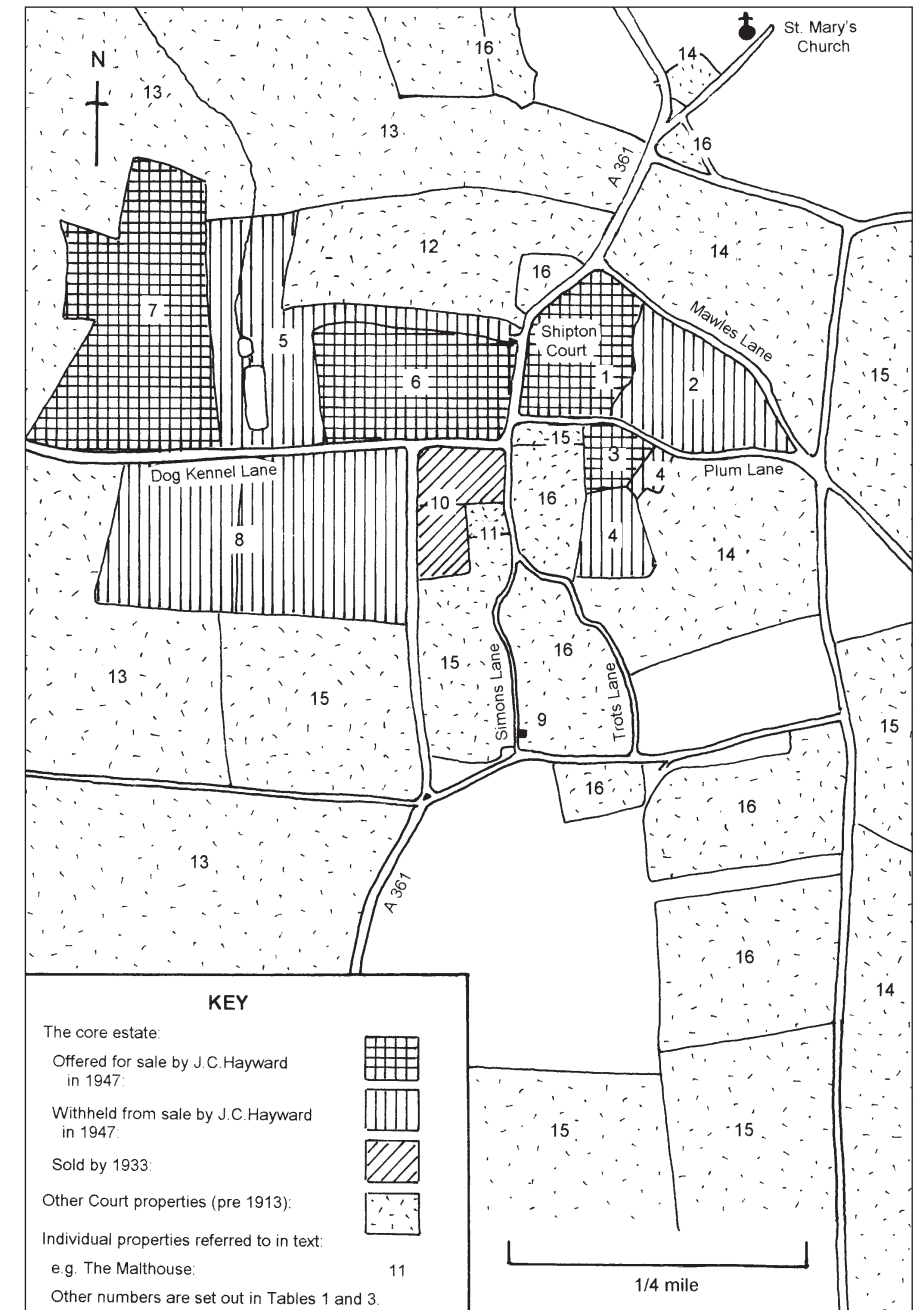


Table 1: Summary of the Shipton Court Estate as offered for sale by Pepper in 1913

Description	Tenant	Size Acres	Rent £. s. d	Map Ref.
Core estate	Mostly in hand.	94.5	98 0 0	see Table 3
The Lodge	Hon A.H.Mills	15.8	194 15 0	12
Grove Farm	Richard Hartley	495.4	495 0 0	13
Court Farm	Harry Mawle	452.3	353 10 0	14
Shipton & New Barn Farms, and Accommodation Holding	John F. Maddox	418.7	294 0 0	15
Upper Milton Farm	(1) Mr S.Stubbs (2) Richard Hartley	239.3	100 0 0	
Lower Milton Farm	G.E.Groves	129.6	160 0 0	
3 smallholdings	W.Cross, J.Mullis & J.W.Claridge	133.8	151 10 0	16
Smaller holdings, cottages etc	Various	76.2	359 18 4	11 & 16
Total		2,055.6	2206 13 4	

Source: *The 1913 Estate Particulars and the 1913 Sale Particulars.*

parties are not stated, but the conveyance of 20th October was the sale of the core estate from Pepper to Huntingdon (see Table 2). The conveyance of 12 November refers to Court Farm (which in 1913 included Springhill Farm), and there is some evidence that the purchaser was Harry Mawle, the tenant. These two farms were sold by D'Arcy Hall in 1947, and there is plenty of verbal evidence that the D'Arcy Halls farmed both farms in hand throughout the War. Their son Teddy Hall in his book, "Some Memories", recorded that they bought the farms when Harry Mawle, the owner, retired from farming and put them up for sale, and Mrs Mary Moore, Harry Mawle's daughter, has confirmed verbally that her father had bought the farm in 1913 and sold it to the D'Arcy Halls when he retired in the later 1930s.

On the other hand it appears that Richard Hartley did not purchase the freehold of Grove Farm. Trudy Yates has recorded that he continued to farm there, as tenant, until his death in 1927, and that the family then gave up the tenancy. I guess that he did not buy the freehold of Upper Milton Farm either. It was later, in the 1940s, that the Hartley family appear to have started buying freeholds, including Grove Farm. It seems that Richard Hartley's business plan was to build up a large farming enterprise by taking on a succession of tenancies as they became available, without adding the financial commitment of buying the freeholds.

I have seen no evidence which enables me to identify who bought the freeholds of these two farms, nor of the other substantial farms tenanted by Maddox and Groves, which may have been purchased by the sitting tenants. Another possibility is that Huntingdon did buy some of these, but

if that were the case, why should they be conveyed to him separately from the core estate? I think it is unlikely. A further possibility is that Pepper himself, having failed to find buyers, retained some farms as income-producing investments, until opportunities arose later to sell them at acceptable prices.

I conclude therefore that the main dispersal of this large agricultural estate occurred in 1913. Even if Pepper retained some of the farm freeholds, ownership of them was now separated from the ownership of Shipton Court as a residential estate.

1913 to 1947

I have been fortunate to have seen a copy of the deeds of the Dower House, and Table 2 summarises from them the abstract of title of the core estate, of which the Dower House was part from 1913 to 1947. This abstract starts with the 1919 conveyance from Huntingdon to Graeme Thomson, but the total of 94.5 acres then is identical with the core estate in the 1913 sale particulars.

In 1931 Thomson's executors put the estate on the market, and the total was then 94.8 acres. The properties are listed in Table 3, and the discrepancy of 0.3 acres may be due to Thomson having purchased some or all of the Simons Lane cottage (to install the Court's water supply) and the Trots Lane cottages. A few small lots may have been sold at this auction (see Table 3), but it seems that the main estate did not find a buyer, as more than two years passed before the conveyance from the executors to D'Arcy Hall was completed, at a knock-down price. The Thomsons were hit hard in the economic depression. The land in that transfer was reduced to 82.7 acres, which was still the extent of the core estate in the 1947 conveyances (see Table 3).

But the D'Arcy Halls did enlarge the estate when they purchased Court and Springhill Farms from Harry Mawle after his retirement. By reuniting these farms with the residential estate, they reversed the trend since 1913, and by farming them in hand, they became the first owners of the Court to practise substantial commercial farming since Enclosure in 1852, if not for centuries before that. Prior to the D'Arcy Halls, the Home Farm with the kitchen garden comprised a very small holding, probably retained more for amenity – grazing and fodder for the horses, produce for the dairy and kitchen, and sporting rights – than as a commercial enterprise.

The D'Arcy Halls also acquired the Malthouse in Upper High Street, though whether as part of Court Farm as purchased from Mawle, or separately, is not known. In the 1913 auction the Malthouse formed a separate lot, then comprising two cottages, and was sold to the tenant of one of them, Mr A.Dyer (marked 11 on the map).

Table 2: Summary of Titles to the Shipton Court Core Estate*20.1.1919. Conveyance*

Between: (1) Arthur William Huntingdon, Major, of Shipton Court
 (2) John Graeme Thomson, of Norwood, Alloa, Clackmannan
 The Manor of Shipton including the Shipton Court Mansion with buildings, grounds etc amounting to 94.5 acres. Consideration: £29,656.17.0
 Reference is made to an indenture of 20.10.1913 between (1) William Frederick Pepper and (2) The Vendor.

11.6.1929. Death of J G Thomson. Will proved 3.1.1930

23.10.1933. Conveyance

Between: (1) The Executors of J G Thomson dec'd.
 (2) Walter D'Arcy Hall, Captain, of Sloane Street, London.
 The Manor of Shipton (as above), amounting to 82.7 acres. Consideration: £10,500.

29.9.1947. Conveyance

Between: (1) Walter D'Arcy Hall, Lt. Colonel, of Ewelme Park, Henley.
 (2) Basil Stephen Allen MBE, of Andover, Hants, Surveyor.
 The Manor of Shipton (as above), amounting to 82.7 acres. Consideration: £33,500.

