

WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Twelve, 1997

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Foreword

Journal Number Twelve is an experiment. After five editions under the skilful editorship of Margaret Ware, this is a team publication. Three WLHS members have produced a collection of articles which we hope will interest our readers. A fourth member, Sue Richards, has assembled and designed the finished product.

Three exceptional women with Wychwood connections are examined in this issue. The first is Salome Welayo, a native of Natal, who was educated in Shipton during the 1860s and 70s by her sponsor Catherine Barter of Sarsden. Jack Howard-Drake tells the unusual story of this young native girl and the equally interesting tale of the adventurous Barter family. The redoubtable Lady Harriet Reade of Shipton Court is recalled in print after much interest was exhibited in her story read at our members evening last March. Unfortunately the whereabouts of the Reynolds portrait of this eccentric eighteenth-century chatelaine still eludes us. Using oral history interviews Trudy Yates investigates the third in this female Wychwood triumverate – one Annie Longshaw of the Red Horse who died aged 99 in 1937 as the oldest licensee in England.

Speaking of oral history, Janet Wallace will soon be undertaking interviews with senior Milton residents after her retirement. In this issue she analyses the 1996 field walk. The sheepwash at Ascott is described by Dennis Minson, and four of our members, Joan Howard-Drake, Anthea Jones, Sue Jourdan and Tom McQuay, report on welfare in the Wychwoods. John Rawlins pays tribute to Bill Kimber; Wendy Pearse has collected material on Spring Hill Farm; and Margaret Ware has supplied the last instalment of Doris Warner's personal memories of Ascott.

Members are urged not to overlook the mini-articles dispersed throughout, one of which is a poetic retort by Wendy Pearse in which she cleverly redresses a slur on local gentility. Finally, Jack Howard-Drake's recently published fourth volume of Oxford Church Courts Depositions 1589–93 is reviewed.

The team is pleased with the depth and diversity of Volume Twelve and we hope every member of WLHS will find something of interest within these pages. In the expectation that some of you will be inspired to undertake research of your own or be willing to share information you already possess, we encourage you to contact one of us with your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you. Volume Thirteen looms large!

J.H.-D., S.J., T.Y.

Welfare in the Wychwoods

The Poor of Milton 1700-1834

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

Louisa Harris: *I am an orphan now. I am ten. I live in Ascott. They are taking me on a cart to Milton. I will have to work. My father once worked in Milton.* 27 September 1820

Joseph Willett: *I am 24. I was born and bred in Milton. I have a wife and baby to feed. I walk to Sarsden every day to work. If there is no work and I need parish help, the overseer says the money will have to come from Sarsden.* 27 January 1753

Sarah Carter: *My belly got big in September. We were at the harvest. They turned me out. I had to go to the parish. They carted me to Milton. I used to work there. The disgrace of it. Then they took me to the magistrate. I swore to tell the truth. John Ward of Chipping Norton did it. Then he left. Let him pay if they can find him. I was a maiden till I met him. I told them everything. The shame of it. Today I am taking her to Shipton to be christened Catherine. Poor bastard pauper babe you're all I've got.* 9 & 21 September 1776

Edward Hawks: *I always worked in a corn mill. I was hired by William Wells at Salford. Then by Peter White, another miller, then back to Salford. I always finished my hire and worked hard. I have been ill. The dust gets you. I lived in Milton and rented a mill in Shipton for £5 10s a year for two years. Times are bad. I can't keep working. Now there is a baby. Another mouth to feed. I went to the parish for help. They made me sign a paper with my mark. I had paid no taxes here except window tax and held no parish office. They couldn't help. I will have to go back to Salford.* 25 October 1742

Margaret Quarterman: *I am 30. I am in service in Milton. I was born and reared in Shipton. The overseer said that if I was sick or had no work my relief money would have to come from Shipton. An old shoemaker, two labourers and me – we have been sent to the magistrate.* 14 March 1766

Mary, widow of Thomas Townley: *God help me and my six fatherless children. All paupers now. I am 32 and we live in Milton. I was 19 when I wed Thomas in St Mary's church in Shipton. Now he lies in St Mary's churchyard these six months. Our eldest is 11 and the youngest a month when her father died. All baptised at St Mary's. I was born and bred in Milton. Thomas came from Shipton. So to Shipton we must go for poor relief or we will starve.* 19 October 1774

William Taylor: *I am a pauper. I have a wife and two children but no wages. We live in Milton parish and they will have to help or we will starve. No other parish will help. I was born in Southampton, East Woodhay or West Woodhay, I don't know, I didn't think it mattered till I needed the parish. When I was 20 I was hired at Hungerford fair. I was a carter with Abraham Taylor of East Garston. That was 1790-91. Good wages £7 a year all found. Then Mr Fulbrook of West Sefford, Berkshire, £8 a year. That was 1792-93. That was the richest I ever was. I was hired at Lamborne fair to serve my old master, Mr Taylor of East Garston. That was £7 a year again in 1793-94 and I got full wages although I married 6 weeks before the end of the service. In 1798 we went to Watchfield, Berkshire. Lived there 23 years. Rented land in various parishes in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire but paid no rates or taxes. In 1817 rented grass in Bampton and Weald from Joseph Carter for the manure from penning and folding the sheep. In 1818 agreed £18 but no rates or taxes but cut the thistles growing thereon. I rented grass in several parishes but never the whole year. Where do I belong!* 15 October 1823

We have put a few words into the mouths of these people, closely based on what is recorded of their lives in poor law documents and parish registers. These were typical stories of poor people, and the Justices of the Peace must often have seen despair in the faces of those brought before them to determine which parish should help them in their need.

The Old Poor Law

Long before old-age pensions and other forms of social security were introduced in the twentieth century, responsibility was placed on parishes for those who could not be supported by their own efforts, their resources or by their families. In the sixteenth century, parliament passed an act requiring parishes to choose overseers of the poor and authorised the raising of money by 'rates'. The relevant Elizabethan legislation was collected together into one codifying Act in 1601, which with modifications remained the basis of poor relief until 1834. From 1834 the

introduction of a 'New Poor Law' caused preceding practice to be described as the 'Old Poor Law', one aspect of which is the subject of this article. The detail of poor law administration in Shipton and Leafield between 1740 and 1762 was examined by Joan Howard-Drake in *Wychwoods History 5* (1989).

Parishes such as Shipton under Wychwood proved in practice to be too large for effective administration, and in 1662 an act of parliament recognised smaller areas or 'townships' as poor law authorities within such parishes. Milton, Langley, Lyneham, Leafield and Ramsden all had individual poor law administrations. Those townships, except Langley, also each elected a churchwarden and were separate for purposes of collecting tithes. Milton's overseers were clearly puzzled about a suitable description of their village – a payment to Warwick's overseers for their expenses in keeping the sick and infirm John Hale covered all possibilities, being sent by 'The Overseers of the Poor of the Parish, Hamlet, Township or Place of Milton in the County of Oxford'.

As each parish was responsible for its own poor, a question arose as to who 'belonged' in any particular parish. It would have been simple to say 'any one actually resident on the day help was needed' but parish officers were afraid this might mean a burden was imposed on rate payers while no economic advantage had been derived from the perhaps very temporary or recent residence of a poor person. Many soldiers wandering round the country after the Civil War period ended at the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660, increased the problem. 'Belonging', or 'settlement', was therefore defined by acts of parliament. The three basic criteria were completing a seven-year apprenticeship or working for a whole year as a hired servant in the parish; if these were not applicable then birth in a parish. Other criteria were less often relevant, like serving as a parish officer, paying rates and taxes, renting property of value of £10 a year or more, or owning property.

The Milton Collection of Documents

The collection of Poor Law documents for Milton contains many papers dated between 1702 and 1833, listed in the Appendix. The most important for our research were settlement certificates and removal orders, which are much the most common surviving records of the operation of the Old Poor Law, together with some sworn statements concerning settlement and an overseers' account book. Some of the documents are very fragile and torn. They have been studied by linking them with the registers for Shipton parish which recorded 'M' for Milton against relevant entries.

A settlement certificate was an acknowledgement by one parish that one or more persons in a family 'belonged' in the parish named on the certificate, and this document was kept by the overseers for future

reference. There are 35 settlement certificates referring to 31 men, three women and an infant, issued between 1701 and 1785, an average of one every two years. Only two of the certificates gave Milton as the place of settlement, and the other 33 were issued by other parishes to cover their parishioners resident in Milton. Two of those covered by a certificate were subsequently 'removed'.

