


WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Four, 1988



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We are grateful to the Greening Lamborn Trust for a generous grant towards the cost of publishing this issue of the journal.

Foreword

This fourth issue of *Wychwoods History* has a marked archaeological flavour with articles on a dig at the Prebendal House in Shipton, on a survey of a deserted medieval site in Milton, and on the results of the Society's fieldwalks in both villages.

We are most grateful to Brian Durham, who directed the dig, and to James Bond, who directed the survey, not only for publishing their work in our journal, but also for giving our members the opportunity to learn something of archaeological and surveying techniques by taking part in the projects. Brian Durham's report was made to Dr N. Clarke who kindly gave permission for its publication here. Frank and Margaret Ware, who organise the field walks, have acknowledged in their article the valuable expert advice they have had in identifying the many and varied artefacts which have been found.

We began another successful year with an exhibition in Milton village hall which attracted some 500 visitors and much favourable comment. In April we were hosts to the Spring Meeting of the Oxfordshire Local History Association, when the subject for the day was 'Oxfordshire Stone' and there was a visit to Taynton Quarry. In May, members of the Association of Local History Tutors, in conference in Oxford, visited us to hear our views as members of a local history society.

Our meetings continue to be well attended and individuals and groups are actively pursuing their various research interests. Two of our members, Sue Jourdan and Joan Howard-Drake, successfully completed the Oxford University External Studies Department certificate course in local history during the year. Sue's dissertation was on the pattern of agriculture from 1800 to 1860 in Shipton and the surrounding villages, and Joan's on the treatment of the poor in Shipton and Leafield between 1740 and 1762.

Another member, Mike Linfield, has been appointed co-ordinator of the Ryder/Cheshire Mission 'Reminiscence Scheme' in the West Oxfordshire area and we are giving the project our full and active support. We plan to contribute to the aims of the scheme and at the same time to gather valuable historical material for our archives.

It is pleasing to be able to report on so much activity, but there is still a lot of interesting work to be done. I hope more and more members will decide to become actively involved.

Jack Howard-Drake
Chairman WLHS

Earthworks at Lower Farm, Upper Milton, Milton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire

JAMES BOND

Introduction

On 30 May 1986 a hachured¹ survey was made of earthworks in a field at Lower Farm on the north-eastern margins of the hamlet of Upper Milton in Milton under Wychwood parish, West Oxfordshire (National Grid ref. centred SP 261174). On the map and schedule accompanying the tithe award of 1842 the western portion of the modern field is shown as in the ownership and occupation of William Powell. It was already then enclosed and under grass, but formed part of a larger parcel called Coppice Piece. The remainder of Coppice Piece lay to the south, there comprising enclosed arable land over 1.6ha (4 acres) in extent. Most of the eastern part of the modern field fell within a parcel called Coppice Furlong in 1842². In 1939 the whole of the present close, on either side of Simmonds Brook (a tributary of Littlestock Brook, which itself flows into the river Evenlode just north of Shipton under Wychwood), was called House Close, and the two portions divided by the brook are now known as Little Fields.³ The field surveyed, the south-eastern half of Little Fields, was 1.72ha (4 acres, 1 rood, 24 poles) in extent, bounded on its long north-western side by Simmonds Brook and on the remaining three sides by hedges. The short south-western hedge includes some large trees and also hazel, holly, maple and spindle. The longest hedge, bounding the south-eastern side of the field, is predominantly of common hawthorn with elder and dog-rose, and occasionally ash and elm. The shorter hedge on the north-east side is dominated by the same three species, but also contains occasional blackthorn, holly, willow, and, perhaps surprisingly, spindle.⁴ The documentary evidence indicates that the south-western hedge is likely to be of some antiquity but that both of the other hedges are a product of parliamentary enclosure in the 1840s.⁵ Both are slightly richer in species than might normally be expected for this date, but not exceptionally so. Nonetheless, the record of spindle in one of the parliamentary enclosure hedges is a little unexpected, since normally in Oxfordshire this seems to be characteristic of ancient hedges.

The field occupies sloping ground on the right bank of the stream, with a north-westerly aspect, and a height range of about 110–115m (360–380ft) OD. Geologically it is based upon Lower Lias clay, but there is a capping of lighter sandy gravel of glacial origin on the higher part of the slope. A spring rises near the southernmost corner of the field, seeping from a perched water-table maintained by the impermeable clay in the overlying drift.

Method and Procedure

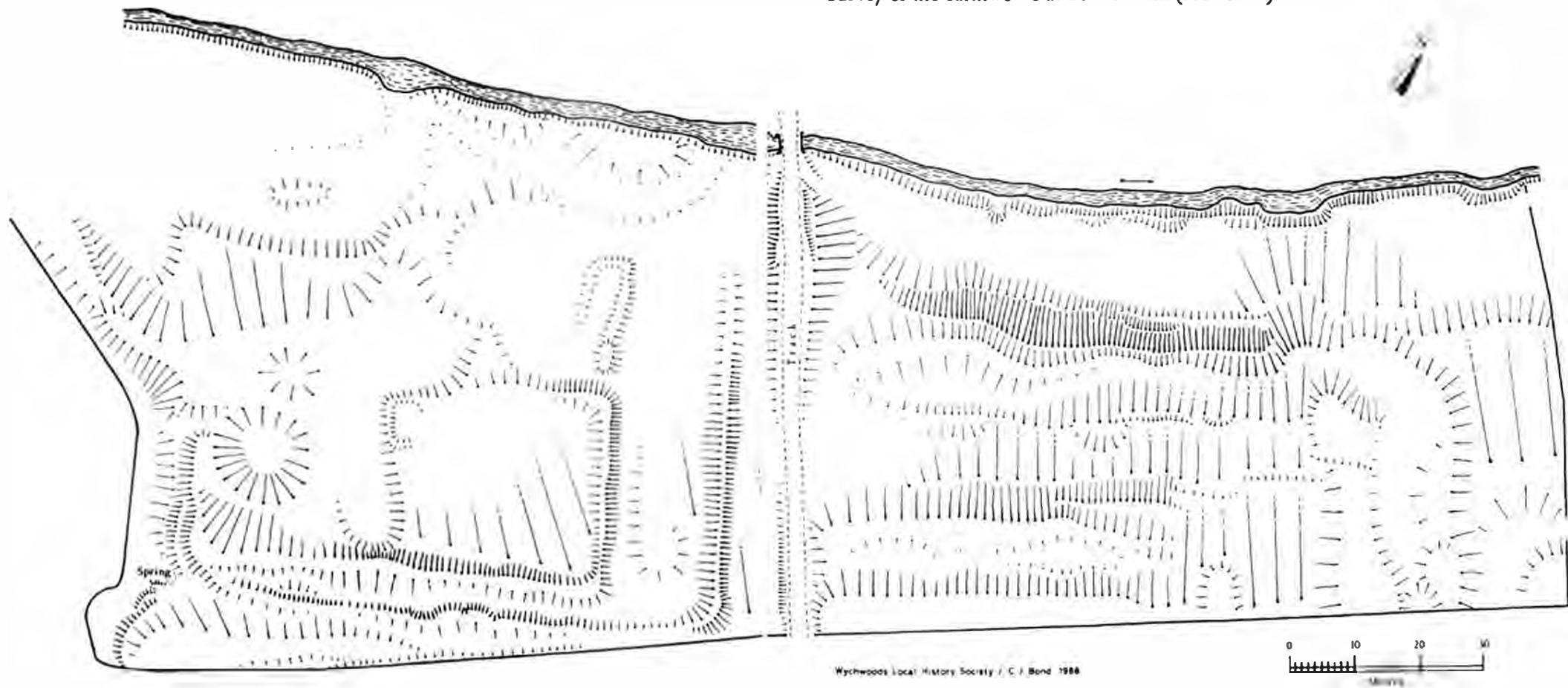
The adoption of the modern field parcel as the framework for the survey was a matter of convenience, governed by the time available for the survey and the availability of permission for access, and justified by the survival of the field concerned as an isolated patch of old pasture in an area generally fairly intensively farmed for arable. It was recognised, however, that this framework has no relevance or validity in terms of the contemporary limits and relationships of the features being surveyed.

The primary purpose of the exercise was to record the earthworks in the field as an aid to their interpretation, but an important secondary objective was to give members of the Wychwoods Local History Society some experience of surveying sites of this type. This latter objective dictated the choice of method. The field was divided into an arbitrary grid of 30m squares, so that each survey party, consisting of two or three individuals, could work within a square at their own pace, moving on to the next free square as soon as their first square was completed. Measurements of all the earthworks were taken along all the main axes of the grid, with offsets being taken to record features which fell within the mesh of the grid. Subsequently all field drawings were joined together, checked on the ground in order to identify and eliminate any error and then redrawn to eliminate the slight variations in individual hachuring style which had inevitably emerged on the original field drawings.

Our knowledge of settlement and landscape, particularly of the medieval and later periods, still relies far too heavily upon written sources, which are themselves in many ways biased and inadequate. As a general principle, field evidence needs to be evaluated on its own merits as an independent and frequently unique source of information, and not merely used to illustrate or support models derived from historical sources. If on occasions the evidence from fieldwork is found not to match up with (or even to conflict with) the evidence from documentary sources, it is not always the former which is at fault. Although the field in question had been reconnoitred previously to assess its suitability for the exercise, the survey was carried out as objectively as possible, with no preconceived notions of what it would reveal. In particular, the cartographic evidence was quite deliberately not studied until after the survey had been completed and drawn up, so that there was no possibility that the observation, recording or interpretation of the features on the ground could in any way be influenced by foreknowledge or expectations of what would be found.

Description of Results

The earthworks surveyed fall into two major groups of features, fortuitously separated by the modern track which, in its present form and alignment, is undoubtedly a post-enclosure feature, and does not appear to follow an ancient course.



To the north-east of the track the valley side is marked by a series of four lynchets (terraces of agricultural origin), of which the lowest is the most marked and the second lowest the weakest. All lynchets have been modified to a greater or lesser extent by the effects of natural slumping and erosion and by the passage of livestock and farm vehicles, so their present appearance is deceptively over-complicated. Towards the easternmost extremity of the field the contour lynchet pattern is interrupted by a further series of vague rounded earthworks which are too limited in extent to identify with any confidence, but which could be interpreted as the much-disturbed vestiges of the stub-ends of ridge and furrow spanning the top of the spur of land to the south-east. Both the lynchets and the ridge-ends, if that is what they are, have a wavelength of 12-14m (13-15yds).

South-west of the track the slope is covered by a much more complex pattern of earthworks. The most prominent features are two sharply-defined parallel banks, 17m apart, running almost directly up and down the slope close to the track itself. At the top of the field, both banks turn south-westwards through a right-angle, bordering a shallow hollow-way some 5m wide which follows the contour of the ground, finally appearing to peter out near the spring. Here this feature probably joins a much larger hollow-way which follows the south-western margin of the field (and was therefore only partly surveyed); this has been overdeepened by longer or more intensive use and by water erosion, so as to leave the end of the smaller hollow-way at a higher level, like a glacial 'hanging valley'.

Within the angle of the lower, inner bank is a plateau roughly 28m square.

gently sloping down from its eastern corner. Its remaining two sides were bounded by sharp breaks of slope, but without any significant bank or rampart. In its lowest, westernmost corner, the foundations of a small building some 7 × 5m in extent were faintly but unambiguously discernible. Stone foundations of a second, larger and more prominent building were observed just beyond the northern corner of the square plateau, roughly, though not precisely, continuing the line of the north-eastern bank of the plateau down towards the stream. This building was some 5m wide and at least 16m long. In view of its slightly different alignment and the fact that its upper end could not clearly be seen, it is conceivable, though far from certain, that it is of an earlier date than the square plateau above it.

South-west of the square plateau the ground becomes much more uneven, being marked by a series of two or three vaguely-defined hollows, the largest and deepest of which debouches into the deeper south-western hollow way below the spring.

Along the foot of the slope above the brook the gradient levels out, but even here the ground is not entirely flat, and there are two intersecting cusped hollows in the valley bottom above the bridge.

Finds

Several sherds of medieval pottery were collected from the ground surface and from molehills in the south-western half of the field. One sherd was coarse, hand-made, reddish-brown in colour, and is undoubtedly of the Fabric CX defined by Maureen Mellor.⁶ This was made nearby, probably at Ascott under Wychwood.⁷ Much of it has been found locally in gardens and during field-walking, but on present evidence it does not seem to have been distributed outside the Wychwood district. It cannot be dated precisely, since none has yet been found in a stratified context, but it can be attributed broadly to the thirteenth to fifteenth century. A second sherd is of Fabric 1B, which is also common in the Wychwood region, and is of a similar date-range. A third, green-glazed sherd is of Brill ware, type AM, of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. A few fragments of oyster shell were also observed.

Interpretation

The interpretation of earthworks without recourse to excavation is a notoriously hazardous operation. Our perception of the archaeological features is limited to the top surface of the ground, and it is rather like trying to guess the contents of a parcel without untying the wrapping. We have to rely largely upon our ability to recognise familiar forms and patterns which can be compared with those observed on better-authenticated sites elsewhere. Even when we can do this, it needs to be appreciated that the earthworks normally only represent the latest phases of human activity on the site before it finally went down to grass, and that they will

often mask earlier archaeological features of much greater complexity. For this reason surface finds brought up by moles and similar agencies need to be used with some caution as dating material; they do not necessarily always relate to the earthworks observed on the ground.

The earthworks in the field surveyed cannot be fully understood in isolation, but must be studied in the context of the overall landscape of the area, in particular the plan of the hamlet of Upper Milton and its surrounding fields. Despite the cautionary note above, there is little reason to doubt that most of the earthworks surveyed are of medieval origin, and that the field examined spans the boundary between the medieval settlement of Upper Milton and its associated open fields.

Further earthworks, less clearly defined than those surveyed, have been observed north of Manor Farm and at intervals all the way along the western side of the main street through Upper Milton, southwards to a point beyond Springhill Farm. While Upper Milton may never have been a very large tightly-clustered village, it is nonetheless fairly clear that in the Middle Ages there were rather more buildings than exist today, straggling for a distance of rather over 1km along either side of the main street. The county maps of Thomas Jefferys (1767) and Richard Davis (1797), though both somewhat generalised, clearly still show far more buildings than exist today, particularly along the western side of the street. The hamlet can, then, be recognised as one more example of the very common phenomenon of the 'shrunken' medieval settlement,⁸ which was still undergoing contraction after the end of the eighteenth century.

The field surveyed included what must have been the north-easternmost croft of the medieval hamlet. The square plateau probably represents its enclosed farmyard, the small building some sort of detached peasant barn, byre or outbuilding, while the larger stone-footed building below was probably the main domestic building of the croft, subject always to the query about its possibly earlier date. It is fairly clear from sites surveyed elsewhere in Oxfordshire, notably Coat and Asterleigh⁹, that the longhouse pattern familiar from the literature was by no means the only peasant homestead arrangement in this area, and that more complex farmyard layouts with separate agricultural buildings were already common by the fourteenth century. There may also, of course, have been other timber buildings in the croft which have left no earthwork trace.

The area of rounded hollows south-west of the square plateau can probably be interpreted as ancient claypits, quite possibly of medieval origin. There would have been many potential uses for clay, such as the manufacture of pottery, as a source of daub or cob for buildings or farmyard walls, for making mill- or fishpond dams and puddling ponds, or for marling lighter soils elsewhere in the parish.

The lobate hollows in the valley floor are without doubt former meanders of the brook, and its comparatively straight modern course suggests that it has been canalised to improve the drainage, perhaps at the time of parliamentary enclosure. This is confirmed by the 1846 enclosure map, which shows both the old course of the brook and the modern course, the latter labelled as 'No. XXVII Public Drain - 8 feet wide'. The former meanders of Simmonds Brook can in fact be traced beyond the boundary of the field surveyed through Simmonds Brook Slad and Callace

Fields to the junction with boundary stream. Molehills were completely absent from the original stream bed when they were very abundant everywhere else.

The second of the two prominent banks, forming the upper side of the hollow-way at the top of the field and then turning a right-angle to run downhill near the track towards a point just above the modern bridge, must be interpreted as the village boundary bank, certainly in its downslope north-west-southeast alignment. The possibility that a further series of crofts occupied the south-eastern, higher side of the hollow-way beyond the present hedge at the top of the field could not be ruled out entirely without careful examination of the adjoining field when it was not under crop. At the time the survey was carried out it was felt that the definite continuity of the curve at the angle of the bank suggested that this possibility was unlikely, and that both linked lengths of this bank did indeed represent two sides of the north-east corner of the village boundary. (Subsequently Frank Ware has informed me that the two fields beyond the hedge to the south-east were quite deliberately selected as priorities for field-walking in October 1986, with the intention of establishing whether the settlement did extend beyond the modern hedge. Only one single sherd of Brill ware, type AM, was found in Coppice Piece closer to the croft, and only five sherds - one Wychwood CX, one Group III and three Brill type AM - in the very larger Coppice Furlong. It is remarkable that so little material was recovered from so close to the medieval settlement, and strongly supports the contention that the settlement did not extend beyond the higher side of the hollow-way). The presence of a hollow-way immediately inside and partly defined by the village boundary bank is a slightly unusual feature, but this is probably to be interpreted not as a principal road of the hamlet, but rather as a service track belonging to the croft, since it gives access to the broader flat area between the two banks, which might conceivably represent a garden space where the medieval tenant could grow his peas, beans, onions, garlic and other crops for the table.

The long hollow following the south-western boundary of the field below the spring represents another medieval roadway which, as suggested earlier, has been overdeepened by traffic and erosion. The stub end of this track is still recognisable on the modern Ordnance Survey map, a very short cul-de-sac branching off the present road at the point where it crosses the brook; and the 1842 tithe map shows that this vestigial lane originally continued along the course of the present field boundary, ultimately giving access to the open fields east of the hamlet.

It was assumed from the pattern of the earthworks that the lynchets north-east of the modern farm track across the centre of the field probably related to the medieval and later open field system. This is supported by the evidence of the 1842 tithe map, made just prior to the enclosure of 1846. Here the abandoned settlement area is shown as old enclosure, and the bounds of the close on the map follow a course which can be matched precisely with that of the putative village boundary bank. Immediately downstream the strips of an open-field parcel called Coppice Furlong run parallel with the brook on a course identical with that of the lynchets recorded on the ground. Only three strips (nos 1419-21 on the map) cover the ground represented by four lynchets, but one of the strips on the map

(no. 1421) is clearly of double width (though as it happens this is the highest of the three and does not correspond, as might have been anticipated, with the weakest of the four lynchets). The length of the lynchets surviving on the ground is of the order of 77m (85yds), compared with that of the strips on the tithe map, from 88yds (no. 1418, the northernmost strip along the brook) to 105yds (no. 105). The small discrepancy between the length of the visible lynchets and the documented strips can be accounted for by the intrusion of the modern farm track, which has slightly curtailed the original strips at the extreme south-western end.

The adjoining furlong still further to the north-east, Simmonds Brook Furlong, has its selions (open-field strips) aligned at right-angles to those of Coppice Furlong, and so the tentative interpretation of the vague earthworks beyond the lynchets as open-field ridges can be confirmed. The two immediately adjacent strips of Simmonds Brook Furlong (nos 1429-30) are not only of double or triple width, but there is some indication that they may have been extended over the meadow slad, where the tiny plots numbered 1403-17 (of which 1414-7 lay within the area surveyed) were individually rented pasture. The division between the strips of Simmonds Brook Furlong and Simmonds Brook Slad is formed by a bank continuing through from Coppice Furlong to the south-west. The Pools Allotments on the Milton tithe map were at the north end of Lower Milton opposite the modern road to Lyneham; at enclosure part remained Pools Allotments and the rest was rented. The 'parting lots' all appear to have been in the various slads around the village, and do include plots 1414-7 in Simmonds Brook Slad. These modifications to the original pattern help to explain the somewhat confused pattern on the ground, with no very coherent ridge structure and the absence of any clear headland earthwork in the admittedly very small portion of this furlong which fell within the survey area.

Historical Context

It lies beyond the realms of earthwork survey and interpretation to speculate upon the reasons for the contraction of the Upper Milton settlement. Only documentary evidence can achieve this, and it usually takes a very fortunate and full survival of documentation to shed much light on the matter. It is a chastening thought that, even in a county like Oxfordshire, which has been subjected to comparatively full and extensive study, only about one-third of all known village depopulations can be dated even approximately or linked with known causes of desertion. The dating and explanation of shrinkages, migrations and changes in settlement layouts is even more problematic. In many cases all that the documentation can provide is evidence of the economic and tenurial context within which the settlement changes have occurred. Documentary study of the Wychwood area in general is further hampered by the absence of a Victoria County History volume, so primary sources need to be examined from the outset. Basic documentary research is still continuing, and only a brief and tentative outline of the medieval landownership can be provided here.

