

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

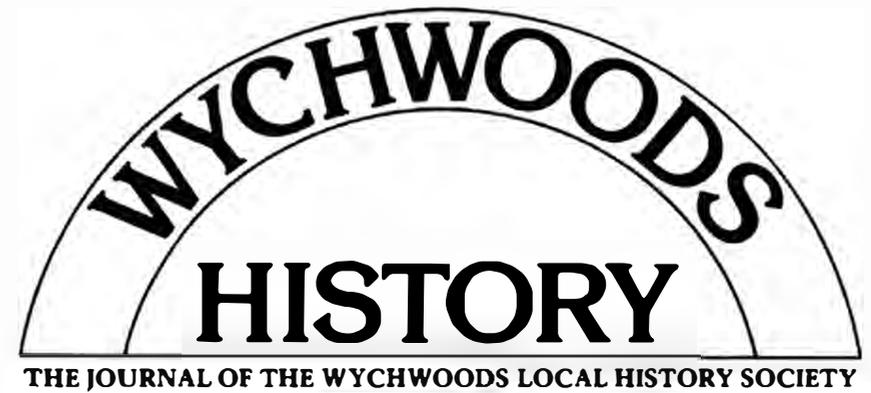
THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Number Three, 1987



MILTON AND SHIPTON IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Published in conjunction with
OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT FOR EXTERNAL STUDIES



Number Three, 1987

**MILTON AND SHIPTON
IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

Edited by **KATE TILLER**

Copyright © The Wychwoods Local History Society and Oxford University
Department for External Studies 1987

ISBN 0 9510372 3 4

Printed by Parchment (Oxford) Ltd, 60 Hurst Street, Oxford

CONTENTS

Foreword by Jack Howard-Drake	3
Introduction by Kate Tiller	4
Chapter I: Patterns in the landscape — farming and community before 1850	5
Chapter II: Village government	17
Chapter III: Decade of change 1850-1860	28
Chapter IV: Decade of decisions: the 1870s	45
Chapter V: Growing up in Milton and Shipton one hundred years ago	53
Chapter VI: Life and work in Shipton and Milton 1880-1914	61

ABBREVIATIONS

ORO	Oxfordshire Record Office
LHL	Oxfordshire Local History Library, Westgate, Oxford
PRO	Public Record Office

FOREWORD

This third volume of the Society's journal is a special issue which brings together a number of studies of Shipton and Milton in the 19th century. They are based on research carried out by an evening class, of members and others, tutored by Kate Tiller, Staff Tutor in Local History, Oxford University Department for External Studies. We are much indebted to Dr Tiller for her work in directing the group for the last three years and for editing this number of the journal. It is a joint publication by the Society and the Department and is a practical example of the value of collaboration between the professional and amateur historian.

The Society has again had a successful year. Our membership is up and our monthly meetings continue to be well attended. A particularly welcome development has been the growing involvement of members in the Society's activities. The field walks, now an annual event, are well supported, a group is engaged in transcribing and analysing all the census returns from 1841 to 1881, and another group is undertaking a detailed study of Shipton Church. More members than before are researching their own interests and many others are working hard to prepare for the Society's exhibition to be held in Milton Village Hall in April 1987.

This all augurs well for the future.

Jack Howard-Drake
Chairman, WLHS.

INTRODUCTION

This is a portrait of Milton and Shipton under Wychwood between 1800 and 1914. It is based on the work of an extramural evening class, which met in the Wychwood Primary School during 1984-6, and which was organised by Oxford University Department for External Studies. The task was to explore the multitude of original sources available for the 19th century and, concentrating on a range of tithe and enclosure awards and maps, rate books, tithe surveys, commercial directories, school log books and School Board minutes, early Ordnance Survey maps, railway plans, land tax assessments, trade union minute books, friendly society records, and census enumerators' returns, to draw out some of the main themes in the development of the two villages.

The period proved to be one of great change and adjustment. Many questions were raised, not all of which has it been possible to answer here. Constrictions on space have not allowed all our findings to be included, whilst some possible sources remain to be explored. Some of the conclusions we have reached will no doubt be debated by readers. One of the rewards of working on the history of these Wychwood villages has been the sense of being part of lively and active research, informed by great local knowledge. This was true of the class meetings, which produced the findings presented here, and of the unflinching interest and support shown by members of the Wychwoods Local History Society. I hope this volume will add information and ideas to the ongoing discussion of Wychwoods local history.

The area studied consisted of the townships of Shipton and Milton, both part of the ancient parish of Shipton until Milton became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1895. Shipton and Milton lie in West Oxfordshire, some four miles north of Burford and six miles south of Chipping Norton.

My thanks are due to the following class members for their contributions and enthusiasm: Chris Burn-Murdoch (chp. 1), Wendy and Jim Pearse (chps. 1 & 3), Margaret Ware (chp. 2), Ronald McKenzie (chp. 3); Margaret Seager (chp. 4), Joan Boddington (chp. 5) and Geoffrey Giles (chp. 6). I also drew on the work of Sally Sutton, Norman Frost, Rosemary and Geoffrey Hitchcox and Duncan Waugh. From the Wychwood Local History Society Sue Jourdan, Joan and Jack Howard-Drake and Sue Richards gave much valuable advice. Mr. Clifford of Wychwood County Primary School kindly lent the school log books. Miss Shirley Barnes and her staff at Oxfordshire Record Office, and Dr. Malcolm Graham and his staff at Oxfordshire Local History Library patiently produced many of the source materials. Last, but not least, Shirley Hermon and Melanie Steiner of OUDES prepared the typescript and the maps.

Kate Tiller
Rewley House, Oxford

CHAPTER I

Patterns in the landscape — farming and community before 1850

Agriculture was the lifeblood of the Wychwood villages throughout the 19th century. However during those years both the landscape and the communities it supported and moulded changed substantially. The greatest period of upheaval was to come in the 1850s. In 1800 continuity rather than change seemed the keynote. The atmosphere was not one of agricultural revolution, of enclosure, improvement or mechanisation. Rather the local landscape largely presented the appearance it had done for centuries previously.

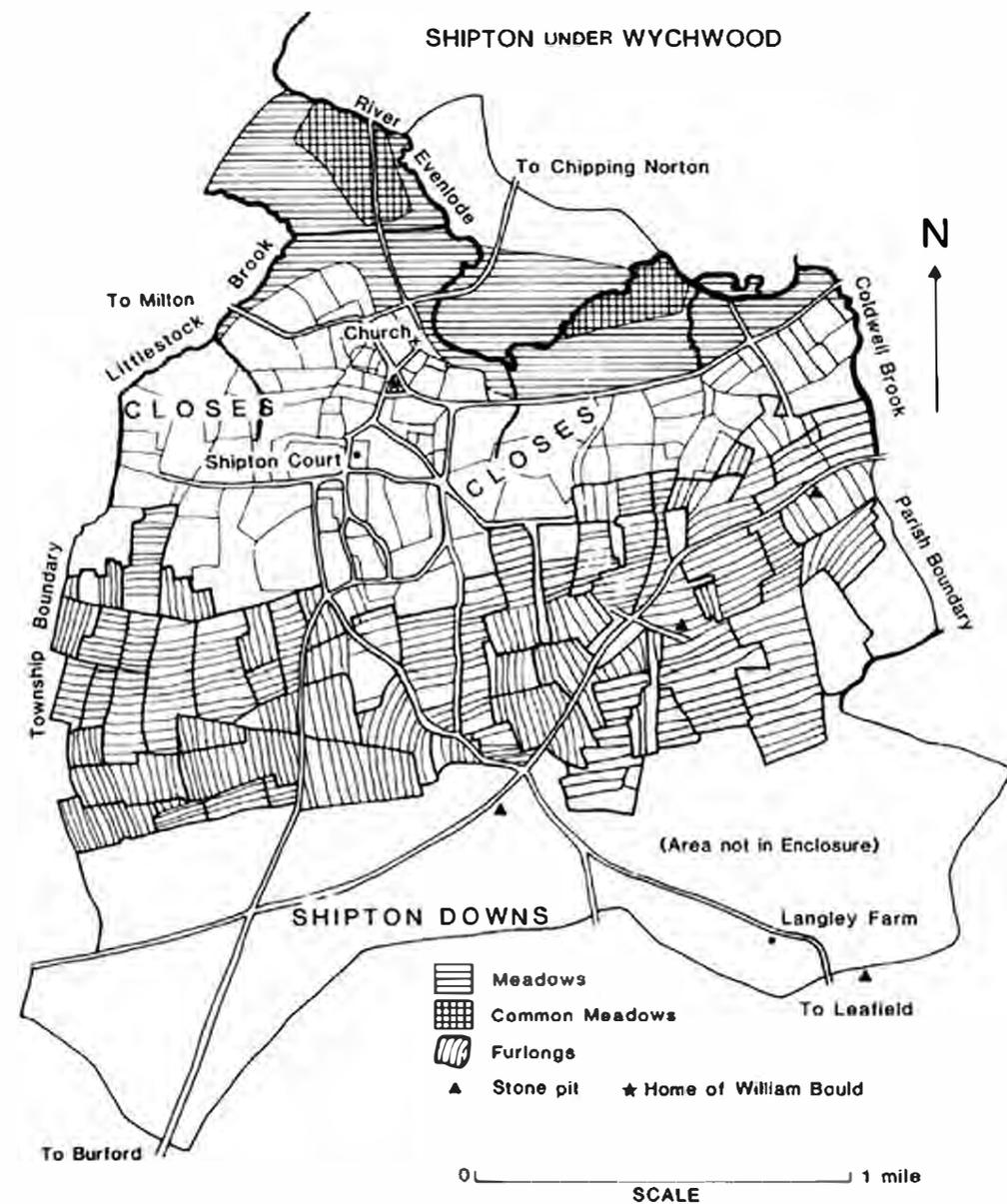
The landscape of both Shipton and Milton had four main elements (see Maps 2 and 4). First the main arable land lay in two great common fields; then there was the common grazing land on the Downs; thirdly some areas, mainly pasture but some arable, had been enclosed into separate fields; finally there were the hay meadows.

Table 1: Distribution of lands in Shipton 1800

	Acres	Roods (hereafter a r p)	Perches
New closes	37	0	0
Common field	1297	2	0
Green land	658	2	0
The Downs	400	0	0
TOTAL	2393	0	0

Source: W.J. Oldfield (Bodleian Library MS Top. Oxon c. 242)

This division reflected a field system of early medieval origin and geared to the production of the staples of human and animal existence — flour, beer, some meat, and enough feed to sustain small numbers of stock for breeding and as draft animals. Such farming aimed at local subsistence and self-sufficiency. The exact balance in a particular community depended on local conditions, as the very name Shipton ('sheep farm') indicates. In 1800 the elements of the fieldscape still closely followed the physical topography, (Map 1). Down in the rich, damp alluvial riverside zone lay the hay meadows, prized for their high quality feed. Landholders had rights to cut hay and graze horses and cows here in proportion to their holdings in the arable common fields. But how was it to be decided who should cut which bit of Bowerham Meadow, or have a fair chance of mowing the best section of Shipton Great Meadow? In 1800 this was solved by dividing the meadows up into lots and holding a ballot amongst eligible landholders.



Map 2: Shipton before enclosure

and Oxford goal would be uninhabited, were it not for this fertile source of crimes. This is a consideration that will surely have its weight with every man who sees the evil, and must consequently wish for the only remedy the case admits.'

Certainly stories abound of the uncontrolled character of the forest — its fair, its gypsies, its robberies, the temptations of game and firewood which it offered. Here was a reservoir of food and warmth, for themselves or to be sold, which was a godsend to local people trying to cope with the low wages and high prices prevalent in the early 19th century. Those in authority did not regard the riches of the forest as godsent, which accounts for the number of convictions for poaching made by successive vicars of Shipton, Robert Phillimore (1814-52) and W.E.D. Carter in their capacity as local magistrates.

Despite Arthur Young's strictures, improvement in the form of enclosure did not reach the Forest or Milton and Shipton until the mid-century, perhaps because of this remoteness and backwardness. Notices of intended enclosure bills for both Milton and Shipton appeared in September 1820, but apparently came to nothing. Thus the story of local farming in the first half of the century is that of the survival, aided by its ability to adapt, of the common field system. This flexibility was demonstrated in a number of ways. To make open field farming work many regulations had to be made; which crops should be sown where and when, how many beasts could be grazed, where and when, and how they should be contained; for the maintenance of boundaries, access ways, and watercourses; for the allocation of meadow rights. This had been done by manorial courts. By 1800, although in Shipton meetings retained the name of Court Leet, the vestry meetings of 'the principal inhabitants' of the townships of Shipton and Milton had effectively taken on this management within the framework of parochial local government (see Chapter 2). Other changes had occurred. As we have seen some private enclosures had already been made. In 1806 Shipton farmers agreed, 'Each to have the same land every year for the Benefit of mutually manuring to cut more Hay and improve the Common which answered extremely well'. Thus the old system of lot meadows was abandoned in favour of more convenient and permanent divisions. As to crop rotations a survey of Shipton parish in 1814 suggests that some of the changes associated with agricultural improvements in the 18th century had been adopted, within the interstices of the ancient field system. The Norfolk four-course rotation had been developed in East Anglia by the 1770s. The 1814 survey shows a clear attempt to follow the same sequence in Shipton. Each furlong was noted as being in one of four quarters, named Milton Road, Burford Road, New Close and Caudle Brook. If, as seems likely, the crops grown in 1814 (shown in italics) were part of a standard rotation, the pattern for Shipton's open fields was as shown in Table 2.

Barley, for which stonebrash was well-suited, and wheat were the principal crops, but a wider range was cultivated. This included oats, probably for horse feed, turnips, beans, peas, potatoes and vetches (cut green). According to an estate map of Ascott parish in 1836 swedes and turnips, peas, beans, vetches and possibly sainfoin were grown in strips in the open fields. Swedes and turnips provided winter feed for sheep, whilst the leguminous plants helped enrich the soil with nitrogen. Sainfoin produced best quality hay and provided

Table 2: Assumed Cropping for Shipton Open Fields 1813-16

Quarter/ Year	Milton Road	Burford Road	New Close	Caudle Brook
1813	Grass	Roots	Wheat	Barley
1814	Wheat	Barley	Roots & beans	Grass
1815	Roots	Grass	Barley	Wheat
1816	Barley	Wheat	Grass	Roots

excellent feed for stock.

How was this landscape worked? Some ploughing was by horse teams, although at the beginning of the century Young noted that the Burford area was famous for oxtteams. After ploughing, crops were generally broadcast by hand and then ploughed or harrowed in, perhaps with a brush harrow. Much hand hoeing was essential, in the absence of chemicals, to keep the crops free of weeds. This task must have consumed long hours in the fields. Children usually performed the other important spring task of crow scaring. On stonebrash soils stone picking was another necessary but tedious task.

Wheat was sown after fallow, usually in August; this early date was believed to cut the risk of smut and mildew. Barley was not planted until around Lady Day (25 March), and oats about the end of March. A proportion of arable was left fallow, up to 7% on some of the larger Shipton tenancies in 1814. Manure was a vital ingredient of open field cultivation, with no artificial fertilisers available. Well-rotted farmyard manure was prized, whilst town dunghills, like those at Chipping Norton, were sold off to farmers. Stock, particularly sheep, were an essential part of the Norfolk four-course rotation in the role of mobile dung carts. Pigeon dung, lime, ashes, rags, mud, gypsum and compost were also used at times.

When the crops came to fruition with the harvest the fields must have been busy with people. First came the hay harvest with men mowing and women bedding and turning the hay before forming it into cocks ready to be carried to the rickyards; then the corn harvest with men reaping and women tying the sheaves, which were put into stooks to dry. These were then carted to the rickyard and built into stacks, neatly trimmed and thatched and raised off the ground on wooden frames balanced on nine or more staddle stones, in an effort to exclude damp and rats.

Harvest was peak earning time. In the first decade of the century men could earn 15-18s per week, plus beer, and women 8-9d per day. Winter work was spasmodic with hand-threshing by flail a mainstay throughout this period. Many labourers were on day pay and, when in work, could earn 8-10s per week in winter. Those looking after animals, like carters and shepherds, had more steady employment, usually on annual contract.

Sheep were the most numerous animals in the Wychwood villages. In 1814 in Shipton there were 1210 sheep and 504 lambs, mostly in flocks of 150-300. The Downs must have been speckled in summer with the grazing flocks, which were then folded over turnips and grass aftermath in the arable fields in the autumn and winter. Young found the Leicester x Cotswold popular around Chipping Norton, and the Leicester x Gloucester nearer Burford. The aim was

obviously to combine the fattening properties of the Leicester with the growth rate and long wool of the Cotswold and Gloucester.

No one breed of cattle dominated at this time. Young noted Hercfords, South Devons, Longhorns and Shorthorns in Oxfordshire, with Shorthorns popular for producing reasonable milk yields and fattening well. We do not know the breeds of the 81 cows and 80 followers (young stock of various ages) found in Shipton in 1814, but it is interesting that they were scattered between farms, only three herds having more than 10 cows. This suggests limited production for local use (the main product being butter not liquid milk) rather than any specialised output.

Transport must have been a prime factor in the marketing of produce. In 1847 carriers' carts went from the villages to the principal markets of the district — Banbury on Mondays (returning Tuesdays), Chipping Norton on Wednesdays and Witney on Thursdays. Animals could be driven to market and grain transported by waggon. Shipton lay on the Burford-Chipping Norton road, turnpiked in 1770. Young mentions the wider contacts of farmers in the east of the county, who supplied the London market. There is no evidence of this trade reaching as far west as the Wychwoods at this date. Groves of Milton used to ship stone along the Thames from Radcot Bridge but there is no mention of agricultural produce following the same route. Shipton and Langley mills produced flour locally. Although life in the villages did reflect outside pressures and influences its agricultural base showed little sign of rapid fluctuation. Local farming is portrayed in the 1814 survey and in another of 1852. In 1814, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, grain prices were high. By 1852 the national average price of wheat (39s per quarter or 4½ cwt.) was only a third of that in 1814. This was reflected in a 10% fall in the acreage of arable crops in 1852 as compared with 1814. Yet some 50% was still down to arable husbandry, suggesting that local production and self-sufficiency were still desirable objectives.

One final, social dimension needs to be added to our landscape of the Wychwoods before 1850. Who were the landowners, the farmers, the labourers and craftsmen? The open field village has often been associated with a traditional, self-governing community of independent small landholders, whilst the ending of the system of communal agriculture, usually identified with large-scale parliamentary enclosure, spelt the disappearance of small farmers, the reduction of a majority of local people to the status of landless wage labourers, the appearance of sharply polarised ownership and social structures, and the creation of big, market-orientated farms. Evidence from Shipton and Milton suggests that many such changes had already happened long before parliamentary enclosure.

The picture in 1800 is revealed by the land tax assessments of that year. Each village had paid this major national tax since 1692. Shipton's share was £98 5s 4d and Milton's £86 14s 10d. Since assessments had become fossilised, and had originally been based on a variety of property rights and not just area of land, they cannot be simply equated with acreages held by each named tax payer. However the number of people taxed in each place and their share of the total assessment does indicate the relative distribution of property. Since both proprietors and occupiers were listed for each property, degrees of owner occupation or absenteeism can also be considered. On this basis Shipton and

Milton in 1800 have been compared, and shares of ownership expressed as percentages of the total tax assessed for each place. There are notable differences between the two.