Removal orders officially authorised parish officers to eject a person or family from their parish, and remove one or all to the parish of settlement. Because the six townships in Shipton were separate poor law authorities, people could be, and sometimes were, removed from Shipton to Milton and vice versa. Orders for the removal from Milton of 33 men were issued between 1706 and 1833. Six of these orders have the minimum information – the date and destination parish only. Single men were not identified in the way that single women were. On average, one removal order every two years has been preserved.

Sometimes, where settlement was uncertain the poor person concerned was 'examined' as to his or her life history, so that either a certificate or an order could be issued. There were 23 sworn statements concerning settlements, dated between 1701 and 1823, an average of one a year. Sixteen of these (70%) were made in the 25-year period between 1751 and 1775. There must have been an energetic overseer who preserved these documents. They often relate to men with a skill like a miller, cordwainer, carpenter, shoemaker and saddletree maker. Fewer examination documents survive in Milton's archives than settlement certificates or removal orders, but those few give unusually personal and detailed information about life. There was just one woman among the 23, seven could not be traced and little information could be found about two.

All documents were 'official', in the sense of being authenticated by the signatures of two justices of the peace at petty sessions. Milton's two overseers must have travelled to attend the justices of the peace at the nearest petty session, usually in Chipping Norton, when anyone in their township was concerned. In all three categories, there were probably more documents issued than now exist. On average, one document a year has survived. The Milton collection of documents mainly concerns those poor people actually living in Milton; certificates issued by Milton overseers acknowledging their responsibility towards those living elsewhere would have been kept by the overseers of those parishes. The overseers may have anticipated coming financial problems and, by obtaining sworn statements and settlement certificates, attempted to define the number of parishioners for whom they were responsible and budget accordingly. Another missing link in the story of Milton's poor was the occasional application by a poor person to the justices of the peace for larger sums by way of relief than the local overseers were willing to give.

An Act of Parliament in 1795 brought the system of settlement certificates to an end, and therefore also the preliminary procedure of an examination. It was forbidden to remove a person until actually chargeable. The overseers' practice of safe-guarding the parish by establishing a settlement before the person was actually chargeable for relief thus abruptly stopped.

Table 1: Comparison of the Number of Documents 1701-1850

YEAR	SWORN STATEMENTS	SETTLEMENT CERTIFICATES	REMOVAL ORDERS (TOTAL)
1701-25	3	9	8
1726-50	1	14	7
1751-75	16	9	9
1776-1800	2	4	12
1801-25	1	0	23
1826-50	0	0	9
TOTAL	23	36	68

Hamlet, Township or Place

Milton, still part of the old ecclesiastical parish of Shipton, was a large township of 2,130 acres, with scattered settlements at Upper Milton, the Green, Frog Lane and Milton Street. Some of these have since expanded to create the modern village. Quarrying was economically important and there was a small settlement at The Quar. There was no resident squire and the church and vicar, to whom tithes were due, were in Shipton. Quakers and other non-conformists built their own chapels.

The social and economic structure of Milton in the early eighteenth century can be examined from the vicar's tithe book (1727-34) to show how many poor people there were and how many better-off who could contribute towards their support. The book has been used for a comparison of Shipton and Ramsden in *Wychwoods History 11* (1996). When he came to Shipton, Revd Goodwin listed all the names of parishioners in Milton: 116 in 1727 and 120 in 1734. Milton then contained a smaller proportion of poor people than Shipton; between 35 and 46, or 40%, were not able to pay even a modest offering, as seen in Table 2. Only one member of the gentry was listed in Milton: Mrs Furley and later Mr Godfrey. Minerals were not titheable so the several members of the Groves family who were the quarrymen were not remarkable for paying significant amounts of tithe. Seventeen men (15%) paid more than 2s 6d: these were likely to be the farmers. Nearly all had animals listed, and the

numbers suggest they ranged from smallholders to larger farmers. These 15% were therefore likely to be the payers of the poor rates. By 1814 when a new vicar ordered a comprehensive survey of the parish tithes, the number of names recorded had dropped to 98, which is close to the census total of 105 houses in 1811. Seventeen had animals, the same number as in the early eighteenth century.

Table 2: Tithe Accounts for Milton 1727 and 1734

NAMES	1727			1734		
	PAID	NON-PAID	TOTAL	PAID	NON-PAID	TOTAL
Upper Milton	13	3	16	11	2	13
Milton Street	29	10	39	23	9	32
Milton Green	27	17	44	30	27	57
Frog Lane	7	1	8	6	2	8
Milton Heath	4	1	5	2	3	5
Milton Quar	3	1	4	1	3	4
The Dicks	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	83	33	116	74	46	120

Milton's parishioners were also less likely to move from the village than Shipton's. Between 1727 and 1734, 91 of the same names appear so that 25 (22%) had either died or moved. That change, on an annual basis, was 3.2%; in Shipton or Ramsden 6% of the householders changed annually. Some of Milton's inhabitants had lifetime ownership of cottages which enabled them to stay in the village. Jonathan Green, in his sworn statement to the Justices, told how he had worked at Overthorpe in Northamptonshire but had been living in Milton for the last three months 'in a house in Milton which is his property for his life and fell to him as heir at law upon his grandfather's death'. His settlement was judged to be in Milton because he owned property there.

Table 3: Milton Census Data 1801 to 1831

YEAR	POPULATION	FAMILIES	HOUSES	UNINHABITED OR BUILDING
1801	495	168	111	4
1811	522	112	105	1
1821	567	126	118	4
1831	568	132	126	9

The Stories behind the Official Documents

Links between the Poor Law papers and the parish registers enlarge our understanding of the way the old Poor Law operated and open many personal stories. These poor people are often the least recorded members of society, except in the instance when they became a liability to others.

Married men with families were most often the subject of Milton overseers' concern. There were fewer links with register entries for those who were removed than for the subjects of settlement certificates. Orders for the removal from Milton of 33 men, 23 of whom were married, were issued between 1706 and 1833. Fourteen women, some with children, were also ordered to be removed; eight could not be matched with any register entries. There were two deserted wives and three were single. In the same period, 12 men, 11 of whom were definitely married, were removed to Milton but only one appears in the registers, and six women were removed to Milton of whom one was a deserted wife, one was a widow and one was pregnant. Twenty-three of the removal orders to and from Milton included wives and a total of 63 children.

Seven of the 33 removed from Milton were resettled in nearby Shipton but some were taken much farther away. Fred Castle had to go to Fordingbridge in Hampshire in 1821. The youngest baby to be removed was the one month-old son of Edward and Judah Hawks who had to go to Salford, Oxon, in 1742. Much of Edward's sworn statement is indecipherable but he had worked at several mills in the area including six years at Salford and had rented a mill at £5 10s per annum at Shipton. He had held no parish office and although he continued two years as a miller he had not gained a legal settlement. He had paid window tax but the overseers had not collected parish taxes from him probably because taxpayers gained a settlement.

In 1782 Richard Prince and his wife were resettled at Barton on the Heath in Warwickshire one month after their baby died. Resettlement after a death in the house suggests that the breadwinner may also have been ill, could not work, and needed medical and financial help which had to be provided by the appropriate parish however far away. And what was wrong with Charles Mills who was transferred to Charlbury parish in 1823 but was returned to Milton for burial eight years later aged 26 years? We do not know who was ill, who was idle, who was sick or who was senile but all needed 'poor relief' from parish funds.

Of the 31 men named on the settlement certificates 29 were definitely married, 18 of them appearing in the marriage register while 11 were recorded on their certificates as married. There is no information about the other two. Ten were baptised at Shipton, but lived in Milton and six were eventually buried in the parish. There is information about the families of 23; there was an average of 1.5 children per family before the

certificate was issued and 2.6 children per family after. Excluding John Harris, who got a settlement certificate 56 years after his marriage, and Thomas Sessions 21 years after, the average interval between marriage and a settlement certificate was 1.4 years suggesting that the overseers needed to clarify their responsibilities for future parish relief before the family increased. The average age for those granted settlement certificates, again excluding Harris and Sessions, was 30 years.

Of the 23 sworn statements, further information was found concerning 13. Two were elderly and the remaining 11 were married men and, interestingly, no less than seven had pregnant wives. For instance, William Eden married Jane Cox in November 1763 when he was 32 years old and made his sworn statement asserting his right to live in Milton in September 1764 by which time his wife was five months pregnant with their first baby. Three years later Shipton township was forced to accept responsibility, and granted a settlement certificate 'for William Eden Jane his wife and John their son as inhabitants of Shipton' by which time Jane was eight months pregnant with her second child. William Eden was born in Milton, married from Milton, and his children were baptised as of Milton, yet he had to ask Shipton's overseers for relief because he had been hired for one year in 1765 by William Stonewood of Shipton and had served a year and three weeks. His one year's work determined his settlement, not where he lived.

