

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Twenty-two, 2007



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

Foreword

Journal 22 sees two subjects, both of which have been long in the gestation, reaching the reporting stage, Bruern Abbey and the Society's fieldwalking. The grandparents of Joy Timms lived at Bruern Grange for the first half of the twentieth century and Joy was captivated by the history of the Cistercian abbey and its occupation for over 400 years by the white monks. Little of the Abbey now remains but after many years of documentary research it is possible to build up a picture of the lives of the men who lived there. In the second part of the article Joan Howard-Drake tells the story of the dissolution of the Abbey and its tenants and possessions at the time.

Margaret and Frank Ware with their interest in archaeology have led the Society's fieldwalking group for many years. Now, with a good sample of fields walked and the practical part finished, Margaret records the coordinated results. Margaret's article on the flints collected is an important contribution to archaeology of West Oxfordshire. The pottery finds will be covered in the next Journal.

As always it's the people of the Wychwoods and their lives which are so worth researching and recording. Small factories making cash tills in Shipton produced an enormous number of products for 50 years in the twentieth century and interviews with some of those who worked in the yards are the basis of Alan Vicker's history. In a much earlier time other useful items were made in Milton, simple long case clocks, made by William Smith, a Quaker. A number of his clocks still survive from the late eighteenth century.

Trudy Yates tells how a visit to Shipton graveyard brought to light another family connected to the Walkers of Shipton Court whose story was told in *Wychwoods History* 21.

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

SUE JOURDAN, JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE AND TRUDY YATES

Bruern Abbey 1147 – 1536

PART 1 BY JOY TIMMS

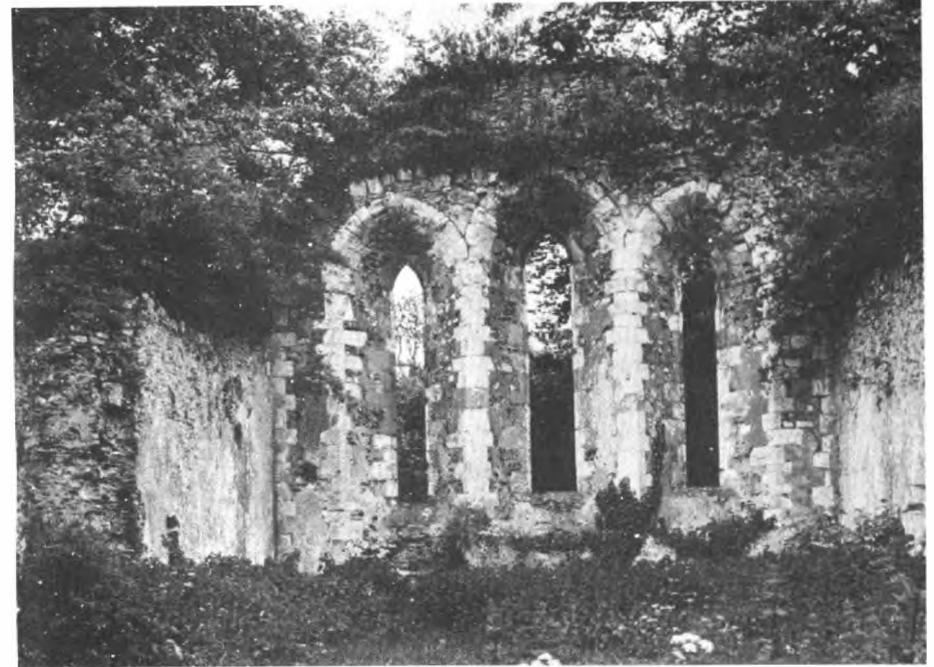
Bruern is an enchanting hamlet situated in a lush valley on the south bank of the river Evenlode in West Oxfordshire, close to the Gloucestershire border.¹ In 1147 Nicholas Basset founded a Cistercian monastery here called Bruern Abbey. The site belonged to the manor of Treton and consisted of heath-land or 'Brueria' whence the abbey took its name of 'The Church of St Mary of the Heath of Treton' (Brueria de Treitonic). Over time the name Treton disappeared and the parish became known as Bruern.

The Basset family were great benefactors to monasteries in Oxfordshire, and this secluded site was perfect as the Cistercian rule required:

No cell of ours must be built in cities, fortified places or villages, but in sites retired from the haunts of men.²

Documentary evidence shows that Ralph Basset, Clerk, brother of Nicholas, had served the church of Treton which was in their father's demesne before the founding of the Abbey, and later a certain William, Presbyter of St Peter's, Treton, witnessed a grant; his stipend ceased at the same time as tithes were no longer paid from the lands which were now cultivated by the Cistercians.³ Nicholas Basset's original gifts were cited in an 1194 charter of Richard I, these being the abbey site and land in Tangle, Sandbrook and Nethercote. Several years later he extended his foundation by bestowing the whole of his manors of Treton and Nethercote. These gifts were confirmed, together with other benefactions by Henry II, Richard I and John, to 'The Church of St Mary of the Heath of Treton'. King John's charter of 1205 at Oxford granted new benefactions of lands at Harptree and Priddy in Somerset to Bruern Abbey.

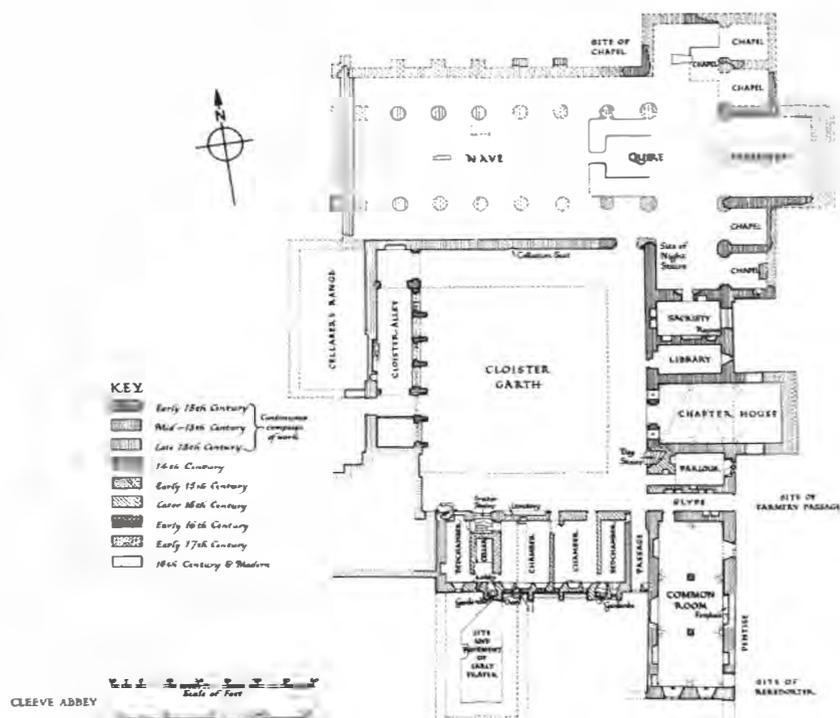
Bruern Abbey, like Thame, was a daughter of Waverley Abbey in Sussex, and although no cartulary is extant, many of the original deeds are preserved in The National Archives, the British Museum, the Bodleian Library and in the cartularies of other abbeys.⁴ Twelve monks and their Abbot David came from the mother house to build an abbey and pray for the souls of Nicholas and his family for ever. During four succeeding centuries they commemorated this now forgotten benefactor, saying



WAVERLEY ABBEY NEAR FARNHAM, SURREY, THE FIRST CISTERCIAN FOUNDATION IN ENGLAND IN 1128 AND THE MOTHER HOUSE OF BRUERN ABBEY. FROM D. KNOWLES, BARE RUINED CHOIRS. 1976

masses for him daily and distributing alms to the poor every year on Maundy Thursday. All Cistercian abbeys followed a basic plan and soon the church was built on the south bank of the river near the heath. Adjoining it were the cloisters, chapter house and the rest of the buildings. There is no obvious trace of Bruern Abbey on the ground now although by looking at other sites it is possible to see what it may have looked like.⁵ There are many famous large Cistercian ruins such as Fountains Abbey and Rievaulx that show the layout but one of the best preserved is Cleve Abbey in Somerset, the gatehouse in particular is a very good example and the entrance to Bruern Abbey may have looked similar.

Early Cistercian abbeys embodied two sorts of religious brethren, the Monachi, the monks, and the Conversi, the lay brothers. During Bruern's first century close connections were kept with their mother house and each year a visit was made by the abbot of Waverley and less frequently by a visitor appointed by the Chapter at Cîteaux so that grievances could be inquired into. The abbot himself was bound to attend the Chapter General at Cîteaux every year. The monks' chief work consisted of recitation of the divine offices with the intervals between being occupied with study,



A SKETCH OF A TYPICAL LAYOUT OF A CISTERCIAN ABBEY BASED ON THE EXTANT REMAINS OF CLEEVE ABBEY

meditation, meeting in the chapter house and periods of recreation and sleep. The daily routine of the 'white monks' in their habits of undyed wool started with matins at 2 am and ended with compline, the last service of the day. The austerity of their order meant self-denial in their food; the daily ration for each monk consisted of a pound of coarse bread, a drink of wine and water, plus two dishes of vegetables. In winter a single meal was served and in summer two meals and a repast known as 'mixtum'. Each monk was required to perform only one manual task, that of taking his turn in the kitchen. The main manual labour fell to the lay brothers; the night offices of the abbey church were curtailed for them as their work called them away at an early hour to work at the granges.⁶ Discipline was strict and the chapter house meted out punishment even for minor offences like breaking the rule of silence or singing too loudly in church. Penalties for serious crimes permitted anything but death as the abbot was not allowed to pronounce sentence on a fellow monk, but as a feudal lord he had the demesne gallows at his disposal for those other than monks. Towards the end of the twelfth century, rules were relaxed as the

abbey lands were now more extensive and lay brothers were found to be in charge of the grange farms. By a decree of Pope Eugenius III in 1152, granges were held to be sanctuaries where none under pain of sacrilege might commit an act of violence, rapine, theft or arson. These granges, as at Sandbrook (Bruern Grange), now contained sleeping accommodation in addition to farm buildings. Lay brothers living in the granges were now permitted to receive holy communion in other churches if no provision existed in their own grange or if they were too far away to return to their mother house at the end of the day.

Bruern Abbey continued to receive many gifts from grateful benefactors. Among these was a gift from Robert de Witfield, Sheriff of Oxford 1181-5, of two hides in Milton under Wychwood mentioning that Peter, his uncle, was a lay brother at Bruern. Middleton, later Monks Milton, was part of Shipton under Wychwood manor owned by the de Clares. Of the other neighbouring villages on the north bank of the river, Kingham was owned by the Mandervilles, Churchill by the De Nowers, and Sarsden by the Golafres. These great families were to figure prominently in Bruern's history as friends and benefactors and the monks in their position as farmers and landed proprietors were brought into frequent contact with neighbouring laity. Not only were they called upon to offer prayers and masses for their lay friends and to grant them privilege of burial in Bruern's chapter house, but their advice was sought also in worldly matters. They acted as King John's bankers on more than one occasion and served others in similar ways. Transactions with laymen included the sale of villeins. Abbot John in 1246 sold his 'nativus', Hugh Barker of Churchill, to the armourer of Nicholas de Nowers for 40 shillings and Matilda, the doctor's widow, sold to the abbot her man, Richard of East End Lyneham, with all his belongings for 20 shillings. There were many quarrels with Churchill over tithes and at one stage in 1217 they lost the contest when Pope Honorius issued a mandate ordering the monks to pay their tithes, and also to pay costs of one silver mark.

The good repute of Bruern's early abbots is evident by their appointment to act as Papal Judges' Delegate to try ecclesiastical cases between the years 1181 and 1217 but the community's fortunes were not immune to national events. The Civil War during the reign of Stephen (1135-54) and the Baron's Revolt proved politically difficult for the community. The Bruern monks contributed 300 marks in money, wool and other treasures and possessions towards the one hundred thousand silver marks demanded for King Richard's ransom in 1191. The Cistercians refused to grant King John aid towards his expedition to Ireland in 1210, and so he persecuted individual houses to the point where the monks were forced to disperse for a time on account of poverty. The Papal Interdict of 1208-1214 did not prevent bequests being made to religious houses which aggravated the laity who accused the monks of

receiving favouritism over the heads of other mortals. In 1212, the document Testa De Nevill shows that the sons of Nicholas Basset were forced to give up their father's lands to Henry II because of their partisanship of King Stephen during the Civil War. Henry replaced Nicholas's name with that of his own as Bruern's founder. He granted the monks freedom from scutage on their two knights fees though the Patent Rolls show that this tax was still demanded of them until Henry III pardoned them from paying in 1218.⁷ It was not until the Valor Ecclesiasticus in 1535 that Nicholas Basset's name was once again recorded and honoured as Bruern's founder.

During the thirteenth century Bruern owned pastures, woodland, fish-ponds and dovecotes, but above all the abbey was famous for Cotswold sheep. The Bruern monks were established in three counties as sheep farmers and wool had become their main source of income. A royal order of 28 February 1233, addressed to the sheriffs of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, granted that no sheriff in these counties could distrain the monks by their sheep for any debt that they may owe. This must have proved useful in 1284 when their debt reached 2,100 marks. Their wool dealings sometimes went awry, when they had borrowed money on the promise of being able to deliver a set quantity and quality of wool in future years, only to find unforeseen circumstances getting in the way.

The monks were friendly with neighbouring lords and even entertained the king on several occasions. Corrodies, agreements for future board and lodging in return for an immediate cash payment, were granted to servants of the king, in order that they could retire to Bruern and enjoy a country life.⁸ The initial payment for a corrody was very welcome but was soon spent, causing financial difficulties for the abbot who was trying to make ends meet. This financial drain on the abbey's resources got worse as successive kings required more corrodies to be granted.

At the beginning of Henry III's reign, (1216-72), an order was given to Thomas Langley, Keeper of Wychwood, authorising him to allow the abbot to have a third cart going into the forest to gather fuel, and the following year he released the monks from paying 2 marks scutage. Later, grateful for Bruern's hospitality, the king ordered the keeper of Wychwood Forest to provide 100 good oak trees towards the new buildings at Bruern, which took 20 years to complete. An indulgence in summer 1250, on the Sunday after the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr, tells of the consecration of the high altar of St Mary in the abbey church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Edmund Rich who, as a former Archbishop of Canterbury and a native of Abingdon, had been canonised in 1246. This great occasion attracted many sightseers and pilgrims. The Bishop of St Asaph conducted the consecration ceremony, and it seems likely that Henry III attended the festivities, as a royal charter was dated at Bruern on

ST EDMUND RICH OF ABINGDON, ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY



that day. The king still kept in close touch with Bruern and in 1258 ordered the Justiciar of Sherwood Forest to send five good oaks to Bruern 'forthwith' for the construction of the bell tower.

Although secluded, news of great events still reached the Bruern community. In 1265 it is likely they were saddened to hear of the deaths at the battle of Evesham of Ralph Basset, their founder's kinsman, their benefactor William de Manderville of Kingham and of Simon de Montfort, 'Flower of Knights', friend and champion of the Cistercian order. Bruern had its share of healing miracles which involved the ghost of Simon de Montfort. On the authority of Robert, vicar of Evesham, the tale goes 'there was a monk of Bruern who had lain in his bed in the infirmary for seven years stricken with paralysis till one day, after the battle of Evesham, he saw in a dream two men passing through his room. One he recognised, an abbot who had died; the other who wore knight's armour was unknown to him. As they approached his bed the sick man heard the stranger ask 'Who is that man?' The abbot answered 'He was once the best singer in our church'. At once the knight drew nearer and touched him. In that touch the monk knew de Montfort's hand, and rose from his bed, healed from his sickness and praising Earl Simon's name'. These tales of healing no doubt helped to boost income as Bruern was short of relics which were the main attraction for pilgrims.

The monks entertained travellers who kept them informed about the outside world. In 1266 through no fault of his own the abbot harboured a stranger, who had obtained hospitality at the abbey under the pretence that he was Prince Edward, heir to the throne. The man, whose real name was Gervase Skimett, had perpetrated a like fraud on the rector of Heythrop. He was subsequently hanged and his hosts were cleared of complicity in his misdeeds.

After his succession, Edward I (1272-1307) visited Bruern on several occasions. He came on 13 and 14 March 1276 and again the following year on 15 January when he presented the abbey with six oaks from Wychwood Forest. Similar gifts followed in 1279 and 1281. Again royal visits were recorded in 1291 during February and March. Such calls on Bruern's hospitality were a source of great expense to the community. Monastic

hospitality could be abused as it would have been great luxury to stay in these 'guest-houses' of the middle ages, and visitations to the abbey by bishops and archbishops with their large entourage were a great drain on the abbey's resources. Rome and the realm were constantly demanding monies from the monasteries so that the monks in turn leaned on their tenants. Bruern lands were included in the Hundred Rolls survey commissioned by the king in 1279 and in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291. This was a valuation made on the occasion of a grant to the king by the pope of a tenth of the profits of all ecclesiastical benefices for six years, as a contribution to the expenses of a crusade to the Holy Land. The account of Bruern's possessions recorded an income of £72 but omission of certain properties show that the return was incomplete. The taxation showed that Bruern Abbey had an income from the church of Shipton under Wychwood worth six shillings and eight pence.

Bruern Abbey was experiencing the worst trials of farming life as the thirteenth century was drawing to a close with bad debts, failure of crops, dilapidations and labour troubles plus the ongoing corrodies imposed on the abbey by successive kings. Sheep disease attacked flocks throughout the country in 1277. The Cistercians had a practical remedy, an ointment made of quick-silver and hog's fat. As lay brothers declined in numbers, the abbot was forced to take on hired labour. This, together with quarrels in the cloisters and the heavy burden of increasing wages and disorder in the grange farms, forced the abbot to borrow heavily from Italian money lenders who had settled in Lombard Street, London.

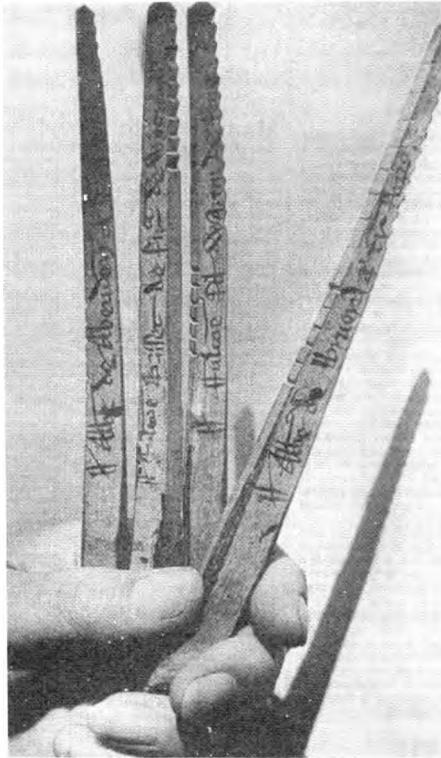
The house of Bardi of Florence was well known in England for its wool dealings and a detailed list survives compiled for the Bardi by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti while working in England in 1318-21. It records 194 wool-producers, mainly Cistercian monasteries, and confirms how heavily the Order was involved in the wool business. The Pegolotti list suggests that the Cistercians got better prices than others in the market reflecting their specialisation in the trade from growing to packing. Wool from Kingswood and Bruern Abbeys was the most valuable produced in England. Their grading, processing and packing was outstanding and others rarely came up to their Cistercian perfection and honesty. Bruern's superiority in the wool-trade enabled them to survive.

