clasped and unclasped, faith and troth were plighted, the bargain sealed with a kiss and co-habitation could follow. But in order to be fully acceptable to the church and the community it became increasingly the practice to follow this contract with the calling of banns and a marriage in church.[12] This probably acccounts for the high percentage of pregnant brides at sixteenth century church weddings, but as the Anglican church tightened its grip on society after 1600 the proportion of pre-nuptial pregnancies fell.

Peter Laslett divides pre-nuptial pregnancies into three classes, 'shot-gun' weddings, cases of 'spouse entrapment' and 'fertility testing.'[13] But such a classification could not be used here because of the limited data available from the parish registers.

It also proved impossible to tell why so many mothers of multiple bastards remained unmarried. Nor was it possible to ascertain the number of illegitimate babies who remained un-baptised, although the burial of an un-baptised baby was noted as such in the register e.g. 'a child unchristened d of Marie of Lynam a bastard.' There are only eight such comments in 300 years, suggesting that mothers were probably punctilious about bringing their illegitimate offspring for baptism.

And it must have taken considerable courage to bring a bastard for baptism, to face a resentful congregation and a reproachful vicar. That poor brother and sister with their child 'begotten in incest', their reluctant relatives and their anxious godparents, must have had a bleak six-mile walk through the Wychwood Forest from Ramsden on a mid-winter Sunday long ago.

Acknowledgements
I wish to thank Joan Howard-Drake, Jack Howard-Drake, Anthea Jones and Margaret Ware for their help in compiling and publishing this paper.

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2 Oxfordshire Archives MS. DD. Par. Leafield.
3 Oxfordshire Archives MS. DD. Par. Ramsden.
4 Oxfordshire Archives MS. DD. Par. Milton under Wychwood.
5 Peter Laslett in P.Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and R.M.Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, London (1980), pp. 14-15.
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7 Anthea Newman in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, p. 152.
8 Peter Laslett in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, p. 217.
9 Tom McQuay, 'Infantile Mortality in Shipton under Wychwood', *Wychwoods History* 6 (1991).
10 Richard N.Smith in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, p. 86.
11 Jack Howard-Drake, *Oxford Church Courts*, Oxford (1992), p. vi.
12 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, Penguin (1990), p. 30.
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The Groves Family of Milton under Wychwood

Cotswold Stonemasons for 400 years Part 2

NORMAN FROST

Part 1 of this history[1] concluded with George Groves(1), born in 1761 to John Grove and Ann Reeve, gradually taking over the masonry business from his father. There is still scant evidence of actual work carried out; indeed in this largely illiterate age most agreements were probably by word of mouth only. But scraps of records begin to appear, like the entries in the Shipton parish minutes for the mid-eighteenth century for the upkeep of parish bridges described at the end of Part 1.

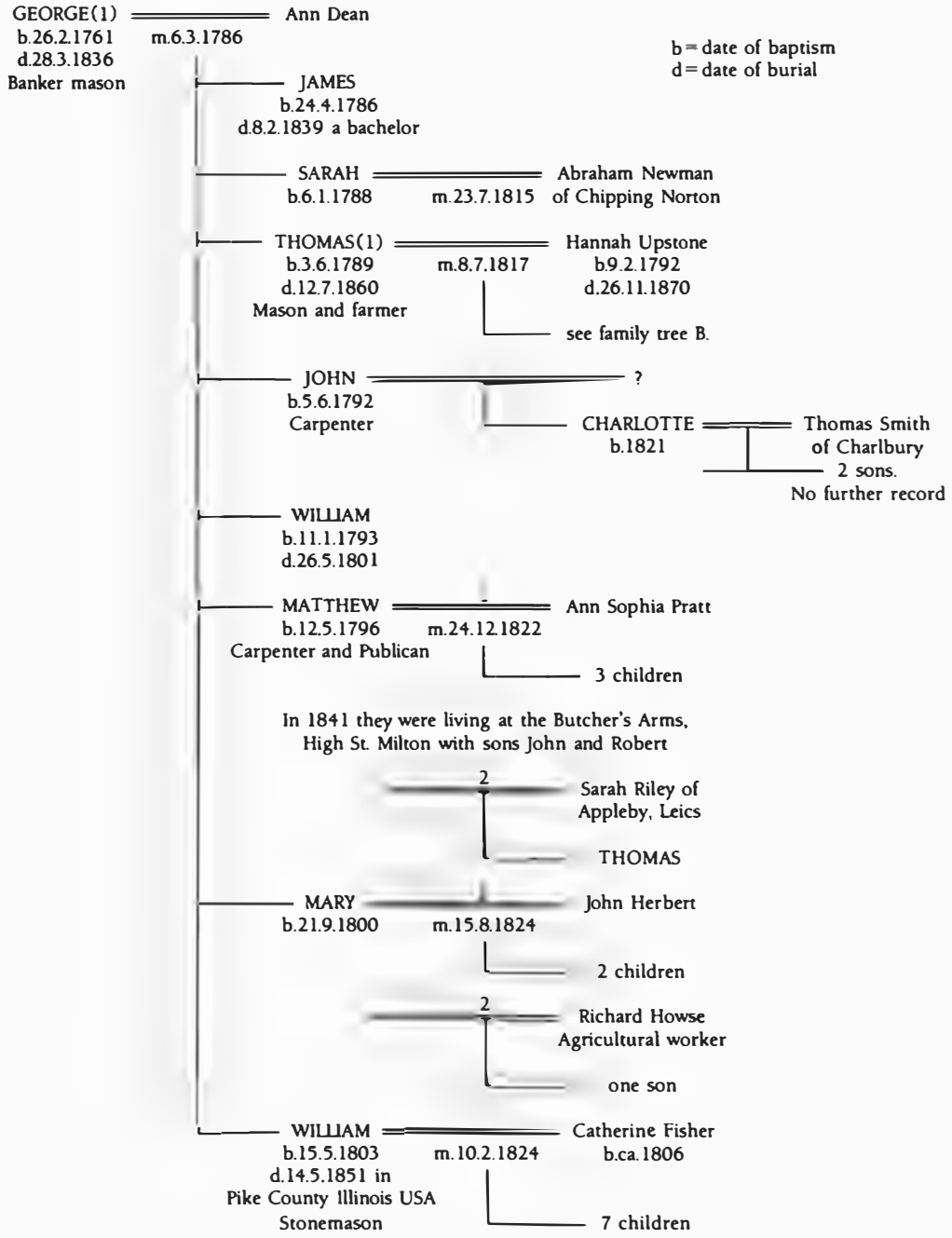
George Groves

We know that George lived in what is now Elm Cottage in the present Groves' works yard; the end wall of the cottage bears his name and the date 1816. Here lived George, his wife Ann and eight children (see Family Tree A), while part of the building was used as his workshop.

