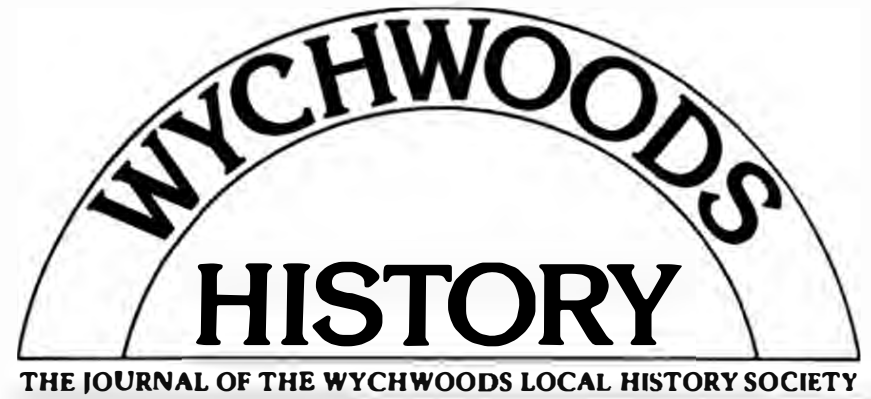


WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Five, 1989



WYCHWOODS
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Foreword

This fifth number of *Wychwoods History* is a further contribution to the detailed study of our area and together with the previous four issues provides substantial coverage of various aspects of its history from the earliest times to the present day. The subjects dealt with in this issue include the treatment of the poor in Shipton and Leafield in the eighteenth century, and changes in Shipton and Milton since the 1930s. The former is based on a dissertation submitted by Joan Howard-Drake for the Certificate in Local History awarded by the Oxford University Department for External Studies, and the latter on detailed research by John Rawlins, who was also able to draw on his memories of life in the two villages. Rachel Grant's note on the church recording group is an interim report on a project which is producing work of a high quality and which we hope to draw on for publication in the future. Tom McQuay's note on infant mortality highlights the special importance of the medical statistics to be derived from the parish registers and Margaret Ware's article is evidence of the Society's continuing study of the pottery and other artefacts of the area.

The increasing involvement of members in research was demonstrated by a display of work in progress at the Society's meeting in January. The comprehensive nature of the exhibits was a welcome sign that we are succeeding in our aim of building up an account of the Wychwood area over the centuries by encouraging members to pursue their own particular interests in the local history context. Our meetings during the year have been well attended and members have given all the activities of the Society their full support. It is a pleasure to be able to report another successful year and to put on record my appreciation of the efforts of all those who have made it possible.

Jack Howard-Drake
Chairman

We are grateful to the members of the society who have generously contributed towards the cost of publication of this issue of the journal, and also to Alfred Groves & Sons Ltd for their kind donation.

The Poor of Shipton under Wychwood Parish 1740-62

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

The legal basis of poor law administration in the 18th century was essentially that of the Elizabethan Poor Law Acts of 1597 to 1601, and the 1662 Act which included settlement provisions. The legislation, as amended by later acts, sought to deal with three categories of poor as seen by authority—the unemployed willing to work, the poor and infirm genuinely needing help, and the able-bodied idle who required correction. It replaced earlier voluntary alms-giving by a mandatory system in which parishes were made the secular units of administration under the supervision of local justices of the peace. Parishes were empowered to raise taxes for poor relief and to nominate overseers of the poor. The overseers were unpaid and joined the incumbent, the churchwardens and other parish officers as members of the vestry. The settlement laws enabled the overseers to remove people who had no right of settlement and who might become a charge on the parish.¹

The parish of Shipton under Wychwood in the middle of the 18th century contained the townships of Shipton, Milton under Wychwood, Leafield, Ramsden, Lyneham and Langley (Figure 1). Each of these townships ran their own poor law affairs, every year nominating their overseers who were appointed by the justices. The Bishops' Call Books show that two churchwardens were elected for Shipton and one each for the other townships.² This article compares the administration of the poor law in Shipton and Leafield between 1740 and 1762 as shown in their poor law account books. Quarter Sessions records and a collection of Milton settlement papers provide some additional information.³ Ramsden, Lyneham and Langley, for which no poor law records have been found, are not considered.

The population at this time is not known with any accuracy. Using the guidelines given by Wrigley and Schofield for population growth and working back from the 1801 census, an approximate figure of 1,858 for the parish in 1740 can be arrived at, with numbers of 383 for Shipton, 468 for Milton, 460 for Leafield, 315 for Ramsden, 184 for Lyneham and 48 for Langley.⁴

Shipton was the largest of these townships in area, the major occupation being agriculture organized on a common two-field system. There were two or three large landowners, the vicar, a few substantial farmers and the usual traders, craftsmen and domestic servants. Milton had a mixed economy with no large landowners, its agriculture also being on a two-field system. There were quarries, a number of masons, builders and other craftsmen. Quakers had a meeting place and burial ground in the village. Leafield was a village assarted from the Wychwood forest, where the agricultural land existed as small enclosed farms with a small acreage of common arable land. Many of its

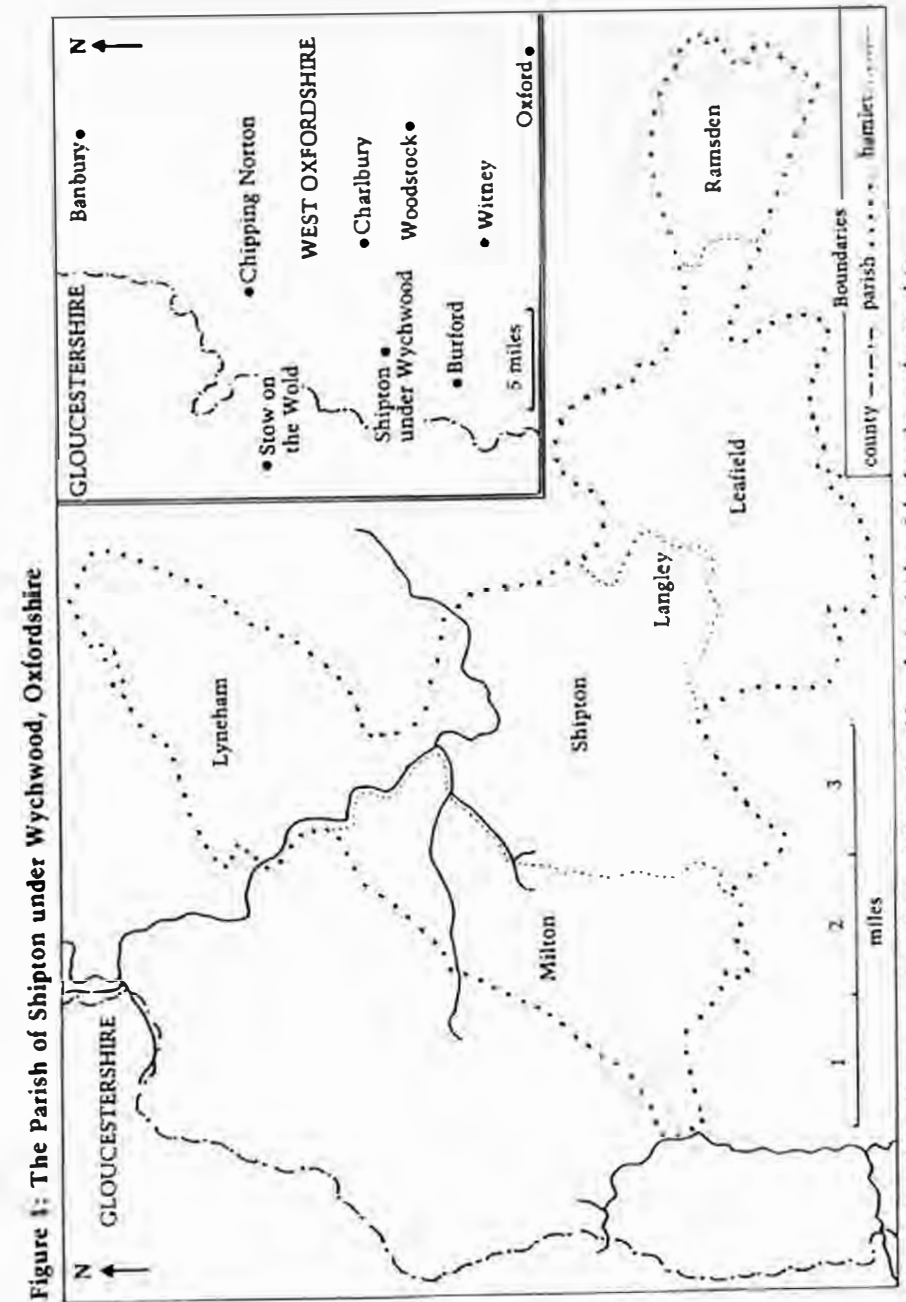


Figure 1: The Parish of Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire

Source: O.S. 1971. The present boundaries follow the old ecclesiastical parish, hamlet and township boundaries, except in the south-west of Leafield which now includes part of Wychwood Forest.

inhabitants worked in forestry, women were outworkers for the glove industry, and there was a thriving pottery.⁵

The Poor Law Officers

The churchwardens and overseers were men of influence and importance in the community as landowners and employers (Appendix A). The churchwardens were appointed yearly, but whether by an open parish meeting or by the vestrymen alone is not known. The overseers were nominated in each village by their predecessors. Since the same men appear regularly in both offices it is probable that they were self-appointing.

In Shipton churchwardens and overseers were closely connected by birth and marriage. For example, Thomas Matthews was married to Elizabeth Brookes, Richard Franklin to Elizabeth Reeve and Martin Shayler to Elizabeth Young. These men, with the fathers and brothers of their wives, served in both offices at some time. The majority belonged to long established village families and were mostly gentlemen, yeomen and farmers. Two landowning gentlemen who served, Edward Hastings, the godson of John Brookes, and Henry Furley, were newcomers but both married into Shipton families. This oligarchy shared out the duties of churchwarden and overseer but only twice did one man, William Hayden, occupy both offices at the same time (Appendix B). Coleman and Furley and another overseer, Thomas Brookes, served at various times as Chief Constable in the Chadlington Hundred, while others served as jurors.⁶ The officers in Leafield were farmers, tradesmen and craftsmen. They did not have the close family relationships as in Shipton but, nevertheless, office holding was in few hands. Only five overseers came from long standing village families and fewer men served as churchwardens (Appendix C). There was one marriage between overseers' families, that of John Rawlings and Sarah, the daughter of John Empson. Only John Harris, a farmer, served as Chief Constable and juror in the hundred.⁶

The duties of the overseers in both places took much of their time and no doubt involved them in some loss of income. However, they did provide goods and services for the poor and were reimbursed from poor law funds. The amounts paid to them were similar in both townships—£22 7s 8d in Shipton and £27 5s 4d in Leafield. They escorted paupers being removed from the townships and travelled for legal advice and on other business. For example, in 1745 Thomas Young charged expenses for 'myself going to Bruern twice and Burford once', with a further journey to remove Mary Harne to Lyneham. Paupers were escorted as far afield as Oxford, Newbury, Bath, Hampshire and Kent (Appendix D, Figures 2 and 3). They visited justices of the peace for orders, warrants, examinations and other purposes. Justices of the peace were legally required to supervise the administration of the poor law and much depended on their active interest. After the Restoration in 1660 there was less central control of the justices themselves and, where they were lax, parishes ran the poor law as they wished.⁷ This did not happen in Shipton and Leafield, the evidence showing that the local dignitaries who acted as justices were continually involved in the villages' business and were in touch with what went on. Before 1752 John Lenthall of Burford and Sir Jonathan Cope of Bruern were the justices who dealt with the Shipton and Leafield overseers. After that date the officers usually went to the justices in Chipping Norton.

Figure 2: Journeys by Shipton Overseers, 1740-62

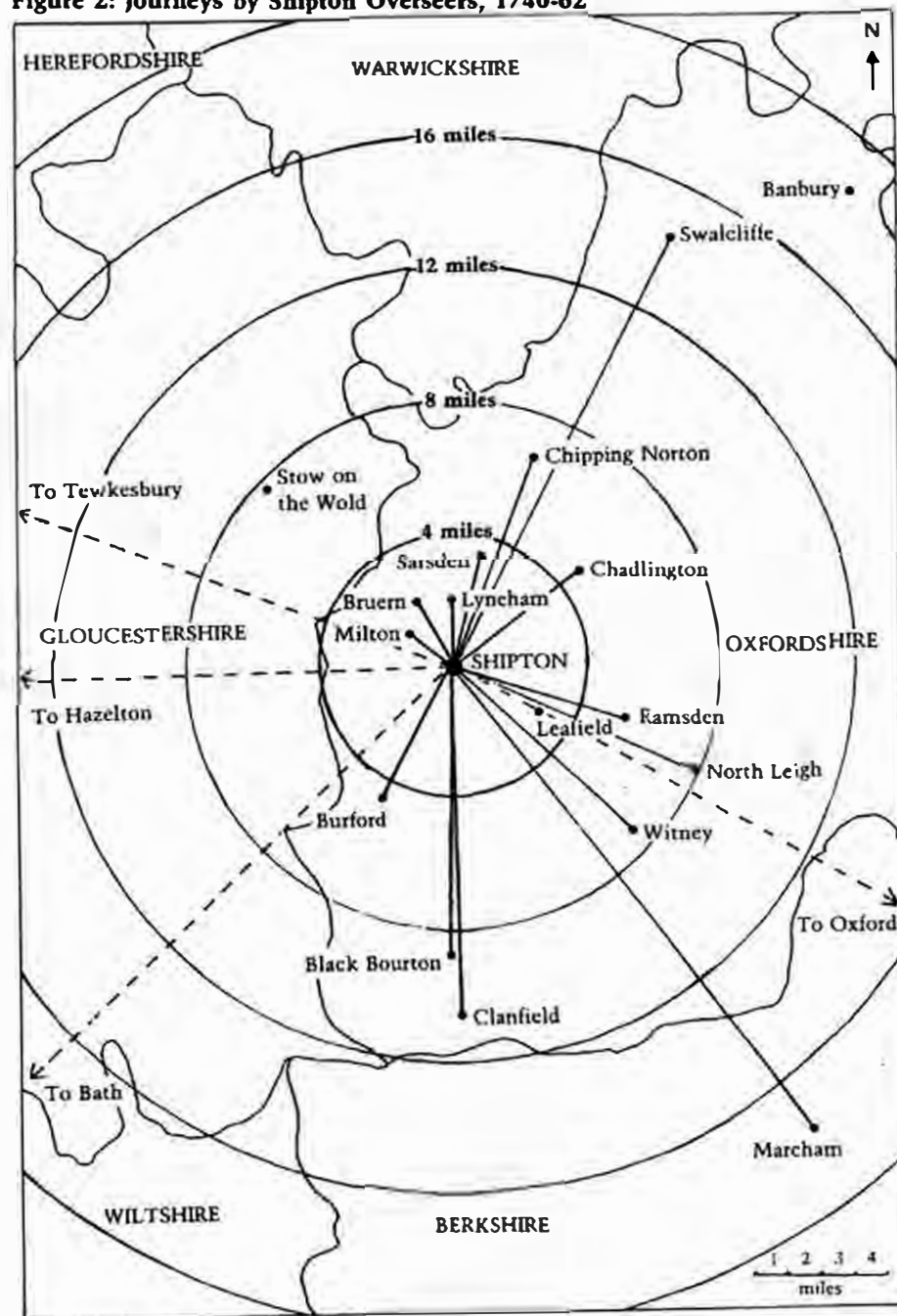
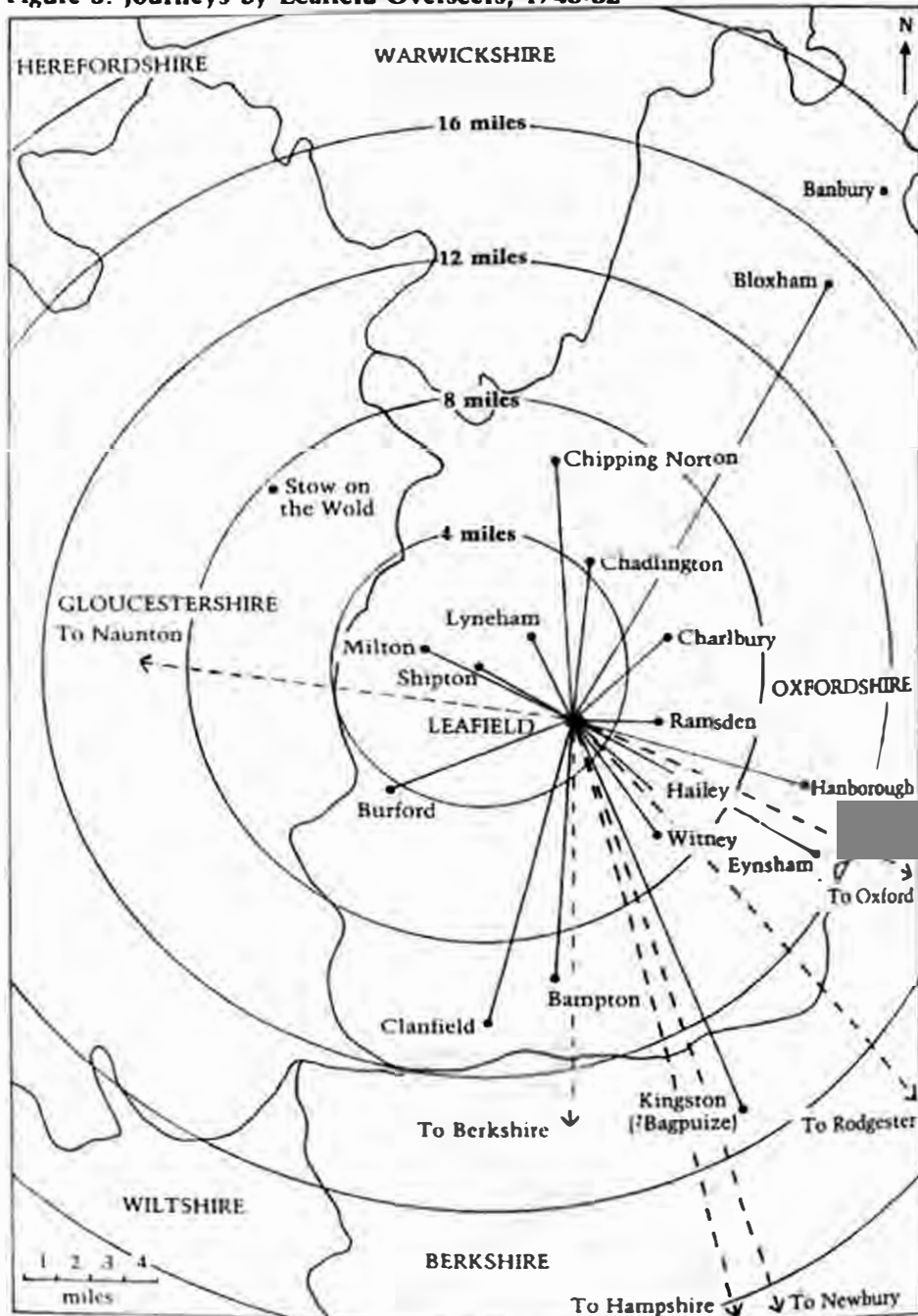


Figure 3: Journeys by Leaffield Overseers, 1740-62



The overseers kept day to day accounts in large vellum books. Those in Shipton were generally more systematic than in Leaffield where, on two occasions, there were no end-of-year accounts. The clearer statements of income and expenditure in Shipton may result from their paying for 'having the accounts made up', which Leaffield did not do. More members of the vestry signed the end-of-year accounts in Shipton than in Leaffield. The vicar, Joseph Goodwin, certified in the Shipton book that 'all persons were buried in woollen'. Burial in woollen was required by a law designed to help wool producers by ensuring the use of sheep's wool for shrouds.⁸ Three of Shipton's annual accounts and ten of Leaffield's were not countersigned by the justices. Four of Shipton's overseers wrote a good hand and spelt well, one made a mark, while the handwriting of the rest was just adequate. All Leaffield's overseers signed their names but only two wrote and spelt well, the rest obviously struggled and one farmer was barely able to write at all. Only once in each township was there miscasting of the figures and the mistakes were corrected later. Appendices E and F show specimen entries from the account books.

Much has been written about overseers enjoying themselves at public expense at the Easter and vestry meetings, but this is not obvious in either village. In Shipton the usual expenditure was 3s which included payment for 'writing a tax' and 'a warrant' for levying it. Only two or three small payments for ale are shown and there are no entries in Leaffield's accounts suggesting entertainment.

Income and Expenditure

Robert Saunders writing on the poor laws in 1799, said that the overseers had the purse of the parish completely in their hands.⁹ This situation arose from the Elizabethan Poor Law Act of 1601 which authorized churchwardens and overseers of the poor 'to raise weekly or otherwise, by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar or other, and of every other occupier of lands, houses, tithes inappropriate, propriations of tithes, coal mines or saleable underwoods in the said parish, in such competent sums as they shall think fit'.¹⁰ Assessment could be made on acreage of land or annual rental value. This varied according to local custom but the justices could impose the method to be used.

In Shipton the poor tax was at a rate of 4s in the yardland, and each levy raised £12. There is no information about the basis of Leaffield's assessment but each levy raised £15 13s 4d. In 1839 rentals in Leaffield were higher than elsewhere because of the rights and privileges which occupiers of land had in Wychwood Forest.¹¹ This may explain the consistently higher rate of tax levied in Leaffield in the 18th century.

The number of levies made in any one year depended mainly on smallpox epidemics. For example, in 1743/4, Shipton raised five during a smallpox outbreak while Leaffield, with no smallpox, raised two and a half. Similarly in 1741/2, Leaffield, in a smallpox year, levied six taxes while Shipton raised three. Bad weather and harvests also had their effects and it is significant that Leaffield's bad year followed the dearth years of 1739-41.¹² It is possible that the poor of Leaffield were more debilitated by the dearth years, and thus more susceptible to smallpox, than those in Shipton where there was no undue

Figure 4: Annual Income

Years	Shipton			Levies	Leafield			Levies
	£	s	d		£	s	d	
1740/41	31	6	8	2	47	0	0	3
1741/42	49	9	5	3	94	0	0	6 (S)
1742/43	31	6	8	2	62	13	4	4
1743/44	60	0	0	5(S)	39	1	8	2.5
1744/45	48	0	0	4	54	15	8	3.5
1745/46	36	0	0	3	70	10	0	4.5
1746/47	48	0	0	4(S)	39	3	4	2.5
1747/48	36	0	0	3	31	6	8	2
1748/49	36	0	0	3	50	11	9	3
1749/50	36	0	0	3	71	1	6	4.5
1750/51	36	0	0	3	55	6	3	3.5
1751/52	36	0	0	3	57	0	0	3.5(S)
1752/53	48	0	0	4(S)	70	10	0	4.5(S)
1753/54	55	17	6	4(S)	87	13	4	5.5(S)
1754/55	48	0	0	4	72	10	0	4.5(S)
1755/56	49	7	10	4(S)	63	3	4	4 (S)
1756/57	48	0	0	4(S)	81	2	9	5
1757/58	60	0	0	5(S)	48	10	9	3 (S)
1758/59	60	0	0	5(S)	66	14	10	4 (S)
1759/60	48	0	0	4(S)	40	13	0	2.5
1760/61	36	0	0	3	32	16	8	2
1761/62	36	0	0	3	31	6	8	2
Totals	973	8	1	78	1269	1	2	79.5

(S) = smallpox year

pressure on poor relief. The only additional income in both villages was a few small sums from rents and sales of paupers' goods which usually covered burial expenses.

Between 1740 and 1762 Shipton made 78 levies raising £936, received £39 8s 1d from other sources, making a total of £973 8s 1d. Leafield raised 79 levies giving £1214 17s 3d and received £54 3s 11d from other sources, making £1269 1s 2d. Details of the funds at the disposal of the overseers in each financial year April to April, the number of levies made and the incidence of smallpox are in Figure 4. In both townships taxes were levied as the need arose and income and expenditure were kept closely in step with only small balances carried forward from year to year.

No relevant lists of poor law tax assessments or taxpayers survive for Shipton or Leafield. However, the Land Tax assessment lists for 1785 for both villages show the main landowners and tenants having the family names of churchwardens and overseers appearing in the poor law account books.¹³ It seems safe to assume, therefore, that the parish officers between 1740 and 1762 were among the principal poor law taxpayers.

Charities were also a source of help to the poor. There was a 'poreman box' in the church in the 16th century.¹⁴ It is not known whether it was still there in the 18th century when the vicar and the churchwardens disbursed the

offertory money to the poor in the Church porch each Sunday.¹⁵ Simon Wisdome's charity provided £2, given yearly at Easter and the poor of Shipton and Milton received cash and goods from the Crown Inn charity. Sir George Fettiplace left £2 for the poor of Milton and Leafield.¹⁶ Payments of 'Town' or 'Lane' money were entered in Leafield's account book. The contributors were local people, some of them churchwardens and overseers, but none of the recipients was on poor relief. In Shipton Church the memorial to Sir John Reade, who died in 1789, records that among his other qualities 'In Charity; he shone conspicuous, not only supplying the wants of the Poor and Indigent with a secret and liberal hand, but manifesting the sublimest acceptance of the words Universal Benevolence'. The trustees and those distributing the charities were largely churchwardens and overseers, so that public and private money available to the poor was controlled by the same parish officers. No doubt they took private charity into account when considering poor law levies and individual requests for relief.

