

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Eleven, 1996

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Contents

Editorial	3
Eggs for the Vicar. A study of the Small Tithes in Shipton under Wychwood 1727 - 1734	4
Personal Memories of Ascott under Wychwood	28
The Priory Tithes of Ascott under Wychwood	34
Quotes	40
The Chaundy Family of Ascott under Wychwood	41
Alfred Groves and Sons	46
'Where There's Muck...'	47
'Agistment': a Tithing Nightmare	53
Asthall Roman Camp	56
A Determined Emigrant	58
From my Bookshelf	60
Medieval Pottery Study	63
The Society's Publications in Print	63

Editorial

A substantial proportion of this issue is concerned with Ascott under Wychwood, while the other major theme to have emerged is that of tithes, in all their complexities. A long series of disputes about tithes in sixteenth-century Ascott has shown that people were as keen to embark upon litigation to protect their rights then as they are today. Moreover, this work also reveals the probable connection between Ascott and the Oxford monastery of St. Frideswide's, explaining the persistence of 'priory' names in Ascott to this day. The Society's industrious 'documents working party' has now explored the ways in which local parishioners in the early eighteenth century supported their incumbent, comparing Shipton with Ramsden, at the same time revealing fascinating insights into the lives and conditions of ordinary folk. A letter of complaint from an Enstone vicar demonstrates the clergy's unease about the effects of parliamentary enclosure upon their incomes.

The Chaundy family were residents of Ascott for over four centuries, and Barbara Adkins' work touches on disputes over tithes and other matters. Her notes also mention the link with the Quartermains, described in last year's Journal. Mrs Doris Warner lived all her life in Ascott, a keen observer of village life, and participated with great enjoyment in the many activities centred on the newly-built Tiddy Hall. Her memoirs are particularly appropriate today in view of the recent opening of the new, replacement, Tiddy Hall. Of our three Wychwood villages, Ascott has hitherto been the least researched by the Society, but this edition somewhat redresses the balance. We would be very pleased to welcome new members from Ascott.

Milton has not been forgotten: the parish vestry's ingenious methods of highway upkeep, grass mowing and of raising revenue in the last century are described.

The recent publication of an Oxfordshire medieval pottery monograph confirms how amateurs like ourselves can contribute to the body of published knowledge by accurate observations and the maintenance of careful records. Congratulations to our fieldwalkers and sharp-eyed gardeners!

New authors would be welcomed, to give our customary stalwart contributors a rest. Articles on local families are acceptable, so long as they also contain sufficient information about contemporary local life: trades, industries, social conditions and so on, to be of general interest to readers. The current editor is also about to retire.

Margaret Ware
Editor

Eggs For the Vicar

A study of the Small Tithes in Shipton under Wychwood 1727-1734

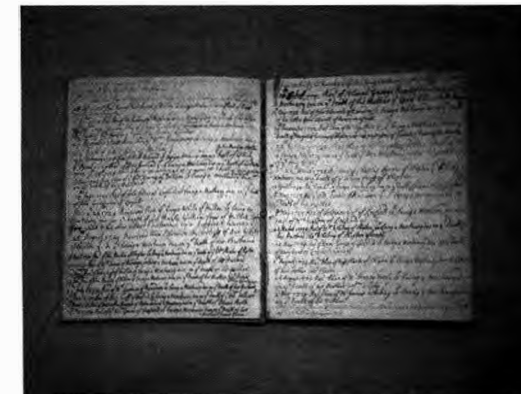
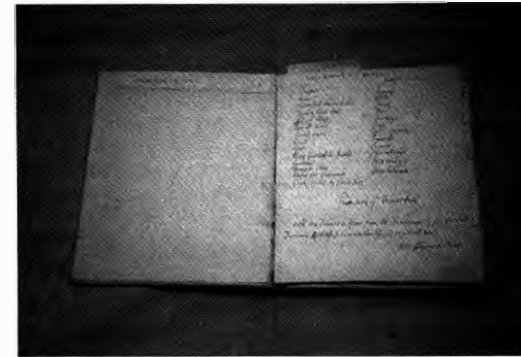
ANTHEA JONES, JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE, SUE JOURDAN
AND TOM MCQUAY

'Good morning, Mrs Green.'
'Good Morning, Vicar.'
'Easter will soon be here!'
'I know, Vicar. I have made my simnel cake.'
'Your hens have started laying, then, Mrs Green?'
'Oh yes, Vicar.'
'I trust you know your duty.'
'Of course. I shall come to the Easter communion.'
'The labourer is worthy of his hire, Mrs Green!'
'Indeed. I shall bring Mr Green, too.'
'And your Easter offering, Mrs Green?'

Could a conversation like this have taken place in Shipton in 1727? The answer may well be 'yes'. Joseph Goodwin, a new, young vicar, had just been instituted to the living of Shipton under Wychwood.¹ His father, also called Joseph, had been vicar before him; both were friends of John Wesley who took a number of services for them at Shipton and Ascott under Wychwood.² Joseph Goodwin Senior died aged 52 in 1725; his son was then studying at Lincoln College, Oxford and two years later he became a Master of Arts, and took up the Shipton living.¹ In the intervening years, Robert Charnock had held the living, on the understanding that he would resign as soon as Joseph Goodwin qualified.³ A copy of his resignation bond dated 24 February 1727 exists in Oxford Diocesan Records. It was during the time of Revd Goodwin and his father that the registers record a significant number of marriages by licence. It appears that the chancellor of the diocese would encourage those who wished to marry by licence, usually the well-to-do who did not want to be troubled by the reading of banns, to get married in less well-endowed parishes so that the fees supplemented the income of the incumbent.

The Small Tithe Book

Between 1727 and 1734, in a little book of 76 leaves measuring six inches by eight inches, the young and perhaps impecunious vicar recorded each year the names of all his parishioners from whom he was entitled to receive payments, and what in fact he did receive.⁴ Apart from the initial pages which record mortuary fees, 10s a burial, these payments were the 'Small tithes' which were



The Revd Goodwin's Tithe Account Book, 1727 - 1734.
(above) Opening page with his list of titheable products.
(below) A page showing names and payments.

traditionally the perquisite of vicars. 'Great tithes' on corn, that is oats, barley and wheat, and on wool and hay were much simpler to collect and much more profitable, and in Shipton's case they were paid to the Oxford Professor of Civil Law who was the 'Rector' of the parish, and who leased them to a local farmer. The vicar, a 'vice' or substitute, received £10 per annum as a stipend from the rector, but a larger part of his income consisted of the Small tithes: payments, usually of pennies, from all communicant parishioners, and for a large number of items produced in their gardens and on their farms. At one time, an actual tenth of the produce was collected, but by 1727 in Shipton, this had been commuted to money and the many small payments altogether increased the vicar's income fivefold. Hence the vicar's imagined visit to a Mrs Green.

Susan Wright has drawn attention to Small tithe lists or 'Easter Books' in an article in *Local Population Studies* (1989).⁵ She described the fascinating variations in these customary payments from parish to parish. The fundamental basis of Small tithes was a payment either by communicants (those aged 16 years or above) or by households. Often payments seem to have been two old pence per head, which is less than one new penny, and very often a household paid one old penny for a garden which covered the produce of herbs, cabbages and other vegetables. Easter books therefore give useful information on householder's names, on some of the produce of the parish and, where there are a series of lists, on the mobility of the parish's population. While they are not rare, they are also not common. In a few places, remarkable series of books have been preserved, for instance for Dalton in Cumbria covering nearly a hundred years from 1673 to 1765. Shipton's Easter Book is not so remarkable, but it still offers unique insights into the parish. The sections for Ramsden and Shipton in 1734 are transcribed here, analysed and discussed. The overall totals of names in each township in the parish were published in *Wychwoods History* 8 page 72.

All money sums are presented as they were recorded, in old pence (d) and shillings (s) which convert nominally as follows:-

<u>old</u>	<u>new</u>
12d = 1s	5p
2s	10p
20s = £1	£1

At the beginning of his Tithe Book, Joseph Goodwin listed the items on which he could expect tithe to be paid, with his signature at the end confirming his entitlement (see opposite page). On this occasion he wrote his name with only one 'o'. It would appear that he wrote up the book himself as the hand is the same as his signature on a bond he was required to take out after his mother died intestate in 1736.⁶

The list included dues paid to the vicar for services in church known as 'altar dues', for marriages, 'churchings', which were services for mothers after the delivery of their babies, and 'mortuaries' which were the standard payments for burials of parishioners, if they took place in a church or churchyard other than Shipton's.

From the annotations Revd Goodwin made in his book it is not possible to tell

List of Small Tithes and Altar Dues from the Easter Book for Shipton under Wychwood 1727 - 1734.

Persons	Eggs	Conies
Kine	Onions garlic & roots	Hops
Calves sold bred or killed	Gardens	Turkeys
Lambs or their odds	Hemp & flax	Pigs
Sale of sheep	Wages for servants	Underwood
Odds of wool	Geese tithe & their odds	Peacocks
Sweet ware	Pigeons	Swans
Fruit	Colts	
Churchings	Marriages	Mortuaries

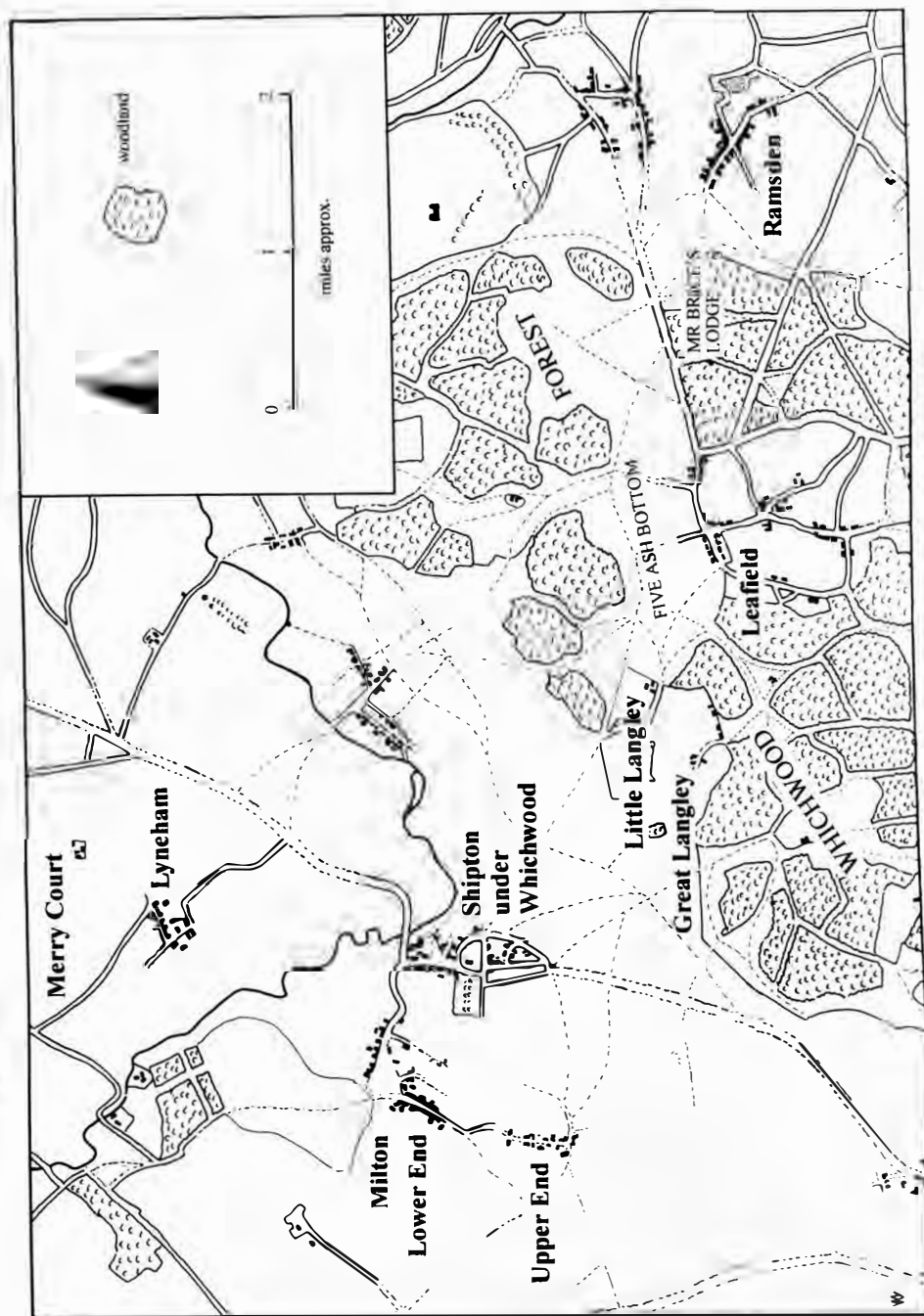
These are the Vicar's dues with £10 p.a. from the Parsonage by four quarterly Payments which I have constantly and regularly rec'd.

Joseph Godwin

if any of his parishioners in Shipton parish was paying tithe on swans or peacocks or what fruit was grown, but it is interesting that, although most items had been customarily titheable for many centuries, the list had been updated to include turkeys. After much searching it has not been possible to find a definition of 'sweet ware' but it might be honey or honey combs. 'Odds' of lambs relates to the tithe paid on less than ten; the basic tithe was one lamb in ten. It can be imagined how an awkward parishioner and a heavy-handed vicar could vye with one another to be vexatious. The ecclesiastical courts have many cases of vicars and parishioners arguing about what was customary and their duty.

The map on p. 8 shows the eighteenth-century extent of Shipton ecclesiastical parish with its townships. Although he wrote up the book himself, it is not known if Revd Goodwin collected his dues in person; it is possible that he sent a servant, or the parish clerk. It would be interesting to know how often he visited Ramsden, about six miles from the Vicarage and parish church, or how well he knew his parishioners there. In 1734 Ramsden was still part of the large parish of Shipton, and there was no church there until 1842.⁷ Perhaps the residents would know that on a particular day each year towards the end of Lent the vicar would call, or they were expected to take their offering to church in Shipton. It is noticeable that in his first year as vicar in 1727, he recorded only 22 Ramsden names in the Tithe Book and collected the relatively small amount of 5s 10d. Two years later he wrote a longer list of 75 names and, although he only collected payment from 40 people, he collected ten times the amount of his first year.

The vicar may not have visited all the settlements in his parish very often but he would have known the six churchwardens whose responsibilities included the repair of the fabric of the nave and tower of Shipton church as well as the



Churchwardens for Ramsden and their tithe payments in 1729 and 1734⁸

	1729	1734
John Alder (1728)	nil	nil
Daniel Joyner (1729 & 1736)	8s	5s (60 sheep not pd)
John Smith (1730)	3s 6d	3s 6d
William Lardner (1735)	3s 6d	3s 6d

Churchwardens for Shipton and their tithe payments in 1727 and 1734

	1727	1734
John Maddocks (1728 & 1729)	£1 5s	n/l
James Cook Jnr (1728 & 1729)	n/l	3s
Richard Day (1730)	15s	15s 6d
Peter Brooks Jnr (1730)	n/l	n/l
Nicholas Willett (1735)	n/l	2s 6d
Richard Franklyn (1753)	10s	10s
Edward Coleman (1736)	5s	5s
Thomas Matthews (1736)	n/l	10s

n/l = not listed

provision of the communion bread and wine. Each of the townships and hamlets appointed one churchwarden while the vicar, who was appointed by the rector of the parish, nominated a second from Shipton. New churchwardens were appointed most years.

It appears that the vicar did not necessarily get his full financial support from his churchwardens. In Ramsden John Alder, churchwarden in 1728, paid nothing in 1729 or 1734 and Dan Joyner, churchwarden in 1729 and 1736, paid 8 shillings in 1729 and 5 shillings in 1734 but owed a tithe for 60 sheep. Peter Brookes in Shipton did not pay at all; he may have been related to Widow Brookes, the tenant at Parsonage Farm (The Prebendal) who, as lessee of the rector, was exempt from paying tithes. Of the other churchwardens missing from the tithe list, two were from the same families who had held Brasenose College leases in the Hearth Tax list in 1662 (discussed in *Wychwoods History* 9 and 10). Alexander and James Cooke held the Bank House lease and Nicholas Willett and his wife Martha held the Red Horse but only Alexander Cook paid tithe in 1727. James Cook and Nicholas Willett were both noted as butchers in their leases in the 1730s. Churchwardens were apparently drawn from the more affluent families as most were substantial tithe payers; the same is also true of the overseers of the poor.

Summary of Small tithe payments 1734 for Shipton under Wychwood parish

Township or hamlet	total amount			numbers of		total names listed
	£	s	d	payers	non-payers	
Merry Court	2	1	0	2	0	2
Lyneham	5	6	2	22	16	38
Upper Milton	2	7	8	10	4	14
Milton	7	12	6	64	42	106
Leafield	7	4	3	46	13	59
Great Langley	1	11	8	6	1	7
Little Langley		13	2	1	0	1
Shipton	9	11	2	42	35	77
Ramsden	2	2	6	47*	37	84
total	£38	10	1			385

* includes 'agistment' not paid by Mr Joyner, (payment for pasturing sheep on land in the parish although they belonged to a farmer from another parish).