The Black Death struck England during 1349-50. The mortality at Bruern is not known but possibly many died. In nearby Witney, two-thirds of its population perished, and the Langley family of Wychwood died out completely in a second visitation of this pestilence in 1363. The loss of tenants on the Bruern estates, the loss of servants and lay brothers and of monks holding official positions in the community may have contributed to the bankruptcy of Bruern Abbey in 1351 when it was threatened with closure. It was in a state of sequestration which lasted for several years. Four officials were appointed, William de Shareshall, John Golafre,

Thomas de Langley and Edmund Bereford (Barford), all of whom had landed connections in Oxfordshire, to take custody while the abbey was under Royal protection. William de Shareshull, lord of Dean and Chalford is remembered among Bruern's benefactors for his gift of Denchworth Church and manor in Berkshire. The *Valor* in 1535 recorded Denchworth church as part of Bruern's possessions leased to a layman, Alexander Unton, at a fixed rent so it does not seem that the monks assumed any responsibility for the parishioners of Denchworth. The apparent monastic indifference to the spiritual welfare of their parishioners was the subject of an attack on them in *Piers Plowman* written anonymously in about 1369. It has been suggested that the author was William Longland of Shipton under Wychwood:

Little cause have owners to give the land
 Away from their heirs, to monks who
 Have no pity, though the rain falls on
 Their altars, and in many places where they
 Are parsons, they themselves live at ease.
 They have no pity for the poor
 Such is their charity but to behave
 As lords, their land lies so broad.⁹

The Bruern community was again troubled in 1363 by an internal revolt by some of the monks who were opposed to the behaviour of their abbot, John of Dunster. Monk Robert of Stow acted as their proctor in the Papal Court. The presiding cardinal decided in the abbot's favour which put Monk Robert of Stow in an awkward position if he returned to Bruern, fearful of ill treatment from Abbot John and his friends. His petition for leave to transfer to another convent was granted in Avignon in December 1363. Further light is thrown on this quarrel by successive entries in the Patent Rolls, how Abbot John of Dunster had closed his gates against a visitation by the Abbot of Garrendon who promptly forced his way in and carried off Abbot John as prisoner to Hailes. He appealed to the king, claiming that he had been 'robbed and imprisoned by evil doers who came at night and broke his close and doors and house'. After an enquiry, the king commissioned John de Nowers and Roger Elmrugge to act, and the next month he appointed the same two joint custodians of the abbey together with William de Shareshall. The fortunes of the abbey had sunk to an all-time low according to the official description in 1366, which relates 'the house was heavily in debt through misrule and adversity and threatened by total destruction and the dispersal of the monks'. And 'The Abbey of Brewern County Oxon, through misrule and covetousness of past presidents is so miserably oppressed by corrodies granted to suspected persons of foul character that divine worship has ceased and alms and



TALLY STICKS. THESE STICKS WERE USED AS RECEIPTS AND DETAILS OF TRANSACTIONS WERE INSCRIBED ON THE SIDES. THE RIGHT STICK CONFIRMS PAYMENT OF £13 6S 8D FROM THE ABBOT OF BRUERN FOR TRESPASS IN THE FOREST.

other pious works is withdrawn and there is danger of dispersal of the monks by lack of sustenance'. This time the king committed the abbey into the hands of William Hervy and John Golafre to do whatever was necessary to revive it.

During this last period of sequestration the Abbot of Cirencester took advantage, making a raid on Bruern lands at Eastleach in the Coln valley, north of Cirencester. In November 1367, Nicholas, Abbot of Cirencester, with four laymen, broke the gallows lately erected at Eastleach, carried off oxen valued at £20 and committed other enormities in contempt of the king and the abbot. The king was Proctor of

Bruern Abbey at this time. This may have been a provocative act by Abbot Nicholas in response to a previous lawsuit between the two abbots, in the course of which the representative of Bruern had produced evidence based on a falsified charter.

John of Dunster's successor revived Bruern's fortunes. Further gifts in the 1380s included land in Lyneham and a meadow in Shipton known as Capron mede. A more important benefaction was the grant of Fifhide (Fifield) manor and land in Kingham.¹⁰ Local tradition assigns the building of Fifield church and a greater part of Idbury church to the Bruern monks. A messuage and land in Brodeysington (Great Rissington) was the purchase price of a corrody by John Lovell and Richard Gurdon.

The fifteenth century saw Bruern's fortunes greatly improving under the rule of three abbots. Henry VI (1422-61) granted them the church of Wootton in 1440 and £8 in rent with licence to appropriate, 'for the aid and sustentation of the abbey, and for Divine Service therein'. Unfortunately, Edward IV coming to the crown by conquest revoked this grant, among others, in 1464. Abbot John appealed, saying that they had little livelihood to live by, but only by husbandry but his pleas fell on deaf-ears. During the Wars of the Roses, Bruern had to act cautiously. Henry VI had endeared



THE TOMB IN ICOMBE CHURCH OF SIR JOHN BLACKET WHO DIED IN 1441. FOUR YEARS LATER THE WILL OF HIS SON EDMUND REQUESTED THAT 'MY BODY TO BE BURIED IN THE CHAPEL OF BLESSED MARY OF BRUERN'.

himself to ecclesiastics by his generous gifts and piety, but prudence compelled them to acknowledge his successor who at the beginning of his reign, revoked by Act of Parliament the grants made by preceding kings. It is likely that the community came into contact with Yorkist Edward IV when he was at Cornbury in 1461, but their support of the Lancastrian kings could hardly have gone unnoticed.

The days of great landed benefactions to the monasteries were now over, but bequests of money or in kind continued to be made. It was the dying wish of Sir John Blacket in 1441 that Abbot Walter should say his funeral service in the church of Icomb. Four years later Abbot John Asheby was appointed executor to John Blacket's son Edmund. His will reads: 'First I leave my soul to God and to Blessed Mary and all the Saints, and my body to be buried in the chapel of Blessed Mary of Bruern'. He bequeathed many precious gifts to the abbey and six shillings and eight pence to every monk, and 'The residue to John Asheby Abbot of Bruern'. John Asheby was obviously a respected and trusted friend, judging by the number of wills administered by him. He was appointed trustee in 1453 under John Wilcote's will during the minority of his son Thomas. Thomas Send, Rector of Taynton, left money and houses in Burford to the abbot and monks in his will of 1453 and two Lincoln wills instance two more of Bruern's benefactors from very different backgrounds. John, seventh Lord Lovell, left the abbot £40 in 1455. Thomas Wilks the hermit of Newelm, a tenant of the monastery in Wychwood Forest, where the Cistercians had

enjoyed rights since the days of Henry II, left a legacy of three shillings and four pence out of 'gratitude'. In the survey of Bruern's property in the *Valor* 1535 it was stated that the King's foresters then occupied Newelm with its chapel and out buildings.

In 1480 Bruern petitioned the Chapter at Cîteaux for a licence to eat meat in Lent:

The Monastery of Bruern is a long way from the sea and rivers and so the abbot and monks living there cannot get a great quantity of fish, they accordingly suffer a great lack of food on fish days. For that reason they have devoutly petitioned that you will grant to them the licence to make use of flesh meat in Septuagesima.

Perhaps the extensive stew ponds at Bruern were insufficient for their needs.

During the great development in the English wool trade, abbots as feudal lords played their part in the engrossing of land, a number of small holdings became consolidated into a large farm. Open fields were hedged or fenced for the purpose of cultivation and arable land was turned into pasture. These changes were due in part to the scarcity and expense of labour following the Black Death and changes in the law of villeinage. Formerly the monks had sold their wool to Flemish merchants. Now they dealt with local dealers who bought for the English cloth manufacturers as well as for export. Bruern's monks sold their wool at markets at Stow on the Wold, Burford, Chipping Norton and Witney. Richard Wenman was the greatest of the local woolmen, and wool merchants such as the Wenmans and the Fermors of Chadlington East End, were taking the place of the feudal landlords who had been patrons of Bruern Abbey. A record of 1530 in the State papers show Bruern's monks as leading wool growers and gatherers in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Bruern, Hailes, Winchcombe and Oseney abbeys were all exporting wool to Calais, as well as laymen like Sir William Barrentyne of Churchill, Robert Catesby of Chastleton, Sir John Bridges (later owner of Bruern after the dissolution), Mr William Fermor, Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell and the Seacolls, a family holding Bruern land in Fifield and Mr Ashfield of Heythrop, a tenant of the abbey at Dunthorp. In 1535, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* lists rights of sheep pasture on common land. Bruern Abbey had sheep pasturage for 500 sheep in Hinchwick and 400 in summer and 300 in winter at Guiting Power, Gloucestershire.

The process of engrossing and inclosure caused much discontent among the poor but it is uncertain how many were deprived of their dwellings. An Inquisition of 1515 stated that the Abbot of Bruern, Dr Robert King, abbot from 1515 to 1527, had in his demesne a messuage and its appurtenances with 30 acres called 'The Grange' in Tangle. He had caused the house to be pulled down and the land put to pasture. This had

resulted in the eviction of four people. Towards the end of King's time at Bruern, services ceased at Treton Church which for centuries had been served by a monk from the abbey who received a yearly stipend of 8 shillings and 8 pence. And also during Robert King's rule certain bills were not paid. The will of Thomas Frydaye of Chipping Norton listed a debt of 18s 4s owed to him by King, by now titled 'My Lord of Thame now my Lord of Oxford', for the 'pavement at Bruern'. In the *Valor* Thomas Frydaye paid 10 shillings rent to the abbey for the quarry at Milton.

When Robert King departed from Bruern to Thame, the community was financially stable with harmony in the cloisters but this phase proved to be short-lived. The monks rebelled against Robert King's successor John Chaffcombe alias Macy. Riots at Bruern in 1529 and 1530 forced the abbot to appeal to Mr Osbaldiston of Chadlington for help. As Chaffcombe's behaviour was the scandal of the countryside, the magistrate refused to interfere. After five years of misrule Chaffcombe's ill-repute had reached high Cistercian dignitaries and the abbot was brought to trial. Chaffcombe had bribed craftsmen from Burford and other places with Bruern's money to help him but, when he knew of the impending inquisition and in order to resist the visitors he shut the gates against them. Sir Simon Harcourt and other gentlemen were commissioned by the king to aid the reformers against the abbot. The monks of Bruern, senior Cistercian dignitaries and abbots and the king's assessors met on April 26 1532 in the Chapter House to confront the accused. The king's mandate opened with these words:

Trusty and well beloved, we greet you well, and for as much as by sundry complaints and information it has come to our knowledge that Dom John Chaffcombe, being a person of very evil rule and conversation ...

John Chaffcombe delivered a protest in writing, refused to accept them as competent judges and entered an appeal to Rome. They dismissed his protest as contrary to the order which he was sworn to observe. Once again he refused to answer them. The judges called on him to present himself at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Meanwhile the monks gave their evidence. Prior Richard Hanney, William Ablington, Robert Dorsette, Henry Bent and many other named men gave evidence to the same effect. It was agreed that the two main points of the inquiry were the improvidence and incontinence of the abbot. A present of 280 oaks for the building of the Cardinal's College at Oxford, now Christ Church, had been the price of Chaffcomb's office as Abbot of Bruern. It was now possible for the prosecution to reflect upon the discredited career of Cardinal Wolsey. Chaffcombe had entered into a bond of £280 to the Abbot of Ford, to rid himself of a troublesome brother who objected to his underhand ways. There had been 3,200 sheep on Bruern's pastures and now there were only 1,500; 300 cattle, now there were only 160. He had been selling convent

wool at a loss, had sold and given away stores of wheat, barley and malt, had sold and pawned jewels of the church and pledged a gold chalice to Sir Simon Harcourt for £80. He leased out farms and pastures unprofitably. £1,200 of the abbey's money had disappeared. Even the abbey's seal had disappeared although it later reappeared. The bursar, William Barrington, told of the money losses and Chaffcombe's dealings with women and he, in company with others, had often spied upon the abbot's privacy. It seems that the whole monastery and some of the neighbours had been present at the discovery of a paramour in his lodging. She was not the only one, ten women, some local, were named out of thirteen habituates of his lodging.

When Chaffcombe failed to appear at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, proceedings were postponed until March 12 the following year, 1533, at St Bernard's College, Oxford, later taken over by St John's. This time he appeared and after examination an outstanding debt of £200 was said to be still owing and, to the rest of the accusations, Chaffcombe made a full confession. He was found guilty of simony, adultery, perjury, dilapidation, rebellion and notorious contumacy. A sentence of deprivation was pronounced upon him and his brethren were absolved of obedience to him. He seems to have got off lightly, it may be assumed that he made deals in high places during that year of postponement. Abbot John Chaffcombe alias Macy continued to receive the yearly pension of £13 6s 8d after the dissolution of Bruern. He was living in Hook Norton in 1548.

Chaffcombe was succeeded by Richard King and his reign as abbot, though outwardly peaceful and successful, was soon cut short. The approaching doom was heralded by the arrival of John Tregonwell, Visitor of the Monasteries. He reported on Bruern Abbey to Thomas Cromwell in a letter written from Studley Priory:

th'abbot (as hyt apperyth to me) not only vertuowse and well lernye in holy scripture, but also hathe ryght well reparyd the rewen and dekeye of that house, left by his predycissors neglygens, and the convent (which hereuntofore were insolvent) byn now brought to good order.¹¹

This good report did not save Bruern from its fate and the next year it was surrendered to the king on October 10 1536. It is now more than 470 years since the white monks left the countryside of Bruern and the abbey which had survived for nearly 400 years. St Bernard, greatest of all Cistercians wrote these words:

Believe one who has experienced it,
Thou wilt find among the woods
Something that thou didst never
Find in books. Stones and trees
Will teach thee a lesson thou
Didst never learn in schools.

PART 2: BRUERN ABBEY AND THE VALOR ECCLESIASTICUS
1535-6 BY JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

So fell our monasteries,
in one instant growne,
Not to less houses
but to heaps of stone.

John Donne ¹²

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, the document that recorded the result of the surveys in 1536 of the lands and properties of religious house that were to be sequestered by the crown in the reign of Henry VIII, is a good source of information on Bruern Abbey's lands but it does not show such things as furnishings, plate and jewellery in the abbey. This article shows the property of Bruern Abbey in Oxfordshire as it appears in the Valor, the land it held, the rentals it received and the disbursements it made when it was closed. It was one of the places where two surveys were made and both are described.

There were early closures of religious houses, for example, in the 14th century foreign houses in England were closed because religious and papal influences from Europe were becoming unpopular in England. In 1524 Cardinal Wolsey suppressed twenty-nine small monasteries and nunneries including St Frideswide in Oxford and seized their assets in order to support his school, chapel and almshouses in Ipswich and Cardinal College. He said of those religious houses that only a handful of men and women were involved and they were 'where neither God is served nor religion kept'.¹³ Thomas Cromwell was closely associated with Wolsey in these dissolutions and worked for him in all his other business, as his agent. Cromwell supported him even after his downfall but did not fall with his master and later managed to join the King's service and become as powerful as Wolsey had been. With the agreement of the king who was desperate for money, the backing of both houses of Parliament and the encouragement of the 'new learning' adherents, Cromwell organised what came to be known as 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries'.

In 1536 Cromwell prepared a bill for an act of Parliament to suppress the smaller religious houses. Its intention is made clear in the preamble to the bill.

Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living, is daily used and committed amongst the little and small abbeys, priories and other religious houses of monks, canons and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons is under number of 12 persons, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent spoil, destroy, consume and utterly waste as well their churches, monasteries, priories, principal houses, farms, granges, lands, tenements and hereditaments, as the ornaments of their churches and their goods and chattells to the high displeasure of Almighty God, slander of good religion, and to the great infamy of the King's Highness and the realm if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many visitations have heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal and abominable living, yet nevertheless little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth ...¹⁴

When the bill reached Parliament it was passed easily in the Lords but in the Commons the presence and pressure of the King was needed to get it through. It was thought that the income from religious lands and possessions sequestered, particularly the gold, silver and jewels, would bring in a great amount of wealth for the Crown. Cromwell boasted that it would make the King richer by £40,000 a year and eventually it was worth more than that. Over time the closures and confiscations came to be seen as part of the upheaval caused by the King's matrimonial problem and the move towards Protestantism. Cromwell later paid with his life in the continuing struggles between supporters of the opposing religious groups which followed the suppressions, separation from Catholic Rome and the King's difficulty in getting a divorce from Catherine of Aragon.

From 1306 the first year's income from a newly appointed clergyman, called 'the first fruits' or Annates, was paid to the Pope. This tax became increasingly unpopular in England and a convocation of religious leaders in 1532 asked the King to stop the payments. This was done in 1534, with all such income passing to the Crown from 1 January 1535 as also Tenths, a further tax imposed on the profits of a benefice.¹⁵ Commissions were set up in 1535 to assess the value of religious property in each diocese and to get accurate returns of the income to be taxed. The Commissioners were bishops, mayors, sheriffs, justices of the peace, official auditors and local gentry. Lists of these men are in the Liber Regis held in the National Archives at Kew. In 1536 small religious houses with the yearly income of less than £200 and with less than 12 religious inmates were to be examined by special Royal Commissioners, often lawyers. All clergy and church officials had to give full and exact information on oath of all their possessions and income and, in particular, religious houses had to specify manors, farms, rents and other temporal revenues, and spiritual revenues



SIR JOHN TREGONWELL BY HENRY HOPPNER MEYER, AFTER HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER, STIPPLE ENGRAVING, © NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

from rectories, vicarages, tithes and offerings. Each religious house was examined with comments on its status and value being recorded with added information as to how the house was run and the behaviour of the monks. Not all fixed assets such as buildings were included in the income and some tax-free deductions were to be allowed for pensions, rents, alms paid under

wills, and fees paid to lay administrators such as bailiffs and stewards amounting in all to about 8% of the income.

The 'visitor' or commissioner who visited Bruern was John Tregonwell. He was a Cornishman, born about 1500 and educated at Oxford. He is described in the Alumni Oxoniensis as a bachelor and doctor of law. He held many high offices in the law and the Church and became a Member of Parliament in 1553. He was a proctor for Henry VIII in his divorce from Queen Catherine and took part in the trial of Anne Boleyn and the trials of Fisher and More who had refused to take the oath of Supremacy. He was said to be an independent, reliable visitor who did not hesitate to plead the cause of any house he thought deserving, as he certainly did for Bruern. David Knowles suggests that he had sympathy for the new learning but against this Geoffrey Baskerville says of him that he was no innovator in religion and cites the fact of the Catholic Queen Mary knighting him in 1553 to show that this was the case.¹⁶ Presumably he was like so many at that time who worked for both sides and took advantage of what was available. In 1536 he asked Cromwell if he could have the lease of either Bruern or Dorchester. He did not get Bruern but he later petitioned and got the site and lands of the suppressed nunnery in Milton Abbas, Dorset and died there in 1565 in the time of Elizabeth.¹⁷

The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* entry for Bruern Abbey began under the heading Bruern Monast' in Com Oxon Lincoln dioces. It stated that it was the 'Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Bruern' and listed its lands, buildings, possessions in Oxfordshire and in other counties, and named all the tenants.

The first entry under 'Bruern Monastery in the Deanery of ChepyNorton' was the 'site and mansion of the monastery'. The places named were given under the headings of their deaneries both in Oxfordshire and other counties. The value of the abbey's lands and houses held in the monks' own hands and not let to tenants, and a chapel called Saint Katherine was given as £4 8s 4d. The abbey held the chapel, tenements and buildings called Nwellme (*sic*) Hermitage in Leafield from the King which was occupied by the staff of the King's Forest. No valuation, rent or income was shown for this.

The second entry was for the manor, grange and lands of Sandbrook which like other granges was for the 'use and sustenance of the Monastery', not let out to tenants and there was a chapel called Saint Peter the Apostle. There was also an entry for Tangley Manor with its grange which was valued at £4. Under Milton Monachorum were the names of the free and customary tenants of the manor and grange with their rents. Then came tenants in villages in the Chipping Norton and other deaneries giving their rents. All the above are listed in Appendix 2. Field names, coppices, granges, mills, chapels, quarries, villages in Oxfordshire and in other counties where the abbey had lands and property are given in Appendix 3. Also stated are the numbers of sheep kept by the abbey.

The grand total for this income with allowable deductions with a tenth of £14 9s 1d to the King, is given as £135 10s 10d.