7.10.1947. Conveyance

Between: (1) Basil Stephen Allen MBE, of Andover, Hants, Surveyor.
 (2) James Charles Hayward, of Grange Farm, East Hanney, Berks, Farmer..
 The Manor of Shipton (as above), amounting to 82.7 acres. Consideration: £43,100.

17.2.1948. Conveyance

Between: (1) James Charles Hayward, of Court Farm, Shipton, Farmer.
 (2) Cyril George Gosden, of the Dower House, Shipton, carpenter & joiner.
 The Dower House and garden. Consideration: £3,500.

Source: The Abstract of Title to the Dower House.

The 1947 Dispersal

The sales which took place in 1947 marked an entirely new departure for Shipton Court, with the added spice of commercial adventure. There are two sale documents. The first, the 1947 Notice of Sale for an auction on 22nd September is brief, dividing the estate into 21 lots. Mawle's Court Farm is split into two lots, Springhill Farm 276 acres and Court Farm 112 acres. This total of 388 acres is rather less than the 452 acres in Court Farm as offered for sale by Pepper in 1913, probably due to the omission of land north of the river Evenlode.

Table 3: Composition of the Core Estate

Description	Size Acres	Map Ref
In core estate 1947		
The central triangle, bounded by the A361, Mawles Lane and Plum Lane. Comprising:		
The west half, inc. the Court, out-buildings and gardens, and 2 semi-detached cottages	6.6	1
The east half, inc. the Dower House, Home Farm yard, buildings & pasture	7.1	2
South of Plum Lane:		
Walled kitchen garden & orchard	2.2	3
Field & orchard	3.5	4
West of the A361:		
The Wild Garden	13.7	5
Cricket field & pasture	9.7	6
2 fields & copse west of the Wild Garden	18.1	7
2 fields south of Dog Kennel Lane	21.7	8
Simons Lane: cottage & water tower	0.1	9
Properties held in core estate 1947	82.7	
Properties sold from core estate 1931/3		
Between Upper High Street & A361		
The Smithy & 2 fields	4.2	10
3 cottages in Trots Lane	0.3	
River meadow near Shipton station	7.6	
Properties in core estate 1913-1931/3	12.1	
Total properties in core estate 1913-1931	94.8	

Sources: the 1931 Sale Particulars, the 1947 Sale Notice and the 1947 Sale Particulars

The second sale document is the 1947 Sale Particulars for an auction to be held on 9 October. James Hayward is identified as the vendor, and the conditions of sale in it state that the estate was purchased by Basil Allen under a contract dated 9 July from D'Arcy Hall, and then purchased by Hayward under a further contract dated 22 August. Neither contract had been completed when the Sale Particulars were prepared, but the Dower House abstract of title shows that the core estate was conveyed to

Allen on 29 September and by him to Hayward on 7 October. The wording of the conditions of sale implies that the two contracts covered the whole estate, so we must presume that the Malthouse and two farms were transferred in different conveyances, probably for technical legal reasons. Allen paid £33,500 for the core estate and sold it on to Hayward for £43,100, a considerable mark-up.

I do not know who instructed the auctioneers to issue the Sale Notice of 22 September. From the dates, it could have been either D'Arcy Hall before the contract of 9 July was negotiated, or Allen after that contract was signed. It is unlikely to have been Hayward after 22 August, as he wished to retain most of the land. It is clear that this auction never took place, having been overtaken by events.

But it was Hayward who gave instructions for the auction of 9 October. The Sale Particulars follow the same division and numbering of lots as in the Sale Notice, but only 11 lots were offered for sale, a sticker inserted in the Particulars stating that the other 10 lots 'have been sold prior to the Auction or withdrawn'. The Particulars describe the 11 lots now offered in some detail. Apart from the Malthouse, they were all part of the core estate.

The Elizabethan Mansion was offered at an upset price of £6,000 and was purchased before the sale by Mrs Arathoon – we may presume that to do this she had to pay that price. She similarly bought the water garden and rockery, nearly 3 acres in all, at an unknown price. A newspaper cutting reports that five lots were sold at the auction for a total of £12,300. If we add £6,000 for the mansion and £3,500 for the Dower House (for which Hayward sold it in 1948) and round up for the gardens, this asset-stripping raised about £23,000.

The lots not reported as sold were the walled kitchen garden and an orchard (marked 3 on the map), one of the semi-detached cottages at the corner of the A361 and Plum Lane, the 2 fields and copse west of the Wild Garden (7), and the cricket field, which was soon sold to the Cricket Club for a price which is not material (part of 6).

Hayward withdrew from auction the two farms totalling 388 acres (parts marked 14 on the map) and, out of the core estate, everything in the central triangle east of the lakes garden (the Home Farm – house, yard, buildings and about 4 acres of paddock and wood – and the Dower house; all marked 2 on the map), the Wild Garden (5), the two fields south of Dog Kennel lane (8) and the field and orchard adjoining the walled garden (4).

It is hard to attribute a value of anything like £20,000 to the properties retained by Hayward out of the core estate, by design or otherwise, though the kitchen garden and adjoining orchards may have even then have had development potential. The lots which sold for £23,000, including the mansion with its buildings and gardens, the Malthouse and the Dower

House, were the gems in this crown. Bearing in mind that the Malthouse was not included in the £43,100 Hayward paid for the core estate, and his incidental costs of sale and purchase, the conclusion must be that Allen extracted a full if not a very high price from him for the core estate. I do not know what figures were involved for the substantial 388 acre farms, which were the main assets Hayward wanted.

Making a number of guesses, I suggest the following scenario as at least plausible. Basil Allen MBE was a professional surveyor, and must be presumed to be an accomplished wheeler and dealer in property, with his ear to the ground and a shrewd sense of property potential. He got wind of the fact that D'Arcy Hall had bought, or proposed to buy, Ewelme Park (which he gave as his address in the conveyance of 29th September), and opened negotiations. Allen made an offer for the whole Court estate, which D'Arcy Hall found it convenient to accept. Allen then had the Sale Notice of 22nd September issued, which attracted the attention of Hayward, then farming at East Hanney. Negotiations followed, in which Allen insisted that Hayward took the whole estate from him, in order to secure a quick profit with a limited period of financial outlay, and without going through the hazards of a public auction. We may presume Allen was the architect of this complex series of transactions, and drove a hard bargain with both D'Arcy Hall and Hayward. Allen was the merchant adventurer who seized the cream.

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'The 1913 Sale Particulars': W.F.Pepper's Particulars of Sale for an Auction to be held for Lots 3 – 47 on 2nd July, 1913, at the Roebuck Hotel, Oxford, issued in 1913 by Osborn & Mercer of Albemarle House, Piccadilly. No map attached.

'Alfred Miles': information recorded by Alfred Miles, then tenant of 9 High Street, Shipton, on an original copy of the 1913 Sales Particulars, now in the possession of his grand-daughter, Mrs Barbara Pearce. It gives information on the disposal or otherwise of lots 3-47 in the auction held on 2nd July 1913.

'Mrs Moore's 1913 Map': Map prepared for the Auction held on 2nd July 1913, showing location of Lots 3 – 47 in colour identified by Lot Nos. In the possession of Mrs Moore, Harry Mawle's daughter.

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The Pepper Family: 1901-1919

TRUDY YATES

The sale of Shipton Court to the Pepper family in 1901 was either a fortuitous event or an unmitigated disaster, depending on one's point of view. Either way, Fred Pepper's ownership of the already venerable building provided months of work for local stonemasons and journeymen as well as much gossip and excitement for the villagers.

The family came to Oxfordshire from Yorkshire but had come originally from Ireland. Thomas Pepper, an eighteenth century emigrant from the Emerald Isle, found employment as a callender (or yarn bleacher) in Monk Bretton, near Barnsley. His son William had great ambition and tenacity. He worked at Monk Bretton colliery, eventually buying out the partners and owning the entire mine.

William married Mary Brown from Northumberland in 1852 and the couple had two children – William Frederick born in 1853 and Emily. When Mary died after nine years of marriage, William married her sister, Elizabeth. This union produced one daughter, Hetty.

William Frederick (Fred) wanted an Army career but his father sent him for engineering training in Leeds. The young man developed heart trouble at age 20. Doctors advised a sea voyage and rest for a year which Fred happily accepted. In 1874 he set out for Adelaide by steamship – a trip lasting 91 days. After a year spent on a sheep farm, he returned home with his health much improved.

Soon after his arrival he met Helen Lawson daughter of Tom Lawson, an Iron Master of Leeds. The Lawsons were near neighbours of the Peppers and the families were quite amicable but never real friends. Fred, a reserved young man, bookish and clever with his hands, fell quite deeply in love with the tiny, gregarious – even flirtatious – Helen. The senior Peppers frowned on the relationship but it survived a four-year engagement and proved to be a happy and productive partnership. On St. Valentine's Day, 1882, William Frederick Pepper and Harriette Helen Lawson were married.

For a year or so Fred and Helen lived in a Leeds terrace. They then moved to Bank House in Monk Bretton. The death of their first baby son was a great sorrow but it made the arrival of their second son, Wilfred, an even greater blessing.

E.P. Thompson, Fred and Helen's daughter, was the second Pepper child. She wrote the family history entitled *Portrait for a Grandson* to which we are indebted for our information about the Peppers but she neglected to share her given name anywhere in the book. An entry in the Shipton Parish Register for 22 August 1913 reveals her as Elsie and her husband as Capt. John Pickering Thompson of the Indian Army when their baby son Clive was christened at St Mary's on this date.