In March 1766, four men made statements to Revd Edward Stone, JP in Chipping Norton. Thomas Townley was one of the four – aged 26 years with one baby and his wife was expecting another. He died eight years later leaving his widow with six children. He had been born in Shipton, married a Milton girl and presumably lived and worked in Milton as his sworn statement concerned his right to live there. His children were all baptised as belonging to Milton and his burial registration also bore an 'M' for Milton. He was buried on 13 March 1774 and his destitute wife and children may have existed on the charity of their neighbours until October when the Quarter Sessions records show that an order of removal of Mary widow of Thomas Townley and six children Ann (11), Mary (8), Jenny (6), Susan (3), John (2), Betty (infant) from Milton to Shipton. The family had probably been allowed to stay in Milton while not needing financial help. It is highly unlikely that this illiterate labourer, who signed his certificate with his mark in the presence of Revd Stone eight years before his death, had any understanding of the complexity of the legislation that was to remove his widow and children from their home and it is impossible not to feel sympathy with a mother and new-born baby forced to move her lodgings and find somewhere else to live.

Mary Townley features in the prologue on page 4. All relevant Townley baptisms, marriages and burials were faithfully recorded in the parish

registers providing an unusually complete account of the family. Several notable figures were concerned with this case. Revd Stone, who has an enduring place in medical history for publishing the definitive work on the refinement of aspirin from willow bark, signed the sworn statement, while William and John Lenthall, the Burford family whose name has a famous place in civil war history, signed the removal order of this luckless pauper family.

Single Mothers, Deserted Wives and Orphans

The case of the single mother attracted publicity at the time, and feelings of sympathy continue to be roused at the apparent harshness with which young pregnant women were treated. Milton overseers were anxious not to have to support a mother and her illegitimate child for years. Some aspects of their lives can be teased out, as the following examples show.

Mary Lawrence was a servant of John Gillett of Westcote in Gloucestershire but her bastard baby daughter was 'at nurse in Milton'. In case the child should become dependent on Milton, a settlement certificate was issued for the child as an inhabitant of Westcote. There is no trace of either mother or daughter in Shipton parish registers. Sarah Carter was a single woman removed from Chadlington to Milton in September 1776. The baptism register suggests that she was then seven months pregnant: 'Nov 18 Catherine Carter ye illegal d. of Sarah'. She also appears in the prologue on page 4. The removal order, a bastardy maintenance order and the baptism entry in the register, all in the autumn of 1776, are all the information that remains. These pauper women flitted like sparrows through our study.

Only one woman made a 'statement on the right to live at Milton'. The document recorded:

Margaret Quarterman of Milton spinster concerning her settlement taken before me one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this county this 14th day of March 1766. This examinant on her oath saith that she was born at Shipton under Wychwood in the said county as she hath heard and believes and that hath heard often by her friends and neighbours that her Father's and Mother's settlement was at Shipton aforesaid and that to the best of her knowledge she had gained no other settlement but what she derived from them.

According to the baptism register she had been baptised on 7 March 1737 so that she was 30 years of age when she made her statement. It is uncertain that she made her case for a right of settlement in Milton where she apparently lived.

Deserted wives were as unwelcome to the parish overseers as single mothers, because they would almost certainly become chargeable. A

removal order from Milton to Taynton in 1706 was obtained for 'Elizabeth wife of William Hollybush' who was 'great with child'. There is no other information, but there is a clarity about that biblical expression for the need for the urgent removal that is lacking in most removal orders. The fact that she was 'wife of William' suggests that she had been deserted. Had William died she would have been 'widow of'. The plight of poor Mary 'wife of William Davis' seems worse than that of any other deported family. She was removed to Downton, Wiltshire in 1765 from Milton with her children John (14), Richard (13), Benjamin (9), Thomas (8), Robert (5) and Mary (4). Another deserted wife was Elizabeth White whose husband was stated to have run away leaving her 'enseite (sic) and with child'. As it was considered likely that she would become chargeable to the parish of Milton, her father, Joseph Holloway, the miller at Upper Milton, was bound to indemnify the parish against all manner of costs, charges and expenses that she might incur.

Marriage meant that the husband was immediately responsible for his wife's welfare. Thomas Burson had been removed from Milton to Fulbrook in 1771. He married Mary Sylman of Milton at her parish church in October 1776 and she was removed to Fulbrook as his wife two months later, a week before Christmas.

The most censorious removal order concerns Jane Smith who was removed from Oxford gaol to Milton in 1792 having been:

apprehended in the University of Oxford as a rogue and vagabond wandering in the night time and having been punished by confinement the quarter sessions ordered to be passed to her legal place of settlement.

She was stated to have been born in Milton where her parents were parishioners, and she had gained no other legal settlement. There is no trace of her in the parish registers.

Sometimes the care of orphans was likewise shifted from one parish to another. In 1717 Elizabeth and Joanne, orphan daughters of Thomas Smith, were removed to Bledington and Louisa Harris, the ten year-old orphan in the prologue was removed from Ascott to Milton in 1820. In 1831 she married a Milton man and had three children.

Settlement by Service

Settlement was usually determined by where a man had worked for a full year, and failing that by where he was born. It was common for a man to work for a different master each year – the hiring fairs were held to allow this annual reallocation of young unmarried labourers to employers. When a man married, his annual service came to an end and he often became a casual labourer. The last place of service for a full year determined which parish should provide relief in case of need, regardless

of where the family were living. For example, Christopher Kilby of Milton married Frances Dixon also of Milton in June 1726 and in November 1726 there was a settlement certificate for the couple 'as inhabitants of Clanfield'. They went on to have 14 children, six of whom died in infancy. Six children were born after the oldest would probably have started to work. Christopher was a labourer and that settlement certificate early in his married life was seen as a useful insurance by poor law overseers. A labourer might well have had difficulty feeding all those children, no matter how good a worker he was, without at least occasional help from the parish. In practice the settlement certificate may never have been called into use as the register recorded the burial of Christopher Kilby of Milton in 1776, aged about 70 years.

On the other hand John Laurence was born in Milton, married a Milton girl in 1709 and three months later had 'a settlement certificate of Sibford Ferris'. After his marriage there were no further entries in the parish registers, suggesting that he went to live in Sibford Ferris. Two men from Milton, William Morton and Joseph Willet, worked in Sarsden a few miles away. Consequently their Poor Law settlement was deemed to be at Sarsden where they worked rather than at Milton where they lived. Milton was a large and populous village compared with Sarsden where there was a manor house, farms and few houses for workers and the two men probably walked there each day. Charles Parratt, Mary his wife and their two children were removed to Milton from St James, Westminster on 26 November 1709 because eight years previously he had worked as a hired servant for a whole year in Milton. The difficulty of deciding the place of settlement was shown by the case of William Taylor in the prologue. He had worked in at least eight parishes in three counties over more than 20 years and ended up destitute in Milton.

Only four of the Poor Law documents relate to men who had been apprenticed. In 1757 Milton went to the expense of asking for a legal opinion costing 4 shillings about the validity of thirty year-old Francis Coombs' settlement in Milton. His apprenticeship at Kingham should have given him settlement there but the indentures were declared void, presumably because he had not fulfilled the terms, and the opinion was that he should be settled at Milton where he had been born.

The Overseers' Account Book 1824-27

In the years 1824-27 a very neatly written account book provides abundant and fascinating information about nineteenth-century poverty in Milton. Some of Milton's rate and other account books have also been preserved. Rates were assessments of the value of inhabitants' lands and other regular sources of income, and were agreed by the churchwardens, the overseers of the poor and other ratepayers of Milton meeting in the



The Quart Pot, seen above in the 1930s, and the Butchers Arms were the two public houses in Milton in which village meetings took place.