Bruern Abbey was one of the abbeys which were surveyed twice for the *Valor* by the Commissioners and the figures that ensued are somewhat different. Monasteries like Bruern owned property in different places and different commissioners could have given different valuations for those properties. The first survey gave the income as £153 16s 2d gross and £135 10s 10d net. The second shorter one gave the income as £171 9s 1d gross and £141 10s 10d net. An Augmentation Court was set up after the dissolutions to account for the income and value of the religious houses that had been closed. In one of the Court's surveys done after Bruern Abbey had been passed to the Crown the total income confirmed was the higher one. An example of how the difference occurred was shown by the entries for Kingham, where the earlier *Valor* entry said that the abbey held it for its own use, whereas in the later one it says John Becham paid 4s rent annually. The second survey gave the names of lands with their acreage and value per acre; these are shown in Appendix 3. Also named there are the authorities that the abbey paid money to for various lands they held and the pensions they paid.



MASONRY FOUND DURING BUILDING WORK IN A WALL OF AN OLD MILL ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE ROAD, OPPOSITE THE PRESENT BRUERN ABBEY.

In a letter to Cromwell from William Cavendish on 10 October 1536 he says,

At our repair to the monastery of Bruerne, Oxon, letter came from the King to Sir John a Brigges to be ready as many as he could make to meet his Grace on the 17th at Amptill; & he said he could not both serve the King & disburse money for such goods, corn & cattle as was here. Having therefore discharged the monks & part of the servants of the house with the money we have received elsewhere, & being even obliged to borrow to despatch the other affairs of the house with such gentle rewards as we have used, we desire instructions what to do, as the grantees of houses not yet dissolved likewise intend to do the King service. Bruern 10 October.¹⁸

So October 10 1536 saw the end of Bruern Abbey as a religious house and the departure of the monks and some of the lay people of Bruern. (See appendix 3). It is obvious that money was given to them, and it presents a different picture from that often reported of brutal ejections of everyone; some at least were helped. The Abbot Robert King became Abbot of Oseney and after its closure he was appointed the first Bishop of Oxford. Abbot Richard King received a pension of £22 a year and later became Rector of Wigginton on the Swere.

The monasteries were part of the fabric of society and of everyday life. The suppression of Bruern Abbey must have greatly affected the area and particularly the people of Milton.¹⁹ There is no evidence to show how they felt, no doubt the community was divided but whatever their feelings their lives would have been considerably changed. The White Monks and lay brothers, known to the villagers, were sent away from the abbey and while some may have stayed locally many would have left for other places. Anyone from Milton employed as a servant at the abbey would have felt the closure badly. Without evidence it can only be speculated as

to what was in Treton Chapel, what painted walls there were, what saints' figures and other church goods if any. In the past money could have been given for prayers and masses for the villagers' dead ancestors; this would now end as would those for the founder of the abbey Nicholas Basset including the masses for him on Maundy Thursday.

Milton villagers would need to attend Shipton parish church for all their services and even there because of the general movement towards Protestantism there would have been changes in church liturgy, in the format of services which they would have known since childhood and which were very familiar. The candles, saints' statues, incense and maybe coloured pictures on the walls would have disappeared from Shipton Church and services now held in English not in Latin. Shipton's later churchwardens' accounts show that they had earlier appointed Nicholas Bennet to ensure that no 'popish' items were in the church.²⁰ It would be interesting to know whether Treton or Shipton churchgoers and officials resorted to the same activities as are recounted in the book on Morepath in Devon where the parishioners hid 'popish' objects from their church thinking that the old ways might return and they could be replaced.²¹

Former abbey tenants became leaseholders of property under the Crown and the later occupiers of the abbey. Its buildings and lands were leased at various times by Thomas Pope, Treasurer of the Augmentation Court and Henry Norris, Esquire to the Body. John Bridges of Coberley in Gloucestershire and Thomas Brydges of Cornbury were granted a 21 year lease of Bruern Monastery on 28 February 1538/39. Thomas Markham, Chief Pensioner, had a lease of Bruern from Queen Elizabeth and finally it passed to the Unton family who retained it until Sir Henry Unton's death in 1596. In the seventeenth century it became the property of the Cope family who built at least three houses on the site, one of which is now a private house called Bruern Abbey.

References

- 1 From the 7th century the river was called the Bladen, changing to Evenlode in the 15th century.
- 2 Ralph, Justiciar to Henry I and father of Nicholas, gave the land of Finstock to Eynsham Abbey and Gilbert, Nicholas's son founded an Augustinian Priory at Bicester in 1182.
- 3 Treton Church which served the parish of Treton is thought to have been in the field called Chapel Bank on the east side of the road leading from Fifield/Milton crossroads to the Stow/Burford Road. OS 243174
- 4 The principle sources used for this article are:
 - Book of Fees
 - Calendar of Close Rolls
 - Calendar of Papal Petitions
 - Calendar of Patent Rolls
 - Campden Society Vol 15
 - Cartulary Antiq

Cisterian Statutes
 Dugdale's Monasticon
 Eynsham Cartulary
 Feudal Aids
 Harleian Rolls
 Hundred Rolls, Record Commission
 Letters from the Abbots to the Chapter at Cîteaux
 Letters Patent dated from the Royal Palace at Woodstock
 Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517-31
 Lloyd (1973) Table 5
 Madox's Formulæ
 Meaux Abbey Annals
 Oriel Records
 Oxfordshire Fines
 Oxfordshire Record Society V.39 PCC wills
 Oseney Cartulary
Valor Ecclesiasticus 1535-6
 Victoria County History vol II
 Waverley Annals
 Waverley Chronicler
 D Hurst, *Sheep in the Cotswolds*
 R M Marshall, *Oxfordshire Byways*
 E Power, *The Wood Trade in English Medieval History*
 D Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England. Bare Ruined Choirs*

- 5 No substantial archaeology has been done on the Bruern site, although an investigation is mentioned in a Chipping Norton Deanery Magazine as taking place in 1887, but no record of this investigation has been found so far, only fragments of masonry and other small artefacts have turned up in the locality. A great window from the Abbey is traditionally said to be in Chipping Norton Church. In the fields beside the farm near Milton called Bruern Grange is the site of some of the abbey fishponds and these were surveyed by Wychwoods Local History Society in 1989. *Wychwoods History* No 5. In the same article James Bond refers to some earthworks reported in 1987 on the Abbey site
- 6 Le Grainge – Norman French for barn
- 7 The tax of scutage allowed a knight to 'buy out' of the military service due to the Crown from the holder of a knight's fee.
- 8 A corrody was a grant made to an abbey. A full corrody consisted of food and drink, light and heat, accommodation within the precinct, and sometimes clothing and laundering.
- 9 William Longland, *Vision of Piers Plowman*.
- 10 From Domesday to the C17 Fifield was known as Fifhide.
- 11 Cook, G.H. Letters to Cromwell, John Baker. 1965.
- 12 Donne, John, *A hymn to the Saints and Marquess of Hamylton*.
- 13 Wilson, David, *In the Lion's Court*, Hutchinson 2001, pp 323
- 14 Henry VIII 26 1536.c.3
- 15 PRO Letters & Papers Henry VIII 1534
- 16 Knowles, David, *Bare Ruined Choirs* CUP 1976. Baskerville, Geoffrey, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Jonathan Cape, 1937
- 17 Cook, G.H., Letters to Cromwell, John Baker. 1965
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 There has been a suggestion that in its early days Bruern Abbey owned the Crown Inn, now The Shaven Crown, in Shipton under Wychwood. There is no reference to Bruern Abbey owning any property in Shipton in the early extant documents nor in the Augmentation Returns except a meadow called Capron Mede. The Crown Inn name was changed to the Shaven Crown in 1932 when a Shipton village charity sold the property to a brewery.

- 20 Shipton under Wychwood Churchwardens' Accounts 1520-1696.
 21 Duffy, Eamon, *The Voices of Morepath*, Yale University Press, 2001

APPENDICES

The Abbots of Bruern are listed in *Victoria County History* vol 2.

Appendix 1

Names of the abbot and monks at the Dissolution as listed on the Deed of Surrender to William Cavendish 1536

Richard King, Abbot
 Richard Norton, Prior

Monachi sacerdotes (monks in priest's orders)

William Abbington
 Robert Dorsett
 John Todnam
 John Webbe
 Henry Bente
 William Barrington
 James Kendall
 Robert Hull
 Ralph Enston

Lay brothers
 James Evysham
 Richard Faryngton
 William Bloxham

Appendix 2

In the first survey of the Abbey the *Valor* states that the monks had in their own hands the site and building of the Abbey with orchards, gardens, pools and closes adjoining and ecclesiastical offerings. Also in hand was the chapel commonly called St Katheryns which was valued at 8s 4d; Newellme (*sic*) Chapel with its tenements and buildings in Leafield; the manor and grange of Tangley, two meadows called Tangley Mede and Cokkysmore and a water mill, a pasture called Bruern Heath; a field called

Laund of two acres valued at 4s. The names of the two free tenants of the Abbey appear in this first entry with their rents. The valuation overall was £4 8s 4d.

Sandbroke is cited next as the manor and grange all of whose lands and appurtenances are used for the support of the monastery. A chapel is named as Saint Peter the Apostle, it goes on to call it the former parish church which pays neither tithes or oblations. This appears to confirm the view that St Peters and Treton are one and the same. No value is given for Sandbrook.

Then follows the list of tenants and their holdings in villages in various deaneries and counties and their yearly rents.

Names of tenants & their rents in Chipping Norton Deanery in Oxfordshire

Names have been kept as in the Valor

Buern

	£	s	d
John King holding the Tanhouse	3	1	0
Richard Knight having a tenement		10	0

[The Patent Roll of 26 December 1560 shows 'grants of leases to Edward Unton which includes a tannery called Sandbroke by the Monastery of Bruern and a messuage called Kytteshouse by the site of the said Monastery'. This entry may indicate where John King and Richard Knight lived in 1535.]

Customary tenants in Milton Monachorum

	£	s	d
John Ivettoo	1	7	11
John Hyatt		11	8
William Hyatt	1	0	0
Richard Perret	1	1	10
William Perret	1	6	2
John Collyng		14	8
William Tonnys		13	4
Alicia Tommys widow		6	0
Daniel Ashwell		4	0
Edward Harberd		4	0
Robert Cambry		10	0
Philip Barret		3	4
George Coke		2	0

The previous tenants paid between them for Raymede pasture	2	0	0
Thomas Fryday holds a quarry		10	0

Free tenants of Milton

Richard Sewell	3	0	
John Sessions	3	0	

Shipton under Wychwood

Abbot & Convent – a field valued	7	0	
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Lyneham

Richard Colyns, by indenture	2	6	0
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It is impossible to find details of the Abbey tenants in Milton and Lyneham when the Valor was taken in 1535 because there are no Abbey records of them and their tenancies. Milton and Lyneham residents and their families would have been baptised or married in Treton Chapel where the monks of Bruern 'served the cure'. After the Abbey was dissolved and Treton Chapel closed they had to go for services to Shipton Church whose parish registers did not start until 1538. The parish then included Milton and Lyneham and the following names appear in the registers of those who could have been tenants of Bruern Abbey with names as found in the registers.

William Hyat/Hiat, Richard Perret senior & junior, William Perret, John Colyng/Collins, William Tonnys/Toms, Daniel Ashwell/Ashill, Philip Barret, George Coke/Cook, Richard Sewell/Shewell, John Sessions, John & Richard Collins and Richard Brodeshaw/Bradshaw who were baptising children from 1538 onwards.

William Hyat, Richard and William Perret, William Tonnys, Philip Barret, George Coke/Cook are in early Churchwardens' accounts for Shipton.

Richard Perret was given in a burial in 1569 as of West End, Milton and he left a will. William Hyat of Lyneham, William Perret senior and junior, Richard Collins, William Tonnys, Daniel Ashwell, Philip Barret, Richard Sewell all of Milton left wills as did George Coke of Shipton. Thomas Fryday of Chipping Norton left a will in 1546.

These records show that although particular linkage to Abbey tenants cannot be made family names are in the area. At this later time there is no mention locally of the King, Knight, Ivettoo and Doege who were named as tenants in the Valor.

Another side of Milton's life at the time of the Valor can be seen in The Muster Rolls returns of 1542 which give lists of men who could be called on to serve in the King's armies. The men would be between sixteen and

sixty and 'picked men'. County and parish officials e.g. the constable picked the men for service. The ablest and tallest were chosen as archers and the rest would be billmen. It is probable that those likely to be called as archers would have practised longbow training following a statute of 1512 which required all men to practise with the weapon on holy days even when Bruern Abbey was still there. The Milton entry says as follows:-

Ablemen. Archers 4.

Richard Perott and William Tomys plus two others.

Bylmen 3

Richard Camby and two others.

Le Armor.

William Perot to find an Archar on horsbacke.

The Towneship besidis to finde an Archard on foote'.¹

	£	s	d
Leafield(Felde)			
Richard Brodeshaw, a [capit] message	1	4	0
Richard Turner		8	0
Thomas Honyborn		8	0
John Hichman		3	0
Thomas Doege		2	0
Shorthampton			
Richard Freeman		8	0
Sarsden			
Elizabeth Horne, widow, a tenement & land by indenture to Master Horne	3	6	8
Churchill			
William Salcombe & Alice his wife	6	8	4
He has the manor & grange by indenture			
Kingham			
John Becham		4	0
Fifield			
Robert Secoll holds a house & lands by indenture	3	6	8
<i>Customary tenants</i>			
John Humfrey	1	0	0
William Brookwell	1	2	0
William Hukkys		14	0

Richard Smith	9	0	
Thomas Byrge	5	0	
Robert Chamblen/Chamberlain	5	0	
William Green	6	0	
Thomas Lynsecombe	4	0	
Richard K...	3	4	
John Green	3	4	
Thomas Cook	2	0	
?Stewards/Officials of the Chapel	4	0	
<i>Free tenants</i>			
John Humfrey		ob	
Robert Payne		8ob	
John Perley gives a garland of Periwinkle	1		

Witney Deanery

Witney			
Thomas Smith	6	0	

Woodstock Deanery**Dunthrop**

Elizabeth Ashfeild, widow, holds the grange and lands with the Abbot & Convent in Sewell	38	10	0
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Epwell

The Abbot & Convent, a water mill valued	3	4	
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Swalcliffe

John Potter	1	6	8
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Holoway Grange

Thomas Watts has the grange by indenture	4	0	0
--	---	---	---

Tangley

The Abbot & Convent the manor & grange with all appurtenances in their hands for work to the support the Monastery			
Valued at	4	0	0

Appendix 3**Berkshire – Salisbury Diocese****Denchworth**

Alexander Unton, armiger, holds Rectory	1	6	8
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Somerset – Bath & Wells Diocese**Preedy**

John Saunders, farmer	4	0	0
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Gloucestershire – Worcester Diocese**Eastleech**

Thomas Keball, farmer holds sheep pasture	6	1	0
<i>Customary tenants</i>			
Walter Green		10	0
Richard Lyffholy jun		10	0
John Lyffholy		10	0
John Robins	0	0	0
Richard Lyffholy sen		7	0
Quarry formerly a stone quarry	0	0	0
Thomas Lyffholy		5	0
Edmund Thame, armiger, pays by Rokis Lond			

Marysden/?Miserden

John Mayse, by indenture	14	0	0
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Collysborn Parva/Little Colesborne

Thomas Prydy, by indenture	1	7	4
----------------------------	---	---	---

Sipton Solas

William Bray, by indenture		13	4
----------------------------	--	----	---

Nether Guiting

Robert Dean holds the farm & water mill	1	13	4
John Crokker, farmer, has sheep pasture & other land by indenture	6	0	0

Hinchwick, Condicote

John Roche, farmer with sheep pasture by indenture	1	13	4
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Sezincote

Heirs & assigns of Edward Greville dec'd lands etc by indenture	6	8	4
---	---	---	---

Longborough

Walter Cockrell, by indenture	1	1	0
-------------------------------	---	---	---

Stowe

Richard Gervis, by indenture		6	8
------------------------------	--	---	---

Little Rissington			
Nicholas Barret	10	0	
Great Rissington			
Robert Lamb, by indenture	2	13	4
Slaughter			
Adam Fenfeld	6	8	
Little Barington			
John Chadwell	6	0	
Westcot			
Thomas Smith	8	0	
The sum total and value of all the manors, granges, lands and tenements ...	139	17	1

This account shows 500 sheep kept in Eastleach between the Feast of the Annunciation and St Martin's Day and 400 between St Martin's Day and the Feast of the Annunciation. 500 and 300 hundred were being pastured in Hinchwick in Condicote, Gloucestershire. Neither entries give any value.

Appendix 4

The second survey of Bruern gives its lands with their acreage, their value per acre (p.a) and names of fields, pastures and meadows. No tenants are named but those of the authorities that the abbey paid money to for various lands they held and the pensions they paid are given.

It records annual sums paid out to the King by the bailiff of Chadlington for the manor of Fifield; Shipton manor holding land in Milton; for the manor of Dunthorp and land in Sewell in the Hundred of Wootton; Brasenose college, Oxford was paid for tenements and land in Dunthorp, the Carthusians of Sheen for other land in Dunthorp; for Treton Chapel to the [Archdeacon?] of Oxford and a [?pension] to Osney Abbey for the same.

It also paid three Stewards, Master Henry Norris and Thomas Nowers under-Stewards with John Hunfrey Bailiff for Oxfordshire; Robert Wye with Robert Whytney to oversee manors, tenements and lands in Gloucestershire with Thomas King a Bailiff; Edward Powell an Attorney, Robert Hucvale an auditor, John Bogye a receiver.

There were also two others receiving annual sums Thomas Arundell and Edward Fettiplace related to Chaffcombe's pension.

Bruern	£	s	d
The water mill in the precincts of the Monastery	1	0	0
Field called Tangley Mede, estimated 10 acres @ 2s p.a	1	0	0
Field called Cokkysmore, two acres, Water Mede, 10 acres & the rest Londe Mede, four acres		6	8
The common called Bruern Heath, 14 acres @ 2d p.a		2	4
Close called Launde Meadow, two acres @ 1s p.a		2	0
.....Summa	2	11	8
			(sic)
Sandbrook Grange			
Pasture called Sheep House Leas, seven acres @ 1s 10d p.a		12	10
Pasture called Bayards Leas, eight acres @ 1s 8d p.a		13	4
Field called Longe Mede, six acres @ 1s 8d p.a		10	0
Field called Deep Pole Meadow, three acres @ 1s 6d p.a		4	6
Field called Black Pit Meadow, three acres @ 1s 6d p.a		4	6
Pasture called The Cow Leas, eight acres @ 1s p.a		8	0
Pasture called The Calves Leas, six acres @ 1s 4d p.a		8	0
Pasture called Ox Leas, eight acres @ 1s p.a		8	0
Pasture called Hatche Leas, nine acres @ 1s p.a		9	0
Field called The Barne Field, ten acres @ 6d p.a		5	0
Pasture called The Infield, 12 acres @ 8d p.a		8	0
Le New Field overgrown with furze, six acres @ 4d p.a		2	0
Pasture called The Brode overgrown, 11 acres @ 6d p.a	1	0	0
			(sic)
Close called Treton Chapel Close, half an acre		8	8
Arable in the South & North Fields, 160 acres @ 2d p.a	1	6	8
Pasture in Shipton called Capron Mede, three acres @ 2s 4d pa		7	0
.....Summa	7	7	6
Wood Copse at Sandbrook Grange not valued	0	0	0
.....Summa	9	19	2
Additional amount		19	6
	Total Sum	10	19
			1
Coppices			
Overhay	1	4	0
Coppice		7	0
Cocks More		7	0
Middlehay		4	0
Chapel		6	0
South		2	0
.....Summa	3	0	0
<u>Total sum for all manors, lands, tenements etc</u>	180	16	2

Annual Payments made by the Abbot & convent of Bruern

Oxfordshire County

Bruern with members?