The Domesday spelling *Mideltone* makes it clear that the name 'Milton under Wychwood' is not derived from any reference to a mill site; the settlement originates as the 'Middleton', a subsidiary settlement within the ancient royal estate of Shipton. In the Domesday Survey two estates are named in Milton, one of four hides held under the king by Ranulf Flambard, later Bishop of Durham, another of one hide held under Roger by Alwi, son of Alsi of Faringdon. The agricultural resources recorded at Milton in the Domesday survey seem far too small for the subsequent size of the place, and we must reckon with the possibility that some of the land listed under the heading of Shipton under Wychwood was actually located at Milton. Alwi's father, Alsi, held the farm of eight hides said to be in Shipton under Wychwood, and two further hides there in demesne, and it seems likely that the eight hides were actually at Milton and the two hides at Langley Mill.¹⁰

During the last quarter of the twelfth century much of the land in Milton, including probably the former Flambard property and Alsi's eight Shipton hides, came into the hands of Bruern Abbey,¹¹ while Alwi's one-hide estate in Milton, along with Alsi's two-hide estate at Langley, passed to the de Langleys, hereditary foresters. Upper Milton seems likely to be equated with Alwi's one-hide estate, the only part of Milton which did not pass into the hands of Bruern Abbey.

Since the role of Cistercian abbeys in enclosure and village depopulation is well-known elsewhere,¹² it might have been tempting to look to Bruern Abbey as the likely culprit in Milton. However, if the above interpretation of the pattern of estates is correct, Upper Milton must have been the property of the de Langleys, and can never have belonged to Bruern Abbey. It is therefore of some interest that Langley itself, which was the main seat of the same family until at least 1331, was also deserted. From 18 tenants recorded in the Hundred Rolls of 1279, the number of taxpayers at Langley had fallen to four by 1327; and by the sixteenth century, while some open-field remained, there had been much enclosure and most of the tenants of the land lived elsewhere.¹³ There is no evidence that the de Langleys were directly involved in evicting tenants for enclosure, and it is more likely that at Langley itself, on a bleak and exposed position on the watershed between the Evenlode and Windrush valleys over 180m (550ft) above sea level, the land had come to be regarded as marginal for arable farming in the changed climatic and economic conditions of the later Middle Ages, and the tenants had simply drifted away. The slow dwindling of settlements by piecemeal abandonment of holdings, not always completed to the point of total desertion, was probably a much more potent source of rural depopulation than the more dramatic and much better publicised wholesale evictions.¹⁴ It is possible that the comparative decline of Upper Milton may be linked with an organised migration, or more probably an unplanned drift of population over a considerable period of time to the present main village of Milton under Wychwood some 1.3km to the north-east, beginning in the later Middle Ages and continuing after the end of the eighteenth century. Such movements, which need not involve any overall reduction of population or number of taxpayers within the parish, are extremely difficult to document.

Acknowledgements

I would like to record my gratitude to Terry Hartley for allowing the survey to be carried out on his land; to all members of the Wychwoods Local History Society who took part, and especially to Frank Ware and Gwen Allen for their most helpful and constructive comments on earlier drafts of this report; and to Jack Howard-Drake for his help and encouragement throughout the project. Any errors of fact or interpretation are mine alone.

Notes and References

¹ Hachuring is a convention used by archaeological surveyors for portraying earthworks. Slopes are depicted by lines at right-angles to the contour, i.e. pointing up and down the direction of the slope, with the broader head of the hachure at the top of the slope, tailing off towards the foot. Sharp breaks of slope are normally indicated by hachures with tincture-shaped heads, more gentle breaks of slope by tadpole-shaped hachures. The relative gradient of the slope is indicated by variations in the density of the hachuring - the closer together the individual hachures, the steeper the slope. The length of the hachures is proportional to the length of the slope in plan on the ground.

² Milton under Wychwood tithe map and award, 1843, Oxon CRO, no. 172.

³ Rental schedule to agreement with Brasenose College, 30 November 1939. I am grateful to Terry Hartley for the information from this source.

⁴ Original survey forms of hedgerow survey by members of Wychwoods Local History Society deposited with Sites & Monuments Record, Oxfordshire Museum Services, Woodstock.

⁵ Milton under Wychwood Enclosure Award, 1849, Oxon CRO QSD/A, bk 41.

⁶ M. Mellor, 'Medieval Pottery from the Wychwood', *Oxoniensia* Vol. XLVII (1982), 133-6. I am grateful to Maureen Mellor for examining and identifying the sherds recovered.

⁷ E. M. Jope and R. I. Threlfall, 'The Twelfth-Century Castle of Ascott D'Oilly, Oxon: its History and Excavation', *Antiq. Jnl* Vol. XXXIX (1959).

⁸ Cf. James Bond, 'Medieval Oxfordshire Villages and their Topography: a preliminary discussion', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Medieval Villages: a Review of Current Work* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, Monograph no 5, 1985), 101-123, esp 108, 110; see also C.J. Bond, 'The Oxford Region in the Middle Ages', in G. Briggs, J. Cook & T. Rowley (eds), *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region* (Oxford University Dept for External Studies, 1986), 139-143.

⁹ For Coat see Medieval Village Research Group, *29th Annual Report* (1981), 9, fig. 3, and Council for British Archaeology Group 9, *Newsletter* No. 12 (1982), 41-3, fig. 10; for Asterleigh, see MVRG, *27th Annual Report* (1979), 9, fig. 7, and CBA Group 9, *Newsletter* No. 10 (1980), 85-6, fig. 23.

¹⁰ VCH Oxon I, 401, 424, 426; J. Morris (ed.) *Domesday Book: Oxfordshire* (Phillimore, Chichester, 1978), 1.9, 58.29, 59.21.

¹¹ VCH Oxon II, 79-81; VCH Oxon I, 388.

¹² For a recent summary, see R. A. Donkin, *The Cistercians: Studies in the Geography of Medieval England and Wales* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1978), 39-51.

¹³ K. J. Allison, M. W. Beresford and J. G. Hurst, *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire*, University of Leicester Department of English Local History, Occasional Papers No. 17, (1965), 40.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g., C. C. Dyer, 'Deserted Medieval Villages in the West Midlands', *Economic History Review* Vol. 35 (1982), 19-34.

Wychwood Park, Toronto, Canada

ANNE MATTHEWS

On Thursday 25 September 1986, a ceremony took place in Wychwood Park, Toronto, to unveil a plaque marking the designation, by the City of Toronto, of Wychwood Park, as an Historical District, under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Reference was made to the Founder of the Park and builder of the first house there in 1874, Marmaduke Matthews of Fifield, Oxfordshire, elder brother of Frederick Matthews, who founded a cornmerchanting business in Fifield and later with his son, F. W. P. Matthews, built the flour mill at Shipton under Wychwood in 1911.

Marmaduke Matthews was born in Barcheston, near Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire in 1837 and moved to Fifield House with his parents, Marmaduke Matthews and Maria Southam, as a child. Educated at Cowley Diocesan School and London University, he trained as an artist under T. M. Richardson, the water-colourist, in Oxford. In 1860 he emigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto, where he was a founding member of the Ontario Society of Artists and a Charter Member of the Royal Canadian Academy.

In 1873 he bought ten acres of wooded land, on an escarpment looking across Toronto to Lake Ontario. In 1874 he built a house and called it Wychwood. In



Wychwood, the house built by Marmaduke Matthews of Fifield

1877 with his friend, Alexander Jardine, he bought another twelve acres to the west of Wychwood, where Jardine built his house, Braemore Gardens. Together with friends they dreamed of founding a co-operative artists colony: this never became a reality though some fine painters have lived there.

One hundred years ago in 1888, the first plans for the park were registered. These were revised in 1891, when a Board of Trustees was formed and the area was registered as Wychwood Park. In 1909 the park was annexed by the City, but it still remains autonomous, governed by three trustees, elected annually. Although residents pay City taxes, they do not pay the local improvement taxes, but raise and administer their own funds for roads, water, sewers and street lighting.

Marmaduke Matthews dammed the stream, Taddle Creek, to form a small lake around which the houses were built. The varied trees and shrubs of the park provide an oasis for a very large number of birds, 135 different varieties having been recorded there.

Marmaduke Matthews died in 1913 but his daughter Mrs Alice Goodman remained at Wychwood until 1960. There are now no links through the Matthews family, but in 1986 the Wychwood Park Archives, through their resident archivist Keith Miller, became a member of the Wychwoods Local History Society. Mr Miller has visited Fifield to see Fifield House and the Wychwoods and keeps in touch with the Matthews family, who were given a warm welcome when they visited Wychwood Park in 1936.



The Heritage plaque

Practical Fieldwalking in the Evenlode Valley

FRANK and MARGARET WARE

Strolling in the countryside or walking the dog, amateur historians and archaeologists probably often keep one eye to the ground looking for interesting finds. This is undoubtedly the origin of some of the objects now in our museums. Yet it is now recognised that such discoveries are of limited historical value without a record of the context in which they were found.

Fieldwalking yields much more precise information. It is the *organised* collection and recording of objects discarded by man from the surface of cultivated land. Its purpose is to discover evidence of man's activity and land-use in the past including the location of hitherto unknown settlements and burial sites.

As more and more archaeological sites become known, many are destined to remain unexcavated due to lack of resources. Fieldwalking is a relatively cheap and easy way of obtaining information, either as a preliminary to, or instead of, excavation, as it allows informed choices of priorities to be made. For an amateur society, it was felt to be a particularly suitable form of fieldwork to undertake, since it did not involve digging. Not only was there little danger of valuable evidence being destroyed through ignorance, but walking over ploughed fields was optimistically thought to involve fewer skills and less energy, and thus be suitable for a predominantly middle-aged membership. After four seasons, opinions may be divided on this point!

How do Objects Arrive in the Topsoil of Fields?

A small proportion may derive from underlying settlement sites (house, farmstead, workshop, military camp etc), long since abandoned, fallen down and covered with soil, whose foundations or remains might be discoverable directly beneath the present level of ploughing. The artefacts may include building materials (brick, stone, nails etc), pottery and tools accidentally lost on the original floor surface or external activity area, and rubbish accumulated on site - all termed primary refuse. A proportion are items of value deliberately concealed, like grave goods and treasure hoards in shallow burials disturbed by modern ploughing.

But probably the greater proportion of artefacts in ploughsoil are not associated with an underlying site at all. These include weapons and hunting tools like flint arrowheads, many of which must have been lost 'on the job' during the many thousand years of the Stone Ages. More modern warfare and hunting also leave

their own detritus eg cartridge cases and shrapnel - and clay pigeons! Agricultural activity in situ can account for the presence of horseshoes, coal from steam ploughing and threshing, and parts of agricultural implements. But what about red earthenware and pieces of blue and white willow-pattern china? For many centuries village middens have been the depository not only of manure, but also of general household rubbish, including broken pottery, glass, fragments of clay pipe, bones and, again, building materials. All this was periodically carted out and spread onto the cultivated land to enrich the soil, often at some distance away from the village. Other domestic rubbish may have been buried in abandoned pits or ditches, while a certain amount has always been thrown 'over the hedge' by passing travellers. The latter categories are termed secondary refuse as they occur at a distance from the site of usage.

It follows that the interpretation of any topsoil assemblage of artefacts is by no means straightforward. Its components can cover the whole spectrum of time from the Palaeolithic to the present day. They are also unstratified: that is, objects from different periods will come to the surface together due to ploughing, in contrast to most excavations, where the oldest layers and artefacts are usually at the deepest levels with progressively more recent layers towards the surface.

Since the topsoil is now beginning to be regarded as a valuable archaeological resource in itself, fieldwalking is an important technique in the investigation of land-use and settlement patterns, and is certainly not to be regarded as a poor substitute for excavation.

Objectives and Methods

We have relied heavily on an excellent booklet published by the Hampshire Field Club - *Fieldwalking for Archaeologists*.¹ Among much valuable advice, it stresses the importance of:

- 1 Having decided on an approach, keeping to it
- 2 The maintenance of careful records in a uniform style
- 3 Careful marking and preservation of significant material for future reference.

These principles we have tried to follow. But had Anthony Brown's recently published book been available to guide us when we started, we could have avoided a number of pitfalls. His informative chapter on fieldwalking is strongly recommended to those contemplating this activity.²

Our objective was to carry out a wide-ranging survey of every arable field in the parishes of Milton and Shipton under Wychwood, in the upper Evenlode valley, with forays into neighbouring parishes. It was recognised from the outset that this would be a very long-term project, probably over ten or even twenty years, but it would provide plenty of outdoor activity for the Society's membership to complement the winter programme of meetings, the means of teaching the

participants (not least the organisers!) the value of careful observation and a methodical approach, as well as the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the local archaeological material.

Several factors have influenced the choice of field to be walked on each occasion. Prior permission from the landowner must be obtained: in this regard we have been more than fortunate in the degree of cooperation and interest shown by all the local farmers so far approached. Fieldwalking can only be carried out after ploughing, and preferably after further cultivation to break up large clods. It is even better if some weeks can then elapse so that rain washes soil away from surface artefacts, improving their visibility, but this is not always possible with modern farming practices where sowing of the new crop follows only a few weeks after harvesting. Walking can be done after sowing, even when the crop is a few centimetres high, but this is distracting and can give low artefact recovery rates. The Society has so far walked mainly over the August Bank Holiday weekend, but recent cold, damp summers and late harvests have resulted in a limited choice of fields and availability has often been the overriding factor so far. With a spring-sown crop, the fallow period can be much longer, but wet and frosty conditions for walking pose their own problems. In the next few years, fields will be chosen where possible to compare a variety of altitudes, aspect, soil types and distances from existing settlements. With one exception, the presence of a known archaeological site has not so far influenced the choice of field: indeed, relatively few of these are known for the area in question. Furthermore, it was felt important to look for evidence of man's past regardless of where one would expect to find it.

The technique chosen was that of line-walking, where a row of people walk slowly across a field at fixed intervals from one another. Each person picks up everything encountered on his or her 'line', the unit of recording being the line. This is the preferred method for an initial survey of a large area, with a spacing of 15m between lines recommended for inexperienced walkers: essentially, it is a sampling technique. The other main method, that of grid-walking, is more suitable for a more detailed investigation of specific sites, already located. The division of the field into squares, with the unit of collection a small section of line or a small area, is much more time-consuming and the collecting and recording of data far more complex.

The simplest procedure involves assembling all the walkers at one time and after spacing them out, the entire field is walked at once. Even coverage can be maintained by frequent visual checking between walkers. But even with some sticks as line markers, it is difficult to maintain straight lines, especially in an irregularly-shaped, undulating field, and where people walk at different speeds. Some writers cheerfully advocate following the ploughlines to preserve a straight track, but we have found that patterns of ploughing and cultivation frequently change direction and are of limited use. Subsequent recording of artefact position is likely to be less accurate using this method, moreover it is not always possible to assemble enough people simultaneously. One cannot apply the same discipline to mature amateurs as one could to a class of archaeology students! We tried this method only once, in a relatively small field after our walkers had gained some



Fieldwalker in action

experience (Sh 8) - and found that people meandered about somewhat!

We like to make our fieldwalks as enjoyable and unregimented as possible; our members can turn up at the survey site at any convenient time during the weekend, for as long as they wish (but a minimum of 1½ hours for a line is suggested), so that family commitments like visitors and cooking the lunch can be accommodated. This involves having the lines marked out on the ground in baler-twine and numbered beforehand. It is then easy to allocate numbered lines to walkers individually when they arrive. The methods we have evolved for marking out the lines are described in Part 1 of the Appendix. They may seem unnecessarily time-consuming and cumbersome, but they suit the workforce at our disposal.

An integral part of the preparations has been setting up a tent with folding chairs, tables and camp stove. This acts as the reception point, office and base for walkers to return to and examine their finds. Almost constant tea and coffee brewing is a feature of the Society's fieldwalking and this helps to engender a sense of occasion attractive to participants.

Before walking, the broad aim of the project is explained to each volunteer. A tray of representative artefacts is displayed and people are encouraged to handle these as an aid to recognition although it is not necessary that walkers can distinguish, for instance, one kind of pottery from another. It is stressed that a sampling technique is being employed, and that individual walkers should not be

Table 1: Fields Walked: Description and Location

Field Number	Name (where known)	Grid Ref (all SP)	Size in Hectares	Height above SL (metres)	Geology	Date Walked
Sh 1	Bowerham	287179	5.81	95-105	Lower lias & alluvium	Sept. '84
Sh 2A	Fernhill Ground	293179	5.1*	100-110	Lower lias & glacial gravel	Aug. '85
Sh 2B	Fernhill Ground	292177	4.0*	100-110	Middle lias & glacial gravel	Aug. '85
Sh 3	Lower Hen Furlong	287168	6.40	140-145	Great oolite & fullers earth	Sept. '85
Sh 4	Sandpit Close	270175	5.34	110-120	Lower lias & glacial gravel	Aug. '86
Sh 5	Milton Close	268176	5.85	110-120	Lower lias & glacial gravel	Aug. '86
Sh 6	Milton Close	268173	4.01	120-125	Lower and middle lias glacial gravel	Aug. '86
Sh 8	Home Ground	282176	5.75	100-115	Lower and middle lias	Feb. '87
Sh 9	Shepherds Bench	292169	11.43	130-145	Inferior and great oolite & fullers earth	Aug. '87
Sh 10	Shepherds Bench	294168	12.16	140-160	Great oolite	Aug. '87
M 1	Coppice Furlong	263175	8.7*	110-125	Lower lias & glacial gravel	Oct. '86
M 2	Coppice Piece	262173	1.7*	120-125	Lower lias	Oct. '86

* estimated

selective in what they collect, picking up everything connected with man's activity encountered on their line, or about half a metre on either side of it. Occasionally people have to be weaned away from the attitude 'There was so much Welsh slate/Victorian china, I didn't try to pick it all up!' As far as possible, walkers are asked to spend a similar amount of time on their lines, usually about an hour and a half in the average sized field and to walk their lines both ways, there and back. This is an attempt to eliminate two variables which may affect artefact recovery rates - walking speed and the direction of light since bright sunlight can cast very dark shadows.

Artefacts are collected in large strong plastic bags (one per line), labelled with the field number, line number and walker's initials in waterproof ink, and a duplicate label placed inside each bag as an insurance. These details are also recorded in the office together with the time taken by each walker and the prevailing weather conditions. Returning walkers are usually keen to display their finds and an old table on which a muddy bagful can be tipped out is useful, but care must be taken to keep the contents of each bag separate. Ideally, one person is required at the office all the time to integrate new walkers, issue bags, check people in and out and (dare we say it?) put the kettle on.

Before the lines are dismantled, sufficient note is taken of their position and of

features like hedgerow trees, gates and streams to enable a sketch map to be drawn later. Rock types, general soil conditions and depth of ploughing are also noted.

Recording the Artefacts

Back at home, the contents of each bag are washed and sorted. Then line by line, the numbers of artefacts of each category are recorded on a master-sheet, together with the time taken to walk and the walker's initials (these master-sheets, with the addition of the last two details, look much like Table 7). Before our fieldwalking started, our members, including the organisers, knew almost nothing about the kinds of objects which were likely to be encountered, so that the ease of writing the previous sentence belies the considerable strides achieved in their identification, largely with the generous help of local professional archaeologists and museum staff. Also recorded is the field's name, if known, its number in the programme, grid reference, area in hectares, date of walking, soil type, weather conditions and any special notes.