George was a 'banker mason', a highly skilled workman, the name deriving from the 'bank' on which he worked. A 'bank' is a large slab of stone used as a workbench and covered by a hide to protect the stone being worked. The working stone had to be squared and trued by hand to the required shape. It would have come to the mason from the quarry, roughly cut by a handsaw. Today this would be done by a power-operated diamond or carborundum saw, but then it was all hand-power, and very hard work – I've tried it! The banker mason would take from the architect's plan a template for the work to be done and then roughly shape the stone with a waster, a cutting chisel. Larger chisels would then be used to obtain the final shape which was smoothly finished with a drag or rasp.

The cottage in which George worked has recently been restored and

A. THE FAMILY OF GEORGE GROVES(1) AND ANN DEAN



modernised but can still be recognised as it used to be. George died in 1836 and is buried in Shipton churchyard.

Thomas Groves

George's eldest son Thomas married Hannah Upstone on 8 July 1817 at St Peter the Bailey, Oxford (see Family Tree B). The Upstones were a local family of some means, which possibly explains why Thomas was able to take up residence in the Elms Farmhouse, next door to his old family cottage. This was a substantial property with twelve acres of farmland attached. Milton's 1851 Census describes Thomas as a mason employing 16 men and as a farmer employing one man. At this time he was also a trustee of Milton Baptist Chapel. These little details indicate that Thomas was becoming a substantial man in the community. In 1851 he had to visit a doctor in London to have a growth removed from his face. The letters he wrote back to his family give us a fascinating insight into his family and village life at that time. Extracts from these letters have already been published.[2]

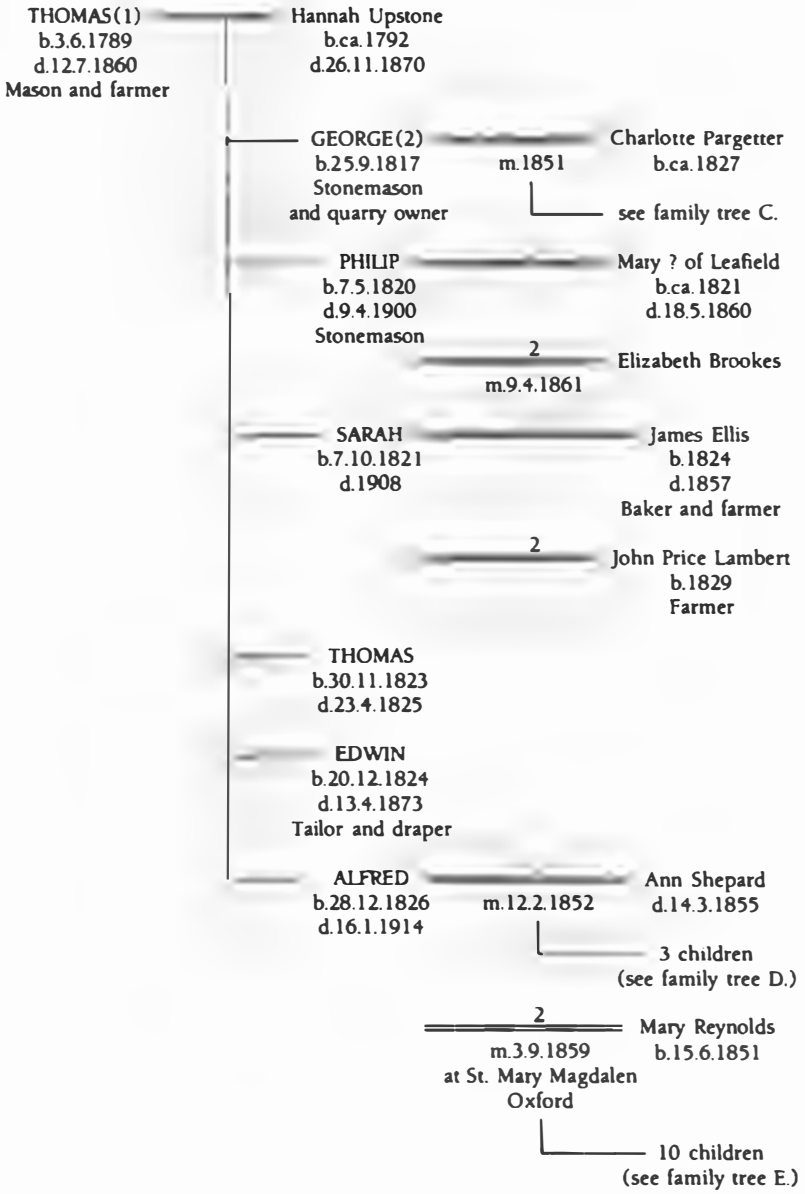
An old cash book dated 1855 belonging to Thomas Groves still survives. It covers the complete year and includes both household and business transactions in the same account. Items for the weekly groceries (usually under £1 a week), the household coal and the servants' wages are shown. The business entries do not specify the work involved, but there is a weekly entry for workers' wages. This sum varies between £14 and £50 and possibly reflects those days when, if the weather was too bad for outdoor work, the men were not paid. Usually the wages total averaged £25-£30 per week.