Analysis of Tithe Payers

This study has used the fuller list for 1734 for the comparisons between Shipton township and Ramsden. For comparisons over time the earliest Shipton list, 1727, and the earliest full Ramsden list, 1729, have been used.

The most usual payment was the 'offering', from which the voluntary Easter Offering and the collections at services of modern times are derived. This had been a recognised obligation on all parishioners in earlier times, but by the late seventeenth century had been allowed to lapse in many places because of the difficulty created by nonconformists in a parish. In Shipton the offering as a general tax continued into the eighteenth century. The amounts reflect the number of adults or communicants in each household, and were apparently paid at the rate of 2d per person, the same as the Rector of Kingham noted in 1741 where 2d per head 'offering' was due from every parishioner over 15 years.⁹ In some cases the offering was not separately itemised but was included within a larger payment. Poor households were obviously not asked to make even this modest contribution to their vicar's income. Nearly all those paying an offering

Analysis of 'Offerings' in 1734

	1d	2d	4d	6d	7d	8d	11d	total
Shipton	1	2	16	6	1	2	0	28
Ramsden	0	3	35	0	0	0	1	39

paid a 'garden penny', also the same as Kingham.

A few households paid for more than two communicants like Mrs Whiting (7d) and the lessee of the Crown Inn, Martin Shayler (8d), the Langley miller, Peter Whiting (8d) and Edward Townsend of Ramsden (11d); the odd penny was likely to relate to half a year.¹⁰ The Inn would certainly have had living-in servants and it seems likely that the others did too, or possibly children over 16 years. Living-in servants were noted in Shipton in the seventeenth century in our Hearth Tax study: Mistress Whiting, who lived at Upper Farm, remembered her maid and her household servants in her will.¹¹ The will of Edward Geeves of Ramsden, pipemaker, of 1737, one of the few wills relating to tithe payers, included bequests to three men and one maid servant.¹² In 1729, Edward Geeves had paid eight old pence offering; his maidservant or one of his men could have been under 16 years of age. In 1734, however, he only paid 2d for himself. Apparent anomalies resulted from personal circumstances or, perhaps, negotiations with the vicar.

In thirteen cases in Shipton and six in Ramsden, larger sums for Small tithes were paid but no details were given; the sums involved were rounded amounts like 5s and £1 1s, presumably arrived at by negotiation with the vicar and relating to those with a larger income and establishment. Lady Read in 1727 and her son Colonel Read in 1734 were stated to have settled by negotiation a

Analysis of larger tithe payments

	1s-1s1ld	2s-4s1ld	5s-9s1ld	10s-19s1ld	£1 and over	Total
Shipton	4	6	4	6	2	22
Ramsden	5	8	1*	0	0	14

* includes 'agistment' not paid by Mr Joyner

'composition' for their tithes, which made a significant contribution to the vicar's income - £1 11s 6d (16%). Thomas Young also paid a composition of 2s 6d for his 'homestall' as well as paying separate amounts for his animals, making a total tithe of 13s 8d.

The tithe-paying households can be divided roughly into the gentlemen, farmers, artisans and labourers. The gentlemen and gentlewomen were distinguished by 'Mr' (Master) or 'Mrs' (Mistress) or a title like Colonel Read; there were nine in Shipton and six in Ramsden. Appropriately the vicar commenced the list for Shipton in 1727 with Lady Read, and after her death in 1730 with Colonel Read, giving due deference to the owner of Shipton Court, the largest house in the village. In Ramsden Mr Tanner was listed first in 1729 and 1734. John Tanner Snr, who died in 1729, was a yeoman and had a son of the same name.¹³

Ten people in Shipton and 12 in Ramsden were identified as yeomen, farmers or small-holders by their payments for animals and produce, although some payments were only for items like eggs. Three were gentlemen and several had

Analysis of produce payments

<u>Numbers paying for:-</u>	<u>Shipton Ramsden</u>	
cows	6	7
calves	6	5
lambs	3	2
colts	0	1
pigs	1	0
eggs	6	2
fruit	8	2*
sweetware	1	0
Agistment	0	1*
* 1 stated 'not paid'		

other occupations. For example, James Cook who paid for a calf, eggs and fruit was a butcher, Martin Shayler was the innkeeper at the Crown, William Moreton was a carpenter, Edward Geeves of Ramsden was a pipemaker, Peter Whiting was the Langley miller and, in the 1727 list, Thomas Whiting, a Chandler, paid 1s1d including 6d for 'sweetware'. They all paid for some animals or produce. Peter Whiting paid 3s 4d 'clack', an onomatopoeic word that described the sound of the 'damself' feeding the corn to the grindstones. The amount of the tithe for the mill appears to have been a sum fixed in the medieval period, when a mark was commonly in use, as 3s 4d was a quarter of a mark.¹⁴ John Egginton at Shipton mill paid a larger tithe of 5s but it was not described as 'clack' and he probably had another occupation.

Eight people in Shipton and four in Ramsden, who probably had a skill like carpentry or blacksmithing and were artisans, paid a shilling or two, which implies a larger income and establishment than a labourer had, but the vicar did not itemise their tithes. Yet the vicar received no more than an offering and a garden penny from one better-off household in Ramsden; Robert Bowrman, a carpenter, left his two houses with gardens and orchards to his wife Hannah when he died in 1739 but paid only 5d in 1734.¹⁵

Twenty households in Shipton, a quarter of the total, and 29 in Ramsden, a third, simply paid an offering, with usually a garden penny; they probably lived on a small wage as labourers. James Dixon of Ramsden paid 3d in 1734 and in his will of 1742 he was described as a labourer; among his few bequests as a widower, he left his house to his son Richard and his 'Great Brewing Kettle' to his daughter Anne.¹⁶

The information from the Tithe Book shows that there was a substantial economic difference between Shipton and Ramsden in the early eighteenth century. There were fewer households in Shipton paying tithes but the total collected was much larger, because there were a few very large contributors and also a larger number contributing 1s or more. Eighty-three Ramsden parishioners contributed £2 2s 6d, whereas in Shipton 75 paid £9 3s 5d, half the

amount coming from five affluent families. In addition to the two compositions already mentioned, the richer men in Shipton included James Hux (£1 1s), Mr Wisdom (17s), and Mark Beckinsale and William Cross (15s 6d). While 30 Ramsden villagers each paid less than 1s, the corresponding figure for Shipton is 20. The smaller farms and number of garden pennies in Ramsden would be consistent with a more subsistence economy of the forest hamlet.

The Non-payers - The Poor

Nearly half the households in both villages, 45% in Shipton and 44% in Ramsden, were non-payers and nearly all can be demonstrated to have been poor. In a very few cases a family did not pay tithes for reasons of non-conformity or disaffection with the established church. The Kingham rector, in his returns to Dr Secker's Visitation of 1738, stated that although there was one family of Quakers in his parish, they paid their dues without compulsion.¹⁷ In Shipton, Revd Goodwin replied that 'the Quakers are decreased of late years. There are not more than 3 or 4 Families & 3 or 4 single persons. There is a Meeting House at Milton, but whether Licensed according to Law I cannot tell. They meet in it, as I am informed, every Sunday, but they have not a Speaker oftener than once a month. As to my Dues, some have paid me themselves, the Relations of others, who are not Quakers, have paid me them, some I have lost, & once I applied to 2 Justices of the Peace against 4 who refused to pay me.'

Using the parish registers and the Poor Law records, it is often possible to suggest reasons for non-payment of small tithes.¹⁸ Under the provisions of the 1601 Poor Law, Shipton's vestry appointed two overseers of the poor for each of the townships in the parish, Shipton, Milton, Lyneham, Leafield and Ramsden, with responsibility for the administration of poor relief. There are no records extant for Ramsden but there is an overseers' account book for Shipton township for 1740 to 1762. This gives details of the rates raised and the way in which the money was spent. Rates were paid on the basis of 4s in the yardland and each year raised £12. A little more came from rents and sale of paupers' goods. Relief was given in the form of both regular weekly and occasional cash payments and as assistance in kind. Weekly payments varied between 6d and 3s 6d and occasional payments between 6d and 5s. Most of the men and women receiving relief were over 40 and the duration of weekly payments was anything from two weeks to 15 years. Most of the relief given in kind was medical treatments which included doctors' visits, medicine from James Pujolas the apothecary, nursing and two visits to Bath to see a surgeon. Smallpox outbreaks added greatly to medical costs. Food and drink were given, mostly bread and ale with some meat, barley, malt, flour, wheat, meal and milk. Clothes and materials to make clothes such as breeches, coats, shirts and shifts and some shoes were provided. Small amounts were spent on household goods and fuel. The poor had 'decent' burials: money was paid to women to lay out the dead, coffins were made, wool for burial 'in woollen' was provided, graves dug and the bell rung. Burials cost as much as food over the period. Other expenses were for employment and apprenticeships and for the legal costs of removals, marriage and bastardy cases.

Shipton

Thirty five parishioners in Shipton in 1734 paid no tithes. Twenty-two were men and 13 were women of whom six were widows, and of these 20 appear to have been old, infirm or impoverished. Widows did not have an automatic exemption from tithes; for example, Widow Morton paid a 2d offering. Four widows were certainly impoverished, and were in receipt of financial help from the Overseer of the Poor in the 1740s. Widow Brooks paid no tithe because she was living at Parsonage Farm, as a tenant of the rector.¹⁹ Tithes would not be appropriate on glebe land.

Of the male non-payers, Henry Barrick received 'poor relief'. He married Edward Beckett's daughter in 1732 and the Becketts were also a poor family, dependent on 'the parish' for their modest income as well as occasional items such as 'bread 1/-' and '½ hundred of wood 2/-'. John Benfield, Robert Powell, Charles Field, the Hancks and the Russels were all poor people needing help from the Poor Rate. John Boulter and Henry Lardner were both buried by 'the parish' and the latter has an entry '7s for his coffin, wool for burying 1s 6d, bells and grave 2s 6d'. Richard Yeatman was a poor man who lost his wife and three children in a smallpox epidemic in 1744 but was apparently immune himself from the disease and continued to work among the victims. There was a curious entry for Daniel Hiet, a non-payer, - 'use of his bed during the smallpox 2s 6d'. Perhaps he let out his bed for money.

The remaining five men who did not contribute an offering or a tithe were all probably incapable of a full day's work in 1734. Identification of the elderly, infirm or disabled parishioners was difficult not only because of the shortcomings of the baptism register but also because a man's working life was generally much shorter in the eighteenth century and his age may therefore be a poor guide. Nonetheless, Henry Brown must have been elderly as he had brought his youngest child for baptism in 1705 and Robert Smith had brought his youngest in 1706. John Shayler may have been infirm in 1734 as he was buried in 1736. Only three non-payers on the Tithe List could not be traced in any of the registers.

Bereavement plunged the Shipton family of a once-prosperous baker into poverty and dependence on poor relief.²⁰ Richard Beckinsale died on January 3 1727, leaving four children and a pregnant wife, Elizabeth, who died at her confinement in March. The baby, Sarah, 'daughter of Richard lately deceased' was baptised on the same day as her mother was buried. She was one of the very few babies in Shipton to survive a maternal death in childbirth, probably because she was boarded with a wet-nurse who was paid what was then a large sum of money, £8 7s 4d. This information comes from a bond itemising the disbursements following Elizabeth's death which happened before the execution of Richard's will. Richard's 'goods and chattels' were valued and sold for £56 and the inventory suggests a comfortable and well-furnished house with items like a leather chair, two feather beds and a warming pan. There was 'one looking glass' whereas none of the Hearth Tax payers in 1662 had had a mirror; there was a table where earlier inventories had listed 'table- bords'; and there was 'one set of window curtains' whereas curtains in the previous century were

all draped around the four-poster or tester beds.

Although Richard Beckinsale was described as a baker in his will, it can be seen from his inventory and the disbursements that he was also a farmer and a maltster. He had two cows and a calf, one sow and pigs and a horse and two acres of standing barley. In the malt house were five quarters and two bushels of malt. This was well over a ton of malt and his executor paid £1 18s 7¼d in duty on malt.

According to the 1727 Tithe book, Richard Beckinsale was due to pay 2s for fruit (this is the biggest contribution for fruit as a separate item in the village), 4d for his two cows and 3d for eggs, a total of 2s 7d. An item in the disbursements following Elizabeth's death shows debts were honoured - 'Paid Taxes Church Poor and King 9 shillings', that is local rates raised by churchwardens and Poor Law overseers and a national tax, the Land Tax, but no mention of tithes. The disbursements included payments for a bond of £23, rent, interest, and many smaller amounts to local tradesmen and the lawyer and totalled £65 9s 4¼d. The value of the goods sold after Richard and Elizabeth Beckinsale's deaths was £56 so there was a deficit of £9 9s 4¼d. He had been able to service his debts during his life but, with his wife dying in childbirth a few months after him, the children were both orphans and paupers. When the extant Poor Law account book started in 1740 Sarah, the child who survived her mother's death, still qualified for relief. This eventually stopped in 1742 when she was 16 years old. Although there was a Mark Beckinsale on the later Shipton Tithe list, he does not appear to be related to Richard but the heir of another tithe payer. Edward Bolt left Mark Beckinsale £70 in 1729, his largest single bequest and on the 1734 list Mark Beckinsale paid 15s 6d, the same figure as Edward Bolt had paid in 1727.²¹

Ramsden

For Ramsden the parish registers were the main source of information as, unlike Shipton, no poor law documents were available. Only three people could not be traced and a further three had only one entry each in a parish register and there was, therefore, little information about them. There were 12 widows, none of whom paid a tithe.

Eleven of the non-payers were probably elderly. John Cook was listed in 1724, 1727 and 1729 but as he had married in 1705 he may have been old and infirm or unfit for work. Two members each of the Dixon, Francis and Somersby families did not contribute nor did four Lardners (although four Lardners did). These ten men were presumably also elderly or disabled. John Dix paid 7d in 1727 and 5d in 1729 but did not pay in 1734. He married Elizabeth Lardner in 1725, had two children and his wife died in 1733 so that his not paying a tithe may have been due to the family situation. John Baylis may well have been a poor man. He was listed in both 1729 and 1734 but did not pay a tithe either time. He brought his baby daughter Sarah for baptism in 1732. On a January Sunday she must have been carried across Ramsden Heath and through the forest to Shipton Church, some 12 miles in all. Four days later the family had to retrace their steps carrying her tiny coffin for burial in Shipton

churchyard.

Mobility and Persistence

Peter Laslett demonstrated the mobility of two seventeenth-century villages' populations in *The World We Have Lost*, by comparing lists of inhabitants separated by a few years.²² In Clayworth in Nottinghamshire 61.8% of the inhabitants in 1688 had not been there 12 years previously so only 38.2% were stable; in Cogenhoe in Northamptonshire about half the inhabitants in 1628 had not been there a decade earlier. On average 5% had left the villages each year.

Would it be surprising to find half the households of Ramsden and Shipton had moved away or died after seven years? Would it be surprising if only a quarter had? As the Easter book extends over seven years for Shipton and five years for Ramsden, we were able to count how many households remained during those years. There were 78 names on the 1727 Shipton tithe list of which 33 were not on the 1734 list. In Ramsden there were 75 names on the 1729 list of which 23 do not appear on the 1734 list. This means that in Shipton nearly half the households had left after seven years and a third of Ramsden household over the five years; in both villages approximately 6% of households left each year, just marginally more than Laslett found. It might have been supposed that Shipton's position on a significant road between Burford and Chipping Norton and the larger society of farmers and landowners might have encouraged more movement than in Ramsden but in fact the two communities had a very similar mobility.

We have more information about Shipton following our Hearth Tax study published in previous *Wychwoods History* 9 and 10 which enabled us to measure the persistence of families over a longer time period. Eleven of the names on the 1662 Hearth Tax list (30%) appear on the 1734 tithe list and a further eight Hearth Tax payers (22%) have descendants on the tithe list, suggesting that more than half the 1734 inhabitants in Shipton had roots in the village extending back at least 70 years. The persistence of this section of the community is quite striking; they appear to have had either valuable tenancies or to have been artisans with their own business. As well as Cook and Willett, eight further names on the 1734 tithe list had forebears on the 1662 Hearth Tax list - Brookes, Brown, Moreton, Patten, Reeve, Shayler, Whiting and Wisdom. Another aspect of the stability is the fact that in Ramsden, many of the 83 people listed were probably related so that just 49 surnames appear. There are no less than ten Dixons and eight Lardners on the tithe list. In Shipton, 75 people listed shared 61 surnames.

The marriages of 49 people on the Ramsden tithe list were identified in the parish register and 36 (73%) married local girls. In Shipton there were fewer local marriages; just 31 (57%) of the 55 weddings identified in the register involved fellow villagers. No married couples on the Ramsden tithe list were new to the village, whereas seven (12%) couples from other localities married, settled and paid tithes in Shipton. Of the 17 (30%) marriages of Shipton tithe-payers whose partners came from elsewhere, some came from quite far away eg. Oxford, Warwick and Middlesex, while in Ramsden there were 13 (26%) such

marriages but all the partners came from nearby towns and villages such as Charlbury, Hailey and Wilcote.

Some Prosperous Inhabitants of Ramsden on the Small Tithe List: Pipes, Slates and Limewash.

The majority of Wychwood Forest lies on the Great Oolitic limestone with the settlements on outcrops of the overlying clays and glacial drift.²³ The villagers of Ramsden made use of the natural resources from the forest and from the ground, and two tithe payers left informative probate material.