In Shipton in 1800 ownership of property was heavily polarised (Figure 1). There were 32 named proprietors, ten of whom held almost 90% of assessed property. Within this dominant group there were even greater concentrations since four people held 58% of the whole, the largest estate being that of Lady Reade of Shipton Court, with over one fifth of the property. Many proprietors were very small fry; 17 held less than 1% of the assessed total.

Only 31% of Shipton property was owner occupied. The 12 proprietors listed as occupiers ranged from the largest units of 16.5% of Lady Reade (some of whose other land was tenanted), and Richard Ellis (9.9%) to Richard Cross with only 0.5%. Thus 69% of Shipton property was tenanted, by 27 occupiers in units ranging from John Patrick's 13.6% and Thomas Brookes Junior's 12.7% to William Toundley's tiny 0.08%.

In Milton property ownership was shared between more people (Figure 2). There were 46 named proprietors. Although not so polarised as Shipton, distribution was very unequal. The top ten proprietors held some 76% of assessed property. No one estate dominated as did the Reades in Shipton, although the holdings of Charles Fettiplace and Thomas Wood accounted for 11.8% and 11.5% respectively. Five proprietors between them held 50% of the whole. Again there were larger numbers of small proprietors than in Shipton; 30 held less than 1%, going right down to 0.06%. These were the surviving small men. The modest role of the independent small landowner is strikingly clear from the very low proportion of owner occupation in Milton. 23 people collectively occupied only 7.1% of property. All the holdings were very small. The largest, accounting for only 1% of the assessed total, belonged to Thomas Maddox, who was also a substantial tenant farmer. Over 82% of Milton was tenanted, by 24 people in units ranging from the very substantial 22.3% of John Wilkins and John Smith's 12.2% next in line, to William Pratt's 0.06%.

So property generally rested in relatively few hands; 32 proprietors in Shipton and 46 in Milton amongst a population in 1801 in Shipton of 406, and in Milton of 495. In Milton patterns of ownership seemed more open and dispersed, with more small owners, yet overall levels of owner occupation were lower than in Shipton. In both places a very few landowners were heavily dominant. This was more marked in Shipton in 1800. How had things changed by the mid-century?

Parliamentary enclosure awards were made for Milton in 1849 and Shipton in 1852 (Chapter 3). By then there were still in Shipton 28 people with holdings and/or common rights, compared with 32 proprietors in 1800. Within their number ownership had become even more polarised. The Reade dominance had increased, and Sir John Chandos Reade received 38% of the land allotted. The next largest share went to Elizabeth Webb with 19%. In Milton still greater changes had occurred; in 1800 there had been 46 proprietors but only 25 owners received allotments in the 1849 award. The result left Milton with an ownership structure even more top heavy than Shipton's. J.H. Langston, of Sarsden, received 41% of allotted land and George Eyston 22%.

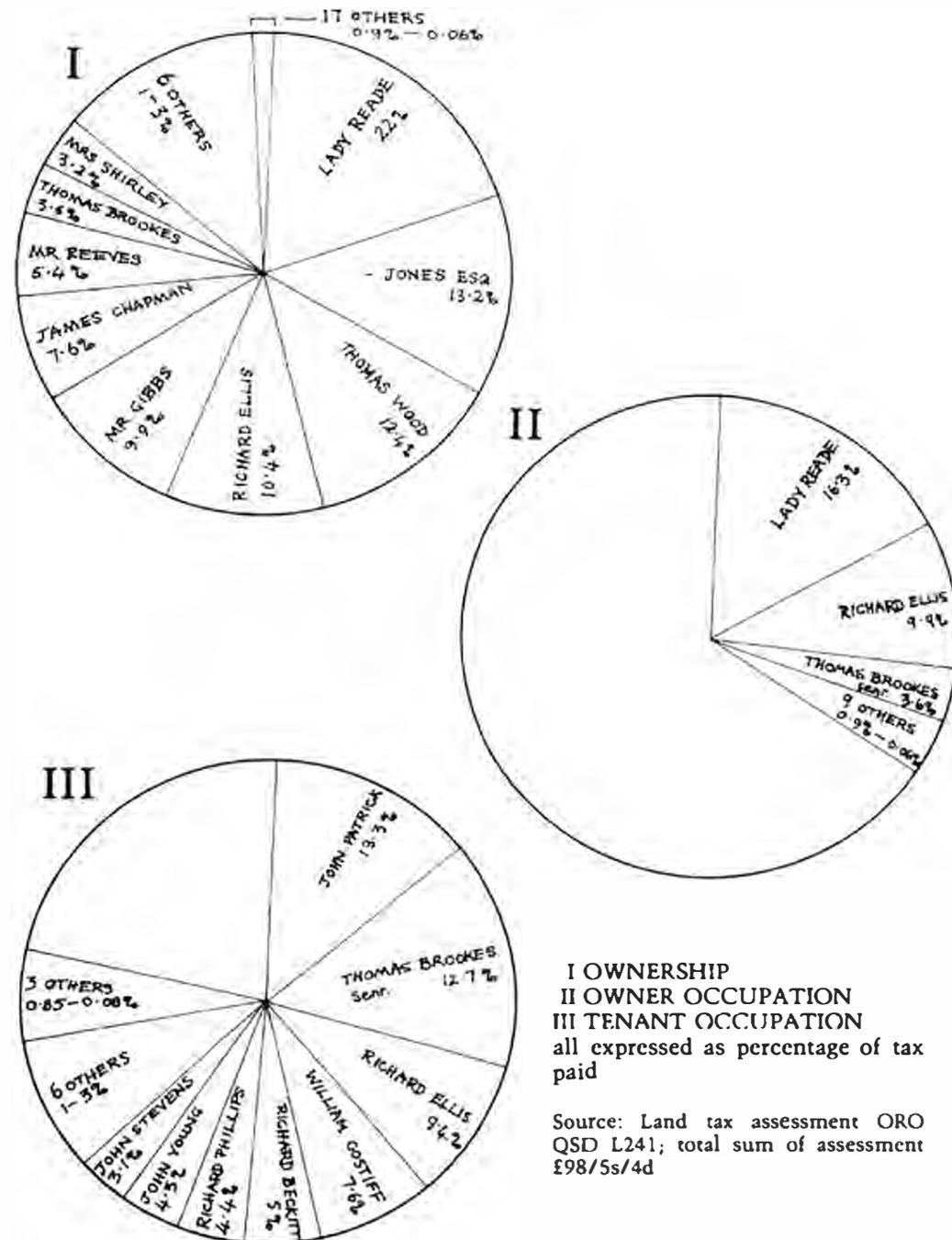


Figure 1: Shipton property ownership, 1800

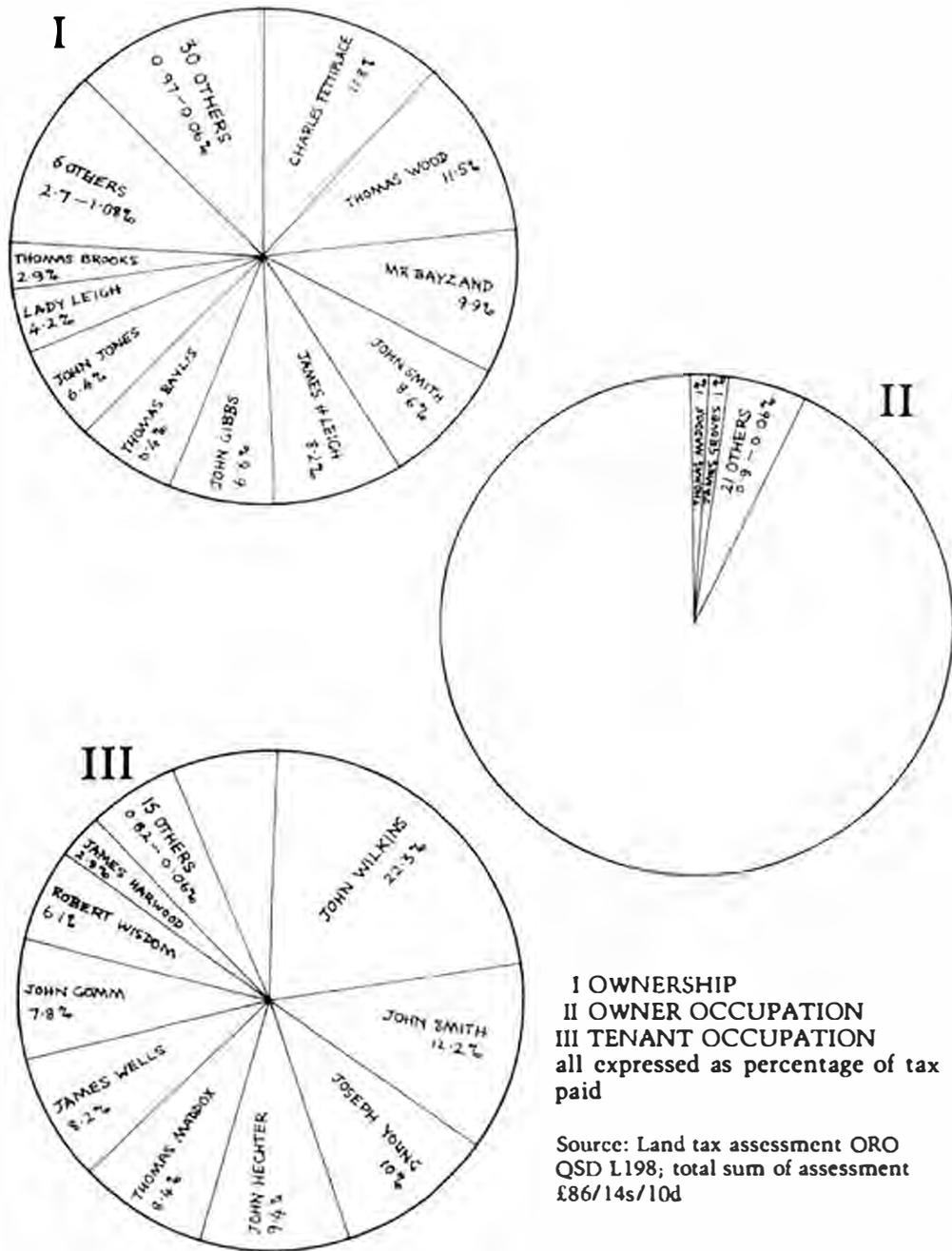


Figure 2: Milton property ownership, 1800

The first half of the 19th century saw our two villages developing very similar structures of landholding, a framework on which so many aspects of local life — farming, job opportunities, housing, patterns of local government, and social relations — depended. For Milton this involved the greater degree of change. In Sipton there was considerable stability, as a comparison of the leading landowners in 1814, 1831 and 1852 shows (Table 3).

Table 3

1814	1831	1852
Sir John Reade	Sir John Reade	Sir John Reade
William Jones	Miss F.E. Webb (late Jones)	Miss F.E. Webb
Thomas Wood Esq.	Thomas Wood Esq.	William Bould
Ralph Ellis	William Bould	W.E. Coleman Esq.
James Chapman Esq.	W.E. Coleman Esq.	Thomas Young
W.E. Coleman Esq.	James Herbert	Lord Francis Churchill
Thomas Brookes Jr.	George Rowmarsh	The Tithe Holders
Simon Sharp Esq.	The Hon. F.G. Churchill	George Eyston
Duke of Marlborough	Biese (late Francis)	Thomas Fowler
Rev. Mr Francis	John Hacker Esq.	
John Hacker Esq.		

Sources: land tax assessments 1814, 1831; rate assessment 1852 (all in ORO)

Patterns of tenancy are revealed by the 1814 survey of Sipton.

Table 4: A Survey of Tenant Holdings in 1814

Those holding	Number	Total acreage involved arp	% of recorded land	Average size of holding arp
Cottages & garden only	44	4 3 35	0.25	0 0 9
Less than 10 acres	17	66 0 05	3.25	3 2 21
10 to 100 acres	6	101 2 36	5.00	16 3 33
More than 100 acres	9	1842 2 36	91.50	204 2 35

Given the high proportions of absentee ownership in both Milton and Sipton it was the tenants who were the practical, working members of the village communities. They often held their land from several different landlords. John Young in Sipton in 1814 rented 363 acres from four landlords, (W.E. Coleman, Miss Gorges, Rev. Mr Francis and S. Sharp), all in furlongs scattered around the village. John Gomm, who farmed 301 acres, had only two landlords, Sir John Reade and Compton Reade, a distant relative of Sir John. The 1839 tithe apportionment for Sipton shows a similar state of affairs; few landlords and an equally small number of principal tenants, although the tenants had changed. Richard Bould and Thomas Trinder farmed 318 and 188

CHAPTER II

Village government

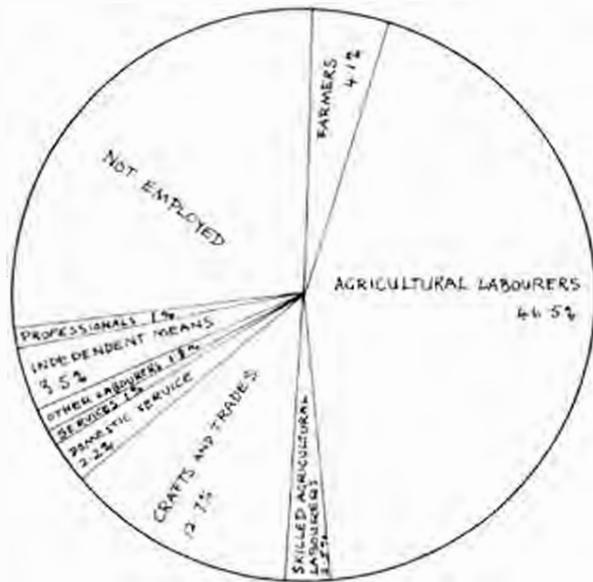


Figure 3: Shipton male occupations in 1851. (Total male population 316)

acres respectively, both from one landlord, Sir John Reade. John Smith, the licensee of the Crown Inn, on the other hand farmed 72 acres from James Herbert, 6 acres from Lord Churchill, and 27 acres from four other sources. Quarter day must have been a nightmare for him. Only two men were both tenants and owners. Otherwise the two roles, of landholding and farming, were very much separate.

By 1851 Shipton showed a clearly stratified pattern of life and society. The rank, status and occupation of villagers, as revealed in the census enumerators' returns of that year, comes as no surprise (Figure 3), but the Wychwood villages were about to embark on a decade of change — the 1850s.

Sources and References

Agreement for managing Shipton meadows, 1806, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.19c; cow commons in Shipton meadow and horse commons in Bowerham meadow, 1789, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.23 ff 31^r, 12^r; land tax assessments for Milton, 1814 and 1831, ORO QSD L 198; land tax assessments for Shipton, 1814 and 1831, ORO QSD L 241; survey of Shipton parish 1814, ORO MS D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood d. 8 ff 150^r-156^r; notices of enclosure for Milton and Shipton 1820, ORO MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers b.122b; tithe apportionment and map for Shipton, 1843, ORO 342; Shipton rate assessment book, 1852, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.20; Shipton census enumerators' books, 1851, PRO microfilm in LHL; A. Young, *General View of the Agriculture of Oxfordshire* (1813); H.L. Gray, *English Field Systems* (1915), p.438.

The ordering of local community affairs in Milton and Shipton at the beginning of the 19th century followed a pattern which had evolved over many centuries. Many aspects of this system are revealed in fascinating detail in the book used by successive constables of Shipton to record their duties and account for their expenditures in the years to 1851. The constable was one of the busiest offices of village government. Local constables had originally enforced the jurisdiction of manorial courts in the Middle Ages. In some places manorial jurisdiction persisted after the Middle Ages and so did the constable. Elsewhere, and very commonly by the early 19th century, such jurisdiction had become the responsibility of the parish and the constable appears as the parish constable.

The central responsibility of the parish for many local matters dated from the 16th century, when Tudor monarchs, seeking to build a strong, centralised network of government with clear chains of authority reaching into the localities, adopted the parish as the chief unit of civil local government. Existing offices, such as those of constable and churchwarden, were made part of the new system, and others were created to cope with the new duties laid upon the community. Notable amongst these were the overseers of the poor, whose task it was to implement the system of relief for the poor and unemployed laid down in the legislation of 1598-1601. The parish was also involved in the registration of baptisms, marriages and burials, the maintenance of local roads, and the regulation of common field farming. Different officials ranging from the churchwardens, to the surveyors of the highways, tithingmen and haywards, had responsibility for these various functions. The constable, in carrying out the decisions of other officers, seems to have been comprehensively involved.

The village 'parliament' was the parish vestry. The vestry was empowered to raise rates and annually elected the various officers. In practice vestry meetings were often not open gatherings of all the local inhabitants but, as at Shipton, had evolved over the years into deliberations between substantial and leading parishioners. It was they who often filled local offices, which were unpaid. The whole edifice of parochial administration was overseen by Justices of the Peace. These magistrates provided important links with county and national government, and with Quarter Sessions and higher courts of law. They were also frequently appealed to individually in parish matters, especially to do with the poor law. The presence of an active magistrate could make a great difference to a locality, as did that of the Revd Dr Robert Phillimore, JP, Vicar of Shipton 1815 to 1852. This tendency to concentration of power and influence in few hands, and in particular to clerical and

magisterial dominance, did not go unresisted for in May 1816 'the inhabitants of Shipton' humbly petitioned the Archdeacon, on his visitation at Chipping Norton, to complain of Dr. Phillimore's attempt to foist on them two churchwardens of his nomination. They defended 'their right of chusing a C-warden (without the interfearence of the Hamlets)', claiming that whilst the vicar chose one warden the inhabitants of Shipton chose the other, and the outlying hamlets had a Sidesman to collect Church Rates. Now Pbillimore, at the 'Easter meeting in Vestry Asembled', bad tried to insert 'a person of Lineham a Tenant of his ... so that he would then have bad both Churchwardens under his controle'. The Vestry reappointed the previous Shipton warden, and now wished to assert their rights and guard against outside control of matters such as the Good Friday distribution of charity moneys to Shipton's poor.

After three centuries as the essential unit of local government, civil and ecclesiastical, the parish by the 1830s was undergoing the first of a series of legislative reforms and administrative transformations which were to increasingly shift the emphasis from the relative automony and local focus of parish government to larger administrative areas, boards, unions and more paid officials. The Shipton constables' book therefore catches for us, not only a multitude of individual characters, but also a system of community organisation soon to be radically altered.

Shipton was a large parish and for this reason had been divided into separate townships, each with its own vestry and appropriate officers. Milton's vestry bad strayed so far from hallowed ground by 1820 that it was held at the Quart Pot or the Butchers Arms. The minutes for 1820 are signed by only a few parishioners: John Rawlings, James Ellis, William Bagnall, George Gibbs, Richard Gilbert, William Holmes, John Neighbours, Samuel Winter, and John Bunting. On 16 October the Revd Dr Robert Phillimore, JP was in the chair. In Shipton too the names of another distinct group of village 'worthies' turn up again and again as overseers, constables and churchwardens. In 1822 John Stephens was constable, John Young and Michael Upstone churchwardens and William Bould and James Herbert overseers of the poor. A year as overseer was often followed by duty as constable: we find William Bould as constable in 1822, overseer in 1829 and constable again in 1830. Thomas Brookes however, was constable three years running from 1826-9. In 1825 the signatories to the constable's accounts were Thomas Brookes, John Young, John Stephens, James Herbert, Richard Bould, Thomas Pratt and Thomas Ellis. All these, except Ellis, were nominated as surveyors of the parish in that year; also nominated were Thomas Maddox and William Bould [who was again constable at the time]. All of these men served their term as constable during the first four decades of the 19th century and some also appear in the 1830s as overseers of the poor or auditors of their accounts.