Expenditure

The income raised was spent on outdoor and indoor relief. Outdoor relief was that given in cash and kind to people living in their own homes. It could be in the form of regular and occasional cash payments, food and drink, clothing,

Figure 5: Annual Expenditure

Year	Shipton			Leafield		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
1740/41	31	6	6	56	9	11
1741/42	46	5	7	91	1	8(S)
1742/43	33	1	10	58	14	7
1743/44	52	7	3(S)	38	5	9
1744/45	49	1	5	51	9	7
1745/46	38	7	8	63	10	10
1746/47	55	1	5(S)	44	14	0
1747/48	31	1	1	35	0	1
1748/49	35	19	10	50	8	0
1749/50	38	1	2	69	12	8
1750/51	34	19	6	51	13	5
1751/52	34	17	7	57	4	10(S)
1752/53	52	4	2(S)	69	11	3(S)
1753/54	55	1	2(S)	88	6	5(S)
1754/55	43	8	8	66	18	6(S)
1755/56	45	5	6(S)	71	16	0(S)
1756/57	56	3	1(S)	75	2	4
1757/58	53	18	10(S)	55	3	4(S)
1758/59	61	7	11(S)	66	15	6(S)
1759/60	45	3	1(S)	35	14	0
1760/61	35	9	4	27	15	0
1761/62	43	12	11	41	12	2
Totals	972	5	6	1266	19	4

(S) = smallpox year

medical treatment and sometimes employment. Indoor relief was that given to people in a poorhouse or workhouse. The amounts spent annually are shown in Figure 5.

Outdoor Relief

How help was requested, which of the officers was applied to or who made the final decisions on relief is not known. Some entries say 'as ordered by the Vestry' which indicates that the whole meeting made decisions. It is not clear how payments were made in the 18th century but it is most likely that it was by paupers going to the inns where the meetings were held, as they did in the 19th century.¹⁷ Special arrangements would have been needed for those living outside the parish and receiving benefit. Occasionally justices ordered payments to be made to paupers but there are no records of this happening in either place. In all, 103 individuals in Shipton and 124 in Leafield received outdoor relief over the period.

Cash payments were made mainly on a regular basis, normally weekly but occasionally monthly. Names of those receiving this relief were usually recorded with details of the amounts given, although some entries say 'paid the poor the weekly pay'. The annual cost of regular cash payments is set out in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Annual Cost of Weekly Cash Payments

Year	Shipton			Leafield			
	£	s	d	£	s	d	
1740/41	12	17	6*	19	8	3*	(*6 months)
1741/42	27	6	0	41	19	3(S)	
1742/43	27	6	6	31	0	3	(estimate)
1743/44	39	8	0(S)	31	12	10	
1744/45	36	8	6	33	18	5	
1745/46	30	12	6	39	19	6	
1746/47	31	14	6(S)	4	8	0	(5 weeks only)
1747/48	24	2	6	20	6	6	
1748/49	23	11	6	23	5	0	
1749/50	31	6	6	39	13	2	
1750/51	29	0	6	39	4	6	
1751/52	29	0	0	47	19	0(S)	
1752/53	37	4	6(S)	49	5	0(S)	
1753/54	33	9	6(S)	48	11	0(S)	
1754/55	31	15	0	49	3	6(S)	
1755/56	36	0	6(S)	42	0	6(S)	
1756/57	33	16	0(S)	31	10	8	
1757/58	46	1	0(S)	30	17	6(S)	
1758/59	41	18	0(S)	26	10	6(S)	
1759/60	41	12	0(S)	25	15	0	
1760/61	34	2	0	18	18	0	
1761/62	34	4	9	8	11	0	
Totals	704	17	9	694	16	4	

(S) = smallpox year

Those receiving weekly benefit averaged about nine in each township, with actual numbers varying between six and 18. Total weekly payments were between 6s 6d and £1 7s 6d. There were only small fluctuations in numbers and payments from one week to another except when there were smallpox epidemics. Changes did not always occur at the same time in both villages and there was no marked increase in winter or fall in summer. Some regular payments were made for short periods but most were made for between one and six years, and a few were made for longer. Appendices G & H and Figure 7 show the periods for which regular weekly benefit was given.

Figure 7: Periods of Weekly Benefit

Period	Men		Women	
	Shipton	Leafield	Shipton	Leafield
1-2mths	1	2	1	2
3-6mths	1	4	2	7
7-12mths	-	1	1	-
1-3yrs	13	9	14	12
4-6yrs	6	5	9	4
7-10yrs	2	3	6	2
11-13yrs	1	2	1	2
14-17yrs	2	-	1	1
18-21yrs	-	-	-	1
Totals	26	26	35	31

The Shipton parish registers have been used to establish the ages of the men and women who received regular relief and to provide information about their background.¹⁸ The ages are shown in Figures 8 and 9. There is no significant difference between the two villages but, in the absence of firm population and age structure figures, it is not possible to relate the ages of the paupers to the ages of the total populations.

Some family connections appear among the recipients and show that poverty affected several members of one family, sometimes through two or three generations. In Shipton, Francis Quarterman, his wife Diana and their children received weekly payments and the children continued to do so even

Figure 8: Shipton Age Groups

Ages	Men		Women	
	Widows	Unmarried	Widows	Unmarried
60-plus	7	9	9	3
40-59	9	9	9	3
20-39	5	2	2	3
Under 20	5	-	-	3
Not known	-	-	2	1
Totals	26	22	22	13

Figure 9: Leaffield Age Groups

Ages	Men		Women		
		Widows	Married	Unmarried	Not known
60-plus	8	9	-	1	1
40-59	9	5	1	3	2
20-39	6	4	2	1	-
Under 20	3	-	-	2	-
Totals	26	18	3	7	3

when they were adults. Diana Quarterman's mother, Widow Pattin, also got relief. Widow Whiting, who had regular payments for four years, was the daughter of Widow Potter, who got weekly benefit for nine years. Family connections also existed among the poor in Leaffield. James Taylor received regular help for three years and his widow for a further nine. Other members of the family also received relief. The Busby and Pratley families were constantly helped and married into several families getting regular payments.

The sort of people who received poor relief can be seen in sharper focus by examining the details of a typical week. On 21 March 1741 Shipton made the following payments:

	s.d
Elizabeth Carter	6
.....Doge	1.0
Edward Becket	1.0
Will Smith	1.0
Widow Rusel	1.0
Widow Potter	1.0
Widow Eginton	1.0
Widow Tanor	2.0
Widow Refe	6
Beckley's child	1.0
	10.0

Most of the people listed received regular help over long periods, some probably from before the account books begin, as generally they had long connections with the village (Appendix G). 'Doge' was Mary Doge, daughter of Edward Doge of Shipton who was baptized in 1695 and received assistance for two years. She disappears from the poor law books in 1745 and there is no marriage or burial in the parish registers to account for this. Elizabeth Carter, another spinster, was baptized in Shipton in 1683, daughter of John Carter of Shipton. She received regular weekly payments until she died in 1752 and was buried by the township. Edward Becket's forbears had lived in the village from the 16th century. He was 70 in 1740 and getting 6d a week. Payments were increased during that year to 1s and went up and down at various times until January 1743. From then until mid-1744, he was getting 2s 6d and thereafter the payments varied between 1s 6d and 2s until he died. In addition he had

food, clothing, fuel and was 'washed' regularly in the last year of his life. His burial in March 1749 cost 14s. William Smith's family had also been in the village for a long time and he was an old man. He received weekly payments and other help over a period of 13 years until he died in March 1753 and was buried by the parish at a cost of 16s. The overseers sold his goods for exactly the same amount. 'Beckley's child' was Sarah, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Beckinsale. He was from Signet, near Burford and she was Elizabeth Turner of Burford when they married in Shipton on 16 April 1719. Both family names appear in the Shipton parish registers in earlier years but there are no baptismal entries for Richard or Elizabeth. They had six children, the first in 1720 and the last, Sarah, born March 1727. Richard died in January 1727 and Elizabeth died at the birth of Sarah. Presumably all the surviving children would have been entitled to the support of the township but by the time the poor law book starts in 1740, only Sarah was young enough to qualify and her relief stopped in 1742 when she became 16.

The other recipients of regular relief in that week were elderly widows. The youngest was Widow Eginton, who was born about 1690, and the oldest was Widow Tanor, baptized in 1648 the daughter of Edward Towser. She had eight children, was widowed in 1706 and died in 1741. One of her children, William, was given 6s towards the cost of burying his mother.

In the same week in 1741 Leaffield's overseers paid:

	s.d
James & Thomas Collett	2.6
John & William Dipper	3.6
William Moulder	1.0
Widow Lay	2.0
Mary Busby	1.0
Rachel Jordan	3.0
	13.0

The list contains several long-term recipients, Rachel Jordan and the Collett and Dipper brothers (Appendix H). Apart from William Moulder, all those receiving relief in that week came from families which had been in the village for a long time. No information can be found about William Moulder but he was supported until his death in 1742, when the township paid for his burial. The Collett family appears in the parish registers from the 16th century but no baptisms are recorded for James and Thomas. A James Collett of Leaffield married Rebecca Woodward in 1701. If this was the same man he was probably between 65 and 70, and his brother of a similar age. John and William Dipper were children, sons of Francis Dipper. John was baptized as of Leaffield, but there is no trace of the baptism of William nor of other brothers and sisters. The parish registers do not show the baptisms, marriage or burials of Francis or his wife and it is not clear why the township was supporting the two children. Support them they did, however, with weekly payments, much clothing and footwear and eventually with apprenticeships.

There is no record of Widow Lay's marriage in the parish or of when she was widowed. Children were being born to Walter Lay from 1694 to 1710 and, if he was her husband, she would probably have been about 70 in 1741. She was

buried at the township expense of £1 0s 8d in that year. Mary Bushby was baptized in January 1674, the daughter of Richard of Milton who later moved to Leafield. She was aged 66 and unmarried when the records begin. She may, therefore, have been receiving benefit earlier but she was certainly getting weekly payments until June 1742. After that date the overseers made a weekly 'lodging allowance' of 3d for her. Rachel Jordan was the widow of George Jordan who died in January 1739. She was born Rachel Collett, daughter of the James Collett mentioned above, and married in 1728. She received weekly relief from 1760 to 1761 and the payments vary between 6d and 3s. She died in 1764 after the Leafield account book ends and it is not known whether she was buried by the parish.

Occasional Cash Payments and Assistance in Kind

In addition to weekly allowances other small cash payments were made from time to time and the recipients included some who were on regular relief. Casual payments in both places ranged from 6d to 5s. In all, Shipton disbursed £12 1s 9d, and Leafield £64 19s 11d, in occasional cash payments. The Shipton figure is insignificant in relation to total cash expenditure but Leafield's is about 9%.

Figure 10: Assistance in Kind—Annual Costs

Year	Shipton			Leafield		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
1740/41	18	9	0	37	1	8
1741/42	18	9	7	49	2	5(S)
1742/43	15	15	4	27	14	4
1743/44	12	19	3(S)	6	12	11
1744/45	12	12	11	17	11	2
1745/46	7	15	2	23	11	4
1746/47	23	6	11(S)	40	6	0
1747/48	6	18	7	14	13	7
1748/49	12	8	4	27	3	0
1749/50	6	14	8	29	19	6
1750/51	5	19	0	12	8	11
1751/52	5	17	7	9	5	10(S)
1752/53	14	19	8(S)	20	6	3(S)
1753/54	21	11	8(S)	39	15	5(S)
1754/55	11	13	8	17	15	0(S)
1755/56	9	0	0(S)	29	15	6(S)
1756/57	22	7	1(S)	43	11	8
1757/58	7	17	10(S)	24	5	10(S)
1758/59	19	9	11(S)	40	4	6(S)
1759/60	3	11	1(S)	9	19	0
1760/61	1	7	4	8	17	0
1761/62	9	8	2	33	1	2
Totals	259	5	5*	563	2	0**

* Expenditure of £8 2s 4d unaccounted for

** Expenditure of £9 1s 0d unaccounted for

The main additional help given was assistance in kind. Figure 10 gives the yearly figures.

Assistance in kind included the provision of food and drink, clothing, household goods, medical treatment and rent. Expenditure was also incurred in legal, travelling and other costs. Figure 11 shows the amounts involved.

Figure 11: Costs of Benefits in Kind

Item	Shipton			Leafield		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
Food	33	7	11	7	19	0
Clothes	19	0	0	89	5	2
Hse goods/fuel	5	16	7	3	12	0
Med Treatment	103	7	6	60	16	4
Rent	-	-	-	123	10	9
Boarding etc.	1	0	6	51	1	0
Workhouse	-	-	-	40	0	0
Employment	1	16	5	-	9	0
Indoor work	-	2	6	-	17	2
Funerals	29	12	3	29	2	8
Marriage/Bstrdy	2	1	1	-	7	10
Settlement	21	2	2	24	5	1
Legal	5	17	4	9	8	6
Apprenticeships	1	18	2	34	19	6
Miscellaneous	30	3	7	31	8	7
Totals	255	6	0	507	3	1

Food and Drink

Shipton's expenditure on food and drink amounted to about 13% of the total cost of relief in kind and Leafield's was just over 1%. It may be that the extra cash payments made in Leafield, for which no reasons are given, were to buy food. The costs of individual items are listed in Appendix 1.

Bread was the main food provided in Shipton and was usually given to named individuals although some entries refer to 'the pore's bread'. In 1754 William Dipper was given a 12d loaf weekly. At that period loaves were made in many sizes, from a small penny loaf to one weighing 17 pounds. Dipper's loaf would probably have weighed at least 12 pounds, the equivalent of six large loaves today. It could have weighed more if it was made of a cereal other than wheat, such as rye or barley.¹⁹

Mathias suggests that by the middle of the 18th century more people, even the poorest, were eating wheaten bread. Certainly by the end of the century workhouse accounts show that wheaten bread was provided for the inmates and the cost of supplementing wages from the poor law was calculated on the cost of such bread.²⁰ Those who received bread were all getting weekly payments but the bread was not given for long on a regular basis. No-one in Shipton is named as making bread until 1753, when it was made by Thomas Moss. A month's supply of bread for the poor cost £1 4s in Shipton in 1756. No baker is mentioned in the Leafield accounts but payments for small amounts

of bread went to Dame Yealls, wife of William Yealls, a farmer and overseer, to Sarah Lardner and to Joe Cox.

Both Shipton and Leafield gave the poor barley, malt, meal and wheat from time to time. In Shipton, in May 1741, Richard Yeatman received two bushels of barley at 2s each and one of meal at 6s. In Leafield, in January 1750, William Cantom was given a bushel of wheat costing 3s 4d every week for three weeks, and one bushel of meal costing 4s.

Shipton gave beef and mutton at a cost of £1 17s 2d and bacon for 8d. Leafield bought two necks of mutton costing 1s each, lamb and veal for £1 1s 9d, bacon for £1 6s and chicken for 1s 7d. The six occasions on which Shipton provided meat were all during smallpox outbreaks and an overseer, John Cooke, was paid for it. Two of the six paupers to whom Leafield gave meat were ill. Obviously meat was not an item which the overseers thought necessary for the poor in the ordinary way. Other commodities given were cheese, which cost 3d a pound in 1753, butter and salt. Only Shipton gave lard, oatmeal, treacle and turnips while only Leafield gave sugar, oil and tobacco.

The amount spent on drink in both villages was small. Ale was the most common, Shipton providing it for five burials and a christening. Leafield gave it at a burial and in a case of illness. Other drink given was beer, sack, cider and wine. During a smallpox outbreak in 1754 Leafield paid 2s for 'a quart of wine and a pint of claret'. Shipton gave ale and white wine costing 5s 8d to Diana Quarterman in her last illness in 1747, and 3s 6d was spent on ale at her burial. Milk was provided in both places costing Shipton 13s and Leafield 3d. No tea was given in either place.

It is not possible to calculate the cost of all the food and drink since some items were often grouped together in one total. However, food prices were generally stable throughout the period and those in Shipton and Leafield were in line with the cost of food in rural areas at the time, with Leafield, if anything, paying a little less than Shipton.²¹

Clothing

Leafield spent over four times as much as Shipton on clothes and shoes, giving 28 different types of clothing as against Shipton's 15. Of the items which are common to both, Leafield always gave more than Shipton (Appendix J).

Shipton's largest expense was for nine coats which cost £4 13s overall ranging in price from 12s to 18s. Edward Becket, receiving regular weekly payments, had two costing 12s 6d and 18s. Leafield spent £5 8s 5d but bought 24 coats costing between 4s for a boy and 13s for a man. In 1757 a 'fowl weather coat' for Thomas Pratley cost 9s 6d. Leafield gave coats to Anne Busby and Suke Pratley but Shipton gave none to women. Many travel writers of the 18th century commented on the red cloaks commonly worn by countrywomen in Oxfordshire but no cloaks were provided by the overseers for poor women in either village.²² In Leafield, the largest expense was for shoes, with 105 pairs provided at a cost of £17 1s 11d and given to men, women and children. Children's shoes cost between 1s 6d and 2s, women's stayed at about 2s 6d throughout the period, while men's cost between 3s and 5s. Boots were only mentioned once, given to 'Ann Earls children' at a cost of 8s 6d and a pair of pattens cost 10d. Shipton provided only two pairs of shoes costing 4s 8d a pair, and one pair of pattens for 1s. Whereas in Leafield most of those receiving

shoes were on weekly relief, neither of the men who got them in Shipton was getting regular help. Leafield's second major expense was for shirts, 96 being provided for £9 19s 2d, while Shipton gave 12 costing £2 3s. Other items included 61 pairs of stockings in Leafield and four in Shipton, 46 pairs of breeches in Leafield and six in Shipton and 44 shifts in Leafield and nine in Shipton.

The items which Leafield provided and which Shipton did not included 'frocks', which were the plain smock type garment worn by agricultural workers, costing between 4s and 6s 8d. Stays, which were laced bodices, were given to women and were often worn in the fields without a gown. They were put over short-sleeved shifts, with a petticoat and a handkerchief (a scarf) over the neck and shoulders. Hats were given to men but not to women although C. P. Moritz, a Swiss, travelling in England in the 18th century commented on the hats worn by 'the highest to the lowest' countrywomen in Oxfordshire.²²

Leafield's accounts show payments for the mending of clothes and shoes, but these do not appear in Shipton's account book. For example, between 1741 and 1754, James Busby and the two boys, John and William Dipper, had their shoes mended several times a year, the cost being from 4d to 1s. Buttons, thread, linings and other items were purchased to mend clothes. In Shipton there are only four entries for the purchase of cloth and five for the making of clothes. Shifts were made from five ells (1 ell = 1 yard) of 'doules' or dowlas, a coarse linen originating from Doules in France. Martin Shaylor, an overseer, was paid 5s 10d for this. No-one is named as making the garments. Leafield bought much more material for making clothes, the overseers paying for linen at 11d an ell, lindsey at 1s a yard and 'Welch' flannel at 10d a yard. Few entries show who made the clothes but the two women who are named, Ann Busby and Widow Lay, were on regular relief. 'The tailor' made clothes for Ann Busby's children for 6s 8d and a coat for James Taylor for 2s.

Leafield consistently provided more clothing and shoes and paid less for individual items than did Shipton. The difference in price may have been accounted for either in the quality of the materials used or in the fact that Leafield made many of the items themselves. The cost of living was generally lower in Leafield and they appear to have been more self-sufficient than Shipton.

Household Goods

Some household goods were provided in both places but not much was spent on them. The biggest item in Shipton was fuel, £2 17s 2d on wood and £1 14s on faggots. In 1746, 100 faggots cost 15s and in 1753 they were 2d each. Wood was given throughout the period, whereas faggots were given on only six occasions, twice during smallpox outbreaks. Wood was provided in the autumn and winter months but the faggots were given at various times of the year. Two overseers and churchwardens, 'Mr. Brookes' and William Moreton, carpenter, were named as providing fuel. Leafield spent less on fuel, presumably because it was within the forest and the villagers had the right to take wood. Nevertheless some was given in autumn and winter and in one smallpox outbreak in August 1753. There are only three entries for faggots—some were provided in 1754 by John Empson, an overseer, at a cost of

7s for 70. The faggots were probably made of furze and thorn, as used in the Leafield pottery.²³ Shipton spent 4s 4d on beds, 8d on a broom and 3s 10d on soap. They paid for glazing a window and putting 'a bord' on Quartermain's house, William Morton and William Cross, both overseers, being paid for the work. Leafield spent more on beds, both making and mending them. In 1741 they bought 10 ells of cloth costing 4s 2d 'to made a bed' and paid 3s for a bed tick. Solomon Goffe, an overseer, was paid 6s for flock for bed ticks at 2d per pound. Bedcords, costing 1s 2d each, were provided on a number of occasions, and blankets and sheets were also supplied. Shipton spent nothing on these items. Leafield bought a bedpan, a pot and some earthenware, not surprisingly since Solomon Goffe owned the Leafield Pottery. Building work in Leafield included mending a chimney, putting a lock on Sarah Turfrey's door, 'binding fern' to Thomas Collett's house and thatching Rachel Jordan's. A 'bisom' was bought for 3d, candles for 3s 2d and soap for 6d.

Those given household items were either on weekly pay or, in two instances, affected by smallpox. The provision of furniture and other goods for the home was not a major consideration for the overseers.

Housing

The overseers were responsible for housing the poor and did this, either by paying their rent, or allowing them to live rent-free in houses owned by the township, or by providing house room or board and lodging.

Only one payment of rent is recorded in Shipton's accounts, which was to John Hawks as described below. In Leafield there were frequent payments and individual sums were from 15s to £4 10s per annum and these payments were usually for people on weekly relief. Robert Garret had his yearly rent of £1 paid for over five years while on weekly pay. Houseowners receiving rents included two overseers, Solomon Goffe and John Smith. There was a 'town house' and two 'church houses' for which rents were paid, the curate in Leafield receiving £4 10s a year for the church houses.

There are three house room entries in the Shipton accounts naming only those providing the room. On 5 March 1748 John Hawks was paid £1 for half a year's rent and another £1 for 'the use of his house in smallpox'. Clearly his house was used to isolate and nurse the victims of smallpox and Rawlings was paid 4s to lime and whitewash it later. The two payments in Leafield under this heading are for Stephen Pierce and Mary Busby, both of whom were on regular relief, as were those providing the room. Board and lodging was different from houseroom in that the people who did the boarding were not themselves paupers. In 1761, Mrs Hayden, a member of an overseer's family and tenant of the Crown Inn, boarded Hannah Lane at a cost of 7s while she was in Shipton until her settlement was decided upon. Thomas Wiggins boarded John Green for a year from 1744 at a cost of £5 9s 3d. The only reference in Shipton to lodging as distinct from boarding is the payment of £14 14s 10d over four years for Thomas Vaughan's son William. Thomas Vaughan was in London and there is nothing to show why his son was being looked after by the township. Entries in Leafield's accounts mostly concern Mary Busby who was lodged for three years.

It is not clear what is meant by 'keeping' which occurs only in Leafield. It seems to have been some sort of 'roundsman' system to help the unemployed.

The Webbs refer to this as a system where 'men were compulsorily assigned to an employer for their keep or billeted out in turn among farmers in the parish....'²⁴ Nearly all those 'kept' in Leafield were men and boys on weekly relief. For example, in early 1741, William Bottler or Butler was kept for eight weeks by Richard Hall for 2s a week, for 16 days by Joseph Jones and for 27 days by John Rawlins, an overseer and farmer, and this continued for various periods throughout the year.

Outdoor Work

An important aim of the 1601 Poor Law Act was to empower parishes 'to set on work' the able-bodied unemployed. Shipton gave outdoor work to six men over the period, two of whom were on regular relief. William Waine received 1s 4d for one day's work in 1746, and Richard Hawkes was employed four times in 1757 and 1758. He mended the road, dug stones and worked in 'Bowram meadow'. He was the oldest of the six, being between 40 and 50, and the others were in their thirties. The two men on regular relief were employed for three weeks digging stones and mending the highway. They were paid 9d a day and no reduction in their weekly pay was made. In Leafield, Solomon Goffe twice paid a man 1s to 'work in my place' for a day, and John Benfield and Richard Lardner were paid for three days work. In three cases cash payments were made in lieu of work. Ralph Siaford and William Bacon both got 1s for 'having no work' and Thomas Wiggins was given 2d 'work being short'. Nursing, sitting up with sick and other odd jobs were given to paupers in both townships but not on a regular basis.

Indoor Work

Both Shipton and Leafield made some effort to give the poor work, such as spinning and weaving, to do in their own homes or in the poorhouse. James Corke, a Shipton overseer, was paid 2s 6d for 'bringing spinning work from Witney for the pore folk'. Leafield bought two spinning wheels, one for 2s the other for 2s 9d, and a wheel belonging to Ann Busby was mended for 9d. Cards costing 1s a pair in 1742 and 1s 5d a pair in 1757 were bought by Leafield but not by Shipton. There is no firm evidence of a 'parish stock' of tools or materials in either village.

Apprenticeships

A provision of the Act of 1601 was that pauper children could be apprenticed by the parish. Shipton spent little on this with only four boys being named. In 1744 Edward Peach or Leach (both names are given) was bound to Mr Yattman. The indentures cost 6s and the 'binding' 3s 6d. In the next year John Rusel was bound to an unnamed master for £1 2s and 6s 8d was paid for 'the prentis boy at Graffen'. Later 5s was paid for shirts for 'Trotman's boy going into service'. In Leafield in 1742 John Dipper was apprenticed to George Edwards for £7 7s with another £1 10s 3d for clothes and other expenses. Three years later his brother William was bound to William Cockril for £5 4s. Three girls were apprenticed and the indentures for one of them, Elizabeth Busby, to be bound to John Rook, were taken to the justices in Burford. All pauper apprenticeships should have been referred to the justices for their consent to the contract but

no other case of this having been done is recorded. The trades of the masters are not given.