To the King's bailiff of the hundred of Chadlington for the manor of Fifield	11	0	
To the King's manor of Shipton under Wychwood for its holdings in Milton Monarchorum	5	0	
To the King's bailiff of the hundred of Wootton for its manor of Dunthrop ?rendering service	1	0	0
To the Master and scholars of the King's College called Brasynnose(Brasenose) in the University of Oxford for land & tenements n Dunthrop	10	0	
To the Prior & Convent of the Carthusians of Shene for land in Dunthrop	2	10	0
To the bailiff of the King's hundred of Wootton for lands in Sewell	1	0	
To the Archdeacon of Oxford by the ?officials of Treton Chapel in County Oxfordshire	6	8	
To the Abbot & Convent of Osney for an old pension for Treton Chapel	4	0	0
.....Summa	4	18	8

Bruern Monastery with members?

Payments to the Chief Stewards and other officials and administrators of the Monastery

To Master Henry Norris, armiger, Chief Steward of the Monastery	3	13	4
To Robert Wye & Robert Whytney, armigers, official Stewards of the manors, lands & tenements in County Gloucestershire	1	0	0
To Edmund Powell, gentleman, Attorney of the Monastery	13	4	
To Thomas Nowers, gentleman, under-Steward of the Monastery	1	0	0
To Robert Huevale/Huckvale Auditor of the Monastery	1	0	0
To John Bogye Receiver of the annual rents etc of the Monastery	2	0	0
To Thomas Kyng Bailiff for all the manors, lands & tenements of the Monastery in Gloucestershire	3	0	0
To John Humfrey Bailiff of all the manors, granges lands & tenements in of the Monastery in Oxfordshire	3	0	0
.....Summa	14	6	8
.....Total	19	5	4

Bruern Monastery with Members

Pensions & annuities rendered annually

To John Chaffcomb formerly abbot of Bruern ?with consent of the King	13	6	8
To Thomus Arundell, armiger, ?for Chaffcomb	2	13	4
To Edward Fetypace, armiger, ?for Chaffcomb	2	13	4

?No other allowances

For all manors etc & possessions as as Summa	180	3	10
All allowances	19	v	4
Remaining	137	10	10
Tenth to the Lord King	14	9	1

Reference

- 1 Beauchamp, Peter C ed. *The Oxfordshire Muster Rolls 1539, 1542, 1569.* Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol 60, 1996.

To The 'Lee' of the Walkers

TRUDY YATES

This is not the article that I planned to write for *Wychwoods History 22* but it is the article that I was meant to write. It all began in midsummer and a visit to St Mary's cemetery in Shipton to check the very nearly obliterated wording on the William Walker tombstone. The Walkers' grandson Graeme Cairns had visited Shipton a few weeks earlier and asked that I order the renewal of the monument by a stonemason. After the dates were recorded I glanced to my right and caught sight of a familiar name on the neighbouring tombstone, Olive Lee.

Graeme Cairns had mentioned Olive as his mother's best friend during her Shipton years and the person she never failed to see when she returned to Oxfordshire from Scotland to visit her parents in Chipping Norton. I knelt down to read the inscription more closely:

In loving memory of
Eliza Strong
died 22 August 1947
at rest
and her daughter
Olive Lee
1896-1974

This was fascinating. The proximity of the Walker interment with that of John Graeme Thomson had yielded so much information about the two closely connected families (*Wychwoods History 21*) and now, suddenly, here was another yet undiscovered relationship to be explored.

I contacted the two founts of Milton and Shipton historical information, John Rawlins and Dulcie Arundell and, in a matter of days, I was standing at the door of La Renardiere on the Swinbrook Road, armed with a photograph of Olive Lee and Annie Cairns standing in the front garden of Olive's cottage on the Milton Road. La Renardiere is the home of Olive Lee's son Desmond and his charming Belgian wife Nicole. They were warm and welcoming, putting their rather tentative interviewer at ease immediately. In this and many subsequent visits, another fascinating local story emerged.



OLIVE STRONG LEE AND ANNIE WALKER CAIRNS IN FRONT OF OLIVE'S COTTAGE ON THE MILTON ROAD, SHIPTON

Desmond first described his mother's relationship with Annie Walker Cairns. 'Annie was part of my childhood,' he said. 'Before I could speak plainly I called her "Auntie Booful (Beautiful)". I adored her.' Was this friendship the reason that Olive's grave was beside the elder Walkers? Desmond reminded me that the location of her mother's previous interment was the deciding factor when Olive died. Therefore the proximity of the Walker and the Strong, Lee stones was coincidental.

The next question, 'Was Eliza Strong related to John Strong, the extremely popular Shipton schoolmaster of the early years of the 20th century?' 'Oh yes,' Desmond said with a smile, 'Eliza was John Strong's wife and they were my maternal grandparents.' When the Lees realized that my interest in them was not cursory, their story and their treasured photographs were generously shared.

Olive Alice Bricknell Strong was the youngest child of John Strong (1864-1932) and Eliza Bricknell Hutton Strong (1852-1947). Eliza's first husband Harry Hutton died in November of 1889 in London leaving her financially secure but in sole charge of their two young sons Perce and Arch (Percival and Archibald). Their education was being overseen by a young tutor called John Strong.

John Strong was born in Sherston, Gloucestershire, near Tetbury, the eldest son of George Strong (1835-1888) and Elizabeth Dickenson Strong. George was a hero of the Crimean conflict when, at the age of 19, he was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the face of the enemy at Sebastopol. He was a private in the Coldstream Guards when he picked up a live shell which had fallen into the trench and threw it over the parapet. His citation reads 'He was well aware of the extreme danger involved and his action saved many lives.' He attended the first V. C. Investiture Parade



THE STRONG FAMILY: BACK ROW: KENNETH, JOHN, ARCHIBALD HUTTON PERCIVAL HUTTON FRONT ROW: OLIVE, ELIZA, GWENETH AND CLARA HUTTON, WIFE OF ONE OF THE HUTTON MEN.

on 20 June 1857. The year after his marriage to Elizabeth, George Strong left the army in 1864 having served for ten years.

Since George Strong had died in 1888, it is reasonable to surmise that the young 25-year-old John should have left Gloucestershire and set out for London to seek his fortune. Did he find it in the Hutton household? There is no birth date for Eliza on the tombstone she shares with her daughter Olive but Desmond's records show that she was born in September 1852 which means that she was her future husband's senior by 12 years and a venerable 95-years-old when she died. At any rate, John and Eliza married and became the parents of Gweneth, later to marry Sidney Cooknell, the butcher in Milton in 1914; Ken, destined to marry Margaret Hartley, daughter of Richard Hartley II and his wife Rose in 1922; and Olive Alice Bricknell, who married Roy Augustus Cornwell Lee in 1916 and became the mother of Desmond Roy Cornwell Lee in 1920.

The Strongs moved from Chilson to Shipton in 1904 upon John's appointment as Head of St. Mary's School and the family home was the graciously ample Church View, now owned by Steve and Lynn Walker, next to the Crown Inn, now the Shaven Crown.

Mr. Strong's tenure as headmaster is remembered by his former pupils as 'strict but always fair'. In April 1910 he received a recognition certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society, having passed the School Teachers' examination for Cottage and Allotment Gardening. This was a 'boys only' project, of course, leaving the girls busily occupied hemming handkerchiefs and pillowslips. Cookery was not introduced until the early 1930s when 'the shed' was built for that purpose. Discipline was firm. Dulcie Arundell remembers seeing a young boy caned by Mr. Strong and thinking that such treatment was quite unfair. However we both agreed as we spoke about it that there is much to be said for a school in which no bullying or disruptive behaviour occurs and pupils respect authority. John Strong retired as headmaster in 1929 at the age of 65. Inexplicably, Eliza convinced him to retire to Littlehampton where she had spent some happy summer holidays in her youth. It was there in 1932 that he died and was buried. Soon after, Eliza and her daughter Olive, who had returned to England to live with her parents, moved back to the Wychwoods permanently.

This then is the background to our story which now turns to attractive, vivacious

Olive Strong. Villagers who remember her see her dancing. She loved to dance and there were many opportunities to do so in her young days. It was at a Leafield event in her late teens that she met handsome 24-year-old Roy A.C. Lee. Olive had obtained a teaching diploma from Oxford Polytechnic College and Roy had trained as a wireless operator with Marconi before serving on private yachts. At the outbreak of World War I he enlisted as a



OLIVE, ROY AND BABY DESMOND LEE IN BARCELONA.



JOHN AND ELIZA STRONG WITH THEIR DAUGHTER, OLIVE, AND GRANDSON, DESMOND

Merchant Navy officer. His ship the S.S. Van Dyke had been torpedoed and sunk by the Germans and Lee had been a prisoner for a time before being repatriated. He was working at the Leaffield Radio and Communications Tower when he met Olive and on 21 December 1916 at St. Mary's Church, Shipton, the young couple married.

The Lees lived in Buttermilk Cottage, Leaffield but, when the war ended, Roy and his friend Gerry Horwood were quick to put their plans for the future into action. They went out to Spain together as chartering agents for the shipping firm Cox's. Olive, of course, went also. There in Barcelona in 1920, Desmond Roy Cornwell Lee was born. His father's friend Gerry Horwood was godfather at his christening.

There are few pictures of the Lee family together. One of the best is shown on page 37. Olive became increasingly unhappy in Spain and, in 1924, she and Desmond returned to Shipton. At the age of five, Desmond

was sent to a pre-prep boarding school in Boumemouth where his paternal grandparents Charles and Theresa (Holland) Cornwell Lee lived. They oversaw his care during term time and he returned to his mother and Strong grandparents in Shipton for holidays.

Charles Cornwell Lee (1862-1930) began his army career in 1883 with the 20th Hussars where he served for a short time as a bandsman under his father James Lee who was at that time the bandmaster. His later distinguished career as bandmaster began in 1886 with the 4th Dragoon Guards. In India he was in overall charge of the music at the Imperial Durbar for the Proclamation of the Coronation of His Imperial Majesty, King Edward VII, Emperor of India which was held in Delhi in 1903. This was a magnificent and lavish event lasting 12 days with parades, a State Church Service, a special honour for the Mutiny Veterans by His Excellency the Viceroy (Lord Curzon), a Chiefs' Retainers Review with bullocks, horses, elephants and, of course, the numerous Rajahs and Maharajahs in all of their finery. At the State Church Service fifteen full bands participated, accompanying a choir of nearly 500 soldiers. This choir was stationed at the farther side of the extensive polo ground and members were provided with megaphones through which they sang. At the Imperial Proclamation read by the Herald at the command of the Viceroy, one hundred and one guns were fired and the Royal Standard was hoisted as the massed bands played the National Anthem. This must have been the zenith of Charles Lee's career but he continued to serve after leaving the 4th Dragoon Guards in 1907 as Bandmaster of the Royal Artillery Portsmouth where he stayed until retirement in 1922 after 39 years in the army. Charles Lee's father James Samuel John Lee (1831-1910) must have inspired him. James had joined the 1st South Lancashire Regiment in 1845 when he was only 14 years old. By 1861 he was Bandmaster of the 5th Dragoon Guards before returning to the 1st South Lancashires for five years. In September 1872 he was appointed Bandmaster of the 20th Hussars when his son served under him and in 1885 he concluded his long career as Bandmaster to the Royal Military College for five years, retiring on 2 May 1890 after 45 years in Her Majesty's Service.

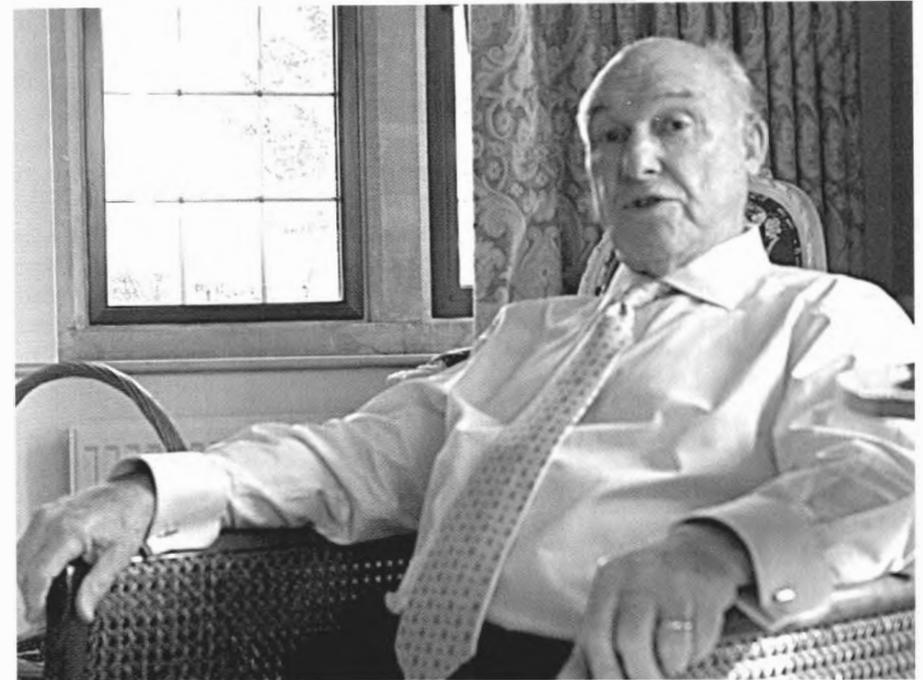
Roy Lee visited his son periodically and was always responsible for his school fees and other expenses. When Desmond went to Felsted in Essex, his father made the arrangements. The relationship between Roy and Olive remained amicable for the remainder of their lives and Desmond remembers happy occasions when they were together for a special event.

As Desmond grew older Roy had more and more advice for his son. 'No need for university,' said Roy when Desmond left Felsted. 'A good position in a good company is what you want.' And so, in 1938 when he was 18, Desmond joined Unilever as a trainee and two years later in July 1940, he enlisted in the Air Force. Again Roy Lee issued orders not advice to his son, 'Don't fly under any circumstances!' And again Desmond listened. He became a radar operator.

Desmond Lee's experiences during World War II would fill a good size volume. Here he summarizes some of the highlights: 'Strictly speaking, my overseas service began in Ismailia; only a very short period was spent in the Azores for temporary repairs following a direct hit from a pocket battleship (the Graf Spey) and a slightly longer time in Gibraltar awaiting a replacement troop ship. We followed the 8th Army to Tunis and were occasionally in front of the artillery. Our battered "Heath Robinson" equipment was consigned to the scrap heap and the unit disbanded. I was posted to a new up-to-date mobile unit outside Naples. It was here that we received orders to move our equipment onto a landing craft but were unable to do so in time due to the fact that the vehicles were bogged down in the mud. We later learnt that the landing craft and the replacement unit were sunk while covering the assault on Anzio beachhead. When we finally got out of the mud we followed the American and British armies to Rome and beyond before being ordered back to Naples for waterproofing and installing our equipment on a more fortunate landing craft to cover the invasion of the south of France.' Returning to Britain in 1944 Desmond was stationed at Whitstable and then Yatesbury where he received jungle training in preparation for deployment to the Far East. Luckily the war ended before he was called upon to put his new skills to the test. In April 1946 Desmond returned to Unilever and found to his great surprise and pleasure that the company had been paying into his pension fund starting in 1941 when he reached the age of 21.

In June 1947 Unilever sent Desmond to Africa where in 1950 he met nine-year-old Nicole Jubin for the first time. It was not a 'love at first sight' occasion but Desmond was friendly with Nicole's 39-year-old father who was a palm oil factory engineer as well as being involved in the production of coffee and cocoa in the Belgian Congo. Desmond and Nicole did not meet again until she was 13 and he was 34. He felt sorry for the young girl because of her isolated existence in an out of the way plantation. 'She had no siblings and no neighbours with children,' he recalled. 'I often took her water skiing on a tributary of the Congo.' They married in 1960 when Nicole was 18 and Desmond was 39.

The Lees remained in Africa until 1973 but not without many trips back to England. Roy Lee was less than impressed when Desmond first introduced his bride. Nicole's mother had been anxious to buy warm clothes for her daughter's visit to frigid England but her choice of garments was limited. Nicole said, 'I looked like a school girl in my pleated skirt and low-heeled shoes. Even though I could speak no English at that time, I knew Desmond was getting a very hard time from his father.' A far warmer welcome awaited Nicole in Shipton. Olive Lee saved the day and won her new daughter-in-law's love and loyalty from that time forward. Roy, of course, soon succumbed to Nicole's charms as well, and family solidarity was restored.



DESMOND R. C. LEE IN 2007

The Lees returned to England in 1965 for the birth of their son Christopher and again to put the five-year-old boy in the care of Norlands boarding school. The young ladies training at Norlands doted on their little charge and spent a great deal of time teaching him English. 'When I came back to visit him after six months he had lost all his French and could not talk with me,' Nicole recalled. 'I was heart broken.' Soon after Norlands sent Christopher on to Dulwich School for a proper education.

The family was reunited in 1973 when Desmond and Nicole returned to the U. K. permanently. Christopher was eight-years-old and a very independent lad. He is now in his early 40s. His first marriage ended in 2000 but he has an 11-year-old daughter Lucinda Antoinette who is doted on by her grandparents. Christopher's pharmaceutical career involves travel which means that Desmond and Nicole are familiar with the route to Cheshire and the demands of a precocious pre-teen. Christopher and his fiancée Helen will marry in 2007 so future visits will be slightly less demanding.

There was little time for family get-togethers with Christopher's grandparents after Desmond and Nicole returned to England. Olive died in 1974 and Roy in the following year. Desmond retired from Unilever in 1973 having worked in Zaire for 26 years, one year longer than the

company's standard 25-year overseas assignment period. The Lees lived in Keston, Kent and Desmond joined a Tropical Agricultural Consultancy Company and participated in frequent but mostly short missions to Francophone Africa. Sometimes Nicole accompanied him and on one occasion Christopher went along. He also volunteered for several charitable organizations. Eventually, however, these activities began to pall. Where to retire? Was there ever a real question? A beautiful lot on the Swinbrook Road was chosen, the builders at Groves' were engaged and, in 1978, Desmond Lee came home at last with his Belgian sweetheart. There is a lovely garden with plum and pear trees laden with fruit in the autumn; there is the smell of freshly cut hay in John Hartley's field next door; and there is a view across the fields that would gladden the heart at any time of the year. But far more important, La Renardiere is suffused with love undiminished after 47 years. What a wonderful story to have found hidden away in St. Mary's churchyard.

William Green, Clockmaker of Milton under Wychwood

SUE JOURDAN

Peter Meecham, Clockmaker, who has lived in Milton under Wychwood all his life, now has in his collection five clocks made by William Green of Milton under Wychwood. William's name is inscribed on the dial and from the style of the clocks it would appear that William was a Quaker. The first mention of a Quaker meeting in Milton under Wychwood was at Robert Secoll's house in 1655 with a meeting house built by 1669.¹ It would appear that these properties were in Green Lane as that is the site of the Quaker burial ground and there are still properties called Quaker's Meet and Quaker's Piece.

Because of their religious convictions, Quakers were unable to swear the Oath of Allegiance and therefore were excluded from higher education or from joining a guild in a town. Clock making was one area where they could apply their skills and, working in country districts, they produced simple inexpensive clocks in localised family networks whose primary bond was one of religious affiliation. How much local fabrication was done by apprentices and to what extent they assemble movements and fitted cases is not known but the Quakers worked to a basic similar design, possibly obtaining engraved dial plates, chapter rings and spandrel castings (corner castings) from someone like Gilkes of Adderbury (1715-1787) another Quaker clockmaker who supplied parts to others. The Gilkes were a large family of clockmakers working in north Oxfordshire and south Warwickshire in the eighteenth century. Many were one-handed clocks as these were simpler and cheaper to make, and of the four examples illustrated two are single and two have two hands. Again with cost in mind they are 30 hour long case clocks with a frame to hang on the wall without a case with two metal spikes to push into the plaster wall. Any clock without a case is more vulnerable to damage. The addition of the case would have doubled the purchase price but protected the movement from dust and the hanging weight and pendulum from children, pets and draughts, thus prolonging the time between costly overhauls and improving the accuracy of the time keeping. The clock case

would have been made separately by the local carpenter, undertaker or joiner and were usually in inexpensive woods like in pine or oak. Customers would have been local farmers and shop keepers.