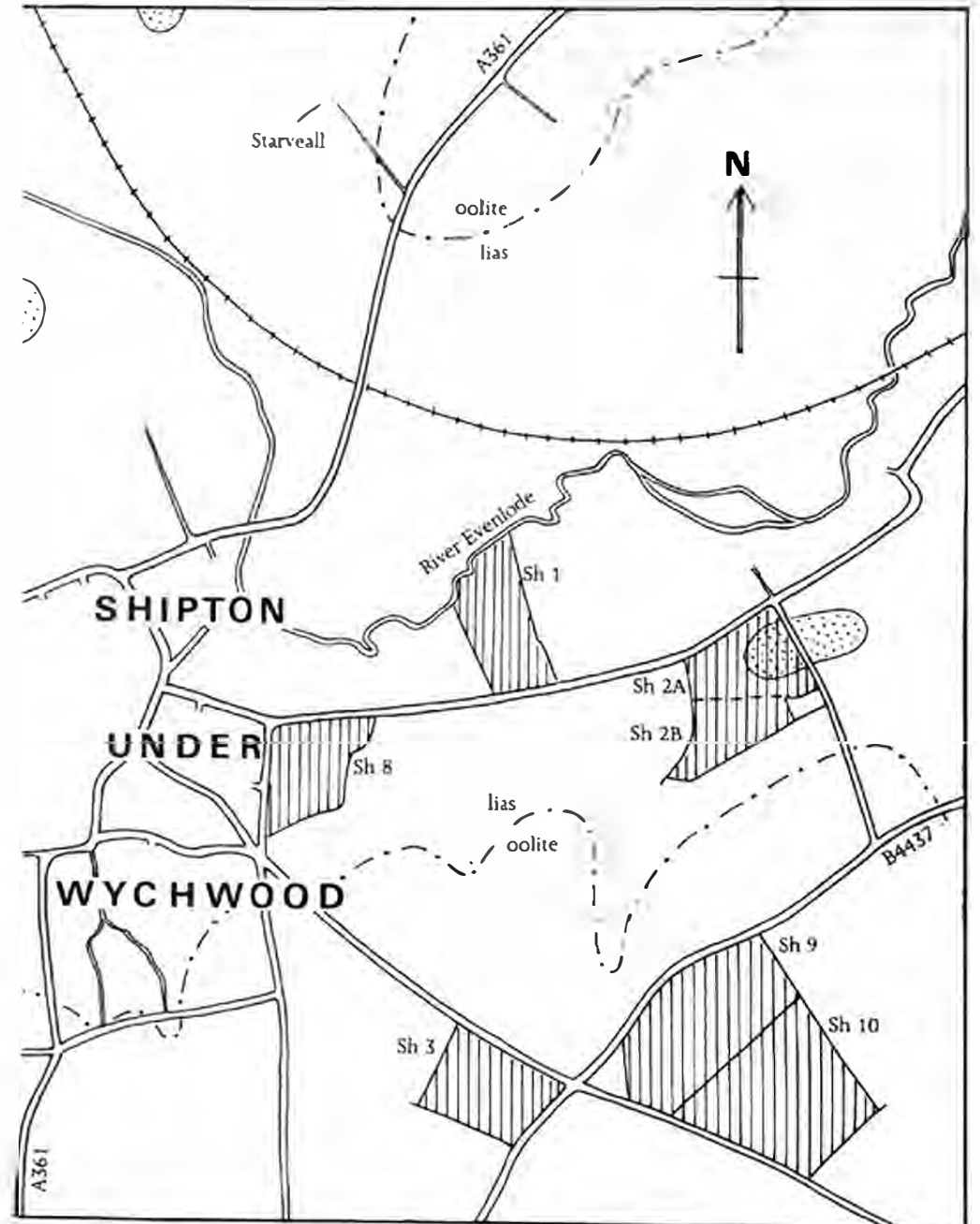
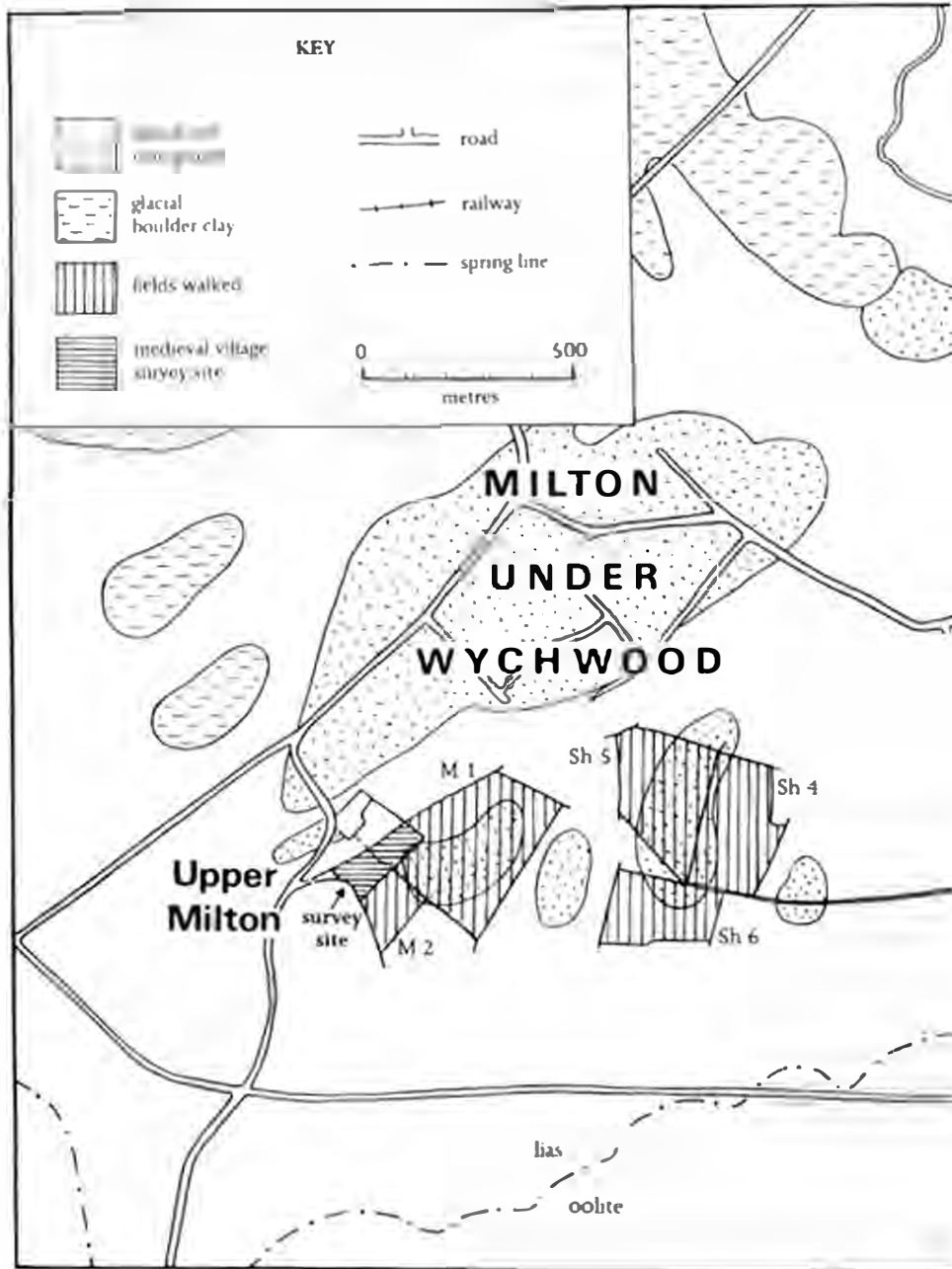
At the outset it was necessary to decide what proportion of the artefacts recovered were to be kept, and what system of labelling and cataloguing to adopt. We have tried to build up a type collection of each category of artefact to aid subsequent identification, and to provide a resource for display at meetings and exhibitions. The recovery of over eight thousand items from only twelve fields has meant that ruthless organisation has had to be attempted! See Appendix, Part 2 for some more detailed comments on the recording and numbering of artefacts.

The Fields Walked

Map 1 shows the location of the fields walked so far. They are all situated in the upper Evenlode valley, between Ascott and Milton under Wychwood, all but two in Shipton parish and all on the south side of the river. Table 1 details their characteristics, the abbreviation 'Sh' denoting fields in Shipton parish and 'M' those in Milton. They cover a relatively modest range of altitude from Bowerham meadow, Sh 1, next to the river to Sh 10 situated on the lower slopes of the 'down' between Shipton and Leafield - a difference of 65m (just over 200ft). Within this small geographical area a variety of soils is encountered. The lower lias produces a clayey loam with especially wet heavy clay in the lower part of Sh 2A. The glacial gravel gives a light sandy soil throughout Sh 4, 5 and 6, while the oolitic strata yield a light, very stony soil abundant in pieces of white limestone which make it difficult to distinguish some artefacts, especially patinated flints.

It will be seen that field Sh 7 is missing from the tables. This was not a fieldwalk, but a personal foray by the writers to a recently discovered Romano-British site to confirm its location and to gain experience of its 'feel' on the ground. We also wanted to acquire known Romano-British pottery for the Society's type collection to aid future identification and the code 'Sh 7' was allocated to these finds.

Map 1: Fields walked and site of medieval village survey



In Table 1, field areas are estimated where they form only part of a larger field or where boundary changes have occurred, otherwise they are Ordnance Survey data. Only a small fraction of field M 2 was walked, sufficient to test for the presence of medieval pottery. This was because it was immediately adjacent to a suspected medieval site at Upper Milton, which is also shown on Map 1, surveyed by James Bond and described in his article.³

The finds recorded in Table 2 are all 'on-line' finds, that is pieces recovered by walkers and put in their bag while actually walking their line. Quite often, people also see and pick up striking artefacts while walking across the field, to and from the office. We call these 'line 0' finds. These items are not recorded in any of our tables (Table 8 excepted), because they are not statistically representative: people do not pick up Welsh slate or broken glass in this way. Nevertheless, some of these line 0 finds are spectacular: they include some of the more interesting tools in our flint collection, and some of them will be referred to in detail in the text.

One such was the medieval pottery sherd recovered from M 2, about 10 to 20m from the hedge bordering the medieval site, and this sherd is specifically mentioned by James Bond.³ It is ironic that our sole medieval find from M 2 should be line 0, and therefore excluded from our tables.

The Finds - General

Table 2 shows the number in each category of find per field, while Table 3 gives densities of finds per hectare.

The sheer quantity of finds is staggering - well over 8000 from twelve fields. This is all the more remarkable considering what a small proportion of the total field area is actually examined, since lines up to a metre wide at 15m intervals represent only about 7% of a field's actual surface. Sh 2A alone yielded 32kg (70lbs) of objects! About one third of the finds are of pottery - the largest single category by number - while struck flints make up just under a tenth. Both these categories are described in more detail later.

Assorted building materials comprise about one fifth of all the finds. They are overwhelmingly post-medieval and are often quite modern - pieces of brick, different kinds of roofing materials including clay and asbestos tiles, and Welsh slate. The latter was probably not widely used here until the coming of the railway in the mid-19th century made its transportation from the mines economic. Particular concentrations of Welsh slate and brick/tile in one or two lines in Sh 9 and M 1 and of brick in the middle of Sh 1 suggest former buildings of which nothing now stands, while the thin, more even scatter over the rest of each field probably derives from manuring. The category brick/tile (Brktl) includes many minute fragments which could be either brick or tile. The unusually large number of these in Sh 9 and 10 probably reflects the fact that slightly different classifying criteria may have been used by their recorder who had not previously recorded the other fields.

Characteristic curved cylindrical pieces of red-brown or whitish earthenware

Table 2: Numbers of Finds by Type and Field

Fieldwalk Number	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 3	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	Sh 7	Sh 8	Sh 9	Sh 10	M 1	M 2	TOTAL
Flints	20	32	24	4	94	97	95	48	56	56	53	147	28	701
Pottery	296	462	200	81	109	108	66	107	555	481	481	375	63	2905
Glass:														
18th century	6	20	10	6	46	4	1	2	29	19	19	13	1	157
Modern	97	185	74	30	73	30	29	38	257	27	27	141	28	1069
Claypipe	11	39	46	4	8	3	8	10	31	24	24	50	4	239
Post-medieval building materials														
Brick	139	24	14	16	7	6	4	6	40	40	10	14	3	283
Roofing-tile	20	14	9	8	1	1	1	4	89	31	31	8	—	185
Brktl	4	16	9	4	14	4	2	4	181	156	156	28	1	423
Welsh slate	15	38	24	15	2	4	5	15	117	49	49	218	29	531
Other	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	19	—	8	—	—	29
Field drainage pipe	—	61	39	—	—	—	2	23	26	7	7	26	1	185
Metal														
Nails	37	17	15	—	31	17	14	15	22	19	19	12	3	202
Horseshoes	1	6	3	—	2	—	—	4	—	—	4	1	—	21
Other	14	22	18	6	4	—	8	15	71	46	46	33	—	237
Aircraft pieces	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	56	—	56
Sundry:														
Bones	62	13	23	7	20	6	11	28	94	49	49	17	16	346
Teeth	22	4	2	—	—	3	4	3	1	4	4	10	4	57
Coal and slag	37	37	27	7	39	29	13	132	128	84	84	17	—	550
Oyster shell	8	—	6	—	—	—	—	12	14	8	8	11	—	59
Other non-metal	—	12	8	6	3	—	4	—	34	11	11	42	10	130
TOTAL	812	1002	556	194	453	313	267	466	1764	1152	1152	1199	191	8369

Table 3: Artefact Density per Hectare

Fieldwalk Number	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	Sh 8	Sh 9	Sh 10	M 1	M 2
Burnt flints	-	64	0.3	1.7	0.7	3.0	-	0.8	0.5	1.3	2.4
All flints	3	6	7	18	17	24	8	5	5	17	16
All pottery	61	81	10	20	18	16	19	49	40	43	37
Glass											
18th century	1	4	8	8	1	-	-	3	2	7	8
modern	17	36	18	34	5	7	1	22	7	16	18
Claypipe	6	6	12	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	3
All post-med. building maas.	31	18	14	5	3	3	5	39	21	31	19
Drainage pipe	-	12	10	-	-	-	4	2	1	3	1
All metal	9	9	9	7	3	5	6	8	6	5	2
Bones	11	3	6	4	1	3	5	8	4	2	9
Coal & slag	6	7	7	7	5	3	23	11	7	2	-
Oyster shell	1	-	2	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	-
TOTAL	140	196	139	85	54	67	81	154	95	138	112

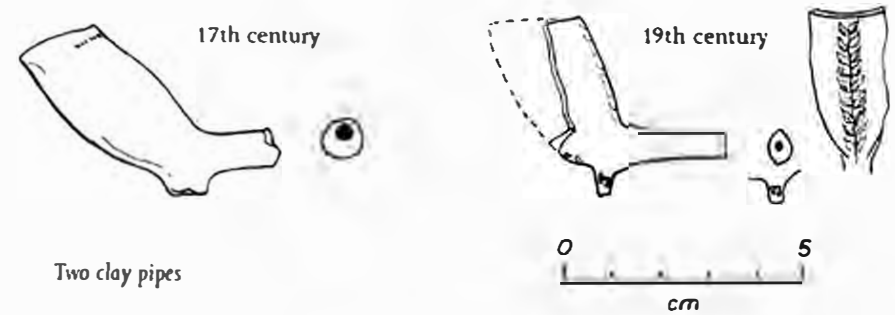
Notes.

- (1) All values except burnt flints are shown to the nearest whole number. '-' shows a presence of less than 0.5.
- (2) The values recorded are the total of 'on-line' finds expressed as the number per hectare in each field. Since the proportion of each field examined was somewhat less than 10% of its total area (say 1 metre in 15), the actual density of artefacts per hectare could be up to 15 times the values shown.
- (3) Data from Sh 3 are omitted as this was only partially walked by one individual at greater than 15m intervals. Thus the density of finds here is not comparable with that from other fields.

are field drainage pipes. Some examples found are hand-made, probably at very local kilns like Leafield up to the beginning of the present century, while others are factory-made (post-1850) with ridged outer surfaces. These were particularly numerous in the lower half of Sh 2A, a heavy clay field, but surprisingly absent in Bowerham, even nearer the river. This suggests that drainage in the latter, if present, is modern with deep set pipes not broken up by ploughing. As might be expected, drainpipes are scarce or absent on the light sands and limestones.

Pieces of glass represented a sizeable category of finds, most being 19th and 20th-century bottle glass. A few specimens bear lettering and are thus identifiable: (Hitchma)NS CHIPPING (Norton), HOOK (Norton Ales), OXF(ord), and also bottle fragments from Bristol and Camberwell (London). Ground glass stoppers, a jug handle and the base of a 19th-century rummer are interesting, but almost all the rest of the pieces are only fragments. There was a slight concentration of 19th-century glass in Sh 9 in lines containing the 'building', and in Sh 9 and 2A associated with an old quarry and sandpit respectively (see later), but otherwise it is spread fairly evenly where it occurs.

There is much less glass of the 18th century or earlier but it is very distinctive. The commonest survivals are thick curved pieces from the bases of characteristic bag-shaped wine-bottles having a convex central protrusion. Decomposition of elements in the surface layers of the glass causes lamination or patination with a distinctive iridescent sheen. Glass earlier than the 18th century has not been positively identified. Sh 4 was distinct in having a much higher density of both types of glass than its neighbouring sandy fields, of which an unusually high proportion (well over a third) was the older type. Perhaps its name, Sandpit Close, yields a clue: this may be evidence of deliberate dumping or of the refreshment of thirsty workmen digging out sand in earlier centuries, although its recovery from all over the field does not support this attractive theory.



Fragments of clay pipe formed only a tiny fraction (3%) of the finds yet they were easily seen. Most were stem pieces of 18th and 19th-century specimens: very few had any of the bowl as well. One good specimen from Sh 6 could date from about 1680.⁴ Several had the maker's initials stamped one on each side of the pedestal spur, either 'EC' or 'IS'. One had 'JS' and also a decorative line of oak leaves

up both sides of the bowl – probably mid-19th-century. Known Oxfordshire pipe-makers include Elizabeth Carty at Neithrop (Banbury) in 1847, J. Smith (Witney) in 1854, and Joseph Sims, 1852 and John Sims, 1876 both of Oxford.⁵ Broken clay pipe could have been scattered with manuring or discarded by workers in the fields. Three fields have more than the average density of pipe-fragments – indicating the habits of a past owner or his farmworkers?

Metal artefacts seemed to be scattered at random over the fields. Nails were almost all handmade and horseshoes ranged in age from possibly 15th to 18th-century, but were mostly 19th or 20th-century.⁶ Other metal objects found included bolts, nuts, clamps and tines from farm machinery, hinges, hooks, chains and scythe blade tips, but also buttons, buckles, half a mole trap, a rusted pair of pliers, parts of a clock mechanism and a suspected Roman coin awaiting identification, from Sh 6. One bonus was the discovery, in the middle of 30 bare acres, of two brand new spanners and a nut belonging to a combine harvester in current use, which were swiftly returned to their owner. Sh 2A yielded no fewer than six broken cast-iron plough shares. Some thirty years ago this area consisted of several small pasture fields, bordered by poor hedges. When these were cleared and the land ploughed, it seems likely that the shrub and tree roots remaining played havoc with the plough.

Sundry other, non-metal items include ginger-beer bottle marbles and the toy glass variety, farm animals' ear tags, pieces of belt and shoe leather, fragments of 'clay pigeon', cartridge cases and even a plastic toy soldier.

Milton's Coppice Furlong (M 1) told its own poignant story. Two adjacent lines produced numerous fractured and twisted pieces of a light alloy (duralumin) in the form of pipes and struts, as well as pieces of perspex and bakelite. These were later identified as parts of a fabric-covered aircraft, with strong evidence that it had crashed; while three associated .303 bullet cases which had exploded due to heat suggested a fire. Several Milton residents remembered that a Wellington bomber (of geodetic structure and fabric covering) had crashed in the field in June 1942 with the loss of all crew members except the rear gunner who was thrown clear.

About half the fields contained empty oyster shells although never concentrated in any one spot; oysters were a more common item of diet in Roman and medieval times than today. Small pieces of coal were recovered from all fields. These could have originated from manuring or from the use of steam-driven machinery: the latter is suggested by the strikingly higher density in Sh 8, a field adjacent to a farmyard. Likewise, animal bones were found in all fields, and teeth in most, but with no significant concentrations anywhere. Only the bones and teeth from Sh 1 have been examined in detail to identify the animals from which they came (ox, sheep, goat and pig). Without specialist knowledge this has not been possible for the other fields although intelligent guesses can be made. Most are limb bone fragments, some showing butchery marks. Accurate dating is impossible without radio-carbon techniques but it was thought that, from the type of butchery mark, some of the Sh 1 bones could have been medieval or earlier.

Modern Pottery

Pottery sherds make up about one third of all the finds encountered – the largest single category – and some are the easiest objects in the soil to see. Ninety per cent of the pottery is post-medieval, dating from the 16th century onwards, with most of it made, used and discarded during the last 200 years.

A very few pieces date from the 17th–18th centuries. These include dish fragments of Staffordshire buff earthenware with a characteristic straw-coloured and dark brown trailed slip, one piece showing rouletting and jewelled decoration. Sherds of Midlands purple ware, a red earthenware with a manganese-rich purple sheen, probably derived from Leicestershire or Northamptonshire, are unusual occurring this far south. Later Midlands red earthenwares of 17th–19th centuries also occur in small quantities, highly-glazed in brown and black, probably mostly from Staffordshire.

A larger category is of stonewares. These are a very hard, impervious kind of pottery widely used in the kitchen and cellar to hold liquids. An early example from Sh 1 was the base of a globular jug of salt-glazed stoneware, possibly 17th-century, called a bellarmine – after an unpopular and portly cardinal of that name. These would originally have been imported, as was the blue- and purple-decorated Rhenish stoneware from Westerwald, popular from the 17th–19th centuries. Most of the stoneware finds are probably of Staffordshire manufacture from the 18th century onwards, in grey, buff and white. One jar-base has an impressed lozenge showing its place of origin: WILNECOTE. TAMWORTH. A fragment of a small white stoneware jar advertises its contents, an ointment: (Poor) MANS FRIEND. PRICE 1/1½. Notts-Derby ware has characteristic combed or impressed designs. Finds also included a few sherds of black basalt – a fine, hard black stoneware, originally developed and refined by Wedgwood in the 18th century but subsequently widely copied in the manufacture of tea and coffee sets.⁷

Two-fifths of the pottery however is a coarse red earthenware showing a considerable range of lead-glaze colours – browns, terracottas, yellows and greenish-yellow. This was the commonly-used cheap domestic earthenware of most ordinary households in the later post-medieval period, made and sold fairly locally by small country potters. In Oxfordshire, potteries at Leafield, Nettlebed and around Banbury are well documented especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, while at Brill, just over the Buckinghamshire border, there seems to have been an unbroken tradition of pottery-making from the 13th to the 19th centuries. A wide range of utensils was manufactured including large pans for milk, cream and hams, bread crocks, jugs, honey pots, chick waterers, chamber pots, flowerpots and vases. The Leafield pottery industry flourished in the 18th century until the last quarter of the 19th century, its products known locally as Field-Town Chaney; one pottery bought out by Alfred Groves and Sons continued to make bricks, tiles and field drainage pipes until about 1920.⁸

It is not known what proportion of the glazed red earthenware found on our walks was actually made at Leafield, but it is recorded in the tables as 'Leafield type' and the large numbers of pieces reflect its widespread local usage. Most are glazed

only on the inside and some obviously formed part of very large vessels indeed.⁹ A thick jar rim (17th century) has a thumb-pressed strip decoration. One piece has a white slip applied in a swirling pattern with a greenish glaze. A fragment of a 17th century charger (large serving plate) in red glazed earthenware with a trailed slip decoration in white pipeclay is probably from Brill or Potterspury (Northamptonshire). One highly glazed fragment, probably 19th-century, is inscribed on the outside in cursive lettering, possibly with the potter's name (very incomplete).