Elsie, a loving daughter, described her father as a truly benevolent employer. He established one of the first working men's clubs in a mining village and, after involving himself completely in the building and outfitting of the club-house, he wisely turned it over to the men to run as they wished. The fact that twenty of the long service employees of Monk Bretton Colliery came down to spend a long day playing cricket at 'Mr Fred's' new home in Oxfordshire, is evidence of the good relations he established with the miners. An interesting postscript to this period of the family's history is this statement of E.P. Thompson: 'Since it was a colliery town, with the exception of the vicar, we were the only gentle people in the village.'

Fred Pepper certainly was expending too much of his strength on affairs at the mine. Several more health scares finally necessitated another move – this time to Hague Hall in nearby Hemsworth where the air was purer. This was a Georgian house in great need of repair. Even though Fred merely leased the property, he began extensive renovation.

Cedric, the son who was born at Hague Hall, was a consolation for the twin boys who had been still-born there a few years before.

The family might have remained at Hague Hall indefinitely; such was their pleasure in the property and their surroundings, but for an unfortunate foray by a local coal mine. A new seam from the mine a few miles away ran under the house and had, apparently, been insufficiently propped. The house began to crack and then, virtually, to crumble.

The next family home was midway between Leeds and Harrogate, in Wharfedale. It was called Rawden Hill and was situated in Arthington. E.P. Thompson described it as 'a many-gabled half-timbered house, too ornate in its striving for effect to satisfy Fred Peppers's taste.' The new home was close to Harewood House and park, however, and Lord Harewood and his family were friends and hunting companions.

The responsibilities at the colliery rested more heavily on the shoulders

TOP RIGHT: THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF SHIPTON COURT IN 1900 BEFORE THE ADVENT OF W. F. PEPPER. NOTE THE CONSERVATORY AND INCONGRUOUS SASH WINDOWS.

BOTTOM RIGHT: THE SAME SCENE IN SCAFFOLDING FOR THE RENOVATION. THE ARCHITECT WAS BERTRAM BULMER OF PERKIN AND BULMER ARCHITECTS IN LEEDS; ALFRED GROVES AND SONS CARRIED OUT THE WORK.



of Fred Pepper during these years (1890s). His father had died in the year of Cedric's birth and, although his cousin Joe Pepper was his trusted friend and advisor, Fred was ultimately in charge.

It was in 1900 that Fred and Helen Pepper decided to leave Yorkshire and settle in the Midlands. Their daughter was at Cheltenham Ladies College at the time and came home for the holidays to find 'the idea well germinated, in spite of strong protests from many of the relations, who could not understand how a Yorkshireman, born and bred, could bear to live in any other county.'

It was the start of a new century and a new life for the Peppers. The colliery was booming suddenly and, in three years, Fred Pepper had made two hundred thousand pounds. He and Helen had had three homes, but owned none of them. At this stage of their lives they wanted a house which was all their own, to have and to hold. When they bought Shipton Court, Fred began immediately to put his own stamp on it.

Although the overall plan was his, Fred Pepper engaged his brother-in-law, Bertram Bulmer of Perkin and Bulmer Architects in Leeds, to oversee the year long renovation of the Court. Mr Bulmer was Emily Pepper's husband and, although there is no mention of her presence in her niece's book, it is difficult to imagine that she did not join her husband in Shipton at some time during the project. Alfred Groves and Sons was hired to carry out the work, the family was ensconced in one of the estate's houses as was Bulmer and the 20th century façade of Shipton Court began to take shape.

Now the dilemma. Did Fred Pepper destroy the integrity of a valuable Jacobean stately home? Should Shipton Court have remained a virtually uninhabitable (in the twentieth century sense) monument to the past like its greatly admired near neighbour, Chastleton House? Was the 1901-02 building work restoration or renovation?

In E.P. Thompson's mind, no dilemma existed. She stoutly claimed that the work was 'truly a restoration to its original state as far as it was known'. The work entailed the removal of additions subsequent to the Elizabethan period, including a hideous conservatory (quite true. See photograph) and the replacement of many mullioned windows; together with a multitude of works of renovation which was a delight to achieve, so ensuring a new long lease of life to the gracious old house.'

TOP RIGHT: A PICTURE FROM THE GROVES' ARCHIVE, SHOWING THE COMPLETED SOUTH ELEVATION. THE CONSERVATORY AND PORCH HAVE BEEN REMOVED AND PERIOD WINDOWS INSTALLED.

BOTTOM RIGHT: AFTER A FEW YEARS, THE FRESH-CUT COTSWOLD STONE HAS MELLOWED BEAUTIFULLY.



During the preparation of the exhibition for the 400th anniversary of Shipton Court in June 2003, a series of photographs was mounted which enforced Mrs Thompson's opinion. The four pictures of the south elevation labelled Before, During, After and Later leave the viewer in no doubt that restoration, at least on the exterior of the house, was foremost in Fred Pepper's mind. The conservatory was indeed hideous and the conglomeration of window styles perhaps even more so. Long time critics of Fred Pepper's building zeal seem convinced that no construction work took place between 1603 and 1901. Not so. Sash windows were not a feature of Jacobean properties. To remove them at what, even then, must have been great cost, was an act of benevolence, not violence.

To comment upon work inside the house is less straightforward. Since the front of the Court has been privately owned and not available for viewing in many years, it is impossible to venture an opinion with any certainty. The back of the house – now six self-contained apartments – has been extensively changed since the 1970s. One thing is certain; Jacobean woodwork is extremely hard to find and early 20th century oak panelling is much in evidence. Was the original woodwork beyond renewal or did Fred Pepper simply desire a brand new look for the new century? Certainly his efforts were not scorned by the Academy of Architecture which featured interior drawings of the renovation – the dining room, the library and the hall – in the 1904 issue of its Journal.

Whatever opinion one chooses to adopt, the work was done and the family moved into the refurbished Court taking great pleasure at the discovery of a James I gold coin dated 1606 during the construction of a stone terrace.

E.P. Thompson remarked on the air of seclusion at her new home which she had found previously only at some of the Oxford Colleges. She described 'walls within walls', 'old yew hedges dividing lawns' the 'splashing fountain' and the 'flights of stone steps leading to the ponds.'

She recalled the laundry beyond the kitchen gardens, staffed by a couple of old spinsters from Yorkshire. They had followed the family to Oxfordshire and remained for some time before succumbing to homesickness and an eventual tearful farewell.

Another cherished character was Charles 'Matey' Wiggins, a tiny gnarled old man, employed by Fred Pepper as 'keeper of the Avenue' – the avenue being the tree lined access to the Wild Garden. 'Matey' was reputed to have been a notorious poacher in his day and there was little that he did not know about the lore of woods, lakes and their wild inhabitants. He could be seen most days 'scuttling along with his twisted gait, armed with a long broom or a rake, tidying up.' Bertram Bulmer was a great crony of the old man's. When asked how his ancient wife was, he would reply 'Oh, she'm just wrigglin' along.' E.P. Thompson recalled.



W. F. PEPPER 1853–1942; TENURE
AT SHIPTON COURT 1901–1919

Fred Pepper's estate had many employees. There were five tenanted farms, an estate joiner, blacksmith, a steward, a bailiff who had accompanied the family from Yorkshire; a local cowman, a myriad of gardeners. E.P. Thompson mentions the Coombes, Rainbow and Ogg families as long time employees of the estate.

She remembered eight maids, including one for Helen and one for herself when she left school. These maids looked after clothes, made summer day frocks and evening dresses and also curtains and other small household

items – all for the princely sum of £20 a year. A first class cook who could cope with large house parties and Wilfred's hungry hordes of students from Oxford was paid £40 per annum. The fourth housemaid and kitchenmaid received £8 each but their mothers were delighted for them to be trained by capable head servants.

There were three male servants in the house; butler, footman and pantry boy. John Millin, first as footman then as butler, was particularly beloved and loyal. Mrs Thompson remembers him as a superb polisher – silver, shoes, woodwork and even the head of Fred Pepper's cane.

She also recalled how long it took for the family to learn the Oxfordshire vernacular. Upon hearing a loud shout from a nearby cottage, one of them suggested to a nearby group of children that someone was calling them. The answer was 'Her aren't a-calling we, us don't belong to she.'

The beautiful tennis and croquet lawns at the Court were in constant use during house parties. There was bathing in the ponds and pleasant lounging in a large punt bought secondhand from an Oxford boatman with

the children's own pocket money. It had new yellow linen covers and cushions and sported the name 'Golden Girl.'

After Elsie's school days were over, she and her father were avid hunting companions. An entry in her diary stated, 'Our first day over walls, of which I am told I jumped thirty-six.' She and her father loved the wall country which was 'on the Burford side.' The delight of this, she explained, was that 'it provided such a good view of the hounds working, unhidden by hedges; and they went at such a pace.'

Fred Pepper's first motorcar, acquired with some reluctance, was a large Gobion Brille, a French model. Fred learned to drive but never enjoyed it, looking upon an automobile as merely a means to an end. Perhaps he used it on chauffeur driven visits to Blenheim where he met and conversed with F.E. Smith, Winston Churchill and his new bride Clementine Hozier. He was much taken by the beautiful, shy Clementine who dispensed tea for the shooters.

Fred Pepper became a local magistrate and, toward the end of his tenure at Shipton Court, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire. Elsie Thompson recalled meeting Mrs. William Morris, an old lady by that time, but still with the dark, brooding eyes with drooping lids; the thick pillar of the throat; the lovely curve of the lips; the thick, heavy waves of hair portrayed so often in the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of D.G. Rossetti. She talked of Compton McKenzie and Christopher Stone living in Burford and being part of a group of young men known as the 'Burford Blighters.'