Edward Geeves paid only two old pence 'offering' and a garden penny in 1734 with a note that he had not paid for fruit. He was described as a tobacco pipe maker but obviously had a number of other interests including farming.²³ He married Mary, daughter of George Bourman, slater of Ramsden, but there is no register entry of the marriage nor of any baptisms. Mary Geeves was buried at Shipton in 1733 and it appears they had no living children. When her husband, Edward Geeves, died in 1737, he left a number of bequests of properties and land as well as money to his 'kindsmen and kindswomen'.²⁵ (Although there are six Bourmans in the 1734 Tithe list in Ramsden, three were widows and none of the men was George). Edward Geeves bequeathed his 'horses stock & stock of hay wood clay and tools belonging to my trade' to a kinswoman Mary Dickson. Three acres of land left to her were to pass to Mary Dix, daughter of John Dix pipemaker, so Edward Geeves was not the only tobacco pipe maker in Ramsden.

At the top end of Ramsden in an area known as Mount Skippet there are a number of shallow boggy depressions on the Oxford clay. It seems likely that this was where the pipe makers dug their raw material. The clay would have been washed and cleaned to remove stones and, when drained, beaten and kneaded to a uniform consistency.²⁶ The simple tools that Edward Geeves would have required included moulds made out of wood, piercing tools for making the bore in the stem, specially shaped knives for trimming the excess from the mould, hand stoppers for moulding the bowl, various smoothing tools and a bench vice for clamping the two halves of the mould over a roll of clay. When the pipes had air-dried and any roughness trimmed and smoothed, the pipes would have been fired in an up-draught kiln shaped like a small bottle kiln. Fired with charcoal or wood, they were usually shared by two or three pipemakers.

Other tithe payers using local materials were George Bourman who, as a slater, used the local stone, and Mr Thomas Somersby, yeoman and limeburner.²⁷ He probably lived at Lower Farm at the bottom (southeast end) of Ramsden towards Witney; several old quarries on the limestone are noted there on the present OS map. Deeds of Lower Farm make reference to a lime kiln and a number of pieces of land identified by a limepit and quarry. He leased the Great tithes from the rector of Shipton for £30 per annum and paid 2 shillings and sixpence in Small tithe.²⁸

By the eighteenth century, the making of probate inventories had become outdated with people owning too many items to list. Nevertheless there are two



Lower Farm, Ramsden, home of Mr Thomas Somersby, yeoman and limeburner.

very long and interesting ones for Ramsden. The existence of Thomas Somersby's inventory in 1741 may have much to do with another document tucked inside:

Ramsden April the 24th 1741

Mr Beaver

I acknowledge that I have no Right to the letters of administration of the goods etc of Thomas Sumersby late of Ramsden in the parish of Shipton under Whichwood in the County and Diocese of Oxford Lime Burner my reputed Husband Deceased and therefore do agree and Desire that those letters of administration lately by me obtained may be declared null and void and cancelled to all intents and purposes: and that letters of administration of the said goods etc may be made to such person or persons as are by law intituled thereto. I am etc

Priscilla Carter

signed in the presence of Edmund Townsend
The Mark of Ann Sumersby A

Six trustees were then appointed and Edmund Townsend and Edward Carter made the inventory.

Thomas Somersby's house had seven rooms, a passage and two cellars. He had a looking glass, a clock & case, a fine needlework picture and a dozen and a half of small pictures, small earthenware on the shelf over the chimney, a punch bowl, a silver tobacco box and glasses, curtains and valances as well as a dresser, tables, chairs, a dressing-table box and chest of drawers. The kitchen and pantry were well stocked with copperware, a brass flour box and a spicemorter, skillets, dishes, trenchers, pans, covers, collanders, plates and bowls, scales and implements including 'rubbing' brushes. There was even 'A horse to hang cloas on' in the brewhouse. One can see that possessions had become too numerous to list in inventories. Many of the commodities like feathers and iron were valued by weight. Feathers were 7d a pound, sheets 7s 6d a pair, flaxen napkins 9d each, new linen cloth 10d a yard, pewter 8d a pound and iron 3d a pound. Thomas Somersby had lime in the lime house worth 4s with hair worth 5s. Lime was used for whitewashing and combined with hair for plastering. At the pit was an old dragg, an iron coldrake and a fire fork, with sledges, bars and wheelbarrows.

One other Ramsden inventory survives for this period for John Alderworth who died in 1731.²⁹ He was probably John Alder who was listed but paid no tithe in 1729 and was a churchwarden. The names Alder and Alderworth are certainly interchangeable. In his inventory it appears that he had quite a large farm with 6 cows, 22 sheep and 7 horses. The inventory was made in April and he still had a stack of oats, a rick of wheat, and 15 quarters of barley, 6 of peas and 8 of oats. There was wheat sown in the ground. His house had six rooms with pictures and a looking glass. In the buttery was a barrel of 'verguce' and another in the room above. Verjuice is cider vinegar often made from crab apples. Also listed was firewood, called his 'Forest Gate'. As John Alder had a forest gate he probably lived within the bounds of Wychwood Forest.

There are puzzles about the situation of two gentleman in Ramsden, Mr Brice and Mr Joyner, and in searching for answers, some of the complexities of Shipton's tithes are revealed. Mr Brice was listed but he paid no Small tithe. His will said that he was a 'gent' of Ramsden and he came to Shipton church to be married and for his childrens' baptisms between 1716 and 1729. The vicar recorded his name at the end of his Ramsden list, under the heading 'New Thrift Lodge', which was one of a number of lodges in Wychwood Forest, and seems to have become known by Mr Brice's name.³⁰ This was quite common; in the same way Potters Hill Lodge was referred to as Pratley's in 1791, because Joseph Pratley and his father before him were the tenants. At this date, when a Royal Commission investigated the customs of the Forest, William Eeles had been at Brizes Lodge for 25 years, and was the Keeper of Patch Hill Walk.³¹ The Forest was divided into five 'walks' or areas. Mr Brice, as tenant of a Lodge, was presumably also Keeper of Patch Hill Walk, though the Lodges were also farmhouses. Mr Brice did provide the vicar with a load of 'Bronce' faggots each year, a useful supplement to his stipend.³² Mr Wyatt at Potters Hill Lodge did the same. Shipton's church had been endowed with a wood within the Forest

before 1066. Some of the medieval rector's rights to firewood had been transferred to the vicar. He also received a load of 'Hard Wood' from Mr Wyatt as tithe due from Langley Grove which was in Shipton parish. Wychwood Forest was outside any parish organisation so the occupants of the lodges did not pay tithes. This probably also explains why John Alder, the churchwarden, did not pay tithes.

Mr Joyner was a Ramsden resident who brought four babies to be baptised in Shipton church between 1709 and 1718, and served as churchwarden in 1729-30 and 1736. In 1729, he made an agreement to pay the vicar 5s 'compositon' for his tithes, and 3s 'Joiments'. 'Agistment', as it was properly termed from a french word meaning 'lodging', was a frequent cause of dispute but if once it was waived the way would have been open for all sheep to be pastured in neighbouring parishes and the church defrauded of a valuable tithe. A Shipton case of 1591 in the records of Oxford Diocese Church Courts being calendared by Jack Howard-Drake is concerned with this problem.³³ Thomas Whiteinge was in trouble for refusing to pay 20d. He agreed that tithe should be paid on sheep wintered in the parish and shorn there; he had paid for 100 sheep, although it appeared that he had a flock of 166. However, he had bought eight sheep in Burford market and taken them into Shipton field and sheared them. Presumably they had not been pastured in Shipton during the previous months, and the tithe on their sale should have been paid by the previous owner. Surely Thomas Whiteinge had a good case! Illustrating how the subject of agistment continued to vex vicars over the centuries, a letter on the subject received by Shipton's vicar in 1822 is printed elsewhere in this Journal. Typically in 1734, Mr Joyner's 5s for agistment for 60 sheep was annotated 'not paid'.

An Antiquarian View

In the nineteenth century Revd Thomas Symonds, an antiquarian vicar of Eynsham recorded in his note book details about the parish of Shipton under Wychwood:³⁴

Among Many old customs in this parish, the Origin of which is forgotten, is that of Chiming the Corpse into the churchyard. The writer of this article had an Opportunity of witnessing this Ceremony at the Funeral of a Villager of Leafield (a hamlet of Shipton) when the Bells chimed as the Body was borne within the gates (it is a very common Custom in many Churches in Oxfordshire). At a Funeral the Inhabitants usually assemble on Horseback, or on Foot, & sometimes in Waggon, to convey the Corpse from the Hamlets to the Parish Church; the farthest of which (Ramsden) is five miles distant. And Whichwood Forest lies between. It is customary amongst the Farmers & Tradesmen to invite their Friends and Neighbours, the young and robust forming themselves into Sets of Bearers, who carry the deceased on their Shoulders to its last Home. But it too frequently happens that this solemn Rite, degenerates into Scenes of Debauchery & Riot: the more depraved Characters remaining at Shipton drinking, quarreling & fighting, till compelled to return to their

Habitations from want of Money OR Credit. These Excesses render Forest Burials celebrated far around, altho' the Abuses are confined to the rudest of the Villagers. It would be difficult to convince an uncultivated Woodman of Ramsden or Leafield that there is any moral crime in killing a fat Buck in Season, that is not fed by an Individual, nor kept within a walled Park: thence many a Deer has fallen, & many a Deer-stealer detected & imprisoned, for endeavouring to repair the Ravages committed on their Finances by a Funeral.

Dr Brookes related a curious Anecdote connected with a Ramsden Burial, that took Place in the Reign of Queen Anne. A funeral Party having lost the Corpse in the Forest on their way to Shipton church. The weather was keen & frosty. Just before they came to 5 Ash Bottom, as the coffin was rested upon a joint stools or trcssels, carried on Purpose, one of the Bearers saw a Squirrel leap from an Oak Tree, & giving a shout he set off in Pursuit. His Example was followed by the whole Party, but the little Animal gave them such a Chase, that he got into a walled Coppice, just at Nightfall. The Rustics then began to recollect where they had left the Coffin, & seeking around in all Directions, when a Snow Storm coming on, they were not only unable to recover what they had lost, but had nearly lost themselves. For the Snow fell so fast that they had great Difficulty in making their way to any Place of Refuge: nor was it till after 3 Days fruitless search that they could discover it; the snow having formed a Hillock over it, so much resembling the low Tufts of Thorn Bushes, that the Coffin was no longer perceptible. The name of the Individual was Eldridge, who was such a Character for lying, that to the present Day, if any one is remarkable for this sinful Practice, the Cry is 'He is as big a Liar as Old Eldridge'. The Grave Stones placed at his Head & Feet are sunk into the Earth, covered with Moss & illegible; but his name still remains tainted with this vicious Epithet.

The registers recorded the burial of Sarah, wife of William Eldridge of Ramsden, on 24 December 1728 and perhaps over the following century the story underwent slight changes. It seems likely that William Eldridge overcame his grief for his wife's death and joined in a good 'forest funeral' on Christmas Eve. Local oral tradition in Shipton records that the bells were chimed according to age and sex; once for a child, twice for a woman and one chime for each year of a man's life. From the account it appears that the route that the party took from Ramsden avoided going through the village of Leafield and took a more northerly route through the forest, passing the focal point of many of the forest trackways at Fair Spear and joining the present road at what is now known as Fairspear Corner. Although Symonds gives us an idea of what happened at forest funerals, we do not know if the mother of a new baby came to church for the child's baptism but, of course, she had to be 'churched'. Did she walk or ride on a cart through rain, snow and wind to Shipton church and back shortly after the birth of her child? The map shows the Ramsden parishioners' probable route through the forest to Shipton Church.

Conclusion

The importance of Small tithes to the vicar has emerged particularly strongly from this study. In a return of the values of church livings published in 1736, Shipton's vicarage was said to be worth £50; £10 was paid by the Professor of Civil Law and the rest, as our research shows, was made up of Small tithes.³⁵

The return of £50 was based on exact figures for this parish, despite its suspiciously rounded nature. The vicar was still not rich, but his income was near the average for clergymen of the time. Coincidentally, the Bishop of Oxford made one of his visitations to his diocese in 1738, three years after the Tithe Book entries finished.³⁶ Joseph Goodwin replied to the preliminary questionnaire sent out by the bishop, Dr Thomas Secker, and his estimate of 370 houses in the parish is supported by the information contained in the Tithe Book. Goodwin's knowledge of his parish was, as his tithe book shows, thorough and precise. He said there were 'no families of Note' in Shipton, except Sir Thomas Read and his brother Colonel Read 'who live together at Shipton'. Goodwin said he lived constantly in the Vicarage House and 'for the Eleven years since I have been Vicar, have been never absent more than a week in a Year, except six weeks last Summer, when I was advised by Dr Frewen to ye Bath for my health.' Goodwin also served as curate at Ascott, noting in his replies to Dr Secker that it was a 'curacy of small value', not above £17 and 'never as yet had a resident curate'. The return of 1736 gives the value of the Ascott curacy as £18 6s 8d.

The Shipton under Wychwood Small tithe book is particularly valuable because there are few eighteenth-century records for the parish which provide any details of the social structure. Moreover, the record includes all the townships of the parish. An important conclusion is that nearly half the households in both Shipton township and Ramsden were unable to pay even the 2d Easter offering. The tithe lists also show that of all the households in the townships, 30% of Shipton but only 17% of Ramsden were more prosperous, paying amounts from 1s to more than £1. In harmony with this finding, 30% of Shipton's households but only 8% of Ramsden's appear to have contained more than two adult persons. More affluent households could afford to keep children longer at home, and to have living-in servants. Poor households were generally small and did not usually contain relations.

The population of both townships was by no means static; about 6% of households moved away each year. The marriage horizons of Ramsden folk seem to have been more restricted than Shipton's, but the parish registers show how often new surnames in the tithe lists disguise the fact that daughters had stayed in the parish after marriage.

Surprisingly, there is less information on the furnishings in houses for the eighteenth century than for the seventeenth because inventories of possessions ceased to be made. There are three striking exceptions which do illustrate how many more items were to be found in some houses by 1750, although not in those where poor folk lived. Parish registers and Shipton township Poor Law account books have particularly contributed to confirming the position of the poor. It is important to find that 'non-payers' of tithe who formed nearly half the households in Shipton and Ramsden are properly categorised as 'poor', although

Revd Goodwin took the trouble to list all their names. He took conscientiously his duty to know his flock.

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- 20 OA Ms wills Oxon Richard Beckinsale 9/1/27 1727.
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- 22 Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (1971), 156.
- 23 Geological Survey of England and Wales, Witney, sheet 218, solid with drift.
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- 29 OA Ms wills Oxon John Alderworth 114/2/50; 160/2/34 1731.
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- 32 Bronce = brusca, latin for brushwood.
- 33 Ms Oxf. dioc. papers D16, ff174,177v,180v.
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Appendix
Shipton under Wychwood Tithe Account 1734

Name	offering	garden	total		
			£	s	d
Shipton township					
Read Colonel	5s	comp £1 5s, for Brookes's 4s	1	14	0
Colman Mr				5	0
Wisdom Mr				17	0
Wisdom Mrs					
Frankling Rd				10	0
Day Rd				15	6
Cross Th	4d	1d			5
Williams Robt	2d	1d			3
Wheeller Wm	4d	1d			5
Draper Mrs					
Rawleigh Christopher	4d	1d			5
Smith Robt					
Brookes Jh	4d	1d			5
Bolter Jh					
Ward Robt	4d	1d			5
Webster Susanna					
Russel Th					
Brown Jh					
Yeatman Rd					
Wilkins Hy	6d	1d			7
Tanner Wid					
Merey Th					
Kirby Jh	4d	1d	cows 2d, calf 9d, lambs 2d, eggs 2d, fruit 2s	3	8
Moreton Wid					2
Moreton Wm	6d	1d	cows 2d, eggs 2d, calf 8d, fruit 6d	2	1
Clarke Mrs	6d	1d	cows 2d, fruit 6d, calf 6d	1	9
Ireland Wid					
Powel Robt					
Becket Edw					
Barrick Hy					
Russel Jh					
Field Chas					
Cross Wm	1d	1d	cows 6d, calf 6d, lambs 2s, fruit 2d, eggs 3d	4	6
Cross Daniel	4d	1d			5
Hayerd Jh	4d	1d			5
May Wm	4d	1d			5
Egginton Jh					5
White Wid					
Becket Jh					
Mathews Th					10
Hux Jas					1
Young Th			comp for his homestall 2s 6d, cows 6d, calves 1s 6d, lambs 6s 2d, sale of sheep 1s, fruit 2s	13	8