Of this village oligarchy it is on the work of the constable that we shall concentrate. This officer was chosen each Easter Monday at a meeting described as 'the Court Leet'. The exact constitutional relationship of this court to the vestry is unclear. The name is a fascinating survival from the manorial court. In practice both bodies were made up chiefly of the same people. After the Easter meeting had approved the accounts of the preceding constable his successor and assistants, the tithingman and hayward, were



Thomas Brookes in about 1860

sworn in. The constable was provided with a staff, symbol of office and possible weapon. On 28 October 1812 Constable Thomas Brookes paid a guinea for a pair of handcuffs and 10/6d for a staff. One of his main duties was to detain wrong doers before taking them to the justice. Sometimes the village inn was used. On 9 October 1815 Constable John Young paid 5/6d to Peter Brookes, landlord of the Crown, for 'J. Coombes & Benjamin Wiggins Eating — ale'. John Coombes, carpenter and court member, seems to have been 'minding' Wiggins, the nature of whose crime is not recorded. On 29 December 1815 the constable records 5s as 'my Expences to Justice whith Benjamin Wiggins'. The latter's life of crime took a turn for the worse in the following year when Constable Thomas Pratt charged 12s for 'taking Benjamin Wiggins to Justice to Wodstock' on 5 November and on 7 December spent £1 15s on 'taking Wiggins Keeping him in Custody two Days and going to Oxford'. In November 1816 Benjamin Wiggins was to appear in Oxford again, charged at Quarter Sessions with assault on John Wilkins of Milton. Offenders could also be secured in the stocks: in 1822 John Stephens rather obscurely noted 'Taking up 6 boys Stocks ... 2s'.

Summary justice for petty crimes could be dispensed by local magistrates,

often in the 'justice room' of the JP's own house. From 1808 to 1818 Shipton constables went to Charlbury and occasionally Kingham for this purpose. From 1819-35, when crime ceased to be recorded in the book, they went to Ascott, with occasional visits to Woodstock and Cornbury, as on 15 December 1819 when Thomas Brookes records 'at Justice at Lord Churchil's with Thos Coombes & Wm Snowshill ... 3s'. Some cases, like that of Benjamin Wiggins went outside the parish to higher courts in Oxford. The Quarter Sessions dealt with petty larceny (that is theft of items valued at less than 12d) and assault, whilst more serious thefts and capital crimes went to the Assizes. Besides Wiggins at least three other Shipton people were recorded as being imprisoned in Oxford jail: Limborough Townsend in 1820, Susan Steed in 1825 and Samuel Longshaw in 1830; seven others were also probably detained.

However Shipton township seems to have been a fairly peaceable place in the early 19th century. Between 1807 and 1835 the average of recorded cases was only five a year from a population of 4-500. Men offended ten times more often than either women or children. The crime rate was not constant; it increased four fold at the end of the Napoleonic wars, a time of financial hardship. After this the pattern returns to normal except for a lesser crime wave in 1829, the possible reasons for which are explored later.

The nature of misdemeanours is seldom clear from the constable's accounts, but the few fuller entries do not suggest serious disturbance. William Bould recorded on 20 September 1830 'expence at ascot with Wiggins & Tims with Sheep Skins ... 2/6d.' Affronts against the dignity of office were taken seriously, as in March 1817 when Thomas Pratt 'Paid a Bill at Charlbury for Refreshments appearing against Chaundy and Tims for Insulting the Tythingman ... 18s.' In earlier times the constable had had to make an annual report on the incidence in the parish of sedition, blasphemy, recusancy, disorder, drunkenness, public gambling and a host of other 'public nuisances'. By the end of the 18th century such reports were a mere formality, usually on a ready-printed form certifying that 'all was well'. In Shipton 'signing the returns for assizes and sessions' ended after 1827, when the obligation was abolished by Act of Parliament.

For several centuries parish constables had been responsible for collecting men, horses and arms as the parish's contribution to the County Militia. By 1815 the Militia was not regarded as a major line of defence but was used as a source of trained recruits for the regular army. Militia conscripts were chosen, by lots, from lists supplied by the parish, and compelled to serve for three years or to provide £10 payment for a substitute. Life in the army was far from easy for the ordinary man, with poor food, bad pay, and harsh discipline. Much energy was expended in trying to avoid militia duty and the finding of a substitute to serve seems to have been the constable's task, as well as taking the parish militia list to Chipping Norton, being present at the drawing of lots, and again at the swearing in of the unfortunate chosen. This all took several days each year, especially during the war years as in 1808 when Thomas Brookes,

'26 Jan paid Expences for Mr. Patrick and myself to Cornwall (Cornwell?) and Chip Norton on account of Tim Wiggins Surcharge & for a substitute ...
6/9 18 April Expences of my journey to Birmingham for the purpose of

Seeking a Substitute to serve in the Militia for John Willis Coach Fare Etc. £6/17/6d. Expences with said Substitute Horse Hire and other Conveyance having him Sworn in and also delivering him at Oxford to the proper Officers — and other Incident Charges ...£5/11/1d. Paid the Said Substitutes Bounty and also the Charges of his coming down ... £47/0/0d. Received of John Willis £20/0/0d.'

Usually the ballot for recruits occurred once a year or less, but in 1815, perhaps in a final effort to defeat the Corsican Upstart, two 'drawings' were held in January and December. The constable was still 'carrying in the militia lists' until March 1831.

As well as pursuing crime and organising militia conscripts Shipton's constables were much embroiled in paperwork. In addition to the 'returns to assizes' already mentioned they made endless journeys (and charged up considerable expenses) on a wide range of business. Chipping Norton was the centre for this kind of administration. For example, the constable had to 'carry in' lists of voters, jury lists, surveyors' warrants, tax assessments (and attend appeals against these and against the poor rate) and help appoint tax assessors. We also find journeys to Chipping Norton 'on Account of Weights and Measures', to give 'notice to the Publicans to renew their licences', and in 1808 and 1834 'A Gorney to Chip Norton to Carre a Leist of the Lunitick in'.

Four times a year the constable collected and paid over the Marshalsea money. This was the county rate, originally so called for the contributions made from it towards the upkeep of the infamous debtors' prisons at Marshalsea and Fleet. In 1807/8 Shipton's annual county rate was £8, but it averaged some £20 p.a. in the 1810s and 20s. In 1813/14 the enormous sum of £64 was paid, partly due to the building of a new bridge at Dorchester; by contrast no rate was charged in 1816/18. On 5 February 1823 William Bould recorded a special rate 'for the fire at Hook Norton... £3/1/9d', the only entry of its kind.

It was the constable's duties in connection with the regulation of Shipton's open fields which were the most ancient, recalling the manorial origin of his office. Until Parliamentary Enclosure ended the system of communal agriculture the Court Leet met each Easter and decided, according to custom, the routine of work in the fields, which crops should be planted and when, the management of the hay meadows, the grazing of animals, and each person's rights to common land and waste. A regular task was 'taking out and fetching home the field gates' for which each constable charged 5s annually. The 'gates' were presumably sets of hurdles to control the grazing of stock on fallow and stubble. The constable had charge of the village pound where stray animals were rounded up and kept until reclaimed by their owners on payment of a fine. Shipton pound was at Five-ways between Mawles and Plumb Lanes. Thomas Brookes had to pay 3/6d for a lock for the pound in 1819, and it had to be renewed twice in 1821.

The constable also supervised water courses. In 1825 Thomas Maddox 'pd John James for Ditching & Cleaning Out the Archs at the Tithing Man's Plot ... 4s'. Although the constable and his assistants were not usually paid for their duties over and above expenses there were perks for these onerous offices and the rent from an appropriately named piece of land was often one of them.



Vermin accounted for by Shipton's constables and haywards included hedgehogs and polecats

'Laying out the Field Hedges' (1808), 'Drawing Thorns to Freemans Ford in the Meadow and Edging the same' (1834) and 'paid Siman Eatwell for Riparn the Town meadow wall' (1845) are evidence of continuing maintenance of internal boundaries. A little local difficulty emerged in 1826 when one Bradley was paid to 'make a mound to keep back Mr. Truman's Cows', while similar problems were encountered with Mr. Freeman's animals the following year. Maintenance of the parish boundaries was also a responsibility, but apart from one occasion in 1808 when six loads of stones were applied to the forest wall, nothing seems to have been done until a considerable programme of repair work was undertaken in 1848-50 around the time of the Shipton enclosure. This provided labourer Simon Eatwell and others with months of steady employment and regular pay.

An immense slaughter of vermin took place every year to protect the growing crops. This was the special responsibility of the hayward, who was issued with a gun and ammunition, paid for on the constable's account. In 1838/9 Constable William Bould paid Thomas Wilkes the hayward £12/10/0d, being 50 weeks at 5s; he also paid out £1/7/10d for the slaughter of sparrows at the going rate of 3d a dozen, which accounts for 1,336 birds. William Batts was paid 3 guineas for a year's mole-catching. Other vermin included '10 Hedgehogs & Polecat ... 2/6d' in 1818, 'for a wesell ... 2d' (1819) and '68 Vipers at 6d each ... £1/14/0d' in 1835. The biggest recorded 'bag' of sparrows was 3,982 birds in 1843/4, for which the constable paid out over £4.

One of the thorniest problems facing human society has always been how to maintain the poor and unemployed. In earlier times relief depended on almsgiving by clergy and laity. The Poor Laws of Elizabeth 1's reign established a comprehensive legislative framework of Poor Law administration, requiring each parish to nominate from amongst its householders overseers of the poor who were to maintain paupers, setting the able-bodied amongst them to work. The necessary funds were to be raised by local tax. Additionally by the 1662 Act of Settlement no one could live in a parish, other than his place of birth, unless he could prove means to support himself and his dependents, or had previously occupied a local property to a value of at least £10 p.a., or served as an apprentice or a year's contract as a servant in the parish. Thus every parish in which a man tried to settle and scrape a living had the right to have him forcibly removed back to his parish of settlement if he became a burden on the rates.

It was the constable's duty to apprehend all such paupers and vagrants without rights of settlement within the parish and supervise their return to their 'own' parish. This involved taking them before two justices who issued them with passes or settlement certificates, stating the destination of the holder and requiring constables of every parish through which they travelled on their way home to contribute towards their maintenance. Such business is a major feature of the constables' accounts until the late 1820's. For example in 1818 Thomas Brookes paid 'for Horse to Carry Thos Wilkins's Family to Brize Norton'. Other typical entries are 'gave a poor Woman in distress ... 1s', 'releved a poor man and his wif with a Pass ... 1/6d', 'paid to a Woman 3 children 6d', 'releivd blind man with a Pass ... 1s', 'releaf to a cripple ... 3d'. The number of destitute travelling pass holders was swelled during and after the Napoleonic Wars by disbanded or disabled soldiers and sailors making their way home, as for example on 8 May 1810 'Gave a sailor and his Daughter being ill ... 1s'. This catalogue of human misery continues until 1827 when two of the last such entries read 'Gave 5 persons on the Tramp ... 1s' and 'Gave a Poor object on the road 6d'.

The parish was particularly keen not to become responsible for unsupported illegitimate children. Pregnant women were moved with alacrity across the parish boundary, lest a settlement be claimed for the child. JPs could authorize the arrest of a putative father, but more often a bond was drawn up under which the father agreed to pay, if necessary, a fixed sum to cover the cost of the birth and upbringing of the child. All this could result in protracted and expensive action between parishes, as is strikingly illustrated by the story of John Sharp, which is told in the Shipton overseers' papers of this period. In April 1821 John Sharp agreed to pay the parish of Shipton and 'the Principal Inhabitants' £18 in three instalments to support the bastard child of Mary Burson. The overseers' signatures are very familiar — William Bould and Thomas Brookes. Nothing more was heard of John Sharp until 1832 when he wrote to the Shipton parish authorities from Brighton, where he had fallen on hard times. He was ill and unable to pursue his trade in cutting timber, his child was ill, and his wife about to be confined. £15 he explained, would ensure that 'I should get my parish here'. Otherwise, he asserted, he had a right of settlement in Shipton, both because he had rented a farm there from his father from Lady Day 1812, and also because he had been hired by his mother as a servant for £10 p.a. Unless Shipton sent help to Brighton he would have to return to Oxfordshire. The sad and long drawn out end to this story only emerged in 1861, some 50 years after Sharp's claimed settlement in Shipton. By this time he was dead, but a lawyer for the parish was investigating a claim on behalf of Sharp's daughter, Anne, now confined as a pauper lunatic in Sussex Asylum, to be supported by Shipton parish funds. The case revolved around a removal order obtained 24 years earlier in 1837, directing that John, his wife Harriet, their daughters Elizabeth, Anne, Emily, Hannah and an infant be returned to Shipton. Rather than go to the expense and upheaval of transporting the entire household it had been agreed that Shipton should pay relief to the Sharp family in Brighton. John had died the following year yet the pathetic aftermath persisted into the 1860s.

Coping with the poor, the unemployed and the under-employed became a larger and larger part of the parish's preoccupations in the early 1800s. As we

Wm Boulds' accounts
 as Constable Bro for 2 408 2

These accounts remain
 allowed by us

Thos. Brookes
 John Young
 John Stephens
 J. A. Herbert
 Rich^d Bould
 Thos. Elli

The Disbursements of Thos. Brookes
 as Constable

	L.	s.	d.
1826			
March 27 th P ^d the certainty money		5	0
3 Bathes		5	0
Court Fees		2	9
April 18, P ^d R. Sims (his bill for 1823 as agreed)		5	11
June 5, gave a Man, Woman, & 3 Children on the Road		1	0
July 4, P ^d a County Rate	7	12	4
Signing the Returns for the Affairs & Expenses (double return)	9	0	
15, P ^d Bradley, to make a mound to keep back M. Freeman's Cows	1	0	
August Going to Justice with the Leases, Warrants & Expenses	6	7	
Taking Mark Pratt to Justice	2	0	
Sept ^r Taking out & bringing home the field gates	5	0	
Oct ^r 6, P ^d a County Rate	3	10	2
Expenses	8	0	
2 Locks to the Pound	1	6	
Dec ^r Making the Militia List	5	0	
Expenses at C. Norton with the same	5	0	
1827			
Jan ^y 2, P ^d a County Rate	2	1	1
Signing the Returns & Expenses	7	0	
Woman with a paps	0	6	
2 ^d and 2 Children on the Road	0	6	

The signatures of Shipton's village oligarchy, 1826 (left) and a page from the constables' book, 1826-7 (right)

have seen, although open field farming persisted in Milton and Shipton, ownership and holding of land was already concentrated in relatively few hands, and the vast majority of local people were wage labourers. Rates of wages in Oxfordshire, including the Wychwood area, were low and did not reflect the increased prosperity of the farming sector, especially before 1815. Rather real wages were depressed by increased food prices and by the weak bargaining position of agricultural labourers at a time of rapid population growth and over supply of labour. These conditions prevailed throughout the Midlands and southern England, and the plight of the agricultural labourer was particularly acute in those areas remote from the buoyant market demand for produce generated by new industrial centres, and in rural areas where no opportunities existed to find alternative or supplementary work in domestic

industry or other non-agricultural employments. In such areas, like the Wychwood villages, the numbers of poor rose, and with them the parish's expenditure and the burden of rates upon the ratepayers. Despair and frustration on the part of agricultural labourers came to a head in late 1830 with a wave of rick burning, machinery wrecking and rioting, known as the Swing Riots. The nearest incidents occurred at Heythrop and Broadwell. The Shipton constable records nothing suggesting local participation, but the parish had seen a marked increase in law breaking during the previous year.

The burden of poor rates was becoming almost intolerable. In Shipton by 1821 the task had apparently grown to such proportions that the township tried to institute a self-financing scheme of provision for the local poor. 'A public meeting of the inhabitants' was called at which Thomas Dodge, baker, was engaged as parish workmaster at a fee of £215 p.a. with a further possible £5 'provided times are ockward'. He was to run the parish workhouse, putting

the paupers to work and using the proceedings for their maintenance. The workhouse was to be kept clean and in good repair, the paupers were to be given 'sufficient Meat, Drink, Clothing, Employment', and the funeral expenses of any who died were to be paid. The careful contract allowed that exceptional expenditures should fall on the parish, for example the cost of a surgeon and apothecary would be paid in cases of smallpox or broken bones. Cleanliness and decency were stressed and Dodge was required to 'take care that the poor persons therein attend Church or some place of worship once at least every Sunday'. The establishment was to be open for the inspection 'of any of the principal inhabitants who may think proper to see the same is kept clean and in good order'. It was the now familiar oligarchy of principal inhabitants who signed the agreement, that is the Revd Dr Robert Phillimore, John Young (Churchwarden), William Bould (overseer), Thomas Brookes and John Stephens (inhabitants). This workhouse was probably situated next to the Crown Inn on the site of 'Church View'.

The overseers' accounts of this time show the further problem of maintaining the parish poor still living in their own homes. For example in the week beginning 7 January 1832, 35 people received payments ranging from 6d to 6/6d, totally £4/17/2d. There were other costs for travelling, meetings, postage, doctors' and attorneys' bills, and for work by the Hayward and the constable. Thus a total of £365/11/2d was disbursed during 1831/2 by overseer Richard Bould. The constable spent only £29/15/6d, of which £20/15/5d was for the county rate, a vivid illustration of the relative costliness of poor relief compared with other services in Shipton. The Shipton poor book tells the story of individuals and families in both chronic or emergency need and how the parish sought to help them in cash or kind. In 1830 'James Harris boy ill ... 1/4d', 'A nurse to wait on them 1s', 'paid Elizth Roles boy no employ ... 5s', and the following year 'pd Mary Upton for a dress for Bette Sims ... 1s', 'pd John Upton for Thaching Widow Steeds house ... £1/9/0d' and 'pd 1 Load and Quarter of Wheat Straw at £3 per load ... £3/15/0d'. Overseer William Stokes recorded in 1830: 'June 26 Paid Thos Wilkes's wife ill ... 2s. July 31 Half Pint Port Wine for Thos Wilkes's wife ... 1/3d. Aug 14 Mary Upton for making Thos Wilkes's wife a shroud... 1/6d. Pd for 6 yds Calico for Shroud at 41/2d ... 2/3d. Pd for 5lbs Mutton for ditto ditto 2/6d. Pd John Cox for burying do do 2s. Pd for underbearers for do do 3/3d. September 4 Pd Susannah Edwards for laying Thos Wilkes's wife out 1/6d.' A child, William, of Thomas and Mary Wilkes had been baptised on 11 July 1830 but was also hurried at the end of September.

We have seen how, until the beginning of the 1830s, local affairs were still firmly in village hands, in the form of secular and ecclesiastical parish government and vestigial manorial jurisdiction. In 1834 a major crack appeared in this ancient system. The new Poor Law amalgamated parishes into Poor Law Unions with centrally-located workhouses, governed by locally-elected Boards of Guardians, who operated under the close supervision of a new central government department, the Poor Law Board, in London. In this way the old, over-burdened, expensive, and to the eyes of reformers, inefficient and demoralising parish system was replaced by centralised and standardised administration. The able-bodied poor were to be relieved in the union workhouse in conditions less eligible than any to be found in their homes;

accommodation was also provided for children and the old. Pauper families entering the workhouse were split into separate male and female wards. The workhouse came to be dreaded by generations of the elderly. In practice some outdoor relief continued to be given in people's homes to mitigate the rigidity of the system. However the removal of responsibility for its unfortunate members was the beginning of the end of community government as it had existed since the 16th century.