Eventually, a break in the family's busy, happy Shipton Court life came with Elsie's marriage. She and her husband John Pickering Thompson went out to India, but the Court was still her beloved home to which she returned yearly until 1913 when the Thompsons arrived with their son Clive to be christened in St Mary's Church. It was then that Fred and Helen admitted that now, with the family grown, Shipton Court was too large for their needs. They expressed a desire to move farther south to a smaller estate, which turned out to be Redlynch Park, Bruton, Somerset.

As she headed back to India, Fred Pepper's daughter had no idea what a cataclysmic decision this would be for Shipton under Wychwood. The break up of the Shipton Court estate changed the face of this Cotswold village forever.

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Alfred Groves & Sons archives, pictures in the collection of John Rawlins

Photographs and material from Mary McNeill's archive of Shipton Court

The Thomson Family 1919-1931

TRUDY YATES

When John Graeme Thomson took up residence at Shipton Court in 1919, the majority of the huge estate had been sold off. Thomson took possession of the 'core' of the original holdings – Shipton Court itself, the stabling and grounds, the Wild Garden, the kitchen gardens (the area of the present Court Close on Plum Lane) and one small farm. Purchase cost was £29,656 17s 0d. It would seem, when one learns more about Mr Thomson, that this state of affairs would have suited him very well. A severe asthmatic, given three years to live by his Scottish doctors, Thomson had no ambitions to run an enormous estate. He wanted to enjoy himself in the time he had left and, to him, enjoyment meant hunting and racing, with a modicum of gambling thrown in. The Heythrop Hunt took centre stage at Shipton Court.

Thomson and his family came to Oxfordshire from Alloa (between Dumfermline and Stirling) in Scotland. In 1909 he had married Mary Catherine Maclean, daughter of the 'Manse' and cousin of Viscount Younger. Their three children were Dorothy (Dor) born in 1910, David 1913 and Joan 1917.

Graeme Thomson was a wool buyer for the family firm of Paton and Baldwin's Mill until his already fragile health reached crisis level. Along with the prediction of a seriously shortened life span, local doctors suggested a move farther south to a more temperate climate and relief from the allergens at the mill.

Mary Catherine was an accomplished singer, having studied music for a time in Germany. Although she met her future husband at a local production of *Romeo and Juliet*, the couple did not share many of the same interests. She was artistic and cultured; he had passion for the fox.

'The stables were very important to his choice of Shipton Court', according to Dor Thomson, who addressed the Wychwoods Local History Society in 1988. Her father also owned race horses but did not keep them at Shipton.

Thomson joined the Heythrop Hunt and, in 1921–23, held joint mastership with H.S.Brenchley. In 'An Ode to the Heythrop Hunt' published in booklet form for the 1922–23 season, Graeme Thomson was described thus:

A CARTOON OF HEYTHROP HUNT CELEBRITIES FOUND IN DOR THOMSON'S COLLECTION OF FAMILY MEMORABILIA, SHOWING GRAEME THOMSON (IN THE SADDLE) AND H. S. BRENCHLEY (TOP LEFT) WHO WERE JOINT MASTERS IN 1922-23. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CREDIT THE PUBLICATION FOR CERTAIN BUT IT WAS PROBABLY COUNTRY LIFE OR SOME OTHER COMPARABLE MAGAZINE.



'To get well away on the tail of the hounds
Gives him pleasure that threatens to burst out of bounds
He laughs and he jokes as the pace gathers speed
And he loves a big fence to try out his good steed.'

For a man with severe asthma and one lung, broken ribs from a hunting accident would seem catastrophic, but Thomson suffered them and survived. He was determined to enjoy himself. Furthermore, he encouraged his children to share his interests. Dor mused about hunting in her talk. How defensible was it? Did emotional attitudes toward hunting overstate the case? She really didn't know. What she did know, and expressed it beautifully, was that it was the most marvellous sport for the Thomson children. She explained that one had to 'jolly well do it on your own.'

'You hacked to the meet and you had to hack back home. There was no taking your horse to the meet in a trailer, getting out and climbing on a fresh horse and then, afterwards, shutting it up in a box and driving it



BRENCHLEY AND THOMSON
READY FOR THE CHASE,
1922

back home again. You left the stable in the morning with enough time to ride and arrive at the meet in good time. It might take an hour or more. After the hunting finished, you had to know how long it was going to take to get home before it was too dark. There was no-one to help you going along the road at night. You had to think about a good many things besides just pursuing the hounds. If you opened a gate to get through, you made sure you didn't let any stock out. You were careful not to damage certain crops. You looked after your pony, too, because, if you didn't there was no way to get home. You learnt a lot of country crafts, country ways and you learnt self reliance.'

Unfortunately Dor's enthusiasm for hunting was thwarted by a riding accident at age 13. She was thrown by her horse and, because of an ill-fitting riding helmet, she was kicked in the head by her mount. She described the event as being 'accidentally kicked in the head and losing a lump of my skull which didn't do me any good and I was out of circulation for quite a long time.' In reality, Dor was trepanned at the Acland Hospital

in Oxford which necessitated the wearing of a hard hat to protect her skull. She was philosophical about the accident because, as a result, she was forced to develop other interests such as racing, gardening and reading.

Graeme Thomson also instructed his children in the fine art of gambling for which Dor, at least, thanked him. 'On Sunday afternoons,' she remembered, 'we used to be taught about gambling. We played roulette, chemin de feu and various games like that, which was all part of our education. It was of enormous benefit to me because we had to play with our own pocket money. There was no nonsense of making it easy or simple or anything like that.'

Dor's pocket money in the mid 1920s was half a crown a week which, she said 'wasn't a great deal even if you played in pennies. We learnt some of the hard facts about gambling fairly young and I have always been grateful for that.'

There was far more to Graeme Thomson than his gaming interest, however. His library fascinated Dor. She recalled that he had very catholic tastes in his book collecting and she described the fine volumes of tooled vellum and leather with handmade paper 'just lovely to handle, they were'.

He was also a keen gardener but, because of his lung condition, it was difficult to tend his plants without bending over more than was comfortable. He devised the idea of having terraced stone walls in the garden and this was the origin of the walls that surround the pond to this day. He also planted water lilies in large baskets of soil that still bloom in the Summer House pond each year.

Joan Thomson Rein, the younger Thomson daughter, wrote from her home in Oslo with her memories of the household staff in the mid 1920s. Staff: a nanny, a governess, one ladies maid/dressmaker, three housemaids, a butler with his own house; a footman, a boy (for shoe cleaning and cleaning of knives which were not stainless); a head cook, a kitchen maid, a 'Tweeny' i.e. a 14-year-old girl who ran between the kitchen and the pantry (a long passage); a chauffeur, electrician and gardener – all with their own homes; nine year round gardeners; 10 extra gardeners in the summer; a head groom with his own house; two other grooms, a daily charwoman who 'did' for the grooms and two washerwomen in the Court laundry – 28 employees in all during the winter and 38 in the summer.

Joan Rein also mentioned the small farm (but not its location). Mary Catherine Thomson was afraid of cows and she refused to let the tenant keep them. Therefore, milk and other dairy products were purchased from a neighbouring farm.

Dor Thomson talked about the Head Gardener, Charlie Tubb. He was in charge of the glass houses and the production of strawberries and new



ABOVE: GRAEME THOMSON ON HIS MOUNT. NOTE THE TWO TOP HATS IN THE BACKGROUND.

BELOW: DOR THOMSON HOLDING THE REINS OF WHISKERS WITH HER BROTHER DAVID ASTRIDE. THE CAR IS A PRIMROSE-YELLOW AND BLACK SHEFFIELD SIMPLEX.



potatoes which were always on the menu for Easter – much to the delight and wonder of guests. Charlie's sister Annie also worked in the gardens for many years and was 'quite a character.'

She also attested to the continuing presence of 'Matey' Wiggins in the Wild Garden. 'He was an absolute nailer at catching moles,' she said. 'He used to catch them a half dozen at a time. He taught my brother how to cure the skins which, as he wasn't very good at it, was rather a smelly exercise in the schoolroom.'

The family cars were a 1923 Rolls Royce – 'large and extremely clumsy' according to Dor; Mary Catherine's 1926 bull-nosed Morris, in which Dor learned to drive and an open Austro-Daimler. The latter vehicle must have defied belief. 'It had an aero-engine and made the most fearsome noise,' Dor recalled. 'It absolutely ate petrol and wasn't used very often but, of course, it went at great speed and we thought it was great fun. We used to pay him to drive in it. It seems extraordinary, and, more power to him, he used to take the money, which I think was absolutely splendid.' Joan remembers riding in the front seat with her father in the Daimler when Graeme negotiated a humpback bridge at speed. 'I was thrown into the air and caught by the passengers in the back seat,' she chuckled. When Mother found out, these outings were stopped.

It was perhaps a fit of pique at being chastised that made Graeme Thomson undertake the greatest adventure of his life – to drive across the Sahara Desert by car! No sooner had the thought occurred to him than he and the head groom, Walker, were off to France, where they purchased a solid tyred Fiat, shipped it to North Africa and set out. Thomson ignored warnings that he would surely be overtaken by sandstorms. When such a storm duly descended, he and Walker sheltered to the lee side of the car. Soon they were in danger of being buried in whirling sand. As luck would have it (and it often did with Thomson) an Arab sheikh just happened by at the crucial moment. The foolhardy Brits were rescued! After a time, the sheikh decided to have some amusement at Thomson's expense. He told Graeme to mount one of his own Arabian stallions, gave it quick slap on the rump and expected his hapless victim to be ignominiously thrown into the sand once more. Thomson was delighted and proceeded to amaze this saviour and tormentor with his masterful horsemanship. All the tricks of the Heythrop Hunt master melted the Arab's heart. The two men became fast friends. Graeme and Walker spent several months with the sheikh and came home gloriously outfitted with embroidered shirts, harem trousers, a full length camel hair cape and a black cape lined with turquoise silk resplendent with gold tassels. Joan Rein still owns some of this Arab finery.