It has not been possible to find out much about William Green but C.F.C Beeson in *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire 1400-1850* suggests that he was born in 1722, possibly the son of Isaac and Joan Green of Tadmarton, and died in 1770.¹ In John Kibble's *Historical and Other Notes on Wychwood Forest* in 1928 he states 'William Green of Milton under Wychwood had a clock club into which so much per week was paid to get a clock.'²

References

- 1 *Clockmaking in Oxfordshire 1400-1850*. CFC Beeson. Museum of Science 3rd ed 1989. pp 107
- 2 *Historical and Other Notes on Wychwood Forest*. John Kibble. 1928. pp 46

PLATES OPPOSITE

A.

A TYPICAL 30 HOUR CLOCK, THAT IS, IT HAS TO BE WOUND EVERY DAY, MADE ABOUT 1760 WITH A BRASS DIAL ENGRAVED IN THE CENTRE WITH A LEAF PATTERN. ENGRAVED ROMAN NUMERALS ON AN APPLIED CHAPTER RING, CORNUCOPIA SPANDRELS AND STEEL SINGLE HAND, COLOURED BLUE. THIS CLOCK WOULD HAVE HUNG ON THE WALL WITHOUT A CASE.

B

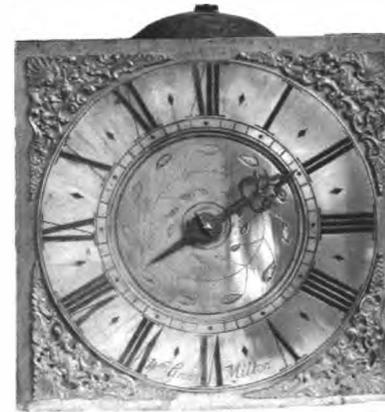
SIMILAR 30 HOUR MOVEMENT BUT WITH A PAINTED DIAL, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN OBTAINED FROM BIRMINGHAM, AND TWO HANDS, MADE ABOUT 1775. BRASS DIALS HAD BECOME UNFASHIONABLE BY THIS TIME.

C AND E

ANOTHER BRASS DIALLED MOVEMENT, THIS TIME WITH TWO HANDS, OF ABOUT 1760 AND A DIFFERENT STAR ENGRAVING TO THE CENTRE. THE CASE IS OF CHERRY WOOD AND WAS BOUGHT AS AN EXTRA, MOST LIKELY MAKE BY THE VILLAGE CARPENTER OR UNDERTAKER.

D AND F

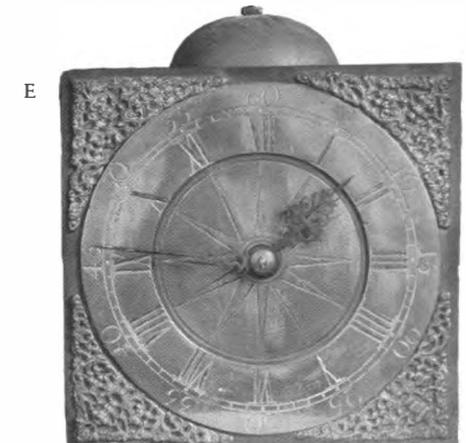
ANOTHER SINGLE HANDED MOVEMENT SIMILAR TO A BUT WITH A DIFFERENT HAND PATTERN AND URN STYLE SPANDRELS. THIS IS IN A PINE CASE, ORIGINALLY PAINTED AND VARNISHED.



A



B



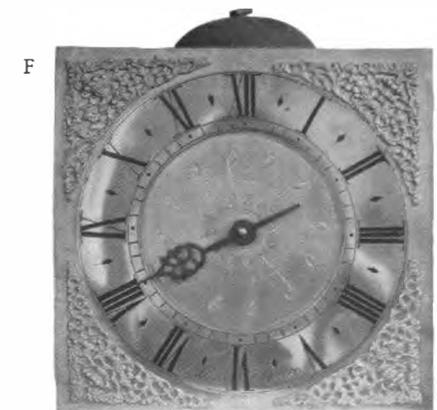
E



C



D



F

The Society's Fieldwalk Programme: The Final Report

MARGARET WARE

Introduction

In 1984, following a series of local lectures by professional archaeologist Claire Halpin, members of the Society decided to try out the then relatively new investigative technique of fieldwalking. This involves the systematic examination of the surface of ploughed fields, collecting the man-made artefacts encountered, in order to gain insights into past human activity and land use. The reader is referred to the first report for a full description of how the project was set up, some of the difficulties encountered and the early finds.¹ Now the project has drawn to a close, a more comprehensive overview is possible.

The Society went fieldwalking on sixteen occasions, between 1984 and 2004, during which time no fewer than 137 people participated, both members and friends, ranging in age from eight to mid-eighties. This period was one of nationally increasing enthusiasm for archaeology, partly fuelled by popular television programmes, and fieldwalking seemed a practical and topical way for us to interest our members. In all, twenty-eight fields totalling 253 hectares (624 acres) were examined in Shipton, Milton and Ascott parishes, and one in Lyneham parish (Fig. 1). Sometimes only one field was walked each year. Compared with the speed of operation of professional archaeologists, this is a ludicrously small output, but the time and effort involved in recruiting and instructing walkers and particularly washing, labelling, identifying and recording the collected artefacts afterwards imposed their limitations on the organisers, all of whom were amateurs and led otherwise busy lives.

Fieldwalking requires not only the cooperation of landowners and farmers (in which the Society has been particularly fortunate) but ideally also a period of a week or two after the post-harvest ploughing when rain can help to wash and expose surface-lying artefacts. (A muddy piece of brown medieval pottery can be almost impossible to spot in soil). The same fieldwalking procedure was adhered to throughout to enable comparability of results, but the method became streamlined over the

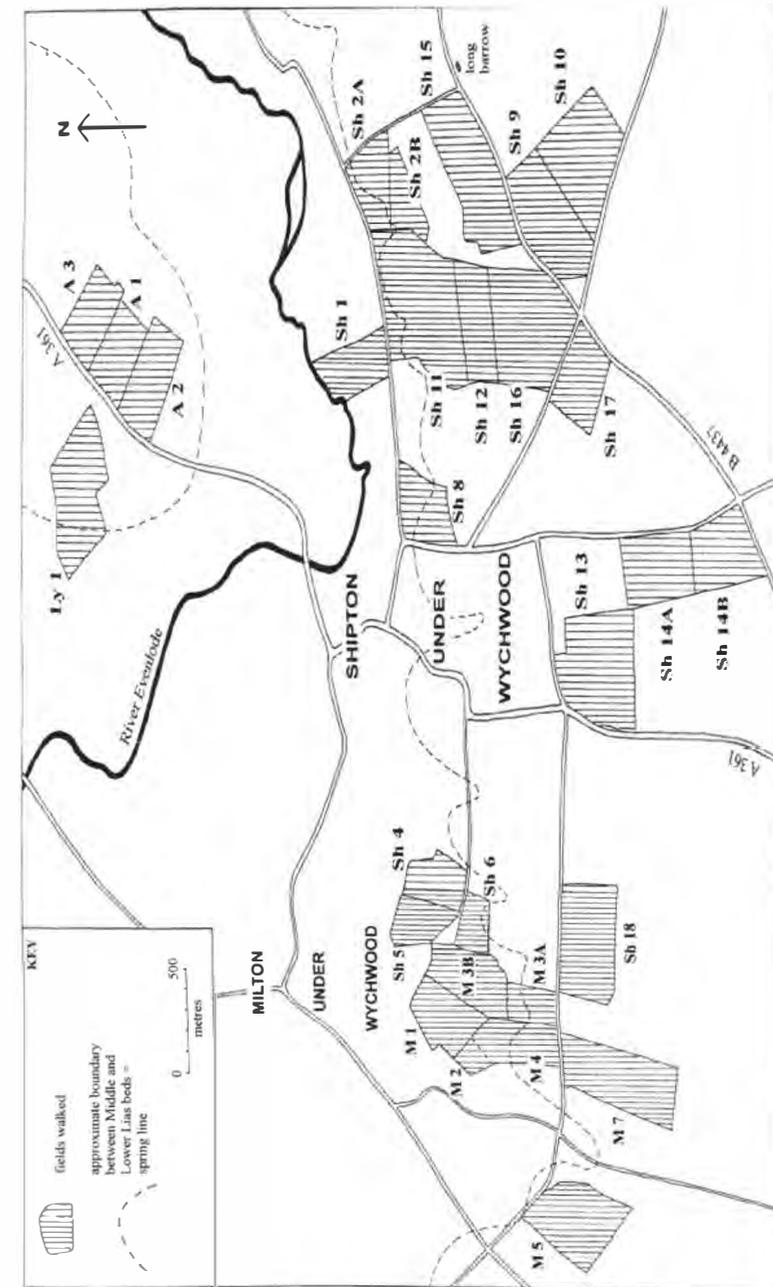


FIGURE 1 FIELDS WALKED

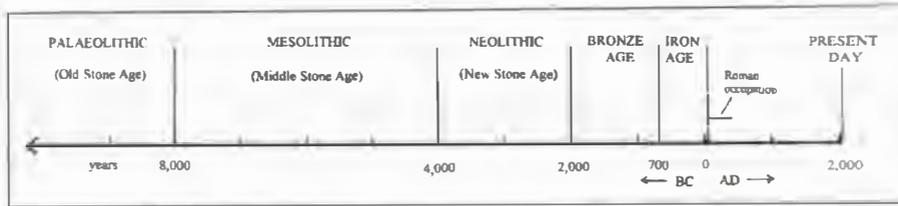


FIGURE 2 SIMPLIFIED TIME LINE (BRITAIN)

years. In essence the ground surface was sampled in metre-wide transects, fifteen metres apart across the shortest axis of each field, giving about a seven percent coverage. In earlier years the transects were laboriously marked out using reels of baler twine, but this was soon abandoned for marking 'lines' across the field with widely spaced garden canes, made more visible by pennants of orange Glotape. Marked lines to walk to were thought desirable to stop folk wandering off-course (easily done with your head down), to achieve more accurately spaced sampling.

All the objects from a transect were collected into one bag enabling a one-dimensional distribution of artefacts across the field to be determined, which was thought to be adequate for a wide-ranging, preliminary survey to give an indication of what was there. A more detailed method involves changing collecting bags at regular intervals along each line so that subsequently artefact distribution can be mapped two-dimensionally. We tried this method out only once, unfortunately in a field relatively empty of artefacts, so the results were not thought to justify the extra work involved. It had always been the organisers' intention to return and re-walk those fields found to have been particularly rich in artefacts during the initial survey, when the latter method would have been employed, but time and human energy ran out. In practice, no significant variations of artefact density were detected within most fields, with a very few important exceptions, so the results are presented initially as totals per field, although of course our fields did not exist as such until relatively recently.

It was clear that one of the biggest variables in the recovery of some artefacts was the human factor. Professional field archaeologists frequently undertake fieldwalking as a preliminary to excavation and build up expertise in seeing objects in ploughsoil. In their studies, perceived variations in artefact density are likely to be real and not overlain by large differences in experience. At our fieldwalks there were almost always some folk who, while keen, had not fieldwalked before. It was very noticeable that those stalwart walkers who had taken part during most of the project consistently brought back more objects per transect than the newcomers. People's natural eyesight also varied considerably, especially considering the age range of our walkers, whereas many profes-

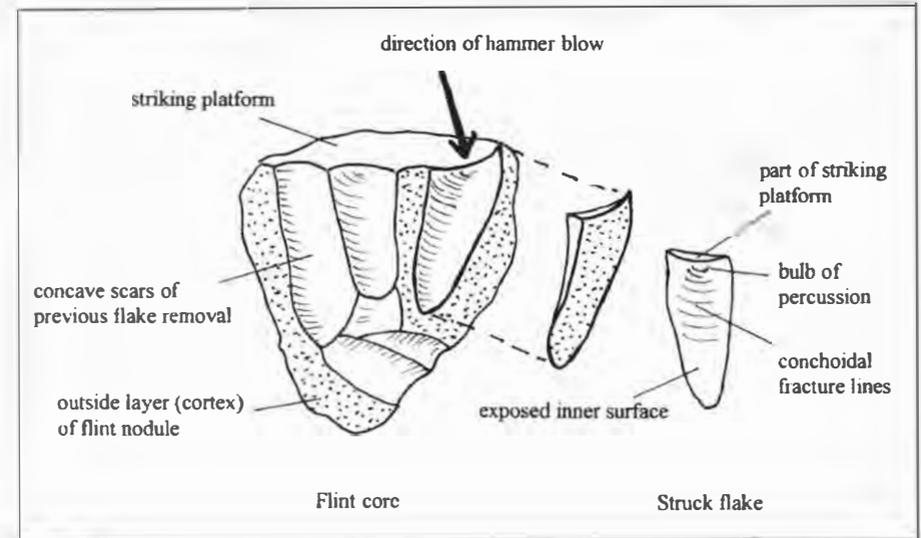


FIGURE 3 FLINT KNAPPING

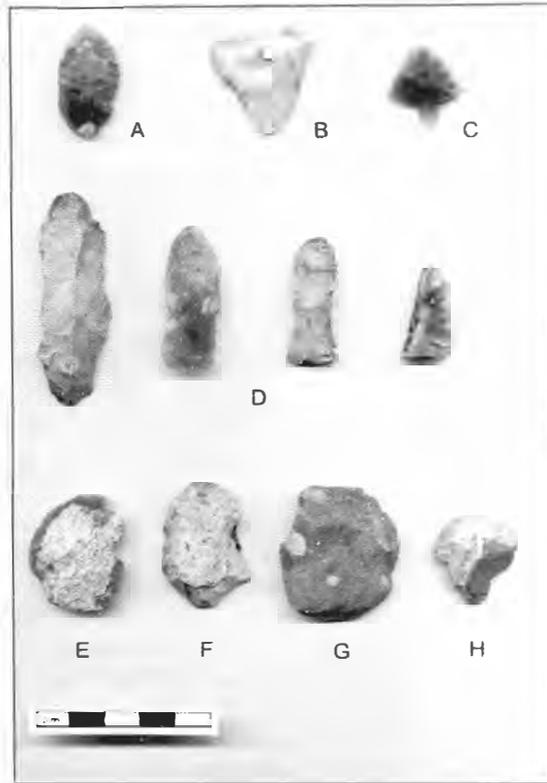
sional field archaeologists are under thirty with presumably keener eyesight. Nevertheless the enthusiasm of all the participants has been outstanding and a very real contribution has been made to the understanding of our locality.

As always in archaeology there is a considerable time-lag between the collection of the artefacts and their identification and the presentation of results. While the organisers built up a certain body of knowledge over the years, really accurate identification of pottery and flints is a specialist skill and, in the end, all the material of medieval and earlier date was submitted to professional archaeologists, mostly at Oxford Archaeology, for detailed identification. It was thought worthwhile to obtain the maximum amount of information possible about the material collected, especially the flints, since this body of information could well form the basis of further or comparative studies in the future. The artefacts have all been catalogued and are available for exhibition, further study by the Society's members or for teaching in local schools. The original article drew attention to the vast weight of post-medieval and modern objects (mostly pottery) recovered from the fields walked at the time.² This trend continued throughout the study - most objects collected were of nineteenth and twentieth century date, and only a small sample of these has been kept, but the objects found ranged in date from the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age 8000-4000 BC) to the Second World War (1942) and later (Fig.2). The original field records, the professional reports and copies of the entries for each field which have been submitted to the County Sites and Monuments Record will all be deposited

PLATE 1

ARROWHEADS:

- A. LEAF-SHAPED (EARLY NEOLITHIC),
 B. TRANSVERSE (MIDDLE-LATE NEOLITHIC),
 C. BARBED-AND-TANGED, BOTH BARBS BROKEN OFF (EARLY BRONZE AGE)
 D. MESOLITHIC BLADES
 END-AND-SIDE SCRAPERS:
 E. (MESOLITHIC/NEOLITHIC),
 F. (BEAKER-EARLY BRONZE AGE)
 G. OVATE SCRAPER ON CHERT (LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE),
 H. THUMBNAIL SCRAPER (EARLY BRONZE AGE)



in the Society's archives.

During the last two decades cereal farming practices have changed and the windows of opportunity for fieldwalking got ever smaller in regimes of increasingly intensive cereal cultivation. Stubble-burning came and went, and in recent years it was possible for the combine harvester and baler to depart and a cultivator to be on the same field the following day and the field re-sown almost immediately. One or two wet summers and difficult, late harvests put pressure on local farmers and fieldwalking could have become an unwelcome complication. In some cases the practice of deep ploughing has given way to a much more surface cultivation. In addition, under set-aside, more fields are being left fallow and not ploughed at all. With a significant acreage in the locality already under permanent grass, it was becoming increasingly difficult to carry out the surveys and the programme was finally wound up.

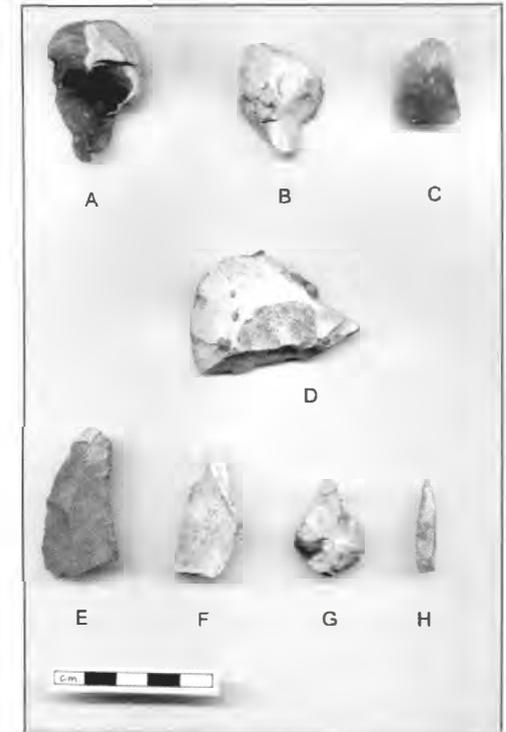
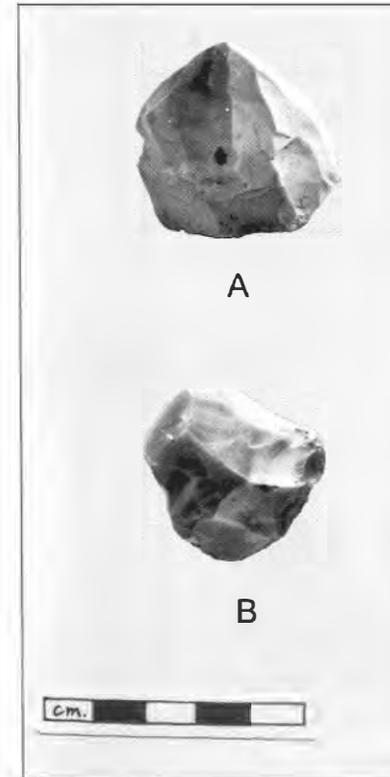
Part 1. The Lithics (Flints)

For thousands of years prehistoric peoples utilised stone, in Britain pre-eminently flint, to fashion their tools (Fig.3). A lump of flint was skilfully hit (knapped) with a hammer of stone, bone or antler to strike off flakes or blades (longer, narrower flakes) of flint, leaving impressions (scars) on the original lump (core). Flint flakes struck by human agency often show distinguishing features (striking platform, bulb of percussion and characteristic

PLATE 2

- A. SIDE SCRAPER WITH HAFTED END,
 B. COMPOSITE SCRAPER/PIERCER (NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE),
 C. RETOUCED FLAKE (EARLY NEOLITHIC).
 D. BLADE-END FRAGMENT OF MESOLITHIC TRANCHESET AXE.
 E. BACKED KNIFE (LATE NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE),
 F. BURIN (MESOLITHIC),
 G. PIERCER,
 H. MICROLITH (LATE MESOLITHIC)

ripple marks — conchoidal fracture lines) not usually seen together on flints subject to random mechanical abrasion.