Other changes were in the wind. The days of the constable were also numbered. In 1856 it became mandatory to form a County Constabulary, and Oxfordshire's police came into being. By then the ancient manorial office of constable in Shipton was already in decline. His accounts record no wrong doings or payments of county rate after 1835. In 1842 vestries were empowered to appoint and pay constables, rather than relying on the old annually elected and unpaid office. Thereafter the Shipton record refers to constables 'paid upon the by rate'. For 15 years from 1835 the old office was merely concerned with agricultural matters, wall repairs, hedging and pest control. In 1851 it became obsolete with the enclosure of the common fields, and records cease.

The affairs of Milton and Shipton were becoming increasingly influenced or controlled by outside bodies in the county and nationally. In addition to the Poor Law Board other ad hoc bodies such as Education and Sanitary Boards were set up to perform specific functions. Besides these the non-elected Justices of the Peace continued in Petty and Quarter sessions, whilst the non-elected parish vestries still functioned, albeit with reduced powers. This was a confused, and for the reforming 19th century, undemocratic, situation which was resolved for the rural areas only at the end of the century. The Local Government Act 1888 transferred the administrative functions of the old counties, including the levying of rates, to new County Councils elected by rate payers. The Local Government Act 1894 extended the vote in local elections, previously based on property qualification, to all county and parliamentary electors, and created more local levels of government in Rural District Councils and new Parish Councils, to which the civil functions of the old parish vestries were transferred. Thus the structures of local government, familiar until 1974 were created. The old dominance of landowner, farmer, parson and magistrate was slower to diminish and persisted well into the following century.

Sources and References

Shipton Constable's account book, 1807-1851, Shipton Parish Council; Shipton Overseers' of the Poor account book, 1830-1847, Shipton Parish Council; minutes of meeting to elect parish surveyors, 1825, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.26c; contract appointing workhouse master, 1821, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.21g; papers relating to John Sharp, ORO MS. D.D. Par. Shipton under Wychwood c.21h; petition of Shipton inhabitants concerning election of churchwarden, 1816, ORO MS. D.D. Par. c.16 b-d; ORO Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1816, 1829; minutes of Milton vestry meetings, 1820, quoted in M. Groves (ed.), *The History of Shipton under Wychwood* [1934]; W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest* [1983 edn.]; E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, *Captain Swing* [1969]; F.D. Price (ed.), 'The Wiggington Constables' Book 1691-1836', *Banbury Historical Society*, Vol. 11 (1971).

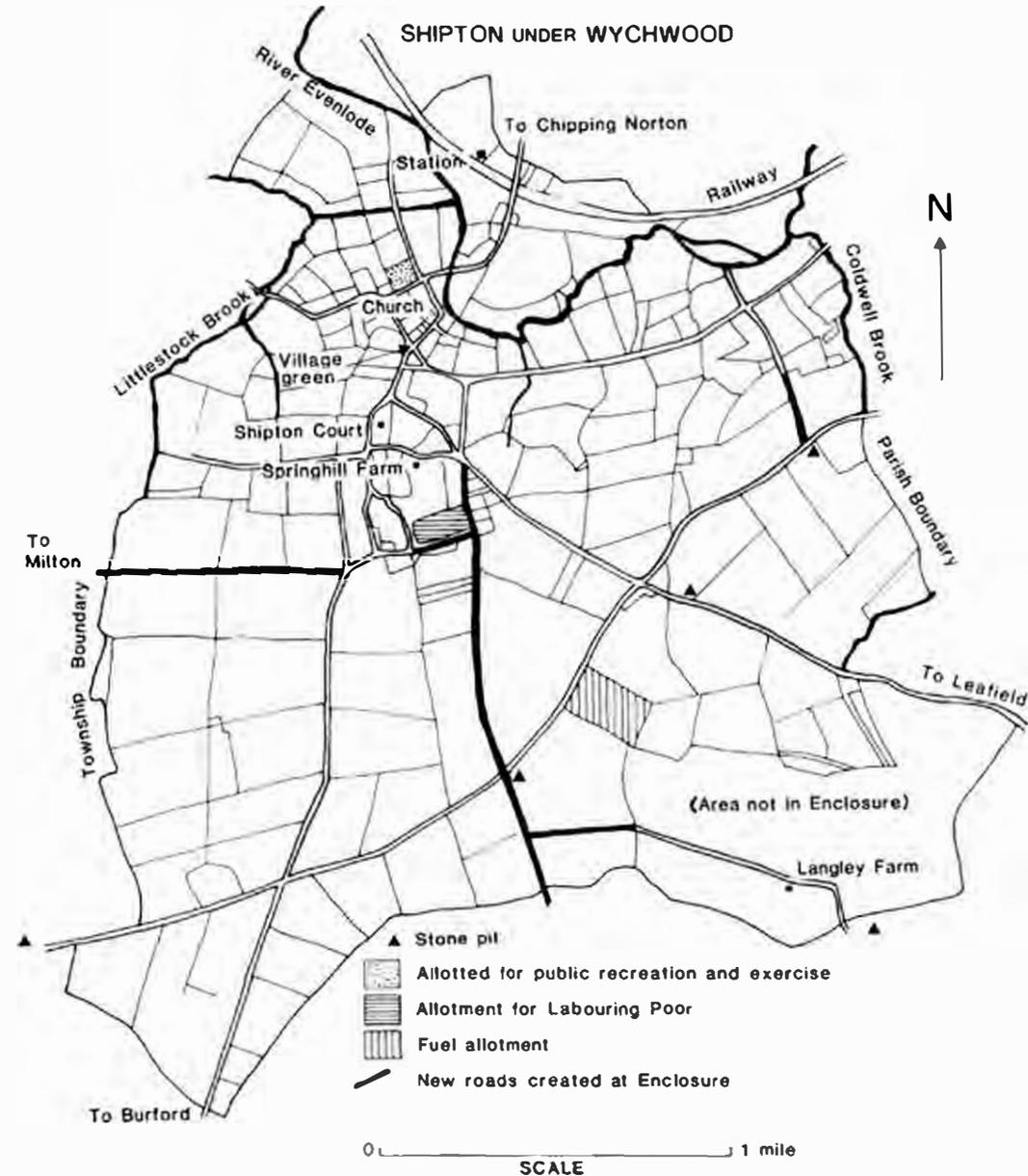
CHAPTER III

Decade of change 1850-1860

The 1850s were a period of great change for the Wychwoods. This began with the enclosure of Milton in 1849 and Shipton in 1852; it continued with the construction of the railway through the Evenlode valley and its opening in 1853; and culminated in the disafforestation of Wychwood forest, the tenancies of the newly created forest-farms beginning in October 1857.

One way to consider these events is through the eyes of a local farmer of the time. William Bould was such a man. Born in Oddington, Glos. in 1793, he moved to Shipton early in life. At the time of the tithe apportionment in 1839 he was farming the largest acreage in the village. This consisted of 196 acres of Springhill Farm, which he owned in partnership with Joseph Plumb, a 126 acre farm rented from Sir J.C. Reade of Shipton Court, and 21 acres rented from Elizabeth Curtis. Both Bould and Plumb acquired their holdings at Springhill through marriage. William took to wife Mary Ellis, who owned one half of the farm. Joseph married Hannah Ellis, widow of Mary's brother Ralph, who had owned the other half. The Plumbs lived at Springhill, but since Joseph is normally referred to as landed gentry, it would seem that William was directly concerned in running the farm. He was a prominent man in the village, as we have seen a Vestry member, who served as constable, overseer and churchwarden. His brother Richard, another churchwarden, constable and farmer, also rented land from Sir J.C. Reade, the 318-acre Grove Farm. After William's first wife died in 1837 he married another Mary and, as this period of change unfolded, was living in the centre of Shipton, his farmhouse and buildings standing on the triangular piece of land bounded by Gas Lane, Church Street, and Ascott Road. In 1851 he employed 12 full-time workers and an unknown number of seasonal day labourers. Enclosure in Milton and Shipton came comparatively late, many other parishes having been enclosed in the peak period of Parliamentary Enclosure between 1760 and 1815. The relative isolation of the area may have contributed to this tardiness. A second factor seems to have been lack of initiative by landowners, upon whom the initial cost of enclosure would fall and whose lands were largely let to tenants.

William Bould was a man in the middle. He viewed the coming enclosure both as owner and tenant. As a tenant, great practical advantages would accrue from reorganising the agricultural land, but as an owner he would be faced with a proportion of the costs involved. At the age of 57, having spent all his life coping with the strip system of farming, it is hard to know on which side his sympathies would lie. The old system had involved each landholder farming numerous strips, most of less than an acre and lying in furlongs scattered throughout the parish. The time wasted by both men and horses travelling from strip to strip would be eliminated, as would the one-way



Map 3: Shipton after enclosure

Table 5: Allotment of land at the enclosure of Shipton 1852

Name of allottee	Acreage allotted a r p	% of total acreage allotted
1 Sir J.C. Reade	623 3 36	38.1
2 Elizabeth F. Webb	309 3 18	18.9
3 William Bould & Joseph Plumb	165 2 18	10.1
4 William Edward & Coleman	131 1 16	8.0
5 Thomas Young	125 2 18	7.7
6 Lord Churchill	68 1 38	4.2
7 Dr J. Phillimore	64 2 23	4.0
8 <i>George Eyston</i>	61 1 35	3.8
9 Mark Pratt	11 3 36	0.7
10 Feoffees of Crown Inn Trust	11 1 6	0.7
11 Revd Dr R. Phillimore	11 0 0	0.7
12 Cecilia Frankland	9 1 33	0.6
13 Thomas Fowler (ex Eliz. Curtis)	7 0 18	0.4
14 Peter Harris	6 2 19	0.4
15 Reginald Blewitt & Richard White	5 0 6	0.3
16 Thomas Maddox	3 1 13	0.2
17 <i>Thomas Brookes</i>	3 0 12	0.2
18 <i>George Yapp</i>	2 3 1	0.2
19 <i>James Pratt</i>	2 0 29	0.1
20 Clerk of Shipton Parish	2 0 27	0.1
21 John Willis	2 0 15	0.1
22 Robert Franklin	1 1 21	0.1
23 <i>Robert Atkins & John Lasky</i>	1 1 8	0.1
24 Philip Upstone	1 0 15	0.1
25 Charles Turner & David Faulkner	1 0 15	0.1
26 John Coombs	0 3 33	0.1
27 William S. Hitchinson	0 3 29	0.1
28 <i>William Coulling</i>	0 1 8	0.02
Total	1636 0 26	

Source: Shipton Enclosure Award 1852

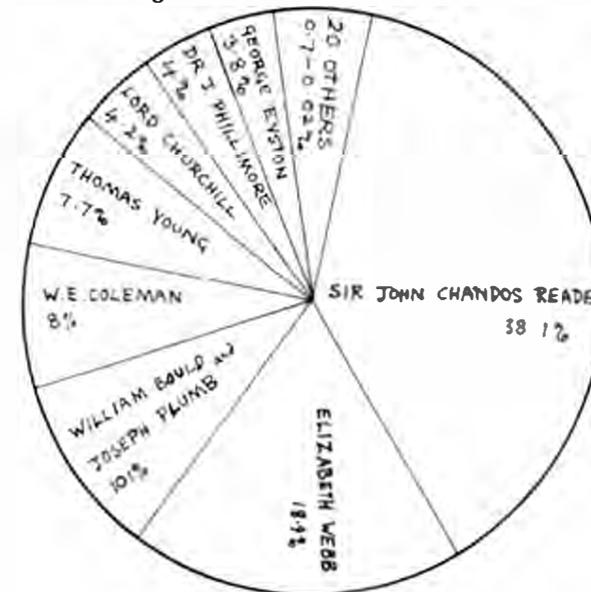
Note: The names of those who also received land in the Milton enclosure of 1849 are in italics.

cultivation imposed by the narrowness of the strips, which also prohibited the use of newly available implements. Keener supervision of workers would be possible, whilst quarrels over illegal extensions of a strip by ploughing would be abolished. Livestock would be enclosed and under control of individual owners, thus reducing the risks of disease and straying, prevalent in a collective herd grazed on common land. Finally large-scale drainage would at last be possible. Yields would increase.

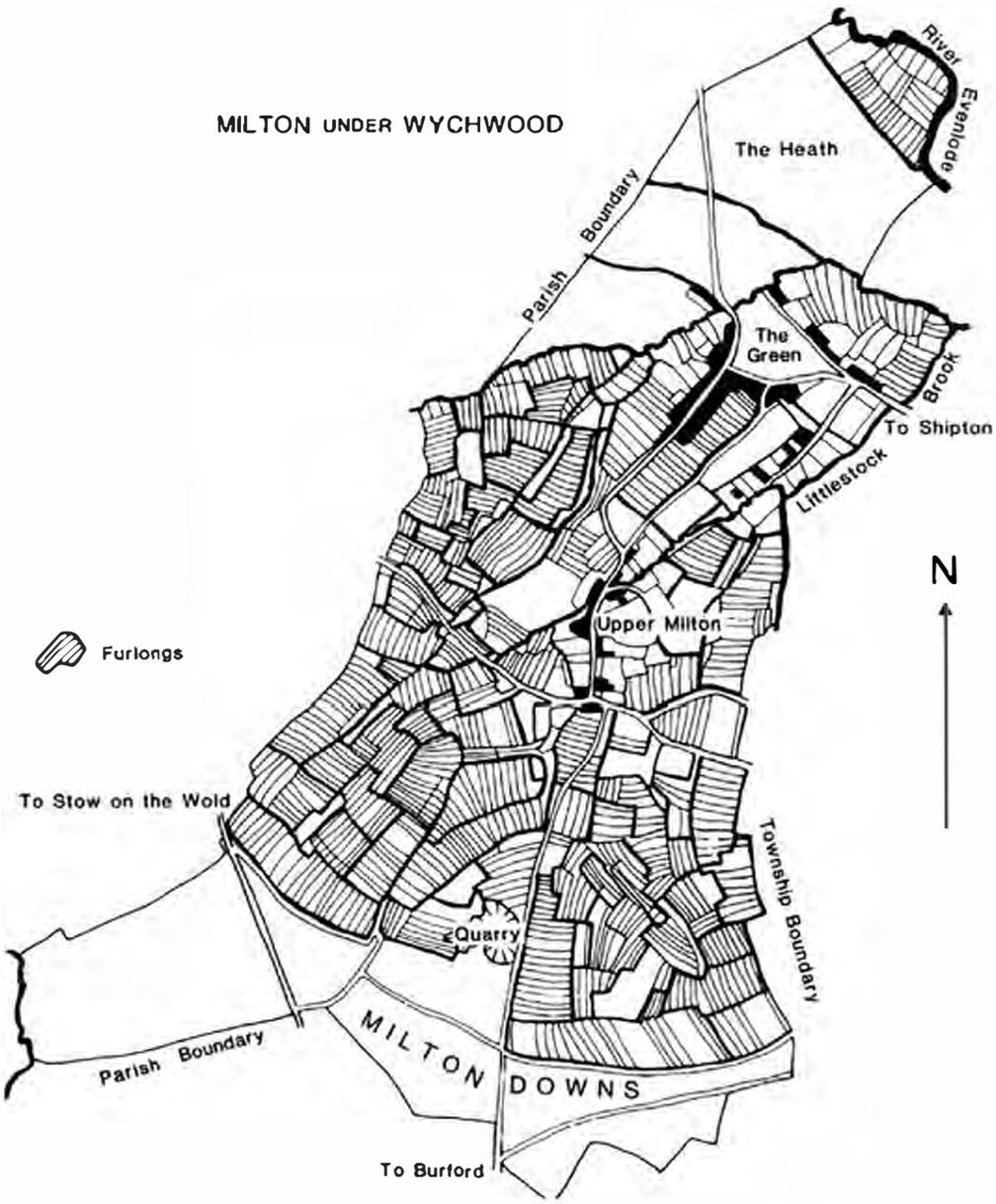
All these considerations would have been known to William. He must have been present at the Crown on 10 September 1850 when the Enclosure Commissioners appointed Thomas Edward Washbourne from London to value the land. Washbourne tackled his complex task with great zeal and thoroughness, as his detailed final award, dated 6 November 1852, demonstrates. This reorganised and allotted 1,636a Or 26p of Shipton's common fields, downs, and old enclosures. The landowners had agreed that the old enclosures be put back into the melting pot, but they accounted for only 148a Or 1p or 9% of the total acreage under consideration, and were mostly held in small parcels of one or two acres. A further 6a Or 2 1p included in the award consisted of small parcels of land formerly in Milton, Ascott and Lynham.

Washbourne had to take into account both the quantity and the quality of land held by allottees in the old field system. He also allowed for associated use rights, such as first cut of grass on particular fields and common grazing rights. There were also many ordinary villagers, with claims from neither land nor commons, but who retained rights of estover (to collect fallen wood for fuel), and to cut furze and coarse grass. It was decided that their claims should

Figure 4: Enclosure of Shipton 1852. Land allotted in award, expressed as percentage of total acreage

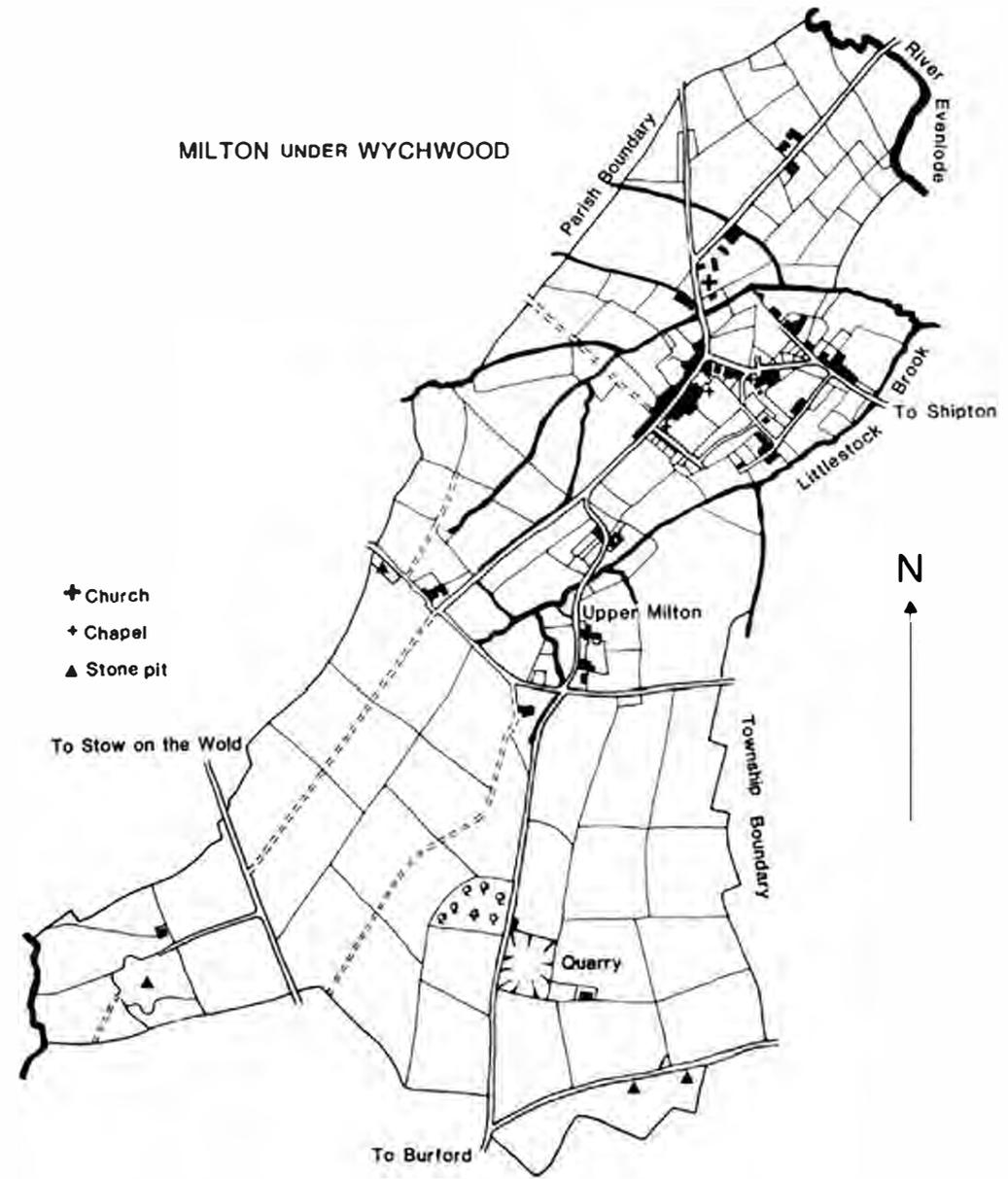


MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD



Map 4: Milton before enclosure

MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD



Map 5: Milton after enclosure

be dealt with separately. Land was allotted in the award to 28 recipients, ranging from Sir John Chandos Reade with 623a 3r 26p to William Coulling with 1r 8p. Between these extremes ownership was concentrated in very few hands (Table 5).