Quart Pot or the Butchers Arms. The overseers, chosen annually from the rate-payers and usually the more prominent men of the community, might need a rate collected several times a year, at so many pence or shillings for each pound of rateable value. In Shipton, the customary land holdings known as yardlands were the basis of assessments in 1746, and the same was probably the case in Milton. More flexible money values had been adopted by the end of the century. The rating lists demonstrate the importance of settlement certificates to Milton's overseers by careful annotations; eight out of 60 ratepayers were noted as having certificates in 1830. To collect rates from potentially poor people would give them a settlement, and unless a certificate had first been obtained, Milton would have to grant them relief if needed. At this time the ten major contributors to poor relief funds were all farmers, who contributed £101 (90%) out of £116 raised in March 1830, the first list to state valuations. Another 50 contributed the remaining £15. In a rural township the burden of the poor fell without doubt on a few well-to-do farmers, whose complaints helped to promote the thinking of the much harsher new Poor Law.

Table 4: Money raised by Poor Law Assessment Rates 1824-27

YEAR	AMOUNT
1824-5	£569
1825-6	£625
1826-7	£1220

The accounts cover difficult years of unemployment following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when the population was growing rapidly. As can be seen in Table 4, the money raised by rates in Milton soared in 1826-27. Not surprisingly, at the same time the overseers were busy obtaining removal orders. The account book showed that in a typical week 65 people received money from the overseers whereas in a study in two adjacent and comparable village 70 years earlier 'those receiving weekly benefits averaged about 9 in each township'. This is more than a seven-fold increase in the number of claimants in 70 years. The amount paid to each poor person ranged from 1s to 10s 10d per week.

More than half of the recipients of relief were men. Many of the surnames in this account book also appear in Poor Law documents more than a century earlier suggesting a cycle of dependency, a claimant culture that followed the generations. For example, a settlement certificate for Charles Burson as a resident of Milton was issued in 1703. There were removal orders for Ann, John, Mary and Thomas Burson between 1771 and 1824, while Joseph and Mary Burson were in receipt of benefit between 1824 and 1827. Members of the Green and Harris families also received help from the overseers of the poor for over a hundred years. When John Harris and Rebecca Green married on 20 October 1729 the register shows that John, 'a labourer of Milton', had been baptised as of Shipton while 22 year-old Rebecca was from Milton. There was an unusual arrangement for the payment of a pension to this couple in their declining years. In 1785 the two townships made 'an agreement as to the settlement of John and Rebecca Harris whereby the overseers of Milton and Shipton agree each to pay one half of their poor relief'. John was buried three years after this arrangement and Rebecca six years later aged 82.

Illegitimacy as well as poverty compounded the problems of the overseers. At least ten (15%) of the 65 paupers were themselves bastards and some bastard prone families can be identified. In the Hale family, Soloman, when an old man, received parish relief for the years 1824, 1825 and 1826 and may have continued to do so until he died in 1830. His son John was described in the registers as 'farmer of Milton' when his three illegitimate children were baptised. He was ordered to be removed from St Mary, Warwick to Milton on 22 July 1825. Aged 46 years he was too

sick and infirm to travel and died in Warwick three weeks later. A bill for £2 16s was then sent to Milton to pay his expenses. John Hale had two partners described as labouring women. Rachel Selman bore two children and both she and her daughter 'Rachel Selman bastard' were a charge to the parish in 1824. Her sister, another labourer, was a bastard bearer. Mary Stringer registered her baby 'Hannah illegitimate daughter of John Hale, Farmer' in September 1817.

There were further ramifications of the pauper family of Stringer. William Stringer, labourer, married Ann Wheeler in 1786 and the first of their eight children was baptised exactly nine months later. He brought his 11 year-old daughter Ann to be baptised in 1794. Was this so she would gain settlement before she went to work at 12? She must have been born before he was married and she in turn had an illegitimate daughter when she was 20. One son, another William, married Ann Pill, pauper, whose sister Sarah was also on parish relief; there was also a settlement certificate for Robert Pill in 1772 and a removal order for William Pill in 1833. Another son of William and Ann Stringer, Samuel, had an illegitimate child with Charlotte Castle in 1822, who may have been related to Mary Castle who had an 'illegal' baby in 1806 and Sarah Castle,

The Butchers Arms

Table 5: The number of removal orders by five years from 1791 to 1835

DATE	FROM MILTON	TO MILTON
1791-95	0	2
1796-1800	1	0
1801-05	0	2
1806-10	1	1
1811-15	2	0
1816-20	2	1
1821-25	10	4
1826-30	3	1
1831-35	2	0

'bastard' on relief in 1822. Seven illegitimate Stringer babies were baptised between 1790 and 1822 and eight members of the Stringer family were in receipt of parish funds in 1825. Poverty and fecklessness went hand in hand. The road to 1834 and the drastic attempt to end the 'Poor Law culture' was clear.

The 65 people on parish relief in 1824 were all of the labouring class, as indicated in the parish registers. By 1824 the overseers must have been totally preoccupied with balancing the books. The finite resources of the ratepayers had to be weighed against the claims of the paupers for enough money to keep them from starving. Table 5 shows that the numbers of removal orders increased at the beginning of the nineteenth century and peaked between 1821 and 1825. Any removal of a pauper with a settlement to Milton must have been a constant worry to the overseers but only two of those receiving relief in 1825 had been removed to Milton from elsewhere.

Most removal orders were undisputed, but the enormous legal costs when it was decided to challenge an order are well-illustrated by a solicitor's bill for £53 2s 1d submitted to 'the churchwardens and overseers of the hamlet of Milton' on 2 December 1825. It does not appear in the year's accounts, but would have been equal to 9% of the annual expenditure on the poor that year. The solicitor's charges start on 23 May 1825 when Richard Brooks, attorney, of Stow hired a horse for 3 shillings to:

attend a meeting of the vestry at the Quart Pot to examine the pauper Mary Boffin and her four children having been removed from the parish of Saint Mary Redcliffe in the City of Bristol to Milton.

But the pauper was 'from home' and Brooks had to go to the Butchers Arms the following day, then to Great Rissington and to Ascott under

6 th Journey to Milton by appointment and attending meetings to examine more witnesses & when it was determined upon (to save expenses) that Mr J. Bagnall and Mr Houghton should go to Ascott and from there to Toston to examine Mr Harris & -----	1	1
Horschire & -----	3	
Mr Harris heard from Mr Bagnall journey to Milton and from there to Ascott to search the Register to ascertain if the pauper's husband was born there when I discovered that she he was christened in the name of Bolechin, and afterwards upon late pauper's mother to correct the apparent discrepancy -----	1	1
Horschire -----	3	
Said search -----	1	
Expenses at the Churchill Arms -----	3	

Overseer's accounts: 6 July 1825

Wychwood to examine witnesses and search the parish registers. At Ascott he wined and dined at the Churchill Arms at a cost of 3s chargeable to Milton ratepayers. He then wrote to the Bristol Corporation solicitor 'when they at last determined to support the order' against Milton's appeal at Quarter Sessions. His clerk:

journeyed to Cirencester with pauper to take the coach to Bristol including Chairhire, Turnpikes and expenses on the Road going and returning from the sessions being from home four days.

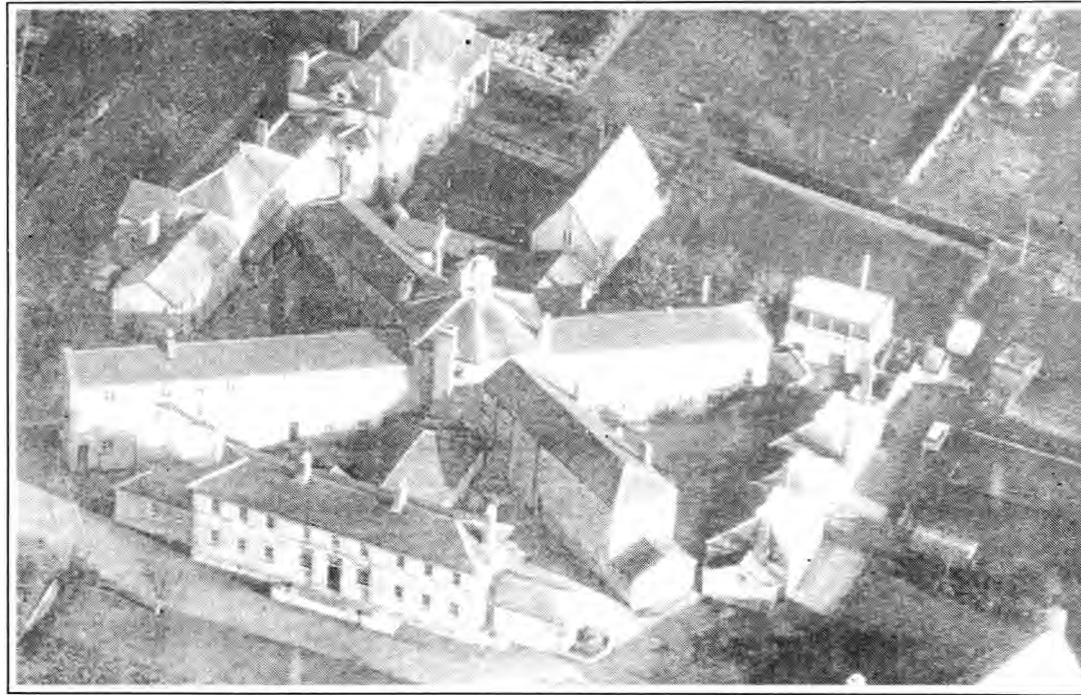
This cost £11 1s 6d. A subsequent item on the bill is for £8 8s:

Journey myself to Bristol to attend this appeal being from home four days.