Name	offering	garden	total		
			£	s	d
Heaven Mrs					
Hyett Daniel					
Wayne Wm	4d	1d			5
Russel Wm					
Cross Hannah					
Shayler Martin	8d	1d	fruit 6d		3
Patten Wid					
Lucket Wm	6d	1d	fruit 3d, eggs 2d	1	0
Beckingsale Mark					15
Hope Jas	4d	1d			5
Hancks Jh jr					
Benfield Jh					
Shayler Hy	4d	1d			5
Shayler Jh					
Hawking Th					
Hitchman Wid					
Whiting Mrs	7d	1d	sweet ware 6d		3
Spruce Chas	4d				4
Cross Robt	6d	1d			7
Hancks Jh					
Cross Jh	4d	1d			5
Browne Hy					
Reeve Wid					
Quarterman Francis	4d	1d			5
Hux Ann					
Lardner Hy					
Dipper Wm	4d				4
Lanshaw Wm	6d				6
Harris Sarah					
Cooke Jas	6d	1d	cows 8d, calf 6d, fruit 1s, eggs 3d	3	0
Willet Nich					2
Simon					
Gray Wm					6
Eggerton Jh					0
<u>Langley Mill</u>					
Whiting Peter	8d	1d	cows 6d, eggs 2d, pigg 2s, clack 3s 4d	6	11
<u>Colestone</u>					
Lardner Mr					2
<u>People of Ascott having land in Shipton liberty</u>					
Chaundy Jh					
Riman Th					

Name	offering garden	total		
		£	s	d
Ramsden				
Tanner Mr		7	0	
Lanchbury Wd				5
Dixon Wm Sr	4d 1d			5
Dixon Wd Sr				3
Dixon Jas	4d 1d			2
Dixon Wd Jr	2d			2
Dixon Thompson				
Dixon Stephen				5
Dixon Daniel	4d 1d			5
Dixon Jn Jun deleted				
Dixon Wm Jr	4d 1d cow 2d, calf 6d	1	1	
Lardner Wm		3	6	
Lardner Wd Sr				5
Lardner Mrs	4d 1d			5
Lardner Richard Jr				
Lardner Thos at ye farm				
Green John	4d 1d cows 10d, calves 1s 2d	2	5	
Lardner Thos	4d 1d			5
Lardner Wd				
Lardner Ambrose				
Bourman Wd				5
Francis Wm	4d 1d			6
Bishop Wm				
Alder John				3
Alder Wd				6
Smith John		3	6	
Bourman Wd				
Aflet Richard	4d 1d fruit 1s	1	5	
Collins John	4d 1d cows 2d			7
Lanchbury Geo	4d 1d cows 4d, calf 6d, colt 6d	1	9	
Falkner Leonard	4d 1d			5
Geeves Edw	2d 1d fruit not paid			3
Patchill Robt				
Joyner Mr	agistment of 60 sheep not paid	5	0	
Somersby Mr		2	6	
Somersby John				
Somersby Wm				
Dorwood Wd				
Barely Paul	4d			4
Launchbury Wd				
Cockerel Thos	4d 1d			5
Townsend Edmd	11d 1d cows 6d, calves 1s 9d, eggs 2d	3	5	
Fletcher Wm		1	0	
Presnel Mrs				
Francis John				

Name	offering garden	total		
		£	s	d
Etheridge Wm	4d 1d			5
Bourman Jos	4d 1d			5
Wilkins John	4d 1d			5
Cooke John				
Bourman Rich	4d 1d			5
Souch Thos	4d 1d cows 2d, calf 1d, lambs 2s	2	8	
Thompson Wm				
Hunt Wd				
Panting Thos	4d 1d cows 2d			7
Collins Wm Sr	2d 1d			3
Bourman Wd				
Dix John				
Baily Jas				
Faulkner Rich	4d 1d			5
Green Wd				
Baylis John				
Hiberd Robt	2d 1d			3
May John				
Allen Daniel				
Bourman Robt	4d 1d			5
Hix John				
Avery Tobias				
Debanke Wm	4d 1d			5
Slaymaker John	4d 1d			5
Bridges Rich	4d			4
Souch John	4d 1d			5
Gillett Thos	4d 1d			5
Willowbee Wm	4d 1d			5
Baylis Robt				
Hunt Wm	4d 1d			5
Dring Simon	4d 1d eggs 3d			8
Goole Thos	4d 1d			5
Twilly Wm				
Collins Wm Jr	4d 1d			5
Francis Wm				
Bloxham Thos	4d 1d			5
Falkner Thos				
Frankling Robt	4d 1d calf 1d, lambs 2s	2	6	
<u>New Thrift Lodge</u>				
Brice Mr				

Personal Memories of Ascott under Wychwood

DORIS WARNER

Born Doris White in Ascott in 1904, Mrs Warner lived all her life in the village and for many years kept the post office. In 1966 she submitted an account of her personal memories to an Oxfordshire Rural Community Council essay competition and won the first prize out of 88 competitors. This account is a selection of her memories which will be continued in a later edition of the Journal. Mrs Warner died in 1986.

When I was a small child, a visiting vicar from the dockland slums of Portsmouth preached us a sermon on 'Truly your lot hath fallen in a pleasant place'. It made a lasting impression on me and often as I have roamed the fields and forest, or cycled the lanes, I have remembered that text, and been glad it has been my lot to have been born and lived in this 'pleasant place'. Ascott under Wychwood, as many generations of my family have been before me.

One of my earliest recollections is of my father getting me out of bed one summer's night and carrying me up the lane to watch Halley's Comet. My father was very keen on astronomy, and music: he was a choirman and bell-ringer for forty years. He was a shoemaker, a craftsman and, although a cripple, took part in all the village activities and loved a joke and a laugh. My mother was a pretty, slim, quiet person with a lovely complexion, often ill and worked to death making two very short ends meet. She kept the house spotless and made all our clothes. They were married when Dad was an apprentice earning twelve shillings a week, and although they never had owned much they were always ready to give to others in need, and were one of the happiest couples I have ever known. There were we three children, one son and two daughters. My mother's sister, Aunt Jane Kilby, was the village midwife, nurse and 'layer-out', so we heard a great deal about birth and death as a matter of course. I started school at the age of three.

It was a Church of England school with two rooms, as it still is (*written in 1966-Ed.*); the 'Big Room' where Mr and Mrs Kinvig taught the older children, with sometimes a pupil teacher too, and the 'Infants' room where Miss Perkins and a pupil teacher taught the three to six-year olds. There were around eighty to ninety children altogether: about thirty infants and sixty in the Big Room. Mr Kinvig was a neat, small man, - a fine man - he came from the Isle of Man so naturally was called 'Kelly'. He gave us a good grounding in all the general subjects: at least we could read and write before the age that children start school

now. The boys had an allotment and had gardening lessons while the girls had sewing and knitting lessons. We had plenty of music and singing and the vicar, the Revd C. Walford came often to school.

We went to Sunday school before church Sunday mornings, and Sunday afternoons we often went to the vicarage gardens after classes. We had a Sunday school party in the summer and a Christmas party after the prize-giving. There was an Ascott charity that gave money to buy books for the school prizes, and also coal at Christmas for all widows and old persons. The row of houses by the church used to belong to the charity but they have now been sold and the interest on the investments is used for these charities.

A great change came for Ascott when Mr Reginald Tiddy came to live at Priory Cottage with his father and brother, and Mr and Mrs Sanderson Furniss had Chestnut Close built (*now called Wychwood Manor*). Mr Tiddy had the Hall built for morris- and country-dancing and all the young folks learned to dance. Mr Kinvig was very keen and we learnt at school until the Hall was finished (*it was opened in 1912*). Mr Cecil Sharpe often came to Ascott collecting old folk songs and dances: my sister had a shilling for singing to him. He borrowed my grandfather's (William Honeybone's) morris bells from my mother, and William Kimber (*of the famous Headington Quarry morris*) copied them. I still treasure these bells and like to think of my grandfather dancing with them over a hundred years ago, and of them being handled by Cecil Sharpe, William Kimber and Reggy Tiddy. My aunt used to tell me that grandfather and the morris team danced at Cornbury Park and the big houses at Whitsun, and the maids who brought out the refreshments for them sometimes put 'jallop' in their beer.

Soon the Ascott country dancers were in great demand at fetes, flower shows etc. and we had many lovely times out dancing at places such as Bruern Abbey, Abbotswood, Cornwell Manor, Lower Slaughter Manor, Shipton Court and Lee Place. The women were kept busy making the dresses - the adults had dresses with a tight bodice and full skirt, white spotted muslin dutch bonnets and fichus, their hair in two long plaits with ribbons in hair and on shoes to match their dresses. The men had white flannels with coloured baldrics, and bells on their legs. The children had coloured flowered-print dresses with matching sunbonnets, or holland smocks with wide hats and red scarves for the boys. Mr Furniss (later Lord Sanderson) used to play his fiddle to accompany the morris dances and jigs although he was blind.

Mr Tiddy had a bathing place made for the boys in the river, with a hut and diving-board but the floods kept washing them away. Mrs Furniss then started a 'Margaret Macmillan' Clinic at the Tiddy Hall where the schoolchildren went in turns on Saturday mornings. Three doctors attended: Dr Parsons from Shipton, and Dr Croly and Dr McNeight from Charlbury, as well as two nurses living in the village. There was also a dentist, so we had our teeth attended to, and weighed and examined by the doctor and treated when necessary. Adults had treatment for a small charge. The Hall was built up on brick pillars about two feet from the ground to give the floor more spring for the morris dancing, so when it was the turn of the clinic doctor who scared me, I crawled right in



Ascott country dancing team, c. 1911. Reginald Tiddy is standing, third from left, and Mr Kinvig second from left. Doris Warner née White is sitting in the front row, right. The names of the whole team are known.

under the Hall where no-one could find me! But usually we loved the clinic and the exercises.

In 1913 Mr Furniss and a frequent guest of his, Mr Albert Mansbridge, started the WEA in Ascott. My brother was the first secretary until he went away at the age of 16 to work on the railway. Then my sister was secretary until 1936. We had women's classes in the afternoons and mixed classes in the evenings once a week, and lots of socials where everyone danced and sang. The WEA and amalgamated folk dancers totalled 120 members; we were the oldest rural class in the country and managed to keep going through both wars, and in the years between. We had many fine lecturers who later became very well known. The first women's lectures were given by Mrs Furniss and Mrs Mary Stocks, now well known on radio programmes. Dr Reginald Jaques gave us community singing, Mr Barrett Brown of Ruskin College, Mr Lower and Mr Alan Bullock all gave history lectures just before the Second World War, and many others including Professor Mackay. Eventually, I regret to say, the WEA was pushed out, so that the Women's Institute could be pushed in - a great pity after all the years of effort to keep going.

Among other childhood recollections, I remember the gas being brought to Ascott and the gas lights and stove being installed (about 1910). Also I can just remember my father going to the last meeting of the Court Lete, the ancient kind

of Parish Council that used to be held annually at the Churchill Arms (*now private housing*) to arrange parish affairs. I remember the very hot summer and drought of 1911, when the water carts came to pump water from our well for Fairspear, High Lodge and Kingstanding. Ascott is well blessed with water; the main supply comes from the vicarage springs, just up the hill (*London Lane*). It was lovely, sparkling, ice-cold water but it's not the same now it has been piped and tapped and messed around with. Many cottages used to have their own wells in their gardens but they are nearly all filled in now.

The vicar ran a clothing club. He used to take the money at school on Mondays, sixpence or a shilling a week, then there would be so much to the pound added and it could be drawn out at Christmas. I remember walking to Charlbury with my mother to spend it. Many women 'did the gloving' by hand in those days. Several brought their bundles of gloves, tied up in big red and white handkerchiefs (known locally as 'bundling hankechers'), to my father's shop to be called for by the carrier's cart. This went from Leafield to Chipping Norton twice a week, driven by a remarkable couple, Temp and Trump Collicut. They had a big roan horse and a high dogcart that rocked like a boat on the tide. Temp (short for Temperance) had a remarkable flow of language and peculiar sayings, such as 'Master White, thee tell that ther 'ooman as they ain't got none so the'll keep it till Wednesday'.

I remember seeing Mr Lloyd George go by as he came up from the station to open the Leafield Wireless Station (about 1912). Altogether I had a very happy childhood. We had very few toys; very rarely a penny for sweets, a new book at Christmas, but we were happy country dancing and roaming the fields and forest. Then came 1914 and war was declared.

My recollections of the War are mostly of the 'King's Liverpools', the soldiers who were guarding the Wireless Station, and a right rum lot they were: mostly Liverpool Irish who seemed to speak a different language. My father had to mend their boots - endless sackfuls of big army boots- from early morning to late at night. Then there were the wireless operators, dashing young men in naval uniform; several married local teachers. Mr Kinvig and several young lads, 'the volunteers', guarded the pumping station at Coldwell Brook.

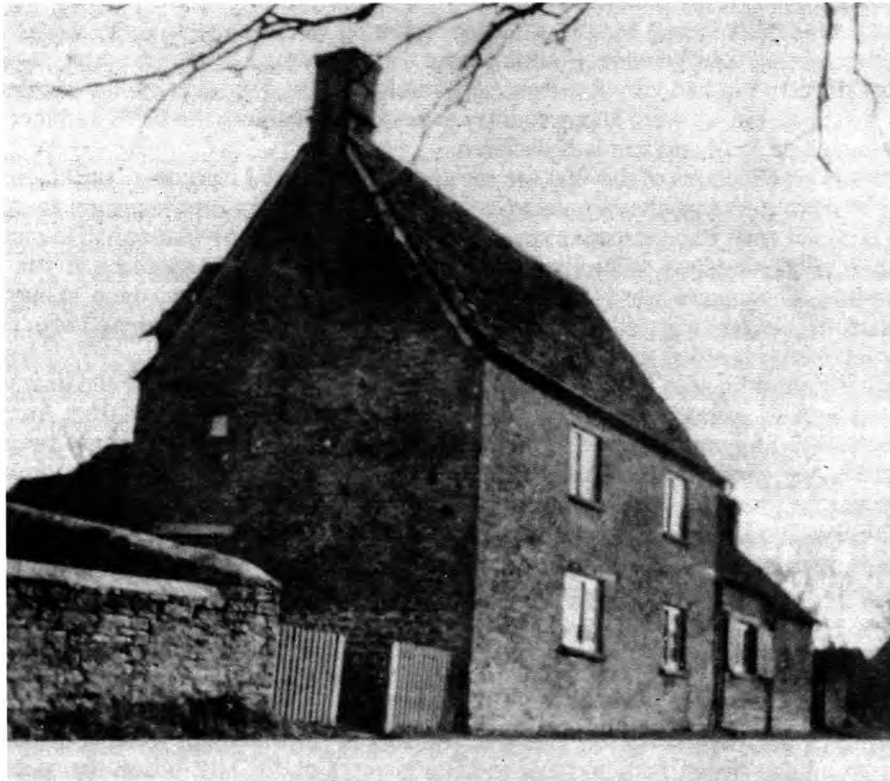
We children used to pick blackberries and hips for the Forces. By the time we had been all over the Common gathering them, and then taken them from Ascott School to Shipton School to be weighed in, we would have walked ten or twelve miles and earned a certificate for War work. Food got very short; one week I remember we only had two ounces of pastry lard and nothing else for all the family. We lived mostly on vegetables and fruit and home-cured bacon, and the only sweets we had were awful black hard things called locust beans, or a bit of chewing gum. One of the most exciting things for us during the war was the visits we had from overseas cousins in the Canadian and Australian Forces. My brother was married at the age of twenty on his only leave from France. Then a sad thing for Ascott: on August 11 1916 Mr Tiddy was killed in action. Fourteen Ascott men lost their lives in that war.

On November 11 1918 I was sent to stand at the bootroom window upstairs with a huge Union Jack and told to keep my eyes on the post office; the second

they put their flag up I was to unfurl ours. The next day I was ill with that awful 'flu that swept the country. It was very bad here: eight people died of it. We had a new vicar just come to the village, Revd C Shackleton. (Our old vicar Revd Walford had been injured when helping to fell a chestnut tree in the churchyard, and he never recovered. He was such a kind, gentle old man.) Mr Shackleton tended the sick people and looked after families who had no-one to help, as so many people were ill.

The Shackletons were such a happy-go-lucky family, very musical and joined in everything that happened in the village. It made such a difference to village life when they were here. They had a lot of foreign students who all joined in too. The Tiddy Hall continued as a focus of village life. Besides the WEA lectures and folk dancing, every week we had whist drives and socials, concert parties, boy scouts and youth clubs, besides special events of all kinds. The country dance team often gave displays at local fetes. My sister taught folk

Doris Warner's home in London Lane, Ascott.



dancing at Lower Slaughter, about twelve miles away just over the border in Gloucestershire, and got engaged to a young man there. A very pleasant friendship grew up between the two villages; our football teams and concert parties exchanged visits and we went to each other's dances, and it was all good fun while it lasted.

When I was thirteen I had to leave school and start work at Dee's Stores at Sipton under Wychwood. For the large sum of 4/- a week I had to work 52 hours weekly, and also walk four miles a day. The hours were 9-6 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9-1 Wednesday, 9-7 Friday and 9-8 Saturday, which was often 9pm, especially at Christmas. There was no closing for meals so often I might start my dinner at twelve and perhaps finish it at three, as I always had to serve while the others had their dinner in peace. Of course, it was a big help having dinner and tea allowed while food was so short. It was a very busy shop and I learnt a great deal there, dealing with grocery, drapery, chemistry, millinery, hardware, men's outfitting, boots and shoes and window dressing. I had to learn it all. During the winter they used to have two pigs in every fortnight, which made a lot of work. Very often the cottagers would pay the year's grocery bills with one pig and draw cash for the other one; a good many people paid for half their living with the money they made on their pigs. Besides selling the pork and curing the bacon and hams, the Dees used to make sausages, lards and scratchings. There were two sisters and two brothers in the family, most upright, straightforward, good people and they taught me a great deal. Then Mr Dee married the other assistant; he was 62 and she was 26, so it made a lot of excitement. Then Miss Mary Dee fell down dead in church.