The award also detailed the common field acreages and common rights on which the new allocations were based. This emphatically confirmed how much the small farmer had already been squeezed out of the picture in Shipton before enclosure. For example, of 2,162 sheep commons no less than 78.7% had been in the hands of the top five allottees at enclosure, as were 81.1% of cow commons and 75.2% of horse commons.

A village green was created at enclosure as a place of exercise and recreation for villagers, and vested in the churchwardens and overseers of Shipton. At the same time the network of lanes and paths which had given access to the old landscape was drastically truncated with 24 public roads and paths stopped up, and five new public roads, each a standard 25 foot width, to be laid out to give access to the newly disposed farms. Washbourne also designated local water courses, ponds, pipes and pumps to be maintained from rates levied on specified allotments. Eight acres, at a rent of £12 p.a., were set aside for the Labouring Poor of Shipton (Map 3).

William Bould and Joseph Plumb received the third biggest allotment, 165a 2r 18p. They were faced with the cost of fencing their boundaries with new stone walls and gates. These walls are still recognisable, though dilapidated, for example the lefthand wall leaving Shipton for Swinbrook. Joseph, as far as we can tell, was financially capable of meeting the costs, but William must have had money problems. The fencing was duly completed but on 3 March 1853 William, to cover the costs involved, took out a mortgage on half the land, £93 at 5% over 500 years was made payable to J. Harbridge of Little Compton and I.W. Kimber, a neighbour from Shipton, both farmers. Unfortunately for William and the other farmers coping with the first year of enclosure, the weather turned against them. It was exceedingly wet during 1852/3 and there were heavy losses amongst livestock and crops. Perhaps this had a bearing on William's need for a mortgage. As he arrived with his brother to sign the document was he filled with relief or anxiety?

The physical transformation of Shipton's landscape was far-reaching. New stone walls and some hedges extended across the old arable areas, the downs and the former meadow land by the river Evenlode. Bits of the parish mixed with adjacent townships were rationalised. The old irregular patterns of lane and path gave way to fewer, straight new roads. New water courses were made. These physical changes are summed up in Maps 3 and 5.

Milton had already undergone a very similar change, with a Parliamentary Enclosure Act in 1846, followed by an Award made by Washbourne on 25 April 1849 (see Table 6). This, too, resulted in new fields and field boundaries, the rationalization of township and parish boundaries, the creation of new roads and the destruction of old rights of way, the transformation of the meadow lands and downs, and the straightening and remaking of some streams. Eventually farmsteads to serve the new consolidated allotments were created, for example High Lodge Farm and Springhill Farm. A major difference between Milton and Shipton was that in Milton the chief areas of common land had lain much closer to the village, notably the Heath, immediately to the north.

Table 6: Allotment of land at the enclosure of Milton 1849

Name of allottee	Acreage allotted a r p	% of total acreage allotted
1 J.H. Langston	709 3 3	41.1
2 <i>George Eyston</i>	371 2 8	21.5
3 Brasenose College, Oxford	226 1 10	13.1
4 William Gayner & Lydia Padbury	176 0 8	10.1
5 Mary Pratt	62 1 39	3.6
6 <i>Thomas Brookes</i>	59 3 3i	3.5
7 <i>Robert Atkins</i>	51 2 17	3.0
8 James Wood	20 1 28	1.2
9 Thomas Groves	14 2 3	0.8
10 John Matthews	11 0 31	0.7
11 Wilkins & Kendall	8 0 39	0.5
12 Weston Aplin	3 2 7	0.2
13 John Hawkes	3 0 3	0.2
14 Society of Friends	2 3 35	0.2
15 <i>George Yapp</i>	1 0 35	0.1
16 <i>James Pratt</i>	3 34	0.1
17 <i>William Coulling</i>	3 34	0.1
18 <i>Thos Atkins</i>	3 32	0.1
19 James Ellis	1 0	0.01
20 Wm Mourby & Elizabeth Groves	0 30	0.01
21 Thomas Mace	12	0.01
22 Anne Castle	12	0.01
23 William Groves (mason)	11	0.01
24 William Groves (labourer)	10	0.01
25 Charles Lane	9	0.01
Total	1726 1 37	

Source: Milton Enclosure Award 1849

Note: The names of those who also received land in the Shipton enclosure of 1852 are in italics.

Milton, unlike Shipton, had also had a large village green. Milton Heath disappeared, enclosed as Heath Farm, whilst the green was reduced to less than a quarter of its former size. (See Maps 4 and 5.)

If enclosure brought problems of adjustment for a farmer like William Bould, how did the labourers on his and other farms in Milton and Shipton cope with this tremendous upheaval? There is no formal record of Bould's workforce, but John Venvil, a farm labourer aged 61, lived in 1851 in one of the Springhill farm cottages with his wife Catherine, and must have been one employee. Others are likely to have been James Turner, occupying a cottage in Ascott Road with his wife Ann and 20-year old daughter Hannah, just opposite William Bould's home, and Edmund Cox, living on the corner of Gas Lane with his wife and five children. All three were over 40, and had probably spent their whole lives as farm labourers. How did they view the effects of enclosure? The greatest change must have been the abrupt departure of common land up on the downs, where firing had been available to villagers for centuries. All this disappeared. A public meeting of 'persons entitled to common Estovers, and the right of cutting furze and coarse grass' had been summoned and three commissioners appointed to act on their behalf during the enclosure. These were the Revd Dr Robert Phillimore, vicar of Shipton, John Smith, a Shipton farmer, and Thomas Ellis, a local baker. The result was a fuel allotment of 17a 1r 28p, situated in one of the most inaccessible parts of the township, a three-mile round trip from the village green. It was largely taken from arable land and therefore could not be expected to yield any actual fuel for some years. Rather it was to be let in 96 equal lots at a rate of 1d per perch. The resulting rents were to be divided each December amongst 'settled inhabitants' of

Figure 5: Enclosure of Milton 1849. Land allotted in award, expressed as percentage of total acreage



The ~~Enclosure~~ Commissioners for England and Wales,
 hereby give notice that a Copy of the Report of the Valuer acting in the matter
 of the inclosure of *Milton Common* -
 situate in the *Parish* of *Milton*
 in the County of *Oxford* - - has been deposited
 at the *Butcher's Arms Inn* in the said *Parish*, for the
 inspection of all persons interested in the said Inclosure.

And ~~they~~ further give Notice, that ~~they~~ ^{with *Richard*} by ~~them~~ or by an Assistant
 Inclosure Commissioner, hold a Meeting at the *Butcher's*
Arms Inn ~~on the~~
 the *24th* day of *November* next at *Eleven* o'clock
 in the *fore* noon, for the purpose of hearing objections to any allotment
 direction, determination, or matter in the said Report.

Witness ~~my~~ hands, this [REDACTED] *October* in the
 year of our Lord 1847

H. H. H. H.
 Secretary

Twenty-one days before and before the day of this Meeting

The making of Milton's enclosure award. Notice of the meeting of the Commissioners at the Butcher's Arms. 1847.

Shipton who applied to the Trustees, who were to be the three commissioners named during the enclosure. So how did John Venvil and his like manage for firing? Probably with some difficulty, since the traditional right to walk freely throughout much of the parish had vanished. William Bould may have given permission for his workers to collect fuel on his property. This did not solve the problem of the many day labourers for whom there was no guarantee of hot dinners or heating. At least Milton's fuel allotment was larger and reasonably close to the village. William Bould did appreciate the difficulties of the poor, for in 1875, he left money in his will to purchase 3% annuities to produce an annual income of £10 to be spent on fuel, clothing, blankets, meat and bread for the deserving poor, to be distributed each Boxing Day.

Initially enclosure provided a considerable amount of work, in clearing old common land, and in preparing reorganised arable land for crops. But once the acreage had been adapted and the walls and fences completed employment possibilities were less clear. Such repercussions were not immediately apparent, but may underlie the migration away from the Wychwood villages which was such a notable feature of the 1870s.

Meanwhile practical farming changed significantly for William and his employees. Ploughing could be performed more quickly and with less trouble, with no need to move from one strip to another, and from one part of the township to another. Perhaps John Venvil and the others felt the eagle eye of Farmer Bould more often. They were also faced with new implements, which could be more easily used in the new larger fields; the iron plough as opposed to the iron-tipped wooden one was becoming more common, and new drills, actually planting seeds directly in the ground, provided better conditions for germination than broadcasting on the surface and harrowing in. Where hand sowing continued it was no longer necessary to avoid inadvertently planting a neighbour's strip. For the shepherd it was easier to pen sheep onto turnips and swedes, and to move the animals around in the new consolidated field system. Although harvests remained a time when all available labour was brought in, the back-chat and banter of the open harvest fields was gone. Work in the new large fields must have seemed more intensive, and sometimes isolated. The availability of machines, especially for threshing, also caused grave misgivings. How would farm labourers feel about a machine which could complete in perhaps 20 days a task which would have kept them in work throughout the winter? Fortunately in the mid-century hand-threshed barley was still the preference and, with labour costs cheap, local farmers were happy to see hand-threshing continue. Such continuities provided some comfort at a time of acute uncertainty and change. Despite the exclusion of the agricultural labourers from the ordering of enclosure it must have caused as much disruption to their lives in Milton and Shipton as any dislocation experienced by William Bould and his fellow farmers.

The second major change of the 1850s was the construction of the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway (the OWW), through the Evenlode valley. Although William Bould seems to have had no direct involvement with the development of the line it must have affected him and the rest of the locals, not least in a general widening of their horizons. As early as 1825 a

horse tramway had been proposed from Moreton in Marsh through the Evenlode valley to Oxford. However, as with an earlier canal proposal, nothing further was heard. A great deal more local interest and speculation must have arisen when in 1844, the great Isambard Kingdom Brunel arrived, with his party of surveyors, to plot the route of a possible steam railway through the area. Did William see this distinctive figure, short, sturdy, his bullet head crowned by an enormous top hat, his shabby clothes normally coated with cigar ash, as he surveyed the still unenclosed landscape? The line never actually entered Shipton or Milton parishes as Shipton (for Burford) station was to lie in the parish of Ascott, albeit within a few chains of the boundary with Shipton. This necessitated the inclusion of William Bould, along with other Shipton villagers, in a list of owners and occupiers of adjacent land on the plan of the line deposited at the Sheriff's Clerk's Office in Oxford. A copy was also distributed to parish clerks concerned.

No doubt events were awaited with intense interest in Shipton, although the initiative for the proposal lay with Black Country manufacturers seeking to achieve better links with the outside world. The line only lay through the Cotswolds because the Evenlode valley seemed to provide the best route via Oxford to London for the products of the pits, furnaces and glass works of the West Midlands. The plan received Royal Assent, at a time of intense railway speculation, on 4 August 1845 and this sparked further proposals for linking lines. Through the summer Shipton again saw surveyors at work, and two new proposals were presented by late November. These conjured up the picture of a countryside criss-crossed with new engineering works. One plan, with a junction near Langley Mill, was for the Rugby to Swindon or Direct Junction Railway to cross the river valley at Burford on a viaduct 70ft high with arches 30ft apart, to run alongside Burford-Chipping Norton turnpike past Fulbrook and Waterloo Farm, entering the downs by an embankment and tunnel, eventually emerging into the Evenlode valley halfway down Shipton Field. The line would then have been carried over the river on a 14ft high, 25ft span arch to join the OWW. The second new line was proposed for the Cheltenham and Oxford railway, through Taynton, into a tunnel through the downs, finally emerging in Milton Field. The proposed line ran all across Milton Field, into Shipton Field near Dogkennel Lane, across the southern end of High Street and Five Ways, to join the OWW near Langley Mill. The response to these possibilities must have been agitated. What of the disruption? How could monetary compensation be calculated amidst the complexities of open field farming? These two proposals were but a tiny part of contemporary railway mania, and like so many others, dropped quietly into oblivion. However the OWW line was a certainty. The whole question of railway development was a great source of controversy. There were economic arguments in favour of the advantages of better communication, of profitable investment and land sales. On the other hand opposition was expressed by coach operators, road and canal carriers who saw their interests threatened, by landowners resistant to intrusion on their land, by inn keepers fearing loss of trade, and by clergyman concerned about the social and moral impact of trains and the wider world upon their parishioners. Alarmist visions of passengers maimed and suffocated, livestock injured, and crops refusing to grow convey just what a fearsome and unknown quantity the railways were, especially in an area like the

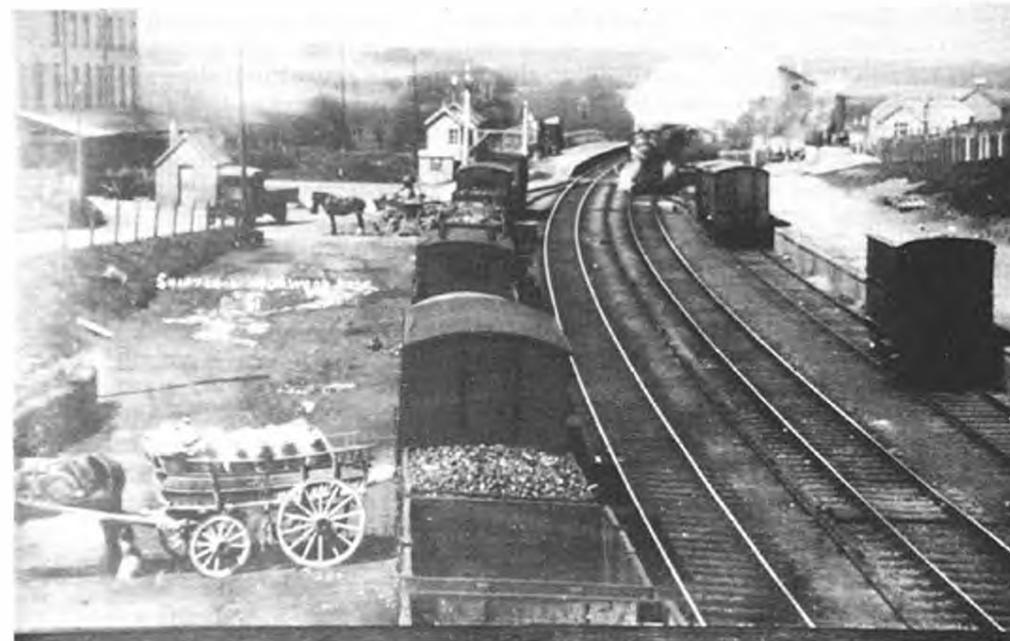
Wychwoods, where the great majority of the population was locally born, seldom travelling outside a ten-mile radius from their home villages.

By 1847 2,800 men were at work on the line. By September 1848 the Pershore-Shipton section was in an advanced state, but that between Shipton and Wolvercote was then held up because of a general financial panic. When confidence began to return to the markets the OWW company received parliamentary permission to raise more capital and new contractors, the renowned Peto and Betts, took on the work. Construction progressed apace. All this happened in the same year as Shipton's enclosure. The Wychwoods must have been alive with men at work. The railway construction was largely manual with navvies, who could each shift up to 20 tons a day in digging, cutting and building of embankments, receiving an average of 3s for their pains. Tub waggons on special lines, with horses trained to dodge the tipping waggons, and pullies and gins were used, but most labour was sheer muscle power. Quarrymen, toolmakers, brick and timber merchants, iron founders, horse traders, smiths, masons, carpenters and bricklayers were all involved. How much labour was local is not certain, but certainly local oolite was used in the bridges, much of the facing coming from Taynton Quarry. The actual workings used, known as Rally Quarr, can still be seen five miles south of Shipton station. Perhaps John Venvil and others had cause to count their own few blessings in contrast to the harsh life of gang labour on the railway construction.

By spring 1853 the line was complete. Semaphore signals and telegraph equipment were installed. Staff were appointed in April 1853. Porters received 16s a week and clerks, depending on the importance of their station, up to £60 p.a. Mr Bunn of Ascott rated £52 p.a. Porters thus received at least 50% more than agricultural labourers, and also had the considerable benefit of job security. However many posts were given to existing employees, moved from other sections of the railway, although some lower grades may have been recruited locally.

The grand opening of the OWW was set for Saturday 7 May 1853. Everyone in the villages must have been conscious of the imminent intrusion into their lives. Everyone who could must have crowded to possible viewpoints. Prominent citizens had reserved positions. Perhaps William Bould and Mary were present on the platform alongside his brother and other tenant farmers to witness the approach of the special train with a long drawn out shrill of its whistle? Two locomotives rattled and roared into view, hauling 26 four-wheeled coaches. The assemblage had left Dudley picking up directors and dignitaries on the way, and after a champagne luncheon at Evesham, steamed dramatically through the Cotswolds, breaking the somnolent peace of the afternoon. There must have been many memories of the appearance of this first steam train, especially amongst those who saw its fiery return late at night, after due celebrations at Oxford.

Regular public services only began on Saturday 4 June. There were five workings each way daily from Dudley to Oxford. Expresses covered the 57 miles in one hour 50 minutes, the stopping trains taking two hours 17 minutes. However the majority of traffic was freight, carrying coal, minerals, Stourbridge glass, Kidderminster carpets, and Worcester porcelain. In 1860 the OWW was absorbed by the West Midland railway, and in 1863 became part of



Shipton station in its heyday

the Great Western Railway.

One of the main advantages of the railway system was the rapid circulation of news through the accompanying telegraph network and more readily available papers and magazines. Few country people actually used the railway as passengers in its early years. However it had its impact, not least with the transport of coal which gradually became the main source of their domestic fuel. Travelling by train must have held some fascination, especially to the young, but early conditions in third-class carriages were uninviting. After the 1844 Cheap Train Act, the waggons were at least covered, although only a moderate amount of air and light penetrated through the small venetian ventilators at the top. Seating consisted of planks and drainage holes were let into the floor for the through passage of rain. Slow journeys in summer heat and winter cold must have been hard to bear. James Spencer of the Crown and William Baylis of the Red Horse must have viewed the coming of the railway with some trepidation. Stage and mail coaches passed through Shipton. However, once regular train services were established, the Post Office followed a policy of using rail transport. The opening of Shipton station did generate the operation of a new coach link with Burford. The presence of the railway also led to the establishment of coal heavers and carrier services and later to the construction of a local gas works and corn mill. This shifted a focus for business outside the old village centre. The decline of one trade may not have been compensated for by the rise of new opportunities as far as the local inn keepers were concerned.