His expenses at Bristol were £8 12s as well as £5 3d 6d for horse and gig hire, turnpikes and expenses on the road. Another item probably concluded the affair:

Drawing and fair copying motion paper by way of Brief to counsel to move to withdraw the appeal 6s 8d.

This apparently unsuccessful but extremely expensive litigation shows the concern of the overseers at the prospect of providing relief to a woman and her four children. Although the extant overseers' account



Chipping Norton Poor Law Union workhouse, 1972 (Aerofilms of Borehamwood ref A247825)

book coincides with this litigation, there were only two references to the Boffin family. 'July 29 1825: Paid Widow Boffin 4 wicks money. 10s' and at the end of September 'Paid for taking Boffin family to Bristol. £1 10s'. There was no entry for a large legal bill and no further entries over the next two years so it can be presumed that the Boffins did not become chargeable to the Milton ratepayers. The fact that the clerk examined the Ascott parish registers demonstrates how important it was for parents to have their children baptised and thereby register their place of birth.

The Workhouse and The Medical Officer

There was an item in the account book for 'annual rent of the workhouse £19 10s'. There is no other information such as a workhouse master's salary although the overseers paid 6s land tax in 1785 for a property. There is no folk memory of its site and the overseers may well have rented a cottage for the sick, helpless or completely dependent paupers in one of the alleyways off the present High Street. The poor law medical officer for Milton was Dr Thomas Cheatele of Burford who was paid 8 guineas in 1824 rising to 10 guineas in 1827 with extra for medicines. For this payment he

was expected to provide free care for sick paupers. At the time he held a similar appointment in Shipton and, as the Burford practice served villages such as Filkins, Sherborne and the Barringtons, he may have held Poor Law appointments there too.

Conclusion

When we started to write this paper our sympathies were with the hapless paupers, the victims of a harsh and at times punitive welfare system, but increasingly we found ourselves identifying with the handful of ratepayers whose burden more than doubled in the 1820s. Moreover it is understandable that the overseers, who had to collect the rates and make the system work, came to view some and perhaps a majority of parish paupers as a dissolute, dependant, disreputable and potentially rebellious underclass.

For all that, there was no wholesale removal of paupers at any period, and on average the two removed from Milton annually balanced the two removed to Milton. The burial registers show that five of the 48 paupers removed from Milton were eventually buried in the parish, suggesting that a small number drifted back. Similarly, 12 out of the 17 removed to Milton apparently left the parish before their death. The number of settlement certificates do not suggest that this documentation applied to all potential applicants for poor relief in the parish. The overseers knew who were local and accepted their responsibilities. One inescapable conclusion is that women suffered more than men under the old Poor Law. The deserted wives, the widows and above all the unmarried mothers had to suffer on their own, a hapless underclass with no male equivalent. Moreover the wives of the men named in the removal orders had to bear much of the shame and stigma of being summarily sent to another parish.

All administration of the old Poor Law was parochial and the substantially increasing demands on the few farmers who were the rate-payers of Milton must have caused comment and perhaps noisy vestry meetings when the overseers asked for further funds. This local concern was reflected nationally when the costs of relief were added together by Parliamentary enquiries in the early nineteenth century, demonstrating an alarming rise throughout the country. This led to a Royal Commission which presented a famous report in 1834. The new Poor Law passed responsibility for the poor from the parish to larger unions which were combinations of a dozen or more parishes. Milton was in the Chipping Norton union where a grand new workhouse was built.

Inflation, recession, unemployment, and consequently ever increasing demand for help and services are as relevant today as they were in our Oxfordshire township before 1834. This paper shows that the problems that bedevilled the administration of parish welfare more than 200 years ago are the same as the problems of state welfare late in the twentieth century.

Appendix

Oxfordshire Archives Shipton under Wychwood Parish Records
Par236/1 Shipton under Wychwood Parish Registers

List of Poor Law Documents for Milton under Wychwood Par 236/5

A2/1-19	Sworn statement re settlement	1720-1823	19
A3/1-36	Settlement certificates	1702-1785	36
A6/1-53	Removal orders from Milton	1706-1833	53
A7/1-16	Removal orders to Milton	1709-1829	16
A8/1-3	Appeals against removal orders	1720,'30 & '53	3
A10/1-12	Orders for maintenance of bastard children	1785-1833	12
A11/1-3	Indemnities against maintenance of children	1720-66	3
A12/1-2	Examination of parentage of children	1747 & 1776	2
A14/1-8	Maintenance orders	1709-1781	8
A16/1-5	Miscellaneous Poor Law papers	1766-1804	5
C2/1	Correspondence	c1819	
F2/1-3	Overseers account book	1824-34	
F3/1-16	Assessment for poor rate	1796-c1840	
A5/1-12	Removal orders from Shipton includes 2 to Milton	1818-1861	2

The Fieldwalk in Bradley's Field, Shipton under Wychwood

JANET WALLACE

Fieldwalking is the visual surveying for, and collection of, artefacts from the soil surface, which can give an indication of previous usage or occupation of a selected site. The chosen field for this particular exercise on 27 and 28 September 1996 is the property of Mr John Hartley and measures 13.9 hectares. It lies to the south of Upper End and Fiddlers Hill and east of the A361 Shipton-Burford road (SP278/168). It had been ploughed, harrowed and recently planted at the end of a very dry summer.

The historical features of the field are that it is known to have been under ridge and furrow as part of the open field system of the township until approximately 1850. Also that an ancient trackway crosses from the bottom NW corner up the hill slope across the field towards the SE in the direction of Swinbrook.

It was decided to walk along lines 10 metres apart moving from west to east and returning along the same line. The previous afternoon marker poles were placed at one end (west) with the intention of walking towards a fixed siting at the further end of the row (east). This saved much work compared with 'stringing' the lines.

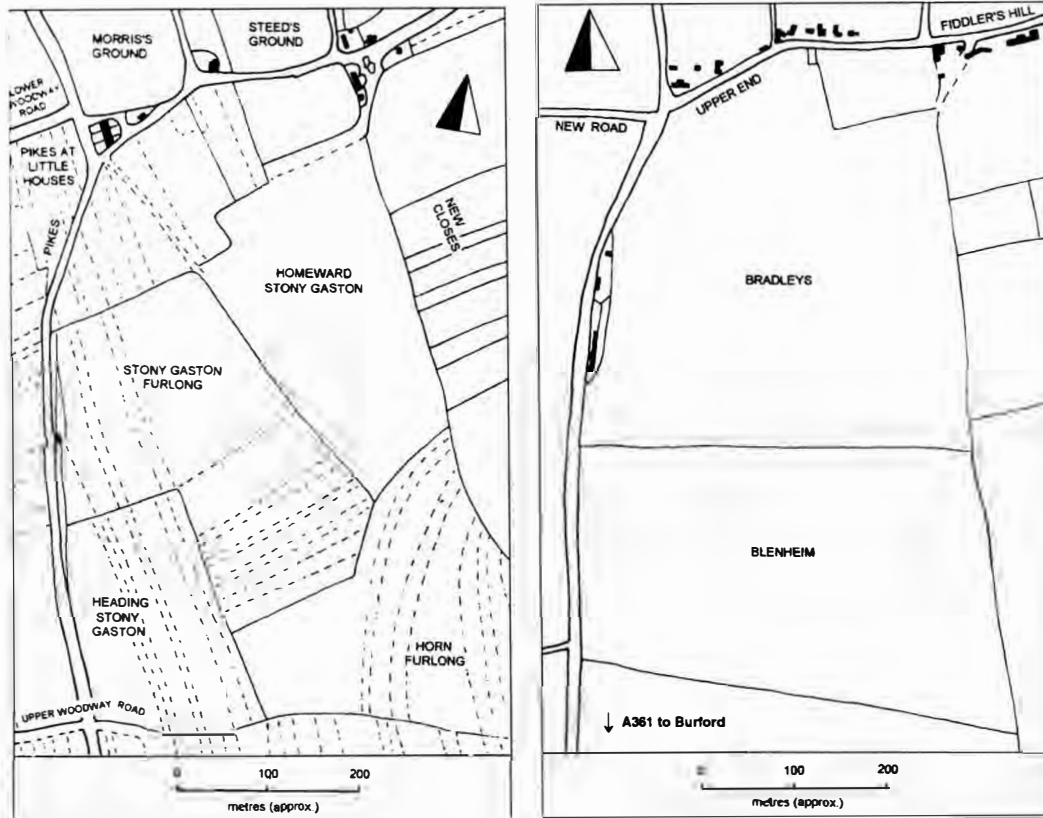
On Saturday morning at 10am a group of volunteers assembled and, after briefing with reference to artefacts and their collection, and the importance of keeping a straight line and no 'digging', the walk commenced. The weather was dry and windy with sun and cloud, and the soil conditions were dry loam with much stone. The rows took one and a half hours to cover, out and back, and all artefacts, which had been collected in numbered plastic bags, were assembled. The shorter rows at the bottom (north) of the field were walked before the lunch break. During the afternoon another group of volunteers continued as before and walking finished at approximately 4.45pm by which time the light was fading. On Sunday four stalwarts turned out in very wet and windy weather and walked the remaining four very muddy, cold rows. The technique of walking in parallel lines without guidance strings on the whole worked well, but the walking back was more difficult and unnecessary.