By the 18th century the pottery industry of Staffordshire was developing to national importance with superior manufacturing and marketing techniques, producing a range of high-quality earthenwares with a hard white glaze and often elaborate hand painted or transfer-printed decoration in a variety of colours. These are mostly floral, but commemorative, proprietary (eg REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT GWR BATH) and nursery decorations (eg alphabet plates) also occur. But the familiar blue willow-pattern seems to be the most common. Significantly only a very few pieces of porcelain, the finest ware of all, were recovered: two of these were imported. A few sherds of the 19th-century novelty 'burning bush' or Mocha ware have been found. The distinctive pattern was achieved by squirting tobacco juice or urine into the clay slip before firing! All this white earthenware was too expensive to be widely used by most country people until the mid-19th century, but the fact that it makes up another two-fifths of all the pottery found is a reflection of its growing popularity.

Unglazed red earthenware is extremely difficult to date and identify. Although shown separately in Tables 4 and 5, undoubtedly some of it is Leaffield type with no glaze showing, and some modern flower pot: thus this category is a bit of a miscellany.

Table 4 shows the absolute numbers of different categories of pottery in each field, while Table 5 gives the densities per hectare. Clearly fields Sh 4, 5, 6 and 8 show a very low density of all kinds of post-medieval pottery, while in Sh 2A it is very thick on the ground. The other fields have an average amount. Leaffield type red earthenware is moderately sparse in most fields, especially Sh 6 and 8, thicker in Sh 1 and M 1, but dense in Sh 9 and 10. The white-glazed earthenware or modern china is sparse in Sh 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, thicker on the ground in Sh 1 and the two Milton fields but exceptionally prolific in Sh 2A. Generally the stonewares, though fewer, show a similar pattern of density to the china. In almost all fields all three main categories of pottery were recovered from all over the field in an even spread, with individual line by line variations due in part to the variable eyesight of individual walkers. The exceptions were Sh 10 where almost none was found towards the uphill boundary, Sh 1, 2A and 2B.

Is it possible to attempt any explanation of the past use of these fields from these rather complex results? It is tentatively suggested that the low density not only of all kinds of pottery, but also of building materials in Sh 4, 5, 6 and 8, and of glass in 5, 6 and 8 may indicate that, for the past two or three centuries, these fields were generally not manured by carrying out debris from the villages. They probably had a long history as pasture, enriched directly by grazing animals, a theory supported by the adjoining name of Cowcommon Plantation. Sh 4, 5 and 6

Table 4: Categories of Pottery Finds per Field

Field/walk Number	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 3	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	Sh 8	Sh 9	Sh 10	M 1	M 2	TOTAL
Romano-British	4	3	1	2	9	9	5	9	62	31	6	1	142
Saxon (poss.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	3
Medieval	42	2	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	2	1	-	53
JB type (inc CX)	21	-	-	1	7	2	1	2	-	-	3	-	37
Sandy Brill type	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	1	-	11
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Medieval	63	3	2	1	9	2	1	4	5	6	5	-	101
TOTAL PRE-16th CENTURY	67	6	3	3	18	11	6	13	68	39	11	1	246
POST-16th CENTURY:													
Leaffield Type glazed red earthenware	95	43	30	20	33	30	10	8	273	278	15	12	947
Unglazed red e/w	-	19	11	12	15	5	1	2	61	44	26	2	198
Non-local white glazed earthenware	89	319	104	38	18	40	29	66	104	72	156	42	1077
Non-local other (stonewares etc)	47	75	52	8	25	22	20	18	49	48	67	6	437
Total Modern Pottery	231	456	197	78	91	97	60	94	487	442	364	62	2659
TOTAL POTTERY	198	462	100	81	109	108	66	107	555	481	375	63	2905

Table 5: Pottery Densities per Hectare

Fieldwalk Number	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	Sh 8	Sh 9	Sh 10	M 1	M 2
Romano-British	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	5	3	1	1
Saxon (poss.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Medieval	11	1	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	—
TOTAL PRE-16th CENTURY	12	1	1	3	2	1	2	6	3	1	1
POST-16th CENTURY:											
Leaffield Type glazed											
red earthenware	16	8	8	6	5	2	1	24	23	13	7
Unglazed red e/w	—	4	3	3	1	—	—	5	4	3	1
Non-local white glazed earthenware	15	63	26	3	7	7	11	9	6	18	25
Non-local other (stonewares etc)	8	15	13	5	4	5	3	4	4	8	4
Total Modern Pottery	40	89	49	17	17	15	16	43	36	42	36
TOTAL POTTERY	51	91	50	20	18	16	19	49	40	43	37

See Notes on Table 3.

are midway between Milton and Shipton villages, mainly on sandy gravel, whereas Sh 8 is on the clay near the valley bottom, close to Shipton and did contain slightly more modern china than the other three. By contrast, Sh 9 and 10 were relatively rich in Leaffield-type earthenware, suggesting active manure-spreading during the 18th and early 19th centuries, but their relatively low density of 19th–20th century china indicates less recent activity. Sh 1 and M 1 results suggest a moderate level of manuring over a fairly long period as they contain moderately high densities of all three main categories of post-medieval fabrics. This is somewhat surprising in the case of Sh 1 which lies close to the river, a good mile away from Shipton village on the parish boundary, with the nearest dwelling at Langley Mill, although the lowest part of the field adjoining the river and once separate as Bowerham Meadow, contained almost no artefacts at all.

The very high density of modern white-glazed earthenware and stoneware in Sh 2A, and to a lesser extent in Sh 2B, concentrated in certain lines in each case, is explained by the presence of an old sand quarry exploiting the glacial gravel, to one side of 2A, which was used as a rubbish dump up to the first decades of this century. While pieces of china and glass were clearly visible in the light sandy soil of lines 3–6 in Sh 2A, in fact higher numbers were recorded in the clay 60–130m downhill. Undoubtedly this anomaly was partly due to returning walkers saying that there were 'too many things to pick up' from the actual area of the dump, but probably it also indicates considerable lateral displacement of artefacts down a slope after several years' ploughing. Experiments have shown that on level ground, objects in ploughsoil do not get moved significantly from their original position, but this does not necessarily hold good on sloping terrain.¹⁰ The concentration of china in a few lines of Sh 2B could also be outwash from the same dump.

Only a small area of M 2 was walked, and the results may be atypical due to smallness of sample. Its proximity to dwellings with local tipping may explain its relatively high concentration of china.

Earlier Pottery

Less than one tenth of all the pottery recovered dates from the Roman to the medieval period – approximately 1500 years of human domestic activity. But half of this was Romano-British – usually hard, well-made pottery and although much worn with the passage of time, it persists well in the ploughsoil. Three main types have been found: greyware, reddish-brown oxidised ware including colour-coat fabric and imported Samian ware. Vessels of the latter are finer and thinner and have a handsome dark red burnish. Individual finds include a fragment of a 2nd-century Samian ware bowl from Sh 6 and a piece of lid of an amphora (storage jar) from Sh 5, while Sh 3 yielded part of an Oxford colour-coat mortarium (a food grinding bowl) with a gritted inner surface, dating from 240–400 AD. A piece of tile with an incised pattern came from M 1. There is a very sparse scattering, a mere 'background whisper', of Romano-British pottery from every field walked, even if only a single sherd, and this strongly suggests that manuring and thus cultivation of the landscape was widespread in the early centuries AD. The particular concentration of Romano-British material encountered in Sh 9 and 10 is described in detail later.

By contrast, Saxon pottery (6th–11th-century) was less well-made, crumbles easily and has been described as 'rare but undistinguished-looking . . . hard to see; the pieces tend to be black or brownish in colour and frequently small and crumb-like, hard to distinguish from pieces of coke, or certain kinds of stone'.² It is not surprising therefore that only three possible pieces have turned up, and all from the most recent walks (Sh 9 and 10). Perhaps our eyesight is beginning to become trained!

Much of the medieval pottery too seems far less hard and durable than the Roman, although it is 1000 years more recent. Two main types have been recovered. The first (group 1B) consists of generally small abraded sherds of reddish-brown or darker brown fabric tempered with fragments of gritty limestone. Normally these show as whitish specks in the clay, but under acidic conditions these calcareous inclusions leach out leaving tiny holes or pores in the pottery, giving it an almost corky appearance. This was handmade, from the 12th–15th centuries: sometimes surface finger impressions can still be seen. Bases, rims and some obviously shallow dishes have been distinguished, occasionally with a thin greenish glaze, but mostly the pieces are unglazed, rather earth-coloured and difficult to see in the field. At least some of this is of a particular type (Fabric CX) which seems to have occurred around the area of Wychwood Forest, but which has not been found at Oxford, Banbury or Chipping Norton.¹¹ It was probably of very local manufacture: considerable evidence of pottery-making in Ascott under Wychwood in the 13th century does exist.¹²



Fragment of medieval beer jar with small bung-hole, 13th–15th century

The second main type of medieval ware is a sandy earthenware (group III), often pinky-buff in colour and widely made at Brill from the 13th–15th centuries. Rod- and strap-handles of jugs have been found, also sherds with a distinctive green glaze and sometimes an annular incised decoration. Sh 4 yielded a substantial piece of such a vessel with an unusually small bung-hole (15mm diameter), probably for holding beer.

In addition, a few sherds of incompletely-fired red earthenware, some glazed, await verification as medieval and are recorded as 'other'. This category however includes an interesting and identified find from Sh 9. This is a small round knob with a laterally compressed neck in green-glazed white earthenware (Surrey white ware, from late 13th century), thought to be one of several knobs from the rim of a chafing-dish, a device to keep food warm.

Like the Romano-British material, medieval pottery occurs as a thin background whisper almost everywhere we look. The exception to this is Sh 1, the first field walked which produced a relatively large quantity of both main types. Even so, the Sh 1 densities per hectare shown in Tables 3 and 5 are somewhat understated as practically no artefacts were found in the lower meadow where silting had occurred. Sh 1 had originally been two fields and with the advantage of hindsight should have been walked as such. It has been suggested to us that this concentration might indicate a medieval settlement site, but since the material was well distributed all over the upper field, manuring is again the likely explanation. Certainly this field was one of a row of old pre-enclosure closes between the road to Ascott and the river: a hedge-count reveals 8 species by the road and 5–7 species down the sides of the field, implying a possible age of seven centuries or more.¹³ If this was a medieval close, it may be that a medieval farmer deliberately spread his muck there more regularly and thickly than on the open fields. Since we were totally inexperienced while walking Sh 1, we expected this density of medieval pottery to recur on every subsequent fieldwalk, and were always disappointed. By the time we realised that the Sh 1 results indicated something rather out of the ordinary, the field had been put down to permanent grass, so further investigation has to wait.

Flints

Struck flints display recognisable characteristics, distinct from flints broken by weathering or cultivation. Moreover, flint does not occur in the basic rock strata of this region: the nearest sources are the chalk downlands of Berkshire to the south and the Chiltern hills to the east. The exception to this is a small amount of poor quality flint in discontinuous patches of glacial deposit, occurring in a great sweep from Moreton in Marsh south-eastwards, through Milton under Wychwood to Leafield and Ramsden and beyond. So, as a general rule, flints found in our area have been deliberately brought in by man and most display some evidence of his handiwork.

We have found struck flints in every field walked. Table 2 shows a total of 705 on-line finds, with another 91 picked up between lines and categorised as line 0 finds. Flints were recorded from all parts of every field except the riverside meadow in Sh 1.

When we walked Sh 4, 5 and 6 over the August Bank Holiday weekend in 1986, we were amazed and excited at the time by the quality and diversity of the flints being brought in. All three fields were comparatively bare of other artefacts, the flints representing 20%, 31% and 36% respectively of total finds. A few weeks later, M 1 and M 2 also yielded a large number, but with other artefacts more plentiful, they only accounted for 12% and 15% of finds. But the densities per hectare in Table 3 show clearly the richness of flint finds in these five fields, particularly in Sh 6.

Table 6 analyses the on-line flint finds from the first nine fields walked, but excludes the finds from the 1987 walks (Sh 8, 9 and 10) which have not yet been discussed with an expert. It will be seen that the vast majority of finds (63%) are simple struck flakes, with no subsequent working. A further 20% are flakes showing signs of retouch, or of having been burnt. That leaves a mere 17% of total flints comprising blades and more finely worked specific tools like arrowheads, scrapers, piercers and axes, or cores from which flakes have been struck. None of the finds show signs of having been polished. A collection like this is called 'flake-dominated'.

The 61 line 0 finds must be regarded as less representative, but show a similar pattern. 69% are flakes. The other items include a handaxe-type of tool which is possibly Paleolithic (ie Old Stone Age, perhaps not of local origin but brought down by glacial or flood action); one possible Mesolithic flake; a scraper; a knife; six blades (two reworked as scrapers) and seven cores or core fragments. A further expert opinion is needed on the possible Paleolithic and Mesolithic items.

Although not yet verified, the finds from the 1987 walks – Sh 8, 9 and 10 – include a number of tiny flakes, small enough to be Mesolithic microliths, but positive identification is required. Sh 8 in particular produced 30 of these, of irregular shape but showing definite signs of having been struck, possibly knapping debris. From Sh 9 and 10 there are perhaps four recognisable scrapers, a small blade, and a definite larger worked tool of irregular shape – perhaps a scraper, or a broken axe – as well as two possible arrowheads. The material from Sh 9 and 10 is mostly heavily patinated, largely white, in contrast with the 1986 finds

Table 6: Categories of Flint Finds
(excluding 1987 walks)

Fieldwalk Number	Sh 1	Sh 2A	Sh 2B	Sh 3	Sh 4	Sh 5	Sh 6	M 1	M 2	TOTAL
Mesolithic (poss.)			1							1
Arrowheads	1		1			1				3
Scrapers	1				5	4	7	4		21
Embryonic scraper		1								1
Blades		3				1	3			7
Rough blade flakes		2	1				1			4
Piercers (poss.)					3	1			1	5
Axe, broken & reused								1		1
Notched flakes					2			1		3
Cores					2	2	2	1		7
Core fragments		1	1		6	4	3	9	4	28
Burnt cores						1				1
Burnt flakes		2	1		9	3	12	11	4	42
Retouched flakes	4	5			12	10	10	18	2	61
Retouched flakes - later work	1	1			2	1	1	4		10
Flakes	13	16	24	4	52	67	54	96	17	343
Rough waste		1			1	2	2	2		8
TOTAL	20	32	29	4	94	97	95	147	28	546

which are lightly patinated with a bluish tinge, or often quite unpatinated, looking like broken bottle-glass.

The vast majority of these items cannot be precisely dated. A simple flake would look much the same, whether struck by a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer (say 6000 BC), or an Iron Age farmer (say 300 BC). Patination may afford a clue, but it seems that the causes of this are not altogether understood; it may not simply be a function of time, but also of a chemical interaction between the flint and the soil. Two things are clear from our collection. First, some fields yield much more heavily patinated flints than others. Secondly, we have a few pieces which show signs of later re-use and reworking: the original flint is relatively heavily patinated, the later working shows little or none. This implies pieces were picked up and re-used, perhaps thousands of years after the original tool was discarded; also the re-user may have moved the piece and discarded it finally in soil where patination was less likely to occur. The ten items described in Table 6 as 'Retouched flakes, later work' come into this category.

Some flints can, however, be dated more precisely. The early Mesolithic hunter-gatherers specialised in minute microliths, apparently not made later. Indeed their tools were very precisely and skilfully made - those made later, particularly in the Bronze and Iron Ages, were often rougher and cruder.

Arrowheads can be dated, since they followed fashion. The first farmers of the



Flint arrowheads. Left: leaf-shaped, early Neolithic Middle: transverse, later Neolithic Right: barbed and tanged, but with barbs broken off - early Bronze Age

early Neolithic period (say 4000-3000 BC) produced leaf-shaped arrowheads. The later Neolithics produced transverse arrowheads, where the prey (or enemy) was not pierced by a point but stunned by a sharp edge. In the early Bronze Age (after 2250 BC), fine arrowheads were made with barbs and tangs.¹⁴ Of our three arrowheads shown in Table 6, that from Sh 1 is a very fine leaf-shaped arrowhead, lightly patinated - early Neolithic. That from Sh 2B is transverse, cruder and very heavily patinated - later Neolithic. That from Sh 5 is barbed and tanged, but with both barbs broken off, totally unpatinated - early Bronze Age.

The finds from Sh 8, 9 and 10 include a very clear barbed and tanged arrowhead (but with both barbs and the tang broken off), heavily patinated - Bronze Age; and a possible transverse, also patinated, damaged by later breaks (perhaps caused by recent ploughing) - if correctly identified, later Neolithic.

These finds indicate that some of our material, at least, originates from the early Neolithic period, say 4000 BC, and some from 2000 years later - but many of the flakes could be much later than that.

Despite showing no sign of further adaptation, simple flakes were nonetheless handy tools. When freshly struck they had very sharp edges, far sharper than early metal technology could produce. For this reason it seems unlikely that the art of knapping was replaced altogether by the introduction of the new metallurgy in the last two millennia BC. Weapons, heavy tools like axes, and prestige items were soon made for the aristocratic warriors from the new metals (though flint arrowheads are found in burials well into the Bronze Age). But if a farmer on the job wanted a sharp cutting edge, what would be more natural, convenient and efficient than to carry a flint core and quickly knap a flake? Evidence for the late survival of flint-knapping is not readily found in the literature, perhaps because flints were not included in later burials, a datable context: a warrior was buried with his spear or sword in bronze or iron, but flint flakes were disposable and lacked prestige. We do know of the discovery of one flint collection not dissimilar from ours in its composition, that is flake-dominated, in a stratified context of very late date - the Glastonbury Lake Village, said to be no earlier than the 2nd century BC.¹⁵

What is the archaeological record from monuments and excavations of Stone and Bronze Age activity in the locality? The main evidence comes from a long barrow at Coldwell Bridge on the B4437 Burford/Charlbury road (SP 299176), excavated by Don Benson around 1970.¹⁶ This is very close to some of the fields

walked. Material from the barrow has a date of about 3700 BC.¹⁷ Parts of 47 bodies were found, one having a leaf arrowhead embedded in the vertebral column, which was presumably the cause of death.

Particularly interesting was what was discovered under the barrow, protected by it from subsequent erosion or ploughing. Mesolithic flints were found from up to 6000 BC, indicating hunting and domestic activities. However, their low density indicated a base camp occupied for a relatively short time, or a succession of smaller occupations. It appeared that the land was cleared of trees in the Mesolithic period, but forest thickened again before being cleared anew in the Neolithic, prior to the construction of the barrow.¹⁶

Other long barrows of probably similar date are visible in the area, one very near to the above excavation (SP 297174), another close to the Lyneham Iron Age fort near the A361 (SP 297211). Shipton Barrow on the Shipton Down is a Bronze Age round barrow (SP 269156) - Sh 6 and M 1 are the nearest walked fields to it.

These burials confirm that there was human activity in the locality, perhaps sporadic, throughout the fifth to third millennia BC.

It will be seen in Table 6 that we have found 43 burnt flints, mostly from Sh 4, 5 and 6 and M 1. A further 3 were recovered from lines 0, and 16 more from Sh 9 and 10. Burnt flints are particularly interesting. They display a crazed surface, or a crystalline appearance. It is thought that this effect could not have been caused by modern stubble burning, which does not generate a sufficiently intense heat for long enough, but probably indicates burning in Stone Age hearths. One theory is that flints were deliberately heated as boiling stones to be put in pots of water, as the ceramic was not fireproof. Another explanation is that heated flints fractured easily and could then be crushed and used to temper clay in pottery making.² Either way these finds may indicate the proximity of at least a scatter of temporary hearth sites, if not more permanent dwellings.

The general picture which emerges is of widespread if sporadic activity throughout the last four millennia BC, perhaps down to the Roman occupation. The sheer numbers of flints found need not cause amazement. Ploughing may chip flints, but they are virtually indestructible, and will continue to turn up in land where there has been neither significant erosion nor deposition of silt. The period involved covered perhaps 4000 years, and one man in his short life probably knapped and discarded thousands of tools or flakes.¹⁸ It is not necessary to postulate either a heavy population, or continuous occupation.

Apparently the Neolithics were early farmers, practising the 'slash and burn' technique. This involved clearing forest, farming it for a few seasons (both livestock and crops) and then moving on to a new site when the land became impoverished, leaving the old site to revert to scrub or forest until it was cleared again decades or even centuries later. In Sh 4, 5 and 6, and M 1, there are deposits of glacial drift giving a light sandy soil, in contrast to the much heavier clay found elsewhere in the valley. It is an attractive theory that this soil would have been much easier for Neolithic Man to prepare for crops with his primitive tools like antler picks. Here perhaps we had the first arable farming in our area, up to 6000 years ago.