Apprenticeship gave the right of settlement and children were often apprenticed outside their parish or township, thus shifting responsibility for them elsewhere.²⁵ In Shipton parish there was some movement between the townships. Two men from Ramsden, William Cockril and William Dixon, took William Dipper and Mary Benfield, respectively, both children of Leafield. On the other hand, some apprenticeships were within the townships—for example, Yattman who took Edward Peach was of Shipton and John Rook who took Elizabeth Busby of Leafield was himself of Leafield. There is an indenture from Milton dated 1740 which shows John Wilkins, churchwarden, and Isaac Snowhill and Jeremiah Grove, overseers of the poor, apprenticing John West to John Androus a broadweaver of Burford. West was 12 years old and was bound until 'his full age of four and twenty years', as laid down in the Act of 1601.²⁶

The period between 1740 and 1762 was a period of relative stability and there are no signs of unusual strains on the economy of either Shipton or Leafield at the time. It looks as though this is reflected in the attitude of the overseers in both places who do not seem to have regarded the provision of work for the poor as particularly important or to have made any special effort to send apprentices out of the village.

Workhouses

In the 17th century the idea of workhouses for the poor was beginning to grow. It was thought that if the poor who were willing to work were fed, housed and given work to do, the income from their labour would reduce the poor rates. Bristol was the first to experiment with this, and as so often in poor law matters, legislation followed local experiments. In 1723 an Act was passed enabling parishes to build workhouses and withhold payments from those who would not enter them.²⁷ It also allowed parishes to combine in building workhouses and, more importantly, to farm the running of them out to contract.

Shipton's parish registers refer to a 'Church House' in the 16th century in which old people and women with illegitimate children were housed. There is enough supporting evidence to show that the overseers used it in the 18th century, to house the poor and give the occupants some work to do. In 1744 and 1759 they paid for work to be done on the house and there are some unexplained purchases of bread, other food and household goods too large for one family but which could have been for a number of people living together. An entry in the Leafield account book for April 1746 shows Thomas Wickens paid £40 for 'keeping the workhouse' and the overseers paid 3s 'at the agreement' with Wickens and 1s for a warrant. This last was to cover the necessary permission of the Quarter Sessions for setting up a workhouse. In the financial year to April 1747 the overseers' only other expense was £4 14s. They clearly farmed out their poor for £40, hoping to save money, since in the year before they had spent over £63 on various forms of relief. The experiment was short-lived for in the following year the overseers resumed weekly payments, and no mention is made of a workhouse.

It seems that Shipton was running a communal house based, perhaps, on

long tradition but Leafield's attempt to establish an early workhouse obviously failed.

Medical Treatment

The 1601 Act laid down that parishes should maintain their poor when they were sick. No mention was made of medical treatment but as the practice of medicine grew in the next 150 years it was included by the overseers in the relief of the poor. This was done in two ways, either by contracting with a doctor for a fixed sum during an agreed period, usually a year, or by paying as and when necessary.²⁸

Shipton and Leafield favoured the second option, both places using more than one doctor, but payments to them were a small part of the overall cost of treatment. Shipton paid Dr Robert Wisdome £15 and Dr Minchin £1 2s 6d out of a total of £103 7s 6d, while Leafield paid Dr Andrews £2 2s and Dr Batts £1 13s 6d out of £60 16s 4d. The doctors provided some medicine and set broken bones, as when in Leafield Dr Andrews 'set Hannah Jordan's arm'. Shipton paid a surgeon £1 15s 6d for treating Francis Trotman in 1761 but no details are given and there is no mention of a surgeon in Leafield's accounts. Most of the medicines given in both villages were provided by James Pujolas, an apothecary, who had a shop in Shipton.²⁹ His bill for medicines given to Sarah Kilby is shown in Appendix K. He was paid £14 by Shipton and £2 2s by Leafield.

Shipton sent two of its poor to Bath for treatment, perhaps emulating the vicar who went there for his health in 1738. William Dipper, aged 24, was taken to Bath at a cost of £1 4s 10d. Thomas Quarterman, aged 19 and the son of Francis and Diana, was on weekly relief and had been given clothing. He went to Bath in 1757 after correspondence between Pujolas and Bath, which was paid for by the overseers. The cost of the trip and 'showing his hand to a surgin' was £3 10s 4d and on his return he continued to get weekly relief and medicine. By January 1759 he was sick again and being nursed. His nurse was paid 2s 6d for 'fier wood' and it cost the overseers 19s 10d to bury him at the end of March.

Smallpox is the only disease named in the account books. About £78 of Shipton's total expenditure on medical treatment was incurred in dealing with smallpox outbreaks; in Leafield it cost £30. The parish registers do not give the cause of death and it is not possible to calculate exactly how many people died of smallpox. There is however evidence that the poor were affected disproportionately, particularly in Leafield. Over the period 1740 to 1762 there were 175 burials of Shipton village residents of which 55 can be identified as paupers, i.e. about 31%. In the eight smallpox years the percentage of paupers buried was 42.5%. From Leafield, there were 148 burials in the period of which 51 were paupers, i.e. about 34%. In the eight smallpox years the percentage of paupers was 65.5%. Extracts from the accounts books showing the special expenses incurred during smallpox are shown in Appendices L and M. The Leafield extract shows that nearly half their total expenditure was on one man and his family. He was referred to as 'My Lord', a nickname for a hunchback, and his wife was called 'My Lady'.

Whereas there are seven entries for illness other than smallpox in the Shipton account book, there are 40 for Leafield. For example, in 1745, an entry

reads 'Gave Thomas Busby when ill 3 weeks, 18s' and in January 1750 'Gave Elizabeth Dore, her wench being ill, 2s'. Amounts paid varied from 6d to 6s 6d and all but seven of the recipients were on weekly pay at some time.

Few drugs or medicines were effective in the 18th century but the overseers gave the poor the benefit of whatever was available. There is no mention of vaccination although claims for its efficacy were being made in Burford at the time.³⁰ Two people, Sarah Kilby of Shipton and Richard Garret of Leafield, were bled at a cost of 6d each. In most cases all that could be done was to provide nursing and both account books show that there were 'professional' nurses. In Shipton, the 'Old Nurse' was paid 5s per week, Nurse Matthews was paid 10s a week in 1746 and Nurse Lewis and another unnamed nurse were paid 10s a week in 1750. In 1754 Leafield paid a 'man nurse' £3 1s 6d for six weeks and a day. Others who were paid for nursing were village men and women, often those on poor relief. Shipton paid Mary Doge, Elizabeth Boulter, Elizabeth Cross and Richard Yeatman, all receiving relief, between 1s and 5s. It was the same in Leafield, where a similar number of men and women on poor relief were paid the same sort of amounts for nursing other paupers. Clearly there was a difference in status between the two groups and the 'Old Nurse' may have lived outside the village as Baggs was paid 1s 'to take her whome'. Several of Shipton's poor who had survived smallpox in their own families, were paid to attend others in smallpox outbreaks presumably because they were now immune. Richard Yeatman lost his wife and three children from smallpox in 1743 and was paid for attending and nursing at outbreaks from 1743 to 1747. With William Baggs he carried people about, limed and whitewashed houses and buried smallpox filth in the meadow. In both villages the poor were employed to wash the sick and old, to sit up at night and to lay out the dead. There is one mention of lunacy when the Leafield overseers 'paid mad Mary Tomas 6d'. It was customary for local village women to attend the poor in childbirth but there are few entries for this in the account books. The only entry in Shipton is in 1750 when 2s was paid for Ann Jeffrey who 'lay for two weeks'. Mistress Andrews was paid 3s at the lying in of Sarah Turrey in Leafield and Mother Midnight attended Ann Busby. No 'Midnights' appear in the parish registers so that maybe this was the nickname of someone who was called to births at night.

Each township paid for the burial of their poor although burials took place in the parish church in Shipton. The costs were much the same in both villages—about £29 for 28 burials—but the expenses were made up of different items. Shipton paid 2s 6d to those who laid out the dead and provided shrouds on four occasions at prices between 3s 6d and 5s 6d. Leafield's records do not mention shrouds but a burial cap was given for Thomas Jordan in 1746. Both places provided wool for burial—two pounds for a man and one pound for a woman, at 6d or 7d a pound. They paid for the affidavits required by law to certify that burial had taken place in woollen, these usually costing 4d. Coffins were made in Shipton by William Cross and William Moreton, both overseers and churchwardens, and cost between 2s and 8s. No maker of coffins is given in Leafield where they cost between 4s and 8s. Thomas Cross of Shipton dug the graves for which he was paid 1s. The bell was rung for everyone and the clerk was paid 1s 6d for this. The bier was paid for twice in Shipton and three times in Leafield and the charge each time was 1s. Shipton sometimes paid

only part of the cost, for example, 5s in 1749 'towards' the funeral of Thomas Hope's father. In both townships the overseers sold paupers' goods to pay for their burial. In 1744, Shipton sold Widow Reeve's goods for 12s and, in Leafield, Catherine Harper's were sold for 13s 7d.

It would seem that the poor received a 'decent burial', in a coffin, with the bell rung, and ale bought. There is no evidence of undignified internments wrapped only in a shroud.

Bastardy

Bastardy cases did not cause serious difficulties for the overseers. Seven Shipton women are given in the parish registers as having illegitimate children and there were none in Leafield. Only three of the seven appear in the poor law records. They were examined in Burford and warrants issued, presumably authorizing the overseers to obtain money for the maintenance of the children from the fathers, whose names are not given. One of the three was Mary Taylor who was examined in November 1749, and her son was born a month later. Her examination cost 1s 6d with expenses of 5s 1d. In Shipton illegitimate children were often given the father's surname as a second christian name. Mary Cross, another of the three, called her son Peter Brooks Cross, pointing the finger at a member of an important family, an overseer and churchwarden. There is no record of marriages in these three cases but Shipton and Leafield each paid for one marriage. The son of Ady Eden and Charles Willett was born two months after their marriage in 1750 when the Shipton overseers paid 3s 6d for the 'marring', 6s 6d for entertainment at the Crown and 12s 6d for the ring. The couple came from Milton and it is not clear why Shipton should have been responsible. Leafield paid 7s 10d in 1749 for the marriage of Tennant Shayler and Mary Smith, but no details are given.

Badges

One way in which Shipton and Leafield may have differed in their treatment of paupers was in their attitude towards the wearing of badges. In order to reduce fraud, the 1697 Act required the poor in receipt of regular relief to wear badges, bearing the letter 'P'.³¹ The overseers were liable to penalties if they did not provide them and the poor could lose relief if they did not wear them. The intention of the act was clearly stated—'that the money raised for the relief of such as are well impotent as poor, may not be misapplied and consumed by the idle, sturdy or disorderly beggars'. Shipton purchased six badges at 2d each in 1740 and 12 at 4d each in 1761. Leafield's accounts show no such expense but there is no evidence in Quarter Sessions that their overseers were penalized for not using them. It is possible that they had a supply before the earliest date in the account book or they may have made them themselves. Shipton's overseers were obviously prepared to obey the law but whether this indicates a more rigorous approach to their poor than Leafield is impossible to assess.

Whatever happened on the ground, however, the practice was increasingly disliked and the act was repealed in 1810.³² In any case it cannot have been much practical use in a small community where everyone knew everyone else and there was little scope for fraud.

Appeals

A charge on the poor law funds was the cost of dealing with appeals and complaints about failure to pay relief. Before the Poor Law Act of 1723, a parish or township could be ordered by the justices to pay relief to any pauper who appealed to them direct. After that date, the claimant had to apply to the overseers before going to the justices. The overseers could then be summoned before the justices to explain their refusal to pay or the reason for paying less than the claimant had asked for.³³ No expenses from this sort of case are recorded in Shipton and Leaffield between 1740 and 1762, nor are there any cases in Quarter Sessions records. This suggests that there were no major disagreements between overseers and the poor at this time.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Other incidental costs included, for example, horse hire and other travelling expenses, carriage of goods and people, meal allowances and letters.

Settlement

The settlement laws enabled overseers to give relief only to paupers who were legally settled in the township or parish. Those with no settlement rights who were, or who were likely to become, a charge on the poor law rates, could be removed. These rights were gained by fulfilling one of several conditions, such as birth, residence of 40 days, a year's rental of a property worth £10 per annum, a hiring as a worker for a year, apprenticeship, paying local taxes or serving as a parish officer. Overseers could accept an indemnity against need in the form of a bond or a certificate of responsibility from an individual's home or last parish of settlement. The legislation created problems for all concerned and led to some of the more unsavoury incidents recorded in poor law history. The unemployed, particularly the family man with children, found it hard to move and often stayed 'on the parish' as a result. Families were parted, pregnant women and the sick were moved on with little regard for their welfare. Vagrants and beggars were removed with even greater harshness. There is no evidence that these more unpleasant features of the settlement laws were to be found in 18th-century Shipton and Leaffield.

In both villages the overseers sought legal advice, twice in Shipton and seven times in Leaffield. Shipton consulted the great jurist William Blackstone in 1756, in the case of Charles Feeldes. William Fletcher, the overseer, made two journeys to Oxford for this purpose and accompanied Feeldes on his removal to Clanfield. There are no details of the case but the legal costs were £5 1s and the removal costs £1 5s 8d. Leaffield consulted Counsel Stevens who received £2 1s 6d, but again there are no details available.

The form that legal advice took is shown by the case of Francis Coombs in Milton. On 28 May 1757 Robert Stevens wrote, 'Upon considering the case of Fran Coombs I am of opinion that he has gained no settlement by his apprenticeship in Kingham but that the indentures are void and unless he has gained a settlement elsewhere by hiring or service for a year he must be settled at Milton where born'.³⁴

People in doubtful settlement cases were taken to the justices for examination and removal orders. Typical costs were 3s 6d, as in the case of Elizabeth Hayward at Shipton in 1752 and 3s in the case of James Wells of

Leaffield in 1749. The nature of the evidence given at these examinations is shown by a case in Milton's records. In 1764, William Edden, in a sworn statement, claimed settlement in Shipton by virtue of employment for a year and three weeks as a living-in labourer for William Honeywood, Esquire, of Shipton. The justices accepted his claim and Shipton would have had to give him relief.³⁵

Shipton obtained removal orders in nine out of 11 cases brought between 1740 and 1762 and Leaffield eight out of 13. Hannah Spiers of Shipton was sent to Marcham in Berkshire, and the destinations from Leaffield included Naunton in Gloucestershire, Newbury in Berkshire and Eynsham in Oxfordshire. Movement in and out of the parish and between townships is further illustrated by Quarter Sessions papers and removal orders in Milton's records. In 1745 Ann Harris was moved from Milton to Bourton in Gloucestershire. In 1751 three children of John Craker deceased, aged nine, five and two, were sent from Stonesfield to Lyneham. Thomas Bradley and family were removed to Shipton from Ascott in 1756, and in 1732 Thomas Benfield was moved from Leaffield to Taynton. This removal was challenged and he was returned to Leaffield, who had to pay costs of £6 5s. The Quarterman family which has featured in this article was moved from Milton to Shipton on a removal order in 1741.³⁶

Certificates were a device introduced in the Act of 1662 to permit people to travel temporarily. The law was extended in 1697 to cover permanent movement but the certificates then had to be issued by churchwardens and overseers, witnessed and countersigned by two justices.³⁷ It was noted in Shipton's account book in 1759 that a certificate had been issued to William Joachim and his family, when they went to Chedworth in Gloucestershire, acknowledging that they were inhabitants of Shipton. Several certificates have survived in Milton's settlement papers. Certificates became prized family possessions passed on to succeeding generations as a form of insurance in hard times.³⁸ There are no indemnity bonds extant for Shipton and Leaffield but an example is found in Milton's records for 1720. Joseph Holloway, miller, entered into a bond of £40 to indemnify George Burson, churchwarden and Richard Hyett and Jo Johnson, overseers of the poor of Milton, against his daughter Elizabeth and her children becoming a charge on the township when her husband 'ran away'. Presumably she and the children would have been removed to her husband's last place of settlement if the bond had not been provided.³⁹ Although the overseers occasionally went to some lengths to enforce the settlement laws, they were also prepared to meet and reach agreement. For example, Shipton and Milton overseers met in 1741 about Richard Yeatman and, in 1758, Leaffield and Clanfield overseers discussed the case of Benjamin Morse. On each occasion they appear to have come to some arrangement without recourse to law—Richard Yeatman stayed in Shipton and since Morse does not appear in Leaffield's records, he must have gone to Clanfield.

'Travellers' and others moving about the country legally, as well as vagrants, were the responsibility of the constable but some expense fell on the poor law accounts.⁴⁰ Shipton paid travellers between 6d and 2s, those with passes usually being given 6d—there are 18 such payments to men and women. One man was a soldier and Leaffield gave another soldier with a pass 4d.

Vagrants and others were also helped. By special permission of the Vestry Sipton paid 2s, in 1759, to 'some men on the road with their bowels and members mangled'. In 1748 they gave 'a great-bellied' woman 2s and Ann Egerton 'is to lead her away'; and Leaffield paid a travelling woman 3s 10d with 4d to Sarah Pratley 'to go with her'. Both places were paying the women to go away in order to avoid settlement and paying two of the poor to make sure they went.

It is evident that people did move about both legally and illegally with all the risks that entailed for them and their families. Furthermore the account books show that people moving into the townships were sometimes accepted for settlement even though they had no previous connections with the villages. The Webbs took the view that the settlement laws were oppressive, intolerable and restrictive but even they accepted that 'a large proportion' of the poor were mobile.⁴¹ Dorothy Marshall believed they compelled the poor to stay in their parishes like 'shellfish clinging to a rock' although she later modified these views.⁴² On the other hand E. G. Thomas found that in rural Berkshire, Essex and Oxfordshire, the poor 'were constantly mobile within about six miles'.⁴³ The evidence from Sipton and Leaffield supports his view.

Conclusion

Relief of the poor in Sipton and Leaffield between 1740 and 1762 was by payment of regular weekly allowances supplemented by occasional payments and by help in kind. Sipton disbursed nearly 73% of its total expenditure in regular cash payments and Leaffield some 55%. Can this be explained by the differing circumstances of the two villages?

Sipton had many of the characteristics of the closed village.⁴⁴ It was in the hands of an inter-related oligarchy many of whom were members of long standing local families. The overseers and churchwardens were of a comparatively higher social status than those in Leaffield. It could be that, in administering the poor law, they considered that they had adequately discharged their responsibilities by handing out cash to those in need while providing some limited help in kind, especially medical. Further, families in Sipton may have been better able to support their poorer members, since the population was more static and family relationships had built up over generations.

Leaffield was a more open village, the population was more mobile and there was more diversity of employment.⁴⁴ The main benefits in kind, on which Leaffield spent far more than Sipton, were clothing and housing. Perhaps the overseers there saw this practical help as more important than the provision of cash and they would have been sure about where their money went.

This difference of approach does not necessarily imply an essential difference in the overseers' concern for the poor. The amount spent per head of the population was about £2 10s over the period, the same in both villages. This would suggest a difference of emphasis rather than attitude. A substantial amount was spent on medical care and, in sending two of their poor to Bath for treatment, the Sipton overseers were not acting like uncaring officials anxious to save money at all costs. In neither village were the poor given undignified pauper burials. Some effort was made in both villages to employ the poor on work, and the 'keeping' of men and boys in Leaffield suggests the

use of an embryo roundsman system to provide employment. There may have been an element of cheap labour in this, but no pauper had his or her relief reduced while so employed. Neither village made any particular effort to send its pauper apprentices out of the township. Neither was under any great pressure from litigation about settlement and removal cases were treated on their merits with a willingness to compromise. People moved around the area reasonably freely as can be seen by the lack of continuity in many family names, particularly in Leaffield.

The years 1740 to 1762 were a period of relative stability in prices and wages. In Oxfordshire, wages for men varied between 1s 2d and 1s 4d a day and for women between 8d and 9d.⁴⁵ Dorothy Marshall took the view that paupers receiving the level of help and cash which was given in Sipton and Leaffield (in line with the general pattern of relief in southern England at the time), would have had a standard of living not much lower than the poorest of the labouring poor.⁴⁶ Neither village provided much food as part of its relief which may bear out Arthur Young's view in 1765 that 'nine-tenths of the cottages he had seen in Oxfordshire had good gardens', so perhaps even the poor, or most of them, could have grown their own produce.⁴⁷

In the absence of vestry minutes and churchwardens' and constables' accounts it is not possible to be sure about the attitude of individual officials in their day-to-day contacts with the poor, nor is there any record of how many sought help and were refused. The evidence for Sipton and Leaffield in the middle of the 18th century, however, does not suggest that the parish officers administered the law with the harshness, inefficiency and corruption said by many writers to be characteristic of the system. The number receiving relief in any one week was about nine or ten out of populations of around 380 in Sipton and 460 in Leaffield. The overseers were not overwhelmed by the need for help nor under pressure from aggrieved applicants appealing to the justices. Despite being the main taxpayers, they did not hesitate to raise taxes to meet known needs, particularly when faced with smallpox. They appear to have treated those in need with some sympathy and as individuals well known to them in their small rural communities.

The abuses of the poor law system were found mainly in the expanding towns and less often in the country at this time. The position in Sipton and Leaffield confirms the views of Snell when he says 'In looking at the economic benefits to recipients under the old poor law one can be surprised by the generous and encompassing nature of relief'.⁴⁸ Life in the 18th century was hard and uncomfortable for most of the population. The expectations of the 20th century cannot be used as a measure of compassion in earlier times and there is nothing to suggest that the poor of Sipton and Leaffield were treated other than humanely by the standards of their day.

Notes and References

This article is based on a dissertation submitted for the Certificate in Local History, Department for External Studies, University of Oxford, May 1987. Copies are in the Department's Library; Oxfordshire County Record Office and with me. I should like to thank the Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council for allowing me the use of the Shipton poor law account books, and the Rev. P. E. Smith for enabling me to work on the Leaffield account books at home.
J.M.H-D

Calendar years are taken to begin on 1 January. Years in the form 1740/41 are financial years April to April.

Abbreviations

ORO Oxfordshire County Record Office
OMS Oxfordshire Museums Service
VCH Victoria County History of Oxfordshire

- ¹ 39 Eliz I, c. 1. to c.6, c.17, c.21; 43 Eliz I, c.2; 13 and 14 Chas II, c.12.
- ² Bishops' Call Books, ORO, MSS. Oxf. Dioc., III.2, c.136/7.
- ³ Shipton—in possession of Shipton Parish Council; Leaffield—ORO, MSS. Par. Leaffield b.1.; ORO MIL/1-VII; W. J. Oldfield, *Calendar of Quarter Sessions Rolls, Vols I-XI*.
- ⁴ E. A. Wrigley & R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871* (1981), 183.
- ⁵ N. L. Leyland & J. E. Troughton, *Glovesmaking in West Oxfordshire*, OMS, Pub. No. 4 (1974), 8. N. Stebbing, J. Rhodes & M. Mellor, *Oxfordshire Potters*, OMS, Pub. No. 13 (1980), 21.
- ⁶ W. J. Oldfield *Calendar of Quarter Sessions Rolls, Vol. X*, 155-287, ORO.
- ⁷ D. Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century* (1926), 59.
- ⁸ 30 Chas II, c.3.
- ⁹ S. & B. Webb *English Local Government Vol. 1: The Parish & the County* (1906), 66.
- ¹⁰ 43 Eliz I, c.2.
- ¹¹ Tithe Commissioners' Papers, Public Record Office, Leaffield I.R. 18/773421.12.38.
- ¹² J. M. Stratton, *Agricultural Records AD 220-1977* (1979), 78-79.
- ¹³ Land Tax Returns, 1785-1851, ORO; Shipton, QSD L242; Leaffield, QSD L179.
- ¹⁴ ORO, MSS. Wills Oxon, W. 11/1/66 & W. 156/1/17.
- ¹⁵ Bishop Secker's Visitation 1738, ORO, MS. Oxf. Dioc. d.554, f.45.
- ¹⁶ Feoffees' Account Books for Crown Inn Charity—Milton 1723, Shipton 1781-1828. In possession of Shipton Parish Council; R. Gardener, *History & Gazetteer of the County of Oxfordshire* (1852), 855-6.
- ¹⁷ Shipton Overseers of the Poor Account Book, 1830-47—in possession of Shipton Parish Council.
- ¹⁸ ORO, MSS D.D. Par., Shipton under Wychwood, b.3, c.1-5, c.10, d.1-2
- ¹⁹ E. David, *English Bread & Yeast Cookery* (1979), 230; E. W. Gilboy, *Wages in the Eighteenth Century* (1934), 22; VCH II (1907), 210-11.
- ²⁰ P. Matthias, *The First Industrial Nation. an Economic History of England. 1700-1914* (1983), 218.
- ²¹ E. W. Gilboy, *op. cit.*, *passim*; VCH *op. cit.*, 209.
- ²² A. Buck, *Dress in Eighteenth Century England* (1979), 127-8; 130-1; 140-1; 146.
- ²³ N. Stebbing *et al.*, (5), 21.24.
- ²⁴ S. & B. Webb, *English Local Government, Vol. 7, English Poor Law History, Part I. The Old Poor Law* (1927) 189-196. Hereinafter *The Old Poor Law* (1927).

- ²⁵ S. & B. Webb, *The Old Poor Law* (1927), 198, 400.
- ²⁶ Indenture of Apprenticeship, 1740—in possession of Alfred Groves & Sons Ltd, Milton under Wychwood.
- ²⁷ 9 Geo I, c.7.
- ²⁸ D. Marshall, *op. cit.* 120-1.
- ²⁹ Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, December 1762 & September 1768.
- ³⁰ J. Moody, *The Burford Smallpox Outbreak of 1754*, Tolsay Papers No. 1 (1980), Tolsay Museum Publications, 11-14.
- ³¹ 8 & 9 Wm III, c.30.
- ³² S. & B. Webb, *The Old Poor Law*, (1927), 160-1.
- ³³ 9 Geo I, c.7.
- ³⁴ ORO, MIL/VI/iii/b/26.
- ³⁵ ORO, MIL/VI/iii/a/12.
- ³⁶ ORO, W. J. Oldfield, *Calendar of Quarter Sessions Rolls, Vol. IV*, 536-624.
- ³⁷ 8 & 9 Wm III, c.30.
- ³⁸ K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor* (1985), 75.
- ³⁹ ORO, MIL/VI/ii/b/1.
- ⁴⁰ F. D. Price (ed.), *The Wigginton Constables' Book, 1691 to 1836*, Vol. II (1971), Banbury Historical Society, xx-xxiii.
- ⁴¹ S. & B. Webb, *The Old Poor Law*, (1927), 327-8, 335.
- ⁴² D. Marshall, 'The Old Poor Law, 1662-1795', *Economic History Review*, Vol. VIII (1957), 38-47.
- ⁴³ E. G. Thomas, 'The Treatment of Poverty in Berkshire, Essex and Oxfordshire, 1723-1834', unpublished D. Phil. thesis, London 1976.
- ⁴⁴ D. R. Mills, *Lord & Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1980), 117.
- ⁴⁵ P. Matthias, *op. cit.*, 195-6; E. Gilboy, *op. cit. passim*.
- ⁴⁶ D. Marshall, *op. cit.*, 15-56.
- ⁴⁷ VCH, *op. cit.*, 203.
- ⁴⁸ K. D. M. Snell, *op. cit.*, 105.