The balance of cash kept in hand is surprisingly small, sometimes less than £20 and only occasionally rising above £100. There is no reference to any money being banked although some accounts were paid by cheque. It appears that the cheques were treated as cash and used to meet outgoings. Occasionally there was insufficient cash for this purpose and recourse was had to borrowing from relatives in business and living in the village. This borrowing was a two-way business and seems to have oiled the wheels of local commerce.

I have also had the opportunity to scrutinise several of Thomas Groves' old ledgers, and for the first time we have a day by day account of his business. One entry states 'Hired John Hill for third carters place from Michaelmas 1859 to Michaelmas 1860 at five shillings and sixpence per week and £1 over at Michaelmas next'. A footnote refers to Michaelmas day as Old Michaelmas, 11 October. There is no record of where the transaction took place but I presume it was Burford Hiring Fair as Thomas' aforementioned letters suggest that he hired staff there, and Burford Fair took place at this time.

Further entries read: 'Hired James Averis for one year at seven shillings per week and one pound over at the end of the year and find him lodging' and 'Samuel Millen hired till Michaelmas 1860 for one year at seven shillings per week and one pound over at the end of the year and to have a month

B. THE FAMILY OF THOMAS GROVES(1) AND HANNAH UPSTONE



supper in the lambing time and also his supper when we are shearing and to have some vituals (sic) when we are sheep washing if the other men have theirs'. The slight differences in each contract indicate the bargaining that went with each one. This ledger then lists the wages paid to some ninety workers over the next five years. It is difficult to draw many conclusions from much of this information as many dates are omitted but it gives an idea of the rapid turnover of the workforce. Few of the men are to be found living in the village at the time of the 1861 Census, suggesting that many of them were itinerant workers.

A second ledger of 742 pages details over a period of about ten years the work that Thomas Groves was contracting for, with costings. Much of it was of a day to day nature such as stone carting, or repairs and improvements to buildings in Milton and surrounding villages. However, a good many entries are of special interest.

1854. 'An estimate to the Rev. Charles Barter of Shipton for taking down an old cottage and building a house for the local schoolmaster' (no sum quoted).

1855. 'Supplied 2,800 cu. feet of stone to William Bliss of Chipping orton for foundation of steam driven machinery...£51 13s 10½d.' This entry marks the beginning of a long connection with William Bliss as there are many records for stone deliveries and other building work over the next five years. In 1865 'The sum of £6098 19s 6d for building a mill'. This account was paid by instalments, the final settlement being made on 15 October 1867. It seems that two years was about the usual time taken to settle a large account at this time. Further work for William Bliss included laying an engine bed for £325 Os 8d in April 1865 and sundry work at Lower Mill.

Work was also carried out on Sir John Reade's Shipton Court estate on a long-term basis, for which sums around £1000 were paid each year. In 1866 'repairs at Chastleton House £542 9s 5d.'

1856. 'To the Trustees of Shipton Turnpike Road, specification for the erection of Turnpike House, Shipton Bridge. Dig and draw wallstones from Five Shilling Corner Quarry...' 'Pike House' still stands by Shipton Station bridge, while the quarry is still visible by A361 at the northernmost boundary of Ascott parish.

In 1857 much work was done for the Road Commissioners: 'Repairing bridges at Lyneham £1 17s 0d.' 'Repairing bridge at Caudle (Coldwell) Brook 6s 9d.' 'July 11. Chopping out stones and ground pinning the wing walls of Shipton bridge. 3 masons – 3½ days £3 15s 6d. 1 wagon load of wallstone from Freestone Quarry.' 'Building wall between Mr Kimbers corner and Court gateway in Burford Road, Shipton, cost to be divided between Sir John Reade and Road Commissioners, £80 ls 0d.'

From May 1856 to Dec. 1857 Groves were engaged to cart 2,500 cu. ft. of stone to Lucas Bros. for the 'Oxford Museum' at a cost of £217 9s 11d.

1860. 'Estimate for Mr East of Burford to provide and deliver to Burford freestone required for erection of school according to plan and

specification, free from damage and ready for setting including carving of cherubs or heads for large window for a sum of £8 7s 2d. This contract does not include freestone or cross £80 7s 2d.'

Several entries refer to work carried out in local public houses. Thu in 1857 Mr T.Hopkins paid £35 5s 0d for repairs at the Coach and Horses at Milton, now a private dwelling at the junction of Green Lane and Shipton Road. In 1867 Shillingford Brothers, owners of the Quart Pot, paid Groves £164 15s 9d to provide a seat around the tap room and in the bay window, a new floor in the parlour and a planck floor (stones) in the kitchen.

The records clearly show a vigorous phase of ecclesiastical building from the middle of the nineteenth century. A separate document found with the old ledgers was part of the building plan of St Simon and St Jude, Milton, designed by the Oxford Diocesan architect George Edward Street, dated 28 June 1853. Adjoining the church was to be a school and schoolmaster's house, which were built at the same time. The work was largely funded by a donation of £5000 by J.H.Langston MP of Sarsden House and a further contribution of £1000 from his brother-in-law, Archdeacon Huxtable of Oxford.

From the ledgers, we find that from Aug. 1858 to Nov. 1859 £1100 3s 8d was paid for carting stone for the new church at Leafield, although there is no mention of further work being done. During the same period restoration work was done in Shipton church for which Revd Carter paid £1540. This account was not settled until Jan. 9 1862 and interest was charged on part of the money outstanding. In Feb. 1863, to the order of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England 'to restore the chancel at Idbury church..£125', while in 1865, restoration and repairs to orth Leigh church cost £1393 1s. There are interesting entries in 1862-3 regarding 'building of Swanbourne church £1235 19s 0d' and repairs to Claydon church, to the order of Sir Thomas Freemantle. These were two neighbouring parishes in Buckinghamshire some forty miles from Milton, although travel was doubtless facilitated by the coming of the railway.