Map 2: Fields Sh 9 and part of Sh 10 showing lines as laid out

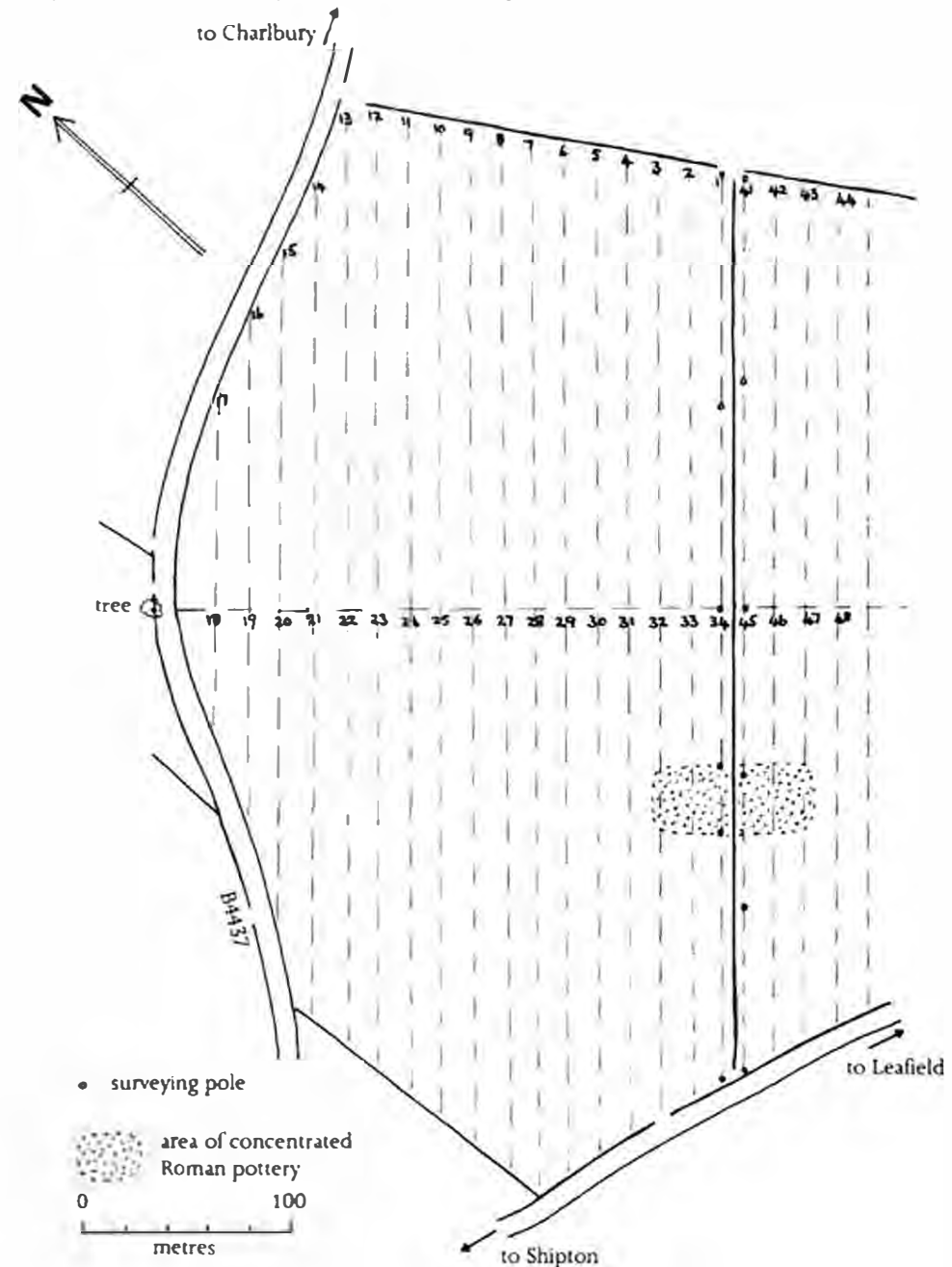


Table 7: Field Sh 9 - Numbers of Finds per Line

Line Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Flints	2	3	-	2	1	1	1	4	-	1	1	8	4	-
Pottery:														
Romano-British	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
Saxon (poss.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medieval	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Post-medieval:														
Leaffield type	4	12	9	13	1	9	13	7	5	12	9	20	4	2
Other	5	9	2	2	2	3	6	11	7	5	9	32	6	2
Glass:														
18th Century	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	2	-
Modern	6	8	6	3	7	9	6	14	2	12	9	14	9	16
Claypipe	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	4	3	-
Post medieval building materials:														
Brick	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	4	-
Roofing-tile	3	-	1	6	2	-	2	4	-	1	3	7	-	-
Brktl	6	20	2	9	2	-	7	9	-	2	2	16	4	6
Welsh slate	4	2	1	2	-	2	5	4	1	4	7	16	13	13
Other	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
Field drainage pipe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-
Metal:														
Nails	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	4	-	-
Horseshoes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	2	4	1	2	4	-	1	1	2	3	4	4	-	4
Sundry:														
Bones	3	1	5	2	-	3	2	4	2	2	4	3	4	1
Teeth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coal and slag	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	8	-	1	-	15	6	6
Oyster shell	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Other non-metal	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	17	-	-
TOTAL	40	65	34	44	20	33	48	72	23	47	52	167	55	54

15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	TOTAL
-	2	1	-	-	1	4	1	1	6	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	56
-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	3	1	18	20	7	-	62
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	5
9	3	6	4	5	7	4	11	10	9	13	8	11	8	3	10	7	10	9	6	273
1	5	2	2	5	7	5	5	5	9	7	7	8	1	9	2	14	3	8	8	214
-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	-	4	-	-	-	29
12	8	1	2	5	3	7	10	3	5	6	11	17	5	15	4	5	9	3	5	257
-	-	1	-	3	1	1	2	3	1	2	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	31
-	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	7	-	4	-	-	2	8	2	1	-	1	40
3	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	4	7	8	4	8	-	1	4	9	5	1	-	89
5	2	5	3	6	4	3	16	4	-	6	-	6	14	4	6	2	4	3	3	181
3	5	2	1	3	2	1	-	3	-	4	3	2	5	3	1	2	2	1	1	117
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	7	3	5	3	1	-	26
-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	2	1	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	1	22
-	-	1	2	2	1	3	4	2	-	2	-	4	3	4	4	4	1	1	1	71
-	-	-	-	2	2	4	3	4	8	3	6	5	11	2	1	4	7	5	1	94
10	1	3	1	5	4	3	14	7	6	3	3	2	6	4	7	-	7	-	-	128
-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	14
-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	1	-	-	-	34
44	28	23	16	39	41	36	77	48	58	63	57	70	45	69	61	57	75	65	38	1764

One Field in Detail

One field, Sh 9, has been chosen for a more detailed examination, because of the special nature of some of the finds, and to illustrate several interesting points about the management of a fieldwalk.

This field was walked in August 1987, together with the adjacent Sh 10 (see Table 1 for general description). Both fields had been ploughed and cultivated, the weather was mainly sunny, and the ground dry. In the Enclosure Award of 1852 they were carved out of a part of the open field then called Shepherds Bench. They are surrounded by hedges with a 1-4 species count, with dry-stone walls adjacent to the roads.¹³ The little triangular field to the west of Sh 9, nestling in the Judds Grave crossroad, has been kept as pasture and shows prominent ridge and furrow.

Halfway along the southern boundary of Sh 9, an old limestone quarry had been filled in some 25 years ago.

Map 2 shows Sh 9, with the lines marked as laid out. This time we departed from the normal convenient practice of laying the lines across the shortest axis of the field. This was done deliberately, to test whether the volume and nature of finds altered as one progressed uphill, and hence further away from the main settlement at Shipton, established more than a kilometre away to the north-east since at least medieval times. The base-line adjacent to the hedge dividing the two fields was about 400m long, potentially giving a longest line of over 500m - this was too long for practical purposes. Map 2 shows that we solved this problem by dividing Sh 9 in half with a line of baler twine and canes.

Map 2 also shows the line-numbering sequence. Thus the base-line itself was

line 1 for its first half, and 34 for the second half. The lines are clearly different lengths due to the shape of the field, and this is partly reflected in Table 7, showing the number of finds in each category recovered from each line. This table is a tidier version of the recording schedule drawn up when the finds were originally sorted and counted.

The answer to the question posed, whether the quantity of finds diminished as we went further uphill, is that there seems to be no noticeable difference in Sh 9, but there may be some fall-off in recoveries of certain types of material further uphill at the top of Sh 10 – the ‘feel’ coming back from walkers was that it became less interesting. But this impression is not conclusive; to establish the point we would need to walk the next field uphill.

There is another factor which causes acute variations in line by line recovery, making patterns harder to distinguish. This factor is the difference in the eye of the individual beholder. The literature refers to this as a problem with professionals, so no wonder if amateurs of varying age and limited experience can sometimes be faulted!¹⁹ We have come to recognise that some walkers have very sharp eyes, others less so. Lines 12 and 22 were both walked by the same person – these were lines of varying length, but the persistent ability is evident and confirmed by the returns from two other lines walked in Sh 10, which show significantly higher recoveries than those from walkers on neighbouring lines. In fact, lines 1–12 were of similar length; of these, lines 5, 6 and 9 were walked by people doing it for the first time, while line 8 was walked by an experienced walker. Individuals may also have their personal blind spots, e.g. flints or early medieval pottery. Whatever is recovered is interesting, but one does have the feeling that a lot may be missed.

A Romano-British Discovery

When we laid out field Sh 9 the day before the walk itself, it was already apparent to us that we had a higher than usual concentration of Romano-British (R-B) pottery between lines 32 and 34. It was clearly more than the background whisper of no more than ten sherds per field encountered in earlier walks, suggesting that we were on to something unusual. It was therefore decided to try to recover all the R-B material from an area about 33m long, covering all the ground between lines 32 and 33, and between 33 and 34. This was done by one of us, who only picked up R-B material, flints and any medieval sherds, ignoring everything more modern. This is a version of grid-walking, though no attempt was made to break each strip between the lines into smaller units, as would have been done on a proper grid. A large quantity of R-B material was recovered.

It will be seen from Map 2 that the adjacent area in Sh 10 was lines 45–48. A casual look in the region of lines 45 and 46 had not revealed anything out of the ordinary, so line-walking was resumed there in the normal way. While lines 45 and 47 returned only a few pieces of R-B material, line 46 was more productive. Meanwhile a walker returning from higher up the hill brought back a spectacular line 0 find, from between lines 46 and 47. This appeared to be the neck of a bottle

Table 8: Romano-British and Other Early Finds from Part of Sh 9 and Sh 10

	Romano-British	Saxon	Medieval
Line 32	18	1	2
Between 32 and 33	48	–	3
Line 33	20	–	–
Between 33 and 34	26	–	2
Line 34	7	–	–
Line 45	3	–	–
Between 45 and 46	9	–	–
Line 46	16	–	1
Between 46 and 47	10	–	1
Line 47	2	–	–
Above Line 47	5	–	2
TOTAL	164	1	11

in terracotta pottery, though with a very narrow bore (about 6mm). After all the line-walking had been completed, it was decided to investigate the ground between lines 45 and 48, and three walkers were assigned to this task.

The final result, after all the finds had been sorted, washed and identified, was 164 R-B sherds. These are shown in Table 8, and come from one rectangular strip, about 85m long from lines 32 to above 47, and up to 33m wide, covering perhaps slightly more than a quarter of a hectare. However it will be seen that nearly three-quarters of the sherds come from Sh 9, from an area of about one eighth of a hectare, a local concentration of say 800 per hectare (this figure is not of course comparable with those shown in Table 5, which shows the finds recovered from narrow strips at 15m intervals, not from an entire hectare). The second and smaller concentration around line 46 is still very much more than the normal background whisper.

In addition, a thin piece of limestone was recovered with a round hole drilled centrally at one end. This resembled a narrow Stonesfield slate broken near the top. We understand that in the Cotswolds the Romano-British did in fact use limestone slates for roofing, though Stonesfield itself was not a source at this time.²⁰ This may have been one such, though it cannot be positively identified as R-B. The only other likely building materials recovered were three small lumps of clay daub, probably used to plug the gaps in wattle walls (these are included in the tables as R-B pottery).

We believe that such a large quantity of R-B material found in a relatively concentrated area fully justifies the claim that we have located a hitherto unrecorded R-B settlement site. The close concentration of finds on the ground felt very much like that at Starveall, the only previously recorded R-B site in the parishes of Shipton and Milton, where we recovered 93 pieces from a few square metres in less than half an hour (Sh 7).

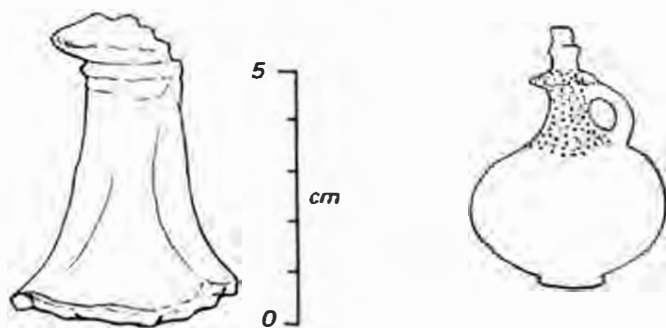
What can be inferred about the site on fields Sh 9 and 10 from the R-B finds

recovered? Two-thirds of the pottery pieces found were greywares, of which about half were a coarse thick Savernake type dating from the 1st-2nd centuries AD (kilns are known to have made this ware as far north as Swindon). Much of the rest of the greywares were of smoother blue-grey clay – at least one piece, a jar-rim, dating from the 3rd/4th century. About a quarter of all the R-B pottery was terracotta oxidised ware and some of this is undoubtedly colourcoat ware with most of the outer slip layer worn off. Such was the bottle neck from between lines 46 and 47, a distinctive type with a flange dating from the 3rd/4th century.²¹ Kilns at Headington near Oxford are known to have manufactured both grey and oxidised wares during at least three centuries.

Other finds included one fragment of whiteware also known to have been made in the Oxford region, and the base of a flagon in south-western white slipware from the Cirencester area, 2nd-3rd century. Only one piece of the finer Samian ware was found: late 1st-century, imported from Southern Gaul.

The pottery evidence points to occupation of this site over at least 300 years, intermittently if not continuously. It was probably a modest farmstead using mostly fairly local coarse pottery.

The recovery of a number of medieval sherds and one possible Saxon piece from this area is also interesting, probably due to it being scrutinised more thoroughly by experienced eyes.



Neck of Romano-British bottle, colourcoat ware, 3rd-4th century AD

Conclusion

These results give an indication of what evidence lies in the soil about man's past occupation of this part of the Evenlode valley. We have tried to point out the many factors which might affect the recovery of artefacts and conclude that the human one probably leads to the greatest variation. Different weather conditions are known to affect recovery rates: an even, overcast light with no shadows is best as bright, low sunlight casting very dark shadows can obscure about half the soil area. Frosty conditions are said to be particularly bad. Some writers suggest that artefact recovery may decline just before lunch!¹

A check on results could be obtained by returning in future seasons to re-walk areas already investigated. Even if all the walkers are very sharp-eyed, one fieldwalk does not remove everything from the soil, even from the lines walked. It has been estimated that only about 2% of the total artefacts in the ploughsoil are exposed at any one time and that the surface population undergoes constant renewal with every ploughing.^{1 10} We would certainly like to investigate Sh 1 again when it is next ploughed, and the Romano-British site on Sh 9 and 10 would repay a local grid-walk. For the rest, it is a question of walking a lot more fields. This is therefore an interim report.

So far we have not found any Iron Age, Bronze Age or Neolithic sherds. These can be notoriously difficult to see, resembling lumps of earth, and are scarce, but the explanation may also be that they have a low survival rate in the ploughsoil, being fragile and broken up by frost and ploughing over thousands of years.

Some professionals cover far more ground in a season than we do. However we feel that the limiting factor is the considerable time it takes to sort, identify and record the large number of artefacts recovered. Perhaps a professional should have the last word: '... a fieldwalking project, which is something that can sometimes sound like a relatively easy archaeological option, is not a thing which should be undertaken lightly: there must be an appreciation of the time and effort which will be required'.² We agree, but nevertheless have found the effort very rewarding.

Acknowledgements

None of this activity would have been possible without the consent and cooperation of our local farmers. Everyone we have approached has been most helpful and tolerant. We would like to express our gratitude to Nigel Adams, Bob Barrett and Jim Barnes, John Fletcher, John Hartley, and Terry and Richard Hartley.

We are also most grateful to the professionals who have willingly and patiently helped us with advice and with the identification of artefacts, often in the face of a very pressing workload. These were Judi Caton, John Campbell and John Rhodes of the Oxfordshire County Museum Service, and the following members of the Oxford Archaeological Unit: Richard Chambers, George Lambrick (flints), Sarah Green (Romano-British pottery) and Maureen Mellor (medieval and other pottery). We also owe a debt to Claire Halpin, whose evening classes inspired us to take up the project in the first place.

We acknowledge help from R. A. (Monty) Montgomery, a former RAF engineer, in the identification of the relics of the crashed aircraft.

We also thank all the members of the Society and others who have helped in setting-up the fields and taking part in the walks. They are far too numerous to mention individually, 54 in total. We hope they have enjoyed it as much as we have.

Finally, we acknowledge as our own whatever errors or omissions there may be in this report.

- ¹ P. J. Fasham, R. T. Schadla-Hall, et al *Fieldwalking for Archaeologists*, Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society (1980).
- ² A. Brown, *Fieldwork for Archaeologists and Local Historians*, Batsford (1987) - especially chapter 2.
- ³ James Bond, 'Earthworks at Lower Farm, Upper Milton', *Wychwoods History* No. 4 (1988).
- ⁴ E. G. Ayto, *Clay Tobacco Pipes*, Shire Publications, Album No. 37 (1979).
- ⁵ T. G. Hassall, C. E. Halpin, and M. Mellor, 'Excavations in St Ebbes, Oxford, 1967-76, Part II', *Oxoniensia* XLIX (1984). List of Oxfordshire clay pipe makers, 261-2.
- ⁶ I. G. Sparkes, *Old Horseshoes*, Shire Publications, Album No. 19 (1976).
- ⁷ J. Draper, *Post-Medieval Pottery 1650-1800*, Shire Publications, Album No. 40 (1984).
- ⁸ N. Stebbing, J. Rhodes and M. Mellor, *Oxfordshire Potters*, Oxfordshire Museums Service, Publication No. 13 (1980).
- ⁹ Some very good examples can be seen in the dairy at the Farm Museum at Cogges, near Witney.
- ¹⁰ C. Haselgrove, 'Inference from Ploughsoil Artefact Samples', in C. Haselgrove, M. Millett and I. Smith (eds.) *Archaeology from the Ploughsoil*, Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield (1985), 8.
- ¹¹ M. Mellor, 'Medieval Pottery from the Wychwood', *Oxoniensia* XLVII (1982), 133.
- ¹² J. Haslam, *Medieval Pottery*, Shire Publications, Album No. 6 second edition (1978/84), 18 and Fig. 11, 45. E. M. Jope, and R. I. Threlfall, 'The twelfth century castle of Ascott Doilly, Oxon. Its history and excavation', *The Antiquaries Journal* XXXIX (1959), 246.
- ¹³ S. Jourdan and G. Allen, 'The Hedge Survey of Shipton and Milton under Wychwood', *Wychwoods History* No. 1 (1985), Map 1, 12.
- ¹⁴ R. Bradley, 'The Bronze Age in the Oxford Area - its local and regional significance', in G. Briggs, J. Cook and T. Rowley (eds.) *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*, Oxford University Department for External Studies (1986), 40.
- ¹⁵ A. Bulleid, *The Lake Villages of Somerset*, The Glastonbury Antiquarian Society (1924 - seventh edition 1980).
- ¹⁶ H. Case, 'The Mesolithic and Neolithic in the Oxford Region', in G. Briggs et al (eds.) *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region* (1986), 18 and 24. The finds are on display at the County Museum at Woodstock.
- ¹⁷ The carbon-date (H. Case, 1986) is around 3000 bc. It is now well known that carbon-dating is not accurate, and the very approximate 'real' date of 3700 BC is deduced from the calibration table in K. Greene, *Archaeology - an Introduction*, Batsford (1983), 112.
- ¹⁸ One estimate suggests that a single Mesolithic hunting group could produce and discard over sixteen million tools in a century, excluding knapping debris (quoted A. Brown 1987, 35).
- ¹⁹ A. Brown 1987, 33. C. Haselgrove 1985, 21.
- ²⁰ James Bond 'Commentary on the Ernie Pocock Prize Essay', *Oxfordshire Local History*, Vol. 2 No. 7 (1987), 230.
- ²¹ C. J. Young, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region*, British Archaeological Reports (1977), 149.

1. Laying-out the Field

The size and shape of the chosen field is first studied on a large-scale map (eg 1:10 000) and on the ground, in order to determine which way across the field the lines are to be laid - usually across the shorter axis for convenience and to achieve maximum coverage.