Appendix A: Overseers and Churchwardens—Occupations

Shipton	
William Beckett	not known
Martin Brooks	gentleman
Peter Brooks	gentleman-farmer
Henry Colburn	not known
Edward Coleman	gentleman
James Cooke	wool merchant
John Cooke	butcher
James Corke	draper
Joseph Cross	yeoman
Richard Day	yeoman
..... Fletcher	not known
Richard Frankling	yeoman-farmer
Henry Furley	gentleman
William Heyden	innholder
James Hux	yeoman
Thomas Matthews	yeoman
Henry Morton	carpenter
William Morton	carpenter
Robert Parrott	not known
John Patrick	yeoman-farmer
Richard Reeves	carrier
Martin Shayler	yeoman-mercier
Thomas Shortland	yeoman
Nicholas Willett	yeoman-innholder
Thomas Young	yeoman-farmer

Leafield	
William Carpenter	not known
John Collins	yeoman
William Coppin	not known
John Dix	smallholder
John Empson	farmer
William Faulkner	innkeeper
Samuel Ferriman	farmer
Solomon Goffe	pottery manufacturer
Solomon Goffe jun.	pottery manufacturer
Edward Green	not known
John Harris	yeoman-landowner-farmer
Joseph Mealum	farmer
Thomas Newman	farmer
William Pratley	horse owner
John Rawlings	farmer
John Smith	property owner
Robert Steptoe	carrier
James Taylor	not known
Thomas Wickens	workhouse master (in 1746/47)
William Yealls	farmer

Appendix B: Shipton Overseers and Churchwardens 1740-62

Years	Overseers	Churchwardens
1740-41	Thomas Matthews	Nicholas Willett
	John Patrick	Richard Frankling
1741-42	Nicholas Willett	Richard Day
	Richard Frankling	John Patrick
1742-43	Henry Colburn	Richard Day
	Richard Reeves	John Patrick
1743-44	James Cooke	Henry Colburn
	William Morton	Richard Reeves
1744-45	Robert Parrott	Thomas Young
	Martin Shayler	James Hux
1745-46	John Cooke	Robert Parrott
	Thomas Young	Martin Shayler
1746-47	James Hux	Martin Brooks
	Henry Furley	Thomas Matthews
1747-48	William Hayden	Thomas Shortland
	Henry Furley	William Hayden
1748-49	Thomas Matthews	Thomas Shortland
	John Patrick	William Hayden
1749-50	Edward Coleman	John Patrick
	John Patrick	Thomas Young
1750-51	Edward Coleman	John Patrick
	Thomas Shortland	Thomas Young
1751-52	Thomas Young	Henry Furley
	Thomas Shortland	James Hux
1752-53	Thomas Young	Henry Furley
	Robert Parrott	James Hux
1753-54	James Hux junior	John Cooke
	Henry Furley	Robert Parrott
1754-55	James Hux junior	John Cooke
	Henry Furley	Robert Parrott
1755-56	John Cooke	Edward Coleman
	Martin Shayler	Thomas Young
1756-57	Henry Morton	Edward Coleman
 Fletcher	Thomas Young
1757-58	James Corke	John Patrick
	Joseph Cross	Henry Morton
1758-59	William Morton	John Patrick
	Peter Brookes	Henry Morton
1759-60	Edward Coleman	Peter Brookes
	Thomas Young	John Cooke
1760-61	Edward Coleman	Peter Brookes
	Thomas Young	William Beckett
1761-62	Martin Shayler	James Hux
	Robert Parrott	William Beckett

Appendix C: Leafield Overseers and Churchwardens 1740-62

Years	Overseer	Churchwardens
1740-41	not known	John Harris
1741-42	John Rawlings John Smith	John Harris
1742-43	Solomon Goffe Thomas Wickens	Thomas Newman
1743-44	John Harris Samuel Ferriman	Thomas Newman
1744-45	Joseph Mealum William Yealls	Thomas Newman
1745-46	John Collins John Empson	Thomas Newman
1746-47	William Coppin Thomas Newman	John Empson
1747-48	John Rawlings John Smith	Solomon Goffe
1748-49	John Rawlings Solomon Goffe Thomas Wickens	Solomon Goffe
1749-50	Solomon Goffe Thomas Wickens	John Rawlings
1750-51	John Dix Samuel Ferriman	John Rawlings
1751-52	William Pratley James Taylor William Ycalls	John Rawlings
1752-53	Robert Steptoe William Faulkner	John Rawlings
1753-54	John Collins John Empson	John Rawlings
1754-55	Thomas Newman Edward Green	John Rawlings
1755-56	Solomon Goffe jun. William Carpenter	John Rawlings
1756-57	not known	John Rawlings
1757-58	John Harris	John Rawlings
1758-59	John Dix Solomon Goffe jun.	John Rawlings
1759-60	John Dix Solomon Goffe jun.	John Rawlings
1760-61	John Harris John Collins	John Rawlings
1761-62	not known	John Collins

Appendix D: Overseers Journeys—Places and Frequency

Places	Frequency	
	Sipton	Leafield
Abingdon, Berks	—	1
Ascott under Wychwood, Oxon	—	1
Bampton, Oxon	—	1
Bath, Somerset	3	1
Berkshire	—	1
Black Bourton, Oxon	1	—
Bloxham, Oxon	—	1
Bruern, Oxon	3	—
Burford, Oxon	20	11
Chadlington, Oxon	2	1
Charlbury, Oxon	—	1
Chipping Norton, Oxon	3	1
Clanfield, Oxon	3	1
Eyesham, Oxon	—	2
Hailey, Oxon	—	1
Hampshire	—	1
Hanborough, Oxon	—	1
Hazelton, Glos	1	—
Kingston (?Bagpuize), Berks	—	1
Lyncham, Oxon	1	—
Marcham, Berks	—	—
Milton under Wychwood, Oxon	4	1
Naunton, Glos	—	1
Newbury, Berks	—	1
Northleigh, Oxon	1	—
Oxford	3	2
Ramsden, Oxon	2	1
Rodgester (?Rochester), Kent	—	1
Sarsden, Oxon	1	—
Sipton under Wychwood, Oxon	—	1
Swalcliffe, Oxon	2	—
Tewkesbury, Glos	1	—
Witney, Oxon	3	5

Note: recorded journeys only. Others must have been made to the justices for warrants, orders, etc.

Appendix E: Extract from Shipton Overseers' Account Book 4 to 29 March 1750

	£	s	d
<i>4 March</i>			
Paid Ann Poter		1	6
Paid William Smith		1	0
Paid ye Wid Egnton		1	0
Paid Eliz Cartor		1	0
Paid Quart Children		2	0
Paid Elin Cros		0	6
Paid for apare of breches for Joseph Boulter		8	2
Paid for bering Edward Beeket		14	0
<i>11 March</i>			
Paid Ann Poter		1	6
Paid Wlm Smeth		1	0
Paid ye Wid Egnton		1	0
Paid Eliz Cartor		1	0
Paid Quart Children		2	0
Paid Elin Cros		0	6
<i>18 March</i>			
Paid Ann Poter		1	6
Paid Wlm Smeth		1	0
Paid ye Wid Egnton		1	0
Paid Eliz Cartor		1	0
Paid Quart Children		2	0
Paid Elin Cross		0	6
Paid Ann Benfeld		5	0
<i>25 March</i>			
Paid Ann Poter		1	6
Paid Elm Smeth		1	0
Paid Wid Egnton		1	0
Paid Quart Children		2	0
Paid Elin Cros		0	6
For maken ye tax		1	0
Spent at ye croud		3	6
		<u>3</u>	<u>10</u> 8
Paid Mr Pugele		1	9 3
Paid for Vanvels wife cofen			8 0
Paid Mr Furly			4 0
Paid Mr Wisdom		5	5 0
		<u>4</u>	<u>10</u> 11
Recd three Reates		36	0 0
Disburste		35	19 10
Remains		4	10 1

These Accounts sene and Allowed by us
Edwd. Coleman, Thomas Young, Tho. Shortland, Willm Cross X his Mark, Richard Reeve.

29 March All Persons Buried In Our Town of Shipton for the Year Last Past Were Accordingly to the Best of My Knowledge Buried In Woolen Only. Witness my Hand Jos. Goodwin Vicr.

We Doth Nominate and Apointe John Patterick and Mr Edwar Coleman Overseers for the Year Ennsuing - Tho. Shortland, Thoma Young, Tho. Mathews, Richard Reeve, Willm Cross X his Mark.

26 May Allowed by us Jona. Cope, J. Lenthal.

Appendix F: Extract from Leafield Overseers' Account Book 29 March to 12 April 1745

	£	s	d
<i>29 March</i>			
Thein payed widdo Jordan		2	6
Thein Payed Thomeis Colet		2	0
Thein payed the widdo Winter		1	0
Thein payed Sarah Turfrey		1	6
Thein payed An Tayler			6
Thein payed John Sparro		1	6
Thein payed John Falkner		1	3
Thein payed James Williams		1	0
For Mr Stephenis his opein		10	6
<i>31 March</i>			
Thein payed Depeir boucy 4 weeks		4	0
Thein payed for woin pair of shuis for Sarah Turferey boucy		1	9
<i>4 April</i>			
Thein payed the widdo Winter		1	0
Thein payed the widdo Jordin		2	6
Thein payed John Spro		1	6
Thein payed Serey Torferey		1	6
Thein payed Ain Teiler		0	6
Then payed Jameis Wileimeis		1	0
Then payen John Fokiner		1	3
Thein payed Thomeis Colet and Jameis		2	0
<i>12 April</i>			
Thein payed the widdo Winteir		1	0
Thein payed the widdo Jordjan		2	6
Then payed John Spro		1	6
Thein Saro Torferey		1	6
Thein payed Thomeis Colet and Jameis		2	0
Then payed Ain Teiler		0	6
Then payed John Fokner		1	3
Thein payed Jameis Wilmeis		1	0
Thein payed Depeir boucy 2 weeks		2	0
Paid for Colling house Rent		2	0 0
Rachell Jordan house Rent		1	10 0
Garrets house Rent		1	0 0
Rece'd by Taxes this year		46	19 0
Rece'd of the last Overseer			18 8
Rece'd in ye whole		47	17 8
Disburst as Appears		44	17 8
Remains in Hand		3	0 0

John Collins, Solomon Goff, John Empson, John Rawlins. We nominate and Appoint John Collins and John Empson to be Overseers of the poor of Leafield for the Year Ensuing.

20 May 1745 Allowed by Jona. Cope, J. Lenthal

Appendix G: Shipton Weekly Relief-Recipients and Duration

Years	Men	Years	Women
15	Simon Stevens	15	Widow Egerton
13	William Smith	12	Elizabeth Carter
8	Edward Becket	10	Widow Wilkins
7	Francis Trotman	9	Widow Ann Jeffrey
5	John Boulter		Widow Ann Potter
	Henry Lardner		Elizabeth Cross
	Quarterman's boy	8	Hannah Lardner
4	John Benfield		Widow Grevil May
	Thomas Cross	7	Widow Diana Quarterman
	William Vaughan (child)		Widow Ann Russell
3	Thomas Dipper	6	Jane Russell
	Francis Quarterman		Quarterman's girl
	Thomas Smith		Susan Spruce
	Thomas Townley		Elizabeth Ward
2	Henry Barick	4	Widow Whiting
	Edward L(?)each (child)		Widow Elizabeth Kilby
	Thomas Quarterman		Widow Dorothy Reeves
1	William Baggs	3	Ann Benfield
	Daniel Cross		Widow Cross
	Richard Kilby		May Quarterman
	William May	2	Beckingsale's (Beckley's) child
	John Venfield		Mary Dogue
	Richard Yeatman		Widow Frances Longsbaw
26 wks	Thomas Wilkins		Quarterman's girl
11 wks	James Hope	1	Widow Elizabeth Cross
10 wks	Thomas Bradley		Hannah Lane
			Widow Mary Meads
			Widow Margaret Pattin
			Isabel Pease
			Mary Stevens
			Widow Ann Tanner
		39 wks	Widow Ann Hope
		11 wks	Ann Hawkes
		10 wks	Mary Ward
		2 wks	Widow Alice Pogue

Appendix H: Leaffield Weekly Relief-Recipients and Duration

Years	Men	Years	Women
12	John Green	18	Widow Rachel Jordan
	George Sparow	14	Mary Busby
9	Robert Garret/Garrard	12	Widow Elizabeth Dore
	Ralph Siaford	11	Widow Ann Busby
8	James Collett	9	Widow Ann Taylor
6	William Dipper (child)	8	Widow Millicent Benfield
	Sampson Rawlings	6	Widow Ann Taylor
5	Thomas Collett	5	Siaford's girl
	James Taylor (child)	4	Widow Sarah Turfrey
4	Henry Linsey		Widow Ann Jordan
3	Binfield Crafts	3	Widow Sarah Andrews
	Stephen Pierce		Mistress Sarah Andrews
2	John Dipper (child)		Mary Beecham
	John Shaylor		Mistress Ann Crafts
	William Winter		Widow Ann Pratley
1	William Brown	2	Elizabeth Brown
	William Butler		Mistress Ann Earl
	William Moulder		Widow Sarah Pratley
	Edward Pratley		Rimal's girl
39 wks	William Hunt		Widow Winter
12 wks	John Hunt	1	Benfield's girl
9 wks	John Faulkner		Suke Pratley
8 wks	Robert Busby	28 wks	Widow Elizabeth Busby
6 wks	William Pratley		Martha Faulkner
3 wks	Thomas Jordan	17 wks	Widow Bunting
2 wks	James Williams	15 wks	Mary Hunt
		8 wks	Widow Elizabeth Sparrow
		7 wks	Widow Busby
		6 wks	Elenor Pratley
		4 wks	Mistress Sarah Cantom
		3 wks	'Mad' Mary Thomas

Appendix I: Food and Drink-Items and Costs

Items	Shipton			Leaffield		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
Drink (various)		19	10		5	0
Ale	3	2	10		16	11
Beer		11	0		3	9
Wine		7	5		2	4
Sack		10	10			
Cider		4	5			
Gin		2	6			
Milk		13	0		2	9
Bacon			8	1	2	5
Bread	21	11	6	1	18	1
Butter		2	0		2	0
Cheese		9	1		7	0
Chicken				1		7
Lard		1	0			
Oatmeal		2	4			
Meat	1	17	2	1	1	9
Salt			8			2
Sugar				1		7
Treacle		3	4			
Apples						2
Turnips			6			
Prunes						5
Meal		6	0		7	0
Wheat		3	6		12	6
Barley		15	3		8	3
Saforns(sic)		1	0			
Flour		7	6			
Barme			6			
Malt		13	10		4	0
Hops						9
Tobacco						1
Oil						1
Brewing						3
Totals	33	7	11	7	19	0

Appendix J: Clothing-Items and Costs

Items	Shipton			Leaffield		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
Aprons		1	0		8	9
Bib						6
Boots					8	6
Breeches	2	5	8	6	4	0
Caps					4	0
Coats	4	13	0	5	8	5
Frocks				2	19	9
Gowns		13	2	3	10	1
Handkerchief						10
Hat					19	2
Patten		1	0			10
Petticoat		5	0		1	0
Shift	1	7	7	3	3	0
Shirt	2	3	0	9	19	2
Shoes		10	0	17	1	11
Stockings		4	0	2	8	5
Stays					11	6
Waistcoat		5	6	2	19	8
Clothing	4	10	0	15	16	5
Cloth	1	18	0	14	15	5
Wool		2	10		10	9
Leather					4	0
Pocket					1	0
Thread			3		5	0
Buttons					1	9
Strings					3	0
Laces						2
Lining					3	2
Totals	19	0	0	89	5	2

Appendix K: An Account Received by the Shipton Overseers from James Pujolas for Medicines Given to Sarah Kilby, 1763

The Officers of Shipton	
1763 Debt to J. Pujolas for Medicines to Sarah Kilby	
January 18th an Hysterick Enema	2 0
January 18th a Bottle Nervous Mixture	2 0
January 18th an anodine draught	1 0
January 19th a purging tincture	1 9
January 20th the nervous mixture repeated	2 0
January 21st the purging tincture repeated	1 9
March 23 Bleeding	6
	11 0

May 13th 1763 Received ye above bill by the hands of Mr John Young. (Signed) James Pujolas.

I am grateful to Dr Tom McQuay for the following note:

'Hysterick' medicines were used for disorders of the womb (Hystera = womb in Greek). The patient appears to have been both acutely and gravely ill. She was probably not haemorrhaging as she had to be bled but was apparently too ill to take medicine so she had to have an enema—given by passing a rubber tube into the rectum and using a syringe or funnel and gravity feed. Saffron, oil of rue, penny royal, wormwood etc., would have been used, given in oil or starch for absorption from the rectum. Quite probably she was either approaching confinement and suffering from toxæmia and fits, or had just been confined and suffering from ensuing infection or trauma at the confinement.

Sarah Kilby died and was buried in Shipton on 24 May 1763.

Appendix L: Extract from Shipton Overseers' Account Book, November 1746 to March 1747

An Account of ye Expences of the Small Pox	
12 Nov	The Carriage of Hawkes Goods & the Boy up with ye Small Pox 5 0
18 Nov	Pd Frank Thomas for 100 Faggotts 15 0
	Pd Farmer Young for ye Carrige and a pint of Ale they had 4 2
16 Nov	Pd Jenny Benfield & child ye Ould Nurse & Jack Quarterman went in the carrige of em & Beding 2 6
28 Nov	Pd Ricbd Reeve for ye carriage of Jenny Benfield to ye Churchyard 2 6
	Pd Ricbd Yattman & Baggs for Attendance 3 0
	Pd for Scutcheneild 18d and Harty Horne 3d 1 9
	Pd for 2 Pecks of Turnips 6
	Pd Bags for Digin a Whole for ye filth 6
	Pd Thos Cross for Jenny Benfield's Grave. 1 0
14 Dec	Pd The Ould Nurse for a month at 5s 1 0 0
	Pd Ricbd Reeve for his horse 1 0
	Pd Bags for going with her whome 1 0
	Pd for 1 Pint of Spirits of Wine 9
	Pd James Hope for dressing a Beasts(?) Bely 4
31 Dec	Pd Nurse Matthews for 7 weeks 3 10 0
	Pd Ricbd Yattman for 7 weeks Attendance 1 15 0
	Pd Frank Smiths Bill 3 4
	Pd Wm Moretons Bill 1 1 8
	Pd Martin Brookes Bill 1 5 9
	Pd Mrs Willits Bill 7 1
	Pd Wm Lucketts Bill 18 0
	Pd Wm Headens Bill 1 11 4
	Pd James Cookes Bill 18 0
	Pd Farmer Patrick for 3 Cheese & for Close for Trotmans Boy 7 8
	Pd Danl Hiet for ye use of his Bed 2 6
19 Mar	Pd Rawlings for Lime & Whitewashing Yattmans & Hawkes Houses 4 6
24 Mar	Pd Martin Brookes halfe a years rent for Mr Hawkes 1 0 0

Appendix M: Extract from Leaffield Overseers' Account Book, 10 August 1753

August ye 10:1753. My Lords Account

Master Isords two weeks pay	2 0 0
Isords Bill of Expenses for the two weeks	1 7 6
For Butter and Chees and milk and bacon	4 6
Gave Ed: Rawlings for going to Wirney	6
Paid Ed Pratley for wood	4 7
Bought a shirt for My Lord	2 0
Dame Jomsons a weeks pay and two days	13 0
The Expences of Dame Jonsons and Eliz: Bursby	14 0
For claning and cloathing of Bety Bursby	14 0
Sary Cantom 3 weeks and half at 4s per week	14 0
The week Before it came and when he was ill	4 6
Lady a months pay	12 0
Gave Lady when the child was a Miss	1 6
Gave Lady when Dam Jonsons was we her	2 0
Gave the children when lady went away	1 0
My Lords Burial	1 1 9
George Sparrow for rining the Bell	6
For Whiting and Claning the House	3 7
Paid Jane Pratley for washing and Airing the things	5 0
Doctor Batts bill for my Lord	1 8 6
Wm. Hunts bill for Elizth. Pratley	18 7
Ruth two weeks pay	1 0 0
Wm. Hunt three weeks at 4s per week	12 0
Gave (Pratley?-deleted) to bury his child	10 6
Paid Robart Stepto for carring of Lady	1 6
	<hr/>
	14 0 0

Note: 'My Lord' was slang for a hunchback (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). The use of the expression led to correspondence in 1802, (loose in the account book), between the vicars of Leaffield, Minster Lovell and Black Bourton, who had clearly been puzzled by it. The vicar of Minster Lovell found the slang definition in the *New English Dictionary* and drew attention to its use in that sense by Smollett, Lamb and Besant; for example, Smollett in *Peregrine Pickle*... 'His pupil was, on account of his lump, distinguished by the title of My Lord'.

'Lady' Pratley appears elsewhere in the account book as getting weekly pay.

How a Little Piece of Old Shipton was Saved

NORMAN FROST

In the year 1773 an act of parliament ordered all turnpike trusts to provide guideposts and milestones along their roads. One of these milestones was erected in what is now Station Road, Shipton, just to the south of (Turn)Pike House. The milestone itself consisted of a dressed block of stone to the face of which was fixed a cast-iron plate showing the nearest towns and their respective distances.

One pleasant summer's day in 1987 the afternoon torpor was broken by a loud crash—the Oxfordshire County Council grass-cutter had hit this immovable stone object. Unfortunately the cast-iron plate was not so immovable and had been wrenched off and lay on the footpath. By good chance I witnessed the accident and was able to retrieve the plate quite undamaged.

The County Council expressed their sorrow and promised speedy action. Unfortunately this was all they did. It took more than a year of official letters from Shipton Parish Council and many less official telephone calls from the Society to spring the council into action, but now the milestone is once again in good repair, as the photograph below shows.

Next time you pass along Station Road spare it a quick glance. We don't wish to lose 216 years of history again.



St Mary's Church, Shipton

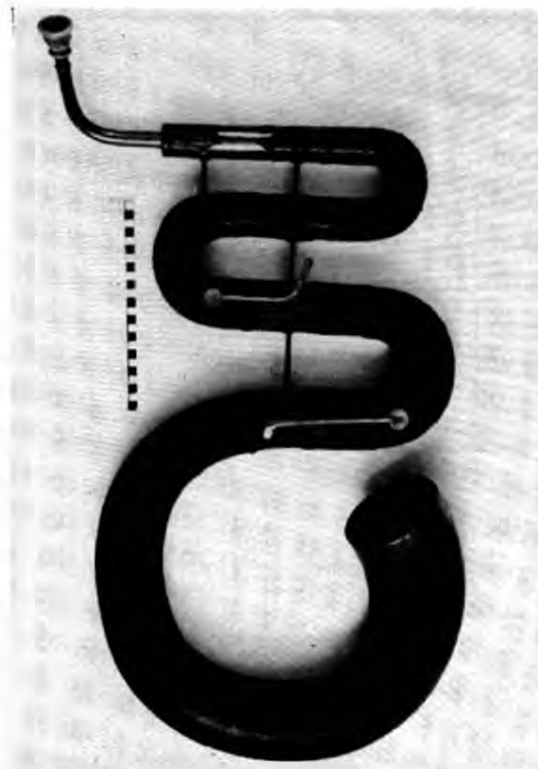
RACHEL GRANT

In September 1986 a group was formed, with the full approval of the Parochial Church Council, to study St Mary's Church, Shipton. The aim was two-fold—to provide a record of the internal furnishings of the church, and to involve members of the WLHS in a research project.

At the inaugural meeting the study was divided into sections, similar to those adopted by NADFAS church recorders. Stonework, Windows, Memorials, Woodwork, Metalwork (including the bells), Textiles, Miscellaneous (to cover the organ and clock), and Library were agreed as convenient headings. One, two or three people chose to work on each.

The research comprises a description, using the correct architectural or technical terms (for lettering of a memorial for instance), measurements, maker or designer, history and dates or donor, if known, and a photograph or drawing. Regular meetings of group members have been held to discuss

'Rose en Soleil' and the Bear and Ragged Staff on the font



The serpent which hung in the church until 1978

progress and to spur one another on. Everyone now knows how cold an unheated church is in winter, but nevertheless the project is nearing completion.

One point to emerge is that the rose carved on the font is the 'Rose en Soleil', the badge of Edward IV, which in conjunction with the Bear and Ragged Staff of the Warwick family (also on the font), limits its date to the years between 1461 when Edward became king and 1470 when Warwick, the 'Kingmaker', turned against him.

Many people will not know that a serpent, a survivor of the musical instruments which used to accompany the singing, hung in the church until 1978. Made in Burford early in the nineteenth century, it is now in the care of Oxfordshire Museum Services. Nor will they suspect that the church contains as many as 47 memorials, dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. They often show coats of arms, and the Lacy and Reade families of Shipton Court are among those commemorated. The realization that the parclose screen in the north aisle contains oak from the rood screen which stood across the chancel arch until 1859, makes another link with the past.

Much information, supported by photographs, will be available when the record is finally put together, to present the furnishings of the church as they were at the end of the 1980s.