Flint pieces and flakes could then be finely reworked (retouched) to sharpen edges or to blunt a backing edge, to shape into tools such as arrowheads, scrapers for the preparation of animal skins, knives and piercers. Some flakes were deliberately notched, possibly for use as spokeshaves. Often though the retouch is hardly visible to the naked eye, appearing merely as a minimal nibbling of an edge. Flint flakes and fragments showing no subsequent retouch are classified as knapping waste (debitage) even though many still have extremely sharp edges and could have been used as

PLATE 3

- A. SINGLE-PLATFORM BLADE CORE (MESOLITHIC/EARLY NEOLITHIC),
 B. MULTIPLATFORM FLAKE CORE (LATE NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE)

Category	Field:	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	Sh 8	Sh 9	Sh 10	Sh 11	Total
Retouched (Tools)												
Leaf arrowhead		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Barbed and tangd arrowhead		-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Other arrowhead		-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	3
Scraper		1	4	-	4	5	7	-	3	4	5	33
Piercer, borer, fabricator, notched flint		-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	4
Knife, serrated flake		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	3
Burin		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Microolith		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Retouched flake		2	4	-	7	6	7	-	3	1	6	36
Retouched blade		-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Miscellaneous retouch		-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	-	8
Burnt unworked flint		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
Cores		-	-	-	10	12	3	1	5	5	1	37
Debitage												
Flake and chip		13	24	22	69	70	66	10	30	53	14	371
Bladelike flake		5	4	1	3	5	11	2	5	3	6	45
Blade and bladelet		-	-	4	5	8	9	2	1	1	7	37
Unclassifiable waste		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	3	2	13
Total flints		22	40	28	101	108	105	15	66	73	44*	602
Total burnt		-	1	1	16	6	15	1	14	11	4	69
Field Area (hectares)		5.7	4.9	3.8	5.3	5.7	3.9	5.7	11.2	12.0	18.0	

* See Footnote in Text

TABLE 1 CATALOGUE OF FLINTS BY TYPE AND BY FIELD

Category	Field:	Sh 12	Sh 11 & 12*	Sh 13	Sh 14	Sh 15	Sh 16	Sh 17	Sh 18	M 1	M 2	Total
Retouched (Tools)												
Leaf arrowhead		-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Barbed and tangd arrowhead		-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	2
Other arrowhead		-	-	4	-	8	4	2	1	6	-	4
Scraper		-	-	1	-	3	-	-	4	-	-	28
Piercer, borer, fabricator, notched flint		-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	6
Knife, serrated flake		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Burin		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Microolith		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retouched flake		3	3	1	2	8	8	1	2	7	-	32
Retouched blade		-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
Miscellaneous retouch		1	1	-	1	5	-	1	2	4	-	14
Burnt unworked flint		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cores		-	3	-	-	6	1	-	3	5	2	20
Debitage												
Flake and chip		2	81	14	13	236	63	15	28	115	21	588
Bladelike flake		2	11	3	5	23	5	-	3	7	5	64
Blade and bladelet		1	2	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	-	16
Unclassifiable waste		-	6	-	2	11	3	-	3	5	5	35
Total flints		5*	108*	24*	26	311	89	20	50	151	33	817
Total burnt		1	15	-	1	27	9	2	8	12	9	84
Field Area (hectares)		6.5	-	13.8	15.7	12.9	14.4	6.5	15.0	8.5	1.7	

* See Footnote in Text

TABLE 2 CATALOGUE OF FLINTS BY TYPE AND BY FIELD (CONTINUED)

Category	Field:	M3	M4	M5	M7	A1	A2	A3	Ly1	Table Total	Grand Total All Tables
Retouched (Tools)											
Leaf arrowhead		1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	5
Barbed and tanged arrowhead		-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	6
Other arrowhead		-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	9
Scraper		3	6	5	1	8	2	2	1	28	89
Piercer, borer, fabricator, notched flint		3	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	6	16
Knife, serrated edge		1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	8
Burin		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
Microolith		1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	3
Retouched flake		1	4	3	1	6	-	2	1	18	86
Retouched blade		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Miscellaneous retouch		2	-	2	-	6	1	3	1	15	37
Burnt unworked flint		-	-	-	-	7	-	2	-	9	13
Cores		4	3	2	-	11	-	8	1	29	86
Debitage											
Flake and chip		51	47	48	2	272	2	130	71	623	1,582
Bladelike flake		1	2	2	3	7	-	3	5	23	132
Blade and bladelet		8	4	-	-	3	1	1	2	19	72
Unclassifiable waste		5	4	3	-	24	-	23	5	64	112
Total flints		81	71	66	7	348	6	178	90*	847	2,266
Total burnt		9	15	10	-	54	1	28	11	128	281
Field Area (hectares)		13.7	9.6	13.9	15.7	5.6	7.0	5.3	10.8*		

* See Footnote in Text

cutting tools without further modification. The classification of flints used by archaeologists is necessarily objective and ignores this point, since we cannot see into the minds of prehistoric peoples. Flints scattered in ploughsoil without a datable context (hearth or dwelling) are difficult to date, even by experts, but a few can be dated on stylistic grounds. Blades and the cores from which they were struck are characteristic of the Mesolithic, as are burins – chisels or engraving tools, and microliths – small geometric flakes used to make hunting tools. Arrowhead shape and scraper size and shape also varied over time. (See Plates 1, 2 and 3.)

Flint does not occur in the underlying rock of our locality, which is dominated by sands, clays and limestones of the Liassic and Jurassic eras,³ so it seems likely our flint was deliberately brought in from some distance. The nearest sources of good quality flint are the chalklands of the Chilterns and the Berkshire Downs, but it has been suggested that outcrops of glacial gravel such as that at Waterman's Lodge in Wychwood Forest and the boulder clay to the north and west of Milton under Wychwood could have provided a limited local flint source.⁴

Altogether over 2000 struck flints weighing nearly nine and a half kilograms (21 lbs.) were collected. Tables 1, 2 and 3 list the numbers and categories of flints found in each field and its area. This is a simplified classification of our lithic material, which was examined and categorised in much greater detail professionally, the full information being preserved in the Society's archive. The flints found on our earliest fieldwalks tabled in the 1988 report have also been re-evaluated and the corrected classification presented here for completeness. Nearly 13% of all the flints have been classified as tools, 4% as cores, leaving the majority (83%) listed as knapping debris. Undoubtedly flint knapping produces a lot of waste material, but we have no means of knowing how much of it was the result of an afternoon's work or what proportion accumulated over hundreds or even thousands of years. The numbers of burnt flints are also recorded as evidence of heating in fires possibly for use in cooking. Half to two thirds of all the flints were broken and about half had an opaque white surface or patina (cortication), compared to the almost transparent glassy grey of good quality, freshly knapped flint.

Only a small proportion of our flint assemblage could be dated, but it is

Footnote to tables

In the Tables 108 flints from Sh 11 & 12 which became mixed together in error during processing are shown separately, but from primary field records it was possible to assign 67 to Sh 11 and 41 to Sh 12. The actual totals in these two fields have been used to calculate densities. The transects in Sh 13 were walked at 10m. intervals rather than the usual 15, and its results have been adjusted to a 15m sampling base. Our single Lyneham field was walked by transects as usual and also a particular area by intensive grid-walking.⁵ Only those flints found in the transects have been used to calculate density in Ly 1).

TABLE 3 CATALOGUE OF FLINTS BY TYPE AND BY FIELD (CONTINUED)

flake-dominated and probably mostly dates from the later Neolithic and Bronze Ages. But we have evidence of the presence of early Neolithic people in the form of five characteristic leaf-shaped arrowheads. As the New Stone Age progressed, the population increased, forests were progressively cleared and crops cultivated. People began to live in more permanent settlements, however small, although these tended to shift as crops exhausted the land. In the Bronze Age flints were still being fashioned into tools: small thumbnail scrapers, backed knives and barbed and tanged arrowheads were typical forms, even though metal gradually became more widely used. But it must be emphasised that we have found no hearths or hut remains as evidence of prehistoric settlement, merely flint scatters suggesting sites of knapping activity or lost tools and weapons. More concrete evidence, if it existed, could have been destroyed long since by ploughing.

None of the fields walked revealed local concentration of flints within a field, but any such concentrations may have been masked by our method of collection. However the fields, being different sizes, showed marked differences in numbers of flints found in each. A more meaningful statistic is that of flint density calculated from total number of flints per field divided by the field area and, although based only on a 7% sample, this allows comparison between fields since the same sampling method was used throughout.

Fig. 4 shows the density of lithics of all periods in each field, the fields ranked according to average height above sea level, although the altitude range is only 65 metres (200 feet). Three features stand out. Firstly, there seems to be no consistent correlation between density and altitude. Secondly, there appears to be an average 'background level' of discarded flints in most fields of about 5 per hectare. Thirdly, a cluster of fields at about 120m (Sh 4, 5 & 6, M 1 & 2 and Sh 15) show a significantly higher density of 17-24 flints per hectare, while densities of 32 and 55 in A 1 and A 3 at 140m are outstanding.

These results are also shown in Fig.5 where the broken line marks the approximate boundary between the permeable limestones and sands of the Oolite and Upper and Middle Lias, and the heavy impermeable clay of the Lower Lias in the valley floor. This boundary forms a well-defined spring line, near which in historical times several farms and the earliest settlements in both Milton and Shipton were established. The higher flint densities in Sh 4, 5 & 6, M 1 & 2 occur just below this spring line, on extensive areas of glacial gravel overlying the valley clay. Since most of the lithic evidence relates to the later Neolithic onwards, it is tempting to suggest that our Neolithic ancestors found agriculture easier on the slightly drier gravel, which formed an attractive settlement location with abundant spring water nearby. Sh 15 is adjacent to several springs thrown out by thin bands of clay in the Lias beds higher up the valley sides. Perhaps significantly, one of two local Neolithic long barrows is situated only a hundred

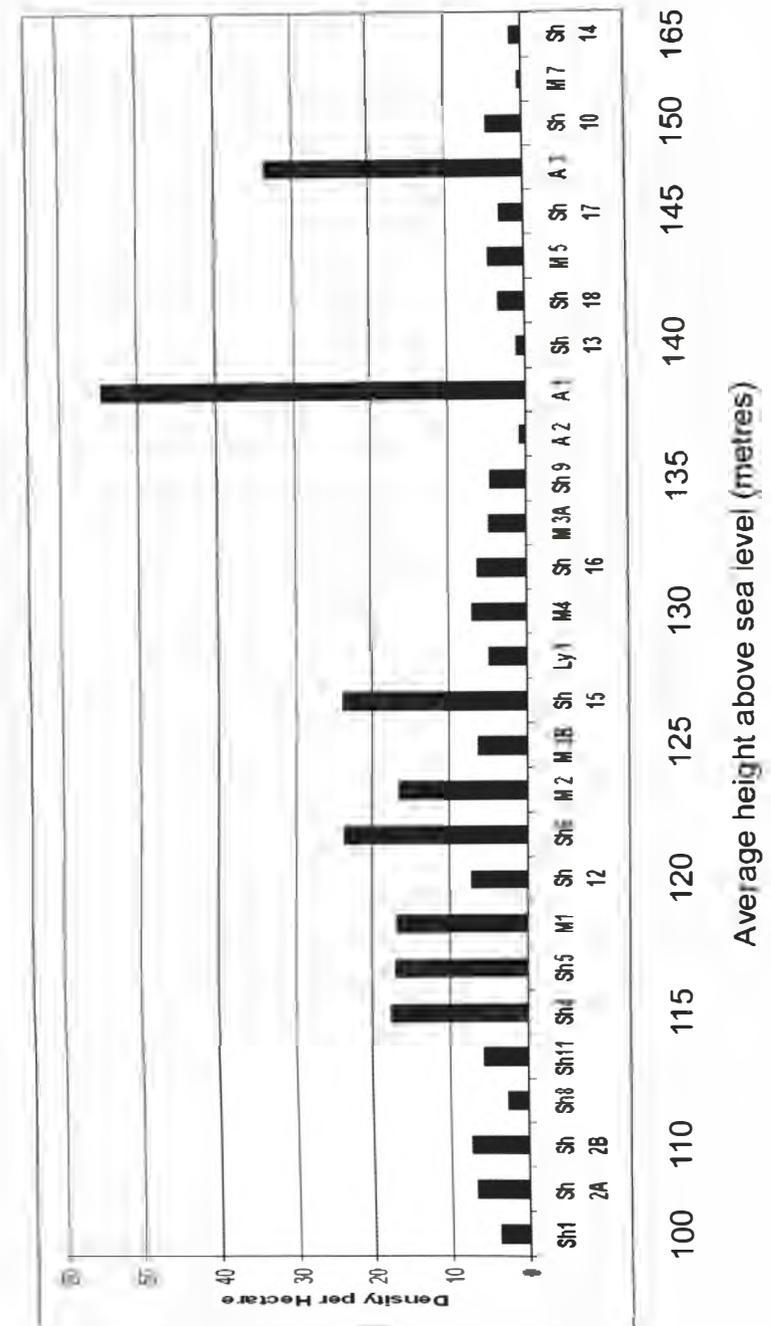


FIGURE 4 DENSITIES OF TOTAL FLINT PER HECTARE BY AVERAGE HEIGHT OF FIELDS ABOVE SEA LEVEL

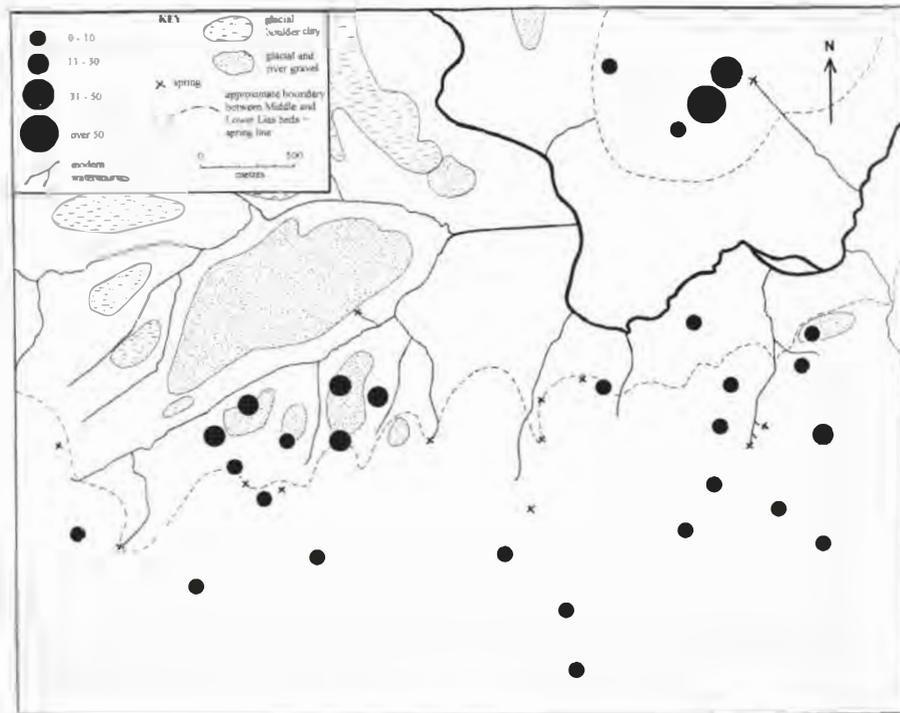


FIGURE 5 DENSITIES OF TOTAL FLINT PER HECTARE

metres away (Fig.1). All these fields produced a higher than average number of cores and definite tools and burnt flints, again suggesting these were at least domestic activity sites, if not actual settlements.

The two adjacent fields A 1 and A 3 high on a rounded spur overlooking the river valley are also next to a spring where the Inferior Oolitic limestone meets the impermeable rocks in the Upper Lias beds. Here there seemed to be a definite clustering of activity since field A 2, also adjacent to A 1, was almost devoid of flints. A 1 & 3 yielded abundant cores and a variety of tools and burnt flints as well as the usual knapping debris although the flints were of poor quality and heavily corticated. This site would have provided light, workable though stony soils, a close fresh water supply but also an excellent vantage point overlooking a long stretch of the valley, and situated on a natural routeway down to the river, utilised now by the A361.

131 flints, nearly 6% of the total, have been identified as Mesolithic, possibly Mesolithic or Mesolithic/Early Neolithic – a very exciting discovery. Mesolithic peoples lived between 10,000 and 6,000 years ago, just after the last Ice Age, before the age of agriculture. They were hunter-gatherers, moving through the still densely-forested landscape collecting nuts, roots and berries,

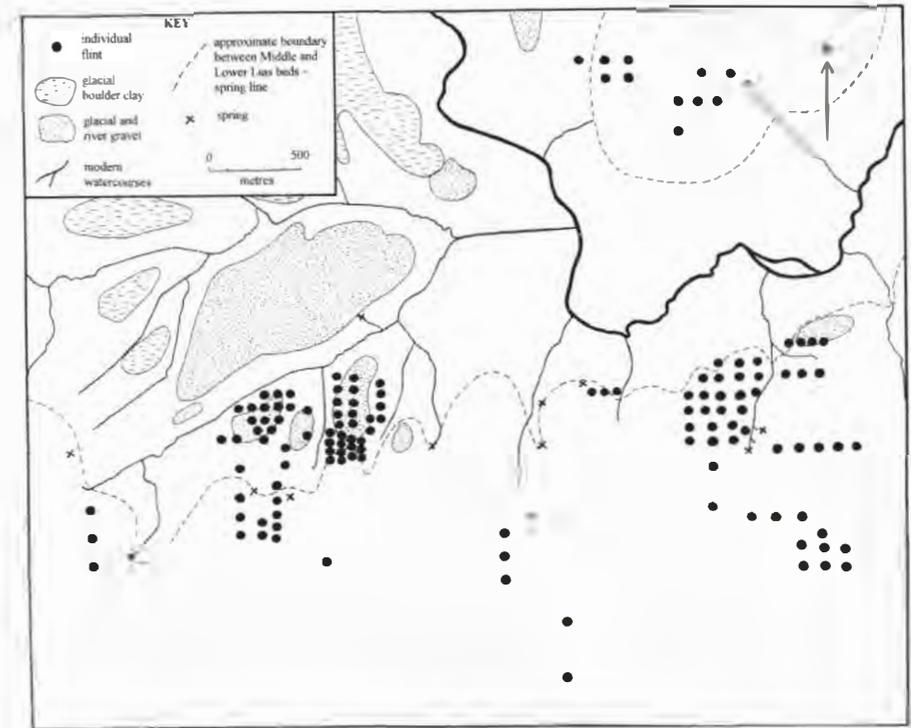


FIGURE 6 DISTRIBUTION OF MESOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC/EARLY NEOLITHIC FLINTS

fishing and following game and probably occupying seasonal camps rather than permanent dwellings. The actual numbers of possible Mesolithic flints found are plotted on Fig.6, which again indicates a concentration of Mesolithic activity near the spring line. The map depicts the modern river system, but in Mesolithic times the river basin would have been extensively marshy, ideal for fishing and wildfowling. The river was probably also used as a routeway, bypassing the heavily wooded banks.

In the Neolithic two long burial chambers or barrows were built on the hillside on either side of the stream now known as Coldwell brook. As already mentioned, one of these, now almost ploughed out, stands about a hundred metres from Sh 15, our most easterly walked field (Fig1), while the other is less than half a kilometre away in Ascott parish. This Ascott barrow was excavated in the 1960s in advance of a proposed road straightening scheme which, in the event, never materialised. The results of this excavation, just published, describe a soil layer containing both Mesolithic and early Neolithic flints which was sealed beneath the barrow when it was constructed. The Mesolithic material indicated two phases of activity, in the eighth and fifth millennia BC and showed evidence of tool production, while the Early

Neolithic material indicated a broad range of domestic activity.⁶ It is pleasing that our investigations provide corroborating evidence of Mesolithic and Early Neolithic activity in a contiguous part of the valley.