The base-line is laid down near and parallel to one of the straight edges, with two people sighting it in a straight line, using surveying poles which are then linked up with coloured baler-twine laid at ground level and pulled taut. Long garden canes make an effective substitute, especially with white rags tied near the tops to improve visibility. It is prudent to start about 5m away from the hedge or wall to allow for unexpected kinks in what appears on the map as a straight boundary. Returning across the field, short canes are then stuck firmly into the ground opposite each pole at a distance of 15m, measured at right angles from the base-line. A surveying tape and set square of sides 30 × 40 × 50cm are employed. The canes on the second line are then similarly linked with baler twine. The next line of canes is measured out in the same way from the second line, and linked up with twine; and so on until the whole field is marked out. Then the lines are numbered with a waterproof tag tied to the first cane in each line.

After the first four or so lines, the set square can be dispensed with, sufficient accuracy being achieved by lining the canes up by eye with each base-pole and its first three or four canes, assuming the early right angles to the base-line were reasonably true. In an irregularly-shaped field, lines sometimes have to be extrapolated by eye to the edge of the field.

It is possible to do all this with two people, but difficult; three is better - two sighting up the canes and measuring the distance, and the third linking up the canes with baler twine, laying two lines each time the team goes across the field and back. A great deal of tiring walking about is avoided if the team makes sure it has a sufficient (but not excessive) supply of canes and twine before starting a double line. Dumps of both should be placed beforehand at intervals along the long edge of the field, to replenish supplies at each turn.

Even when carefully thought out, experience shows that this is a pretty laborious and time-consuming procedure. Initially we tended to be excessively meticulous about accuracy, wasting time. It needs to be remembered that this is only a sampling technique, and that any line-laying is probably a great deal more accurate than the alternative of a gang advancing across the field in a row, maintaining distance by eye.

In Sh 9 and 10 in August 1987, we tried to cut down the labour of setting up and the subsequent dismantling, by only laying baler twine on alternate (odd numbered) lines. Each time canes were sighted at right-angles to a laid line, they were placed at both 15m and 30m from the previous line, only the canes at 30m being linked by twine. This gave half the walkers an actual line of twine on the ground to follow (which improves concentration), while the rest walked the

intermediate lines marked only by canes. We took care to allocate the former to new or inexperienced walkers, leaving the unmarked alternate lines to more experienced people. Undoubtedly, this saved a good deal of time and effort, and seemed to work well enough. Visibility has been improved by painting white the top 30cms of all canes. It is possible when walking an 'invisible' line to see the neighbouring lines of coloured twine sufficiently clearly to maintain an approximate 15m interval but even so, in a steeply contoured field it is still possible to stray off course if the marker canes are too widely spaced. A sufficient number of base-line poles to begin with is the key: a maximum interval of about 80m is recommended, depending upon the lie of the land.

Dismantling the lines after walking is complete involves first pulling out the poles and canes and collecting up the latter in rows at right angles to the base line. This minimises the walking involved and makes recovery of all the canes easier. Then the baler twine on each row can be wound in onto reels from the side of the field - essential to avoid tangling. Experience has taught us that unless care is taken over this, setting up the next field will be a nightmare! Winding in can be a relatively speedy process, as lots of people can help, provided there are enough reels available.

Winding in the twine



2. Recording and Numbering the Finds

Sorting, identifying, recording and numbering the finds is a process conducted at home at leisure, and can take months. Walkers often like to take their own bags of finds home to wash, and this we encourage, so long as great care is taken to keep the contents of different bags separate. Washing involves merely scrubbing in cold or lukewarm water with an old toothbrush. For the rest, we ourselves only wash items to be kept, or what is necessary for accurate identification. As some categories of modern material are discarded immediately after identification and recording - a collection of 531 fragments of Welsh slate does lack glamour - it is often unnecessary to wash these at all.

Recording, best carried out by only one person, is done on large sheets of A3 analysis paper. The layout is pretty much as in Table 7, though with a more detailed breakdown of some categories, eg post-medieval pottery. The material is sorted a bag at a time, that is line by line, counted and the numbers entered on the schedule. It is of course vital to be scrupulous about keeping the bagfuls separate. We have found it helpful to sort all the material to be kept under headings (R-B, medieval etc) on a large sheet of white paper (wallpaper would do), keeping all the items from each line together in a numbered box marked on the paper with felt pen.

Each item is then labelled in indian ink, and after final identification the numbers fixed with clear varnish (otherwise they rub off). The code we have used so far comprises three elements, being field, line and specimen numbers, eg Sh8 - 4 - 26. The specimen number (26) refers to a catalogue entry recording any further specific information.

In practice we have found this system is not altogether satisfactory. The index tends to become unmanageable if material is recategorised, eg after subsequent examination by experts. It tends to be repetitive, for instance one 'flint flake, no retouch' is much like another, and to have 343 numbers recording this information is cumbersome to say the least. We feel that for the future we must devise a numerical code enabling all pieces of a similar nature to bear the same number.

Bitter experience has taught us that the greatest potential source of difficulty is when the initial identification of material, usually pottery, is uncertain or subsequently revised. Sometimes the answer is only obtained weeks or months later, after expert evaluation. The schedules can get much altered, and difficult to follow. One may now be certain what an individual sherd is, but how was it recorded originally? Memory can be very fallible. We have come to the conclusion that it is essential to have a 'pottery unidentified' category on the preliminary schedule into which every doubtful piece can be put in the first instance, bearing only its field and line numbers. After identification, all pieces in this category can be reallocated and their coding completed.

Prebendal House, Shipton under Wychwood

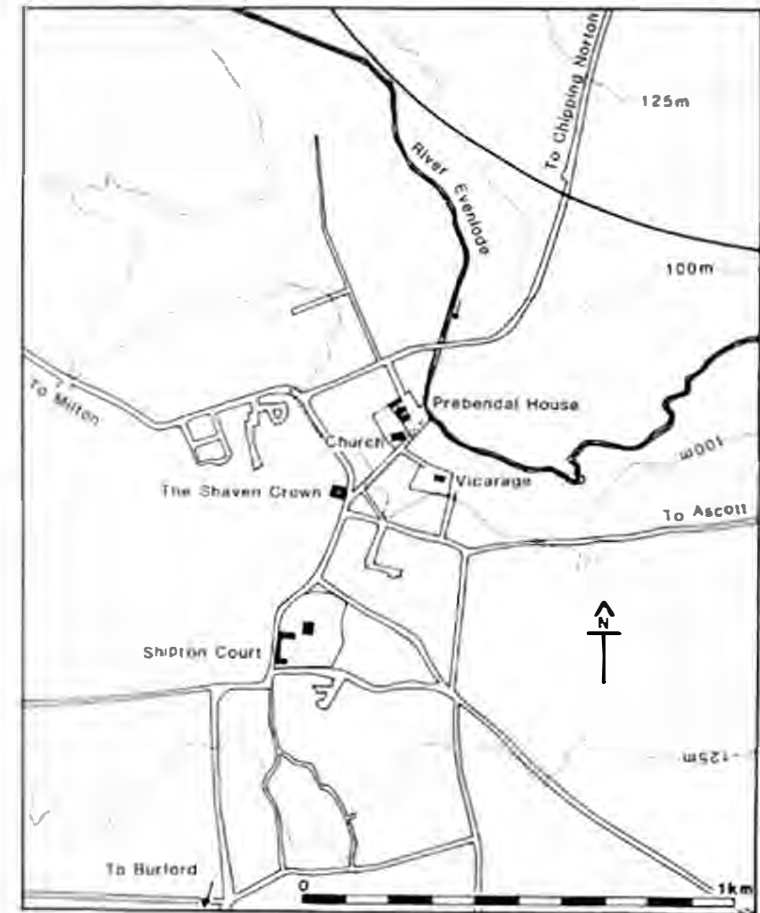
BRIAN DURHAM
Senior Field Officer, Oxford Archaeological Unit

Prebendal House and its ancillary buildings stand in an acre of garden on the east side of the village of Shipton under Wychwood. The plot is roughly rectangular, lying between the churchyard of St Mary's Church and the flood plain of the river Evenlode. The property was formerly approached from the direction of the modern village green via Church Street, but a new entry from the north-west was established in the mid-19th century and has now become the main approach to the replacement front door in the 20th century east extension.

Following a succession of private owners, the house and grounds have been acquired by Dr and Mrs N. Clarke on behalf of Mitrecroft Ltd for conversion to a complex of sheltered accommodation including residential and nursing care facilities. The necessary alterations are designed to make minimum visual impact on the impression of a Cotswold manor house. There will however, inevitably be major internal works to provide seven suites of bedroom, bathroom, sitting room and kitchen, 24 bedsitting rooms with bathrooms en suite, and various communal rooms. The tithe barn is to be restored and refurbished to provide an indoor swimming pool and concert hall/theatre.

The house itself exhibits several architectural features which indicate medieval origins. The barn has been compared with major Oxfordshire 15th-century barns such as Adderbury, Swalecliffe and Upper Heyford, and there are medieval features in the range of small buildings dividing the two. The complex as a whole is roughly what would be expected of a rectory in any rural parish, with a domestic area and a separate barn area for the storage of tithed produce. Assuming that it is included in the Domesday valuation of £72 for the Royal Manor of S~~criptone~~ in 1086, it may indeed have begun life as a rectory, either on this site or nearby.

The first surviving reference which can be seen to relate to this property or its predecessor is between 1111 and 1116, in a writ which implies that Shipton church had been granted to Salisbury Cathedral since the accession of Henry I (ie after 1100). It had been given by Arnulf (or Arnold) the Falconer 'for his son Humphrey'. Arnulf was probably a royal officer, and may have been the king's representative on the royal estate of Shipton. By extension therefore, his son Humphrey may have been the rector, who would have been a wealthy man on the valuation of 45 marks (£30), one of the twenty richest manors of any sort in Oxfordshire on Domesday valuations. Perhaps Humphrey wanted to join the chapter of Salisbury cathedral as a canon, and to pave the way for this his father

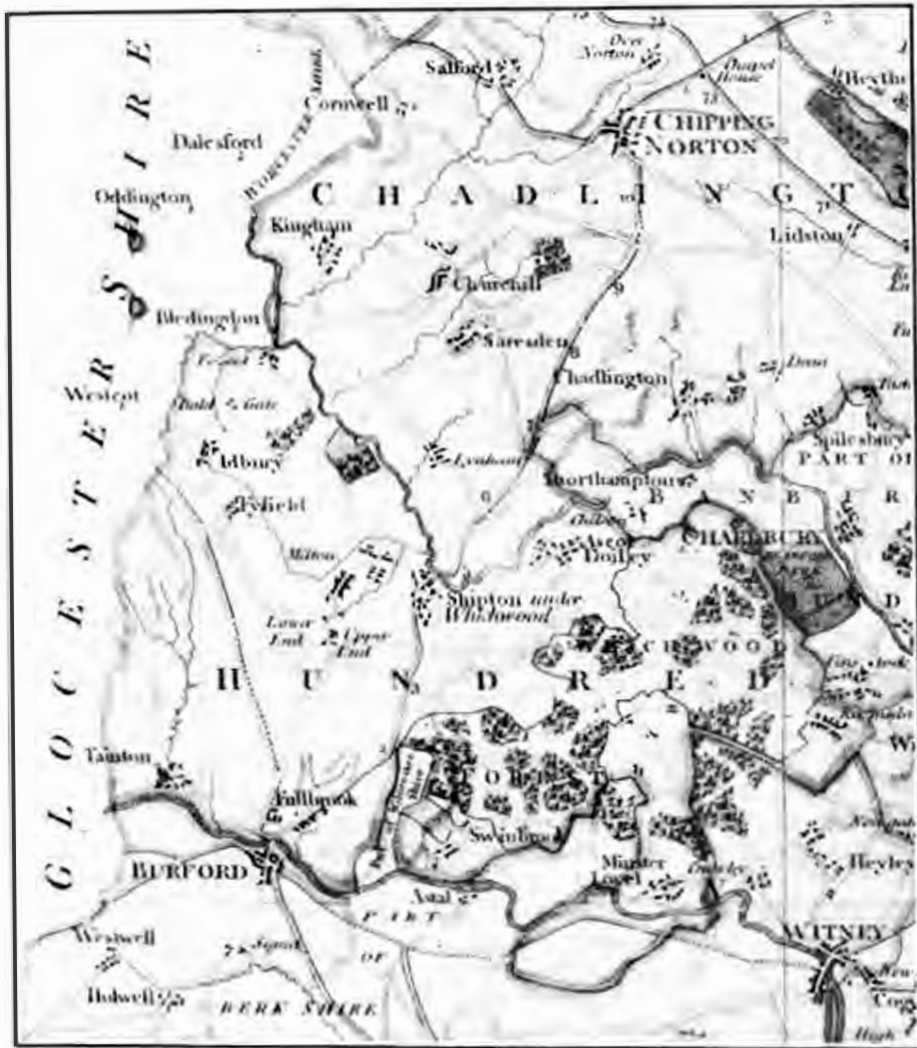


Location of Prebendal House and the old vicarage in the modern village of Shipton

asked the King to grant the revenue from his rectory to the cathedral in perpetuity. The church, the rectory and the glebe lands would thereby have become a 'prebend' of the cathedral, and the canon the first 'prebendary' of Shipton. The details are mere supposition, but the story is typical of the way in which cathedrals and monasteries were increasing their revenues in the post-Conquest period by acquiring interests in outlying manors.

The general plan of Prebendal House may therefore date back to a formative period in English history. The new owners were pleased to take advantage of the proposed alterations to learn more about the house, and thereby to provide their future residents with a historical perspective in their new surroundings. The Oxford Archaeological Unit was in turn pleased to conduct a series of small excavations aimed at sampling the deposits beneath the various ranges of

buildings, to provide archaeological evidence for a review of its history. The Unit is very grateful to members of the Wychwoods Local History Society for their practical assistance organised by Margaret Ware, to John Rawlins for keeping a regular watch on what was disclosed by the contractor's work and for his tireless research on the recent history of the property, and finally to Joan Howard-Drake for making available to the Unit her file of papers on its early history.



Shipton under Wychwood on the road from Burford to Chipping Norton (Davis Map 1797)

The Excavations: the medieval hall range (Figure 1. Area III)

A small trench in the kitchen was designed to study deposits in the north-west corner of the medieval 'hall', which has been identified by the large late 13th/early 14th century blocked window in its west gable facing the church. A second trench in the adjoining lobby was designed to seek similar deposits in the north wing. There was no significant medieval build-up on either side of this wall, Feature (F) 306, but it was instructive to see that the threshold of a small 'Gothick' communicating doorway was originally at a level where it could have provided an opening from a medieval hall into a courtyard.

The interpretation of this range as the medieval 'hall' rests on the blocked window and the massiveness of the west and north walls. The chamfered course shared by the foundation of the west and south walls was not seen to the north, perhaps because this was a more mundane facade. The east wall of this block (F306/1) was seen in contractor's excavations for a new partition wall, and alongside it were several human burials on a similar alignment to the church. These add to the many burials reported in the past from this part of the property, and show that the house was built over part of an older churchyard. A second partition footing to the west showed deeper fill of a ditch-like feature which may have divided two parts of the old churchyard; the only burial here was much deeper, and lying along the ditch roughly at a right angle to the church. The ditch may have still been visible when the first stone building was planned, because the footing was taken much deeper here (F306).

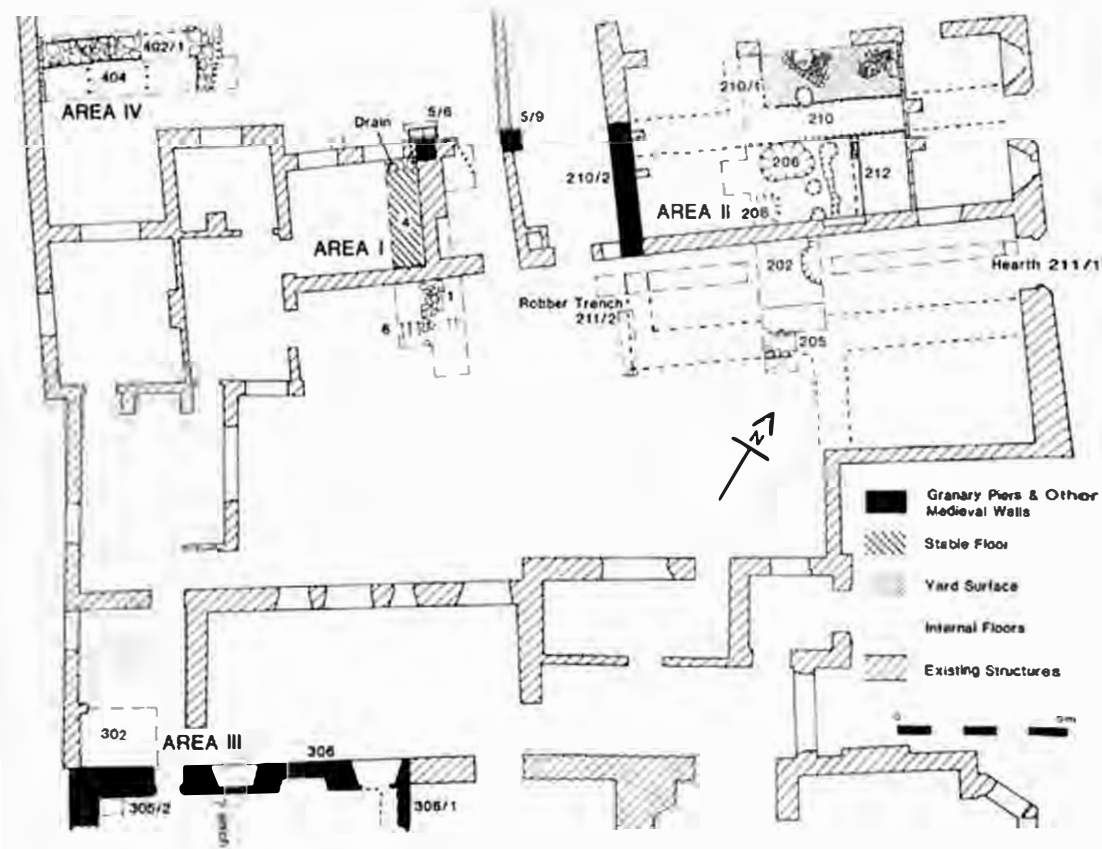
The Excavation: the 'chapel' and garage building (Figure 1. Area II)

The trenches were designed to look at deposits which are to be disturbed by the proposed dining rooms. By extending trenches within the garage and courtyard it was possible to reveal much of the plan of a late medieval building slightly broader than the existing one (built in 1900) but offset by about 3 metres to the south. The stonework of the foundations had been largely robbed out (F205, 210, 211/2) but the standing west gable of the garage could easily be a medieval survival (F210/2). Within the medieval building was a thick accumulation of ashy floor yielding minute fragments of Tudor-type pottery, fragments of eggshell and a charred grain of barley (Layers (L) 201, 202 etc). This suggests domestic occupation, although there were three large hollows dug into the floor which might argue that there had been an industrial usage which for some reason had left no material traces (F203, 206, 208). A partition was later added, possibly a screened through-passage (F212).

Most of the medieval finds came from this area. Bruce Levitan (environmental archaeologist, Oxford University Museum) reports that there were many bone fragments, mainly sheep and cattle, but including rabbit, goose, domestic fowl, wild duck and bony fish. Maureen Mellor (pottery researcher, Archaeological Unit) was interested to find that the medieval sherds were thicker, coarser and greyer than previous groups from Shipton, and there was nothing which closely

Figure 1: Courtyard of Prebendal House showing archaeological trenches and medieval standing structure

Note: In the text, feature and layer numbers are prefixed by F and L



resembled 'Wychwood ware'. She suggests two possible reasons - either the sherds belong to a period which we have not seen from Shipton before, or they have come from vessels with a specialised function in the barnyard area. The absence of Wychwood ware may mean that the Prebendal household could afford better, either fine vessels from Brill in Buckinghamshire (3 sherds) or even metal vessels. Maureen hopes that her *Survey of Oxfordshire Pottery* will answer some of these questions.

Most interesting in this area was a substantial north-south wall sealed beneath the building F214 (not on plan), immediately west of F212. It appears to have had metallised surfacing to the west but nothing to the east, and is therefore tentatively suggested as an early curtain wall to the prebendal house at a time when perhaps

the flood-free land may have been no more than a narrow strip against the churchyard.

If this was indeed the line of an early boundary wall it was clearly pushed eastwards in medieval times by the tithe barn (cruck trusses circa mid-14th century) and by the excavated building (not earlier than late 13th century on pottery evidence). New buildings of this period would explain the existence of two perpendicular doorways and windows which have been reset in the east facade of the 1900 building. These are reputed to have come from the 'chapel', but there is no clear indication where this was. Certainly the later use of the excavated building was domestic and it seems to have been described as a 'barn' by the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society in 1870. The description seems to imply that the medieval doorways and windows were originally in the south elevation of this building, ie in the wall F205, and it was perhaps this which gave rise to the term 'chapel'.