It is estimated that very approximately 50 kilos of artefacts were collected from the 45 rows. The contents of each bag of artefacts were

Extract from *Historical and Other Notes on Wychwood Forest and many of its Border Places* (p82) by John Kibble., Oxford Chronicle Co. Ltd., 1928.

QUAKERS AND BAPTISTS AT MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD

It appears that in the 19th century sin and ignorance prevailed pretty largely in Milton. God's day was profaned and given over to prize-fighting, bull baiting, and all ungodliness. Two good women, Mrs Green and Miss Upstone, were led to confer with a Mr Pool, of Ascott, and John Turner of Pudlicote, and at Mr Pill's house at Upper Milton a religious service was started, being held at 8 o'clock on Sunday mornings. A Baptist minister from Burford, the Reverend J. Smith, conducted it. The rough element did all they could to oppose it. Stones were thrown at the door, and more than once a stream was diverted to run into the house, 'to give the dippers plenty of water' it was said. However, the work continued, and in 1808 a Mr Goffe, of Hook Norton, built a chapel. Two years later a division took place. But again the cause rallied, under the ministry of the Reverend John Hirons, assisted by the Reverend T. Edens. Other men have carried on, and amongst them the Reverend G.W. Davidson, of fragrant memory, must have mention.



The fieldwalking site in 1839 (left) and now (right). The layout of the present day fields and roads correspond closely with the earlier map with the exception of the removal of the field road crossing Stony Gaston furlong and Lower Woodway Road at enclosure, and the making of a straightened new road, to be called Milton Elms Road.

washed and dried separately. They were examined and sorted with the valuable assistance of Charlie Chambers, a local archaeologist. The outcome of this exercise indicates that the field contained much local earthenware and pottery, especially Leaffield-type. There were quantities of modern glass and china, slate and brick. Occasional sherds of pre-medieval and medieval pottery were found, particularly a small but regular occurrence of Wychwood ware – OXCX. Small quantities of worked flint were found, especially from the top (south) of the field.

The explanation for the artefacts found was the clearance of muck heaps containing animal waste and rubbish from the farmyards in the village and their tipping and spreading on the fields. Small bits of coal and clinker could indicate evidence of steam-ploughing. To summarise: this

was a field which was used over many centuries for farming crops and contained no evidence of any settlement or building within it.

Thanks are due to John Hartley for allowing us access to his field and to Charlie Chambers for his assistance with artefact identification. Also to those who helped to prepare the field for walking and to the following for 'walking': Daphne and Duncan Waugh, Sue and Tom Jourdan, Frank Barea, Peggy and Jack Chapman, Mr Topham, Margaret and Christopher England, Barbara Wilson, Hamish Fenton, Anne Matthews, Joan Howard-Drake, Rachel Grant, Margaret and Frank Ware, Mary McNeill, Eva Moore, Wendy and Jim Pearce, John Rawlins and Gladys Avery and her daughter Elaine. Thanks also to Margaret Ware for drawing the maps accompanying this article.

Maps

From the Tithe Rent Award map for Shipton under Wychwood, 1839 OA, Par/236/15. Transcript held in WLHS archives.

❖ THE SOCIETY'S ARCHIVES ❖

Until recently the Society's archives have been held by Norman Frost but he has retired and they have now been again transferred to me. In our first journal in 1985 I reported on the archives which then could be kept in one boxfile. Over the years they have grown and now comprise five boxfiles of miscellaneous papers which join parish register and census transcripts, books and local history journals on the shelves.

The miscellaneous collection of papers includes house sale particulars, personal memoirs, maps and much else. We have transcripts of the parish registers for Shipton (the parish included the hamlets of Langley, Leafield, Lyneham, Milton and Ramsden until about 1850), Ascott, Leafield, Fifield and Idbury. The census returns for 1841, 51, 61, 71, 81, 91 covering Ascott, Bruern, Fifield, Idbury & Bould, Langley, Leafield, Lyneham, Milton, Ramsden and Shipton have been transcribed. All the transcripts have been made by members of the Society to whom we are very grateful.

There is also the excellent survey of the interior of St Mary's church, Shipton, its furnishings, fittings and memorials which was also done by a team of our members.

A comprehensive up-to-date list of all the archives is held by members of the committee and items may be borrowed by members of the Society.

JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE
January 1997

From My Bookshelf

TRUDY YATES

A Sprinkle of Nutmeg: Letters to Christopher Fry 1943-45 by Phyl Fry.
Enitharmon Press, London 1992

Lost, strayed or perhaps even stolen by mechanical means! Whoever or whatever we blame for our loss, it looks as if the art of letter-writing regretfully must be left behind us as we enter a new millennium. No more spidery love letters tied in blue ribbon to be carefully packed away in dusty trunks. It is too easy to pick up the telephone. No more hastily written requests for money or dramatic reports of exam results from our faraway children. There is the handy phonecard, E-Mail or the Fax.

And yet when one picks up *A Sprinkle of Nutmeg* by Phyl Fry, a slim volume of letters written to her husband, Christopher Fry, during 1943–45, it is delightful to return for a few moments to an era when we all thought about what we wanted to say and proceeded to say it – beautifully – on a piece of carefully chosen bond. Happily for us, Phyl Fry was living in our midst when she wrote these wonderful, brimming with life letters to a playwright husband who was separated from her by war duty. She had placed their five-year-old son Tam in Miss Thomson's school for under-eights in Fulbrook and, in order to be near him, she took employment there as domestic help. On days off she luxuriated at The Buildings, two stone cottages huddled face to face on the wide hill above Shipton, 'the front windows no further apart than would give bare room for a farm tractor to drive between them' explains Christopher Fry in the foreword.

In one cottage lived Mr and Mrs Stoter, whose married son Norris or Norrie, lived farther down the hill. Mr Stoter was a carter and the second cottage had once housed the shepherd. Lately, the farmer, Mr Holloway, had used it to store sacks of corn. Because the Frys were homeless since the sale of a cottage they had once rented in the village, Mr Holloway kindly gave the shepherd's cottage a lick of whitewash and let it to the Frys for three shillings a week.

Between The Buildings and Cotter's Bow in Fulbrook, her home during the week, Phyl happily bicycled. In the letter chosen to whet readers' appetite for more, this journey is described so beautifully that I am loath

to mention that the Shipton Court Wild Garden avenue is lined with lime trees not elms. What does it matter? And was communication through the post ever so charming?