At the higher levels of local society we know from the diary of John Simpson

Calvertt, farmer, that the railway had a highly beneficial influence on his lifestyle. Not only did Calvertt travel frequently to markets whose location was now dictated by their proximity to the railway, to agricultural shows, on holiday, on social visits and to the races, but he also made use of its facilities in practical farming. Bulls were dispatched from distant regions to his Wychwood farm, whilst he consigned truckloads of sheep to various markets. Straw was transported by rail, a costly method, until in 1896 freight charges were reduced on agricultural products. Even a pointer puppy was delivered to him. His children travelled to boarding schools and, later still two daughters *en route* for their new married lives in Imperial India and Belize. In the late 19th century it was largely the use of rapid rail routes which enabled farmers, first in the Thames Valley and later in the Evenlode Valley, to change to dairy farming, taking advantage of the ever-increasing demand for milk from the growing conurbation of London.

As the century advanced so greater use was made of the railways by the lower ranks of society. They could send letters and obtain national newspapers, as well as benefit from receiving cheaper mass-produced products delivered by rail. Mail order catalogues came into existence. They could set their clocks by GMT which came along the telegraph from London. Young girls setting out for lives in service could travel greater distances using the train. Many of the migrants, leaving the Wychwoods during the 1870s, set off by rail on the first leg of their journeys.

William Bould was a stalwart of the parish church of Shipton, St Mary the Virgin. He would have been closely interested in the great changes which took place in the religious life of both Shipton and Milton in the 1850s. Shipton was a rich living, known in the late 18th and early 19th century for its pluralist incumbents. Absenteeism also occurred as in the 1780s and 1790s, when Bishop Butler found the vicar of Shipton 'shamefully non-resident' in 1784. Such abuses were unacceptable in the reformed and reinvigorated Anglican church of the 1850s. The resources, both spiritual and material, poured into this restoration of the Anglican church are very apparent in the history of the Wychwood villages. In 1854 a Church school, in a new building designed by G.E. Street, the Oxford diocesan architect, was opened just north of Shipton church. Next, in 1855, £1,000 was spent in enlarging Shipton's vicarage, first built in 1818. If the claims of the ubiquitous Revd Dr Robert Phillimore at the time of the 1851 religious census are to be believed, the Church certainly had a considerable local following, with Sunday congregations averaging 400 in the morning, 450 in the afternoon, with an additional 230 Sunday scholars. The population of Shipton township was 616 at the time.

However the fact that adjoining Milton (population 799) had no Anglican church must be taken into account. Milton had long been a stronghold of Dissent, just one of the differences between the two villages which are further discussed in the following chapters. If Anglicanism had the monopoly in Shipton in 1851 the reverse was true of Milton. There were three chapels there: the Primitive Methodists claimed a congregation of 101 in the afternoon, 96 in the evening; the Baptists claimed 120 in the morning, 200 in the evening and 80 Sunday School scholars; whilst Zoar Particular Baptists

claimed a congregation of 161 in the afternoon. The dates at which their chapels had been built, respectively 1834, 1840 and 1846, is another indication of the vigour of these Nonconformist groups. The 1850s saw the Church of England trying to counter this strength and in 1853/4 the new church of St Simon and St Jude, together with a school and teacher's house, were built in Milton at the expense of James Haughton Langston MP, Lord of the Manor of Milton, but resident at Sarsden House. The mood of the time is caught by the vicar of Shipton's response to Bishop Wilberforce's visting enquiry of 1854 about local dissent, 'The number of Dissenters in Shipton amounting perhaps to four or five. In Milton and Lineham there are a great number, probably two thirds of the population, but I verily believe their Dissent or at least the Dissent of the majority will be overcome by the New Church'

As to life in Shipton and Milton anyone leaving the villages in the late 1840s and returning in 1860 would have been barely able to believe the evidence of their own eyes. This impression would have been added to by one more major event; in 1853 an act was passed for the disafforestation of a large tract of the ancient forest of Wychwood. Part of the Crown allotment was to be reclaimed and brought into cultivation. The presence of the surviving forest had long been an influence on the adjoining villages. Arthur Young's fierce championing of enclosure for Wychwood has already been noted but action for change was slow to reach west Oxfordshire. It was the spirit of applying scientific principles of development and management to agriculture in the hey day of Victorian high farming that finally provided the impetus. The first task in the disafforestation was the construction of ten miles of public roads with boundary walls at a cost of nearly £700 a mile. There was then ample work for local people in the enormous task of clearing the dense, dark and gloomy unreclaimed forest — 1,970 acres of the 2,937 acres of Crown allotment. Even more unaccustomed was the sudden abundance of meat, for the virtually total slaughter of the forest deer resulted in such a surplus of venison that for a time not even the poorest family went hungry.

The labour of clearance lasted from October 1856 to January 1858. The hundreds of men and boys involved felled, cut, stripped and tied the timber. The cost of clearance was easily covered by sales of timber to the War Department at Woolwich and elsewhere; timber was transported by the recently opened railway. The Fowler Tree Throwing Machine must have been a great novelty. Used for pulling down small trees and bushes it was a windlass, turned by two horses, which held a long wire with various lengths of chain stretching out in all directions attached to different trees and bushes. The tightest chain worked first, then the next and so on until all were uprooted. Then stout tools and strong arms were the priority in removing the network of roots and stumps that were left. For a time at least the villagers' fuel problem were solved. Supplies so far exceeded demand that masses of surplus firewood were burnt on the spot.

The final task, before advertising for tenants, was to divide the reclaimed land into seven farms by trenches, posts and rails, which protected two rows of whitethorn quicks. In 1858 these farms were advertised to let by tender on 31 year leases, running from the previous Michaelmas (10 October 1857) the

normal date for taking over farm tenancies. Nearly 70 tenders were received from 200 applicants from all over England and Scotland. Access on the railway must have been a great attraction for these incomers as they arrived at Shipton station in search of transport to see the new improved farms. Again speculation and amazement at the pace of change must have been rife amongst the locals.

The land handed over to the first tenants was far from inviting. Wide ditches, high banks, hollows, briars, roots, undergrowth and patches of fern abounded. Hard labour was needed to erase these obstacles. Nevertheless the first harvest was very favourable.

The first harvest for the new Wychwood farms brings the decade almost to its close. It had been a time of great change, of benefits, of dislocation and adjustment, and short and long term difficulties for some. Agriculture was going through a period of prosperity. William Bould continued his lifelong association with farming. In 1856 he suffered the death of his brother Richard, with whom he had lived and worked closely during their years in Shipton. It seems he retired from running the farm during the 1860s and lived a quiet life with Mary until her death in 1869. He died in 1875 at the age of 82. William's portion of Springhill Farm passed to his first wife's niece. One of her first acts was to pay off the mortgage William had undertaken in 1853. Hannah Plumb outlived her husband Joseph by a number of years, and upon her death three years after William, her portion of Springhill farm passed to her nephew. She had left instructions that the farm was to be sold and converted into money, but by that time the dark age of 19th-century farming had arrived, and no buyer could be found until 1897 when Joseph Reade finally purchased the land, following a trend visible throughout the century for Shipton's land to become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Today, the house at Springhill where Hannah lived retains its buildings although it is practically devoid of land, but William, our redoubtable 19th-century landowner and tenant, has emerged from obscurity to guide us through the important events which so influenced his life, and those of all his contemporaries in Shipton and Milton.

Sources and References

Tithe apportionments and maps for Milton 1843, and Shipton 1843, ORO 272 and 342; Shipton enclosure award and map, 1852 and 1850, ORO QSD/A Bk. 48; Milton enclosure award and map, 1849 and 1846, ORO QSD/A Bk. 41; deposited railway plans, ORO PD 2/7, PD 2/18, PD 2/25, PD 2/40; Shipton Estate Documents, Bundle 3, referring to Springhill Farm, Shipton Parish Council; Shipton census enumerators' books, 1851, 1861, 1871, PRO microfilm in LHL; religious census returns for Shipton and Milton 1851, PRO microfilm in LHL; C. Belcher, 'On the Reclaiming of Waste lands as instanced in Wichwood Forest', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 24, Pt. II (1863); A. Young, *op. cit.*; G.W. Davidson, *A Brief History of the Baptist Church, Milton, Oxfordshire* (n.d., 1889?); M. Turner, *English Parliamentary Enclosure* (1980), *passim*. and pp. 65, 87; S.C. Jenkins and H.I. Quayle, *Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway* (1977); D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869* (1960), pp. 30, 48, 58, 73; E.P. Baker (ed.), 'Bishop Wilberforce's Visitation Returns, 1854', *Oxfordshire Record Society*, Vol. XXXV (1954), p.129.

CHAPTER IV

Decade of decisions: the 1870s

As we look at the Wychwood villages in the 1870s it may be helpful to consider the viewpoint and fate of a local agricultural labourer, such as Thomas Turner, a Milton man, who in 1873 was married with a family of eight children. What was life like for such a family? How much were they affected by, and aware of, happenings elsewhere in England and overseas?

Farmers at this time had been benefiting from a period of steady or rising prices; in fact they were near the end of what was later seen as the 'golden age' of Victorian High Farming. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 had removed protection from home-grown crops but was not immediately followed by a serious slump in prices, as had been feared. It was only after the mid-1870s that competition, first from increased grain imports and later from foreign refrigerated meat, began to have its effect. This was eventually reflected, as we shall see, in a shift to greater dairy and livestock production in the Wychwoods area. More immediately falling corn prices signalled the beginning of a time of difficulty and depression in farming, locally and nationally.

By the 1870s improved communication, not just by rail, but also along improved roads, had enabled the development of a cheap and efficient postal service and telegraph network. Speedy delivery of national, and a rapidly expanding number of local, newspapers was also possible. In Milton and Shipton educational provision had been considerably expanded during the mid-century. The Education Act of 1870 introduced national compulsory elementary education to the age of ten. Levels of literacy began to rise. All these developments were making it more possible for people of all classes to be more aware than ever before of what was happening in other places.

An Oxfordshire farm labourer, like Thomas Turner, in the 1870s was earning 11-12s a week, a basic average of about £35 p.a., allowing for loss of pay during bad weather or illness. Turner may not have read a newspaper, but he was probably aware that industrial workers' wages were higher than his own (in fact some 50% higher), and that farm workers in the north were also able to command better pay. These farmers, faced with competition for labour from nearby manufacturing towns and receiving higher prices for produce because of local market demand, had to be more generous. In Milton Thomas was expected to work long hours, from sunrise to sunset, under very hard conditions for his small and uncertain wage. This pay alone was scarcely enough to feed a family, even on the poorest diet, and was inadequate to provide for reasonable clothing against wet and cold. Many local farm workers lived in cramped conditions, in tied or rented cottages with no security of tenure.

Things did not get better in the Wychwoods during the mid-century. Population rose considerably in both villages between 1801 and 1901, by 53% in Milton and 65% in Shipton. For both communities the most intense period of growth came between the 1830s and 1860s (Table 7 and Figure 4). By 1871 Shipton and Milton had reached a peak of population. Thereafter they experienced stagnation or absolute decline. It was the 1870s which set the seal on this change of fortune, for it was during these years that the village

Table 7: Population 1801-1901

Year	Milton under Wychwood	Shipton under Wychwood	Oxfordshire
1801	495	406	111,977
1811	522	395	118,953
1821	567	441	138,224
1831	568	506	153,526
1841	660	546	163,127
1851	799	616	170,434
1861	895	655	179,973
1871	962	761	177,960
1881	836	724	179,593
1891	898	743	185,274
1901	759	672	181,149

Source: Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, Vol. 2

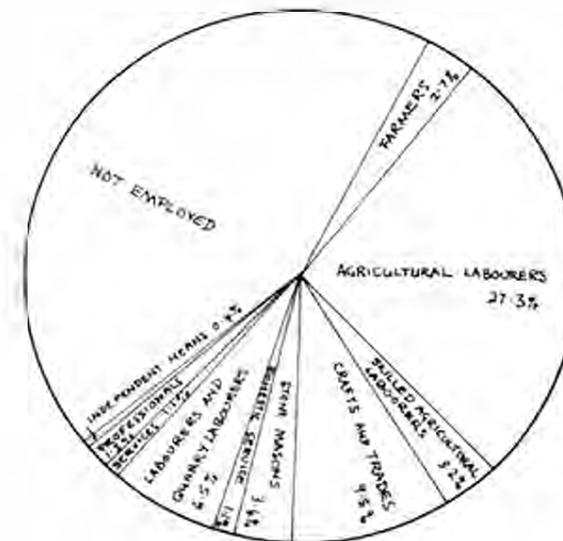
economics finally proved unable to sustain the rapidly enlarged population. The basic problem was clear in the Milton work force, of which Thomas Turner was part in 1871. There were ten farmers who employed 58 men, six women and 21 boys, whereas some 100 men were described in the census as farm workers. There was more labour than there were jobs, and despite the non-farming occupations of mason and quarry work for the men, and gloving for the women, there were insufficient alternatives to absorb this surplus (Figure 7). Some of those not taken on by farmers might hope for seasonal work like hedging, ditching, or harvesting, or do casual work like hoeing, stone picking or threshing, but unemployment was becoming an increasing threat to their existence.

Life had been less grim for villagers when they could still benefit from nearby Wychwood forest. There had been no royal hunting or strict control of the forest since the previous century and people grazed cattle, hunted game and collected fuel there. With enclosure and the clearance of the forest after 1856, there followed a few years when surrounding villages could enjoy surplus timber and venison and there was plenty of work to be had; all this came to an end when the new enclosed farms came into production. Not only were the villagers deprived of their source of game, probably their only meat apart from a household pig, but the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 had brought in harsh new measures which enabled the police to search anyone suspected of carrying a bird or rabbit which had been taken illegally. The penalty for night poaching could be three months in jail with hard labour. To add to all this was the new Poor Law introduced in the 1830s, and based on a punitive workhouse test.

Figure 6: Population change in Milton, Shipton and Oxfordshire 1801-1901



Figure 7: Milton male occupations in 1871. (Total male population 476)



The growing number of friendly societies in Shipton and Milton at this time shows the dread that labouring families had of becoming unable to support themselves, and worst of all, of suffering the stigma of a pauper burial. The Shipton Friendly Society was established in 1860. It met at the Crown Inn on the second Monday in February, May, August and November when its members spent two hours in friendly but sober company, and paid 4s 'into the box'. Of this 3s went to the Stock Fund, 6d to the annual feast, 3d to an incidental fund and 3d towards beer. Members had to meet definite conditions before being voted into the society; they must 'bear a good character, be of sound habit of body, not labouring under known or concealed distemper', and be between the ages of 12 and 45 years. After a year's membership they would receive when ill or not working, 8s a week for up to 52 weeks, and then 4s a week. Society membership also ensured a decent burial, not only through help with the daunting expenses, but also through much valued marks of respect from fellow members before and during the funeral. The friendly societies also provided welcome opportunities for fellowship and a rare chance for labourers to organise their own affairs, although, as at Shipton, local clergy and notables were frequently involved.

Outside the quarterly meetings society affairs were operated by two stewards and their four assistants, whose job it was to visit sick members weekly (unless they had smallpox or some other contagious disease), to engage a 'medical man' when necessary, to account for all expenditures, and generally to maintain a well-ordered and respectable appearance. This was the tone of the Society as a whole, with its rules excluding from benefit any member who 'wilfully ran himself into danger, such as cudgeling, or foot ball playing, fighting, drinking or such like', and expelling anyone claiming benefit whilst still working or found 'at a public house or gaming, or engaged in any other improper way'. A door keeper was appointed to ensure that only members entered the Society's meetings.

Despite these sober strictures Society events were enjoyable and important parts of village life. This was especially true of the annual feast, a rare day off work. In Shipton this took place on the Wednesday of Whitsun week and was paid for from the members' quarterly 6d and an additional payment of 2/6d for the dinner. Feast day had an elaborate ritual of its own. Each member was required to attend divine service, walking in procession in twos 'as they stand on the books', or pay a fine of 1s. The stewards were to solicit the local clergyman to preach a suitable sermon or be fined 2/6d. Festivities then lasted until ten at night with the feast in the club room at the Crown, followed by a more general fete and fair for the women folk and children of members. To belong to a friendly society was an important thing in a labourer's life; it provided special occasions and fellowship in a hard life, and some relief from the constant threat of unemployment or sickness. Was it enough for the farm labourers of the Wychwood villages?

In the early 1870s rural workers started to take more radical action to remedy their situation. Joseph Arch, a Warwickshire hedge cutter and Primitive Methodist preacher, urged his fellow workers to fight for better pay and conditions by means of a trade union. In February 1872 Arch held his first meeting at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire. Two months later on 16 April the first meeting of what was to become the Oxford District of the National



Shipton Friendly Society Club Day, Whitsun 1908. Shipton Band are entertaining the crowd outside Shipton post office in Church Street

Agricultural Labourers' Union was held on the green at Milton under Wychwood. Fifty men joined that evening, having appointed 35 year-old Joseph Leggett of Milton as their secretary. Leggett had been born in Windsor, married a Milton girl, and was not himself an agricultural labourer, but a carpenter employed by Alfred Groves of Milton. Like many of his fellow unionists Leggett was a Dissenter in religion, a Baptist. The April meeting elected a committee of six, two from Milton (James Mills, agricultural labourer, and William Barnes, carpenter), two from Shipton (William Right and Charles Cox, agricultural labourers) and two from Lyncham. Once started the movement grew at an amazing speed. A week later they held a second meeting, also at Milton, at which rules and objectives were agreed. These included the demand for a nine-hour day, with extra pay of 4d per hour for overtime and Sunday work. The minutes of that meeting state that 'After the rules were read a large number joined the Union from different parishes, an excellent feeling prevailed among the men, who quietly dispersed to their homes'. By May, only a month later, 13 branches with over 500 members had been set up in the area. Demands were extended to include a basic minimum wage of 13s a week, and a day's work at harvest time of 13 hours, including 2 hours for meals, paid at 4s a day without beer.

The idea of working men joining forces to demand fairer treatment was resented and strongly resisted by the farmers. In July Mr Maddox of Shipton dismissed six of his 25 labourers for joining the union. Tensions affected all three Wychwood villages, including Ascott where, as John Calvertt of Fairspear Farm recorded in his diary, 'Mr. Robert Hambridge told me how he had been persecuted by the Josh Arch-ites, two or three years ago'. Union members paid a subscription of 2d per week to the union funds, which were used to assist those who suffered loss of employment because of their

membership. Thomas Turner of Milton was one of those who claimed assistance; he was paid 9s for one week in January 1873, perhaps because of a lock out.