The Excavations: the 'Romanesque building' and farmyard (Figures 1 and 2, Areas I and IV)

The most interesting surviving structure in the present north range is a small building with several Romanesque features recognised by John Blair of the Queen's College, Oxford. The features include two shallow pilasters rising to first floor height (F5/6, F5/9), a distorted round-headed doorway (F5/7), and a fragment of an impost which presently supports a timber lintel. Excavation has established that:

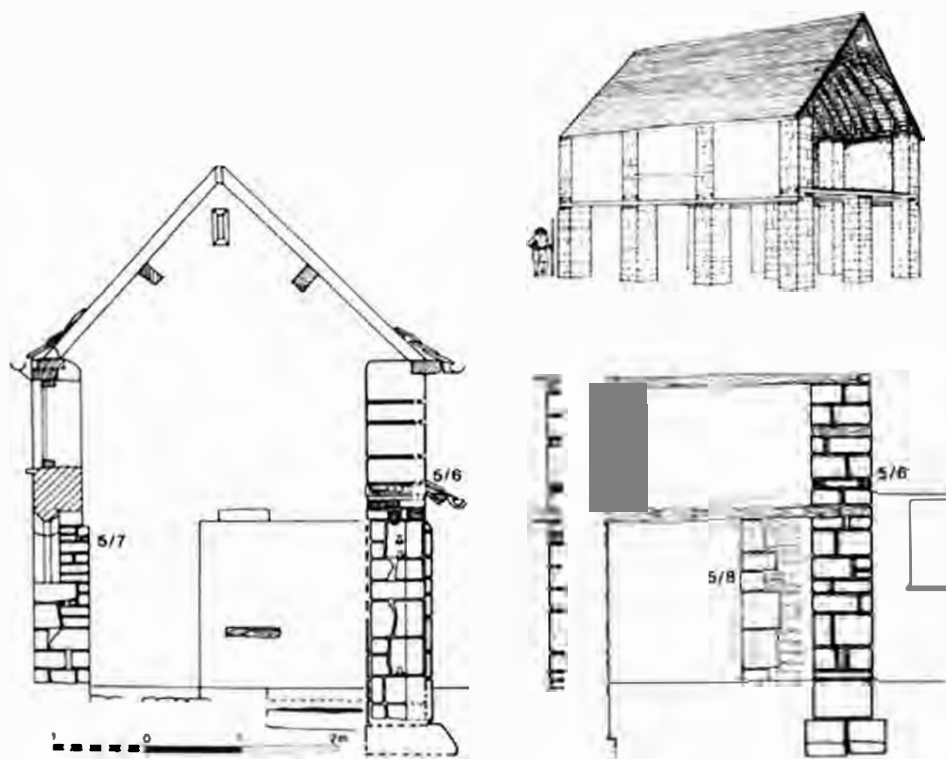
1. The pilasters are attached to free-standing piers which themselves rise through two storeys. Their overall height and the presence of supporting pilasters distinguish them from several other examples of square stone columns which support open-fronted farmyard-type buildings on the property.
2. The walls of the building have shallower foundations than these piers, and are therefore in the nature of infill panels between them. Architectural features of the walls therefore cannot necessarily be used to date the original construction of the pier building, even if they were assumed to be in their original location (which is questionable for at least the round-headed arch F5/7).
3. The floor levels within the adjoining range of buildings to the west had been dug at some time to give headroom and drainage for a stable floor which existed by the 18th century (L4). Any pre-existing medieval floors of this range are likely to have been removed in this process and consequently the excavation could not be expected to show original surfaces.

The 'Romanesque building' therefore consisted originally of free-standing stone piers 60cm (2ft) square, buttressed by 7cm (3in) pilasters to the first storey (F5/6, F5/9). Incorporated in the upper part of each pier is an arrangement of three oak timbers running right through the pier east-west, and a further two running north-

south, let into both the east and west faces. These immediately suggest composite supports for a first floor, and their location means they must have been inserted when the upper piers were built. A building raised on such high piers could well have been a granary, but as such it would be very unusual in an area where the familiar type of granary is raised no more than 60-90cm on 'staddle stones'. This exaggerated height, coupled with the interesting, slightly stylised buttressing provided by the pilasters, could mean that the piers are very rare survivors of a 12th to early 13th-century granary. They survive principally because the infill panel (F5/8) formed a wall which was on a convenient alignment to be reused in successive farmyard buildings.

The granary is assumed to have been two bays wide at least, and subsequent infilling between the piers would have created a useful space. Eventually however it must have been replaced by buildings used for stabling animals, like that now surviving. This may have happened in medieval times, because a drip-course at a high level in the west gable of the adjoining garage building (F210/2) suggests that

Figure 2: The 'Romanesque' building; left, internal elevation of west gable; right, external elevation of north wall; top, reconstruction of early 13th-century granary



this was an external wall face, rather than something built against the end of a pre-existing granary

The Area IV trench was dug against the churchyard wall with the assistance of the Wychwoods Local History Society. It exposed the foundations (F402) and sloping floor makeup of an agricultural building shown on the 19th-century maps, probably of no antiquity. Most interesting was a ditch (F404), parallel to the churchyard wall, and yielding early medieval pottery. Was this an early division of the churchyard continuing that beneath the hall range? It seems possible.

The Shape of the Medieval Manor House

From the archaeological and topographical evidence it is possible to produce a plan of Prebendal House for the post-medieval period, and to extrapolate back to the medieval without stretching the evidence too far. The house would have occupied the strip of land between churchyard and floodplain, as previously recognised by Paul Drury (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage). Early Saxon grass tempered pottery in secondary deposits implies that there had been early settlement nearby, perhaps associated with a river crossing, but there was nothing to suggest any continuity of settlement through the Saxon period. If there was a rectory at Shipton before about 1100-16, it need not have been on this site, and human burials under the house and elsewhere suggest that part of the property was cut out of the Saxon churchyard. Perhaps therefore in the 12th or 13th centuries the churchyard was reorganised, making space for a house fronting onto Church Street, with a ditch demarcating the boundary between the two. This gives a historical framework, and means that what is known of the house can be usefully compared with, for instance, the Bishop of Salisbury's 12th-century houses at Old Sarum and Sherborne Castle. The former is sure to have been known to the incumbent when the property became a prebend of Salisbury in circa 1127. Both this and Sherbourne were built round very compact courtyards of between 30-40 metres outside dimensions. The two ranges surviving at Shipton in 1839 (tithe map) could reflect a tradition of a quadrangle of buildings around the south lawn. Its proximity to Church Street may be significant. The street leads off the area of the modern village green and is now a cul-de-sac, but has many of the characteristics of a main road through the village leading to a river crossing and up the hill towards Chipping Norton. This would give additional significance to the frontage. No doubt there would need to be an access to the rear part of the property, where there may already have been a barnyard.

The Salisbury houses quoted above are both 'castles', and it is important to note that in a 12th-century setting many manor houses of the size of the Shipton prebend would have been fortified against the anarchy of Stephen's reign (1135-54). One need look no more than two miles downstream from Shipton to find two sites on the same bank of the Evenlode which were provided with impressive earthworks (Ascott Earl and Ascott D'Oilly). The lack of earthworks may indicate that the Shipton prebend was comfortably protected by a fortress elsewhere in the

village, perhaps the royal manor, wherever that may have been. It might be argued of course that such defensive works were restricted to secular magnates who were involved in the political hurly-burly of the period, but the sheer wealth of the prebend would make it a subject for protection.

On the other hand the lack of defences may simply mean that the rectory was elsewhere in the 12th century, and it is interesting to note that the 1870 visit by the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society concluded that it was the vicarage, 150 metres to the south, which had the defences. Could it be that when Elias Ridell presented the first recorded vicar in 1227, the vicar took over the existing prebendal house, and a new house was built on part of the churchyard? This would fit the assumed dating of the earliest tangible remains, the granary piers.

Tithing of an estate the size of Shipton must have produced large quantities of grain, all requiring storage in dry vermin-free conditions. The granary would have been at least three bays long and probably two bays wide along one side of the barnyard. Since the structures are unprecedented, it is a little difficult to be categorical about their date. The stone is heavily weathered so that the tooling has almost disappeared, but it is apparently not as consistently diagonal as would be expected of 12th-century ashlar. I am therefore indebted to John Blair's opinion that such slender pilasters have no place in Gothic architecture. Even when applied to a free-standing pier as in this case, we agree that they must be Romanesque and hence no later than the early 13th century. In time the ground area beneath the granary could have been used for storing other materials and equipment, leading to the construction of walls between the piers, for weather-proofing and security. This point may have been reached by the mid-14th century, perhaps the time of a major building programme which saw the construction of the great barn in its original timber form.

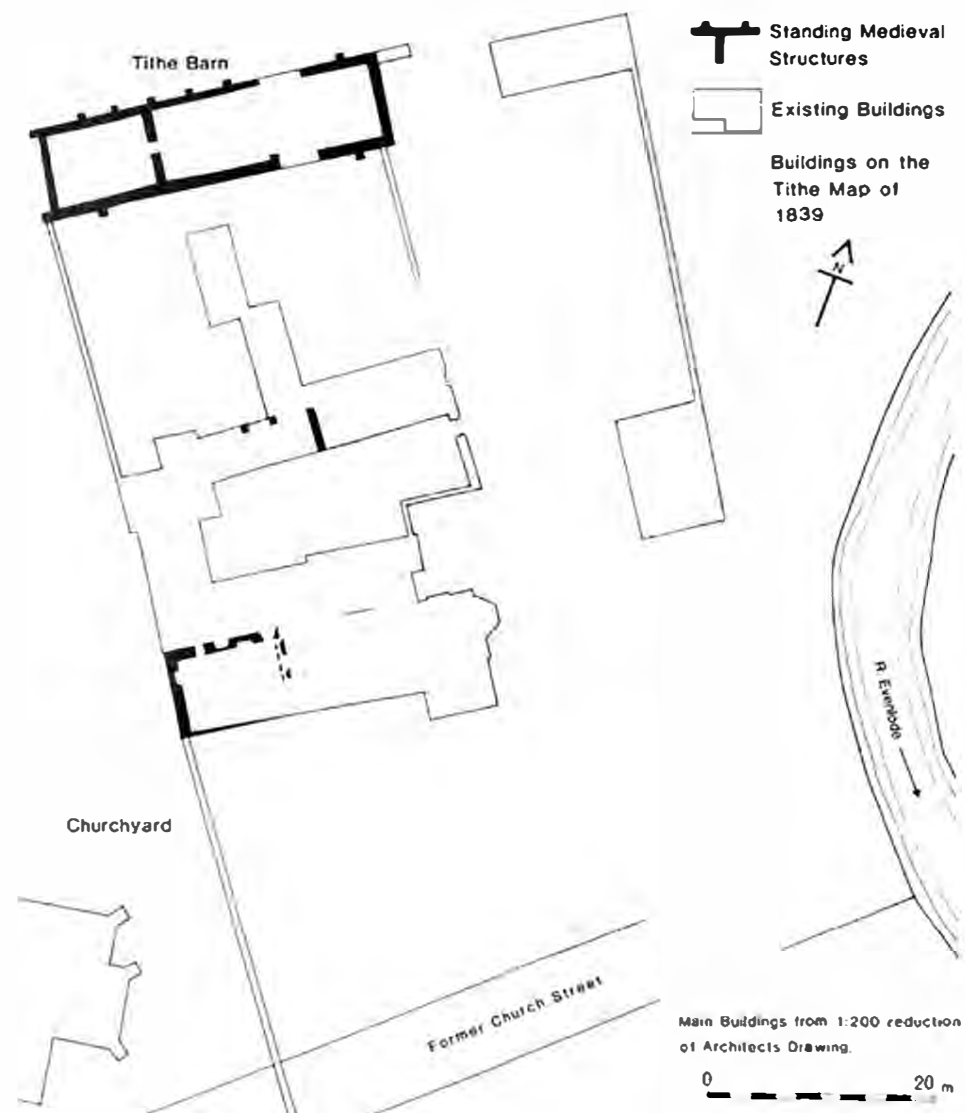
The shape of the barnyard would by this time have been well established. The layout was to be completed by a late medieval building continuing the line of the granary eastwards. The contrast between the thick carpet of ash in this building and the cleanliness of the floors of the hall range may indicate a difference in function, but the ash does not necessarily mean an industrial usage. Similar floors occur commonly in medieval domestic buildings in Oxford, and it is not impossible that this was in fact the residence of an official concerned with the administration of the prebendal barnyard.

Conclusion

It is ambitious to attempt to tell the history of such a complex building by digging a few holes in one area but this is the way that research on medieval buildings is likely to go in the future, and the exercise must be seen as a challenge.

There can be no doubt that the property has been taken out of the churchyard, possibly in the early 12th century but more likely around 1227. The only building of the period is the putative granary, but the existing hall or chamber block could

Figure 3: Prebendal House showing medieval structure, with overlay of buildings shown on tithe map of 1839



have been built within a century of the later date, and both the barn in its timber form and the Area II building not long after. The new discoveries also focus interest on the vicarage site, as a possible predecessor of the prebendal house. The most memorable thing to the writer however is the present north range of buildings. The western room has been converted from a cowshed or stable, while adjoining it is the extraordinary little square building presently used as a passageway, with a re-set or deliberately faked Romanesque arch for one doorway, while the opposite wall retains two piers of a less ostentatious piece of true Romanesque building, the granary. And the range is completed by a 20th-century double garage, which is known as a 'chapel' by virtue of a medieval doorway which has been built into its east end, and which is now to become the kitchen. It could almost have been designed as an archaeological obstacle course.

Sources and References

Discussion of the date of the foundation of the prebend is in E. J. Kenley's *Roger of Salisbury* (1972), 234-5. Details of the tithe barn are taken from reports by J. Steane and M. Taylor for Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services (PRN 11755), and by P. Drury for English Heritage. Notes on the house in the 19th century are from an excursion by North Oxford Archaeological Society in 1870, and *Proc. Oxford Architectural and Historical Society* N. S. Vol. 2 (1869), 132-5. For identifications of bone and pottery I am indebted to Bruce Levitan and Maureen Mellor respectively.

Entertainment in Milton

Entertainment. An excellent entertainment consisting of music and reading was held in the Board School on Thursday evening the 19th November. Some charming glees and part songs were given by the Church Choir which is now one of the best in the Deanery, sung with precision and sweetness, the result of much careful training. A trio by Messrs Clemens and Hawridge and Miss Poole was also much appreciated. Mr Choules most skilfully and sympathetically gave some violin solos and accompaniments, and showed himself a most capable vocalist also. Miss Groves was encored in her songs which were sung with great and pleasing effect, and Miss Gorton's excellent voice did justice to her pretty songs, also encored. The Reverend A. G. Grisewood took the room by storm as usual with his thoroughly trained and melodious voice, and other songs were sung to the great satisfaction of the crowded audience, by Messrs Penson and Bradford and Mrs Salter. The Reverend A. W. N. Deacon gave two popular readings. Mr Giblett is to be congratulated on the success of the evening as arranged by him. Entertainments with interesting programmes are arranged for Tuesday December the 8th and Monday the 28th.

(From the Oxford Times for 28 November 1885)

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

The photograph below shows the eastern side of Prebendal House which faces the river. On the left can be seen the 'new' wing built by the Alfred Groves in about 1912. The 'chapel' block (mentioned in Brian Durham's article) is on the right. When alterations to the building are completed, the 'chapel' block will form the domestic building, and behind the wall to the left will be the new dining room.

Alfred Groves has been chosen to carry out the conversion using their skills as high quality craftsmen to successfully blend new with old. We are grateful to the firm for its donation towards the cost of producing this issue of the journal.



My Father's Days

JOHN RAWLINS

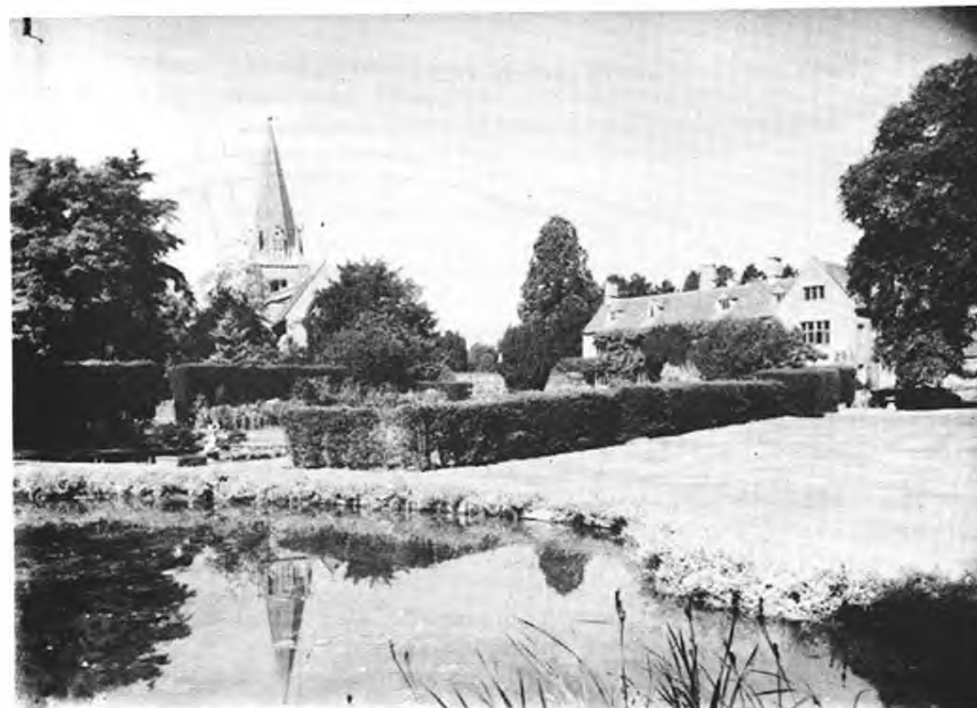
My late father, Kenneth Richard Rawlins, worked at Old Prebendal House as gardener/handyman for several years. His exact starting date is unknown, but it was probably just before the outbreak of the First World War. He worked there, with a break for military service from 1916-18, until 1926 when he changed employment for a similar situation at Sunrise, Jubilee Lane, Milton, with the Batt family.

The turn of the century saw the end of the line of Brookes who were the tenants and later the owners of Old Prebendal House, or Parsonage Farm as it was once known. Their last member, Thomas, was almost a recluse, shutting himself in the house and having nothing to do with the running of the farm which extended to over 90 acres. The farm was run until about 1910 by George Bradley's uncle, Ernest Edwin Bradley, together with his two sons, Cecil and Wilfred. Thomas Brookes died in 1909, and the house and farm were finally sold in 1912 for £3,625.

The new owners were Dr F. R. B. Hinde and Mrs Ellen Hinde, who moved from Bloxham where Mrs Hinde's father had founded Bloxham School. Considerable alterations were made to the property. Before 1912 the present Church Street (see map page 64) was a dusty track ending in a five-barred gate which led into a field. This field, called Poole Yard, was converted into a pleasure garden, much of which is now occupied by New House and Kelbrook. An extra wing was added to the south-east corner, facing the river, and all the buildings were re-slatted. The field between the tithe barn and the A361, previously called Barn Close or the rickyard, was turned into a kitchen garden, complete with the gardener's cottage, Prebendal Lodge. The old rick-yard, which can clearly be seen in old photographs (front cover) was one of the last places in the area where the ricks were stood on staddle stones to protect the unthreshed corn against vermin.

It was in this garden that my father spent much of his time. Both garden and father have now gone, but Dad did leave behind some of his diaries. From 1921 I have selected a few pages. Each day's entry is written in full, with my comments in parentheses.

- 12 Jan Stormy, windy. Pruned and tidied up ramblers in 2nd patch. Pruned loganberries and started tying up. Fed hens etc.
- 15 Jan Frost. Fine day. Pumped up water. Lit carbon stove. Doing odd jobs. Helped Dad with linseed oil.
- 17 Jan Wet nearly all day. Pumped up water. Stoked fires. Got coal etc. Fed hens etc. Got soil and leaf in. Got marrow seed ready.