The flowering of nonconformity during the same period is also reflected in the ledgers of Thomas Groves. In 1860, restoration of the Baptist chapel at Burford cost the Trustees £119. In 1859 Mr Pratley paid £54 18s 5d for taking down an old cottage and hovels in The Square, Milton and building the Wesleyan chapel. It opened a year later but closed in 1986. In 1860 Mr Maddox engaged Groves to build a Baptist chapel at Shipton for £131 1s 2d, paid in 1862. In 1862 'repairs to Milton Baptist Chapel at a contract price of £100 with extras of £31 3s 2d. for the provision of lamps, tables, chairs and a new cover for the baptistry and painting the front gates.' In 1867 they required a schoolroom at a cost of £250, while in 1868 Leafield chapel with vestry and baptistry was built for £327 14s 2d.

It is clear that considerable quantities of stone were being carted at this time from Five Shilling Corner Quarry at Ascott and Planck Quarry on Milton Downs, both long-since closed. Thomas Groves died in 1860 and it is

C. THE FAMILY OF GEORGE GROVES(2) AND CHARLOTTE PARGETTER

GEORGE(2) b.25.9.1817 d.2.8.1886 — Charlotte Pargetter of Lutterworth, Leics b.1827

Stone mason and quarry owner. They were living at Quarry Cottage, Upper Milton in 1851

- THOMAS(2) b.26.5.1852 d.14.4.1930 Stonemason and quarry owner — m.9.6.1874 — Annie Barnes b.30.10.1852 d.16.11.1930
  - [redacted] ns incl. GEORGE(3) Stonemason
  - 5 Daughters
- PHILIP UPSTONE b.10.11.1853 d.19.11.1927 Stonemason — m.18.3.1876 — Elizabeth Dinah Smith of Burford b.1855
- JOHN b.5.11.1855 — Miriam Frances Barnes b.1865
  - A stonemason who moved to Birmingham with his family around 1905 and later emigrated to Canada leaving them behind. Parts of his family have been traced to Winchester and to South Australia..
- MATTHEW RICHARD b.19.9.1857 d.11.1.1859
- HANNAH CECILIA b.1.7.1859 d.3.9.1939 at Leicester — m.27.9.1882 — William Rowell Burwell b.9.2.1859 at Cheltenham d.1909 at New Cross, London
  - 1 son and 4 daughters
  - The families of two daughters and the son have been traced.
- EDWIN GEORGE b.9.7.1861 Stonemason — m.1886 — Alice Elizabeth Brown
  - 4 daughters and 1 son
  - Not traced so far.
- MARY ANN b.25.1.1863 — m.14.9.1897 — Frederick Farmer
  - No further trace of this family so far.
- WILLIAM UPSTONE b.4.2.1865 d.1870

interesting to note that, for a period, all payments were made to his widow. Hannah. She died ten years later: both are buried in Milton churchyard.

George Groves(2) and his family

After the death of Hannah Groves in 1870, their eldest son George(2) who had worked in the Milton Quarries since around 1850, took over their management and continued to work them with the help of his brother Philip (Family Tree B). During this period the quarrying expanded: the 1881 census shows George employing twenty men. George's sons (Family Tree C) all worked in the quarries which were very prosperous at this time. They built and occupied a number of large houses in Barnes Corner Lane, which soon became known as Groves Lane. Later, at the time of the Jubilee of the nearby Baptist chapel, it was renamed Jubilee Lane, the name it bears to this day.

George died in August 1886 and his eldest son Thomas(2) took over the quarries. An 1890s photograph shows a workforce of twenty-six men. The earlier criticisms of Milton stone appear to have been forgotten and large quantities were being dug for the Oxford colleges and churches. But it is said that by 1893 St Mary's Church at Oxford was in a poor state due to erosion of the exterior stonework.[3] No more stone was sent to Oxford although a great deal was still being quarried for interior work and for local building. However, by the turn of the century local stone was becoming very expensive to extract, being about forty-five feet below the surface. So, early this century, Thomas closed the Milton quarry and moved to Tally Ho quarry near Staunton in Gloucestershire, taking with him some of his workmen. But the day of the independent quarry was passing and the large concerns at Portland and Bath were beginning to dominate the market. It was also heavy and sometimes dangerous work quarrying stones by hand. Local records tell of men being killed: one man was sadly run over in Milton by his own cart loaded with stone.

Thomas shortly moved on to become manager of Clipsham Quarries in Rutland, from which he retired sixteen years later. His younger son George(3), another stonemason, took over as manager and only retired in 1959 when the quarry closed. During that time he was awarded the MBE for his work on stone carvings supplied for the post-war restoraton of the House of Commons. His work is illustrated on the cover of *Wychwoods History* 7. After Milton quarry closed, the remaining family of George Groves(2) moved away: a sad loss to Milton.

As far as can be traced, this is the end of the line for the Groves family in the work of actual stone quarrying. However, as we shall see, a younger branch of the family was to continue with the building work in natural stone.

Edwin Groves

The third surviving son of Thomas Groves(1) (Family Tree B) was Edwin who had started work in the family business, but left the mason's trade and by 1871 was in business as a tailor and draper. He lived at 'Roseneath' next





George Groves (1817-1886), owner of Milton Quarries after his father Thomas' death and Charlotte Groves (nee Pargetter), who married George in 1851.

door to the Baptist chapel at Milton and for many years was the much liked and respected Sunday School superintendent. His niece Mary, daughter of his younger brother Alfred, was his housekeeper for most of his time in this house. He died at the age of forty-eight and was buried in the chapel graveyard where his memorial stone can still be seen next to the path.

Alfred Groves and his Family

The story of the Groves family now continues with Thomas' youngest son, Alfred (see Family Trees B and D). On the death of his mother Hannah, Alfred and his family moved into 'The Elms' and continued the building business from there. He was an energetic and far-seeing man and the business prospered under his guidance. In the 1871 census Alfred is described as a builder and grocer. The grocery business was developed for his workmen so that their wives could obtain credit in the company shop all week and payment could be made on payday, no doubt a great help in those times. It was not a 'Tommy shop' with the workers being forced to buy from their employer at inflated prices, since it traded fairly alongside the village shops of the time. However by 1881 no more mention is made of it.