OCTOBER 16, 1943

In this very hand that salutes you is a new fountain pen! Got simply for the asking in Shipton Post Office on this my Friday out. I asked Mrs. Wiggins if I could go down on her list when she had a fountain pen in her shop, and as casual as all get out she said she'd just got a large consignment in! Nothing like that has ever happened before to me and now I'm writing you a flowing letter from my bed with a warm hot water bottle on my stomach and Mary Charles has just brought up a handsome hot drink of Lime juice cordial for me. And the pen was only 4/3 all told. So with that and *Woman and Beauty* and 24 sheets of beautiful green wrapping paper for 1/- I rode back to the cottage through the sunset whose sun had come through the mist for the first time today. And the sun made a thick yellow light on the underside of everything so that looking down Shipton Court yellow elm avenue was like looking through a bright pot of Golden Shred marmalade, and all the horses' bellies were luminous.... Then with the last dying light I turned my kitchen out – all the cupboard contents were to be vice-versa except that the dark came and I couldn't see which I was turning out of one place and which I was putting in another. Then it was too dark to do anything except draw the curtains and light the lamp and candles and boil an egg with 2 bits of toast and three cups of coffee and read. I *did* read *Woman and Beauty* but I thought noble thoughts to make up for it while I was cycling home... I swam over the top of the hill like a fish through moonstone mist lit with a grey candle of moon – and this is my lovely, lovely bed.

(*A Sprinkle of Nutmeg* is available at £7.95, plus £1 postage and packing from Enitharmon Press, 36 St George's Avenue, London N7 1HD)

From Annie to Barbara

Five Generations of a Shipton Family

TRUDY YATES

When Barbara Pearce, née Smith, was born to Violet and Walter Smith on 7 September 1936, there was some urgency about mother and baby daughter returning to Shipton from Chipping Norton hospital and making a very important call. Little Barbara's 98-year old great-great-grandmother, Annie Longshaw, was waiting impatiently to cuddle the new arrival and to feel the very real pleasure of knowing that, for a brief period at least, five generations of her family were living in Shipton at the same time.

For the sake of the record, the Longshaws can be traced through the local census and St Mary's church records back to the mid-seventeenth century. This particular branch of the family-tree blossomed thus: Annie Deuster of Lyneham married Robert Longshaw in Shipton on 3 November 1857. They lived in the village where Robert was at first employed at Shipton gas works where he eventually became manager. From 1858 to 1868 Annie bore five daughters and one son. The girls, Naomi Jane, Marianne Sabina, Elizabeth Ellen, Clara Emily and Agnes, all grew to adulthood. The little boy, Frederick Herbert, died at the age of two months and was buried in Shipton churchyard on 9 August 1868².

Naomi Longshaw, the eldest daughter, grew up in Shipton and eventually married Alfred Miles, a carpenter. A perusal of the 1891 census uncovered some interesting information about this couple³. Since Miles is (and has been through the years) a common surname in Milton, one might suppose Naomi and Alfred met and married locally. However, the census tells us otherwise. The couple were aged 37 and 33 respectively when the census was taken and were living at Rose Cottage. Alfred's place of birth was given as Purbrook, Hampshire. Their three sons were also born elsewhere – eight year-old Alfred in Purbrook like his father; six year-old Harry and four year-old Robert in Portsmouth.

Was Alfred a journeyman carpenter from a Hampshire family related to the local Miles clan? Did he meet Naomi here when visiting relatives and did the two return to Hampshire and marry there? Certainly there is no entry for the marriage in the records of St Mary's, Shipton.

Or did Naomi take a teaching job in Purbrook and meet Alfred in Hampshire? Did they marry and later move to Portsmouth where Alfred



Annie Longshaw c.1890

found lucrative work in the shipyards?

Perhaps Naomi's growing family responsibilities turned her thoughts to home where a loving grandmother and four aunties eagerly awaited the three little boys. Did Annie Longshaw seek employment for Alfred at Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd where he eventually worked? We may never know how it all happened, although it is a beguiling enough mystery to warrant future detective work.

Whatever the circumstances of the Miles' return to Shipton, one can only imagine how fond Annie Longshaw was of her grandsons after the loss of her own baby son and the task of raising a bevy of five daughters.

Alfred and Naomi eventually lived at The School House in Church Street.

Young Alfred Miles grew up to marry Millicent Bartlett, daughter of William and Kate Bartlett of Gas Lane in Shipton. Regular church-goers today hurry past their tombstone every Sunday on the way into the church porch. Mr Bartlett was the signalman at Shipton railway station. There were nine children in the family – William, Anne, Ellen, Edith, Katie, Alice, George, Fred, and Millicent. The Miles also kept a home at 9 High Street that became a centre of village activity. Alfred was a skilled carpenter like his father and he took over the village undertaking duties as well, when Henry Coombes decided to relinquish them. He was also quick to assume the responsibilities of the telephone exchange from the post office in the late 1920s when the facilities there could not accommodate a larger system. It was one of the first exchanges in the country to be run from a private home. Vi Smith recalls a small manual exchange with batteries which had to be charged regularly and which took up most of Mr Miles' workshop. These family duties continued until after World War Two when the new exchange building was constructed next to the village shop. Young Vi Miles was an enthusiastic telephone operator until her marriage to Walt Smith in June 1932. She was also known to help her mother with the lending library which was housed in the front hallway at No. 9. There was never a dull moment at the Miles house!



*The Red Horse,
Shipton in 1906*



*Annie Longshaw
feeding the hens*

The line then from this bouncing, newborn baby girl to her very elderly great-great-grandmother is Barbara (Smith) Pearce, Violet (Miles) Smith, Alfred Miles, Naomi (Longshaw) Miles, Annie (Deuster) Longshaw.

Vi and Barbara visited Annie at The Red Horse. Here the indomitable old lady lived and worked as the publican following Robert's death in September 1900 at the age of 64. Robert had become the licensee in 1891. The *Oxford Times*⁴ described her as 'the oldest licensee in the district and probably in the country' when Annie was a mere 92. With the help of her youngest daughter, Aggie, Annie's tenure at the pub continued until her death in November 1937 aged 99.

Annie Longshaw was a well-loved village personality. Vi Smith remembers that she always made milk puddings for new mothers in the village and delivered them herself until the last few years of her life.

Blanche (May) White recalls being invited to take a glass of sherry with Annie each Christmas when May was delivering the papers and post. 'I never favoured sherry much as a drink' Miss Wright averred, 'but Annie Longshaw's was lovely!'

The *Oxford Times* article quoted Annie as saying she had only once made a trip in a motor car.

'We had to go to Chipping Norton on business and a man fetched us and brought us back. That's the only ride I ever had.'

The paper went on to say that although poor eyesight prevented her serving in the bar, Annie retained control of the business and personally carried out transactions with the brewers.

'Every morning she is up at seven o'clock and one of her first duties is to feed 80 to 100 poultry; this duty she carries out wet or fine.'

We are very fortunate to have a photograph of this early morning occupation. The article concludes with the story a proud family member told about Annie.

'When this relative called after ten o'clock one night last year (1929) Mrs Longshaw was rolling up her sleeves. 'Whatever are you going to do at this time of night, Granny?' she asked. 'I'm going to scrub this place out,' Granny replied. And she did.

Following Annie Longshaw's death, Aggie made her home at 6 Church Street where Gladys Avery now lives. Gladys recalls that her husband, Vic, who lived next door as a child, shared a birthday with Aggie. 'She always gave Vic some money on the day to mark the coincidence,' Gladys said.

Barbara (Smith) Pearce remembers being a bit intimidated by her great-aunt. 'Of course my grandparents lived right around the corner at 9 High Street,' Barbara said, 'so I used to do shopping and errands for Great-Aunt

Aggie every week. I remember she always wore black and kept cats. My friends and I could read all sorts of connotations into that!"

Aggie never married nor did Marianne Sabina (Polly). Clara married and had one daughter, Betty, who lived in Liskeard, Cornwall. Vi and Barbara visited her there once or twice before her death. Elizabeth Ellen (Bessie) also married and had one daughter, Dora, whose whereabouts remain unknown.

It was Naomi Jane (Longshaw) Miles and her son Alfred in particular, who produced the descendants of Annie and Robert Longshaw who still live locally. Naomi and Alfred's other two sons, Robert and Harry, had no children. Harry, who was headmaster of St Barnabas School in Oxford, did not marry and retired to Cornwall. Robert married and settled in Cheltenham.

Alfred and Millicent Miles had the two daughters referred to earlier –



Annie Longshaw (centre) with daughters Elizabeth (left) and Marianne (right) and Naomi and Agnes standing behind.

Sybil and Vi. Sybil married Eric Reavley of Burford and the couple had three children, Nigel, Cedric and Allison. Allison is deceased; Nigel is married with two step-children and lives in Burgess Hill near London where he is employed by Barclays Bank; and Cedric is the pharmacist in Burford carrying on his grandfather's business, married to Ruth and father of two young children, a boy and a girl.