After Mr Dee and Miss Dee had died the business was sold to Mr Rex Hathaway who had just come out of the army. Life was very different then! Instead of Miss Dee's large joints and family-size pies and cakes, it was stewed rhubarb and half a sheep's head for dinner! When I was twenty-one I left Hathaway's and we took over the Post Office at Ascott.

To be continued.

The Priory Tithes of Ascott under Wychwood

JACK HOWARD-DRAKE

The parish of Ascott under Wychwood had its origin in the two Domesday manors of Ascott D'Oilly and Ascott Earl. It is an example of a parish whose boundaries were broadly coterminous with manorial jurisdiction, unlike many others where there was often an overlap and interlocking of manors within and across parish boundaries. Even in Ascott in 1591 the parishioners were not able to distinguish between the two manors which formed their parish. A survey of that year says 'that where the mannors of Ascott Doyle and Earles Ascott lye bordering one upon the other and their land intermingled they [the jury] can not without very great deliberacion certanlie distinguishe the seyde Mannors by anie demonstracion by wordes only, but by some other descripcion'.¹

In the sixteenth century Ascott, with its twelfth-century church, its rights of burial and its own parish registers, had all the attributes of an independent parish, but it was technically a chapelry of Shipton. When John London as prebendary of Shipton, and therefore the rector or parson entitled to the parish tithes, leased the prebend to William Fermour in May 1541, the lease included 'all and all maner of tythes Aswell predyall as personall within the towne and paroche of Ascott'.²

Disputes about tithes were common in the sixteenth century. Many of them found their way into the ecclesiastical courts, that is the bishops' and archdeacons' courts in each diocese which had wide-ranging jurisdiction over the everyday lives of both clergy and laity. Three related Ascott tithe cases came before the archdeacon's court in the Oxford diocese in 1572.³ They show that Alexander Gardyner and Bartholomew Chawney had been joint farmers of the Shipton prebendal tithes for some years, that is they had leased them as Fermour had done in 1541; but their claim to other tithes was being contested on the grounds that they were not prebendal tithes but tithes arising from the manor or demesne land which belonged to 'Ascott Priory' and had been leased by William Bonde. The priory and its tithes were described in various ways - the 'priory and proprietaries of Ascott called Ascott priory', 'the prior of Ascott commonly called the priory of Ascott', the 'priory ground', and 'the portion of tithes commonly called the priory of Ascott'.

The disputed tithes are described as the great and small tithes from Ascott farm, from the priory grounds, from certain tenements belonging to the priory, and in particular from Ascott mill and the ground to the south of the mill. There is another difficulty of nomenclature here. When, as frequently happened,

demesne or manorial lands were leased, they were referred to as 'The Farm', namely lands which had been leased, at a time when most land was held by copyhold, that is by the custom of the manor. References to Ascott farm in this article are therefore to be interpreted as referring to the demesne lands of the manor of Ascott D'Oilly. Furthermore, those who leased tithes were known as farmers of the tithes, and this is the sense in which the word farmers is used here. As will be seen later the people of Ascott in the sixteenth century appear to have been well aware of these various meanings.

There is no evidence that there ever was a priory as such in Ascott but according to the The Victoria County History of Oxfordshire the word priory survives at certain places in Oxfordshire where no independent religious house existed.⁴ The priory in Caversham, formerly in Oxfordshire, is identified as a grange, that is an outlying farm, of Notley Abbey, and the priory of Great Milton as a grange of Abingdon. The prior of Kirtlington is said to be an agent of the Abbey of Aunay living in Kirtlington to collect tithes for the abbey. There is firm evidence that there was a similar connection between Ascott and the monastery of St Frideswide's in Oxford.

A number of documents in the monastery's cartulary, dated c.1150 to 1218, concern Ascott tithes.⁵ In one Roger D'Oilly acknowledges the monastery's right to tithes and land there. In another the church of St Frideswide agrees to pay the church of Osney 2s 6d a year in settlement of Osney's claim to part of the Ascott tithes. Others refer to agreements about Ascott tithes between St Frideswide's and the prebendaries in Shipton. The Hundred Rolls (1279/80) show the Prior of St Frideswide holding all the demesne tithes and the tithes of ten virgates of villein land.⁶

There is a reference to a priory of Ascott in a pardon of alienation dated 1576, which suggests that William Bonde had a valid claim to the priory tithes.⁷ The pardon shows that Bonde, by payment of a fine, acquired from David Snowe, Thomas Goddard and William Goddard 'the manor and priory of Ascott, lands in Ascott and Shipton and all tithes there'. In other words, at some stage the Bondes had acquired the manor without the formal consent of its overlord and William had regularised the position.

There seems little doubt that the so called priory of Ascott had at one time been a building occupied by an agent, probably a priest, collecting tithes for the Priory of St Frideswide's. When Wolsey dissolved St Frideswide's in 1525 to make way for the building of Cardinal's College, now Christ Church, this link would have been broken and St Frideswide's property sold, both land and tithes. Thereafter those who acquired the tithes would have made their own arrangements for collecting them. At the time of the court cases William Bonde was living in Nether Worton but his bailiff John Henlowe, was living in Ascott looking after his affairs and collecting his tithes. William Bonde said that Henlowe had lived with him for some eight or nine years so it could be that he lived in Manor Farm, also known at various times as Lardner or Priory Farm. If he did we know what his house was like from the description of the Manor House in the sixteenth century in the report on the excavation of the castle in Ascott D'Oilly carried out in 1946.⁸ It was then a three-bay house with a cross passage,

basically a six-roomed house, compared in the report with 'The Priory' in Marcham.

Elsewhere in Ascott the word 'priory' still occurs today to the east of the church, suggesting that this is the area where St Frideswide's tenements were located (see map opposite). The mill site and its ground to the south are clearly identifiable just to the north of the railway.

There are various documents later than the court cases, detailed study of which, together with some field work, should make it possible to identify the sites of the various sixteenth-century priory buildings and their occupants with more certainty - a task for the future perhaps. For example, there is an abstract of title to a barn yard and premises called Priory Barn in Ascott dated May 1759, which refers to a 'passage next the barn door to the corner next the Priory House'; and in 1835 there is a reference to a 'Barn hitherto known as Priory Barn and now altering or converting into two or more cottages etc...'⁹.

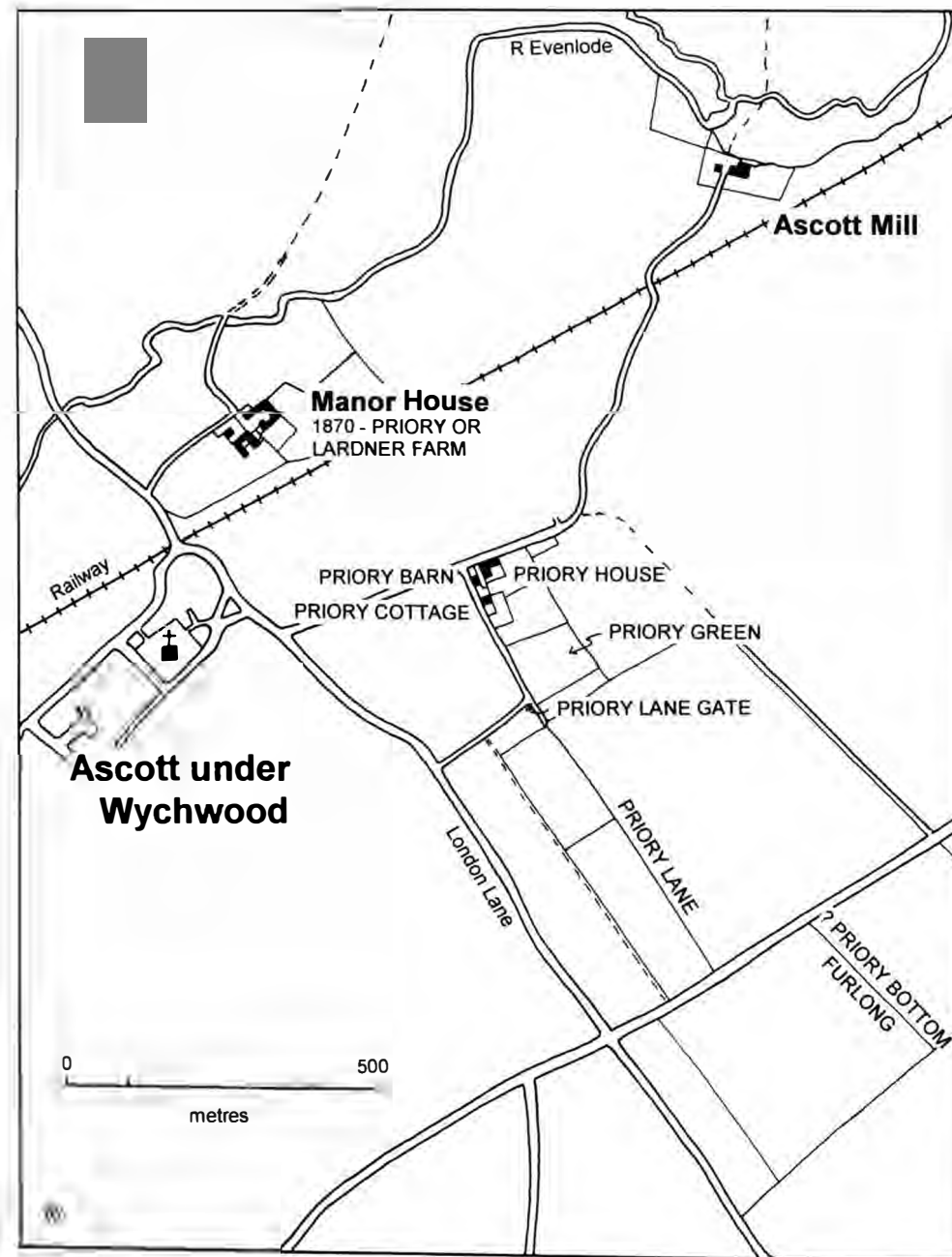
One of these later documents is the tithe commutation award of 1840 which in Ascott was enacted two years after enclosure.¹⁰ The rector of Shipton was granted rent charges for just over 921 acres of enclosed land and Baron Churchill was allocated rents for just over 761 acres called 'The Priory Tithes'. (There were two other small grants.) It looks as though Churchill received the historic priory tithes which were still distinguishable from the prebendal tithes, echoing William Bonde's claim to them three hundred years earlier.

The records of the court cases and the other documents so far studied have shown that the history of tithes in Ascott is complex and merits further examination - possibly another task for the future. The disputes between Gardyner, Chawney and Bonde are merely incidents in a continuing story from at least as early as the twelfth century until the Tithe Commutation Act in the nineteenth century; but for the men and women concerned they would have been an important event in their day to day lives, involving journeys to Oxford and appearances in the ecclesiastical court. It is one of the valuable features of the records of the church courts that they give glimpses of such everyday events in the past and, in describing witnesses and recording their evidence, they tell us something about the people concerned - their ages, where they lived and had lived, where they were born, their occupations, and so on.

In the first of the three cases about the Ascott tithes, Gardyner and Chawney, as farmers of the Shipton prebendal tithes, sued Richard Andrews for tithes on eggs and hemp. Andrews argued that while Gardyner and Chawney were entitled to all other tithes in Ascott, they were not entitled to those from the priory grounds. As far as his own case was concerned, he took the simple line that he had had no cocks, hens, eggs or hemp anywhere in Ascott.

In the second case, Gardyner and Chawney sued Katherine Andrews, also for tithes on eggs and hemp. She too said that Gardyner and Chawney were entitled to all the tithes in Ascott except those which of ancient custom belonged to the priory. In 1570 she had eight hens and a cock and six ducks and a drake, but did not remember how many eggs. In 1571 she had ten hens and a cock, twelve ducks and a drake, but again could not remember how many eggs. She had paid Gardyner the tithes on these at the customary rate, namely two eggs for every

Part of Ascott under Wychwood showing survival of 'priory' names into recent times.



hen and three for the cock, and two eggs for every duck and three for the drake; but she had wronged William Bonde in so doing for the eggs were laid within her mill, and the tithes of the mill and its ground to the south belonged to him as farmer of the priory. She also admitted that thirty-eight years previously she had for six years paid tithe on eggs laid within the mill to Robert Washington, then farmer of the prebendal tithes. She did not mention hemp in her evidence.

Witnesses for Gardyner and Chawney said that the farmers of the tithes in Ascott were entitled to all the tithes except only those from Ascott farm, the demesne tithes. Richard Whiting, aged sixty, who was born in Ascott and had been parish clerk (*clericus*) there from about 1543 to 1550, was quite sure that tithes on all eggs and hemp in Ascott belonged to the parsonage, except those from Ascott farm. Agnes Hickee, aged fifty-five, who was also born in Ascott, said that for the ten years during which her father Robert Washington had been farmer of the tithes, her mother Cicely had collected tithe eggs and hemp from the whole parish except from Ascott farm. Elizabeth Washington, aged thirty-one, who was born in Kidlington and had lived in Ascott for fourteen years, said that when she was servant to Robert Washington she had heard him ask Roger Andrews, the miller of Ascott, whether he had brought him his tithe eggs. Andrews had said no, he had brought none, but agreed to pay Washington instead. Richard Hickee, aged sixty, born in Ascott, said that when his father was the farmer of the Ascott tithes, he had had all the tithes of hemp and eggs except for those from Ascott farm. He named other farmers of the tithes who had also done so and other witnesses gave similar evidence.

In the third case, William Bonde sued Gardyner and Chawney and produced witnesses to give details of the tithes which they said were payable by custom to the priory. Anthony Pacy, who had a yardland and a quarter in Ascott, said that all tithes from the yardland belonged to the parsonage but 'all corne of all sortes and all other thinge whatsoever yt be as hempe, garlycke, onyons, apples and suche lyke' from the quarter yardland, belonged to the priory. Witnesses named the tenants whose tithes were payable to the priory, including Honyborn, John Cantroll, Philip Whiting and William Washington. Another tenant, Alice Boresley, one-time servant to John Bonde, collected their tithe fruit, hemp, eggs and pigs for the use of her master. Alice Andrews of Chadlington, aged about twenty-four and born at Cotton in Northamptonshire, had been another servant of John Bonde's, and had 'gathered up tythe egges, hempe, pyge and all maner of other small tythes lying on that side of the myll of Ascott towards Chylson'. Joan Butler of Longworth, who had lived in Standlake, Sparsholt and Clanfield, also at one time one of John Bonde's servants, said that she had received tithes from the mill, the tenements and Ascott farm. Another witness was Margaret Fletcher, aged sixty-eight, who had lived in Ascott for forty-four years but had been born in Shipton Solers in Gloucestershire and had lived for ten years in Shorthampton. She said that she and her husband Henry Fletcher had lived in Ascott priory some forty years previously and had had the farm of all the tithes from Ascott farm, six tenements and other grounds, and from the mill and its grounds. All subsequent farmers had received them without question until the current disputes.

One stage of proceedings in church courts gave the parties to actions an opportunity to cast doubt on the credibility and honesty of the other side's witnesses. John Bonde said that Richard Hickee, one of the witnesses for Gardyner and Chawney, was well known for dishonest living. Richard Whyting, the one-time parish clerk and another of their witnesses, was a common drunkard who had been sent to London to appear before the High Commission for drunkenness. He was worth nothing and could not afford to buy his wife a coat so that she had not been able to go to church for six months. Bonde did not think the other witnesses for Gardyner and Chawney were of any credit. He had to admit that one of his own witnesses, Margaret Fletcher, who seems to have come down in the world, was very poor and had borrowed a coat from his maid to go to Oxford. He believed she had spent what she had in the ale house but he knew of no other dishonesty on her part. He also admitted that two of his witnesses, Alice Andrews and Alice Blunsden of Over Norton, were pregnant when they were married, but they had married the children's fathers and he knew of nothing to their discredit since. They were not the sort of women to be coerced into saying what a man wanted them to say, and he had had some difficulty in getting them to give evidence.

This account of some of the witnesses and their evidence is only a selection from the record of these particular cases. About forty-five people were involved, either as plaintiffs or defendants, as witnesses, or as people referred to in evidence. The proceedings lasted from at least 16 February 1572 to 6 December 1572 in six or more sessions of the court. Unfortunately, as so often happens in these cases, the sentence of the court is not available, and we do not have the complete record; but it is clear that these disputes must have made a considerable impact on the lives of the people of Ascott in 1572.

Acknowledgements

I am much indebted to Anthea Jones for providing me with various references and for guiding me through some of the many complexities associated with tithes. I am most grateful to Wendy Pearse, who also provided a number of references and located present-day occurrences of the word 'priory', on the ground. My thanks too to Margaret Ware for drawing the map from Wendy's sketch and for general editorial guidance.

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Editor's note

The Bartholomew Chawney mentioned above is the same person as Bartholomew Chaundy described later by Barbara Adkins.

Quotes

'To give an accurate description of what has never occurred is not merely the proper occupation of the historian, but the inalienable privilege of any man of parts and culture.'

Oscar Wilde

'...truth can neither be apprehended nor communicated... history is an art like all other sciences.'