In the spring of that year the Wychwoods attracted national attention over the notorious affair of the women 'martyrs of Ascott'. In April Robert Hambridge, who farmed some 400 acres at Ascott, was approached by his labourers for a rise of 2s per week in their basic wages. Hambridge refused and the men went on strike. Within a week labourers on other farms in the village followed their example. In May Hambridge decided to hire men from Ramsden to take the place of the strikers. On the morning of 12 May a group of wives and daughters of the Ascott strikers met two of these men as they came to work in the village and tried to persuade them to stay away. Although initially deterred, the men subsequently returned, under the protection of a single police constable, and began work. For their allegedly intimidatory action 17 Ascott women were arrested and charged at Chipping Norton Petty Sessions with breaching the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871, a piece of legislation aimed at restricting picketing by trade unionists. It was claimed that the women had threatened violence. Sixteen of the Ascott women were found guilty and sent to prison, seven of them for ten days and the remaining nine for seven days hard labour. They were transported to Oxford jail under police escort. The sentencing magistrates were the Revd W.E.D. Carter, Phillimore's successor as vicar of Shipton, and the Revd Thomas Harris, rector of Swerford. The harshness of the sentences, and the fact that two of the women were nursing babies, which had to go to prison with them, caused an outcry not just amongst union supporters but nationally. The affair was debated in the national press and in Parliament. The Lord Chancellor required the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Marlborough, to investigate events. Despite the Duke's stalwart defence of the rigorous action of the magistrates the Lord Chancellor disagreed, firmly pointing out to the Duke that 'the authority of the law would have been in this case better vindicated by a different and more lenient course'. Many Wychwood unionists were Nonconformists; and the actions of the local clerical magistrates must have added religious resentment to social and economic grievances. When the Ascott Martyrs were finally released from prison there were large demonstrations, and on 20 June at the gates of Mr. Hambridge's farm, Joseph Arch himself presented each of the 16 women with £5 and a silk dress in royal blue, the union colour.

By this time the NALU Oxford District had set up headquarters in Oxford with Joseph Leggett of Milton as organising secretary. The District was affiliated to the national headquarters of the union in Leamington. The Union made a major policy decision to assist families to emigrate, arguing that as long as there was surplus labour available the farmers would not give in to their demands.

In July 1872, when the first efforts of the Union were being blocked by the farmers, Charles Carter, an emigration agent from a New Zealand construction firm, Brogden and Sons, held a meeting at Shipton, at which he recruited ten families. They left on 13 September, and arrived at Napier, Hawke Bay on 28 December, a journey of over three months. Letters from these first emigrants, giving glowing accounts of life in New Zealand, were passed around at home in Oxfordshire, and did much to encourage others to take the same course. Fares

were paid for families on condition that the men either worked for a stated period for the construction firm, or agreed to refund the loan once they were settled.

This was the start of a period of massive emigration from the area. Over 200 per 100,000 of population left Oxfordshire, the highest figure for any county except Cornwall, with its special problems of a failing mining industry.

In November 1873 the emigration agent, Carter held another meeting at Milton. This took place in a large marquee, which was used frequently at this time for chapel and union functions. It was owned by Isaac Castle, a typical example of the respectable Victorian radical working man. Isaac was a Primitive Methodist who ran a coffee tavern in Milton to assist the cause of temperance. In 1881 he appeared in the census living in High Street, Milton with his wife Anne. Castle was then aged 55 and described as a woodman. In 1873 his marquee was pitched in a field near the village and there 5-600 gathered for a meeting lit only by lanterns. The audience had come from far and near to hear Carter speak for an hour and 40 minutes on the wonders of life in New Zealand, comparing it to the 'march down hill with the workhouse at the bottom', which they faced in England. A collection of £17 was made to help a group about to leave for Hawkes Bay.

We do not know the exact number who left Milton, but the shipping company records tell of about 100 adults and children going from the village, including Thomas Turner with his large family. By 1881 Milton's population had fallen by 126, a loss of 13% during a decade when Shipton's population fell by 5% and that of Oxfordshire remained stable (Figure 6). The Milton emigrants included several large inter-related families, and also many of those active in the union movement and in the Nonconformist chapels. These Dissenting groups, which organised their own affairs and provided lay preachers from amongst their own ranks, did much to provide the determined, lively-minded men of independent and radical spirit who led Wychwood trade unionism in the 1870s.

By comparison with the adjoining village people in Shipton took little part in active unionism. Perhaps Milton's larger population, the fact that it had undergone more rapid and radical changes in its property-owning structure in preceding years, and had no big house or strong Anglican presence, all contributed to its position as the real stronghold of local unionism. Certainly before 1874 only the Wiggins family had emigrated from Shipton. In May 1874 Shipton was described in the NALU journal, *The Chronicle* as a 'large respectable village with only about 14 or 16 in the Union'. Then a party of 17 from Shipton joined the 'Cospatrick', which sailed on 11 September. The ship caught fire in the South Atlantic and sank, leaving no survivors from the 429 emigrants on board. A memorial to this disaster stands on the village green at Shipton showing the names of more extended family groups, the Hedges and the Townsends, lost to the village.

After this tragedy interest in emigration waned. The incident was a great shock to the area, and at the same time the outflow of workers that had been taking place during the previous three years was having its affect. Wages and conditions of work were gradually improving as the bargaining powers of the labourers strengthened. Even in Shipton, Union membership increased sharply in 1875. A very large demonstration was held at Milton on Wednesday 28 July

1875. Joseph Arch, the NALU President, was led in procession from Shipton station to Milton village green. Bands played, banners waved, and nearly 800 people had tea in Issac Castle's great tent. The demonstration was said to have been attended by 3-4,000.

The NALU members certainly had reason to be pleased with their achievements during those first years. Basic wage rates had risen 20-30% between 1873 and 1874, and 40-50,000 people had emigrated under Union-sponsored schemes. Total Union membership had reached over 150,000. From this point however, the movement was destined to run into difficulties. A prolonged period of strikes and lock-outs in East Anglia laid great demands on the Union's central funds. When eventually the strike collapsed it led to bitterness in other parts of the country, as branches saw 75% of their contributions being diverted to the Leamington headquarters. There were disputes at the Oxford District HQ as to future policy, and the old strong feelings of united purpose gradually slackened as real wages improved. Of the pioneering leaders many had left for New Zealand, including Joseph Leggett, James Mills and William Barnes, all from Milton. All this weakened the Union's position, but another factor was soon to become dominant.

By the second half of the decade the prosperous years of farming were well and truly over. John Calvertt's diary tells of year after year of disastrous weather. Successive harvests were ruined by rain, and when there was a dry spell it seems to have been fatal to crops, cereal and fodder alike. In years past a bad season might have caused a rise in market prices, but now the American prairies had been opened up, and ship loads of cheap cereals were arriving at English ports, causing prices to fall. Some farmers like Calvertt were able to continue in their comfortable lifestyle despite these troubles, but many smaller farmers did not manage to survive this period of depression, and landowners were finding it hard to dispose of leases on vacant farms.

As things became genuinely difficult for farmers the labourers were forced to accept some cuts in wages, but since the cost of living had fallen their real wage was in fact still better than at the beginning of the decade. Although the period of heady agitation had died down, the villagers now had a sense of what could be achieved by co-operation. The Union lapsed, and many of the young and vigorous leaders amongst the working men had gone. Amongst those who were left was there some legacy of the independent spirit which had helped families to brave the long voyage to the other side of the world, and to risk hardship by challenging farmers for better conditions? Now in more defensive mode, it was into allotment schemes, friendly societies and chapel-going that energies flowed.

Sources and References

Rules of Shipton Friendly Society, 1860, ORO Willis I/v/1; census enumerators' books Milton and Shipton, 1881, PRO microfilm in LHL; the minute books of the Oxford District of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, 1872-9, published in P. Horn [ed.], 'Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire 1872-81', *Oxfordshire Record Society*, Vol. XLVIII (1974); Rollo Arnold, *Oxfordshire Emigrants to New Zealand during the Farm Labourers' Revolt in the 1870's* [typescript of lecture to Wellington Group of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, 17 June 1976].

CHAPTER V

Growing up in Milton and Shipton one hundred years ago

'What do our young Alf want wi' a lot of book-larin!' they would say. 'He can read and write and add up as much money as he's ever likely to get. What more do he want!' Then a neighbour of more advanced views would tell them: 'A good education's everything in these days. You can't get on in the world if you ain't had one.' Flora Thompson: *Lark Rise to Candleford* Chapter XI

The village children of the 1880s were amongst the first for whom a sustained period of schooling was almost universal, although the main village schools at both Milton and Shipton had been built in 1854. Each stood close to the Anglican church, and the Church of England was a dominant influence in the education they gave. There were other schools in the villages during the 19th century, including Anglican and Dissenting Sunday schools, Church evening classes at Shipton in the 1860s, and private dame schools offering rudimentary teaching and child-minding. Such independent and unregulated provision as dame schools dwindled as government funding and legislative control gradually increased, from the first grants and inspectors of 1833 to Foster's Elementary Education Act of 1870. This Act required that every child had an elementary school place. In areas where the existing voluntary schools could not meet this need, local ratepayers were to establish an elected School Board, financed partly from local rates and partly by the government. Bye-laws could be made forbidding the employment of children under ten and requiring attendance at least part-time to age 13, unless pupils passed an appropriate leaving exam. Shipton's schooling remained based on voluntary Anglican provision; Milton, to the displeasure of the parson, had a non-denominational, elected School Board from 1874, one of only some 12% of Oxfordshire villages to do so.

Attempts to provide education for all children met with mixed reactions in the villages. The children of the farmworkers, who formed the bulk of the local population, had always been sent to work as soon as they could earn. Eight-year olds picked stones, scared birds, and worked as ploughboys, leading the horses. At busy times, like harvest, it was fruitless to try and keep the schools open. Throughout the year older girls might be kept at home to look after younger children, whilst their mothers worked. Girls of 12 or 13 went into domestic service. Earnings from all this work helped the whole family to survive financially. Local farmers were also keen to use this readily available, cheap labour. Some parents may have hoped their children would get on through education. However, Shipton school log books suggest the opportunities were small, as in 1872 when only one or two went on to Burford Grammar School. Some mothers may have been glad to have their children out

Table 8 : School Attendance in Shipton and Milton

	MILTON		SHIPTON	
	Total aged 0-14	Scholars attending	Total aged 0-14	Scholars attending
1851 Boys	167	62 (37%)	115	39 (34%)
Girls	140	68 (49%)	105	38 (36%)
1881 Boys	109	62 (57%)	109	62 (57%)
Girls	116	81 (70%)	116	80 (69%)

of the way in safe hands, although it was at the price of the weekly fees which were charged until 1891. It was not until school attendance was made legally compulsory that resistance and indifference were overcome, and then sometimes only with difficulty, as the labours of the Milton school attendance officer in the 1880s demonstrate. By that time the Education Acts of 1876 and 1880 had imposed full-time attendance at school for all children aged five to ten, with compulsory part-time attendance between ten and 14. Children could leave earlier if they passed a leaving examination in the three Rs (the 'labour certificate'), or on attendance record (the 'dunce's pass').

The effect of all this on Milton and Shipton is to be seen in the differing experiences of the children recorded in the censuses of 1851 and 1881. Taking all boys and girls aged 14 and under attendance had increased (Table 8).

In Milton in 1851 35 boys were working on the land, starting with three aged only nine. Thirty years later, of 20 boy workers in various jobs, the two youngest, again in farming, were 11 years old. There was a greater variety of jobs, including baker's assistant, slater's labourer, groom, and highway contractor, several being sons working for fathers. In Milton in 1851 levels of attendance were higher than in Shipton, a difference partly explained by the admission of three- and four-year olds at Milton. This tradition of infant scholars apparently caused problems; the Milton School Board had to resolve in July 1879 that, 'No infants under the age of three years be admitted to either of the Board Schools' (Milton and Lyneham). The usual starting age was five. In both villages boys started to leave school earlier than girls, showing the continuing pressures for early employment. At Shipton in 1881 50% of girls aged 13 and 14 were still at school compared with only 12% of boys, some of whom still left as early as age ten. Not all school leavers went straight into work; 15% of Shipton children aged 12 to 14 in 1881 were at home, although they may well have worked there.

The parental attitudes to child labour and educational opportunity experienced by these children differed greatly from those prevalent a century later. Wage levels and sheer survival do much to explain this. In 1907 the Oxfordshire agricultural labourer had the lowest average weekly wage (14/11d) of any county in England and Wales. There were also many more children to support than there are now in Milton and Shipton — 1 in 3 as opposed to 1 in 5, and in a generally much younger population (Table 9).

As compulsory education was gradually accepted so the school buildings

Table 9: Children and Old People 1881 and 1981

		MILTON	SHIPTON
		% of total population	
1881	Aged 0-14	36.84	35.17
	Aged 65 +	5.98	5.79
1981	Aged 0-14	20.61	23.06
	Aged 65 +	18.44	19.97

Source: Census tables 1881, 1981

expanded, Shipton in 1887 to a capacity of 170, and Milton in 1890 and 1897 to provide space for 180. Average attendance reached 98 and 166 at Shipton and Milton respectively in 1883, and 126 and 160 in 1899.

In school photographs taken at the end of the century the children do not look poor and ragged. The girls have neat white pinafores and long hair, sometimes crowned by straw hats, covered in flowers and ribbons. The boys have long shorts, boots and small flat caps. Expressions are serious, perhaps reflecting the protracted and rare experience of having their picture taken. Fortunately the surviving log books for Shipton school help us to get behind the solemn facade, as do the log and minute books of Milton School and School Board.

The teacher's task was not an easy one working with large classes and wide age ranges, often overcrowded and not always in separate rooms. In 1892 Milton school had 60 children in a room intended for 38. In such circumstances older children were pressed into service as monitors. At Shipton the headmaster was Mr Peirce, who was helped by his wife and a succession of 'certificated teachers' and pupil teachers, all of whom seem to have been away ill a good deal. However the Peirce daughters stepped into the breach and the vicar and curate also took classes. The vicar played a large part in school life, taking tests, checking attendance records, and providing religious instruction. With attendance officers, sanitary inspectors, school governors, diocesan inspectors, HMI's and the family from Shipton Court, surveillance was strict.

Ensuring attendance was a constant problem. Mr Peirce visited families to find out why children were not attending and trying to collect fees, 2d per week. In 1869 he began to admit 'better class children' at 6d. At Milton a graduated scale was adopted in 1874, of 1d for labourers' children, 3d for tradesmen's and 6d for farmer's. Despite these incentives difficulties arose with arrears of school pence and irregular attendance. Several non-payers were excused through poverty, here and at Shipton. This applied especially to widowed mothers like Emily P—, summoned before Milton School Board in 1880. She was a 41-year old widow, living on the Green. Mrs P— worked as a laundress. Harry, her 16-year old son lived at home and worked as a groom, but they could not pay school pence for Clara, 11, and Jane, 7 whilst Albert, 4, was just coming up to school age. The family was exempted from school fees. Against non-attendance the Board took a harsher line, instituting magistrates' court proceedings against the fathers of absent pupils.



School children at St Mary's School, Shipton. 1909

Sometimes the problem was with the employers of under age labour. At Shipton in 1885 Mr Peirce had trouble with Mr Maddox, a leading tenant farmer, whom he had to press to return from work a boy without a leaving certificate. On one occasion the attendance officer reported eight children illegally employed, three by a magistrate. Children from Fifield, Langley and Southlawn all faced a long trek into Shipton school, and their attendance difficulties, especially in bad weather, were understandable.

Illness also disrupted work. Serious epidemics meant closure of the school. Diphtheria, measles and scarlet fever victims had to be passed by the Health Officer before returning, and brothers and sisters were sent home into quarantine. Mr Peirce despatched John T— home with 'the itch' in January 1870, only to receive a visit the following day from his mother, who was sent to the vicar. A sad entry records 'one little girl was too dull and underfed to be worked'. At Milton in January 1892 there was a flu epidemic and the children were at home 'looking after their parents'.

The death of children was a more frequent occurrence in the late 19th century than now, as is reflected in the log books. Some happened very close to home. On 17 July 1888 John Peirce recorded, 'Death of son'. The school was closed the following day, but the headmaster then soldiered on helped by a daughter. On 22 May 1871 Mrs Peirce was absent, having given birth to a daughter the previous day. In just over three weeks she was back at work. In January 1875 Mrs Peirce again returned after a confinement, but a month later was absent a week, 'her infant dead'.

Enjoyment as well as harsher realities are recorded, with a round of high days and holidays from cricket matches, the Shipton School treat in July, and the feast of the Oddfellows Friendly Society, to less official absences for

occasions like 'maying'. Some were unsanctioned, as when three boys were thrashed at Milton in 1894 for following the hunt. Sometimes the inevitable was accepted, as at Milton in November 1894 when, 'In consequence of a circus being in the village it was thought advisable to close the school on Thursday afternoon'. Other absences show the persistence of old seasonal work patterns, involving the children in potato planting, potato picking, hay and corn harvesting. In 1896 Mr Giblett of Milton School was still bemoaning that children were kept away to take dinner to their fathers in the hayfield, a meal that apparently lasted two hours, but kept the children away all morning.

Discipline was a vexed issue. Corporal punishment was used, as at Milton in the 1890's by Mr Giblett. One boy, who was insolent and disrupted the class, got four strokes across the shoulders. The result was 'an abusive letter from his mother indicating her intention of withdrawing him', an outcome for which Mr Giblett felt 'for the sake of the school no regrets are necessary'. Beatings were, however, always unpleasant, and caused Mr Peirce heart searching. He reflected on 10 November 1880, 'Having passed three winters without corporal punishment in the night school began now to try day school without'. On 17 December he 'Broke rule of Nov. 10 last'.

The curriculum in the schools reflected the system of government funding by payment on results, instituted in 1862. This placed stress on the 3Rs, and made the visits of Her Majesty's Inspectors crucial. At Shipton in 1871 an inspector's report copied into the log book recorded 30 failures in reading. Lesson subjects are often listed. In 1892 arithmetic at Milton consisted of:

- Standard III Long Division
- Standard IV Multiplication, division and reduction of money
- Standard V Practice, simple and compound and bill of parcels
- Standard VI Vulgar fractions and decimals

'Standard III are the worst'.

Despair permeates some entries; a boy fails to get one multiplication sum in 12 correct; another is given up altogether and returned to the infant class; the girls fail to grasp mapping in geography. Enthusiasm and renewed hope are also apparent. Despite the three Rs being emphasised other subjects were tackled. Mr Peirce made an annual list of songs and poetry to be learnt, and 'object' lessons and nursery rhymes for the infants. In 1898 at Milton some infants came into school not knowing their letters, but were so enthused by *Masterman Ready* that 'many of them have asked for the privilege of taking it home to read'. Mr Peirce had gardening classes and drill sessions, and Mr Giblett tolerated hockey — until a window was broken and only two boys paid his 1/2d fine, after which the sticks were burnt.

As the Milton and Shipton schools took over as the main educational centres after 1870 there are hints both of the schools they were replacing and the development of alternative middle class private establishments. In 1874 Mrs Durham gave up her dame school in Shipton, adding eight to Mr Peirce's infant class. However in 1876 'a private school opened in the village takes several tradesmen's children away'. Private schools in Witney and Charlbury meant two boys were taken away in 1877, whilst the closure of Mr Gardener's private school in Milton meant new pupils for Mr Peirce in 1878.