Mar 30 1905 "Reade's Tomb"

Names taken from the Plate fastened to wall inside "Reade's Vault, at Shipton Church 1905"

- First Buried, Dame Elizabeth Reade
2. Miss Farmer
 3. Jane Reade, wife of George Reade
 4. Sir Thomas Reade Baronet
 5. George Reade
 6. Sir John Reade Baronet
 7. Sir John Reade Baronet, died 17th Nov 1789
 8. Miss Harriet Reade
 9. Miss Louise Reade
- Mr Reade's Children —
10. Charles
 11. Catherine
 12. Thomas
 13. Thomas
 14. Catherine

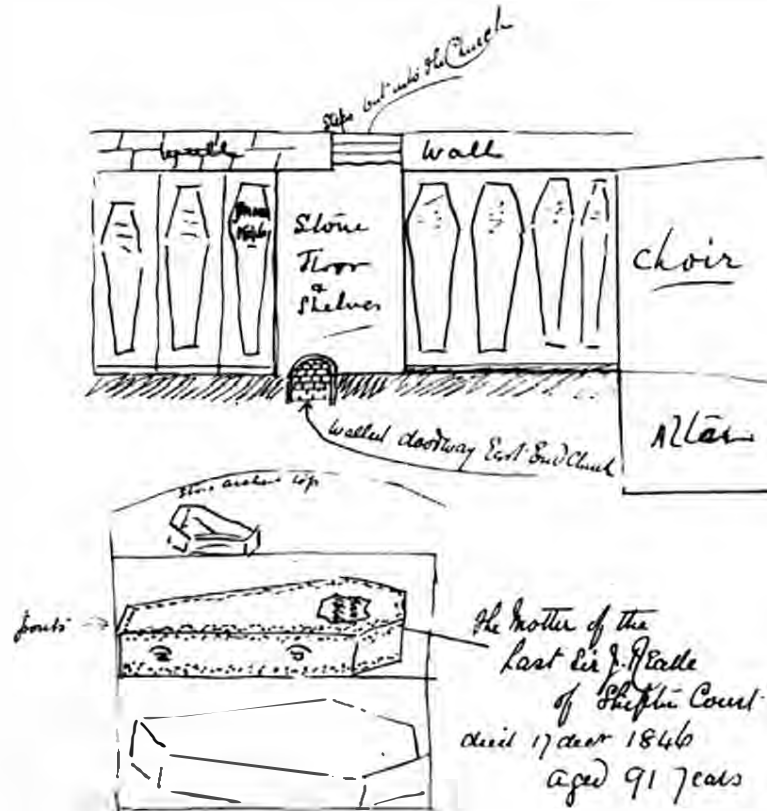
all above are not exactly and named exactly as on the Plate mentioned above. (copy)

Particulars taken from Coffin Plate of what looked to be the last person to have been interred there - (Vault)

Jane Reade
widow of the late
Sir J Reade Bart
daughter of Sir Charles Hoskyns Reade Bart.
died Dec 17th 1846?
aged 91 years.

I made out 20 Buried altogether } which take standing
room for 6 more. } & take Office
Shipton Court
Oxon

Rough Sketch
of Vault interior



A note on the 'scull house' under the Reade chapel in Shipton church was published in Wychwoods History Number Two. It described how the Reades were granted a faculty to appropriate the place for a family vault. On 14 March 1905, the vault was opened to see if the roof was strong enough to support a cement floor. A report on the inspection has recently come to light and is reproduced above.

News from the Wychwood Park Archives, Toronto

NORMAN FROST

A recent letter from Keith Miller, archivist, tells of a recent art and photographic exhibition held at Wychwood Park, Toronto, Canada. There were 65 paintings on view including 17 original paintings by Marmaduke Matthews. Also on display were photographs and historical documents relating to the history of Wychwood Park. The exhibition was a great success.

Should any of our members visit Toronto and wish to pay a visit to Wychwood Park the address of the archivist is Keith Miller, 108 Wychwood Park, Toronto M6G 2V5. Mrs Gwen Morgan, a former resident of Milton and one-time schoolteacher, now resident at Wootton near Abingdon, called at Wychwood Park while visiting her family in Toronto. She was made most welcome by Keith Miller and his mother and spent a delightful afternoon at their home. She was also shown around Wychwood Park and saw Wychwood, the house built for Marmaduke Matthews of Fifield in 1874. A photograph of Wychwood is shown below, correcting the article in last year's journal, when another of the houses in Wychwood Park was printed by mistake.



Plague Tyme

TOM McQUAY

The parish registers¹ for Shipton in the sixteenth century provide a full record from 1538 of baptisms, marriages and burials for Shipton itself and for Milton, Lyneham, Leafield, Langley, Ramsden and Bruern. Inter alia they document two contrasting outbreaks of plague, the first in Shipton and the second in Milton.

There is an entry in the burial register for the 18 October 1575: 'Wickens, Thomas of the plague as it is thought out of Richard Coxies house'. A further entry on the 17 November 1575 with 'nota' written in the margin reads 'In October buried Thomas Wickins by night because he died of the pestelence at Richard Coxies house, he came thither from the Bristoward and lay not sike past two or three daies'. Beneath this, dated 5 November, is another entry, also with 'nota' in the margin: 'John Greene in the Forest besides Richarde Bradshawes Lodge by the device and consent of the parish for that yet he died there of the pestilence.'

There was no increase in the number of burials after 17 November 1575 compared with the preceding years and nothing to indicate a plague epidemic. The basic precautions taken by the Shipton villagers to prevent the spread of infection thus appear to have been successful. They seem to have recognized victims of bubonic plague, possibly from bitter experience, accepted that the disease was contagious and may have been aware that there was a plague epidemic in Bristol² where 'This year began the plague to be very hot about St James' tide and there died about 2000 persons.'

Whereas in 1575 there were only two plague deaths, in 1593 a total of 47 villagers from Milton under Wychwood were buried between 1 July and 30 November and the vicar or clerk wrote 'Plague Tyme' in the register. The scale of the epidemic can be gauged by the proportion of the villagers who died. The average number of burials per year from Milton for the previous 28 years was 5.1. The sixteenth-century average is said to be 26 deaths per 1000 population per annum³, and on this basis the population of Milton may be estimated at 200. This figure is confirmed by multiplying the decennial average of baptisms by 30. A degree of inaccuracy is inevitable because the parish burial and baptism registers list internments in the churchyard and christenings in the church, rather than deaths in the parish and births in the village, but it is likely that a quarter (47/200) of the population of Milton died in this plague outbreak.

The number of burials from the nearby hamlet of Lyneham rose abruptly in May and June 1593, but there is no comment in the register. In July there were three burials from Milton, 14 in August, 15 in September, eight in October,

seven in November and none in December. In the Phippes family seven died, together with their servant. That family name does not reappear in the registers. Of the Shewell family six members and their servant died. Five households accounted for 28 deaths.

The origin of this outbreak is not clear. There is no burial entry suggesting the death of a stranger at the beginning of the epidemic but there was certainly plague in the summer of 1593 in the city of Oxford, twenty miles away¹. Whereas the Milton epidemic appears to have ended as abruptly as it began, the Oxford outbreak continued, and there were 400 deaths in 1597.

Bubonic plague depends mainly on the rat flea, *Xenopsylla Cheopis*, for its transmission. In the village outbreak the infection was probably passed to and from the victim by fleas and continued to spread in that way. The short period of the epidemic, its late summer peak and abrupt end, suggest that the infection did not become endemic in rat colonies to provide a reservoir of infection. Major continuing epidemics depend on concentrations of rodents and man. Density of population appears to be very important and this would account for the different experience in rural Milton under Wychwood and the city of Oxford.

¹ Oxfordshire County Record Office MS DD Par. Shipton under Wychwood d.1.

² Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stewart England*, Routledge and Kegan Paul (1985) 111.

³ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871*, Edward Arnold (1981), 311,528.

⁴ Oxford Council Acts 1583-1626, 80-81.

William Master, Vicar of Shipton 1564-91, (Wychwoods History Number Two) left us much valuable information in the parish registers and set a pattern of good record-keeping which endured after his death. I am indebted to Jack and Joan Howard-Drake for drawing my attention to the medical data and helping with its interpretation. I am using this data, some of it unique for the sixteenth century, to write an article on Maternal Mortality to be published in Local Population Studies and have material for another paper on Perinatal Mortality in a sixteenth-century parish'.

T. M.

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

The English timber side of Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd was built up by the late Samuel E. Groves (the last of the sons with the firm's name) at the beginning of this century. The business flourished for some seventy years, and the sights and sounds of its operations were familiar to all villagers. It employed some 40/50 men until the early 1980s when English timber became scarce. The firm had relied heavily on the supply of elm and the spread of Dutch elm disease was one of the contributory factors which caused the closure of this side of the firm's business. The sawmill and ancillary buildings were then let out as industrial units. This photograph shows some of its timber stock and the steam crane in the old timber yard, a site which will probably be developed for light industrial use and for residential building.



Fifty Years of Change

JOHN RAWLINS

Introduction

These are a few observations on some of the changes in the Wychwoods villages in the last fifty years, from the 1930s to the 1980s. My research is based on photographs, school records, the census material which is available for public examination, newspapers, maps, my memory, and the recollections of countless persons to whom I owe grateful thanks.

For the record, I was born in my present home in 1930, and lived there until 1948. From then onwards my working life was spent away from the village, although I did return during holiday periods. On my retirement three years ago I began making notes on changes in the villages. This was stimulated by the material in *Wychwoods History* Number 3 which records the changes in the last century. Further impetus was given by the film '24 Square Miles' which showed life in nearby villages in the 1940s.

This article covers the present civil parishes of Leafield (which includes part of the now extinct Wychwood parish), Ascott under Wychwood, Shipton under Wychwood (which includes the now extinct Langley parish), Milton under Wychwood, Lyncham, Bruern, Fifield and Idbury. I write generally about all those villages, but mainly of the two which I know best, Shipton and Milton. When I refer to a more detailed study of an area, that area is the stretch of road in Milton from the parish boundary with Shipton at Prew's garage along Shipton Road running west and going down Green Lane. This is my home.

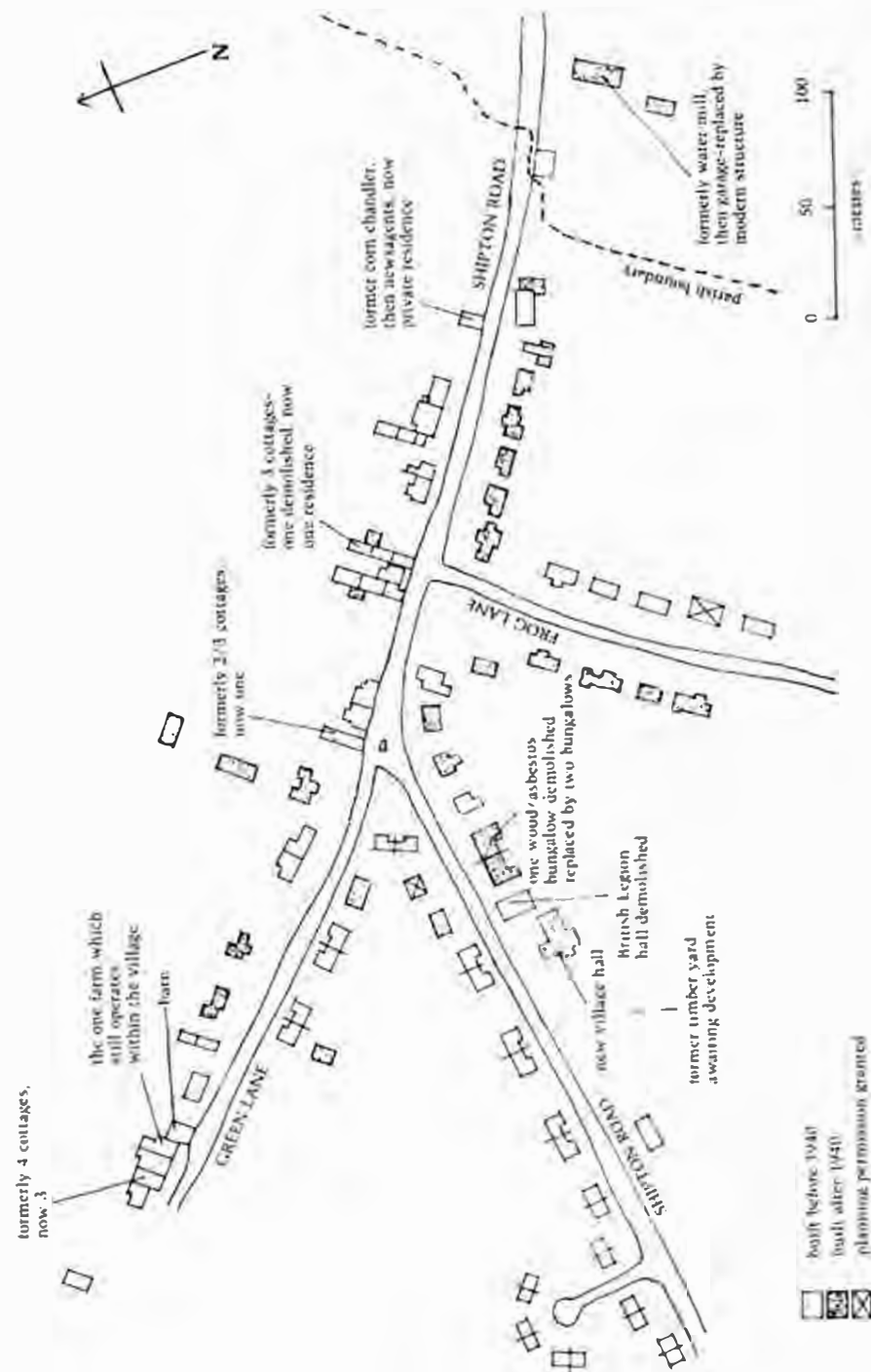
My only qualifications for writing this article is that I can remember the area as it was in the 30s, and can now compare it with today. I am not a sociologist, historian or author, so I ask you to make allowances for any incorrect sifting of material or wrongful interpretations of facts. Classification of buildings, social groupings etc. are my own. As changes in the area are continuous, I have taken 31 October 1988 as a 'cut-off' date.

Since my retirement I have become acutely aware that villages do not merely consist of roads, fields and buildings but also of people who live in them. This has been made obvious with the deaths, in the last three years, of so many of the villages' inhabitants who were born, lived, worked and died here. They are a vanishing breed. Many played a very full and active part in village life and helped to make the villages into living communities and not merely collections of roads, fields and buildings. Some of their recollections have been used in the compilation of these notes, and it is to them that I would like to dedicate this article.

Daily Routine

Some indication of life style in the 30s may be gained from the daily routine of my own family.

Figure 1: Some of the changes since 1930 at Shipton Road and Green Lane, Milton. (Domestic residences and work places only)



Awoken by hand-wound alarm clock (no electric or radio alarms). In winter this meant frozen window panes, cold board floors and the need to get some form of lighting, either candle or oil lamp. We had no gas and only the minimum of electrical points, and they were all downstairs.

Having arrived downstairs one had the luxury of electric light but this did not extend to heating so the kitchen range had to be lit for warmth, and oil stoves for heating water for tea (no coffee) and washing.

After breakfast Father usually cycled to work in the morning cycle 'rush-hour'. I walked to school an hour later while Mum stayed at home, as did most village mums. She then attended to the household chores, including preparation of food for the chickens and the mid-day meal, then called dinner. If it was Monday then the copper had to be lit and filled by bucket, and then followed the vigorous routine of thumping the clothes, mangling by hand-wringer, and ending up with the warm soapy water being used for washing down all the floors.

Father and son returned for dinner and after that left Mum to do the washing up before she spent the afternoon preserving fruit, baking, shopping, or out on social calls connected with the chapel, British Legion or Women's Institute. The evenings were spent fetching the milk, gardening, ironing, darning or social functions, ending up by locking up the chickens, and bringing in the wood and coal for the following day.

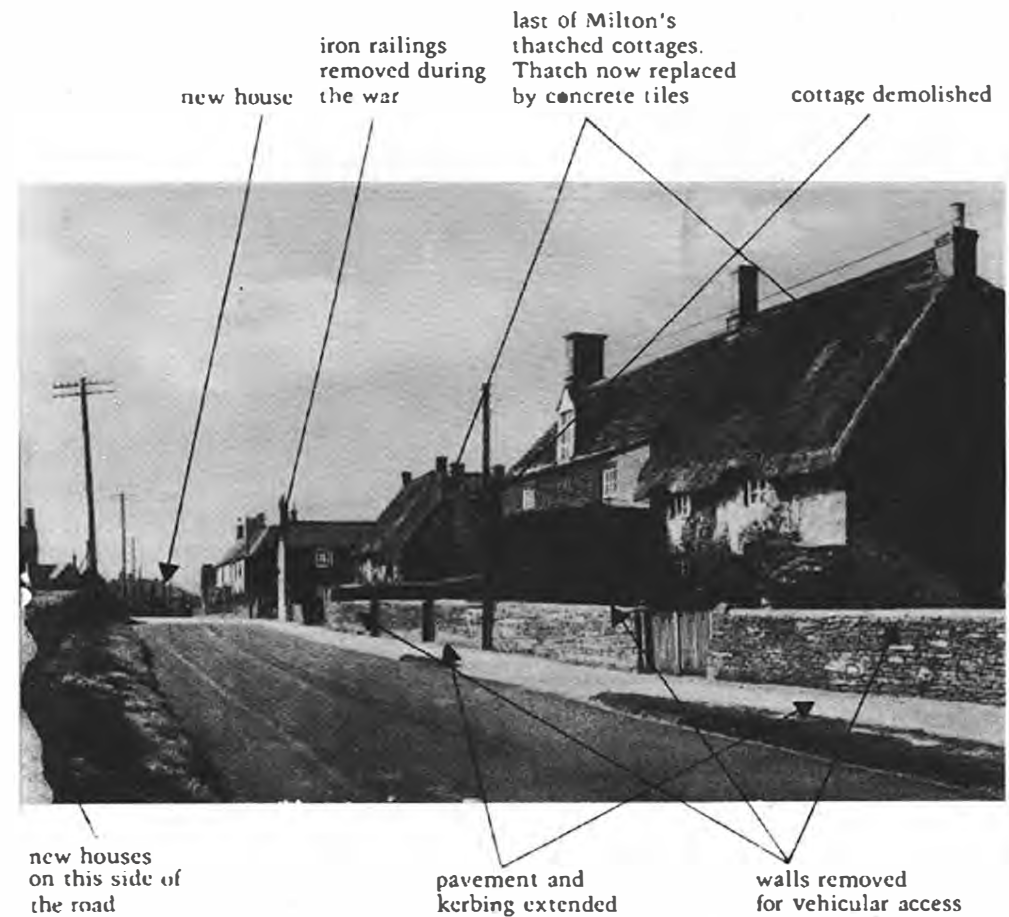
There were variations to the routine at weekends although Saturday began in the same way with Dad off to work as normal, leaving Mum to do the weekend cooking and me to do odd jobs—fetching paraffin, taking the accumulator for charging, weeding and getting in the wood and coal. Collecting fallen leaves from the elm trees in Frog Lane was an added autumn task.

The midday meal on Saturday was always roast followed by rice pudding and fruit—never on a Sunday—I know not why. The afternoon was spent cleaning out the chickens and other odd jobs in house and garden. Occasionally there were fetes and jumble sales to attend. More frequently it was haircut afternoon. This operation was carried out by the local blacksmith in the open-sided shed at the bottom of his garden.

By tea it was time to light the copper fire and get the zinc bath down from the scullery wall in preparation for the weekly event of bathing in front of the kitchen fire. The rigmarole was repeated before visits to the doctor or hospital. After labouriously bucketing the water from copper to bath, the whole process had to be repeated to empty it.

One change to Saturday's routine were the weekends when the visiting minister to the Zoar Baptist Chapel came to stay overnight. As I recall, these gentlemen were usually dressed in black, with black squeaky boots to match, and had come by the evening train from the Midlands or the Black Country. They were working men who had been 'called' and seemed to spend a great deal of time praying; on their arrival, before, during and after meals, on their departure or at other times when they thought fit. The arrival of these gentlemen meant that the attic was my designated sleeping place for the night. It also meant that the marble-topped washstand was brought into use.

On Sunday after being woken up—the one late start to the week—it was my job to take up the hot water for our guest's ablutions, while the rest of the



Some of the changes since the 1930s in Shipton Road, Milton. Notice the absence of cars, TV aerials, road signs and markings, and estate agents' boards.

family still had to wash at the one tap over the scullery sink. By the late 30s we did have a WC, albeit outside, which obviated the need for 'guzzunders' and walks up the garden to the white jasmine surrounded privy.

My next job was to light the fire in the front room—the one occasion that it was lit—so that the room had a chance to air. Obviously this airing was insufficient to combat the rising damp which reached up the walls as far as the curtain rail and above.

Coming from a strict Baptist family, the chapel figured largely in Sunday's schedule of events. After a cooked breakfast I was despatched to Sunday School, while Dad carried out his chores as handyman/gardener at Sunrise in Jubilee Lane. After chapel together Dad and I would visit relatives or some of

his friends—those who had been injured in the First World War, the gardening fraternity, or those with a similar disability to his rheumatoid arthritis. These visits sometimes extended to Sunday afternoons. In the afternoon I went to Sunday school again, while Dad got on with his letter-writing. In the evening Mum would go off to chapel, while Dad and I would do his evening chores at Sunrise.

Sunday's routine was sometimes varied by the arrival of visitors, when the table would be laid in the front room (the only time) with the special treats of tinned-meat sandwiches followed by tinned fruit and condensed milk. The latter treat was never allowed to be savoured on its own—it always had to be eaten with bread and butter so that it would last longer. There were occasions when we went out to visit, but only rarely were these visits made by motor car.

The whole village was a different place on a Sunday. Sunday was a day of rest from the weekly toil—all chapels and churches were open for business. No sport on the Green. No cycle rush hour in the morning, no screaming band-saws or hooters from Alfred Groves. No motor-mowers, mechanical hedge-clippers and strimmers as now. Men waited by the tap for the lunch-time opening of the Quart Pot. (The tap was one of the village taps set into the wall on the corner of Church Road and Shipton Road, Milton. It was demolished to improve the road junction, and replaced by the coronation gates onto the Green.) Later, young men and lads would gather at the same tap waiting for something to happen or something to do. More waited at the tap for the evening opening at seven. Few people worked, only those caring for the stock. It was a time for family walks and visits.

Farms & Farming

From being the essential core to the life of the area, farming has been reduced to a minor role in the economy. The changes to the farms, and methods of farming have been very great in the last 50 years. This period has seen the disappearance of many of the small mixed farms of 100-200 acres, taking with them the style of farming, the machinery, tools, animals and farm buildings, as well as reducing the amount of local employment.

The 30s saw the introduction to many local farms of the tractor, and with its gradual spread it replaced the horse for pulling carts and operating machinery; and it replaced human power for hedging, ditching, digging etc. As the tractors increased in number, so they increased in size, as did much of the machinery they pulled or operated.

With the increase of mechanization, buildings (including whole farms) became redundant as did the farm workers and their cottages. Where perhaps six full-time workers were needed to run a pre-war farm of 150 acres, one person with a variety of machines will now suffice. As a consequence of this change Milton has lost Poplar Farm, High Street, completely; Heath Farm, Lyncham Road, has lost much of its land; and Little Hill, Church Road, has lost all its land and its buildings have been adapted for residential use. The farms of Shipton show a similar pattern, with The Meadows, Meadow Lane, almost disappearing; The Old Prebendal in Station Road, Grove Farm in High Street and Court Farm in Mawles Lane have all lost their land. Springhill Farm buildings have been converted to domestic dwellings, with Home Farm soon



The Wells family in an Oxfordshire wagon at Poplar Farm, Milton around 1930 before the arrival of the tractor and Dutch barn. Now the site of 20 to 23 Poplar Farm Close and Poplar House

to follow suit, and at Lanehouse Farm the buildings are now used for holiday lets. Ascott and Leafield farms also show a similar pattern, but Fifield and Idbury have kept their farms more or less as they were pre-war.

Farms situated within the villages generally went out of business first. Possibly their size made them uneconomic, and because there was some profit in selling to cater for the expanding need for housing. Those farms further from the village centres have soldiered on, by amalgamating with other farms, by absorbing land from those farms made redundant, or by specialization. Some small units still exist and some of them are newly created outside the village confines.

Gone are the labour-intensive mixed farms on which one branch of the farm's economy supported others—they produced fowls, sheep, fruit, cider, grain, pigs, cattle (both for meat and dairy) for market or local sale, as well as milk, grain, hay, roots and straw for their own animals' consumption. From these farms came the manure for fertilizing and conditioning the land. But with the demand for increased production to offset increased capital expenditure, some specialization and the increased use of other fertilizers has been necessary. Sometimes this has brought over-production, not to mention the problems associated with the disposal of straw and slurry.

Gone too are the daily routines of the mixed farms with early morning milking; getting the horses ready for the day's work; feeding fowls and pigs; collecting eggs; carrying, cooling and bottling milk and then taking it on the delivery round, or putting it in churns for roadside collection. Then would follow the day's ploughing, drilling, hedging, ditching or other seasonal occupations. The day's routine would end with a repeat of the morning's activities.

The big annual events of the local farming year have also come to an end. Harvesting was one which demanded the presence of as many arms as possible. After the cutting and binding of the sheaves they then had to be stooked, while at the same time keeping an eye open for rabbits for the pot as the amount of standing corn grew less. After the drying period more arm work was necessary to move the sheaves from stook to cart, and then from cart to elevator up to barn or rick.

So all was safely gathered in, until the arrival of the 'threshing tack' usually hired from Messrs Griffin of Bruern Grange. Then all the sheaves had to be moved again. With the chuffing of the engine, whirling and slapping of the belts, the hum of the drum and thump of the baler, the crop was finally sorted into grain, chaff and straw which then had to be humped and wheeled to storage, all accompanied by smoke and dust, not to mention danger to life and limb. All that effort and movement has been superceded by the immensely complex combine harvester, rendering redundant men, machines, hessian sacks and barns.