D. THE FAMILY OF ALFRED GROVES AND ANN SHEPARD

ALFRED b.28.12.1826 d.16.1.1914 Builder and grocer — m.12.2.1852 — Ann Shepard d.14.3.1855

SARAH ANN b.10.5.1852 d.1941 — m.12.6.1872 — John Gomm b.1842 d.1924 Farm bailiff of Shipton

- ALFRED b.1875
- SOPHIA b.1877 d.1948 a spinster

MARY b.26.7.1853 — m.9.9.1874 — Joseph Harris of Bledington Miller

THOMAS ALFRED b.20.9.1854 d.1.2.1929 a bachelor

The increasing prosperity of the Groves family is apparent from the style in which they lived, 'The Elms' being a large house worthy of a gentleman. By contrast, Alfred's aunt Mary married a farm labourer and lived in a tiny single-storey thatched cottage next to what is now Milton Post Office. This cottage is still owned and lived in by Mrs Doris Williams, her great granddaughter. Alfred's uncle William was a labourer, a stonemason who also raised a family in a tiny one-up, one-down cottage. He eventually emigrated to America with part of his family to seek a better living and died in Pike County, Illinois in 1851 (Family Tree A).

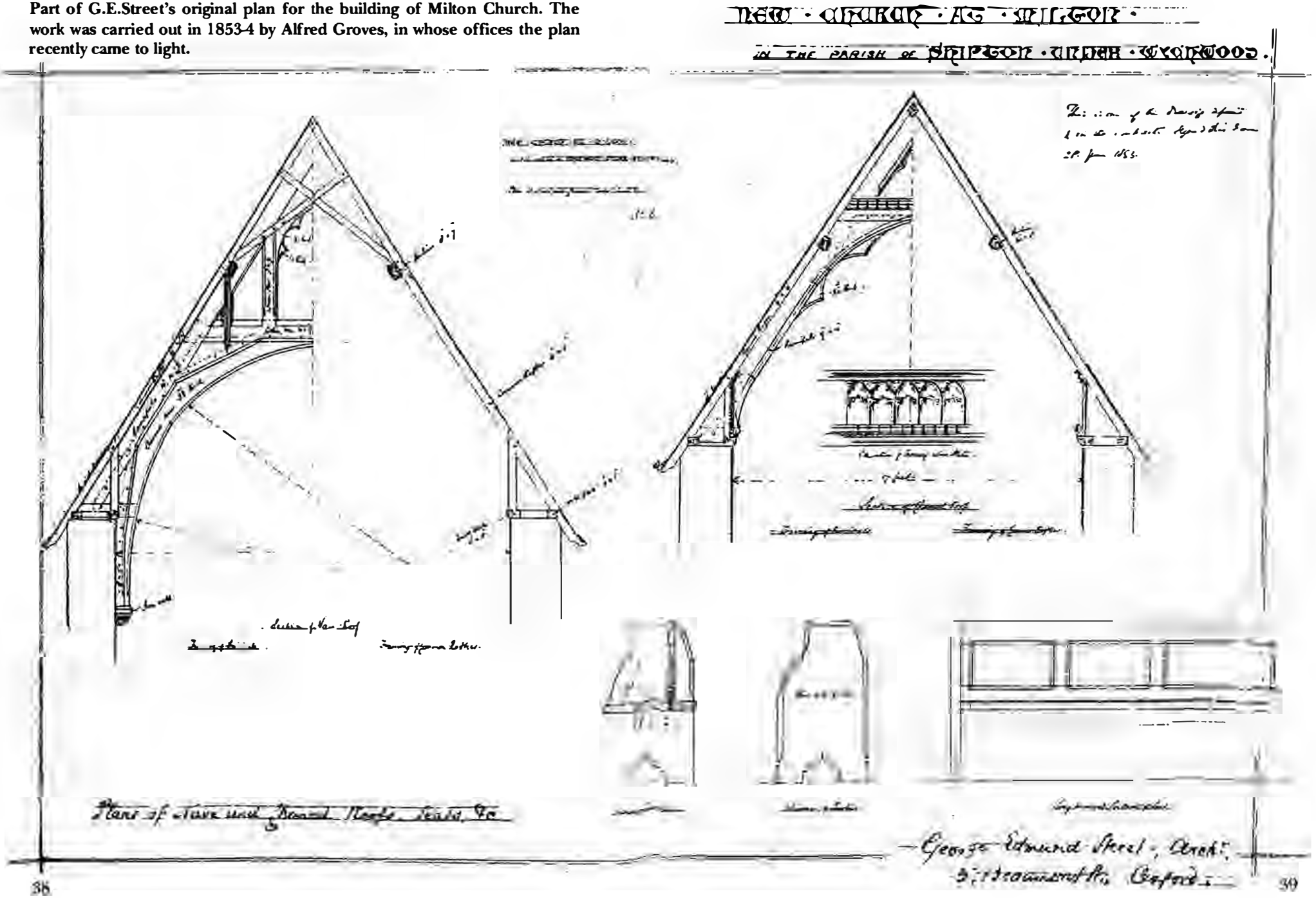
Alfred's family circumstances were very different (Family Tree D). Sarah Ann his eldest daughter married John Gomm, a farm bailiff from Shipton and lived the latter part of her life in Terrace House, Milton. Thomas Alfred, his eldest son attended a private school, Staple Hall Academy in Witney. He must have been a star pupil: I have his arithmetic book for 1867 when he was twelve. It reveals no alteration or crossing-out and he uses immaculate copperplate writing throughout. Thomas went on to work with his father and eventually became managing director of the family business. He enjoyed cricket at which he was a good bat and a useful medium-pace bowler who represented his county. He died a bachelor; his obituary states that he captained Milton Cricket Club for fifty-one years, surely a record by any standards.