The children were allowed a share of their father's theatricality when the family took a caravanning holiday in Wales. Thomson had obtained an

Apache Indian costume which was a copy of the clothes Ivor Novello wore in a London play. He pranced about Newport, Wales in his outfit and, according to Joan Rein, 'spoke only French the entire time.'

Joan has fond memories of the family Christmas season. An enormous tree in what the Thomsons called the Stone Room (the present Winter Garden) was the centre of attention. In mid-December the girls from the Waifs and Strays Home on Milton Road were invited for a huge tea with crackers and paper hats following which the children were ushered into the Stone Room for the distribution of gifts. 'The older girls (13-14),' she said, 'who would be leaving soon to go into service, were given a little suitcase in which to assemble all the necessities they had themselves made – apron, overall, blouses and woolly hand-knitted stockings.' 'The smallest children were given baby dolls, each in a shoe-box bed with basic bedclothes, which my mother and I had made. There were heartbreaking scenes when it was time for them to go home, as they were afraid the babies would suffocate when they put the lids on the boxes.' Graeme Thomson's contribution to these parties was not mentioned by his daughter but is defined clearly in the school log book. (See John Rawlin's article 'Court and School' elsewhere in this journal.)

On Christmas Day, the routine began with stockings at the end of the bed; then church, lunch and the ritual visit to the stables (where the horses were all looking their finest) armed with carrots and apples, before enjoying a huge tea in front of the fire in the hall.

'At dinner, where there were always guests,' Joan said, 'there was a tradition that we children gave presents to our favourite grown-ups.' A shopping trip to Woolworths in Oxford with ten shillings in hand resulted in some rather odd purchases. One year, she remembered, Dor bought her mother some rouge (very risque at that period); David chose theatrical protruding teeth and she (Joan) purchased lilac silk garters with a rose on one side. 'Mum had to march into the dining room wearing all these things,' Joan said, 'and holding up her skirts to show the garters. As a result, the butler gave notice saying that he couldn't work for such people.'

Because of the number of Scots working for the family, Hogmanay celebrations were planned for New Year's Eve. There was a proper band from Witney, a supper served at long tables in the Stone Room, with garlands of mistletoe, laurel and evergreens for decoration. 'Because I was very dark haired,' Joan explained, 'I used to be sent outside to come in when the stable clock struck 12, carrying salt and coal meaning good health and prosperity to all good Scotsmen.'

The family retired early, leaving the staff to their revels and their consideration continued well into the next day. The governess made a quick Continental breakfast and the Thomsons repaired to Chipping Norton for lunch and tea with friends. 'When we arrived home we were



ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVID, JOAN AND DOR THOMSON WITH SOME OF THE HOUND PUPPIES C.1920.

BELOW: THE HEYTHROP HEADING DOWN THE AVENUE OF THE VICTORIAN PLEASURE GARDENS WITH SHIPTON COURT IN THE BACKGROUND.



met by some red-eyed and some bright-eyed staff,' she said, 'and with the house in perfect order!'

This idyllic, carefree lifestyle came to a tragic end in June of 1929 when Graeme Thomson died suddenly at the age of 47. Because of his precarious health his life was uninsured and he had no pension. It was soon apparent that he had also run up an enormous overdraft at the bank. Mary Catherine was left with three children, a large house, 28 staff and huge debt. The shock was compounded by the New York stock exchange crash in September. It was a dreadful time for the family. Luckily each of the children had a trust fund to protect their future.

'Almost the first thing my mother did was to send me to boarding school,' Joan said. 'Father didn't believe in boarding school for girls and hadn't allowed me to go. I was at school when we moved into the groom's house (now Court Cottage) on Plum Lane. The staff was reduced to a cook, a scullery maid and a part time daily woman. Mother was totally unable to cook but was used to ordering food and supervising staff.' During 1930, Shipton Court stood empty before being let to the D'Arcy Halls who eventually bought it.

In 1931, the house was put up for sale and the Thomsons left Shipton for the south coast. Mary Catherine wanted to live by the sea and Dor had a friend who lived in Slindon between Arundel and Chichester. The family moved there and settled first in Well House and then in Elm Cottage, the home Edward VII had purchased for Lillie Langtry earlier in the century. It was here that Mary Catherine lived quietly until her death in 1960 aged 79.

The Thomson children fared variously in later life. Joan, the youngest, married Alexander Rein, a Norwegian lawyer, in 1945. They had met before the war and planned to marry but the occupation of Norway by the Nazis caused a long separation. As soon as the allied victory was declared, Sasha came to England to claim his bride. The Reins settled in Oslo and raised three children: Signe Marie born in 1946, John Alexander 1951 and Erning 1954. Although her husband is now deceased, Joan still lives in Oslo and is working on her memoirs.

David married his first wife Pat at the beginning of the the war and lived at Hove. He married a second time and had two sons, Peter and John Thomson, both born in America. David died at an early age as his father had done and his son Peter is also deceased. John married, has two sons and lives in Northamptonshire.

Dor Thomson was in London during the war where she met Kate Wylie. The two young women became fast friends and decided to join forces in peace time. Kate was a trained dietitian and Dor, after a year in agricultural college where she honed her gardening skills, excelled in horticulture and chauffeuring. The two were a sought after pair to take

work in the sorts of homes with which Dor was familiar. Eventually they returned to Oxfordshire where Dor ran a market garden in Bampton. Having been well taught by Charlie Tubb at Shipton Court, she grew vegetables and fruits under cloches and harvested crops well before they were otherwise available. She developed an excellent market at nearby Brize Norton, where American servicemen became good customers. Dor Thomson always regretted her lack of formal education. With her, as with Joan, Graeme did not sanction learning for girls beyond the limited abilities of a nursery governess. Dor commented 'I found it pretty frustrating because there were a great many things I wanted to learn and, she, poor dear, wasn't able to help me a great deal.'

Dor found a great satisfaction when, after joining the Oxfordshire County Council in 1961, she served on the Education Committee for 15 years. She worked to make sure that any handicapped children in local schools were able to have maximum opportunities to learn as much as they could. She was also a school governor at Burford and took great pleasure in following in the footsteps of her mother who had served in 1926 when 'gels' were first welcomed into the Grammar School.

Dor Thomson at 94 now lives at Mill House Nursing Home in Witney. Kate Wylie has moved from Lock's Lodge, the home they shared in Bampton, to a flat at Lavender Place, Bampton. The Society is indebted to her for the donation of numerous Shipton Court and Heythrop Hunt photographs from the 1920s.

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Life at Shipton Court in the Mid-Twentieth Century

MARGARET WARE

Mr Thomson died in 1929, and the 82-acre Court estate was put up for sale two years later. In the prevailing economic depression it finally sold in 1933 for only £10,500 to Captain Walter D'Arcy Hall MC of the 20th Hussars, whose family owned lucrative Australian gold mines. He was Independent Conservative MP for Breckon and Radnor during 1918-1937. Mrs Ann Hall née Brook came from a Yorkshire textile family. She ran the Court household in traditional Edwardian manner with up to fifteen indoor servants: cook, butler, housekeeper, a lady's maid, undercook, two scullerymaids, footman, odd-man, and about six housemaids. In addition there were ten gardeners, two rough gardeners, two grooms and a chauffeur. They ate in the servants' hall, the butler carving (with rabbit served not more than twice a week), the first four senior staff retiring to their private sitting-room for the pudding course. The butler and cook earned £100 per annum and the housemaids £20. There was great rivalry in the village between Hathaway's and Franklin's stores to take on the Court's grocery account, while George Wiggins from the Post Office came every Saturday or Sunday at 12.45 to wind the clocks, and was given a glass of sherry.

Edith Faulkner entered Mrs Hall's employment in 1933, at the age of twenty-six, as her personal maid, caring for her clothes and tidying up as well as doing light housework, returning home daily to Upper Shipton. She came in from the main road through a discreet wooden door, past the former squash court to the laundry, then down a covered way to the kitchen and staff area, totally screened from the gardens by a side wall. The housemaids wore long dresses, white aprons and starched caps, and the butler or footman a green waistcoat. She recollected Mrs Ward the cook from County Durham, an Austrian parlourmaid, and Mr Belcher the butler who was married and who lived in one of the modern, semi-detached houses at the west end of Plum Lane, the head gardener (who wore a top hat to work) occupying the other. Of the outdoor staff, she also remembered Charles 'Matey' Wiggins, a bent old gardener, who apparently asked for a rise on his ninetieth birthday, and got it! A married herdsman lived in what is now the Dower House, while unmarried cowmen slept in the



bothy in the stableyard. She recalled a tennis court on the north side of the House and a croquet lawn at the southern end of the garden, next to the upper lake or swimming pool.

The Halls removed the crenellated front porch, returning the west facade to its earlier appearance but replaced the oak panelling in the central hall with a rusticated rendered finish. Mrs Hall was remembered as being somewhat eccentric, keeping about 500 caged birds and a variety of animals – 30 dogs, especially French poodles, snakes (for which she bred rats and mice for food), a tame badger, a monkey, a wallaby and two kinkajos indoors in the Victorian mosaic-floored garden room – an echo of the foibles of her eighteenth-century predecessor, Lady Harriet Reade. Not surprisingly, the house became overrun with mice. But Mrs Hall's passion was for breeding pedigree Jersey cows, on which she spent money freely. She established the Shipton Court Home Farm Dairy in Oxford in the thirties which sold Jersey milk and cream in the town, and in about 1936 bought both Court and Springhill Farms from Mr Harry Mawle. Eventually she had 300 cows, employing 30 people to milk them by hand, and another 30 on arable work. Carter Gregory, occupying one of the cottages above the kitchen garden in Plum Lane, earned 28/6d a week to keep wife and ten children, although he did receive free milk and potatoes.