A general idea of the changes in farming can be gained from a closer look at two of the local farms. First, Lower Farm at Upper Milton, which in many ways mirrors other farms of less than 200 acres. No longer does it keep dairy cows (for milk and butter), sheep, draught horses, hens, ducks and turkeys, nor does it grow oats and root crops. The only animals kept which are the same as pre-war are pigs, and horses for pleasure. There has been some specialization

Threshing by steam, Hill Farm, Bruern, 1924. This was a familiar annual sight on local farms until ousted by tractors and combine harvesters



into crop production of barley, wheat, beans and peas. There has also been a reduction in full-time staff from seven (including three family) to two (including one family).

The decrease in the number of farm workers is even more apparent when one looks at another local farm, Hill Farm at Bruern, where twenty-four full-time workers once found employment but now only four are needed. The farm once operated a thriving steam traction engine business in the 30s, but it has now lost its ten engines and associated machinery for ploughing, threshing and haulage. Hill Farm is a larger farm of some 640 acres where some specialization has taken place, from mixed farming to sheep and cereals. As a result the farm has lost its orchard and cider-making, dairy cows (milk and butter), pigs that were once sent to Collins pork pies at Evesham, ducks and rabbits for London shops and hotels, and 20 draught horses. Gone too are some crops—oats, mangolds, swedes, turnips, peas and beans which were grown for consumption by the animals on the farm. Many pieces of agricultural machinery have also fallen into disuse: chaff-cutters, root-choppers and pulpers, cake-grinders, shears, dairy equipment, yokes, chums, Lainchbury elevator (from the Kingham firm also made redundant) and stationary engines, both steam and diesel (see photo below). Other changes in the farming at Hill Farm have meant that sheep are no longer walked through Foxholes to Kingham market (also closed), and straw is no longer cut into chaff to supply the Co-op horses in Birmingham. And lastly, the number of tractors has increased from one in 1930 to seven present day.

Farm changes have also had repercussions on a wider front, for it has meant

loss of employment in the ancillary trades—the casual and part-time hedgers, ditchers and hoers etc, the gate and hurdle makers, blacksmiths, woolstaplers, pig-killers, and drovers. It has also caused the loss of the local dairies (there were approximately eleven in the area pre-war who delivered milk etc, from their own farms), three water-mills, and the markets at Shipton and Kingham. In their place has come the need for bulk carriers of farm produce and animals, specialist firms to supply all the fertilizers, foodstuffs and machinery for modern farming. One local firm still in existence is F. W. P. Matthews Ltd, flour millers of Shipton (see *Wychwoods Album* page 22) which, by virtue of modernization, has managed to increase its production. Most of its consumption of wheat for flour comes from local farms (within a 25-mile radius).

To see farming as it was in the 30s it is now necessary to visit Cogges Manor Farm Museum, Witney, or the Cotswold Countryside Collection, Northleach. Finally, where have the lady farmers gone? In *Kelly's Directory* four were listed in the 30s.

Buildings

Looking at the Wychwoods villages one is struck by the number of new buildings which have been crammed into the existing village confines within the last 50 years. In Milton this has amounted to an increase of 166% by 1981 and in Shipton an increase of 126% (see Figure 2).

These new houses have been built on fields (e.g. Sinnels Field, Shipton and The Sands, Milton), alongside existing roads (Frog Lane and Church Road, Milton and Milton Road, Shipton), and on land adjoining the larger houses and redundant farms. In some cases the farm buildings have been converted to residential use (Springhill and Lanehouse Farms, Shipton and Little Hill, Milton), or there are plans to do so (Home Farm, Shipton). At Poplar Farm, High Street, Milton, all the farm buildings were demolished to make way for house building. Its orchard went as well, as did those of Little Hill Farm, Milton, and Court Farm, Shipton.

Most of the larger houses have undergone change. Some have been split into smaller units (Shipton Court and Milton Vicarage), while others (Old Prebendal House and St Michaels, Shipton) will offer a different type of accommodation to pre-war, but all have surrendered part of their gardens for housing development. This latter feature, of filling in gardens with new buildings, has also applied to the slightly smaller houses (Holmwood, High Street, Shipton, and Cotswold, Shipton Road, Milton) even down to building in the gardens of former council houses (Shipton Road, Milton). When one adds the residential development of redundant buildings or the sites on which they once stood—the local schools, tillyards, gas works and chapels—one can easily get the feeling that the villages as they were pre-war have been converted into 'rural suburbia'. Similar development can be seen at Leafield and Ascott, but not on quite the same scale. The smaller villages of Fifield, Idbury, Lyneham and Bruern have seen fewer changes.

As the century has passed so the style and construction of the buildings has changed, as has the demand for new building. There would appear to have been very little domestic building in the first decades, merely a little alteration to existing structures. The 20s saw the first council houses in the area (Shipton

Road, Milton), and the simple bungalows of wood, asbestos and corrugated iron (Simons Lane, Fiddlers Hill, Shipton, and Bruern Road, Milton etc). Latterly, some of these have been demolished and replaced by more substantial structures. The 20s then brought a rash of brick, cement rendering and pebbledash (Meadow Lane, Shipton; Pear Tree Close and Frog Lane, Milton), as well as the first solidly built bungalows of brick, stone and tile. There was also some commercial development of the tillyards and garage/filling stations. The 30s saw almost the last of the thatched roofs in the area, being replaced by the newer concrete tiles, ousting the Welsh blue slates, which in turn had superseded the local Cotswold (probably Stonesfield) stone slates.

After the Second World War came the development of the council house sites in most of the villages. This satisfied the demand for better housing for rent by the local population which could not be met by private development. Unfortunately it saw a continuation of brick and pebbledash.

During the 50s the amount of private building was small, limited by the shortage of materials. By the late 50s, local opinion, and the planning authorities were asking for a return to building in the local material—stone. The closure of the local quarries, the increasing cost of extraction elsewhere and a shortage of skilled craftsmen posed a financial problem. This was partially overcome by the building supply industry developing and producing a cheaper reconstructed stone and slate. Improvement in this field continues.

The late 60s saw the beginning of the building 'boom' in the Wychwoods. It is interesting to note that, as much of the demand for new building came from outside the area, so did the developers and builders and there was a subsequent decline of the larger local building firms as builders of the larger estates. Most of the subsequent development of such sites (Poplar Farm and Little Hill Farm, Milton, and Court Close and Sinnels Field, Shipton) has been undertaken by contractors from outside the area, leaving the local firms to pick up what was left—the building of individual houses, conversions, extensions and modernizations.

Farm buildings have changed from the stone-built barns, byres, pigsties etc. to those needed for modern farming. Dutch barns are still with us, but grain silos and dryers, battery pig and hen units etc. have since appeared, constructed of the more modern materials of concrete block, asbestos, steel, etc.

The improving financial status of the occupants of the cottages, together with the more widely available results of technological progress has also meant some alteration in building styles. The 20s and 30s saw new buildings with downstairs bathrooms, and in the 30s some had integral garages. Newer buildings (from the 60s) have been designed to include upstairs bathrooms as well as garages. The older properties have had to be adapted to include such features, and this has led to some visual change in the exterior of many, especially in the need to cater for the motor car.

For the larger houses this was easy, as the driveways and stables previously used by horse-drawn traffic had little difficulty in receiving the car. But for the smaller cottages some drastic alterations had to be made. In some cases a front room was converted into a garage, extensions were added, sheds were utilized, or prefabricated structures were erected. To provide access to the car's new home, pedestrian gateways had to be enlarged, often necessitating the removal



Above: Poplar Farm in High Street, Milton, around 1950

Below: The same view in 1988



of the garden wall. New driveways and turning bays meant that once valuable garden had to be sacrificed for the more valuable motor car.

In the 30s the cottage garden usually formed a very important part of the household economy for it produced a considerable proportion of the food supply. Although there may have been an odd flower patch or bed, the garden was mainly functional and not for pleasure. Pleasure gardens were the preserve of the larger houses. But since then there have been changes. Most of the larger houses have lost their gardens and many of the cottage gardens have changed their use. No longer do they contain privies, fruit and vegetable plots, chickenruns, and pigsties which have been replaced by conservatories, driveways, garages, lawns, play areas, patios etc.

Internally the cottages have also changed, both through the dictates of fashion and the improved financial standing of the owners. It is thought there are less than ten cottages in Shipton and Milton which have not had some major alteration in the last 50 years.

In the 20s and 30s one was considered to be 'getting somewhere' if your beams, rafters and stonework were covered with plaster. If you could not afford plaster then a coat of lime-wash would suffice. Now fashion decrees and estate agents pronounce 'exposed beams and inglenooks'.

Downstairs the cottages usually had one or two rooms with possibly an extension or 'lean-to' at the rear. One room contained an open fire or kitchen range, and this, being the only heated room in the cottage, was used for cooking, eating and relaxing in. The other room was probably a rarely used front-room or parlour, or else a kitchen/larder, perhaps with a sink and possibly the one tap in the building. If the tap was not here it was either outside or in the rear extension. This extension was often a corrugated-iron roofed lean-to and was variously called scullery, outhouse or wash-house. In it would be the sink and tap, a gas or more often oil stove, copper and mangle. The copper served as the source of hot water for Monday wash-day, and Saturday bath-night.

Toilet facilities were minimal until the arrival of the main sewer in the 30s, and even then it was often an outside WC, but it did at least replace the need for a longer walk to the previous privy which was usually at a greater distance from the living accommodation.

Upstairs consisted of bedrooms only, each room separated from its neighbour by thin lath-and-plaster or tongue-and-groove board walls, and reached by a narrow steep staircase which probably rose straight from one of the downstairs rooms.

Since those days the owners of the cottages have taken advantage of the improved public services, which had previously been non-existent or too expensive except for the more wealthy. Sometimes with the help of improvement grants, but always with planning regulations in mind, the owners have introduced piped water and mains drainage, fitted kitchens, damp-proofing, proper electrical circuits, central-heating, double-glazing etc., many of which were already standard in the larger pre-war houses. Perhaps it should be mentioned here that in the course of this improvement, two, or sometimes three cottages have had to be sacrificed to form one dwelling which satisfy the needs of the modern home-owner.

One result of cottage modernization has been a change in the type of

occupant. Small cottages of the 30s were usually tenanted by the more humble sections of the local community, mainly manual workers, who neither had the money to buy nor to maintain their own property—nor was it the thinking of the time. With the necessary cost of modernization out of reach of the manual worker the cottages have been bought up and/or occupied by those with sufficient funds, usually the artisan and professional classes. An estimate of the pre-war buildings in Milton would seem to show that some 60% of them were rented, either from landlords or the local council. By the 1981 census that figure had dropped to 39% and has probably dropped further since then.

Before the war there was probably little incentive to buy one's own property as cottage rents were low. Rents of 2/6d per week were common. As late as 1968 cottages in Hawkes' Yard (The Terrace), Milton were 10/- per week (*Wychwoods Album* page 11). Although the cottages were small and unmodernized they represented good value if your needs were small, as the landlord paid rates, repairs and insurance. If you wanted something a little larger the house now called Inns Keep, opposite the Green, Milton (*Wychwoods Album* page 38 – the house on the left) was available at 17/6d per week in 1968. However, although this may have been good for the tenant, it presented problems for the landlord, for, with sitting tenants, various rent acts and the demand for modernization, some landlords found the only solution was to sell. This coincided with a demand for all properties in the area and many people looked on the smaller, older properties as a good investment.

With the increasing activity in the property market came the plethora of estate agent sign boards. I cannot recall seeing any of these sign boards pre-war, apart from an occasional directional sign to a farm sale. The *Oxford Times* shows how the estate agents have come to dominate the scene, for in the 1939 editions there were no estate agents as we now interpret the name. Estate agents then sold estates, although as a side-line they may have sold individual properties. When a house or cottage became vacant, prospective tenants or buyers were soon on the owner's doorstep and it did not need a separate supplement of the *Oxford Times* to tell the locals what was on the market.

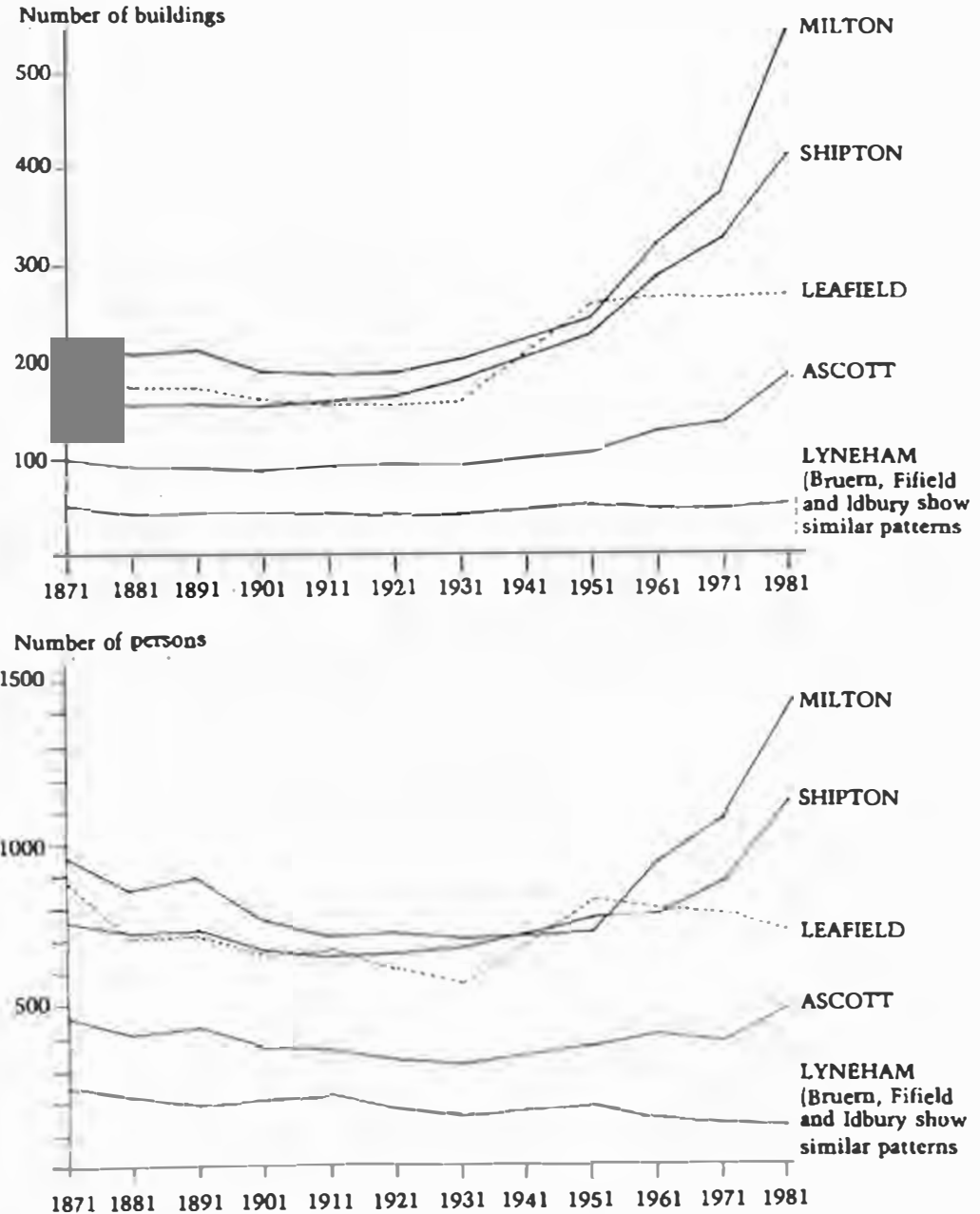
The spiralling cost of housing in the area has led to a tendency for a few people to exploit the situation by buying cheaply, using local authority grants to improve the property, selling for a handsome profit and moving on, contributing nothing to the villages in their short stay. Even more regrettable is the ploy of buying a house and land cheaply, gaining planning permission for the land, then selling off both house and development site and moving on. Luckily it would seem that the Wychwood villages do not have many of these people, but though they may be small in numbers, they certainly add to the ever-increasing house prices which the low-earner cannot afford. There is also difficulty in securing rented accommodation, for not only have the private landlords sold off many of their properties which were previously available for letting, but so have the local authorities. Properties which are for rent are often holiday lets or on a short-term lease. So, where do the low-earners go?

Population

The following comments are on figures from the census returns, the last of which was in 1981 (see Figure 2). Whether there has been any significant change since then is conjecture.

Figure 2: Changes in buildings and population, 1881-1981

From census returns for civil parishes. No census taken in 1941. Shipton absorbed Langley parish and Leafield absorbed part of the Wychwood parish after the 1931 census.



Following the steady rise in population figures in the 50 years from 1831 to 1881, there then followed a steady decline in the next 50 years from 1881 to 1931. Whether this decline would have continued in the decade after 1931 will not be known as no census was taken in 1941 due to the intervention of the war. That war no doubt affected the size of the population with the temporary invasion by evacuees and by the armed forces, but these figures are not recorded. Between the two censuses for 1931 and 1951, all villages show a steady increase in population.

In the 50 years from 1931 to 1981 it is the villages of Milton (113%), Shipton (63%), Ascott (53%), and Leaffield (32%) which show the most dramatic increases. Leaffield's very sudden increase in population is partly due to its being combined with part of the old Wychwood parish. Since 1951 Leaffield's decrease in population is probably due to the lack of new building since that date. The population of the smaller villages of Idbury and Bruern has remained almost constant, but there has been a decrease at Lyncham (-8%) and Fifield (-3%).

Relationship Between Population and Building

Over the last 100 years there has been a steady decline in the number of people per household. The figures for the whole area were 4.3 in 1881, 3.6 in 1931 and 2.7 in 1981. There are some variations in these figures for the individual villages. The decrease in the figures for the 50 years from 1881 no doubt can be attributed to the fall in population, in the next 50 years to the increase in building. In those 100 years the population has risen by 736 and the number of buildings by 757.

Over the last 50 years the building increase has been most marked in Milton (167%), Shipton (127%) and Ascott (110%). However, all villages have shown some increase in building, some of which, no doubt, is to cater for the need of each household for more living space. This would seem to be proved by the figures for Fifield which has the lowest number of people per household at 2.4 (compared to Milton's figure of 2.9, the highest in the area), where the buildings have increased in number by 45% and the population decreased by 3%. Lyncham also shows a reduction in population of 8% with an increase of 34% in the number of buildings.

For some reason the number of the females in the population has decreased in the last 50 years from 54% to 51%.

The schools admission registers reveal that with the overall increase in population and building in the Wychwoods area there does not seem to be any corresponding increase in the child population of primary school age, which is almost constant at around 260. When I was a child in the 30s it was my impression that the population was stable and that children stayed in the same house that they were born into. On checking, I find almost the opposite, with some families moving two or even three times within the decade, 1930 to 1940. Of my primary school class of 1937, only five boys (out of 17) and one girl (out of 12) still live in the Wychwood villages.

Shops and Businesses

From the first village shops set up in the front rooms of cottages there has been a gradual reduction in their number in Milton and Shipton to a probable two in

the 30s. By then many had been replaced by the single or double shop-front complete with sign board. Some of those have now ceased to trade as shops, most have had some change in the type of product which they sell, some have had more than one change, but there are still a few which retail the same product.

If one makes an analysis of the shops, garage/filling stations and public hostleries (i.e. those businesses, apart from farms and their ancillaries) which sell to the public direct in Milton and Shipton one sees a reduction from 32 to 20. Of these 20 only four shops retail the same product as pre-war. In Milton the reduction has been from 17 to 12, whereas Shipton has suffered a greater loss, from 15 to 8.

In Milton the reduction has been from 18 to 17, although perhaps one cannot count a dentist's surgery or a bank as shops, so the figures are from 18 to 15. However, Shipton has seen a larger reduction, from 18 down to nine. Is this due to the traffic on the A 361? The two shops which have remained open in Shipton have both provided parking space for their customers. Has this parking problem caused the shift of Shipton's shops, including doctor's surgery and bank, to Milton, taking the problem with them?

Of the shops which have disappeared, it has been the small general store which has seen the greatest reduction, from nine to four. Of the remaining four, all have had to increase their selling space by taking former living accommodation. Most of the pre-war specialist shops have gone; chemist, watch-repairer, draper, cobbler, cycle retail and repair, and saddler. Gone too are the printers (although one establishment now offers the modern equivalent of photocopying and fax etc.), the part-time fish-and-chip shops, and the gasworks from which one could buy tar, creosote etc. Butchers have been reduced from three to one. Luckily both villages still have their post offices, although that at Shipton has had a change of site. In place of the businesses which have disappeared have come the Wychwoods Surgery, dental surgery, bank, DIY shop, estate agent, hairdresser, pet parlour, greengrocer and library. In the interim, junk shops, ladies fashions, hairdressers, corn chandler, florist and cinema have come and gone.

Most of the hostleries have undergone some kind of change for they all now cater for the more solid form of nourishment as well as the liquid kind. All provide bar food, and three provide a full a la carte menu, whereas only the Shaven Crown at Shipton provided such a service pre-war.

Most of the above refers to Milton and Shipton, but a similar pattern can be seen in Ascott and Leaffield. Ascott has had a reduction from three shops to one, although a new farm shop has opened, and its public houses have dropped in number from two to one. Leaffield has had a greater reduction, from eleven shops to two, but all three public houses continue in business.

Fifield had one shop which continues to open as does its one hostelry, although this has now extended its facilities. Lynebarn had one shop pre-war but has since lost it. Bruern and Idbury had no shops, which is still the position to-day.

Most village housewives shopped pre-war on foot or by cycle, with occasional forays into Witney and Chipping Norton by bus, or to Oxford by train. Today, many still shop on foot or by cycle, but the motor car has brought increased mobility, so that many shop locally by car as well as doing an

increased amount of shopping in the nearby towns and the new markets at Moreton in Marsh and Carterton. Increased coach facilities have also helped the locals to shop further afield.

This increased mobility of the customer has meant the virtual disappearance of the door-to-door delivery service. Such a service was vital to the smaller villages which had a limited range of shops. Pre-war, both Mr Kethro from High Street, Shipton and the Co-op from Chipping Norton offered a door-to-door baker's service. The Co-op also offered delivery on sale or approval from its very wide range of shops. Most local shops would deliver, by van, horse and cart, or cycle, the latter with a carrier at the front complete with squeaky basket. Many local farms delivered milk, eggs and dairy produce, or you could fetch your own from the farm dairy but none now offer this service. Coal can still be delivered to your door, but no longer from the coal wharves at Shipton station, which has seen a gradual decline in coal businesses from four in 1931 to one in 1939 and none today. The special delivery services of Mr 'Fishy' Rainbow, supplying fish and all sorts by horse and van, and those of Jack Hawkes ('Small profits, quick returns' being one of his mottoes) have gone, but Fosters red van can still be seen in the area, now operated by Basil Pratley.

Transport

The 30s saw the gradual spread of the internal combustion engine in the form of tractor, lorry, van and motor car replacing horse and steam power. This change has caused the slow diminution of public transport (freight and passenger) in favour of the more individual service offered by the private motor car, so that it almost dominates some of our villages—a constant stream of traffic through Leafield and Shipton and parking problems everywhere, perhaps most evident in Milton High Street.

Both Shipton and Ascott railway stations were fully operational pre-war with at least six passenger trains in each direction on any weekday, many of which also carried light goods. There was also a thriving goods train service including coal haulage. This rail service has now been reduced to two passenger trains to Oxford and one from Oxford daily, with no goods service from the local stations, and the loss of connections from Kingham to Banbury and Cheltenham.

Oxford Bus Company ran a fairly regular bus service through the Wychwood villages to Chipping Norton and Witney (connections to Oxford). The Midland Red also ran a daily service through Shipton from Chipping Norton (for Banbury) to Burford (with connections to Oxford, Swindon and Cheltenham).

A feature of the bus and train network was the goods service that was also provided. Parcels, small crates etc. could be taken to the converted railway carriage at the station, or Mesdames Avery and Dore, the local bus agents, for despatch on the next service. Similarly goods could be collected from these agents. This gave a speedy delivery to anywhere en route, now superseded by hordes of carriers, hauliers etc. Larger items could be taken to or collected from the station by one of the three lorries which the G.W.R. ran in the 30s. The best known of the drivers was probably the late Ernest Clomson. The freight business at Shipton station was sufficient to warrant separate sidings and buildings in which the goods could be sorted. Pick-up freights plied up and



Bradley's Garage in Station Road, Shipton, around 1947 This garage and the tillyard on the far right were demolished and The Nook, Saron House and Haberton Mead have been built on the site. A new garage was built before the war but was requisitioned by the military for some years

down the line sorting out the wagons, including those for the coal businesses and the flour mill. F. W. P. Matthews Ltd who still operate from the station, had its own fleet of wagons for carrying goods to and from its flour mill, and for its own coal business. All its business now goes by road.

Perhaps a portent of the decline of the railway was the establishment in the 20s and 30s of three businesses along Station Road, Shipton, in addition to the already existing flour mill. These new businesses, two garage/filling stations and one haulage company were probably set up to feed off the railway, but in doing so drew transport away from rail to road.

The establishment of garage/filling stations following the First World War provided car and taxi hire, and a few motor cars for the wealthy. With decreasing costs, the popularity of the motor car spread so that there were some ten private cars in Milton and Shipton at the beginning of the 30s. By the end of the decade that number had probably doubled. So few were the cars that their owners were easily recognised—Mr Mawle in his Wolseley, Miss Turner in her ex-George Robey Vauxhall, Muriel Groves in her open-topped Morris. Including cars used for commercial purposes the total car population of Milton and Shipton in 1939 was probably less than 50. The 1981 census figures showed some 750 plus.