After the death of Alfred's first wife, he married Mary Reynolds of Stow on the Wold (Family Tree E). Some of Mary's family moved to Upper Milton and eventually took over Spring Hill Farm, which the Reynolds family farms today. Alfred's eldest daughter by his second marriage, Elizabeth, has left us a diary of the years 1880-82. It paints a picture of a young lady who spent her early life at home doing good works e.g. she was a Sunday school teacher. In 1881 she married Edward Bolton, son of a well-known West Oxfordshire family, a JP and Methodist lay-preacher. They emigrated briefly to Australia but returned to farm in their native county. Alfred had nine more children by his second wife, five of whom married, and including two sons who remained in the family business. The report of his fifth daughter's wedding was given in *Wychwoods History* 7.[4]

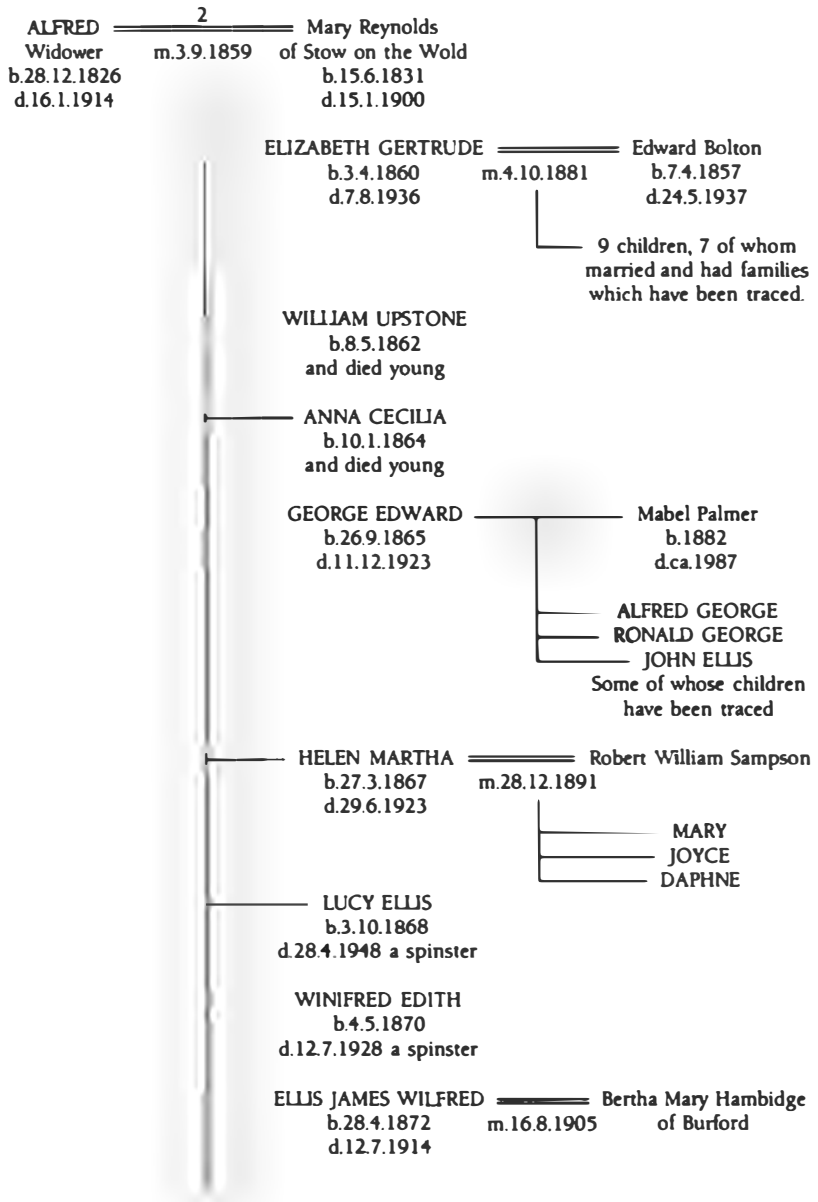
Alfred Groves (1826-1914) with his three children by his first wife Ann Shepard: Sarah Ann, Thomas Alfred and Mary. From an original Ambrotype photograph dated to 1856-7.



Part of G.E.Street's original plan for the building of Milton Church. The work was carried out in 1853-4 by Alfred Groves, in whose offices the plan recently came to light.



E. THE FAMILY OF ALFRED GROVES AND MARY REYNOLDS

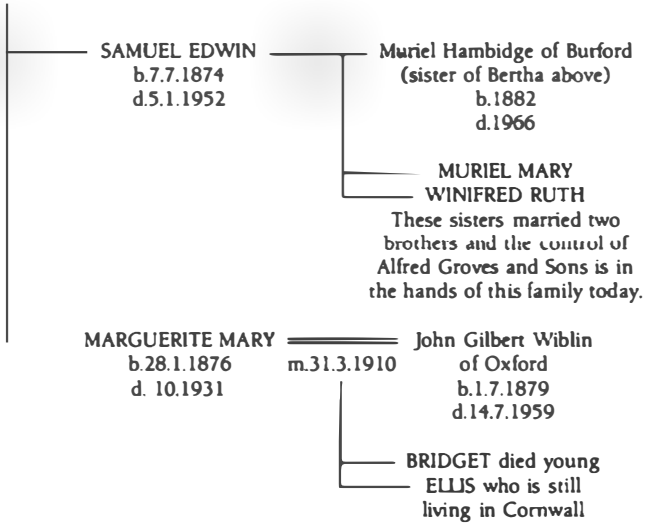


This then was a further period of expansion of the business. I have been able to examine the ledger kept by Alfred from the time he took over the business on his mother's death in 1870 until 1887, which again most fortunately survives. The first item of note is that labour charges had been increased to four shillings per day.

Work on local churches and chapels continued: Revd R.L.Baker of Ramsden paid £1 100 for a new house with an extra 6s 3d for a bedroom grate. In 1884 at Milton church the Revd Alfred Deacon paid £20 for a new reredos and the provision of some boys' seats and other work. In 1880 Groves were paid £2600 for taking down the old church at Heythrop. On Aug. 20 1885 J. orgrove spent the day pointing windows in Shipton church at a charge of 4s. In 1881 Revd J.H.Hodges paid £1145 2s 6d to restore Eastleach rectory; Lechlade church restoration cost £984 12s in 1882 while in the following year improvements were carried out at churches at Churchill, Compton Abdale and Shilton.