FAR LEFT: WALTER D'ARCY HALL IN THE UNIFORM OF CAPTAIN OF 20TH HUSSARS, 1915

LEFT: ANNE HALL SOON AFTER HER MARRIAGE



RIGHT: CHARLES 'MATEY' WIGGINS WITH MAJOR EDMONDSON, CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE 1924

Captain and Mrs Hall had three children: Betty, Bill and Teddy. In his memoirs, published two years before he died, Teddy vividly recalled his childhood at the Court. Their second-floor bedrooms ran along the front of the house, looking towards the Avenue or Wild Garden. They were very cold (fires were cissy) and water froze in their bedside glasses in winter. As children they spent much of their time in the schoolroom with a series of hated governesses; when they were twelve they were allowed to eat lunch and dinner with their parents. They were beaten for lateness and having dirty hands. The boys kept out of the house as much as possible – they built a tree-house in the Wild Garden and made friends with boys from the village and the servants in the kitchens. They were good customers of James Alfred ('Puffer') Willis who dealt in cycles, saddlery, cartridges and pellets, but he never would do business on a Sunday, however hard they tried. Miss Faulkner remembers the boys were always experimenting: they once spilt some acid in their bedroom and begged her not to tell their mother. Later they conducted experiments in a workshop by the stables, where Teddy set up a laboratory and decided on a science career.

The Halls entertained a good deal, including NFU and hunt balls and grand house parties; there were shooting parties and Betty Hall hunted.



BILL AND TEDDY HALL IN THE TREEHOUSE IN THE WILD GARDEN

The Court also provided the focus for a variety of local events. Shipton School log book contains several references to childrens' Christmas parties held there which some local residents can still remember, also the use of the cricket ground for village sports and fetes, and hospital charity matches with famous visiting cricketers. Captain Hall laid on fireworks in 1937 for the George VI Coronation celebrations, and the Wychwood WI celebrated its Silver Jubilee in June 1939 with a tea-party in the grounds. (photo in *The Second Wychwoods Album*).

With the outbreak of the Second World War the old way of life changed irrevocably. Captain Hall went away to the war but his wife continued to run the estate with an autocratic hand, and a series of farm managers. To begin with only the stable block and grounds were taken over by the military, the 50th Northumbrian Division being the first to arrive in 1939. Edith Faulkner remembered the Grenadier Guards in the stable yard following Dunkirk, and has told of firewatching at the Court and having to go round and turn all the lights off as the black-out was inadequate. She watched the bombs dropping on Coventry from a second-floor bedroom. RASC troops and men from the 42nd Division were in residence in about 1941, but by 1942 the whole house had been requisitioned for military personnel: Mrs Betty Scott recollected a canteen in the garden room run by local women to feed evacuee mothers in order to relieve host families. At a later stage part of the Court was home to black American soldiers, with the white units being separately billeted in the grounds of Bruern Abbey to avoid fights breaking out, racist attitudes then being still commonplace. Nevertheless, local residents remember that fights still

occurred, perhaps because local girls were said to prefer dancing with the black soldiers. The Court also served as an army convalescent home. Mementoes of military occupation have since been recovered from under floorboards: a 4th Infantry Brigade Officers' Mess bill for December 1941 for £12 9s.4d, US army cutlery and a leave-pass, while more than one soldier scratched his name into the fabric of the old house. But not all the soldiers appreciated their historical surroundings: one British tommy reported that he'd never been to such an awful place as Shipton in his life.

In 1942 Betty Hall married and Mrs Hall moved out to live at Lower (Court) Farm, establishing her sitting room on the second floor where Edith Faulkner used to take tea up on a tray. Mrs Hall's pedigree and tuberculin-tested (TT) Jersey dairy herd were housed both at Home Farm at Springhill and at Lower Farm, where Teddy Hall remembered Jersey calves in the downstairs living room. Later at least a dozen cows were accommodated behind the Malt House (Upper High Street), then part of the estate. Mrs Hall also bred Percheron carthorses. The Court's two-acre walled kitchen garden boasted extensive ranges of heated greenhouses, some for peaches and vines, and four sets of heated pit lights as well as the usual potting, tool and coal sheds, with an adjacent orchard. Formerly serving the House, it was now run as a highly productive market garden. Vi Smith remembered collecting lettuces from there.

Graham Arundell has clear recollections of being employed by Mrs Hall during the war. He drove the lorry taking the milk in 15-gallon churns either to Shipton Station in the evening to put on the Oxford train, or in the morning direct to the Shipton Court Dairy in Walton Street, Oxford. He well remembers her embarking on various money-making food-production schemes, like the time when he was sent to Evesham with an open cheque to buy ten thousand tomato plants. All hands were summoned to plant them in a field up the Swinbrook Road, stake them and protect them with six miles of single-strand wire obtained from the War Agricultural Committee. Unfortunately her land girls who afterwards spread sulphate of ammonia around the plants got tired after the first few hundreds, and started throwing the fertiliser rather carelessly, which burnt the plants. As a venture, it was not a success, but Graham took what tomatoes were produced to sell in Oxford market. A similar large-scale scheme involved him being sent to purchase a lorry-load of celery plants which Ben Wright the gardener had to plant out. He was not best pleased. Mrs Hall also tried, with Graham's help, to grow mushrooms in empty battery chicken-houses, but this too was unsuccessful as they were not dark or damp enough. She did, however, send him to cut daffodils from the Wild Garden in spring which he took and sold in Oxford market.

At one time Mrs Hall kept rabbits, but their numbers started getting out of hand because, as Graham said 'The land girls that were working for

her were having the time of their lives putting the bucks with the different does'. Eventually, in desperation, Mrs Hall asked Graham to take several hundred away 'alive - I couldn't have the poor things killed', but of course he gradually sold them off in Oxford, for food. He acted as general driver and carrier, collecting farm machinery, delivering cows in calf to other farms (to save on upkeep), then collecting the calves back to be reared at Shipton. Once he was sent to London on an errand concerning a pet dog, and remembers helping the two boys in their workshop. Mrs Hall now had no chauffeur, but often took a lift in the milk lorry to Shipton Station on her way to London. 'She'd get out of the lorry and say to me "Arundell, have you any money on you?" And I'd say "Why Madam?" and she'd say "Well, I haven't got any money and I've got to get a ticket". So I used to lend her the money...she always paid me back of course'. He remembered the indoor staff only consisting of Mr Belcher, now butler and general handymen, and 'one or two maids'. Mrs Hall still entertained at the Court during the early war years; Graham Arundell remembered visits by the Mitford girls, while Teddy Hall said they had to pretend not to recognise Sir Oswald Mosley when he was interned in Shipton.

With many young and able-bodied employees called up, several local men worked on the farm after their retirement such as George Case, and Jack Hawkes who started life as a travelling salesman selling tin pots and pans. Eventually boys from the YMCA and both Italian and German prisoners of war were also employed on arable work. Vic Avery, a schoolboy at the time, said if they were late for school 'she'd catch you for spud-picking!' But from the beginning Mrs Hall employed members of the Women's Land Army. Margaret Reeves, née Pulsford, trained in bovine management and came to Shipton Court in 1939 on her first job. She vividly remembers on arrival being shown up to her top-floor room in Shipton Court by the butler with a candle. The bed had a canopy and the window looked out over the gardens to the lake. 'The weather was freezing cold and I had to start milking at 5am the following morning.' She was one of the first girls to arrive; Mrs Hall apparently dreaded having women on the farm at first, but eventually employed about ten WLA girls. Margaret tended the Jersey herds of 80-100 animals each, including milking by hand twice a day and the care of numerous calves, rising at 5am to milk at Home Farm and 6am at Lower Farm. Like Irene Groom (Carpenter) who came later, she would drive the cows up out of the village 'onto the downs' to graze and sit with them, sometimes meeting one of the soldiers for a chat, and 'took the bull out for a walk every week. Jersey bulls are enormous.' She remembers her employer as strict but very proud of her animals ('my babies'). The girls took turns to work in the steamy room at Home Farm where milk bottles were washed by machine, under the direction of Eva the dairy manager. The hours were 'pretty long' and it was



FIRST RECRUITS – WOMENS LAND ARMY GIRLS AT SHIPTON COURT WITH MARGARET PULSFORD TOP RIGHT

'jolly hard work', for which she was paid eleven or twelve shillings a week, all found. But she managed to go into Oxford quite frequently on the milk lorry, and back by train, while the farm manager Mr Clayton who had a car, sometimes drove the girls to Burford on their day off.

To begin with, they had their meals in an upper room at the Court, (being served so much veal that they got tired of it), where Teddy Hall remembered he and his brother spied on them. But Margaret only occupied her top-floor bedroom for about a week: afterwards the LA girls were quartered in the upper room of the bothy in the stable yard, while the army used the room below as their cookhouse. The girls hung their clothes behind a curtain, but rats and mice chewed holes in them. After complaining about their living conditions, she and about six of the other girls were housed in a cottage in the stable yard 'somewhere near the dovecote'. Other girls were billeted in Springhill Farm cottages in Plum Lane (Irene too remembers cold, shared rooms with mice running up the curtains), and they all had their meals in a canteen at the Court. Margaret remembers several dances at the Court, possibly when either Captain Hall or the boys were home on leave. She recollects one day in the Court climbing up to the long library which held no books and was empty save for a table at one end on which stood a wind-up gramophone. She played Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller records and danced by herself.