Not only did the car take over from horse and steam, it also took over from human pedal power—both on cycle and on foot. Pre-war saw a 'rush-hour' of cycles to the 7.50am Oxford train and to the local centres of employment. Present day rush hour consists almost entirely of motorized traffic.

I cannot recall any horse-drawn passenger vehicles from my childhood memories. I can only assume their probable owners were able to afford a motor car. However, horse-drawn carts were still a common sight on the roads, especially from the farms, for delivery services, and for timber haulage. The latter also used steam power, the 'Sentinel' from Alfred Groves being a familiar sight. Perhaps it sealed its own fate in that it was one of the suggested causes of the large fires at the Alfred Groves' site. Steam power continued to be used for threshing, ploughing, traction and for road rolling until the 40s. Horse and steam are now completely replaced by diesel. Diesel power also appeared on the railways in the 30s with the introduction of the railcar which operated on the 'out of rush hour' services to Oxford. Slowly, diesel replaced steam on the railway as it had done on the roads.

Present day inhabitants can remember being transported by the regular horse and trap carrier service to Witney, and yet by the 30s another form of transport was appearing in the sky above. Who then could have forecast that in the next ten years there would be a least 30 airfields within a 20-mile radius of Shipton church? Luckily there is no longer the need for so many military airfields, although we are certainly aware of those which remain, if only on account of the noise.

Communications (other than transport)

Social contact and local gossip often formed a great part of the communication system in the villages, as it still does. For the passage of messages over longer distances the telephone has probably replaced the letter and postcard. Pictorial postcards were available in great numbers in the 30s and showed a wide range of local views, with some post offices commissioning their own series. These cards were used, not only by visitors, but also by the locals as news carriers. As the 30s passed so the number of postcards available grew less, until there were none on sale in the 60s. Within the last ten years or so there has been a re-emergence of the pictorial postcard, no doubt catering for the increase in holiday-makers in the area.

Telegraph facilities were available from the local railway station in the last century, but the private telephone would seem to have come to the Wychwoods in 1925. It was then that the post office in Shipton, (*Wychwoods Album* page 6), found that it could not accommodate all the necessary apparatus for an exchange so it was installed in the home of Mr and Mrs Alfred Miles at the corner of High Street and Ascott Road in what is now one of the front rooms. It was a small manual exchange powered by batteries which were kept in a building at the rear of the house. At that time there were about 35 subscribers on the Shipton exchange which covered virtually the same area as today. Together with a public callbox in the passage, with notice outside, it stayed there until after the Second World War, which had delayed the building of a new automatic exchange. By 1939 the number of subscribers had risen to hundreds and a 24-hour service had to be maintained, all manually operated. The new exchange (next to Shipton Stores in High Street) was automatic, but even so it could not cope with the increasing numbers of subscribers and amount of traffic, and an even newer exchange was built on the opposite side of the road. From 53 subscribers in 1935, the number has risen to 1,380 in 1985.

Other villages also had call boxes inside buildings, sometimes in the post office, sometimes in a private house. In Milton's case it was in the home of Tommy Hopkins, turf accountant, in Shipton Road and it displayed the blue and white sign 'You May Telephone From Here'. When that disappeared Milton folk had to travel to Shipton for a public kiosk (where it is now) until Milton was given its own red kiosk in the late 40s. Since then, others have sprung up in the villages, only to be replaced in 1988 by the more modern variety.

Coinciding with the increasing use of the telephone there was a corresponding decline in the postal service. In 1933 the postmaster at Milton was asking for a half-day holiday on Saturdays. The parish council looked on this with disfavour for it would mean the loss of the 6.15pm collection. Long gone are the days of a 6.15pm collection on any day, let alone a Saturday. Another big change in the postal service has been mechanization— not only the introduction of post codes but the replacement of foot and cycle delivery by motorized traffic. This was no bad thing when one recalls that the Shipton round (for one person) of two deliveries meant a cycle ride of some 20 + miles daily, and that continued until at least the late 1950s.

Remarkably, Lcafield, Shipton and Milton have all kept their Post Offices, although Ascott and Fifield have lost theirs, the latter only recently. Will the remaining post offices stay open when the current changes in telecommunications enable more people to operate telex, fax, computer and television links? Will the spread of these innovations in the 90s correspond with the spread of the telephone in the 50s?

Before the telephone, the telegram was the means of speedy communication, with its arrival in yellow envelope setting tongues wagging. Larger items for transport were, and are now, carried by the post office. Formerly they could also be carried by bus and train which in turn had ousted the private carrier by horse and cart. Now many of the bus and train services, and some of those of the post office, have been taken over by the many other motorized carriers.

Mass communication has also arrived in force. Pre-war it consisted of the newspaper and radio. The radio was changing even then, with the mains-operated sets replacing the need for accumulators, and change continues, with transistors and battery-powered sets. The number of stations that can be received has also increased and now includes local and commercial stations. To the radio can be added television, teletex and video.

With the exception of the *Chipping Norton Advertiser*, all the local newspapers are still in circulation and appear to flourish. So much so that the *Oxford Times* now requires a separate delivery to cope with its many supplements. To those existing pre-war can be added the *Cotswold Standard* and the more local publications *The Wychwood* and *The Go-Between*.

In spite of all this communication I still find it difficult to know who the people are in my own village, whereas at one time they were all known to me. No doubt this is due to the increasing and more mobile population, but also to the fact that some do not find time to stop for a chat these days. One of my anticipated pleasures of returning to my home village was that locals would call in to pass the time, as I recall they did when my parents were alive. Then, villagers would call in unannounced, not for a meal, not even for a cup of tea,



Above: Milton Lane (now Milton Road), Shipton, about 1940

Below: The same view in 1988



just for a sit in front of the fire and a chat. But this no longer seems to happen.

At one time you walked the roads and streets and knew where you were, whereas today you have to be told by means of road signs. This labelling is probably necessary with the increase in the number of roads and of newcomers to the villages. Perhaps it is a way of making the names permanent when one notes the temporary nature of some names, both of roads and properties. Looking through some of the Milton records of the 30s there are references to Lower End, Lower Side, Jonathan Square, Park Street, Frogmore Lane, The Yard, The Terrace and Hawkes' Yard. The last three names refer to the Terrace (off High Street) and that seems to be the name which has gained some permanence because there is a sign which says so. Of the other names mentioned above, Jonathan Square is now referred to as The Square (behind the former Primitive Methodist Chapel), Frogmore Lane has been shortened to its 16th-century name of Frog Lane and also has a sign saying so. The other names have disappeared from use.

In the early part of this century the smaller properties usually had no individual names, but were known either by their geographical position or the type of business carried on—cobblers, blacksmith etc. Gradually, probably as the volume of mail increased, properties were given names. These names were given by the owner/occupiers and were often purely personal and given with no consideration to other properties in the area with the same name. When the properties changed hands very often the name of the property also changed, all very confusing for mapmakers and local historians. A few examples spring to mind; two Fairspear Farms on the OS map; Glebe Farm and Starveall Farm are one and the same; in Milton there are two Orchard Houses as well an Orchard Bungalow and an Orchard Cottage; in Frog (or is it Frogmore?) Lane, Milton, the name Frogmore has changed houses, and where now are The Potters Arms, Leafield and The Merrymouth, Fifield?

Roads, Paths and Pavements

Many of the roads of the 30s were still very dusty with powdered limestone, a few were freshly tarmaced, but only in the centres of the villages were there kerbs and any form of pavements.

As one walked along there was very little danger from motorized traffic for there was so little of it—in any case it moved at a reasonable pace. Much of the pre-war traffic was still drawn by horse, and a little powered by steam. Gradually the internal combustion engine saw the elimination of both horse and steam so that by the end of the 40s they had become collectors' items. In the same period one saw the disappearance of flocks and herds of animals being driven from field to field, or to the blacksmith, slaughter or market. This bad meant that householders always kept the garden gate shut for fear of invasion.

As the motor car population increased so it brought problems. Gateways and roads had to be widened causing changes to the scenery—the tap at Milton had to go, as did Milton Lane in Shipton, taking with it the elm trees before Dutch elm disease set in. So much change was there in Milton Lane that someone deemed it necessary to change the name to Milton Road. The car brought a rash of signs and symbols to the road side—30 and 40 mph, give way, etc—as well as various white and yellow lines on the road surface. It even brought death. As the number of vehicles escalated so did their width and length,

especially that of commercial vehicles. This brought more problems for they often have to mount the pavements to pass one another, and they cut off corners taking the grass verges with them.

New building sites have meant that new roads have had to be constructed (e.g. Sinnels Field, The Sands). New building in other areas has meant the disappearance of the lanes. Frog Lane, once lined with elms, is now lined with buildings, and the grass verges of Green Lane can hardly be called green today. Of those highways called lanes in Milton and Shipton only Mawles Lane, Shipton, and the southern end of Frog Lane, Milton, bear any resemblance to their pre-war appearance.

The way in which the roads are surfaced has also changed. Once the tar was applied by hand-held brush, the chippings thrown on by hand, then swept again and finally rolled by steamroller. Now the whole operation is mechanized and there is no sign of steam.

In my childhood we played in the road with impunity. Not so today, for it is sometimes difficult even to attempt to cross the road, or to walk the pavements which seem to have become cycle tracks and dog loos, not to mention the occasional vehicle parked or even being driven along them.

Paths across the fields have almost fallen into disuse. At one time Milton Green was criss-crossed with paths, and the Parish Council put down ashes to provide a good surface. There were paths across Calais Fields and Lancut (Milton), all delineated by use. They were walked by people using them as a short cut, or for family walks and strolls, but now they seem to be used solely by those who wish to exercise their dogs. Conversely, there has been an

The NE end of Milton High Street in about 1956. Sid Smith's herd of cows on its way to his smallholding (now the site of Langston House) at the top of Hawkes Yard (The Terrace)



increasing emphasis on keeping paths and bridleways open and signposted, e.g. Oxfordshire Way.

Alongside the roads which interlink the villages can be seen other changes. Elm trees have disappeared, grass verges are vanishing and where they have not been worn away by traffic they are continually being mown. At one time children were given competitions to make the best collection of wild flowers, usually gathered from the roadside. Hedges were once cut and laid and field walls were neat and tidy. All these things are no more.

Occupations

Looking at the occupations of the villagers it is noticeable that the number of jobs offered by local employers has declined. These were mainly the full-time workers on the farms, those associated with wood products, and the full-time staff of the larger houses, the railway and the schools. There has also been a fall in the number of jobs offered by the larger building firms.

Gone too are many of the self-employed trades of cobbler, laundress, saddler, hurdle-maker, thatcher, undertaker (except Leafield), chimney sweep, blacksmith, and drover. Local employers no longer offer employment to shepherds, cowmen, carters, boxmakers and gate-makers in the same numbers as pre-war.

In place of these job opportunities have come the occupations which satisfy the needs of a more modern society, not based on the land, but dealing with computers, fax, domestic appliances, T.V. and video, pet parlour etc. There has also sprung up a demand for full and part-time domestic staff, such as cleaners, gardeners, handymen, home-helps etc., serving a different type of the clientele to pre-war. Then it was the larger houses who employed such people, whereas now it is in the schools, homes for the aged, and in the homes and gardens of the working population and the elderly.

With the swing in the larger building firms away from direct labour to contract labour there has been an increase in the number of the self-employed builders and allied trades - plasterers, glaziers, masons, decorators, carpenter/joiners etc. There has also been an increase in the number of jobs in the transport industry i.e. carriers, hauliers, mechanics etc., and also in the catering establishments i.e. public houses and hotels.

Not everyone chose to work within the confines of the villages, and many of today's inhabitants also seek their employment in towns near and far. Perhaps the greatest change has been the number who now find employment elsewhere, and the manner in which they travel. Pre-war only four people travelled from Milton by car, the rest went by cycle, or by train from Shipton station. I do not have figures for today's travelling workers but I would guess that the vast proportion travel at least some of the way by car.

For those people employed within the Wychwood villages in the 30s, many found work in the 40s through to the 70s in the car and its associated industries in Oxford and Witney, and at the Maintenance Unit at RAF Little Rissington. These sources of employment have since been reduced but the workforce still has to find its employment elsewhere-in Oxford, Witney, Carterton etc.

Some indication of the Wychwoods dependence on seeking employment outside the villages can be gained from my knowledge of the area which I know



W. L. Arthurs, hurdlemaker of Fife in about 1946. Not only are the hurdles gone but also the thatched roof, the bus agency and the elm trees in the churchyard behind

best—that is the stretch of road from Prew's Garage to the end of Green Lane, Milton. Of the pre-war working population of that area the Wychwoods provided work for all except one. Now it is only 5 or 6 who work in the villages, the rest commute. However, we may be at the beginning of another change which could see a diminishing need for commuting, in that, with the increasing use and availability of computer links, fax etc. many people may well be able to conduct businesses from their own homes, as some are already doing.

Changes Due to the 1939-45 War

The war years saw a great mixing of populations, with the influx of evacuees and their families, Land Army personnel, the armed forces of many nations, war workers, Italian and German prisoners of war, and of displaced persons at the end of the war. Many of these people made friends and some found spouses, either making their home locally or moving on elsewhere. Villagers were also called away for military service, war work, nursing and voluntary work, and several returned with spouses. Some villagers were unable to return.

The end of the war appears to have brought a questioning of authority and the establishment. Locally this can be seen in the appointment of people from the 'lower orders' to become executive officers of local organizations, positions previously held by the more wealthy and powerful.

The election of the Labour government in 1945 had its effects on the local

scene with changes to the school system, the provision of the Welfare State and the National Health Service, and the disappearance of the G.W.R., the Wessex Electricity Company and the United Gas Company. Various changes to the tax system created a more even distribution of wealth, manifested locally with the decline of the larger houses and some farms whose owners could no longer afford to maintain large staffs. Those made redundant were usually able to find employment in industries which had previously been devoted to the war effort, with its consequent starving of civilian needs. With the war over, these industries began to cater for some of the demands being made for motor cars, consumer goods, homes and their modernization.

Law and Order

I would think that there was less lawlessness in the 30s and less need for law enforcement, and yet at that time there was a visible sign of a police presence for the local PCs from Shipton and Leafield could be seen cycling on their rounds gathering information and making contacts. Few people had a telephone and even in 1938 Shipton police station did not have one either, yet today this seems the only way of making contact.

Nowadays the community has to protect itself—burglar alarms, security locks and lights, neighbourhood watch schemes etc. I do not think that all this was necessary pre-war, in fact the back doors of most houses were left unlocked all day, only to be locked when the occupants went to bed. Very probably the contents contained therein were of little value, but even so, they must have been tempting to some. I suspect that the villagers operated their own codes of self-discipline, in that the villagers were not averse to punishing their own wrong-doers. The villages also had their own 'watch' schemes, for most people travelled on foot or by cycle and thereby could see and hear far more than by the modern form of travel, the motor car. The fact that many housewives stayed at home also meant that they too could keep watch. These ladies were not above a little gossip to pass the time, so who did what and when was all information that was quickly passed around. An example of this efficiency can be noted from one occasion when I transgressed the law. One evening, another local lad and I used the windows of an empty house for stone-throwing practice. We thought we were unobserved, but, by lunchtime on the following day PC Cole was on the doorstep (back door) to see my parents and inform them of my misdeeds. Chastisement, both physical and financial was speedily exacted.

On reading through the minutes of Milton Parish Council one notes that there are occasional references to fowls and dogs causing a nuisance on the allotments, a bull in a field where it should not be, etc., but it is not until 1949 that the word 'vandalism' appears for the first time. Now it seems to rear its ugly head in many Parish Council discussions. Does this mean that vandalism has increased since the war, or was it not worth mentioning up to that date?

The increasing vigilance needed by the local population in an effort to combat crime probably arises from a variety of factors, some of which have already been referred to. The increase in population, many from outside the area, means that it is difficult to differentiate between residents and strangers. Increased mobility also means that visitors, whether making social or felonious calls, can quickly come and go.

Education

Due to pressure from both state and county all the schools in the area have had some kind of change forced upon them, or they have ceased to exist. By 1930 Milton Infants (held in the Baptist Schoolroom, High Street) and Lyneham School (held in the Methodist Chapel) had amalgamated with Milton School (Church Road). Up to the end of the 30s the local schools catered for the full age-range, apart from Milton and Ascott, which only took children to eleven. Only Leafield remains open, catering for primary school-age children from Leafield and Ascott. Milton, Shipton, Bruern, Fifield and Lyneham use Wychwood School, while children from Idbury now attend Kingham School instead of their now closed school in Idbury, which also took children from Fifield. All the pre-war schools except Milton were Church of England, as are both Leafield and Wychwood schools today.

Most children remained in the village schools for their secondary education except Ascott children who attended Shipton, and Milton children who were 'bussed' to Burford. Pre-war there was a choice of secondary education available, for Burford Grammar School offered places to fee-payers as well as those who obtained a scholarship (later known as the eleven-plus). A similar situation existed at Witney and Chipping Norton (fees £4 10s per term), but almost all Wychwoods grammar school children attended Burford as a bus service was provided. All children in the area are now offered places at Burford School and Community College.

Choice of secondary education is now limited, for the grammar schools have ceased to exist. The only alternative now is private education, which also existed pre-war for children of all ages, although the last private school in the area was probably Mrs Gosford's, a school for children of primary school age in Bleak House (now called Sunset House), Jubilee Lane, Milton.

One of the greatest changes in the education system has been the increased opportunity for the ordinary youth (i.e. not fee-paying) to go on to further education. I cannot recall anybody going to university in my school days. Whether today's successes are due to improved and greater facilities, improved prosperity of the parents, or the results of the many changes in the whole educational system remains to be assessed.

When I began school at Milton in 1934 I was accompanied by my mother as far as the school door on the first day. That was the only occasion that either of my parents ever visited the school on educational matters. Parents only visited the school if trouble was at hand. Nowadays they are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the schools, contributing socially, educationally and financially.

In my time at Milton School, all children went home for lunch (except those who came by bus or taxi) as there was no provision for cooked meals. Now only 2 out of 260 go home to lunch from the local schools. Wychwood School has its own kitchens and a dining room which also serves other purposes. The school has playing fields, play areas and a swimming pool—all facilities unheard of in any of the local schools pre-war.

There have also been great changes in discipline, style of teaching and the curriculum. And yet, with all the changes and reorganization, there does not seem to have been any improvement in the pupil/teacher ratio from 1938 to 1988. Perhaps this may be balanced by the increased use of ancillary staff.

The log books of Milton School reveal two interesting facts. In the seventy years from 1891 there were three headteachers, while in the thirty years since 1958 there have been five. In the 30s all the teachers lived within the village, including the headteacher in the school house. In the Wychwoods area all the school houses have been sold off and, of the teachers at Leafield and Wychwood schools, less than 50% live in the catchment area.

The schools provided a 'safety net' in health terms, for all children were regularly checked by health visitors, doctors and dentists, and treatment offered when required. These checks are still made, the only change being that fewer parents take up the offer of treatment for their children, preferring to make their own arrangements. Perhaps this is wise when I recall the sandy-haired gentleman from Charlbury pulling up at the school in his green Morris car. This was Mr Cooke, the school dentist. The sight of him struck terror into the minds of the local children, myself included. All his dental equipment came in the car; hard chair for the patient, foot-operated drill which was slow and painful, and a bucket for teeth and blood which was usually left conspicuously by the side of the chair. An attractive lady assistant made pleasant conversation to detract the patient from the rigours of Mr Cooke's ministrations, usually performed with the minimum of anaesthetic. This treatment was carried out in one of the school's classrooms. With silence the order of the day, the noise of the screaming of the patients and the cracking of their teeth carried throughout the building, creating a more submissive child population than usual. Nowadays a properly equipped surgery van visits the schools and I am sure that visits to the dentist are far less frightening.

Medical Matters

It is difficult to define exactly the limits of the local medical practices as all patients can choose their GPs. Most of the area covered by this article would seem to be in the current Wychwood Surgery practice, although some villagers are registered with GPs at Burford, Charlbury, Chipping Norton or Witney. In the 30s the area covered by the doctor from Shipton would appear to be the same, except for Leafield which probably came under the Charlbury practices, and Idbury and Fifield which came under the Burford practice.

The local doctor in 1930 was Dr Roe (*Wychwoods Album* page 40), followed for a short spell by Dr Tippett (a practice monger), and then by Dr Gordon Scott from 1936. The doctors held regular surgeries in the wooden building in the grounds of Nara, School Lane, Shipton, and occasional surgeries in some of the other villages. All visits, treatment, consultations, and dispensing were carried out by the one doctor, with some assistance from Nurse Ford of High Street, Milton. In addition, doctor and/or nurse were called to home confinements. Most children were born at home in the 30s compared with today's average of 2%.

The Wychwood surgery now boasts three doctors, plus full ancillary staff of nine. The number of patients has increased from some 1100 in 1936 to 4100 today. All services are now provided under the NHS. In the 30s there was no such national cover for all patients, and payment for the doctor's services was made in a variety of ways. A few wealthy patients were treated privately, paying around one guinea a visit. Some 800 working people (but not their families) were members of a panel, which paid a capitation fee to the doctor for

each patient. Those people not covered by any other means (approximately 300) paid around 6d each per week to a club. The very poor only consulted a doctor in extreme circumstances and paid in kind—pickles, rabbits etc.

In the later years of the war, Dr Scott's idea was that a new surgery should form part of the Wychwood Social Centre (see page 85). That scheme never reached fruition and a new surgery was not built until 1956 on the corner of the Sands where the pathway leads to The Square, Milton. In 1968 the practice moved to its more commodious and ever-expanding premises in High Street, Milton. This accommodation provides consultation and treatment rooms in which nurses, health visitors, midwives as well as doctors can practice. Compare that with the one doctor's room and one waiting room of the 30s, complete with sloping floor. The 'practice' of using uneven floors continues in the modern surgery.

Those requiring hospital treatment are now provided with a wider range than pre-war. They then had to find their own means of transport, as well as funding their treatment by making regular payments to a hospital fund (memories suggest that a pink collecting card was used).

Children of pre-school age were catered for at the twice-monthly clinic at the Baptist Schoolroom, Milton. There are now twice-monthly health visitor clinics, as well as surgery clinics, antenatal and well-woman clinics. Children of school age receive regular inspections at their schools, and treatment is offered and provided if necessary, as it was in the 30s. In the section on schools (page 81) I refer to my memories of the dentist's visits. Apart from treatment by the school dentist, all patients could receive dental attention at the Shipton surgery where a visiting dentist made a call on one day in every week, or else made a trip to a nearby town, usually to Messrs Nock and Naylor of Chipping Norton. Patients today can receive their treatment at the new dental surgery in High Street, Milton, or travel to one of the nearby towns.

Provision of care for the elderly has greatly increased. At one time families were expected to care for their elderly relatives with little assistance, apart from local charity. Elderly tenants were sometimes forced out of their rented or tied cottages with no provision for alternative accommodation. Another proposed scheme allied to the Wychwood Social Centre (1945) was the provision of bungalows and a hostel for the elderly. This did not materialize and it was many years later that the local authority provided similar accommodation at Ballards Close and Bowerham, Shipton, and the Sands, and Langston House, Milton. Not only has a variety of accommodation been provided, but assistance in many forms is now given, by nurses, health visitors, home helps, meals on wheels etc.

In 50 years of change I must mention one thing which has not changed—the generosity and compassion of the villagers. Generosity in providing funds to bolster the NHS in raising money for the Wychwood Surgery Amenities Fund, to assist local hospitals and hospices, provide scanners and other equipment, as well as making contributions to national charities. Compassion continues to be shown to the sick and elderly, by toleration shown to them in their disabilities, and efforts made to relieve their distress.

Social Structure

In the 30s the social structure of the villages was probably dominated by those



Opposite the village green, Ascott., 1934. The building in the centre is now a private residence

people who owned and lived in the large houses, the farmers, and those who ran the larger businesses in the area. Their power was exercised both directly and indirectly. Due to their sound financial position they had direct power over 'lesser mortals' in that they had the power to hire and fire at a moment's notice. To this could be added the power of eviction over those who lived in tied cottages. They also exercised their purchasing power over the local contractors, suppliers and shopkeepers. It was not unknown for a worker or supplier who lost favour with one employer to be blacklisted by other local employers. Indirectly their power and influence came as a result of their domination of most of the local organizations. They were usually the chief officers of the British Legion, Women's Institute, parish councils, churches, chapels and sports clubs. They also provided the speakers and prizes for such organizations, as well as celebratory and Christmas teas for the children, and allowed their gardens to be used for fetes etc. All this largesse probably made others feel that some sort of allegiance was due, either to the employer or to the organization.

The Second World War seems to have been a turning point as after the war there came a greater questioning of the establishment and the hope of a 'new Britain'. After 1945 one notes that artisans, labourers and their wives began to take over the positions formerly held by the 'upper echelons' of village society. For instance, both the British Legion and the Women's Institute had labourers' wives elected on to the committees for the first time, and not merely as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. 1949 saw the first artisan elected to Milton Parish Council, an election which also saw women nominated for the first time, although on that occasion they were unsuccessful.

With the gap between rich and poor narrowing, many of those who owned the farms and large houses could no longer afford large staffs. Those workers displaced often found more lucrative employment outside the villages, especially in the motor industry; the product of which in turn created a more mobile population. This increased mobility then meant that those who had formerly lived in the towns could now move their home to these villages, and then commute. Many of these newcomers were from the professional classes so they helped to change the social mix of the villages upwards. This trend was also continued by those village children who had been able to take advantage of the better educational facilities and opportunities offered, and so earn for themselves better employment and a status far above those of their working class parents. More recently, the ever increasing house prices of the south-east of England has continued the social mix upwards, for, professional people, both working and retired, have found it to their financial advantage to move to the Wychwoods. This change in the social mix seems to be borne out by my analysis of the working residents of Shipton Road/Green Lane, Milton (Table 1). Although the classification is my own, and I have no documentary evidence, it does give some indication of a change.