Much work was still being done for the Surveyor of Roads for in March 1882 there were orders for: repair to wall of Langley Bridge £23 14s 3d; Meadow Bridge at Lyneham £1 10s; bridge at Hawcutts Mill (Shipton Mill) £1 1s 7d; 35 loads stone to Frog Lane, Milton £3 6s (presumably for road repair).

E. THE FAMILY OF ALFRED GROVES AND MARY REYNOLDS (continued)





Mary Reynolds (1831-1900), second wife of Alfred Groves, who bore him ten children

Around 1880 Alfred's business was further extended by the leasing of Franklin's Leafield pottery. Ledger entries of Sept. 1880 record the sale of 1500 bricks to James Holloway at a cost of £2 5s; in Jan. 1881 Milton Allottments were charged £6 18s 1d for 5000 agricultural drainage pipes. A billhead dated 1908 advertises their manufacture of lime, bricks, tiles, draining pipes, glazed ware, seakale pots, flower pots, chimney pots, vases and other earthenware goods. The pottery works became uneconomical in the 1920s and the site was sold in 1921. The works were demolished in the 1930s.[5]

The ledger also records work at South Lawn, Swinbrook, Barrington Park and also Wilcote House where, in 1880, C.Sartoris Esq required Groves to build a coachman's lodge, a summer house and wall. He made Groves a gift of one elm tree for superintending the work in the house. There are also two entries for timber purchased by Alfred Groves. In July 1881 he received two oak trees together with the top wood and ten fir trees for which he paid Lady Churchill of Cornbury Park £16 17s 4d. In the same year Lord Churchill sold Alfred Groves 51 oak trees, and later a further 15, for which Alfred paid £855 6s. These are the only entries relating to timber in the ledger, which generally details work being done, rather than stock purchased. However it does give some indicaton of the stock that the timberyard could handle. There is also a record of Carter Radband being used to take a load of sand and gravel from the pits in the Sands to Churchill church, illustrating that these pits were still in use at this time.

I make no apology for quoting so many ledger entries, which only amount to less than 1% of the 10,000 or so that I have examined so far. I have only quoted items of local interest or work on the major houses and churches in the area, but the examples given emphasise very clearly the vast amount of building work undertaken by this family in the second half of the nineteenth century – a period which was probably near the peak of their operations.

In spite of this the Groves family maintained their interest in village affairs. In the 1850s Alfred's elder brothers Philip and Edwin had attended Vestry meetings, the forerunner of today's Parish Council, but in 1857 Alfred Groves took his seat and attended its meetings for the next thirty years. He continued to serve as a Brooking Warden until 1897, when he was 71 years old, but made a further appearance as a Warden in 1904.

In that year, at the age of 77, Alfred Groves formed the present-day business of Alfred Groves and Sons. He died just short of ten years later at the age of 87.

Some insight into the character of Alfred Groves is given by John Kibble of Charlbury.[6] Under the heading *A Wychwood Builder* he writes 'Milton owes much to the fact that the late Mr Alfred Groves conducted an extensive building business there, which is still continued by his sons at the village. He was a remarkable man. His knowledge of the art of building, coupled with gifts and qualities of a high order, a keen sense of humour and a great love for little children, made him quite a man above the average... his fine

The Elms, Milton under Wychwood, a farmhouse and also the site of Groves' masonry business





Thomas Alfred Groves (1854-1929) became managing director of Alfred Groves and Sons after his father Alfred's death

commanding presence and his tall white hat made him so conspicuous that once seen he was never forgotten.'

By the time of his death in 1914, Alfred's eldest son Thomas Alfred had taken over the management of the business, to be followed at his death in 1929 by his youngest and only surviving brother Samuel Edwin (Family Trees D and E). These were again prosperous years for the family. In 1914 Samuel founded the timber department. He had an expert knowledge of the timber business and Groves became the country's largest supplier of English timber to the trade. Unfortunately Dutch Elm disease was to decimate their main supply of English timber and this side of the business closed in 1983.

During the early decades of the present century Groves carried out many large contracts: Leafield Radio Station was built in 1919-20. Soon afterwards, Mr Anthony Gillson asked Groves to restore both the Manor and the whole village of Cornwell under the direction of the architect Clough Williams-Ellis of Portmeirion fame.

An article in *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder* for 1964[7] claims that at one time Alfred Groves and Sons employed 300 men, although by the time of publication the workforce was down to 130. The reason for this large

workforce was that it was the firm's policy to carry out all the work using their own staff, with nothing contracted out. They employed labourers, banker masons, masons and wallers, carpenters, joiners, slaters, plumbers, blacksmiths, iron-founders, painters, glaziers and a bell-hanger. It was also the firm's normal practice to employ succeeding generations of local families, so the old skills were handed on from father to son and even to grandsons. It is not surprising therefore that many of these men could claim long periods of employment with Groves. *The Carpenter and Builder* quoted the example of David Miles who, including his time as a Groves' pensioner, was on their books for 78 years. He was born in 1835 and died at the age of 91, having worked as a carter; in his early days he drove wagons carrying stone to Radcot Bridge for loading onto Thames barges. The longevity of service contrasts markedly with the rapid turnover of Thomas Groves' workforce noted in the last century.

Like their father, Thomas and Samuel Groves both played their part in parish affairs. Thomas took over from him as Brooking Warden in 1897 but handed the position over to his younger brother George three years later. However, Thomas continued his duties on the Parish Council until his death in 1929, when he was succeeded by his younger brother Samuel. Samuel was

Alfred Groves' workforce in the timberyard in the 1920s. T.A. Groves is on the left. Other members of the group include Don Miles, Harry Smith, Jack Baldwin, Roland Stroud and 'Ogger' Wilks.





Samuel Edwin Groves (1874-1952), youngest son of Alfred Groves. He became managing director of the business after his step-brother Thomas Alfred's death, and was the last of the family to fill that position.

chairman of the Parish Council at the end of World War Two when a Welcome Home committee was formed to greet the returning members of the forces. In 1945 the question of a village hall was raised under his chairmanship and in 1947 he gave the plot of land at Milton on which the present hall was built, an impossible task had it not been for his generosity.