C. V. Wedgewood

'The great thing about history is that it is adaptable.'

Peter Ustinov

The Chaundy Family of Ascott under Wychwood

BARBARA ADKINS

The Chaundy ancestry can be traced back to the early sixteenth century at Ascott under Wychwood. The family seems to have been established there by 1548 because in that year a John Chaundy gave 'one annuall rent goinge out of lands for an obitt to the church valued at 14s'.¹ It is thought the family may have originated at Chauny in NE France and settled in the Ascott/Chipping Norton area in the early sixteenth century. A few puzzling entries in the neighbouring parish registers, like that of a marriage of John Chawney alias Baker on 24 October 1575 at Black Bourton, Oxon. do not seem to fit into the picture and all present-day Chaundy lines trace their families back to Ascott.

When I first began my researches I met Dr. Theo Chaundy, a retired mathematician and Tutor of Christ Church, living in Oxford. He had researched the family extensively and had corresponded with Chaundy descendants all over the world. Sadly I only met him once in 1965 as he died the following year.² Dr. Chaundy was friendly with T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) who had done some research for him on the early Chaundys, as seen from the following note in Lawrence's own hand:-

Chaundy (Chandie)	Richards	Bromston	husbandman	d. 7 Feb 1569
Chauney	John	Ascot	yeoman	20 Mar 1590
Chauney	Bartholomew	Ascot under Wychwood	yeoman	21 June 1596
Chaundie	Foulke	Asketon		22 Sept. 1619
Chauney	Anne	Asketon	widow	21 July 1621
Chauney	Richard	Bromston	yeoman	29 Apr. 1641
..	Fulke	Earle's Ascot		26 Apr. 1694
..	Isabell	Ascot under Wychwood	spinster	24 July 1722
..	John	Ascot under Wychwood	yeoman	17 April 1730

These are all the Chaundy's in the manuscript lists of the ~~the~~ Somerset House, not "peculiar" or University wills, or Canterbury court. Am now going East: tomorrow to be exact.

T.E.L.

There was no mention of Chaundy in...

There are no known descendants of Richard of Overnorton or Bartholomew, the family descending in direct line through Fulke Chaun(d)y who died at Ascott in 1619.³ But the life of the 'great Bartholomew Chaundy' as Dr. Chaundy called him, is well documented. An entry in the Church Court Depositions in 1572 described a case where Bartholomew Chaundy was in dispute over tithes on lands in Ascott.⁴ He and Alexander Gardyner thought they were leasing the Priory land amongst others but the claim was disputed by other tenants and their claim for tithes of eggs and hemp were denied. An entry in the Manor Court Rolls for 1588 states 'We present Bartholomew Chaundy for encroaching stone wall put in wrong place', and in 1592 'Order to stop ploughing on my land'.⁵

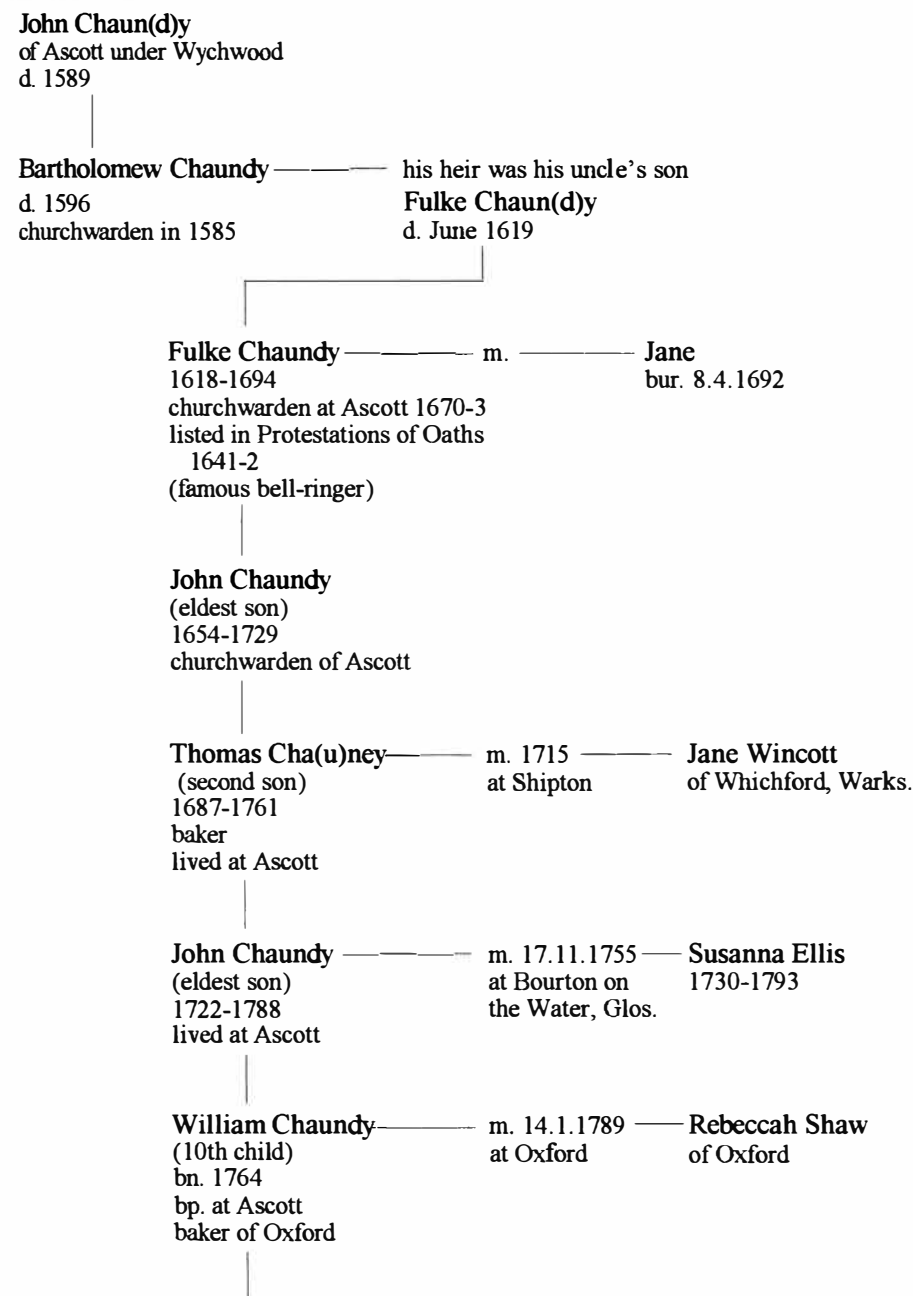
Bartholomew had married Blanche Batti on 4 November 1594, but he died less than two years later.⁶ According to his will his heir was fflowke Chaundy, his uncle's son, to whom he left his mansion house and property. Bartholomew mentions two natural sons in his will: John alias Whithorn and William alias Holms. His widow Blanche remarried in January 1596/7 John Joyner and proceedings in chancery were instituted 'W.Chawndy alias Holms, an infants, plaintiff & John Joiner & Blanch, his wife & other defendants - object of claim by devise premises, lands at Ascott-u-Whichwood, Oxfordshire, late estate of B.Chaundy'.⁷

When Bartholomew's children had been baptised at Ascott in 1603 and 1605, William was recorded as 'William Chawney' with no mention of an alias. However, Manor Court Rolls refer to a William Chawney alias Hobbins at Minster Lovell Mill in 1608.⁸ In his will dated 1615, Gilbert Peisley of Ascott directed his brothers George and Bartholomew Paisley 'to sell my dwelling house & all my land, tenements & cottages that I bought of William Chaundy alias Hobbins being in Ascott & Shipton in fee simple'.⁹ It would appear from this that William kept his lands at Ascott after all.

The descendants of Fulke Chaundy can be seen on the family tree and many of them appear from their wills to have been prosperous Ascott landowners and farmers throughout the centuries. Thomas Chaney of Ascott and Jane Wincot of Whichford, Warwickshire were married by licence on 17 February 1715.¹⁰ There are a number of Wincott tablets in Whichford church as well as several large tombs; also a Wincott House and a Wincott Barn, but it has now died out there as a family name. Thomas and Jane had one son John, baptised at Ascott in 1722, and five daughters.

In the late eighteenth century a John Chaundy was the occupier of lands rented from the Duke of Marlborough.¹¹ In 1786 John Chaundy appears as proprietor and occupier of lands. This John would have been the son of Thomas and Jane. He married Susanna Ellis at Bourton-on-the-Water in 1755. He was a bell-ringer and is mentioned in *The Church Bells of Oxfordshire* by Fred Sharpe: 'The second bell in the tower of Holy Trinity Church, Ascott-under-Wychwood: "John Chaundy & Michael Rose C.W. H.B. made ME 1744.... Sing unto the Lord a new song", and on the fifth bell: "Michael Rose John Chaundy C Warden H Bagley MA M 1744 and on the tenor".' Three of John's sons settled in Oxford: two were bakers (see later) and the third a builder, probably building in St. Ebbes as there was a Chaundy Place there. The name is still extant in the

Part of the Chaundy Family Tree



Oxford area, and also around Birmingham and in London.

William Chaundy, a grandson of John, was transported to Australia in 1847 for stealing two £10 notes from a letter while working as a letter carrier in Oxford. He was tried at Oxford Assizes and sentenced to seven years' transportation, reported in the Oxford Chronicle and Jackson's Oxford Journal in March 1847. He and 190 other prisoners sailed on the SS Eden for Melbourne, but were pardoned and arrived as exiles. This meant they were free men but could not return to England until their sentences were completed. The reason so many were transported was to replace the men who had left the towns to go to the goldfields. His wife Rachel and their children followed him in 1850. At a special Court of Guardians in Oxford on 15 February 1850 £30 was granted towards expenses of the emigration of Rachel Chaundy and her eight children and they sailed on the *Ramiles*. William was able to buy a house as some of his children worked in the goldfields. There are a great many descendants of William and Rachel, mostly in the Melbourne area.

Another eighteenth-century John Chaundy, a cousin of the previous John of Ascott, was killed in 1775 at the battle of Bunker's Hill in the American War of Independence: it would be interesting to know on which side he fought. He deserted his wife and five daughters and a case was made against him, reported in the proceedings of the Oxford Quarter Sessions on 28 December 1757 'John Chaundy of Ascott under Wychwood, labourer, having gone away and left his wife and five children on the Parish, claiming relief, order made to seize so much of the annual rents of his lands as will suffice to meet charges'.¹² His eldest daughter Jane married John Quartermain and some present-day descendants live in Sydney, Australia.¹³

This John Chaundy's father, another John, lived at Langley Mill, Shipton and had another son, Bartholomew, who was very different from his brother. He became a marine officer, losing a leg in the battle of Guadaloupe Island, and died in Exeter in 1777. His son John Amyatt Chaundy matriculated at Oxford in 1788, became a B.A. and was vicar of several Devon parishes; there is a plaque to him in Bath Abbey.

I am descended through my grandmother's mother Amelia Godfrey Chaundy from William Chaundy, the tenth child of John (1722-88) of Ascott, churchwarden and bell-ringer. William was baptised at Ascott in 1764 and became a baker at Oxford. The Chaundy descendants of William's brother George lived at Ascott until the name died out there in the 1960s. The 1841 census shows that Chaundys were living at Yew Tree Farm, High Street, while in the present century Long House Farm, High Street was the residence of Osbert and Clara Chaundy.¹⁴ He died in 1950 and she died there aged 98 in 1965.

References

- 1 Chantry Certificates in Edward VI Reign 1548, *Oxfordshire Record Society* (1919).
- 2 Dr Chaundy's obituary appeared in the *Oxford Mail* 16 April 1966.
- 3 Ascott under Wychwood parish registers.
- 4 Jack Howard-Drake (ed) *Oxford Church Courts Depositions 1570-1574* (1993), 31-33
- 5 Oxfordshire Archives, Misc Watney I/i/1, Manor Court Rolls.

- 6 *Marriage Index of Oxfordshire* vol.1, Phillimore. The marriage took place at Chipping Norton.
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- 8 J.L.Bolton & M.Maslin (eds), Calendar of The Court Books of the Borough of Witney, 1538-1610, *Oxfordshire Record Society* Vol 54 (1985).
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- 11 Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Westgate Library, Oxford, Land Tax Assessments, Ascott under Wychwood 1785-1831, microfilm reel 811606.
- 12 Oxfordshire Archives, Canon Oldfield's index of Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions, John Chaundy RI 1755.
- 13 Alison Schenk, 'The Search for George Quarterman of Ascott under Wychwood', *Wychwoods History* 10 (1995), 56
- 14 A photograph of Long House Farm appeared in *The Second Wychwoods Album* (1990), 30.

Barbara Adkins lives in Banbury.

Doilly House, High St

Yew Tree Farm, Ascott, c. 1930.



‘Where There’s Muck...’

MARGARET WARE

This 1941 photograph shows the estate village of Cornwell, near Chipping Norton which, together with its manor house, was one of the many prestigious restorations undertaken by the firm in the earlier decades of this century. The very run-down estate was purchased in 1938 by Mrs Anthony Gillson, described by *Country Life* as ‘a generous lady with America’s high ideals of human dignity and standards of sanitation’. Every cottage was modernised, while retaining its traditional seventeenth-century Cotswold exterior. The redundant Victorian school house, converted to a village hall (right) was given an elaborate chimney cum belfry incorporating an air-raid siren. Just beyond, up the street, is the bow window of the new village shop, a branch of the Co-op, while the foreground is the green and children’s playground. Mrs Gillson’s architect was Clough Williams Ellis of Portmeirion fame, and the estate bears his unmistakable stamp. The hall belfry was described by the *Architects’ Journal* of the day as ‘a charming touch of country baroque’, although Nikolaus Pevsner in his *Buildings of Oxfordshire* is less appreciative: an ‘aggressively heavy Art-Deco style’ and ‘the whole group looks sadly dated’. Groves’ foreman at the time was Mr Joe Timms, to whom many of the detailed ingenuities and improvements in the cottages were ascribed. Despite the War, the reconditioning of all the existing buildings was completed by 1941.



We are fortunate that the original minutes survive of the Milton under Wychwood vestry meetings from 1849 to 1894. The vestry was the body of ratepayers which ran the affairs of the parish prior to the establishment of elected parish councils in 1894. As noted in a previous article¹, parish administration nationally could present a very variable picture, with some parishes well served, but others badly, often with some duties not being carried out at all. The care and maintenance of local roads had been a parish responsibility since the mid sixteenth century, but during the next three hundred years the burden proved too much for most communities to cope with and the condition of many roads deteriorated appallingly. A series of Highways Acts throughout the nineteenth century gradually removed the burden of highway maintenance from individual parishes, transferring the various duties to County and Rural District Councils by the end of the century².

The impression gained from a study of the Milton records is that in this village in the middle of the last century, at least some matters were conducted efficiently and scrupulously, and carefully recorded. The vestry elected annually two surveyors of the highway, only one of whom changed each year, thus providing a degree of continuity, although there is no record of work they actually carried out. By 1864 a single waywarden was being nominated annually instead. Before enclosure of the common fields, it is probable that small farmers habitually grazed their animals on the roadsides, and this had the incidental advantage of keeping the grass down. As a result of enclosure in Milton, finalised in 1849, some existing roads and trackways were extinguished, some would have become better defined and tidied up, and some new roads created like that from Upper End, Shipton to Upper Milton and beyond. However, the minutes of a vestry meeting held in the *Butcher’s Arms* soon after enclosure, on 6 June 1850, suggest that the custom of grazing the verges was not being lightly given up, possibly in protest against enclosure. The meeting considered ‘what course to adopt to prevent Horses and all kinds of Cattle from being depastured on the Sides of High & Bridle ways to the Injury and annoyance of the Occupiers of the Lands Adjoining the Same. Resolved that an Association be formed for raising a fund to defray the Expences of Prosecuting all persons who shall after Notice being given depasture any Horse or Cattle of any kind on the Sides of High & bridle ways in this Parish.. The Surveyors are requested to take the necessary steps for forming the Association and of Prosecuting all offenders..’ Obviously this casual grazing of verge grass was not now thought to be an appropriate solution to keeping the grass down, even

though the loss of these small pasture rights really mattered to the people concerned who had probably done rather badly out of enclosure.

In April 1854, the surveyors were 'requested to direct the removal of Timber and other obstructions which may from time to time be found in and by the Sides of the Highways, in case of neglect or refusal, to enforce the same'. They were also asked to initiate a scheme 'to let in lots the Grass on the sides of the public Roads, to be mown only, to respectable persons for such money as they shall deem sufficient and that no cattle be allowed to depasture the Sides of the said Roads - the Grass to be mown in due season or when directed to be done by the Surveyors'.

This scheme seems to have taken a little time to get off the ground since the first record of the letting of the roadside grass is not found until April 1856, when the local roads were divided into five lots, let for different sums. We are not told whether the surveyors themselves fixed the rents or whether the lots were auctioned off among suitable 'respectable persons', or tenders invited, but at the same time there is also recorded the sale of four lots of 'Dirt lying on the sides of the Roads'. With the traffic of hacks, hunters and horse-drawn conveyances of all kinds and of farm animals, the road 'dirt' must have had a very high manure content and thus could be a saleable asset to boost the parish rate-fund. The sale of these two valuable commodities, roadside grass and 'dirt', were recorded in detail every year in April or May from 1856, with various changes at first in the position and number of the lots. By the later 1860s however, the lots seem to have become fixed at eight each of grass and dirt, so the scheme seems to have proved a success. The following entry is typical:

At a Meeting held pursuant to Notice this 15th day of May 1868 for the purpose of Selling the Dirt lying on the sides of the Public Highways; and likewise to sell the Grass growing on the sides of the said Public Highways to be mown only

The following lots of Dirt were sold including the scrapeings off the respective Roads up to Ladyday 1869.