Margaret remembers that the house itself looked a little shabby, but that the pleasure garden was kept up: one of the WLA was a lady gardener, 'a dragon', who might have worked in it. Edith Faulkner, described as Mrs Hall's 'right hand', took on extra work such as laundering the dairy staffs' overalls. She was thankful not to have to work away from Shipton since by now she was looking after her elderly widowed father. The Court's private water supply came from springs higher up the village, with the pumping station next to Waterworks Cottage in Simon's Lane, where it still is, though derelict. But Chipping Norton Rural District Council's minutes contain several concerned references to the drop in pressure in the village water supply due to excessive abstraction up at Mrs Hall's dairy unit and by the army at the Court – 'the washing of military vehicles must cease'. The Court cellars to this day contain an opening in the flagstone floor, through which the natural water-table can be seen. After heavy rain the water level rises, starting a mechanical pump, but before this device was installed, the excess ground water had to be pumped out by hand. The RDC also seriously considered sending the Court's ornamental iron railings and gates for salvage but finally agreed they should be saved.

By the end of the War the old house was in a sorry state. All the family's childhood treasures which had been stored away had disappeared. Sadly Bill Hall died in 1944 of wounds sustained in the Anzio landings, but Teddy returned safely from the navy and went up to New College, Oxford in 1946 to read chemistry and physics. (Professor Hall's subsequent distinguished career at Oxford included work on dating the Piltdown Skull and the Turin Shroud). Mr, now Colonel, D'Arcy Hall and his wife moved away to Ewelme Park and in July 1947 the original core estate of 82 acres including the main house, farm and gardens, cricket field, the Wild Garden and several cottages, plus the Malthouse and Court and Springhill Farms were bought by Mr Basil Allen, a surveyor from Andover. Almost immediately the entire lot was sold on to Mr James Charles Hayward, a farmer from East Hanney. He kept Springhill and Court Farms, both described as first-class TT farms, Home Farm and what later became known as the Dower House, the Wild Garden, an orchard and twenty-two further acres, but put the rest of the estate up for auction at Oxford Town Hall on 9 October 1947. The 'fine Elizabethan Mansion' of Shipton Court was offered 'at an upset price' of £6,000, while other lots included the Malthouse, the Laundry Cottage, the Stable Yard, the two modern semi-detached cottages near the dovecote (by now occupied by Mr Holloway the gardener and the kennelman, Mr Grant), the walled kitchen garden, and 'a pasture field' containing 'one of the prettiest cricket grounds in the Cotswolds'. By the end of the day, the dispersal of the Shipton Court estate, begun with Pepper's sale in 1913, was complete. The *Oxford Times* reported that in the sale of the pedigree Jersey herd (Mrs Hall's pride and

joy), thirteen animals made over 100 guineas each, with the top price for one animal 'Shipton Prize Packet' of 210 guineas. The report continued that a Mrs Arathoon of Hove had purchased the mansion and gardens prior to the auction and proposed to open a hotel.

This scheme never materialised, but the Arathoon family began the long and arduous process of rescuing Shipton Court and its gardens from war-time dereliction, which they have accomplished over the years with spectacular success. In 1978 the 56-room main house was divided vertically, the front part with its historic facade facing the Avenue being sold as a separate dwelling, and the rear portion divided into six self-contained apartments. The integrity of the lovely gardens has been maintained by a policy of avoiding physical boundaries between properties, and strict control over additional building in the grounds. The owners are to be congratulated for bringing this splendid Grade II* listed building into the twenty-first century in such good heart, although the Lordship of the Manor, with its ancient 'rights members privileges emoluments and appurtenances' which was still being quoted in conveyances up to 1947, now had the sober addition of the words 'if any'. Meanwhile, a walk round the village still reveals many clues to the former estate. The houses in Courtlands occupy a field adjoining the barns of Court Farm, while the kitchen garden became Court Close. The stables (Shipton Grange), Court Cottage, the Dower House, the Malthouse and Court Farm are private residences, but villagers are fortunate still to be able to enjoy walking, with permission, in the Avenue or Wild Garden. In Chapel Lane the semi-detached houses built by Joseph Reade for estate workers in 1868 still bear his family crest, a falcon rising with wings outstretched from a tree-stump, while the remains of the Court's ice-house are just discernable under a clump of trees above the stream.

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Court and School

JOHN RAWLINS

This article shows the connections between Shipton Court and the local Shipton under Wychwood Church of England School as recorded in the school's log books between 1869 and 1946. The school was all age, from infants at five or under to school leavers at 14, and the numbers on roll varied between 90 and 153. Direct quotes are shown between single inverted commas.

The earliest extant log book of Shipton under Wychwood National School No. 1445 begins in 1869 and the first reference to the Court is in October 1870 which records 'Visit of Mrs Hall and the Revd. H. Barter who examined the needlework and mental arithmetic'. Two visits of A.W.Hall Esquire are noted in May 1871 and also 'Girls do marking for Mrs Hall of Shipton Court'. Between 1873 and 1878 there are no references to the Court. It is possible that between the several ownerships of the Court other local 'worthies' were asked, or volunteered, to provide teas, treats, make examinations or presentations as with Mrs Maddox, Mrs Brassey, the vicar, Revd Barter, or his relatives.

In 1878 the log book notes 'Visit of Mrs Samuda and Friends from Shipton Court to inspect girls' needlework and heard (sic) school songs'. Mrs Samuda maintained this interest in needlework for the next ten years with almost annual visits including presentation of wool for girls' knitting in 1883, and a tea at the Court in 1887 for the needlework children with prizes for the best nineteen. But, in 1888, 'Mrs Samuda discontinued her treat to needlework children and no prizes given by her. Needlework having been inspected by Mrs Barter only'. In the days before 'ready-made' clothing, there was a great advantage in a girl having needlework skills. It enabled her to provide clothing for herself and family and to enter the job market on a higher scale than mere domestic.

On 14 December 1891 the log book notes 'Made a list of children attending Sunday School for Mrs Samuda', followed by 'School closed this afternoon for Xmas treat given by Miss Dillon and Mrs C.C.Samuda' on 23rd December. The next reference to the Court is in 1899 with 'Visit of K.Reid Esq. this week' in June. He had had earlier connections with the school which had school treats or feasts between 1889 and 1895. In 1895 the arrangements for the feast held at the Vicarage were by Mr Kenneth Reid for some 200 children including 18 from Bethnal Green holidaying in

the village for a fortnight. Previously, in 1893, the school feast on the day of the Royal Wedding was held in a field at the Grove lent by Mr Reade.

The turn of the century brought changes to Shipton, the Revd. Barter was succeeded by Revd. Collingwood Carter, St Michael's (now Willis Court) began taking in Waifs and Strays and the log book makes its first reference to the Lady Reade Charity when it awarded Robert Miles a scholarship to secondary education at Burford Grammar School. This charity was set up for bequests left by Dame Harriott Reade of Shipton Court for the advancement of further education of young people resident in the ancient parish of Shipton under Wychwood, this area being defined as the parishes of Shipton, Milton, Leafield and Ramsden. In 1900 it was also necessary to be attending one of the local schools in the parishes including the one at Lyneham.

On 31 January 1903 the log book notes ' J.Reade Esq's farewell' and a fortnight later 'Visit of W.F.Pepper Esq. manager', the Court's new owner.

In an effort to combat truancy the charity was also used to reward regular attendance at the school and for children who performed well. In 1902 £2 8s was distributed at a penny for very four weeks' complete attendance. A similar amount was expended in 1904 when children received amounts varying from threepence to two shillings. The presentation of these awards, together with medals and watches provided by the Oxfordshire Education Committee (OEC) were made by the vicar, his sister and Mrs W.F.Pepper over the next few years. These ceremonies presumably took place at the school in the company of managers, friends and parents. Possibly due to the success of the OEC scheme which gave books, medals and watches as incentives for regular attendance the Lady Reade charity ceased giving attendance awards in 1906/1907.

Changes in occupancy of the Court had an indirect effect on the school as new occupiers tended to bring their own work force with them whose children then attended the local school. Mr Pepper's groom came from Yorkshire and the log book records the several visits that his sons, Michael, Ernest and Harold Hyde, made to and from their previous home. Also recorded are Harold's visits to Burford hospital and gaining a scholarship to Burford Grammar School where Mr Pepper was a governor

With the many attempts to boost attendance Mr Strong, the headteacher, was probably dismayed to record 'Several boys absent owing to Mr Pepper's shooting party'. A little later he notes 'Mrs Case & Mrs Longshaw asked if their boys may be absent today – to go beating for Mr Pepper...' followed by 'Have been to see Mr Pepper & he has given instructions to his keeper not to employ school boys again for shooting (they were employed without Mr Pepper's knowledge)'.

In 1910 the children 'were entertained at the Beaconsfield Hall for the coming of age of Mr Wilfred Pepper' and Mrs Pepper continued her prize



THE SHIPTON COURT CUP FOR GIRLS' SPORTS PRESENTED BY MRS D'ARCY HALL IN 1942. Photo David Trollope

distribution until 1912. By August 1914 the school had become Shipton under Wychwood Church of England School No. 181. Annual presentations were taken over by Mrs Huntingdon in 1914, although by the following year 'the children having relinquished their Prizes on account of the War' only received certificates. In spite of the war the log book records in 1915 'Major & Mrs Huntingdon called to know if the children would like a Xmas tree again this year'. This would appear to be the beginning of an annual visit to the Court for a Christmas tree and treat although it was sometimes postponed due to illness or bad weather.