Alfred Groves & Sons Ltd. today

After Samuel's death in 1952 there was no male member of the Groves family to take over the management of the bu iness. Ownership passed to Samuel's daughters, Muriel Parsons and Winifred Ruth Parsons (Family Tree D), while the day to day running was vested in a manager, W.W.Forsythe. He left shortly afterwards, to be followed by a succession of managers until in 1970 the present managing director Mr Roger Rawlins was appointed. Mr Rawlins had joined the business in 1954 as an articled pupil and studied at the School of Architecture and Building in Oxford. After gaining many building qualifications he became a director a year or so after taking over as manager.

During Mr Rawlins' association with Groves the firm has been called upon to carry out many prestigious projects including alterations and refurbishments to Gatcombe Park, Glos. for HRH The Princess Royal, and

to Nether Lypiatt Manor, Glos., for Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, and extensive works for the late Hon Michael Astor, The National Trust, Lady Robson, The Duchess of Devonshire, Alan Bond, Cartiers of London, Mr and Mrs Gummer, a member of the Kashoggi family and numerous others. Perhaps the most demanding of these projects was the restoration for Jesus College of nos. 26 and 27 Cornmarket, Oxford, formerly the premises of Zacharias & Co., gentlemen's outfitters. Together with the shop next door, this was all that remained of one of Oxford's finest medieval inns, dating from the fourteenth century. Alfred Groves had to take out the Victorian brickwork covering the old timbers which then had to be removed for treatment at Groves' works. The building had to be supported throughout to prevent collapse while the old timbers were replaced and some new timbering inserted. One of the craftsmen involved, Mr P.Simms made a valuable photographic record of the work in progress: the finished building reveals many historical and archaeological features.

Over these years the tradition of long service with the company has continued with such people as the late Geoffrey Rathbone who started with Samuel Groves as an office clerk, later to become company secretary and a director until his retirement. F.E.Bolter joined the firm in 1942 and successfully managed the English timber department until it closed in 1983. Ivor Jennings was the foreman/supervisor for much of the more prestigious work carried out between 1920 and the 1950s.

The company still employs stonemasons as they have throughout the

Nos. 26 and 27 Cornmarket, Oxford, formerly the premises of Zacharias & Co, gentlemen's tailors, and all that remained of a fourteenth-century inn. Seen here after restoration by Alfred Groves and Sons.



centuries, but in these years of recession the workforce is only a fraction of what it once was. The old, highly skilled trade of banker mason has almost ceased to exist here: the large quarry companies with their powered machinery can supply stone cut to requirements so that a true banker mason is only called in for very special work.

What the future holds for such a traditional business is very hard to foresee but I believe and sincerely hope that, after nearly four centuries, Groves will still be there to carry on an industry which has not only made Milton under Wychwood what it is, but has made an outstanding and unique contribution to the architectural heritage of the entire Cotswold region.

Acknowledgements

I would like to repeat the acknowledgements contained at the end of Part I of this Groves Family History. If I have omitted anyone from the list I do beg their pardon. So much has been contributed by so many it is difficult to remember all. Let us just say that over the past twelve years this has been truly a village contribution to our history.

References

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4 'One Hundred Years Ago', *Wychwoods History* 7 (1992), p. 44.
5 Nancy Stebbing, John Rhodes and Maureen Mellor, *Oxfordshire Potters*, Oxfordshire Museums Service Publication 13 (1980), p. 24.
6 John Kibble, *Historical and Other Notes on Wychwood Forest*, Charlbury (1928), p. 83.
7 John Slee, 'Over 300 years of building work', *The Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, (11 Sept. 1964), pp. 2998-3000.
I have also made extensive use of the following:-
Parish Registers – Oxfordshire Archives (OA), MS. DD. Par. Shipton under Wychwood.
Official Census Returns 1841, 1851, 1871, 1881.
Milton under Wychwood Enclosure Awards 1849.
Minutes of the Milton under Wychwood Vestry Meetings.
Minutes of the Milton under Wychwood Parish Council Meetings from 1894.
Minutes of the Brooking Wardens Meetings 1854-1913.
The diary of Elizabeth Groves 1879-1882.
Freda Derrick, *Cotswold Stone* (1948).
The old business records, books and other documents of Alfred Groves & Sons dating from the mid-nineteenth century.

An Anglo-Saxon Charter for Shipton?

In his article 'From my Bookshelf' in Wychwoods History *6, Frank Ware referred to a local mystery about whether there is an Anglo-Saxon Charter for Shipton. W.G.Hoskins referred to one in his important book* The Making of the English Landscape *(1955), and it was also shown on a map in* The Archaeology of the Oxford Region *(1986). The only apparent candidate was a Charter of 777 by King Offa of Mercia, giving land at 'Deilesford. Eunelade. Ceasteltone. Cornwelle. Saltford. Deorneford. Siptone.' to Evesham Abbey, quoted by Margaret Gelling in* Early Charters of the Thames Valley *at p. 125. There was a suggestion that this referred to Shipton on Cherwell, not Shipton under Wychwood.*

Dr Gelling writes:

'The only reason for preferring Shipton on Cherwell to Shipton under Wychwood seems to be that the sequence Cornwell-Salford-Dornford-Shipton suggests a movement away from the Evenlode towards the Cherwell. Nobody regards the charter as genuine, so it does not constitute an 8th-century record of either place. I don't know why either Shipton should have featured in an Evesham forgery.

'I am sure that someone who knew the history of Evesham Abbey would be able to work out the reason for the appearance of Shipton (whichever one) in the forged charter. This deserves further investigation.'

Quotes

'History is a myth which has been generally agreed.'

Voltaire

'History is bunk.'

Henry Ford

'People who have no sense of the past, no sense of proportion, no sense of what Mankind has accomplished already, are a danger to themselves and to others. They suffer from stunted vision, laboriously re-making old mistakes, reconquering continents already known and mapped.'

Enoch Powell