Lot 1	From Quart Pot to Bruern Wood & from School corner to Lynham Parish	
	Bought by Mr E Groves	3..6
2	From Quart Pot to Mill & Froglane	
	Bought by Mr R Gorton	2..0
3	From Quart Pot to Barnes's Corner	
	Bought by Mr Robt Gorton	3..0
4	From Barnes's Corner to Mr Foden's	
	Bought by Mr Joseph Sillman	3..6
5	From Bricklayer's Gap to Mr Mace's	
	Bought by Mr Potter	9..0
6	From Mr Foden's to Washpool	
	Bought by Mr Potter	7..0
7	From Grange Gate to Shipton Elm	
	Bought by Mr Gilbert	1..6

8	From Washpool to Fullbrook Green Lane	
	Bought by Mr Gilbert	5..6

The following lots of grass were sold to be Mown and Cleared off by the 1st Day of August next

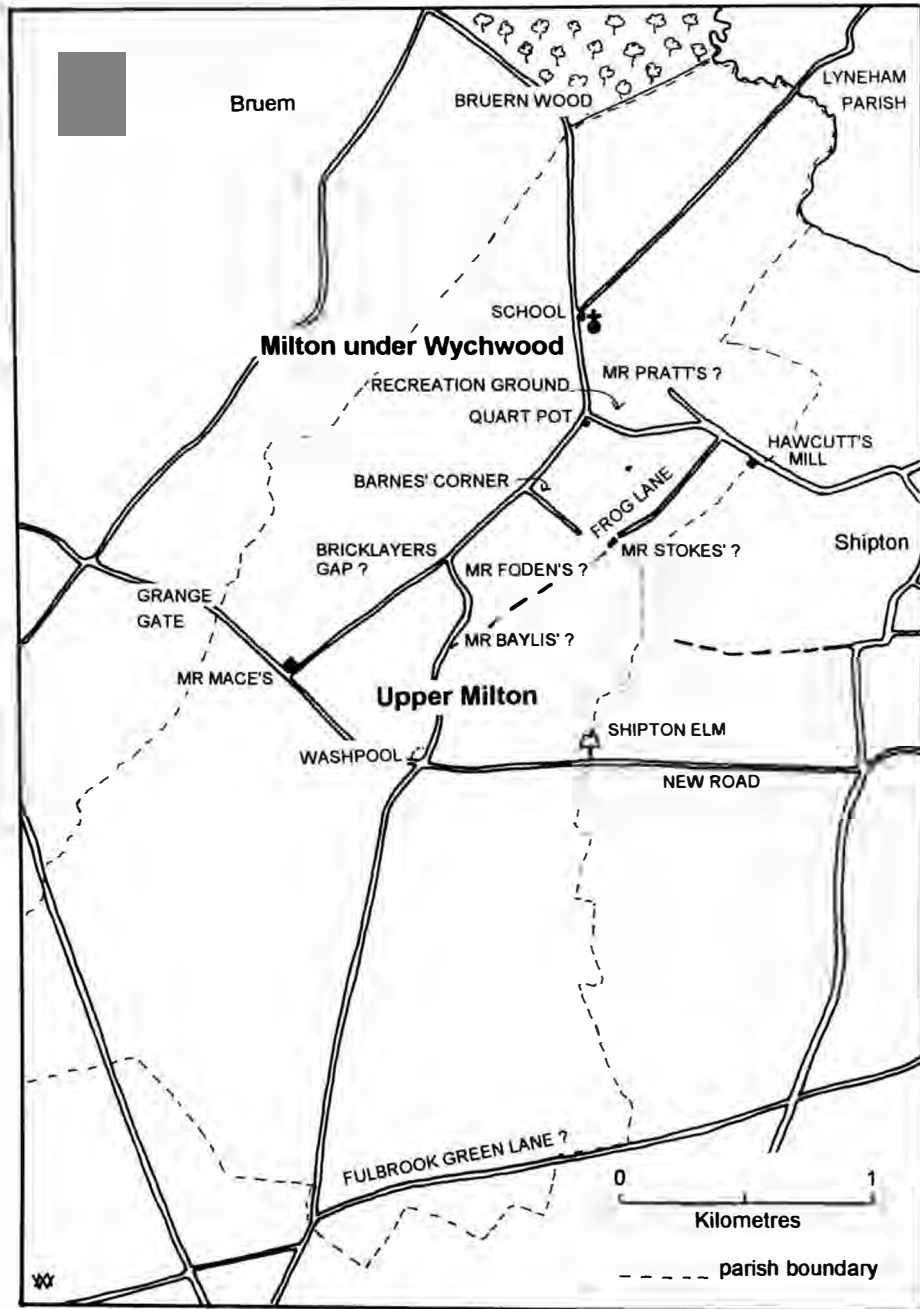
Lot 1	From School Corner to Lyneham	
	Bought by Mr Cattell	7..6
2	From Quart Pot to Bruern Wood	
	Bought by Mr Pratley	4..0
3	From Quart Pot to Mill, to Mr Pratt's Farm & Froglane to Gate near Mr Stokes's House	
	Bought by Mr Stokes	2..0
4	Froglane from Gate near Mr Stokes's House to end near Mr Baylis's Garden	
	Bought by Mr J Rawlings	..6
5	From Mr Mace's to top of Street & Barnes's Corner Road	
	Bought by Mr Walker	3..0
6	From Washpool to Bricklayers Gap	
	Bought by Mr Howes	3..0
7	From Shipton Elm to Grange Gate	
	Bought by Mr John Smith	17..6
8	From Washpool to Green Lane	
	Bought by Mr Cattell	9..6

(signed) John Cattell
 John Pratley
 Robert Stokes John Foden Waywarden
 James Rawlings

Letting conditions often stated 'the above lots of dirt to be removed by the 1st week in August or forfeited', 'the above lots of grass to be mown and taken away', 'grass sold to be mown and cleared off by 21st July' and so on. The map over the page shows the landmarks referred to. The location of some of the persons mentioned has been deduced from the Tithe (1842) and Enclosure (1846) Awards. The 'lots' of verge grass and of dirt did not necessarily correspond geographically. It is interesting that Frog Lane as a thoroughfare seems to have extended beyond its present length, right to Upper Milton, and that it needed mowing. The whereabouts of Bricklayer's Gap remains a mystery: no other reference to it has been found.

In any one year the lots fetched different prices, which also varied from year to year. The value of each grass lot must have been partly a reflection of its length and of the width of the verge; Lots 7 and 8 usually (but not always) fetched high prices, and were by far the longest stretches of road (over a mile and a quarter each). Lot 1 was often highly priced: a good length of road going down into river-meadow land with the verges probably growing good lush grass. The price may also have varied with the current weather conditions which would affect grass growth. For example Lot 7, New Road, an enclosure creation, from the parish boundary at Shipton Elm (since about 1980, alas, only a stump) to the

Some landmarks in Milton parish, 1860s - 1880s.



Bruern parish boundary at Grange Gate, fetched an average of 7/- between 1862 and 1867. In 1868 the same Lot went for 17/6, only 2/- in the following two years, but back to 16/- in 1871. In 1881 John Simpson Calvertt up at Fairspear wrote in his diary³ of severe frosts up to the beginning of April, 'every prospect of *late* vegetation, and *backward* Spring' and subsequently of a dry spring and summer, that year Lot 7 made 17/-. On the other hand Calvertt recorded 1888 as '...very favourable for Farming around here- frequent rains-...enormous quantity of Grass and Clovers...' and in Milton Lot 7 only made 5/-. This strongly suggests again that the lots were tendered for, or auctioned, the prices reflecting current demand.

The value of the lots of 'dirt' must have depended upon the customary amount of traffic on each stretch of road; in the example shown above, Lots 5, 6 and 8 were all lengths of road running past farms and out onto the downs which might be expected to have been well manured. On the other hand, some of the annual variations in value are difficult to interpret. Lot 2: from the Quart Pot to Hawcutt's Mill (on the Shipton parish boundary, the site now adjoining Milton Service Station), which might have been thought to have supported a fairly regular flow of traffic, made only 2/- in 1861 but 20/- and 10/6 the following two years, and was not let at all in 1865 or 1866. In 1868 as seen above, the same lot (which now included Frog Lane as well) only made 2/-. There seems no logical explanation for this. It is however unlikely that ordinary folk living nearby did not occasionally sneak out with a bucket and help themselves without seeing the need to pay anyone for the privilege.

The letting of lots of grass and dirt continued to be recorded in the vestry minutes until 1888, a full six years before the Local government Act of 1894 finally removed any remaining responsibility for highway maintenance from parishes. After 1888 in Milton the lettings were either discontinued or recorded elsewhere.

The Recreation Ground was obviously another parish asset, in more ways than one, since from 1851 onwards it was let out at Easter every year for grazing. The annual rental averaged about £25, varying from year to year, from £19 in 1855 to a high £34 in 1868. In contrast to the high price realised for verge grass in 1881, the Recreation grazing that year only made £20: for some reason it seemed a poor prospect. These annual variations again suggest that the letting was auctioned.

Several letting conditions were regularly stipulated viz:

- 'First - No Stock to be turned on the Land before the first day of May and none to remain on after the 31st Day of December.
- Second - The rent to be paid in three separate Instalments to the Waywarden for the time being of the Township of Milton
 - the 1st On the first Monday in June
 - the 2nd On the first Monday in July
 - the 3rd On the first Monday in September
- Third - The Land to be clodded every three weeks and no manure to be taken off.

Fourth - Nothing to be stacked on the Land.

Fifth - the Land not to be underlet and the Gate to be kept locked.

Sixth - The Public not to be interrupted in their Recreations such as Cricket Playing etc.'

However, with these conditions in force, cricket must have been distinctly hazardous, not to mention fragrant amidst the accumulated manure, with a somewhat slow outfield! This is in spite of condition 3 that the land be clodded regularly, which seems to mean that clods and piles of manure be broken up and evenly spread.

John Cattell, carrier, rented the Recreation Ground for twenty out of the thirty-five years between 1851 and 1885; after that the minutes are silent on this subject. In 1892, after a gap of seven years, a different form of words was introduced viz: 'the Recreation accounts were audited and found correct'. It is likely that, if the land was still being let by then, the details of the transactions were recorded in a different book.

References

Minutes of Milton under Wychwood Vestry Meetings 1849-1868 and 1868-1894.

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Milton under Wychwood Enclosure Award (1845-6).

1 Margaret Ware, 'One Hundred Years Ago: The First Parish Council Elections,' *Wychwoods History 10* (1995), 35.

2 W.E. Tate *The Parish Chest* (1983), Phillimore, 242.

3 John Simpson Calvertt, *Rain and Ruin, The Diary of an Oxfordshire Farmer 1875-1900* (1983), Alan Sutton, 78.

4 *Ibid*, 148.

I am most grateful to Anthea Jones for her helpful comments on this article.

The Green, Milton under Wychwood, probably pre-1930. Cattle were pastured here until 1946; after that, no more tenders are recorded.



'Agistment': a Tithing Nightmare

ANTHEA JONES AND SUE JOURDAN

The complexities of tithes have been referred to elsewhere in this Journal, in an examination of a tithe account book for 1727 to 1734 kept by the vicar of Shipton under Wychwood, and in particular 'Agistment' which was a payment to the parson for animals pastured in the parish. Nearly 100 years later, a successor, Joseph Phillimore, was sent a letter by a fellow vicar, Samuel Nash of Enstone, asking for help in assessing the value of agistment (OA/PAR 236/15/T1/3). The vicar of Enstone was concerned at what happened to clerical incomes in the process of enclosure, which was being carried out at this time by Commissioners appointed under Acts of Parliament for individual parishes. While the layout of farms and fields was being reorganised, the opportunity was usually taken to extinguish tithes. If they were undervalued in money terms by the Commissioners, the parson received inadequate compensation. A transcript of the letter is printed in full below. It not only illustrates what the collection of tithes implied, but it also raises a number of interesting points about agricultural and ecclesiastical practice. Some explanatory notes follow the letter.

Great Tew near Enstone
April 1822
Oxfordshire

Rev.d Sir

Although I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you, yet as I am informed that your Living or the Vicarage of Shipston (sic) has a similar Endowment to that of Enstone, which also has Mr Wood for its Impropriator¹, I have troubled you with a few lines on the supposed value of the Agistment, which seems to have been very imperfectly understood by the generality of Commissioners,² to the great detriment of many Parishes. With respect to Laws on the Subject if they contradict plain good sense they have but little claim to our attention - If you look at the six Crops on the Ground you will see that two of them and the Tithe of Milk etc.- belong to the Vicarage, consequently if the whole of the Tithe Great and Small at the present reduced prices were let at six shillings per ann per acre that 2s would, making all fair allowances, belong to the Vicarage³ Or if you take the value for the legal stock kept, which is two

Cows and 21 sheep per Yard Land,⁴ and value the Milk, other seeds etc, it will come to nearly the same money - The 21 sheep must be divided into three sevens - 7 Ewes - 7 shear Hogs & fatting Ewes - and 7 tegs etc - If you look at the valuation⁵ which was given me you will see that the Shear Hogs and fatting Ewes used to pay 9d per week - Put them at one penny per Day on the best keep - and it will be 365 pence per head per ann for keep - or £1 10s 5d for the whole year or its proportion for any part - The tenth of which is about 3s 5d per ann⁶ - They now offer about 4d per head per ann for the Flock - which will show you the mischief the Commissioners have done the Livings - The Lambs pay agistment from the Day they are weaned the first week in July - till the Day they are Sheared June 1st 11 months - when you pay the Impropropiator 6d for his fleece - which will leave their Tithe according to their Pasture say 2s or in some Instance 1s 6d - The six Crops are 1. Turnips* - 2. Barley - 3. Clover - 4. grazed clover* - 5. wheat- 6. Oats - The two marked & Sainfoin Pasture and Seeds are Vicarial ---

Valuation

Cows from 8s, 10s to one Pound according to their Pasture - the Tithe of the fatted Calf 6s - per ann

Heifer 2s per week -
-stirk 1s 6d -

Colt 1/6d
2 years 2/0d
Sheep 6d
Cows 3/0

per week Winter
fatting sheep on Turnips 9d per week -⁷

April the 6 Summer -⁸

Couples 8s/0
Dry sheep 7d
Feeding Beast 4s/6d
Grown Horses 6/0
Two yer olds 3s/6d
mared colt 7s/0
Poney 2s/0
Lambs 6s/

per week

NB The above was sent me

From which you will clearly see that the Vicar is entitled to 2s per acre composition -

If the Pigs & Geese are under 10 the Vicar takes one and pays the difference -

Have the goodness to send me your Composition & estimate - I remain
Sir

Your Humble St.

Samuel Nash Vicar of Enston

By the Langly Miller⁹

Notes

- 1 'Impropropiator'. The person who took the tithes from a parish once due to its rector was called an impropropiator. In Shipton, the largest portion of tithes, the Great tithes on corn and hay, had been transferred by the Crown from a canon of Salisbury Cathedral to the Professor of Civil Law at Oxford. He was therefore the impropropiator, and Mr Wood was a lessee, who hoped to recoup more value from the parish than he paid the Professor for the lease.
- 2 'Commissioners': these are the enclosure commissioners; their imperfect understanding may not be a matter for surprise.
- 3 Calculation of value. The Enstone vicar's calculation is that he should get 2/6th (or 1/3rd) of the rent of all tithes, as paid by such a man as Mr Wood, because he was entitled to tithes on two crops out of six.
- 4 'Yardland'. Alternative calculations tried by the Vicar rest on estimates of the value of pasture rights in the common fields. There was usually an agreement made in the manor court about how much stock each farmer could keep. Holdings of arable land and pasture rights were described in terms of 'yardlands', 1/4, 1/2, 1 or more yardlands, and two cows and 21 sheep were the suggested usual allowance or stint for each whole yardland holding.
- 5 'If you look at the valuation'. See number 7 in letter, which has been underlined for ease of reference.
- 6 3s 5d was a reasonable calculation of tithe for sheep pasture, but only 4d was being allowed by the Enclosure Commissioners, which the Enstone vicar saw was only 1/10th of what should have been allowed.
- 7 'Fatting sheep on turnips 9d per week' is an important basis of calculation. By 1822 clover, sainfoin and turnips, the 'new' crops of the agricultural revolution, had become general farming practice.
- 8 'Summer' started April 6th - a reasonable description of the farming season if not the weather.
- 9 By the Langly miller. It is interesting to notice the postal arrangements before the inauguration of the Penny Post in 1840. Were the flour carts regularly used for delivering letters?

Asthall Roman Camp

FRANK WARE

A Roman camp was newly identified from cropmarks and photographed from the air by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1994¹. It lies to the south of Akeman Street and aligned on it, map reference SP 284108. It is nearly square, 98m. by 86m., with the shorter side aligned on the Roman road and encloses an area of about 0.8 hectare (2.1 acres). Immediately south-west of the camp is the crop-mark of another enclosure, described as 'possibly of Iron Age' date. Neither is normally visible on the ground.