One of the first school tasks undertaken by Mrs Thomson was the presentation of an OEC watch to Nora Steed in 1920 for 10 years perfect attendance. In the previous year Nora Steed had gained a Lady Reade scholarship to secondary education but with none available locally for girls she had to travel to Oxford High School for girls.

In May 1921 the log book notes 'Miss Thomson presented the Certificates for Reg.Att. & Proficiency, also Prizes given by Mrs Thomson, to the children...'. A Christmas tree and treat was still given and fondly recalled by former Waifs and Strays. The ghost stories told by Mr Thomson were often re-told in the darkness of their dormitories in which there should have been silence.

In 1925, when Burford Grammar School began admitting girls, Maud Goss (later Rawlins) was among the first but Sybil Miles (later Reavley) was probably the first to gain a scholarship provided by the OEC.

The Area School Sports were held at the Court in May 1929 and the local school had more than a fair degree of success. Mr Thomson died in June that year and for the next six years there are no references to the Court in the log book with teas, prizes and entertainment being provided by Colonel & Mrs Addinsell at the Old Prebendal, the managers and the parish, with presentations made by Lord Latymer of Shipton Lodge.

The first log book references to the next Court owners appears in 1935 with 'Mrs D'Arcy Hall called in a.m. to see the Senior Girls with regard to forming a dancing class to dance Folk Dances at the Fete she was organising for local charities'. Sadly, the Oxford Times makes no mention

of dancing in its report of a successful event. In December 1935 the log book records 'The scholars and staff are invited to a Tea and Christmas Tree at Shipton Court by the kindness of Mrs D'Arcy Hall'. For some reason Mr Horne, the Head, failed to fill in much of the log book until 1939 when a party at the Court was noted in December. Among those present in 1939 were evacuated children from West Ham as this country was now at war which brought many changes to both Court and school. This may have been the last party to be given by the owners of the Court. Mr Horne was called up for military service and his successor, W. D. (Bill) Campbell, notes in January 1941 'School closed at 12 midday at the request of the Managers for a half day's holiday for children's party and tea', but does not say where.

Mrs Hall probably had indirect connections with the school with its various wartime fund raising. By alteration of the timetable in September 1941 the children were able to watch the hand-over of the Wychwood Ambulance by Mrs Hall to the Duchess of Marlborough on behalf of the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Corps. By 1942 the school had a new head, Mr T.S. Sharps, who introduced a team system to the school with awards for many school activities. Among the awards were a shield donated by Lord Latymer and two cups, one given by Mr S. E. Groves (of Alfred Groves & Sons) and the other by Mrs D'Arcy Hall. They were first presented by the donors in 1942 and the last log book reference to the owners of the Court is on 1 October 1942 when 'Mrs Hall called and presented 'The Court Cup' to Raleigh team'. The head should have called it 'The Shipton Court Cup' for girls' sports played between the two teams of Raleigh and Drake. Although there are no more log book references to Shipton Court there were occasions when local children were entertained by the U.S. military billeted there.

Since 1946 there have been changes. In 1953 the school was designated No. 3041 by the Ministry of Education, and having lost its senior pupils to Burford became known as St.Mary's Church of England Primary School in the 1960s. The Shipton Court Cup was presented in the 1960s when the teams were Evenlode and Wychwood. The school finally closed in 1984 with the buildings becoming three residences with another built in its former gardens. The Lady Reade Educational Foundation continues.

Thanks to Mr Duncan Spence, head teacher of Wychwood Church of England School for use of school material.

Sources

The log books of Shipton Church of England school
 The Minute book of the Lady Reade Educational Foundation
 Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine 1893-95
 Information from former pupils

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT

***That's How it Was: Women in the Wychwoods during World War Two* £5.50** An illustrated record of life in the Wychwood villages in World War Two, as recalled by the women who lived and worked there.

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***Wychwoods History, Number 1 (1985)* £3.00** Hedge Survey of Milton & Shipton, Pt 1; Milton Graveyard Survey; Railway Timetable 1853; Cotham Cottage, Milton; Royal Manor of Sciptone in Domesday, Pt 1; Probate Inventory of William Hyatt, 1587.

***Wychwoods History, Number 2 (1986)* £3.00** William Master, Vicar of Shipton 1564–91; A Milton Field, 1842–1985; Survey of Baptist Ground, Milton; Letters of Thomas & Hannah Groves; Royal Manor of Sciptone in Domesday, Pt 2; Hedge Survey, Pt 2.

***Wychwoods History, Number 3 (1987)* £3.00** Published jointly with OUDES and edited by Kate Tiller. Milton & Shipton in the Nineteenth Century – Farming and community before 1850; Village government; Decade of change, the 1850s; Decade of decisions, the 1870s; Growing up 100 years ago; Life and work 1880–1914.

***Wychwoods History, Number 4 (1988)* £2.50** Earthworks at Lower Farm, Upper Milton (survey by James Bond); Fieldwalking in Evenlode Valley; Prebendal House, Shipton (excavation by Brian Durham); My Father's Days; Wartime Wedding.

***Wychwoods History, Number 5 (1989)* £3.00** The Poor of Shipton 1740–62; Shipton Milestone; St Mary's Church, Shipton; The Reade Chapel; Plague Tyme; Change in the Wychwoods, 1938–1988; Medieval Pottery Finds at St Mary's School, Shipton.

***Wychwoods History, Number 6 (1991)* £3.00** The Untons; Leonard Boxe, Gentleman of Ascott; Infantile Mortality 1565–94; The Wharton Charity; Medieval Fishpond at Bruern Grange; Shipton School Log Book 1869–1905; Mary Moss; Life in Old Milton.

***Wychwoods History, Number 7 (1992)* £3.00** Origins of Shipton Minster Church; The Groves Family, Pt 1; Early Days at Shipton; Ridge & Furrow; Henry Mills, Shipton Vicar 1593–1641; Death by Misadventure; The Milton Murder; Cottage on the Waste.

***Wychwoods History, Number 8 (1993)* £3.00** Royal Observer Corps, Shipton; Base-born in Shipton; The Groves Family of Milton, Pt 2; Milton Church – Architect's Plan; An Anglo-Saxon Charter for Shipton? Field-walking a Romano-British site above Shipton; Vital Statistics: Shipton Parish Registers.

***Wychwoods History, Number 9 (1994)* £3.00** The Medieval Lords of Shipton, Pt I; The De Clares; Shipton in 1662, a Hearth Tax Study; Possession is Nine Points of the Law; The Groves Family of Milton, Pt 3; Emigrants to America; Old Christmas Custom at Chadlington; Moss Families of Ascott; Book Reviews.

***Wychwoods History, Number 10 (1995)* £3.00** Jessie Hunt, Evacuee 1939–45; Shipton in 1662: Hearth Tax Study, Pt 2; Shipton Village Shops and Roundsmen; First Parish Council Elections; Smallpox; Puzzles over Shipton Prebend; What really happened at Shipton Court; The de Langleys: Medieval Foresters; George Quartermain of Ascott.

***Wychwoods History, Number 11 (1996)* £3.00** Shipton Small Tithes 1727–34; Memories of Ascott; Ascott Priory Tithes; The Chaundys of Ascott; 'Where There's Muck...'; Agistment – a Tithing Nightmare; Asthall Roman Camp; A Determined Emigrant.

***Wychwoods History, Number 12 (1997)* £3.00** Welfare in the Wychwoods 1700–1834; From Annie to Barbara – Five Generations of a Shipton Family; More Memories of Ascott; Sheepwashing & the Ascott Sheepwash; The Barthers of Sarsden and Salome of Natal; Lady Harriet Reade; The Wychwooders Lament; Springhill Farm.

***Wychwoods History, Number 13 (1998)* £3.00** Mother Shipton; Gwen Morgan, a Milton teacher; Doctor's Bill; Killing the Pig; Occupations 1785–1817; The Stampe Family; Farming Memories of Chadlington.

***Wychwoods History, Number 14 (1999)* £3.00** Crime & Punishment in 1790, a Tale of Wychwood Men; John Chapman's Legacy; A Bouquet of Roses; A Roman Villa at Upper Milton?; Cospatrick Tragedy; The Agricultural Ladder; Memories of Shipton Station.

***Wychwoods History, Number 15 (2000)* £3.50** Survey of Earthworks at Ascott d'Oilley Castle; A Wychwoods Farming Year 1854–55; Shipton and Religion in Sixteenth Century; Medieval Pottery in Wychwoods; Burford to Banbury Turnpike Road; Wychwood Manors in Domesday Book; What's in a Name?

***Wychwoods History, Number 16 (2001)* £3.50** Hartley Heritage Part One; Shipton & the Foxe Family; James Longshaw of Shipton, Musician; Care in the Community Eighteenth-century Style; Ascott Tollgate Board; The Millennium Fieldwalk; Assigning Quarters in the Wychwoods 1939–45.

***Wychwoods History, Number 17 (2002)* £3.50** His Name be Not Forgotten; From Village Medicine Cupboard and College Cellar; Some Wychwood Neighbourhoods about 1900: Milton; Who's Heard of Daffy's?; Reuben Rainbow's Diary; Recollections by John Richards.

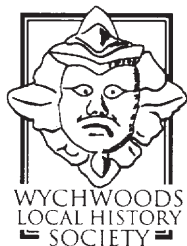
***Wychwoods History, Number 18 (2003)* £3.50** Chesnut Close; Local Casualties of a Forgotten War in Iraq; Some Wychwood Neighbourhoods about 1900: Shipton; A Problem of Ownership; The First-Twenty-one Years; Book Review; Hartley Heritage Part Two.

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Title page illustration: Shipton Court 1824, J.P.Neale



£4. 00

ISBN 0 9544887 1 7

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Nineteen, 2004

SHIPTON COURT SPECIAL ISSUE