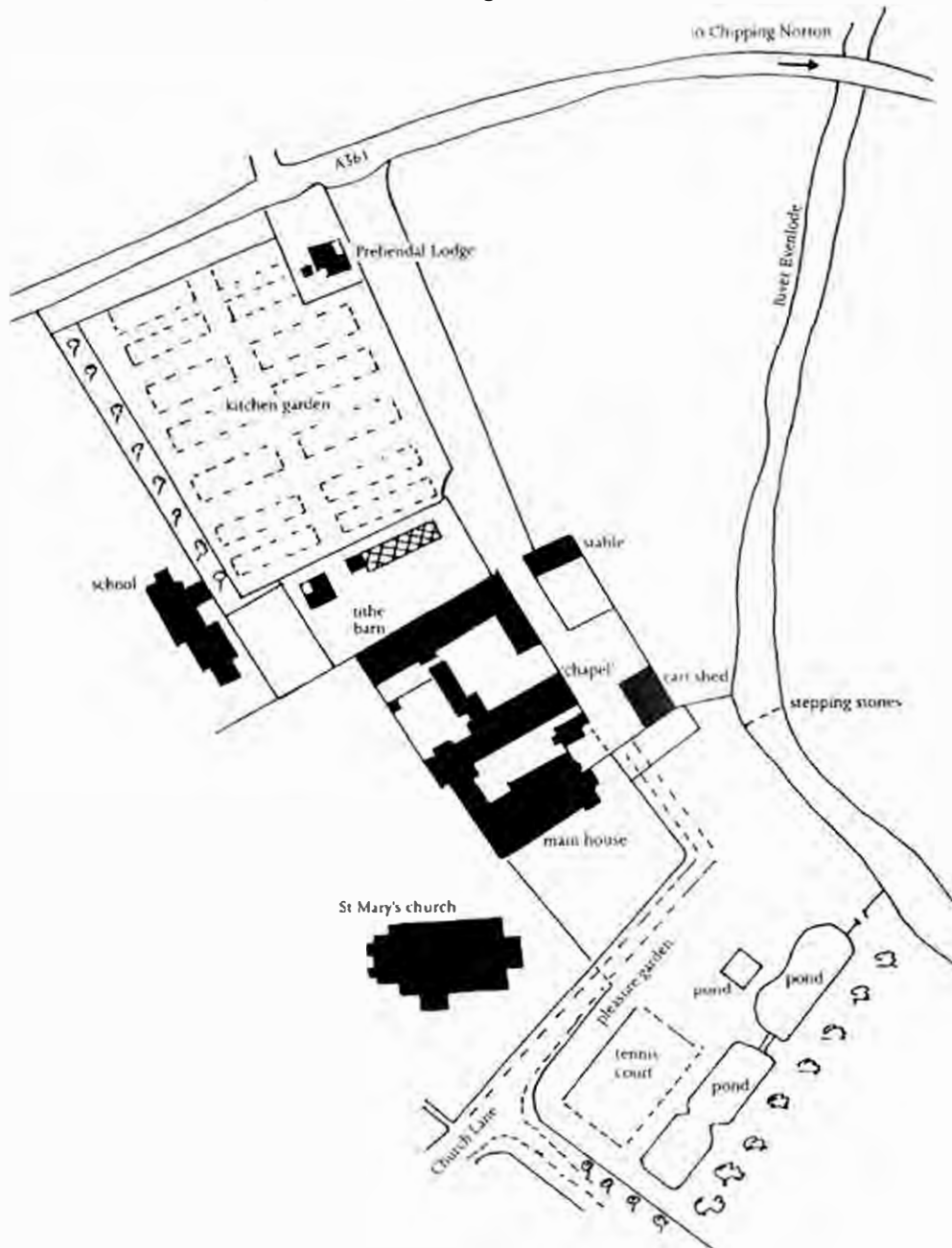


St Mary's Church and Old Prebendal House, circa 1925. The pond, originally in the field called Poole Yard is now in the garden of Kelbrook (With acknowledgement to Oxfordshire Museums, Woodstock)

- 18 Jan Fine day. Vety rough wind. Pumped up. Fed hens etc. Helped dress sheep and lambs' feet. Tying up roses on cow-shed.
- Pumping up water from the cellar and stokehole continued daily, including Saturday and Sunday, until 1 February when Dad was taken ill.
- 1 Mar Tying up vine all day. Fed stock.
- 19 Mar Fine. Wet night. Buried lamb. Took B and W pig to Ascot and left her there. Went to Long Compton.
- 21 Mar Fine day. Fetched B and W pig from Ascot. Rolled tennis court and top lawn etc. Fed stock etc. Went up allotments, dug headland. (Stock included hens, ducks, rabbits, pigs, horses and sheep.)
- 5 Apr Lavely fine day not so hot. Fed stock etc. Swept gravel path and square. Planted 14 rows of Great Scott (potatoes) up allotments.
- 6 Apr Lovely fine day. Mr B. (probably the Head Gardener who retired in 1922/23 and went to live near Reading) pruned roses. We hoed and cleaned off beds, edged and dug them. Planted 13 rows of A.C. (Arran Chief) in allotments.

Then follow references to the planting of 67 more rows of various kinds of potatoes on the allotments, followed by more references to planting spuds at Prebendal.

Map of Old Prebendal House and its gardens, 1921



- 20 Jun Hoed over ground ready for violets and watered them. Half-day. Mother ill.
- 24 Jun Watered rockery soaking. Started edging and weeding up drive. Earthed up 13 rows spuds. (In the days following he earthed up 120 more rows.)
- 7 Jul Watering up front. Dipped sheep etc. Clipping hedges in kitchen garden. Fete at Vicarage. (At which he spent 5/6d).
- 4 Oct Swept and rolled tennis court. Edged herbaceous border and paths etc. Went home early. MOTHER PASSED AWAY.
- 7 Oct Weeding Bennett's spuds. Cleaned off marrows and hoeing in kitchen garden. MOTHER LAID TO REST.
- 19 Oct Wheeled coal down. Cleaned stokehole. Planted cabbage bed. Got in tennis nets and garden seats. Ralph and I went to Long Compton and back. (Ralph was his younger brother, and father of Roger.)
- 20 Oct Took soil out of cucumber house, scrubbed glass and woodwork and all outside glass all day. Went to chapel and walk.

In the back of his diaries he lists his minor expenses. Income is never mentioned. Weekly expenses include tobacco 10d and chapel collection 1/. Other items listed include haircut 6d, carbide 10d and the fare to Oxford via Burford and Witney 2/7d.)

During the year 1921 Dad seems to have had to work on seven days every week, although Saturday was a half-day. Sundays were busy days for he usually records that he 'went to work in morning and afternoon'. Coming from a strong Baptist

The kitchen garden, 1924, looking to the tithe barn from Prebendal Lodge. Formerly part of the field called Born Close and used as a rickyard, now the site of Tithings and Barn Piece



family his diary entries of 'Chapel morning and night and class (Bible) in the afternoon' are regular. I am not sure how he squared the teaching of 'the seventh day of rest' with his work on Sundays. As well as the above he also mentions outings for dinner (lunch) and tea, walks, cycle rides as well as more than one funeral.

However, Sundays did have one brighter light for Dad in 1921, for on 31 July he writes 'The Misses Hall (Gladys and Ethel) came to tea'. As the year progressed he writes of 'G came to tea' and 'walks with Gladys' etc.

The Gladys mentioned was Gladys Ruth Hall who came to teach as an uncertificated teacher at the school in Church Road, Milton in 1918. The socialising continued throughout the year, even when she went back to her home at Cowley, Oxford for the school holidays.

During the rest of the week, evenings seem to have been well filled with work at home on the garden, and on the allotment. There was also social and sick visiting, as well as meetings of the Radcliffe Club (for which he was a collector), the British Legion, the Band of Hope and activities connected with the Brotherhood and the Baptist Chapel.

Apart from Bank Holidays and days off for sickness Dad does not appear to have had any other holidays, although he was permitted half-days off for fetes and funerals.

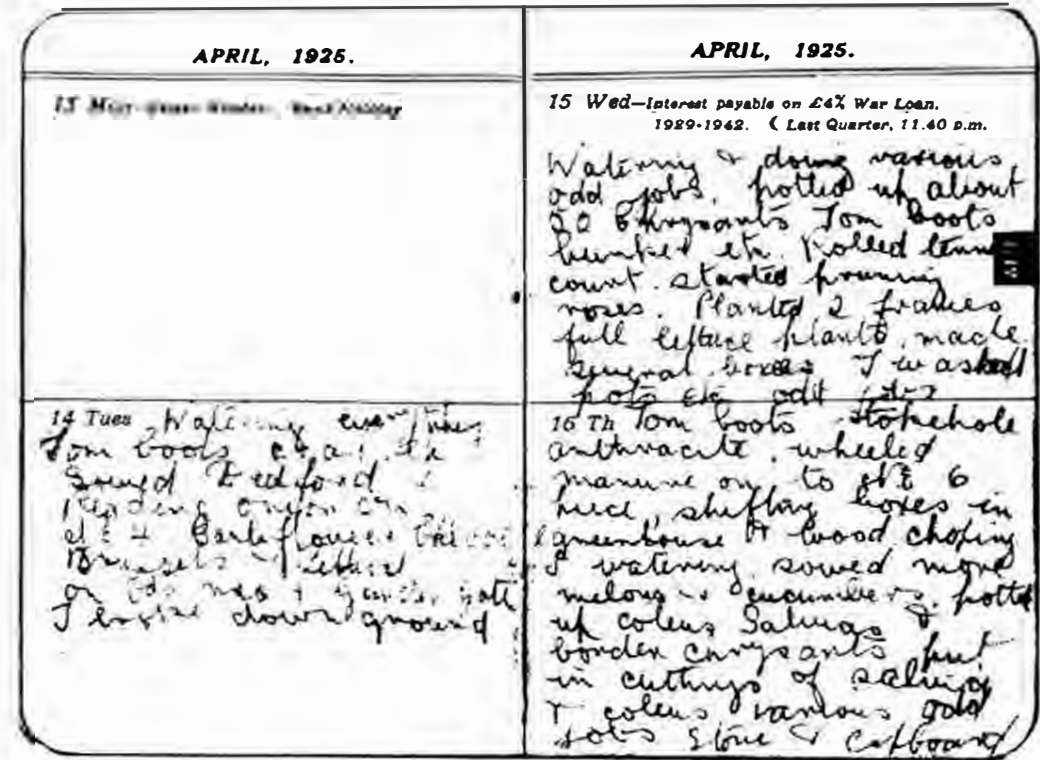
After 1921 the pattern changed a little with less Sunday working which allowed days or week-ends away from home at Oxford or Long Compton. The visits to Long Compton were to the farm of his Uncle Dick, one of the Timms family from Upper Milton. Visits to Oxford were to see Gladys Hall. The journey was by train, or with his best friend Reg (R. J.) Bradley (brother of George and father of Bob) on the back of his Levis motorcycle or occasionally in a Ford 'Tin Lizzie'. Reg made trips to Oxford to see his future bride Harriet Shepard who was in service in Oxford. Previously she had worked at Prebendal for Mrs Hinde where she was needlewoman, and personal maid to the daughter, Margaret Hinde.

1922 saw the departure of Mrs Hinde from Prebendal House. She returned to Bloxham where she lived until her death in 1943. At the end of 1922 the house, farm and contents were sold, including some gardening tools which I am still using.

During the early part of 1923 Dad seems to have added caretaker to his list of duties, and was also responsible for showing agents and their prospective clients over the property. His diary records. . .

- 26 Feb Showed Lady over . . .
- 7 Mar Showed Gent round 2/-. Lady being sent. (His letters mention that they thought the price was too high)
- 14 Mar Showed Lady and Gent over 3/-.
- 18 Jun Lady and Gent came 12.30. 3/-.

This last couple would seem to be the next occupants of Prebendal. Colonel and Mrs Addinsell, who eventually moved in at the end of the year. Colonel Addinsell's



Dad's diary, 1925. He was married on Easter Monday

gravestone lies to the left of the path leading to the front door of the church: the inscription reads

Life is mostly froth and bubble
Two things stand like stone
Kindness in another's trouble
Courage in your own'

Whilst at Prebendal Dad's tasks were the usual ones associated with the gardening year on a plot of some five acres. Time was spent in the provision of fruit, vegetables and flowers to the house, and the maintenance of drives, paved areas and pleasure garden which included ponds and a tennis court. One of his regular jobs was the sweeping of Church Lane (Street), usually on Saturdays.

A great deal of time was spent in keeping the house warm, with cutting and fetching wood from the farm, and hauling coke, peat and coal from the station. This was then carried to the house for use in the boiler, the kitchen range, and the 18 fireplaces in the house. The boiler was a continual source of extra work as it was below ground level in a stokehole which was frequently flooded in the winter



Kenneth and Gladys' wedding, 1925.
 Standing (left to right): Muriel (sister), Walter (brother-in-law), Ralph (brother), Ernest (father), Edith (step-mother), Reg Bradley (best man)
 Seated: Francis Hall (father-in-law), Gladys, Kenneth, Cecil (brother-in-law)
 Kneeling: Esther (sister), Ethel (sister-in-law)

months and this necessitated many hours of pumping out, day and night. This was done by hand-pump which needed two to operate. No extra pay was given for the longer hours worked, but plenty of food and beverage was available in the servants' hall.

As well as his duties as gardener/handyman, Dad also spent time as a farm labourer as his diaries mention helping with the feeding and care of livestock. This also involved taking and fetching the animals to and from other farms, and taking them to the station and to markets at Kingham and Shipton (see *The Wychwoods Album* p.35). Other work noted was hedging, ditching, and hay-making, the latter often requiring a 12-hour day.

The staff photographs circa 1916 show 13 staff, presumably to look after Mrs Hinde and her daughter. Of these, five worked in the garden, but by the end of 1924 the number in the garden had been reduced to two - Dad and a 'boy'. As Les Case (the 'boy' at that time) remarks, 'If we had taken on any more staff we would have had a cut in wages'.

1925 began with what had become the seasonal problem of pumping up water from the stoke-hole and cellar. Holidays still do not appear to been very numerous apart from bank holidays and Dad seems to have put the first one of the year to good use.

There are no entries for Good Friday, Saturday, Easter Sunday and Monday (10-13 April), but they resume with normal entries of work done at Prebendal on 14 April. Records tell us that Kenneth Richard Rawlins and Gladys Ruth Hall were married on Monday 13 April 1925 with Dad's friend, Reg Bradley, as best man.

Dad now seems to have taken on more than a wife, for he writes that in his spare time he is 'working in the garden at home' and 'forking up at The Shrubbery'. Home was Rehoboth, now called Blenheim House, Church Road, Milton (see *The Wychwoods Album* p.38), and The Shrubbery was my parents' lodging accommodation with George Baughan (see *The Wychwoods Album* pp. 21 and 32) and his family in what is now known as Cotswold House, Shipton Road, Milton. As well as work on those two sites Dad also refers to 'digging at Sunnyside' which was my parents newly acquired but uninhabitable home, also in Shipton Road. Then it was described as a 'shoemaker's shop and former bakehouse'.

Perhaps it should be mentioned here that Dad was not a fit man, already wearing leg-irons to counteract the crippling effects of rheumatoid-arthritis. However, that did not stop him carrying on with his duties, listed above, as well serving on the committees of the Band of Hope and the British Legion. At the start of the year there was much to do to complete the building of the British Legion hut (hall), on the site of the present Milton village hall, prior to its grand opening on Ember Day, 6 March.

On 26 March Dad's accounting included 'fare to Oxford 2/3, clock 5/6, licence £2/2/0, chest of drawers 30/-', presumably in preparation for his marriage a couple of weeks later.

This was the year of the arrival at Prebendal of Les Case, now of Milton Road, Shipton. His availability as a new member of staff was due to the 'good offices' of the vicar, the Revd Freeman, who responded to Colonel Addinsell's request for more labour. Pressure was then put on Mr Strong, the headmaster of Shipton School (see *The Wychwoods Album* p.17), to release Les before the statutory leaving age of 14.

Les remembers his short time at Prebendal, on 5/- a week, following in the footsteps of other young lads before him, such as Alf Harvey and Reg Duester. At the time the larger houses of Shipton provided many first jobs for school-leavers. The late Cecil Viner was another of those who found his first job at Prebendal. Les recalls that his tasks were the usual boring ones of doing as he was told - hoeing, digging, raking, fetching and carrying, even to the extent of fetching Dad's bike at knocking-off time. By carrying out the latter task Les taught himself to ride a bicycle.

According to Les, one of the perks of the job for Dad was that his brother, Ralph Rawlins, always got the contract for any decorating work at Prebendal. This 'old boys' network' seems to have extended a little wider, for Dad also notes that in addition Ralph did the decorating at the school nearby.

The entries for 1926 begin with the usual problems of too much water. Away

from Prebendal, in the evenings and at weekends, Dad spent much time in getting Sunnyside, his new family home, ready for occupation. Many diary entries refer to 'putting up stairs, cupboards and casing girder'. The girder was an RSJ which was put in above the first floor as rising damp had caused the old beam to rot through.

Finally, on 20 February the diary states 'shifted from The Shrubbery to Sunnyside. Finished the crapper so far'. Life in the new home could not exactly have been described as a bed of roses as work continued inside and out until the end of the year. Les was offered a 'slice of the action' but decided that working with Dad in normal hours, from 7am to 5pm, was sufficient for anyone.

Just before Dad left Prebendal, Les asked him if it would be alright to request a rise from 5/- to 7/6d a week. Dad replied that he would not recommend the idea as it might result in what happened to the other lads before Les. Notwithstanding, Les made his request to the Colonel, and was sacked on the spot.

But that was to be in the future, for 1926 ended on a high note. On 27 December Dad recorded 'Prebendal party till 2am', and finally, but ironically, the last entry for 31 December reads 'watering inside and out'.

My grateful thanks are due to the people mentioned in the article, and to many friends for their help in the re-construction of the life and times recorded herein.

Election in Shipton

The Election. By midday on Thursday by far the greater part of the upwards of 600 voters in this district had polled. From then until the poll closed the officers had little to do. Sir. B. Samuelson and Mr Wynne visited the station during the day and received a welcome from their supporters. The scene in and around the Public House was quite a contrast to the order within the polling-room, the staff of police being far too small to prevent fights and quarrels arising from too much alcohol and political excitement. By 9 pm. the village resumed its usual quiet.

(From the Oxford Times for 13 December 1885)

Misunderstanding in Wychwood

Petition of William and John Boice, of Burford, Labourers.

'That your petitioners are very poor & necessitous & went to chase conies & vermine only in his Maties forest of Whichwood Underwood, in the daytime, but did not kill or destroy any vermine or game there; & your petitioners crying out kill them, mening the vermin of the Forrest & not the game, or the keepers of the Forrest, the keepers of the Forrest violentlie set upon your petitioners to their no small damage.

Your petitioners are very pensive & sorrie for entering into the Forrest & humblie begg pardon for the same promising never to attempt any thing of the lik nature hoping to be dischargd of their Recognisances. . . .'

Noted - Returned on their Recog till next sessions.

(From the Oxfordshire Calendar of the Quarter Sessions for Epiphany 1688)

A Wartime Wedding at Prebendal House

JOHN RAWLINS

The activities of the Oxford Archaeological Unit at Prebendal House, coupled with the interest and co-operation of the owners and their contractors, stimulated the Society to research further into its history. A request was made for any old photographs which might add to our knowledge of the property. Initially very few were forthcoming, but on checking an old photograph of the Prebendal staff with Bob Bradley, he produced the wedding photograph shown here. Both his mother and my father appear in the back row, and Mrs Hinde, the owner of Prebendal at the time, sits on the groom's right. It was obviously taken at Prebendal, but why and when?

The photograph prompted Norman Frost to recall some correspondence he had had with a retired minister of the United Reform Church, the Revd Norman Singleton. With the kind permission of the Revd Singleton (who appears as the page-boy in the sailor-suit in the front row) the letter is now quoted in full.

When war with Germany was declared in August, 1914, the Old Prebendal at Shipton under Wychwood was a lovely 'stately home' in the old tradition - dignified, handsome, comfortable, well staffed with 'domestics', gardeners and coachman, and owned by a 'stately' pair of occupiers, Dr and Mrs Hinde. Soon, Britain was really at war and our young men were being killed or wounded by tens of thousands, at which Dr and Mrs Hinde offered to turn part of the house into a convalescent home for wounded men, an offer quickly accepted by the authorities.

Beds, medical supplies and other necessities, plus a nurse or two, quickly appeared at Shipton and were soon followed by a string of young men in blue hospital uniforms. When 1915 became warm enough, the lovely garden took on a new look with groups of blue-clad men - some bandaged, some on crutches - enjoying the peace and beauty of it.

At least two romances developed from all this. One had begun previously when Mrs Hinde engaged a new, young assistant gardener named William Sabin. Finding that Will was attracted to her personal maid, Nell Evens, Mrs Hinde thought it best for Nell to go home to Lancashire, which she did, though not surprisingly Will was soon called up for army service. Mrs Hinde was then without either of them and, missing Nell's invaluable services, she quickly recalled Nell and used her in the convalescent home arrangements. To that end Mrs Hinde bought a motorcar - an Overland 'tourer' - which Nell quickly learned to drive and many of the wounded soldiers were met at the station by Nell and the Overland. And what could Mrs Hinde say or do when one of the wounded arrivals was none other than Will Sabin? Thus, a few years later Will and Nell were married, being tremendously happy together for many years and dying within a week of one another in Hertfordshire.

By another coincidence, one of the wounded soldiers turned out to be Nell's brother, an extremely good-looking young man who, while at the Old Prebendary, quickly 'fell' for one of the young



The wedding of Levi Evens and Katherine Wall, 14 July 1915

housemaids. It was all very sudden, and a great event in the first year of the Shipton 'soldiers convalescent Home' was when Levi Norman Evens (aged 22) married Katherine Lilian Alice Wall (21) at the Parish Church on 14 July 1915.

They were anxious to marry before Levi's return to the trenches; Mrs Hinde was anxious that it should be more than just a 'war wedding'; and so she did all she could to make it a great day for both. Thus the procession out of the Church was of a 'white' bride, a handsome soldier bridegroom, soldier best man, six 'white' bridesmaids, and lastly a very young pageboy dressed in a sailor outfit and carrying a Union Jack which, incidentally, he had dropped with a clatter in the centre aisle during a prayer! (No carpet those days!) Sadly, as the war took its course, Levi Evens was badly gassed and he died very soon after the war ended.

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 *Wychwoods History* and the Society Newsletter. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Norman Frost, The Gables, Station Road, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxford OX7 6BQ (telephone Shipton under Wychwood 830802).

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Cover illustration: *Prebendal House and St Mary's Church seen across the field from the river, taken from a photograph of 1906*

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