28 1871

April 27th Standard I with extra time
at Reading get to page 20
The 1st class are working for
the Dio: Examination
Visit of Mr Robinson B.A.
Pupil Teacher began Drawing

May 1st Few present many away "Maying"
" 2nd H King absent at Seafield
" 3rd More spelling given throughout the
school
" 4th Visit of A W Hall Esquire

May 10th Visit of A W Hall Esq^r and friend
sent to the parents of absentees for
explanations &c Gave notice that
the leave of parents to go to the
Stock & Sale would not be
sufficient for absence
Standard I get to page 36
Standard II begin division

29

1871

May 15th Dio Examination on the 11th
More Reading given to the whole school
Mrs Peirce begins the charge of Standard
II Began to be more particular
about the position of children at standing
lessons Naomi Longshaw leaves
teaching to go to Chalbury British School
as pupil teacher

May 22nd Mrs Peirce absent the 1st time being
confined on Sunday the 21st
Three children admitted
Emma Simmons made monitor
May 25th Standard I get to page 60

Whit' week. Holiday -
June 5th H King absent all this week
to 9th More Writing lessons given
June 12th H King took charge of the school
" 13th 2 girls admitted
" 15th The 1st class have more writing of large
hand in their copybook
June 19th Mrs Peirce returns to her school work this
week being absent 3 weeks

In December 1885 Shipton school was used as a polling station in the first General Election since agricultural labourers had been given the vote in 1884. This is a rare and indirect political note in Shipton's log book. Educational matters in Milton were more contentious in that the Baptist Chapel had had a school since 1867. In 1870 the Milton Vestry resolved that no School Board, as proposed under the new Education Act, be established in Milton. Four years later just such a Board was set up. It began with the Anglican incumbent Revd William Stockdale, as chairman and treasurer, and Mrs Stockdale as 'Lady superintendent' of the school.

Attempted Anglican dominance and Nonconformist independence soon came into conflict. In February 1875 the Board accepted a resolution by Robert Craddock that 'the Bible shall be read in the schools with such explanations and instruction in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of the children, but that no attempt should be made to attach them to any particular denomination'. In September 1876 Mr Stockdale resigned. After the first School Board elections in 1877 William Mace became chairman. Later that year arrangements were made to use the Baptist schoolroom for the Board's infant provision. Mr Stockdale's accounting during his trusteeship was subsequently questioned and became the subject of a long dispute, involving reference to the Local Government Board in London. The whole story cannot be gleaned from the official record, but the clear evidence of denominational tensions provides another interesting contrast between Milton and Shipton in an area of local life, education, that became much more central to the life of the villages at this time.

Sources and References

19th-century log books of Shipton and Milton schools, by courtesy of Mr G.A. Clifford, headmaster, Wychwood County Primary School; minute book of Milton United School Board, 1874-1889, ORO T/SM 9; Milton Vestry minute book, 1870-73, Milton Parish Council; Milton and Shipton census enumerators' books 1851, 1881, PRO microfilm in LHL; B. Seebohm Rowntree, *How the Labourer Lives* [1913]; P. Horn (ed.). 'Village Education in Nineteenth-century Oxfordshire', *Oxfordshire Record Society*, Vol. LI (1979).

CHAPTER VI

Life and work in Shipton and Milton 1880-1914

What sort of life did the children schooled by Mr Peirce and Mr Giblett grow up to? In some ways the tenour of existence in Shipton and Milton was very different, in others very similar. The contrasts might be summed up as those perceived by contemporaries and later historians, between closed and open villages. Was Shipton a closed village; that is characteristically smaller, dominated by a big house, a single landowner, and the Anglican church, with relatively little variety of occupations, few independent small farmers, crafts or tradesmen, few pubs, little radicalism, a tidier and more controlled physical development, and lower rates of population growth circa 1851? Was Milton a typically open village, with a larger population growing more rapidly, no big house, no dominant landowner, a relatively weak Anglican presence, strong religious dissent, more varied job opportunities, more small farmers, crafts and tradesmen, more pubs, active trade unionism and radicalism, and a poorer housing stock?

A look at the most important households in each village in 1881 seems, at first, to confirm this pattern. At Shipton Court Cecil d'Aquilar Samuda was in residence, with his wife Cecile, son Cecil (age 2), and friends Sir Francis and Lady Winnington and their baby Frances. Twelve indoor servants were caring for their needs. This seems to be the 'big house' family in full array. However Samuda was very much a 'temporary' squire. He was the grandson of a West India merchant, the son of a shipbuilder and engineer, and in 1881 the 32-year old scion of a newly rich family moving into the ranks of the landed gentry. He had taken a tenancy of the Court from the Reade family, who had owned the house and estate since 1663. Economically Shipton Court was not the centre of an estate economy, moulding all aspects of village life. The working estate was separate from the big house, divided into tenanted farms and still owned by Joseph Reade, who remained lord of the manor, but took little active interest in its running. The Samudas took on some of the social roles of squires — he was active in the Conservative party, she visiting the local school. They held garden parties and hosted the school treat. However their part was a limited one. Even when they were in residence at the Court their many servants were hardly ever local; in 1881 only one of 12 indoor staff — an 18 year-old footman — came from Shipton. The family soon moved on to a more permanent country seat, Bruern Abbey, but not without benefit to the local economy, for John Calvertt notes in his diary that Groves of Milton received a £2,300 contract to build new stables there in 1887.

Whilst the Samudas occupied the Court Joseph Reade, the person ostensibly likely to fill the role of leading proprietor in a closed village society, continued to live in Shipton. In 1881 he was resident at the Lodge, with his wife, son, a

The
Shipton Court Estate

is a FINE and BEAUTIFUL PROPERTY

2,055 ACRES

and is beautifully positioned on the eastern spur of the Cotswolds in the Parishes of SHIPTON and MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD, about a mile from Shipton Railway Station, 20 miles from the City of Oxford, and under two hours' railway journey from London.

The outstanding climate is an acknowledged recommendation of the district.

The Unique Mansion

RANKING AMONGST THE FINEST
SPECIMENS OF ELIZABETHIAN ARCHITECTURE

is fittingly placed in the

Old World Village of Shipton-under-Wychwood

(The major part of which belongs) and having for its surroundings, CHARACTERISTIC

Gardens and Grounds

representing ONE OF THE MOST CHARMING PLEASANCES OF THE ELIZABETHIAN PERIOD. Kitchen and Fruit Garden, range of Glasshouses, Extensive and complete Stabling Premises, enclosed in a large quadrangle.

The Estate is suitably divided into Farms, Small Holdings and Cottages, let to a thriving Tenantry of long standing, and producing a return, irrespective of the Mansion, Stocking and Lands in hand, of about

£2,200 PER ANNUM.

THE PROSPECTIVE OF SOON (BEING) THE ALL FIELD RESERVE IS IN THE

Centre of the Heythrop Country

AND SHOOTING, FISHING, POLO, GOLF, &c. ARE OBTAINABLE.

cook and one housemaid. However this Reade did not represent the continuity of landownership and family tradition associated with his predecessor, Sir John Chandos Reade, earlier in the century. Sir John, although not farming his majority landholding in Shipton directly, had extended and consolidated it. At his death in 1868 his baronetcy passed to a great nephew, but he bequeathed all his property, including Shipton Court, to his butler Joseph Wakefield on condition that Joseph adopted the name and arms of Reade. Despite legal investigations his disposition of the estate stood and it was Joseph 'Reade', who lived at the Lodge in 1881, having let the Court. He educated his son, another Joseph, at Brasenose College, Oxford, and was succeeded by him in 1896. The family portraits were sold off at Christies in that year, and in 1900, the Shipton Estate itself was finally sold out of 'Reade' hands. The purchaser, W.F. Pepper, set about bringing 'the residence up to modern requirements', developing a sporting estate (in 1910 630 acres were described as sporting), and improving the farms. By the time Pepper in turn sold the property in 1913, the Court had become 'a Gem of a Picturesque Age', equipped with electricity, radiators, lifts and mains drainage, whilst the well-tenanted farms constituted 'a model estate'. This included Grove, Court, Shipton and New Barn Farms, Lower and Upper Milton Farms, Shipton and Langley Mills. In all 2,055 acres went under the hammer at the Roebuck Hotel, Oxford on 2 July 1913. Such a heavy concentration of ownership made for a closed village only if the influence potentially inherent in it was actively exercised by a resident owner. Late Victorian Shipton had little continuity in this respect. Its stability lay rather in established tenant farming families, such as Brookes and Maddox, and its tradesmen.

The leading household in Milton in 1881 was that of Alfred Groves, the builder, who employed 40 hands. He lived at 'The Elms' on the south side of The Green, with his wife, three sons and three daughters, an unmarried sister-in-law, but only one, 19-year old, girl servant. Despite this lack of grandeur Groves was by far the largest employer in either village. The next biggest were William Ellis, farming 332 acres in Shipton, and employing 16 men and four boys, and another Groves, George. He lived in Groves lane, now Jubilee Lane, Milton, and owned stone quarries employing 20 men. Although the antithesis of a squire figure Alfred Groves probably had a more pervasive and direct influence on life in Milton than any of the figures described in Shipton. He lived and worked in the middle of the village, where the houses of all classes were interspersed. He employed a large number of people, he and his family owned at least 19 cottage properties in 1910, he was a leading Baptist, and active in public affairs, for example as a School Board member. His business was flourishing. In *Kelly's Directory* for 1899 he is described as builder, contractor, brick maker and potter, English and foreign timber merchant. The prosperity of the quarry-owning branch of the Groves was clear from the late-19th century building, by Philip Groves, of 'Holmleigh', a house with workshop behind in Jubilee Lane. In many villages a newly developed road of this name at this date would surely be a commemoration of Queen Victoria's long reign. In Milton it was apparently named for the Jubilee marking the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Baptist Chapel in 1839. If, in this and other ways, the ethos of Milton life was very different from that of Shipton it too had its dominant characters. On paper Earl Ducic, owning nearly 750

Handbill for the sale of Shipton Court Estate in 1913

acres, was likely to fulfil such a role. He was the son-in-law and, in 1863, successor to J.H. Langston, who had received so much land at Milton's enclosure. In practice, although Ducie supported Church causes in Milton and lived part of the year at Sarsden House, his farms were tenanted and he was not directly involved in village life. The Church of England did continue to work hard for influence in Milton. In 1895 Milton finally became an independent parish and £2,000 was spent on a Parsonage, but its isolated position, out of the village on the Lynham road, seems significant. An interesting reversal of this pattern of religious prosletysing in Milton was the establishment in Shipton in circa 1863 of a Baptist chapel, whose chief supporter was a leading local farmer, J.F. Maddox

Identifying the leading local citizens and their influence or lack of it is one key to understanding life in the late Victorian village. Another is to discover the 'typical' circumstances and experience of ordinary villagers. The great majority were still agricultural labourers or members of their families. Even in Milton, where building, quarrying and labouring jobs provided an important alternative, farm work remained the staple occupation. In 1881 in Milton whilst 15 men were stonemasons, nine carpenters, three slaters and plasterers, and five quarrying or building labourers, no fewer than 136 were farm workers. In Shipton there were 98 resident agricultural workers listed in the census returns. Thus Milton was more dependent on agricultural jobs than Shipton, with 53% as opposed to 43% of the occupied male population working in farming.

A comparison of numbers stated to be employed on local farms with numbers of individuals giving their occupation as agricultural labourers reveals a large surplus of available labour, one unlikely to be absorbed by casual day work. The fact that the short fall of jobs was much less in Shipton than Milton supports a pattern of closed and open communities, with a pool of

Table 10: Farms and Farm Workers in 1881

	Milton	Shipton
No. of farms in census	7	10
Total acreage of census farms	1370	1598
Nos. employed on census farms (men/boys)	37/13	61/18
No. of resident agricultural workers	136	98

labour in the open village of Milton, where more plentiful cheap housing existed, being drawn on by employers in neighbouring, more closed Shipton. However even in Shipton there appeared to be more available workers than regular jobs. Shipton had more jobs for women than Milton, with more domestic servants and 23 gloveresses as opposed to ten in Milton.

The scale of labour surplus is all the more startling given the mass exodus, particularly from Milton, in the 1870s. This had failed to eliminate employment problems, but did produce a workforce with distinct characteristics. In Milton in 1881 32% of households had an agricultural labourer as principal wage earner. The average age of this group was 46.7 years, an old workforce. They were also overwhelmingly local in origin, with almost three-quarters Milton born, and the rest from nearby villages. Their average household size was 3.9, compared with 4.3 for Milton as a whole. All three of these characteristics reflect the difficulty of farm workers in getting regular work, and of supporting a family on the wages offered. Many had voted with their feet and gone to other jobs and other places. Opportunities for local children remained greatly limited.

What was life like for local farmers? By 1879 the 'golden age' of farming was

Page 8 | 1881

The undermentioned Houses are

Civil Parish (or Township) of *Milton-under-Nyehwood*

County of *Wiltshire*

Parliamentary Borough of *Milton-under-Nyehwood*

ROAD, STREET, &c. No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage
110 The Elms	1	Alfred Groves	Head	Mar.
		Mary Do	Wife	Mar.
		Thomas J. Do	Son	Unmar.
		Elizabeth G. Do	Daughter	Unmar.
		Allen M. Do	Son	Unmar.
		Eliza J. H. Do	Daughter	Unmar.
		Samuel G. Do	Son	Unmar.
		Marquerite M. Do	Daughter	Unmar.
		Frederic M. Reynolds	Son-in-law	Unmar.
		Rachel Smith	Servant	Unmar.

situate within the Boundaries of the

of *Milton-under-Nyehwood*

County of *Wiltshire*

Parliamentary Borough of *Milton-under-Nyehwood*

AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	(1) Dead and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic or Idiot (4) Lame etc.
52	Builder, employing 40 hands	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
46	Builder's Assistant	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
21	Gloveress	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
8	Scholar	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
6	Scholar	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
5	Sole Care	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	
30	General Servant / Domestic	born Milton-under-Nyehwood	



Groves Brothers quarry workers

well and truly over. Tenancies were being given up. Earl Ducie could not let his land, although advertised weekly. By 1886 land was being sold at £12 per acre, the cheapest for 100 years, and in 1895 land was being let out at 8s per acre. In 1897 Mr Jeffrey's farm in Shipton was offered at auction, but no bids were received. John Calvertt's diary for 1875-1900, covering his tenancy of the Wychwood farm of Fairspear, gives some vivid insights. In only seven of 24 years did his harvests yield average or above average. Wheat prices dropped from 48s per quarter in 1876 to an all time low of 17/6d in October 1894, when wheat and oats were scarcely saleable at Witney. After fluctuations prices remained about 26s a quarter to 1900. Other crop and stock prices suffered similarly. Calvertt was lucky in having the Crown as his landlord. Improvements were carried out to his farm buildings and irrigation systems, and his rent reduced, as in 1892 when £450 instead of £600 p.a. was accepted. Calvertt was able to use mechanical aids — steam cultivators, reapers, an elevator, horse hoes and rakes, drills and a grass mower are all mentioned. He was sceptical of some advances, as when, on a visit to Mr Samuda's model farm at Bruern in 1887, he 'laughed at *Ensilage* and *Calf Rearing*'.

Not all farmers were so fortunate as Calvertt in their landlords, although the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1875 and later legislation increasingly protected the tenant's position. Difficult circumstances and changing practices, like the availability of artificial fertilisers and nitrogen fixing, led to adjustments in local farming. By 1914 permanent pasture occupied a greater area than arable crops. Wheat production fell, whilst barley and oats for local and animal production, remained stable. Sheep were still a major local product, sold at Shipton market, but numbers were falling somewhat with wool prices. Returns on cattle production and increasing demand for liquid milk,

transported by railway to urban customers, meant an increase in numbers of cattle.

Thus both Milton and Shipton ended this period as farming communities adjusting to change. Milton differed from Shipton in its educational, political and religious life, its social relationships, and its range of employments. These contrasts may be explained by identifying Milton as an open village, but it is important to remember that it lacked several crucial features of such a community. Landownership was not dispersed, but heavily concentrated, and, even in 1800, before this concentration had taken place, Milton's small owners were not occupiers of their own land, not the independent farmers regarded as the bedrock of an open village society. By 1850 a considerable polarisation of ownership, largely absentee, had occurred, reinforced, but not caused by parliamentary enclosure. Because similar changes had taken place in Shipton even earlier its economy and social structures were more stable and less disrupted by the many changes — in ownership, farming practices, field systems, population levels, transport, education, and local government — to which both villages were subjected during the century. When a crisis point was reached in the 1870s it was in Milton that it was felt most acutely, and that radical protest and action over pay and jobs was most marked. It was Milton that suffered the largest and most abrupt losses of population. Those who left included many of the younger and most enterprising of the local workforce. Even after their departure a surplus of labour remained. This was particularly acute in Milton, despite alternative jobs in building, quarrying and the slightly larger number of trades in Milton as opposed to Shipton (for example all the carriers were based in Milton). The impact of this greater economic diversity must be judged in relation to the high proportion of landless labourers in Milton. Shipton, by contrast, had a less acute surplus of farm labour and apparently more jobs for women. Just as Milton's degree of 'openness' is subject to question, in some respects Shipton's apparently closed character must be tempered — by the size of the village's population, the lack of direct estate farming and the absence of interventionist squires. Nevertheless many contrasts between the villages are apparent. Were these becoming less marked? For example by 1915 Earl de la Warr, Earl Ducie, Major Mervyn Wingfield and Cecil Samuda were described as Milton's only landowners. The village population had fallen to 707, it had more inhabitants aspiring to the status of private resident in *Kelly's Directory* than did Shipton, and was 'resorted by visitors in the summer'. How deep did these apparent changes go? What contrasts remained between Shipton and Milton in the inter-war years? Answers to these questions must await another volume of this journal.

Sources and References

Milton and Shipton census enumerators' books, 1881, PRO microfilm in LHL; 1910 'Domesday' valuation surveys for Milton and Shipton, ORO DV X/32; Shipton Court estate sale catalogue, 1913, ORO SC 136; Compton Reade, *A record of the Reades of Burton Court, Berks.* (Hereford, 1899); Walford's *County Families*; *Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire* 1883, 1899, 1915; G W Davidson, *op cit.*; Celia Miller (ed.), *Rain and Ruin. The Diary of an Oxfordshire Farmer John Simpson Calvertt 1875-1900* (1983); John Orr, *Agriculture in Oxfordshire* (1916); personal info. Mr N. Frost.

Alfred Groves & Sons,
LIMITED.
BUILDERS, CONTRACTORS & TIMBER MERCHANTS.
MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD.

The photograph below is of Groves' workmen reroofing The Elms, Milton, in July 1904. The house was then the home of Alfred Groves and his family. In 1881 he lived here with his wife, six children, sister-in-law and one servant.

The building is now used as offices by Alfred Groves & Sons Ltd. The company have deservedly built a great reputation for high-quality traditional building which continues to this day in Milton. One prestigious project with which they are currently involved is the restoration of the medieval building on the corner of Ship Street and Cornmarket Street (the former Zacharias shop) in Oxford. We are grateful to them for their donation towards the cost of producing this issue of the journal.



The Wychwoods Local History Society meets once a month from September through to May. Meetings alternate between the village halls at Shipton and Milton. Current membership is £3 for an individual member and £5 for a couple, which includes a copy of the Journal and the Society Newsletter. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Norman Frost, The Gables, Station Road, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire (telephone Shipton under Wychwood 830802).

Oxford University Department for External Studies is the extramural department of the University of Oxford. From its headquarters in Oxford it provides courses for adult students all over Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The Department is delighted to be involved in the joint production of this publication of the results of one of its weekly evening classes in local history. Details of future classes, day schools, weekend courses and of other publications may be obtained from the Local History/Archaeology Course Secretary, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA (telephone Oxford 270360).

Further copies of *Wychwoods History* Numbers 1, 2 and 3 may be obtained for £2.50 each plus 50p postage and packing from Sue Richards, Foxholes House, Foscot, Oxford OX7 6RW.

Cover illustration: *Shipton and Milton were caught up in the railway mania of 1845, with no fewer than three lines proposed to run through the townships. Only one was finally built. How the two villages met with this, and other, pressures for change in the 19th century, and how they coped with them is the central theme of this volume of Wychwoods History.*