It is just possible that one or two of our pieces might be even older, but the professional verdict errs on the side of caution. 'A small number of flints, mostly unretouched flakes, were identified as possible Palaeolithic pieces. These were isolated on account of their heavily worn and iron-stained condition, suggesting great antiquity, rather than on the more reliable indications of technology and typology. As such, there is reasonable doubt as to their early origin'.⁷

Our fieldwalking programme has examined only a small sample of the land surface in our local parishes and we have not collected material from higher than 185m above sea level. Land immediately adjacent to the river was not available for study, being mostly under permanent grass. Nevertheless this study has shown that people penetrated into the Evenlode valley up to 10,000 years ago, later folk may have settled here and cultivated the land, and all produced flint artefacts with consummate skill and of great beauty. It has been a revelation to many of us that the evidence of prehistoric activity is so abundant and all around us. As an interesting postscript, the discovery of two post-medieval gunflints from Sh11 (not included in the tables), which were possibly lost on a hunting expedition, is evidence of a later resurgence of flint production for muskets, rifles and pistols.⁸

I am pleased to acknowledge the professional expertise of staff of Oxford Archaeology – Pippa Bradley, and especially Kate Cramp for her continuing interest in the results of this study. Special mention must also be made of my husband Frank Ware, my co-fieldwalk organiser, and those senior members of the Society who have devoted many hours measuring and setting up the fields prior to walking. Neither could we have achieved our results without the participation of our 137 walkers.

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The Shipton Tillyards

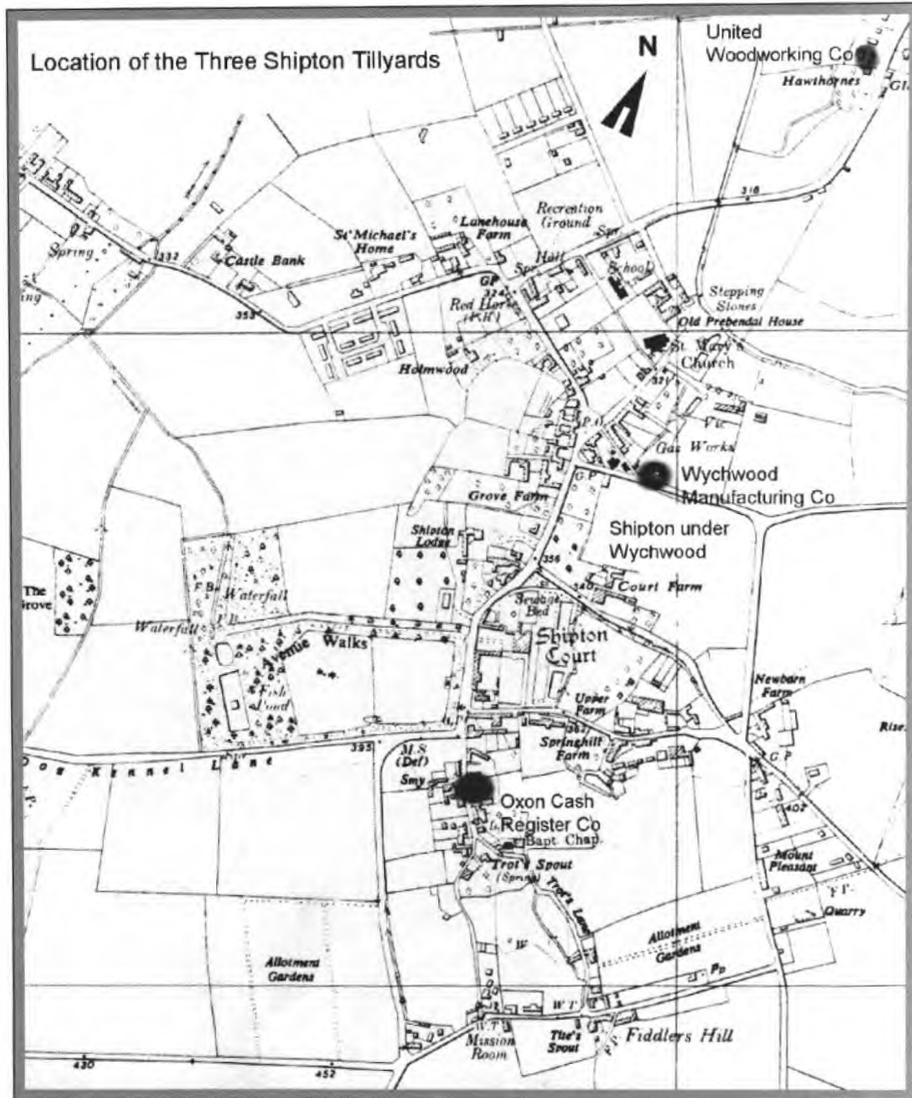
ALAN VICKERS

Wooden cash tills, usually with an opening on the top to accommodate a paper roll, were common in small shops throughout the country until about the 1970s. More often than not such cash tills came from workshops in Shipton under Wychwood. From the First World War until the late 1970s, the village housed three such businesses (see Map), which have now completely disappeared. This is the story of this local enterprise, which for so long was an important part of the village's economy.

The first till manufacturing business was established by Alf Baylis just after the First World War. Alf Baylis had been raised in Shipton. His father was a railway signalman at Bruern and the family lived at 1 The Row next to the Red Horse public house. Alf had a reputation as a bit of a "ladies' man" who appreciated fast cars. He had learned the cash till construction business at Gledhills in Halifax (who in turn had copied from the National Cash Register Co) and brought Jimmy Wallace and Harry Crabtree with him from Halifax to work in his new business which traded in Upper High Street Shipton under the name of The Oxon Cash Register Co. Alf Baylis later lived at Wayside, Milton Road, Shipton.

The site of Alf Baylis's new business was a builder's yard belonging to Shipton Court. It had been described as the "Estate Yard" in the sales catalogue of 1913 and as having a carpenter's and painter's shop, an engine shed and saw shed with saw pit. There were also hardware and timber stores. In total the area was given as occupying one rod and 11 perches. This reference to a "yard" encouraged the naming of the cash till manufacturing works as a "tillyard" and this was later applied to the other locations where cash tills were produced. Diagram 1 shows the layout from memory of the Baylis works (source Bob Coombes).

In 1919 Henry (Harry) Coombes and his second cousin William Edwin (Ted) Coombes joined Alf Baylis. They had worked at Groves, the Milton builders, before the First World War. By 1923 the relationship between the workforce and Alf Baylis had deteriorated, for example over clocking in procedures (the clock in question is shown in the mess room on Diagram 1) and possibly pressure to work on Sundays (both Harry and Ted were staunch church members and had been in the bell ringing team before the First World War – see Photo 3). One day in 1923 Alf Baylis lost his temper



MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE THREE SHIPTON TILLYARDS.

and told some of the men to leave.

The vicar of St Mary's Shipton, the Reverend Nixon, helped the unemployed men set up their own business in the stable loft at the Vicarage but there were objections to men in working clothes being housed about the Vicarage. After some two years, premises were obtained in Station Road for the new United Woodworking Company. For a while

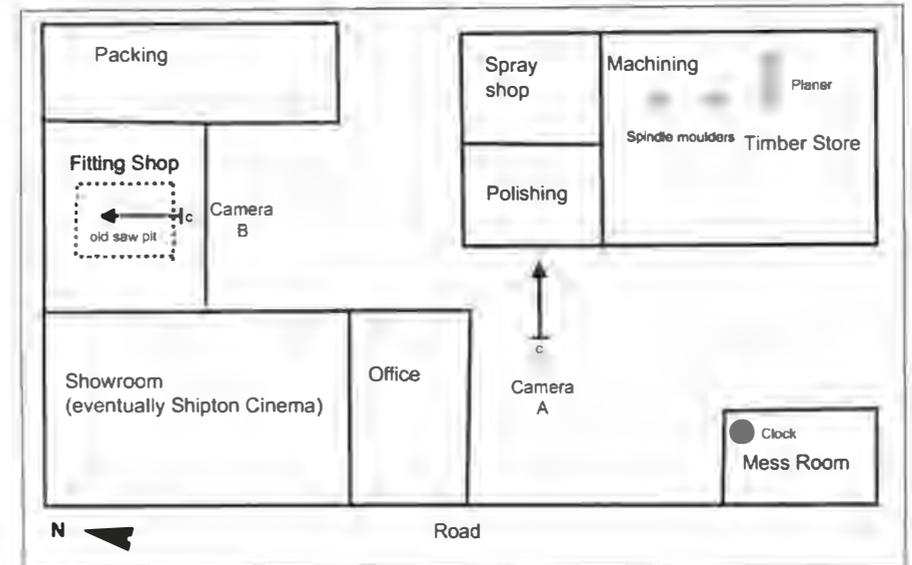


DIAGRAM 1: THE OXON CASH REGISTER CO'S WORKS (LATER THE SOUTH OR LOWER TILLYARD OF THE UNITED WOODWORKING CO.) CAMERA A IS THE POSITION FROM WHICH PHOTOGRAPH 1 WAS TAKEN. SIMILARLY CAMERA B IS THE POSITION FOR PHOTOGRAPH 2.

the two cash till companies worked independently although social connections seem to have been reasonable. In 1927 the Parish Council for example thanked both Harry Coombes and Alf Baylis for carrying out work to provide a coal store at the village hall.

By the second half of the 1920s, The Oxon Cash Register Co. was getting into financial difficulties. One factor may have been the building of a large show room (which later became Shipton's cinema) described as a "white elephant" by Bob Coombes, and the old Baylis business was bought out using money from Sam Groves and William Willett. By 1929 Alf Baylis had moved to Lyneham and resigned from the Parish Council. He disappeared from view, although he is reported to have traded in furniture in Manchester and is believed to have died relatively young.

The Station Road works now became known as the North Works and was run by Harry Coombes while the Oxon Cash Register Co.'s works continued as the South Works under the supervision of Ted Coombes. Both units cooperated in the manufacturing process where required. For example the North Unit had a dovetailer machine while the South Works, which mainly made shop fittings, had a corner locker machine.

The layout of the Station Road or North Unit as it was just before the Second World War is shown in Diagram 2.

The top shed with an engine in what later became the polishing shop

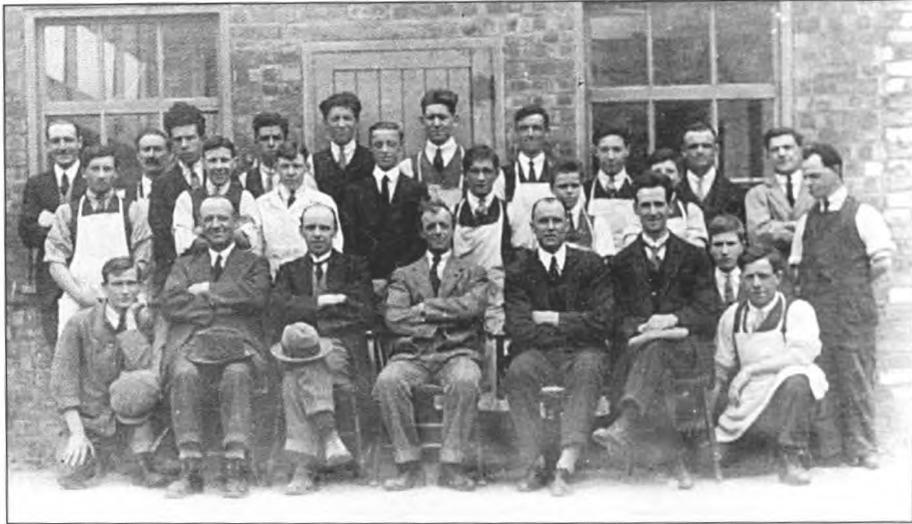


PHOTO 1: THE WORKFORCE AT THE OXON CASH REGISTER CO IN ABOUT 1923 (PRESUMABLY AFTER THE EXODUS OF HARRY AND TED COOMBES WHO DO NOT APPEAR IN THE PHOTOGRAPH). THE MAN CROUCHING ON THE LEFT OF THE FRONT ROW IS CHARLES DUESTER. THE FIFTH MAN FROM THE LEFT IN THE FRONT ROW IS ALF BAYLIS. STANDING BEHIND HIM IN THE BACK ROW IS KEN EARLEY. BETWEEN THEM, IN THE MIDDLE ROW IS BERTRAM POWELL WHO IS ALSO THIRD FROM THE LEFT IN PHOTO 2.

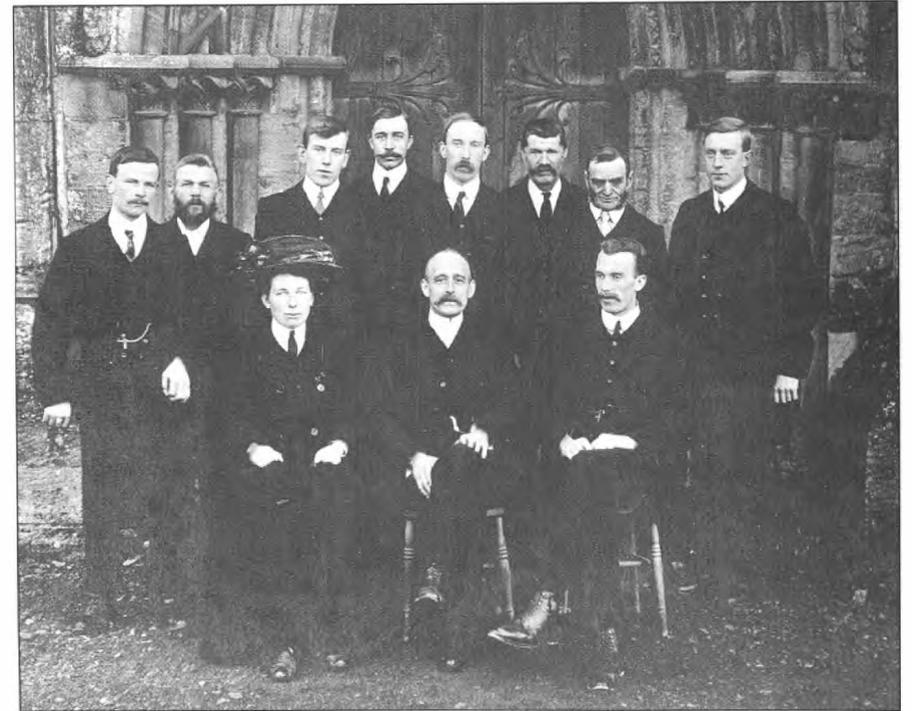


PHOTO 3: THE BELL RINGERS AT ST MARY'S SHIPTON AROUND 1910. HARRY COOMBES IS AT THE END OF THE BACK ROW ON THE LEFT. TED COOMBES IS FOURTH FROM THE LEFT IN THE BACK ROW. STANDING ON TED'S LEFT IS ALF MILES WHO LATER WORKED AT THE OXON CASH REGISTER CO. AND WHOSE ASCOTT ROAD WORKSHOP WAS TAKEN OVER AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR BY THE WYCHWOOD MANUFACTURING CO, THE LAST OF THE THREE SHIPTON CASH TILL BUSINESSES TO START UP.

was the extent of the first works. By the mid 1930s a second shed had been erected housing the machine and fitting shops. This second shed was joined to the first via the polishing shop. The adjacent business was Bradley's Garage, belonging to Reg Bradley, who had served with Harry Coombes in the Royal Naval Air Service. Harry Coombes lived in Glenhurst opposite the Station Road Tillyard and then in 1935 moved to the adjacent villa, Hawthornes. In about 1945 a further shed was built parallel to the "lean to"

LEFT:

PHOTO 2: WORKERS IN THE FITTING SHOP OF THE OXON CASH REGISTER CO. ABOUT 1923. NOTE THAT THE WALL BEHIND THEM BACKED ONTO THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE RUN BY DICK AVERY. RATS FROM THERE OFTEN RAN ALONG THE SHELF VISIBLE BEHIND THE WORKERS IN THE PHOTOGRAPH. THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN STANDING OVER THE OLD SAW PIT. WHEN EVENTUALLY A HOUSE WAS BUILT ON THE SITE IN 1980 A DIGGER REDISCOVERED THIS PIT BY FALLING INTO IT! THE REAR OF THE PHOTOGRAPH HAS THE NAMES JACK BAYLIS AND BERT POWELL. JACK BAYLIS WAS THE BROTHER OF ALF.

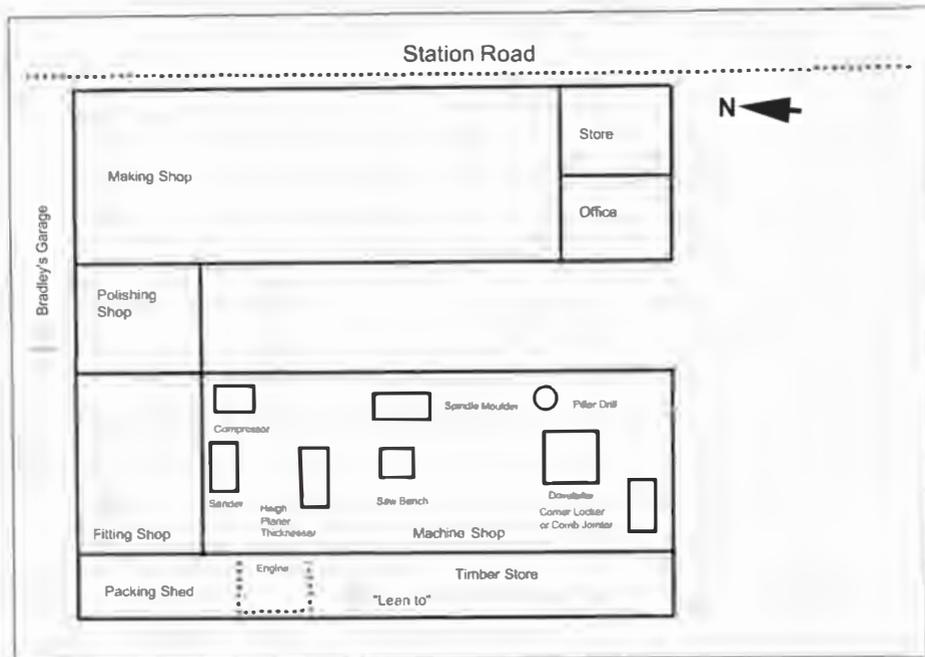


DIAGRAM 2: THE STATION ROAD TILLYARD JUST BEFORE WORLD WAR II

and this housed the timber store, the fitting shop for the poultry incubator and the garage for Harry Coombes' car. A small office and mess room were built to the right of the plan, i.e. parallel to the main road.

About one year after the move, in 1926, a young woman, Phyllis Siford (later Phyllis Longshaw and finally Phyllis Smith), came from grammar school in Cheltenham to be the new and indeed first bookkeeper. She later recounted (WLHS archives), that the administration was in a state of some disorganisation with bills stuck on nails and the cash flow not receiving the attention it required although this was probably to be expected in a new and growing business.

According to Bob Coombes, Ted did not get on with Phyllis but she and his father Harry always had a good mutual liking and respect even after she left in 1946 to set up the third Shipton operation, Wychwood Manufacturing Co. They were both very shrewd, the one a modern, well educated girl from outside the village while Harry had left school at twelve and was very much a pillar of the local community – Chairman of the Parish Council, a member of the Rural District Council, Church Warden, Grandmaster of the Oddfellows and on the Board of Governors of the Workhouse. Photograph 4 shows the workforce at the Station Road yard in about 1936.

Photo 5 shows the interior of the Oxon Cash Register Co.'s workshop after it had been bought by the United Woodworking Co.