Table 1: Working Residents of Shipton Road and Green Lane, Milton

	Employers/Professionals	Artisan/Manual	No. of Persons
1938	23%	77%	35
1988	80%	20%	40

Leisure

I assume that pre-war leisure activities and their quantity were determined by the amount of time that could be spent away from making one's living, and the availability of transport. Therefore leisure pursuits were fewer than those of today and were concentrated in the villages. They were dominated by those associated with the sports clubs, British Legion, Women's Institute and the churches and chapels. Of course the wealthy, by reason of time and money, had the ability to engage in a far wider range of activities, both near and far.

Most of the village organizations from pre-war appear to have survived to the present, with the exception of the men's section of the British Legion, Brotherhood, Ascott Country Dance, Life Boys and Boy's Brigade, the latter having taken over from the Cubs and Scouts in the 30s.

Some of the pre-war organizations have flourished and some have multiplied. The Wychwoods WI has spawned to produce those of Ascott, Shipton, Milton and Fifield. The Wychwoods Library now has its own premises, instead of the travelling boxes of books which were left in schools or private homes. In Milton's case this box was left at the house now called Hillborough where the books were spread out on a large table and on the floor. The library service now has its own mobile van. The sports clubs continue to flourish, with the addition of sports for the younger generation. Except for the minors, it would seem that each village likes to keep its own identity on the sports field. Milton and Shipton still do not meet regularly on the cricket field,

although in the early 50s there was an attempt to improve standards by combining Shipton and Milton football teams as Wychwoods United. The plan was doomed to failure after one or two seasons.

Perhaps this inter-village rivalry was one of the reasons for the failure of the late Dr Gordon Scott's scheme for a Wychwood Social Centre. This scheme, publicized in 1941, was for the conversion of St Michaels Home (vacated by the Waifs and Strays in 1935) into a centre which would cater for a wide range of organizations and activities. These included not only school, doctor's surgery and infant welfare, but swimming pool, hard tennis courts and children's playground (to be built on a separate site), and possible playing fields. All local organizations would be encouraged to use the variety of rooms for meetings, games, and to use of the library, as well as the kitchen and bathrooms. The latter were also to be made available to those householders who did not have their own. Local organizations of the time, from Fifield Tennis Club to Wychwood Keep Fit Class raised money for the scheme. By 1945 some £2,500 had been raised for the project, towards the initial target of £3,000. However by this time the scheme had been somewhat enlarged to include theatre/cinema, bowls green, and sheltered accommodation for the elderly. During 1945/6 the scheme collapsed. Many reasons have been suggested for this, but none substantiated: perhaps it was a combination of many. Suffice to say that those individuals and organizations who had contributed money had their contributions returned.

Tennis pre-war was confined to those who had their own grasscourts, usually in the gardens of the larger houses, and on farms. In Milton and Shipton they numbered 13, now reduced to two, although hardcourts are now available at Shipton recreation ground. Fifield did have a tennis club pre-war but no longer.

As a boy of primary school age my leisure time was spent playing in the road with whip and top or hoops; with my friend Richard Wells on Poplar Farm in High Street, Milton; in the river at Lyneham; in the old quarries (which still showed signs of quarrying with trackways and tubs); or in the garden of Sunrise where my father worked. All these sites are now virtually impossible for children's play. I cannot remember ever playing on Milton Green pre-war, as for most of the time it was occupied by sheep and cows and their depositions. The only time I remember using the Green was when the fairs arrived, and on Bonfire Nights. Gang mowers have now replaced animals as a form of grass keeping, and it is now dogs which leave their depositions. The Green now has play equipment for the children and a new sports pavilion.

Many and varied are the new organizations, from Evergreens to Young Farmers, from singers to handicrafts, from Red Cross and St Johns to the Local History Society, and many others, all within the villages. Many of the old favourites like whist, bridge, darts and cribbage also survive. With the increased mobility the local population can now take advantage of all the other leisure activities further afield, at one time only available to the more wealthy. Horse-riding seems to be enjoying a boom, and is no longer restricted to farmers and the wealthy.

Apart from weddings and visits to Jo Lyons in Oxford when out shopping I am sure that my parents never went out for a meal in a restaurant. In the Wychwoods there was nowhere to go apart from the Shaven Crown at Shipton

which was beyond the pockets of most of the local population. Pubs in the area now serve meals, the Hillborough at Milton has opened, and the Lamb at Shipton and the Merrymouth (now Hunters Lodge) at Fifield have both been extended to provide restaurant service. With increased spending power and greater mobility the locals can now add to the range of eating establishments available by calling at the nearby towns for restaurant service or 'take-aways'.

One leisure pursuit which many do not seem to find time for is gardening—witness the number of gardens turned over to driveways etc., or left untended, as are many of the allotments. And yet, curiously enough, the Milton Allotments and Gardens Association has just been formed. Will it go the same way as the Wychwoods Horticultural Society which flourished briefly post-war?

Most of the organizations referred to above raise money for their own survival. Most pleasing to note is the fact that many of them also raise vast amounts of money for the many and varied charities which the area supports.

Charities and Fund Raising

By the 30s the Friendly Societies and Clubs in many of the villages had ceased to function. Since then other charities have changed, as the needs of the inhabitants has improved. The financial status of most of the population was much lower than today. However, as the financial position of most of the population has improved so the poverty line has moved upwards. To be without car and television today may perhaps be considered a form of poverty, but in the 30s the local charities then operating considered coal, bread and clothing to be more vital. Throughout the 30s and on to the 60s Milton Fuel Allotments provided coal tickets (170 at 3/- in 1934 to 37 at 4/- in 1942) and the Fettiplace Bread Charity gave out tickets (43 at 2/6d in 1934 to 44 at 3/- in 1942) to deserving households. These tickets could be redeemed at many of the local shops for all kinds of goods. The number of recipients and the amount they received depended on the amount of charity money available. The recipients were those who applied for and/or were considered deserving cases by the overseers (appointed by the Parish Council).

There were similar charities in other villages but as the need for this type of assistance lessened, many of the charities were amalgamated. In the case of Milton they were put together to form the Milton Welfare Trust, which is administered by trustees, and gives financial help to those in hardship. Since the war the welfare state has arrived with the vast organizations of the DHSS and NHS, but it does not seem to satisfy all the various demands made upon it. Many and varied are the charity organizations which work locally, supplementing the Welfare State.

Before the war, fund-raising was dominated by churches, chapels, British Legion and Women's Institute, who in addition to raising money for their own existence, organized fund-raising events for local and national charities—for example, Dr Barnardo's, Red Cross, Burford Cottage Hospital. Since then there has been a proliferation of organizations which raise huge sums of money for charity. Indeed some local organizations exist purely as charity fund-raisers. Many of the ways of gathering remain the same now as then: whist drives, jumble sales, fetes etc., but coffee mornings, pram and boat races, and sponsored events of all kinds have been added to methods by which money is

extracted from the local population. One has only to look in *The Wychwood* or pages of the local press to see the fantastic response by the villagers to these many appeals, running into hundreds of pounds. In addition to these fund-raising events, everyone digs deep into their pockets on behalf of the recently deceased for donations to their chosen charity.

Religion

Being unable to judge the spiritual climate of the population I will look at the physical aspect first. In the last century the area obviously contained a very strong non-conformist element for all the villages had at least one chapel, two in some cases, and three in Milton. The one exception was Idbury. Of these chapels it would seem that the Primitive Methodists were the most plentiful, but by the 30s those at Fifield and Leafield had been taken over as reading rooms. Since then the Primitive Methodist chapels at Fordwells, Lyneham and Milton have closed. There is a reference to a Primitive Methodist chapel in Shipton in *Kelly's Directory* for the 30s, but no one can recall it in being.

So, all the Prims have closed, as has the Zoar Baptist Chapel in The Terrace, bringing to an end one event from Milton's calendar. This was the annual gathering of the 'dinner basket Baptists'. As they held their services both morning and afternoon of the Sabbath, and as many of them had travelled long distances they had to bring their own material provisions for lunch—hence the nickname. On August Bank Holiday special services were held, when worshippers came from all parts to attend the services, their vehicles tending to clog up both Hawkes Yard and the High Street. At one time they boiled up water for tea in the wash-houses of the adjacent cottages, but gas was eventually laid on to the chapel. The mid-day meal was held in the barn in the nearby farm, now the site of Langston House. Not only has the barn gone but the chapel has also been sold.

Baptist Chapels remain open in Ascott, Milton and Leafield although the manses of the last two have been sold. The vicarages and rectories of the Church of England have also been sold, although a new vicarage has been built at Shipton. A new rectory was built at Fifield but that too has since been sold. The only Methodist chapel surviving would appear to be the one at Ascott.

All the Church of England churches remain open except those constructed of wood and corrugated iron at Lyneham and Fiddlers Hill, Shipton. These were variously known as mission rooms, tin or iron churches or missions churches. The Church of England still maintains some influence in the local state schools.

As the population has increased, so the number of clergy has decreased. Is this due to lack of religious fervour or was it pre-war overstaffing? Wars and popular clergymen have created surges in attendance at churches and chapels but with their closing and the reduction in the number of the clergy, perhaps one can assume that religion plays a smaller role in the life of the villages, with the non-conformists showing a greater decline than the Church of England. What has not changed has been the way in which the villagers still use the religious buildings, irrespective of their religious beliefs, to show their grief and gratitude to those recently deceased who have served their community well.

The organizations connected with the religious bodies continue to thrive,



Witney Lane. Leaffield as it was in the 1930s. The former Primitive Methodist Chapel on the left had already become the Parish Room (now a private residence). Concrete tiles now replace the stone slates on the next house and the tree has disappeared. Bungalows have been built beyond the cottages on the right

and it is pleasing to note an increasing involvement in the visiting of the elderly and sick, whether at home or in hospital, irrespective of religious beliefs.

One visible change has been the attitude to Sundays and sport, perhaps due to the lessening power of non-conformism. Sunday sport on Milton Green was very heavily frowned upon pre-war. Gradually this feeling relaxed; at first only cricket was allowed provided stumps were drawn before evening service, until now there is no time limit on any sport played.

Politics

There have been some changes in the political scene in the area, including the addition of party politics at district council level. Local government has had some changes in that the Wychwoods villages once belonged to Chipping Norton Rural District, but that has been amalgamated with the urban districts of Witney and Chipping Norton and the Witney Rural District to form West Oxfordshire District Council. At parliamentary elections the area once voted for a member for the Banbury constituency, but now votes for the West Oxfordshire constituency. Fifty years ago Milton did not have its own polling station at election time. Who could have imagined in 1939 that not only would the Wychwoods villages have their own polling stations but that these would be used for voting for a member to a European parliament?

The villages still elect their parish councils, although on reading through the minutes of Milton Parish Council, it would appear that the existing

members of the council in the 30s 'appointed' new councillors whenever a vacancy arose. It is not until 1949 that the clerk to the council used the verb 'elect'. Up to that time the parish councillors were businessmen or farmers—no mention of labourers, artisans or women being considered as councillors until that election of 1949.

At one time the parish councils had far more direct power than now, for they controlled the policing, charities, water supply etc. But the years have seen their strength sapped by a 'higher' stratum of government. One example of this is that the parish councils controlled their own water supplies in the 30s. Eventually this power was taken from them, first by the Rural District Council, and then passed on to Thames Water. My personal hope is that the parish councils do not become completely impotent, with those furthest from the local scene making the decisions which affect us all.

In spite of the ever-increasing size of the villages it has not quite reached the stage which warrants the address on a letter recently delivered to the Clerk to Shipton Parish Council—it read 'The Mayor, Shipton under Wychwood'. Maybe that day is not too far away, as Milton's population already exceeds that of Burford.

Political thinking and changes at national level have also had their repercussions on the local scene. State legislation has meant changes to the schools system and the attitude to council housing. Nationalization and de-nationalization have caused alterations to the railways, telephones and the supply of gas, electricity and water. Who can forecast what other changes are in the pipeline?

With an extra tier of government, that of a European Parliament, it is to be hoped that the sequence of events following 1938 are not to be repeated. It was then that Chipping Norton Rural District Council was asking for volunteers to become wardens for civil defence. Fifty years later, West Oxfordshire District Council has been calling for volunteers to support the Emergency Planning Officer on matters of civil protection, from disaster to nuclear war.

Public Services and Utilities

As this century has passed there has been a gradual improvement and development of all the public services, but, due to the geographical position of the houses and the financial circumstances of the householders, the services did not reach all houses at the same time.

Water Piped water from the springs above the villages was available from wayside taps in the last century, but it was not until the 20s and 30s that many cottages and houses actually had an inside tap. After the war there came a greater use of water and a consequent demand for a more reliable constant supply; some reservoirs were constructed to satisfy this need. However even in the 50s there were still households which had to rely on outside taps and wells. As both the population and the demand increased so the villages were connected to a mains pumped supply which obviated the reliance upon gravity feed from springs.

Sewers The increasing use of water created another problem, that of its disposal. Before the 20s waste water was probably thrown on to the garden or

into the gutter. At the same time the toilet facilities were somewhat primitive with outside bucket 'loos', the bucket being carried to garden or field where the contents were buried. Some properties had privies (one, two and three-seaters are remembered) with never-emptied vaults. With the coming of piped water in the 20s some properties near to the mains supply had WCs installed, but this meant the construction of cesspits as the sewers had not been laid. The cesspits had to be emptied, a rather smelly business, with the council providing horse, cart and loader. When the sewers arrived in the 30s those properties which had previously relied on cesspits could be connected, if they were near enough. Others could also have WCs (some inside) if the distance to water and sewer warranted the expense. It is interesting that *Kelly's Directory* for 1939 considered it worthy enough to note that the Red Horse, Shipton and the Churchill Arms, Ascott had 'bath and indoor sanitation', amenities not noted in the 1935 edition. But there were properties in the area which still had neither piped water nor sewers.

With the post-war boom in house building the increasing demand upon the system meant the creation of a new sewage works. For some reason this was put upstream from the previous works, and in Milton parish not Shipton.

Rubbish As a child I cannot recall our household having a need for a dustbin. There were very few pre-packed goods on sale, and if there were any tins, bottles, paper bags etc. they were kept for re-use. Ashes were used to make paths, kitchen waste made into chicken or pig food, or put on the compost heap (or rubbish heap as it was called then). However, there must have been a need by the village for some rubbish disposal facilities for Milton Parish Council was negotiating with Brasenose College in 1930 for the use of the old Milton quarries for that purpose. Permission must have been granted because the Parish Council was later looking for tenders for carting the rubbish to these quarries. Gradually other parish councils took advantage of Milton's foresight and began dumping their rubbish in the same quarries much to Milton's disgust, who complained to the Rural District Council about it. Eventually the RDC settled the matter by taking over the running of the site and the collection of the rubbish. However, this did not apply to all the villages, who still had to make their own arrangements for rubbish disposal. When the Milton Quarries were finally filled in, a new site at Dean was opened. The excellent provision made there does not stop some people from creating rubbish tips in hedgerows, lay-bys and roadsides. With the modern 'throw-away' society it is not possible to keep to the old adage 'kick it around till you lose it'.

Funerals On reading through the minutes of Milton Parish Council I was intrigued to see an annual entry 'Rent of Bier House 1/-'. On checking further it would appear that most of the local villages operated their own funeral arrangements before the war, mainly based on the village carpenter/joiner who also functioned as undertaker. In Milton's case it was Alf Keen who worked from his premises in Jubilee Lane (now the site of Silver Birches) where he made all the preparations for any funeral and also stored the parish bier. Those wishing to use the bier had to pay a charge of 1/- if they lived in Milton, Lyncham and Bruern, but 2/6d if they lived outside the area of the



Above: Church Road, Milton in about 1926. looking towards the village

Below: The same view in 1988. Little Hill Farm was on the right at the brow of the hill



ecclesiastical parish. Of this, 6d went to Mr Keen, and the rest to the Parish Council. The coffin bearers were local men, often the friends and relatives of the deceased. What a change from the simple pedestrian cortege with locals taking an active part, to the modern panoply of motorized hearses etc., with Leafield the only local village now offering a funeral service.

Telephone See under Communications (pages 72-3)

Electricity The 20s and 30s saw the introduction of electricity to the area by the Wessex Electricity Company. Before that some of the larger houses had their own supply created by their own generators. As an inducement to join the Wessex, houseowners were offered the 'cottage rate' which meant that three lights and one power-point would be fitted free. Many took advantage of this offer and had that bare minimum, while others could afford more. The power lines spread as electricity's popularity as a fuel increased, and it soon ousted gas as the main fuel for domestic and street lighting. Street lighting in Milton amounted to ten lamps in 1938 at an annual cost of £35 15s 0d which has now increased to 74 lamps at an annual cost of £2,000.

Gas United District Gas Company supplied Ascott, Shipton and Milton with town gas from its Shipton Gas Works (now Bowerham, Ascott Road), with Leafield getting its supply from Witney. In the early 50s Shipton Gas Works closed and town gas was then supplied from Oxford. The 70s saw a revival in the use of gas locally for natural gas had arrived and was made available to a wider area, although this still does not include Fifield, Idbury, Lyneham and Bruern.

Local firms generated their own gas to power gas engines which drove their machinery. F. W. P. Matthews Ltd used anthracite and Alfred Groves & Sons Ltd used sawdust. Both firms eventually converted to electricity.

The increasing use of electricity and gas had two repercussions locally. The first came at the end of the 40s with the virtual disappearance from sale of paraffin for lighting and cooking, both from the many shops which retailed it, and from the delivery services by cycle, cart and van. Basil Pratley (Milton) would seem to be an exception. The second was the closing of the coal businesses which operated from Shipton Station (*Wychwoods Album* page 22). In 1930 there were five firms in business but by 1939 only the local firm Pratt and Haynes continued to trade from Shipton, and that has since closed. In *Kelly's Directory* for 1939, Pratt and Haynes were listed as having eight other coal depots, but they were all on the local branch lines which have now closed.

Allotments All the villages except Lyneham and Bruern had parish allotments pre-war. Apart from Fifield, whose allotment land was taken for the building of the rectory and council houses, all the other villages have retained theirs, although Milton has lost some for a cemetery. Shipton and Lyneham had private allotments but both have now gone, Shipton's to become the village green and Lyneham's to revert to farmland.

The 'garden' allotments were once a valuable asset to the villages as they provided an area for growing food for those who could not otherwise afford it, and they also provided an income for charity. This income came from the rents

for the individual plots and for shooting rights over the whole. In the 30s most of the villages could report that all the plots were rented, and at times there was a waiting list for any vacancies. It was a common sight in the evenings and at weekends to see villagers cycling or pushing handcarts laden with tools and produce to and from the allotments. The Second World War gave the use of the allotments as 'kitchen gardens' a final boost, for there has been a steady decline in demand for plots since then. As early as 1948 Milton Parish Council were having to advertise vacant plots. At the present time no more than 10% of such plots in any of the villages are now used as 'gardens', the rest being let out to those who farm the land.

This decline in the use of allotments reflects some of the changes in the life of the villagers—less time spent on gardening, and more money available to buy food which was once grown. Other changes can be seen in the use of Milton village green. Like some of the local allotments, part of the Green was given over to building houses (Pear Tree Close and Shipton Road). Although used for organized football and cricket pre-war, the Green must have been regarded as self-sufficient, for any expenditure on fencing, weeding etc. was borne by the income from 'grass keeping'. This was the letting of the grazing rights on the Green to the highest bidder, usually a local butcher or farmer. At one time this was considered to be important enough for public auction by Tayler and Fletcher, but by the 30s the tenders were submitted direct to the Parish Council. In 1930 the highest bid was £10, but this slowly decreased in value through the decade until it only reached £2 in 1940. Then began an upswing to £6 in 1942, £20 in 1944 and finally £25 in 1945. One does not have to look far for the reason for this increase in valuation put on grazing rights. However, there were no bids at all in 1946, and the Parish Council was considering buying gang-mowers to keep the grass under control. This was necessitated, not only because there was less need for food production, but there was also a different attitude to the Green's use. From now onwards the Green was to be used less by farm animals and more by the general public. In the late 40s there was much discussion and some action on proposals to provide play equipment, village hall, paddling pool, concrete wickets, and public conveniences on the Green.

So from being almost farmland in the 30s and costing the village virtually nothing in upkeep, the Green has now become a play area for the village at an annual cost of £150 for grass keeping, plus expenses for play equipment, sports pavilion and insurance. It is hoped that parishioners' money and the voluntary efforts of the Village Green Committee are not rendered useless by enormous insurance premiums and the mindless vandalism and misuse by some of its users.

Epilogue

In writing this article I am very aware how sketchy some of the contents are, as new information comes in daily. Perhaps someone may be tempted to write more comprehensively on the last 50 years, and then include the 30 years prior to that. This would then cover all this century and link up with the work put into the compilation of *Wychwoods History* Number 3.

For me the greatest changes of the last 50 years have been the more even spread of wealth; the demise of agriculture and local firms as employers of



St Michaels, Milton Road, Shipton, has seen more changes than most. This late Victorian building was used as a College for Young Ladies in the last century and then as a home for waifs and strays. Since the 1930s it has been used by Basque refugees, the army and was the proposed site for the Wychwood Social Centre. It then became a corn chandlers, a warehouse and mill, an antique shop, a guest house and now faces an uncertain future

labour with the consequent need for commuting; the universal spread of the motor car which permits this, and affects all our lives; the increase of domestic building, which at one time was for the local population, and now provides homes for the commuters; the need for Neighbourhood Watch to protect our property; the increasing activity in local history; that Shipton and Milton have grown so rapidly while Fifield, Idbury and Lyneham have declining populations.

On a more personal note I miss the school bell, steam engines, farm animals walking through the villages, walnut trees, the sound of Groves' hooter and band saws, darkness at night, the sight of the red lights atop the old Leafield poles (Leafield radio transmitter), the old village characters and their dialect. My hope is that the villages will remain living communities and not become an accumulation of buildings, housing holiday-makers and commuters who have no need for village social life. In the three years since I returned to live full-time in Milton I have seen enough social activity to have every reason to hope that this will not happen.

The Secret of the School Paddock

MARGARET WARE

How many of us, over the years, have fondly watched our diminutive sons and daughters run up and down the paddock on sports day at St Mary's School, Shipton? Little did we guess that about two and a half feet beneath us lay exciting evidence of the village's medieval past.

During recent building works at the school, we were fortunate enough to be allowed on the site to examine soil heaps and trenches as they were dug¹. The first discoveries, from a service trench, were of several pieces of the rough, brown, gritty medieval pottery with which we had already become familiar from our fieldwalks. But these pieces from the school site, like those recovered from other sites within the village, were larger and much less worn than fragments which have been tumbled about in ploughsoil for centuries. The story they can tell therefore tends to be clearer.

As the work proceeded, earth was stripped from the site to a depth of about two feet overall and then foundation trenches dug. A total of 65 pieces of medieval pottery were recovered, mostly from the spoil heaps of top- and sub-soil. However, one of the 'prize' finds, made by the digger driver who spotted it protruding from the side of a trench, was a large rim-piece of a late 12th/early 13th-century cooking pot. Altogether, eight fragments of cooking pot were recovered, five pieces of jug and one portion of a strap-shaped handle. The rest of the sherds could not be assigned to a particular type of vessel.

After detailed examination², it was clear that much of the pottery was of clay tempered with particles of gritty limestone or more rarely with flint fragments, and mostly appeared unglazed. A smaller proportion was of a sandy-



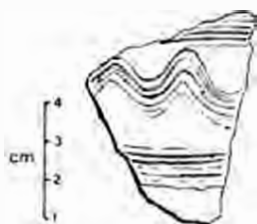
Rim profiles of cooking pots, all 25-30cm diameter. Left: Wychwood ware, Fabric OXCX, 12-13th century Middle: probably OXCX, 12-13th century Right: Fabric OX291



*Base of Wychwood ware jug (OXCX),
early-mid 13th century, with potter's
thumb impressions*

tempered ware, often with a light greenish or mottled green glaze. A very few pieces were obviously wheel-thrown, probably much of the rest was hand-made. Two jug bases showed distinct thumb impressions all round the junction of base and side, resembling a fluted pastry edge, presumably to give the vessel greater stability. A few pieces showed a degree of decoration, usually in the form of horizontal lines with occasionally a combed, wavy design. Two sherds had decorative patches of red slip under the glaze. The jugs were calculated to have been about 10cm in diameter at the rim, widening to about 30cm below, while the cooking pots varied from 25-35 cm in diameter.

All the pieces of pottery recovered were made and used in the 12th-15th centuries but some of them could be dated more precisely. Even more interestingly, over a dozen different sources of manufacture were represented on this one small site. The largest single type was of the local 'Wychwood ware', but other examples originated from potteries at Brill in Buckinghamshire, Minety in Wiltshire and the Savernake Forest area, indicating a widespread trade³.



*Sherd of Minety ware, Fabric OXBB,
12-14th century. Light green glaze
and grooved decoration.*

The original service trench also contained a piece of antler split lengthways and shaped along one edge, which could have been used as a tool in the middle ages. Wychwood Forest would have been a handy source of supply. The site yielded very few pottery fragments of a later date (post-medieval), but these included red- and white-earthenware and stoneware. The finding of several pieces of coke (probably from the school boiler) and two slate pencils brings the story of this tiny plot almost up to modern times.

¹ We are much indebted to Messrs Lewis and Catling for their kind cooperation and interest.

² I am grateful to Maureen Mellor of the Oxford Archaeological Unit for identifying the specimens.

³ Maureen Mellor, forthcoming publication.

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 £4 for an individual member and £6 for a couple, which includes a copy of *Wychwoods History* when published. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, Littlecott, Honeydale Farm, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxford OX7 6BJ (telephone Shipton under Wychwood (0993) 831023).

Further copies and back numbers of *Wychwoods History* may be obtained from Frank Ware, Monks Gate, High Street, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxford OX7 6BA. Numbers 1-4 are £2.50 each and Number 5 is £3.00, all plus 50p each postage and packing. Cheques payable to Wychwoods Local History Society.

Cover illustration: *Heythrop Hunt Meet at The Green. Milton under Wychwood, 1934.*