To the south of the camp the ground falls away gently before rising steeply to the skyline along which runs the A40, about half a kilometre away. The highest part of the camp is the north-east corner, about 100m. above sea-level. To the north a hillock rises above the camp to 120m. before the ground falls to the Windrush valley. The modern land-use is arable. Akeman Street crosses the R. Windrush a little over 1km. to the north-east, beyond the later Romano-British settlement at Asthall excavated by Paul Booth of the Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1992 (not yet published).

On the ground the hillock to the north clearly overlooks the site, and hides 'dead ground' where an enemy could assemble and come close to the camp to attack it before being seen. This is contrary to the military manuals², which makes one wonder why such an obviously insecure site should have been selected. Fresh water, another consideration for siting a camp, seems to be no nearer nearer than the Windrush about 1km. to the north, though it is possible that springs or a stream in the valley to the south may have been ploughed out and the water channelled into modern field-drains.

Why was the camp built? We can only speculate. Conventionally Roman troops on the march, on campaign or on manoeuvres, built them for overnight protection, particularly in hostile terrain. According to the manuals it was almost mandatory to build one, which experienced troops could do very quickly. The fact that this camp was beside and aligned to Akeman Street might suggest that the road preceded the camp. Alternatively, the camp may have been built during the construction of the road itself, which would have been engineered and supervised by legionaries even if conscripted natives acted as labourers. Perhaps it accommodated a construction gang with their supervisory troops, in which case security may have seemed less important.

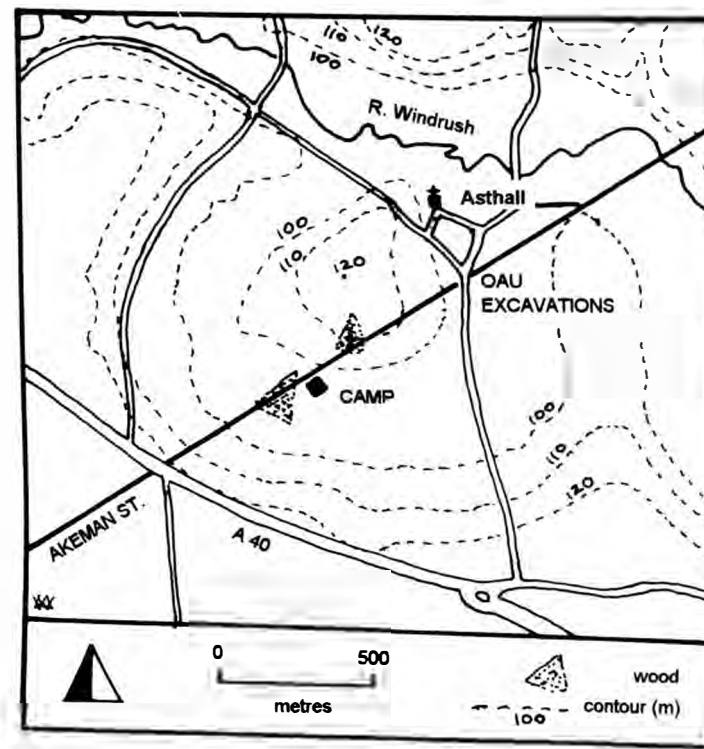
This is a relatively small camp - examples are known in Scotland exceeding 50ha., built for an army on campaign. Less than 1ha. would have been scarcely

sufficient to accommodate a cohort of about 500 legionaries while an auxiliary cavalry regiment of similar size would have needed more space.

Literally hundreds of camps are known north-west of the Roman Fosse Way linking Cirencester with Lincoln, the relics of campaigns in England as well as Wales and Scotland, but Asthall camp is almost unique in the lowland zone south-east of the Fosse Way. Only one other is listed, in Norfolk³ and therefore probably related to the suppression of the Iceni after Queen Boudicca's revolt in AD 60. That particular incident is not likely to have affected our own part of the Province, so one can hazard an earlier date for Asthall camp in the first years of the Roman conquest after the Claudian invasion of AD 43.

References

- 1 Humphrey Welfare and Vivien Swan, *Roman Camps in England - The Field Archaeology*, HMSO (1995), 181.
- 2 *Ibid*, 6-17.
- 3 At Horstead, about 9.5ha. *Ibid*, 70-1.



A Determined Emigrant

TOM MCQUAY AND DUNCAN WAUGH

The annual report of the Medical Officer of Health for Oxfordshire in 1873 describes an outbreak of fever in Ascott under Wychwood following a tragic and abortive attempt to emigrate to America:

‘In November a limited outbreak of typhoid fever occurred at Ascot-under-Wychwood under very remarkable circumstances. A man, named Eli Pratley, who had previously emigrated to America, having there lost his wife, returned with his three children, all in very wretched condition, and took up his abode in his mother’s house at Ascot on November 20, bringing with him several boxes containing clothes and bedding, many of them old and filthy. The remaining inhabitant of the house, viz. his brother, was attacked with typhoid fever on November 29, and his mother (who died of it) on the following day. Eli Pratley, on being questioned, at once said that his wife had died of typhoid fever. The only other case in the neighbourhood occurred on December 5, in the person of Pratley’s married sister, who had been up to the house and taken away some of the dirty things to wash. It was suggested that the brother had taken the fever at another place (Foden’s Hill), where he had been to work after Pratley’s return; but further enquiry quite negated that idea; for it appeared that he did not go to Foden’s Hill until the 24th, and that though there had been fever in the house in July last, yet the house had changed tenants in the interval, and there had been no recurrence of fever amongst the new inhabitants. Moreover, in this case the mother must be supposed to have caught the fever from the son, and she was, as we have seen, attacked the very next day. There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that the source of infection in this case was in the clothes and bedding brought by Pratley from America’.

However Typhus, a louse-borne infection also known as army-, camp-, famine-, ship- or trench-fever, and recognised as a ‘barometer of human misery’, is a much more likely diagnosis than typhoid which is usually spread by human faeces or urine. Typhoid bacilli would die rapidly on contaminated clothing, whereas Typhus rickettsiae could survive for several months in the dried faeces of the louse and are highly infectious if inhaled. It was not until early this century that microbiological tests made a differential diagnosis definite so that confusion between these infections is understandable.

Between 1821 and 1871 over six million people emigrated from the United Kingdom, nearly 90% going to North America. Pratley and his family probably travelled from Oxfordshire to Liverpool and sailed from thence to New York. Typhus was endemic in the overcrowded cities of the eastern seaboard of America and the family must have been infected there.

Eli’s father was an Ascott ‘woodman’ whose first wife had died in childbirth forty years earlier. He had married again so that Eli had a half-brother and a half-sister as well as five full brothers and two sisters. Eli’s mother died of typhus in December 1873, and his young son (another Eli) in February 1874. Apart from the married sister the rest of the family, of vigorous country stock, seem to have escaped the infection.

In the early 1870s the government of under-populated New Zealand contacted the newly-formed National Agricultural Labourers’ Union, which had tried with moderate success to improve wages but which was willing to promote emigration as an alternative. In 1873 New Zealand offered free passages for suitable emigrants. There was an immediate response, and in February 1874 Eli Pratley’s half-brother John’s son Philip (who was only a year younger than Eli) left for New Zealand with his wife and three children. Eli himself re-married on 16 May 1874 and emigrated for the second time in September. He too went to New Zealand with his new wife and presumably one daughter, now five years old. On the same ship sailed his brother Fredrick with his wife Mary Ann (who had been an Ascott Martyr in 1873), and six children. Initially both men worked as farmhands in Temuka, South Island, about 85 miles south-west of Christchurch, but after about eight years they jointly leased 128 acres. Later they took two separate farms, Eli working a similar acreage that he first leased and then bought at Temuka, while Fredrick leased 400 acres at Winchester nearby. Both families prospered. Fredrick’s wife Mary Ann died in New Zealand and he re-married an Elizabeth Simmons from Oxfordshire in 1895.

Eli fathered ten sons and a daughter. By the close of the century he had a thriving farm and a large family, a very different situation from that of the wretched failed emigrant of twenty-seven years previously with his ‘old and filthy clothes’.

From My Bookshelf

SUE JOURDAN

Much of the study of Local History is looking at old documents and one particular category, in a way one of the most accessible, is the published texts of contemporary documents. I have found some of these to be fascinating in giving quite a different view of life than some of us learnt in school history when the emphasis was on power and politics and often their resulting wars.

The three contemporary accounts I have in paperback on my shelves were all written for quite different reasons, which has to be remembered when reading them. The earliest tells of a journey made in 1188, the second relates the history behind the allocation of pews in a church in 1701 and the third is the diary of a shopkeeper covering the years 1745-1765.

Gerald of Wales

The Journey through Wales and *The Description of Wales* were written by Gerald of Wales after he had accompanied Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, in a mission to Wales from 2 March to 14 April 1188. Their purpose had been to preach the Cross and further the cause of The Third Crusade. Gerald was born and spent his childhood in the Castle of Manorbier, on the coast of South Pembrokeshire. He was the son of a Norman knight, William de Barri, and Angharad, whose grandfather was Rhys ap Tewdwr, Prince of South Wales. After his Benedictine education, Gerald became a dynamic and colourful churchman, although he never achieved his aim of becoming the Bishop of St David's and freeing the bishopric from Canterbury. Gerald had the role of liaison officer as well as preacher on the mission, coping with difficult public relations as well as the hazardous travel over harsh terrain. In the diary he kept and reproduced in *The Journey through Wales*, he gives an accurate and comprehensive history of events in twelfth-century Wales with lively accounts of local miracles, natural prodigies, folklore and scenic descriptions.

It is still possible to follow Baldwin and Gerald's route, starting at Hereford and crossing to New Radnor, and then south and round the whole coast of Wales with some excursions inland, eventually returning to Hereford via Chester and Shrewsbury. The book would add enormously to any touring holiday of Wales today with his descriptions of, for example, Llanthony, St David's, Anglesey and Snowdonia. I have visited the remains of the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida where they stayed the night after preaching at Lampeter where 'Many persons were induced to take the Cross'. He gives a loving description of his childhood

home, Manorbier Castle, on its rocky hill top, from where one could see the boats on their way to Ireland 'scud before the east wind... and you can see them brave the ever-changing violence of the winds and the blind fury of the waters'.

The second part of the book is his *Description of Wales*. In the first part he describes the natural features, its size, divisions, palaces, rivers, mountains and its fertility and agricultural products, together with a genealogy of the Welsh princes. In this part he also considers the people, noting they are bold, agile and courageous, and giving all their praiseworthy points but this is followed by the reverse side of the coin because he says he must not conceal the truth from the serious historian. The Welsh are inconstant, unstable and rarely keep their plighted word! He also suggests how best the Welsh could be conquered and governed and how the people could fight back and resist. He himself was three-quarters Anglo-Norman and one quarter Welsh.

The translation from Latin by Lewis Thorpe makes easy reading and, although I think one should take his more outlandish stories with a pinch of salt, the whole is divided into short chapters making a very accessible account of life in Wales in the twelfth century.

The History of Myddle

Richard Gough's book *The History of Myddle* is unique in historical literature. Myddle is a large parish of one chapelry and seven townships, a few miles north of Shrewsbury. In 1701 at the age of sixty-six, after writing down a description of the Antiquities and Memoyres of the Parish of Myddle, he embarked on the novel and much more ambitious work of drawing a plan of the pews in the parish church and then establishing the ownership of each pew by giving the history of each family. Although this may sound a rather dry objective, the attraction of the resulting work is the wonderful enlivening way he recounts the family stories over several generations and his gift for giving fascinating glimpses of the characters of seventeenth-century men and women. Gough is the master of the pithy phrase. David Hingley of Balderton 'was a good husband by fits. Waht hee got with hard labor hee spent idely in the Alehouse.' 'Thomas Jukes had three sons, and never a good one. Thomas, the youngest, did use to break his neighbor's houses, but had the fortune to be caught before he had done any mischeife. At last, his father, in some drunken humor, sett him apprentice to a Jugler, a very hopeful employment.'

Much of Gough's account was based on memory and oral tradition, going back well into the sixteenth century and, although some of his genealogy can now be shown to be muddled, much can be corroborated by modern research. Although Gough's own spelling has been preserved, it presents few difficulties and greatly adds to the flavour of this record of the way of life in Stuart England.

The Diary of Thomas Turner

My third contemporary account is based in Sussex. *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765* records eleven busy years in the life of a key figure in the workings of the village of East Hoathly, about seven miles from Lewes. Thomas Turner started this only-surviving volume of his diaries when he was newly-married,

twenty-four years old, just moved in to the village and ends when, after the death of his wife and child, he marries for a second time. Spent from being a shopkeeper, Turner was also much concerned with village administration as undertaker, schoolmaster, church-warden, overseer of the poor, village scribe and much more. And I remember being much struck at the amount of travelling that he did, on his own and on parish business, giving the lie to the idea that no-one, particularly the 'ordinary' people, left their village. In March 1759, he spent three days in London settling many accounts and buying goods, paying 8s 11d for his travel, food, lodging, wine, tips and the turnpike.

As with the other two books, it is the liveliness of the writing that makes this book so enjoyable to read today. His descriptions of his friends, neighbours, work and pleasure are vividly portrayed. He also notes on many days what food he has had; hog's head, sausages and apple-sauce, carp, venison, boiled beef and peas and boiled bacon. He also drinks a lot of tea but admonishes himself for his occasional over-indulgence of liquor and is full of reproach the next day. 'Weds. 9 Feb. 1757.... Mr French and I both being pretty much in liquor, we quarrelled very much... Oh! what an unfortunate wretch I am that I can drink but 2 glasses of liquor before I am drunk...' 'Thurs. 10 Feb. 1757. A sad unpleasant day. Oh! the reflection of yesterday intolerable...' He writes movingly about his wife's illness, going on about his business with a heavy heart, until 'Tues. 23 June 1761. About 1.50 it pleased Almighty God to take from me my beloved wife who, poor creature, has laboured under a severe though lingering illness for these 38 weeks past,... In her I have lost a sincere friend and virtuous wife, a prudent and good economist in her family and a very valuable companion... We dined on the remains of yesterday's dinner.'

Only one of these three books was written with a view to being widely read by others with Gerald of Wales producing several editions of his work. All have comprehensive introductions by their editors which help to set the scene. The freshness and accessibility that they have make them not only historically interesting but with such humanity in them, I can recommend them as books to dip into. I find they add flesh to the bones of history.

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Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales* (1978), translated by Lewis Thorpe, Penguin Classics.
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David Vaisey (ed), *The Diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765* (1985), Oxford University Press.

Medieval Pottery Study

A SYNTHESIS OF MIDDLE AND LATE SAXON, MEDIEVAL AND EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY IN THE OXFORD REGION, by Maureen Mellor, published in *Oxoniensia LIX*, 1994 (issued 1995), pp 18-217.

Maureen Mellor's monumental study of pottery types made or found (in some quantity) in the Oxford Region from about AD 780 - 1625 has been eagerly anticipated by archaeologists and ceramic students. The Region is defined as the post-1974 County of Oxfordshire, but the study extends to the distribution outside the Region of pottery made within it. Maureen builds on the pioneering work of Bruce Mitford from the excavation of the site of the Bodleian Extension in Oxford in the 1930s and of Professor Jope in the wider Region, to construct a coherent analysis of the different fabrics made, of their places of manufacture and of their distribution from excavations and other properly documented finds. This is a heavy-weight study for specialists, which will provide an invaluable framework for compilers of excavation reports.

It is of particular interest to us because Maureen studied and incorporated the Society's collection of material, obtained from our fieldwalks and casual finds in Shipton, Milton and Ascott under Wychwood. She also inspected John Campbell's important collection from Ascott, though sadly the material from Jope's excavation of the Ascott d'Oilly castle was not available. As a result, these villages as a group appear among the top twenty places within the Region for the quantity of material analysed.

FRANK WARE

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Wychwoods History, Number 10 (1995) £3.00
Jessie Hunt, Evacuee 1939-1945; Shipton in 1662: a Hearth Tax Study, Pt 2; Shipton Village Shops and Roundsmen; First Parish Council Elections; Smallpox; Puzzles over Shipton Prebend; What really happened at Shipton Court; The de Langleys: Medieval Foresters; George Quartermain of Ascott.

The above may be obtained from Dr Margaret Ware, Monks Gate, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BA (telephone 01993 830494). P&P is 75p for the first book plus 30p for each additional book. Cheques payable to Wychwoods Local History Society.

The Wychwoods Local History Society meets once a month from September through to May. Meetings usually alternate between the village halls at Shipton and Milton. Current membership is £4 for an individual and £6 for a couple or overseas member, which includes a copy of *Wychwoods History* when published. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, Littlecott, Honeydale Farm, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BJ (telephone Shipton under Wychwood 01993 831023).

Further copies and back numbers of *Wychwoods History* may be obtained from Dr Margaret Ware, Monks Gate, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BA (telephone 01993 830494). Postage and packing is 75p for the first copy and 30p for each additional copy. Cheques payable to Wychwoods Local History Society. See inside for full list of publications in print.

Cover illustration: *The Tiddy Hall, Ascott under Wychwood, about 1915.*

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