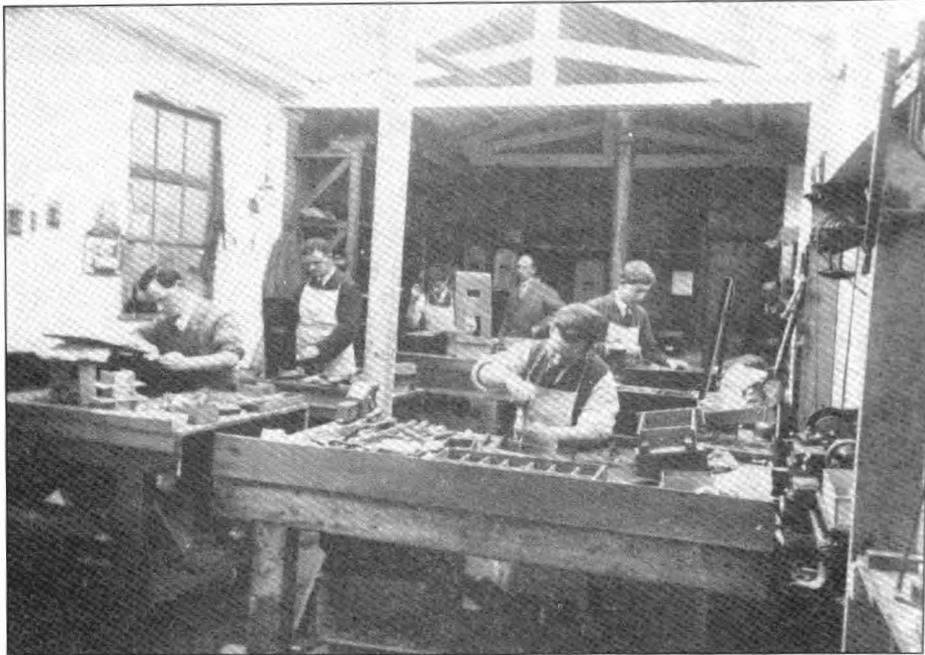


PHOTO 4 : UNITED WOODWORKING COMPANY WORKFORCE IN ABOUT 1936. PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN FRONT OF THE POLISHING SHOP
 BACK ROW FROM LEFT – ERNIE BELCHER (LYNEHAM), CYRIL LAITCHBURY, VICTOR BROOKES, DON PITTAWAY, HORACE PITTAWAY, ALF CARPENTER
 MIDDLE ROW FROM LEFT – JIM SLATTER, SID HARVEY, PHYLLIS LONGSHAW (NEE SIFORD), DAN WIGGINS, ALF SMITH, HARRY COOMBS, JAYBEE BROOM, LAURIE PITTAWAY, FRANCIS DIX, SID TIERNEY (CHURCH STREET), NORMAN COOPER
 FRONT ROW FROM LEFT – ALBERT LONGSHAW (FIRST HUSBAND OF PHYLLIS SIFORD), CHARLIE NORGROVE (MOUNT PLEASANT), CHARLIE STRINGER (FIFIELD), ARTHUR SHIRLEY (ASCOTT), FRED SMITH (MILTON, SECOND HUSBAND OF PHYLLIS SIFORD), ALF HARVEY
 ALF HARVEY AND SID HARVEY WERE BROTHERS AS WERE HORACE AND DON PITTAWAY. ALF HARVEY AND DON PITTAWAY WORKED FOR THE COMPANY FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1923. SID TIERNEY WAS POSSIBLY THE ONLY MAN TO HAVE WORKED IN ALL THREE TILLYARDS WHEN THEY WERE INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS.

There is some disagreement over the identity of the workers shown on Photo 5. The best suggestion is that the man on the left is Jim Slatter. The two men (second and fourth from the left) are Jimmy Wallace and Harry Crabtree who had come to Shipton with Alf Baylis from Halifax. At the front right is Ernie Souch and behind him Albert Longshaw. The man between Jimmy Wallace and Harry Crabtree has not been identified.

Photo 6 is of the interior of the Station Road Workshop of United Woodworking at about the same time.

Both workshops were in operation until the start of the Second World War although by then the South Works was mainly making shop fittings. The Station Road Works concentrated on cash tills. The range comprised about a dozen models including one for fitting under counters (used in public houses) and one with a separately locked desk shaped top. Some wooden furniture was also produced (for example chairs for the Village



PHOTOGRAPH 5: INTERIOR OF THE OXON CASH REGISTER CO.'S WORKSHOP EARLY 1930s

Hall and cotton reel cabinets to a German design for Coates). There was still a relationship with Groves. This mainly took the form of Groves buying occasional fittings from United Woodworking and United buying English timber from Groves. Photo 7 shows typical Shipton cash tills.

Photo 8 shows the Great Western Railway lorry picking up a consignment of cash tills from outside the Station Road tillyard. The driver is Ernie Clemson and the photograph would have been taken during the mid 1920s. Bradley's garage is on the right.

One day early in the Second World War a Ministry of Supply controller, working for the Air Ministry, called at the South Works. He inquired whether they might be interested in making aircraft parts from wood. Ted Coombes apparently tugged his moustache in disbelief and showed the caller the door. Thus vanished any opportunity for Shipton to be the site for the production of the Mosquito fighter bomber! Shortly afterwards Ted sold off the machinery in the original works to Kings of Oxford and he, Reg Duester and about half a dozen other workers moved into the Station Road Works while about a dozen of the workforce including Fred Smith and Horace Pratley went to work at De Havillands (later Smiths Instruments) in Witney, ironically on the Mosquito.

The old premises were used during the early war years to shelter cars



PHOTO 6: UNITED WOODWORKING CO.'S STATION ROAD WORKSHOP PROBABLY IN THE EARLY 1930s AND TAKEN LOOKING TOWARDS THE END OF THE MAKING SHOP THE MAN FRONT LEFT IS CHARLIE NORCROVE. THE MAN FACING AWAY FROM THE CAMERA, SECOND ON THE RIGHT IS JAYBEE BROOM. ON HIS LEFT IS JIM SLATTER AND ON THE EXTREME RIGHT IS SID TIERNEY

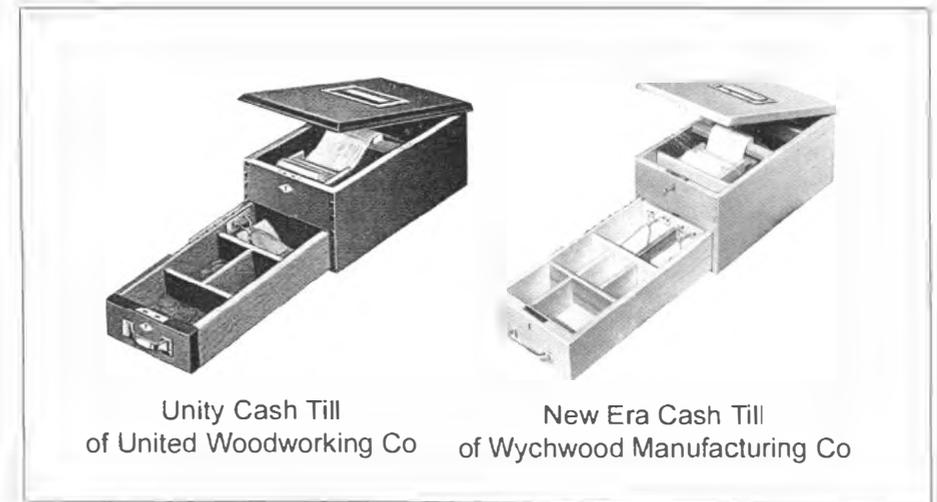


PHOTO 7: TYPICAL SHIPTON MANUFACTURED CASH TILLS



PHOTO 8: A CO-SIGNMENT OF CASH TILLS LEAVES THE STATION ROAD TILLYARD

owned by well off car owners from Birmingham. After the War, they became a store for agricultural materials for Pratt and Haynes. In the 1950s, films were projected in the old showroom. Its final use before demolition was by the Newbolds, of the Court stables, to house pigs.

During the Second World War the number of employees declined until, according to Bob Coombes, there were only two or three boys, too young for national service, and half a dozen women including his mother. Besides cash tills, they made battery boxes and rubber stamp mouldings for the Post Office.

By 1946 however the workforce had recovered to sixteen people. The list taken from the wages book for the week ending 19 April 1946 was as follows:

Machinist	H Pittaway
L Pittaway	J Broom
	F Smith
Makers or Assemblers	D Pittaway
R Duester	
S Tierney	Polishers
P Hepden	J Richards
J Sheehan	R Brookes
H Moss	
G Duester	Office
B Miles	P Smith
V Brookes	

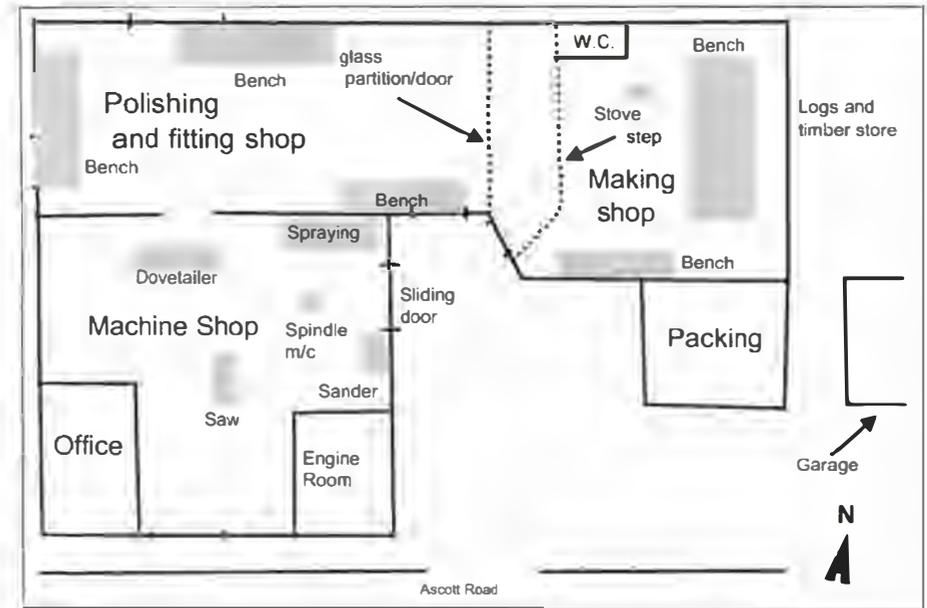


DIAGRAM 3: PLAN OF THE ASCOTT ROAD TILLYARD

This was the last page written in Phyllis Smith's neat handwriting. The next week's entries were in the hand of Mr R Williams (Ted Coombes' son in law). A group of employees (Phyllis Smith with her husband Fred, Laurie Pittaway - who had been one of the originals to have split from Alf Baylis in 1923 with Harry and Ted Coombes - and Jaybee Broom) believed they could do better on their own and gradually left to found the Wychwood Manufacturing Company. Harry Coombes had apparently wanted to make Phyllis a director of the United Wood Working Co. but Ted had objected. Phyllis Smith left first. She was followed by her husband Fred Smith on 10 May (Alf Harvey rejoined United Woodworking that week as a polisher and Arthur Shirley also rejoined but as a maker). Laurie Pittaway left on 24 May and Jaybee Broom on 21 June.

At first they worked at Phyllis Smith's bungalow, Alstone in Station Road just the other side of Bradley's Garage but then took over workshops in the Ascott Road belonging to Alf Miles and used for his woodworking and undertaking business. Alf continued to work there until he died (and presumably was responsible for the "undertaking" mentioned on the new company's promotional material).

Diagram 3 depicts the layout of the Ascott workshop as recalled by Bim Champness. The structure was of wood with a corrugated tin roof. There is no known photograph of the Ascott workshop and only one, rather poor photograph of the interior taken for the Oxford Mail (see Photo 9)



PHOTO 9: NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE INTERIOR OF THE ASCOTT ROAD WORKSHOP. FRED SMITH IS THE MAN SECOND FROM LEFT. THE MAN ON THE LEFT IS POSSIBLY ROBERT VALENTINE.

The workforce in the mid 1950s as recalled by Fred Russell and Bim Champness consisted of:

The four partners – Phyllis Smith who ran the operation, Fred Smith (in charge of making), Jaybee Broom (polishing) and Laurie Pittaway (machining). The partners all lived close to the workshop – the Smiths in Church Street, Jaybee Broom in Ascott Road and Laurie Pittaway in the High Street but next to Jaybee Broom's house.

Bim Champness, who was Fred Smith's nephew by marriage, was a polisher.

There were six assemblers – Bill Slatter (Ascott), Bernard Wicksey (Fifield), Philip Hackling (Milton), Basil Miles (Milton) and Sid Tierney (Shipton) plus a trainee assembler Fred Russell (Ascott).

There were evident tensions. Fred Smith suffered badly from asthma and was often unable to work so that Laurie Pittaway and Jaybee Broom felt they had to do more than their fair share. Jaybee Broom had taken something of a demotion in joining Wychwood Manufacturing. At United Woodworking he had been foreman in the making shop. Fred Smith in fact had started his career as Jaybee Broom's "boy". Laurie Pittaway (who later returned to work for United Woodworking in Station Road) was felt to

have a rebellious streak and Fred Smith was critical of his cutting at times. It probably did not help that two of the four partners were married to each other and could carry on business conversations out of hours.

Conditions were hard especially in the winter. The wood glue used to freeze solid over night. At first heating was from the "slow but sure" stove in the making shop. It was Fred Russell's job to pack the stove with sawdust the evening before and then get it started when work began again at 7.45 the following morning. There was apparently no water. He used to fill up a kettle from the neighbouring gas works so that Phyllis Smith could make tea for 9.45. She and Fred would then sit on the tool box and discuss priorities. Sometimes she would say, "There's a bit of post Fred" and this was a signal for the directors to meet informally.

Phyllis Smith always had a reputation as a sharp business woman. She knew the value of information. In 1958, when the Oxford Mail visited both working tillyards, United Woodworking was frank about its current production level of some 200 tills a month. Wychwood Manufacturing's output however was a secret! Phyllis Smith would allegedly tip the lorry driver, who collected the output from both tillyards, ten shillings a week so that he would pick up the tills from Wychwood Manufacturing after those of United Woodworking and she could see how well the competition was doing and to whom they were selling! She would also look at the United Woodworking Co.'s paying in book at the bank (these were apparently often left open on the desk at the bank in Shipton) and tie up payments with known deliveries. In this way she was able to undercut United Woodworking.

Wychwood Manufacturing concentrated on the production of cash tills (according to Fred Russell 80% of sales consisted of cash tills in batches of 30 units which would take up to three days to produce) although invoices prepared in the mid 1950s still listed 'cabinet making, undertaking and general repairs' among the activities. There was a greater concentration on exports than at the United Woodworking Co. and, according to Phyllis Smith, this brought support from the Board of Trade when Sam Groves tried to get them closed down just after the War.

In the 1950s employment at both tillyards fell by roughly half as wooden fittings gave way to plastic and more sophisticated cash tills became popular. Neither firm was in direct contact with its market as they only sold to wholesalers who generally marked up prices by 100%. Brunton and Williams of Peckham took around a quarter of the production of the United Woodworking Co. while Morden and Green, also in London, were an important outlet for the Wychwood Manufacturing Co.. Neither till producer had the means or perhaps the initiative to employ their own sales people and both suffered from a lack of space to allow them to hold stocks.

In 1972 the Ascott Road business was bought by a Mr Cohen of Adsit

Typewriters of Birmingham who wanted to close it down and build on the site. Phyllis Smith stayed on for the new owners for a further two and half years until the business eventually closed in about 1975. After that the deteriorating building was briefly occupied by a tramp until a fire caused further serious damage. Now brambles have completely taken over the site.

The United Woodworking Company lasted three years longer. Harry Coombes had bought up the Groves, Willet and Clifford shareholdings and obliged Ted to retire just before his seventieth birthday in around 1954. Harry himself fell ill in 1956 and died in the following year. The day before he died, Phyllis Smith turned up to ask what arrangements were being made for the tillyard! She was told that this had been decided some three years earlier. Harry's son, Robert (Bob), who had his own busy accountancy practice, took over the running of the company (he had been partially involved during the period of Harry's illness). At Harry's death about 80% of revenue still came from the production of cash tills. Bob made efforts to diversify the business. New ventures included pheasant and turkey incubators, bale sledges, bar and drapery store fittings (Avery's store in Shipton was refitted twice and Langston's pub in Kingham was fitted out as a night club) and garden furniture.

Roger Watts worked at United 1959-1964. He estimates the business employed approximately 17 people at that time. Harold Lord was the foreman. Other workers he remembers included Jim Claridge machinist, Terry Stowe fitter, David Rathbone, assembler and Roy Rathbone assembler. Interestingly there were also three mixed race assemblers, Mervyn Case, Johnny Neibeer and Clifford Glynn whose fathers had been American servicemen during the Second World War. Working hours were 7.30 to 12.00 with a quarter of an hour for tea at 9.45. Lunch was from 12.00 to 13.00 and then work resumed until 17.30 with a ten minute tea break at 15.00. There was work on Saturdays from 7.30 to 12.00.

As with the first tillyard, clocks were an important feature in the daily life of the business. Roger Watts relates how Jim Claridge, while playing football, hit the works clock and broke the glass of its elaborate cupboard. Harold Lord continued to open the glass case for six weeks to wind the clock up before he realised the glass was missing!

From the time of the business's inception until 1978, according to Bob Coombes, it rarely sold less than 300 cash tills in any one month. The peak month was 3,000 tills probably in the boom years just after the Second World War! Decimalisation in 1972 however led to the introduction of even more sophisticated automatic cash tills and there was no longer the need to write on a paper roll as with the Shipton tills. The National Cash Register Company (which had first inspired Gledhills and indirectly Alf Baylis fifty years earlier!) had large stocks of automated decimal machines which would do both the calculation of the sale and the

recording. Demand for traditional wooden cash tills dried up. Even the Company's diversification programme ran into problems. Larger, specialist agricultural machinery manufacturers brought out bale sledges which stacked the bales so that they were easier to pick up. Several large orders for turkey incubators were cancelled when hire purchase of agricultural machinery was stopped. By 1978 the business was no longer viable and was wound up. Of the long-time workers, Philip Hepden, Eric Pratley, Horace Pittaway, Ernie Hedges, Jimmy Woodward, Alf Harvey and Reg Duester were there until the end.

Shipton probably produced at least 500,000 wooden cash tills in the half century from 1920. There are no production records so this must remain a rough estimate. What is true is that this micro industry allowed a significant number of men in the Wychwood villages to exploit carpentry skills largely learned at Alfred Groves and Son so that they could earn higher rates of pay than were available elsewhere (including Groves) and generally enjoy better job security without having to commute to Oxford. Its insularity was initially a strength but led eventually to its demise because the industry was, to use the modern jargon, product orientated rather than market orientated.

This paper owes much to the painstaking collection of information, including audio recordings made over the years with Wychwood inhabitants, by John Rawlins. The author is also very grateful for interviews with Bob Coombes, the son of the founder of United Woodworking and Roger Watts who worked there from 1959 to 1964. Gordon Duester who worked at United Woodworking at the end of the War also made several valuable suggestions. Similarly, with regard to the Wychwood Manufacturing Co, information and recollections were generously shared by Fred Russell who worked at the Ascott Road works from 1954 to 1958 and then again from 1964 to 1966 and Bim Champness who also worked at the Wychwood Manufacturing Co. from 1956 to 1966.

The Wychwoods Local History Society meets once a month from September through to June. Meetings usually alternate between the village halls at Milton and Shipton. Current membership is £6 for an individual and £9 for a couple or overseas member, which includes a copy of *Wychwoods History* when published. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, Littlecott, Honeydale Farm, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BJ (telephone 01993 831023).

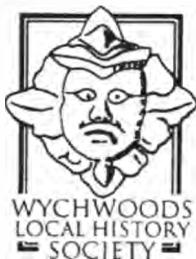
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An Index of articles, contributors, personal names, farms, maps and subjects in journals 1-19 is available free from the same address on receipt of a self-addressed C5 (229 x162mm) envelope with 2 first class stamps or see www.wychwoodshistory.org for the personal name index.

Cover illustration

The seal of Bruern Abbey, a pointed oval with an abbot standing on a corbel. He has a pastoral staff in his right hand and a book in his left. The legend is: SIGILLUM :ABBAT: [IS :DE] BRUERIA.

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