Violet Miles married Walter Smith, son of George and Amy Smith and had one daughter, Barbara. Walter was employed at F.W.P. Matthews mill at Shipton starting as an office boy and progressing to secretary and eventually to manage the company.

Barbara Smith married Colin Pearce, son of Annie Martha and Edward Thomas Pearce on 19 July 1958. The elder Pearces were natives of Wales where Edward had been a miner. When they moved to Milton, Mrs Pearce became a teacher in the local school and, in time, the much-respected headmistress. Colin and Barbara have three children: Stuart, who is married with three sons and lives in Watford; Trudy, living in Kidlington with her husband and two children, a son and a daughter; and Karen who lives in Bolton by Boland in Lancashire.

Barbara Pearce and Vi Smith are village fixtures, active in the W.I. and the Bowls Club. They are friendly and outgoing, proud of their Shipton roots but warmly welcoming to the many 'outlanders' in their midst. Barbara is a popular caterer, producing dinner for eight or titbits for 80 at the drop of a spoon. Whether she shares her great-great-grandmother's affinity for milk puddings we do not know but Barbara's egg custard has kept at least one member of the WLHS in good enough nick to write this article. I think Annie Longshaw would approve.

Author's Note

The material for this article was collected during local oral history interviews. I wish to thank Vi Smith, Barbara Pearce, May White and Gladys Avery for their contributions and our archivist Joan Howard-Drake for her help in perusing the local records in her care. Special thanks to Vi and Barbara for their diligent search for photographs.

Footnotes

1. Shipton under Wychwood Parish Registers OA Par/236/01/R3/03.
2. Shipton under Wychwood Burial Registers OA Par/236/01/R5/1.
3. 1891 Shipton under Wychwood Census Piece Number RG 12/1178-24.
4. *Oxford Times* 15 August 1930.

More Personal Memories of Ascott under Wychwood

DORIS WARNER

Born Doris White in Ascott in 1904, Mrs Warner lived all her life in the village until she died in 1986. When she was twenty-one, she and her family took over the running of the Ascott post office next to their house in London Lane. The first part of her memoirs written in 1966 appeared in Wychwoods History Number 11.

For the large sum of £4 per month we were open from 9am to 7pm with no dinner-hour closing. The mail came at 6am; we were sorted and out on delivery at 7am. The letters went out by train at noon and another mail in by train too. The last collection was at 8pm and went out on the 8.30pm train, so it was a long day. It was some years before the mails all came by motor mailvans. My father had to deliver up to Kingstanding and High Lodge, then across to Fairspear and Langley and the radio station right out to the meteorological office. Sometimes he would come home with blood and matter coming through the lace holes of his boots from his bad foot, so eventually he had to give up the round and Jim Chandler our neighbour took it on. I delivered down to Ascott Mill every morning, and Mary Edginton delivered the village. When she finished after over forty years service, Nelly Trinder delivered the village mail.

I should think there is no place like a village post office for learning all about one's fellow creatures. Whether it was the state of their poor feet, their internal organs or their most secret love life, you had to stand and hear it all as there was no escape! I used to hear such tales from pensioners too, of the old days, especially from Jack Pratley, a retired shepherd, well over eighty. He could remember when the Forest was cut down, in the days when it grew nearly to the Charlbury Road [*in 1856-7*]. Tramps and wanderers had to work in the village sawpits belonging to the Cornbury estate before they could spend a night in the workhouse, which used to be in the houses between the church and the Green. He would say 'Ah my wench, I be the King of Ascott, and Her up at the Top thinks as Her's the Queen', 'Her' being Mrs Chaundy of Yew Tree Farm who was on most committees etc. He used to tell me about my grandmother Eleanor Honeybone, known as Lovely Eleanor, and my grandfather William Honeybone who, with George Beachamp, were the first men to drive a

threshing machine in this district. Then Mr Beachamp's smock got caught in the machinery and he was drawn into the engine and killed.

We had a lot of fun in those days. Our house seemed to be always full of people practising or rehearsing something for the church choir or the concert party or socials. My sister played the piano and church organ and sang alto, and Father had a good bass voice, so we always had plenty of music and singing. We worked hard and we played hard, especially at Christmas time. For ten days before Christmas the mails would arrive at 4am! It was a rush to be sorted and back from delivery by 9am, then on all day in the post office, then out carol singing with the choir for St Dunstan's till 10pm. We always had a big Christmas provision whist drive before Christmas. Boxing Day we would be busy making our fancy dresses and decorating the Tiddy Hall ready for the following night which was our big event – the Invitation Fancy Dress Dance. The hall would be crowded with friends from all the surrounding towns and villages; everyone looked forward to that night, we always had a good time. New Year's Eve would be the choir and ringers' party, then in January we went to Dr Croly's dance at Charlbury. We were all dancing mad at that time and went in for competitions and had good bands at the hall.

The boys had a very good baseball team. We often went out to matches at Chipping Norton, Banbury or Birmingham with them. I bought a racing bicycle, the first in the district, and we had some lovely rides for miles around. Going through the villages my friends would ride some distance behind me to hear the remarks people made. 'Our Side', as we called ourselves, was a lively little crowd and we had a lot of fun with dancing, cycling, motor bikes etc. On Saturday nights we could go to Oxford by train for 1/3d, now [1966] it costs 5/6d. So we often went to the theatre or cinemas, or to folkdance parties at the Town Hall, or sometimes a WEA social at Ruskin College or a WEA Summer School at Rhodes House. We also did quite a lot of boating on the river at Charlbury, at Oxford or at Radcot Bridge, until I fell out of a canoe at Stratford and wasn't so keen any more.

In 1929 my father died of cancer at the age of fifty-eight, a cruel death for such a kind man, and all the village mourned his loss. My sister had just gone to live at Kidlington, so my mother and I had a quiet life until she died in 1937. Then I lived alone for nine years. In 1937 I was the secretary for the Coronation Celebrations Fund. As my father had been secretary to the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 1897, and I was again secretary for the Coronation Celebrations in 1952, it is interesting to compare the accounts for the three events. Talk about the 'good old days', when the whole village could have a real feast for £28 – 253lb of meat for under £9! Apparently coronation mugs that cost about 6d each are now [1966] fetching up to 25s each in antique shops!

When war broke out we had an influx of evacuees, mostly from East Ham, about fifty schoolchildren besides mothers with babies and private evacuees. For days many of the children just sat on the grass bank outside the post office waiting for a letter from 'our Mam', but when they started school they soon got used to village life. The office was open Sundays and all times, there was so much to do – endless forms to be delivered and filled in, civil defence instructions, gas-mask instructions, ration books, clothing coupons, billeting orders etc. Ascott station was the centre for the unloading of bombs. They were stacked all along the roads, a pile every twelve yards. Between Charlbury and Burford, and Chipping Norton to Shipton they were great big ones, and smaller ones were piled along the roads into the village. It was creepy to walk along the lanes in the twilight between these tons of bombs and wonder where they were destined to drop and how many poor souls they would destroy. The Americans had an office in a hut at the top of the lane and their bomb lorries rumbled by day and night.

When there were War Weapons Weeks and Savings Weeks I went with Dr Scott to fetes in surrounding villages which had no savings bank facilities, and sold savings certificates, bonds and stamps. One special Savings Week we had had whist drives and I had attended several fetes for savings bank work, and finished up on the Saturday night with over £8,000 in the house. It shook me when I got up Sunday morning and found I'd forgotten to lock the doors when I went to bed.

Well, all the big events are in the history books, but it's the funny little personal episodes one remembers now. Like the stately lady evacuee who came in the office one day and asked for a £3 savings bank withdrawal. I gave her the withdrawal notice and asked her for her bank book. She said it was not convenient, so I said I couldn't give her the money unless I had made the withdrawal in her book. So much to my surprise she bent over, put her head on the counter and said 'Then will you kindly put your hand down my back and get my book out of the pocket in my corsets!' I practically undressed her before we could reach the book with her identity card etc. in her safe hiding place. I often wondered how she managed in a busy city office. One of my favourite recollections: we were coming up the road from the funeral of a neighbour, Mrs Trinder, and I was walking with another neighbour, dear old Miss Cox, when we heard a banging over the radio station. 'Coo, thunder' she said, and stuck her head under my coat, quite terrified. Then she peeped out and said 'Oh, it's only them Germans' and scrambled up the bank and cheered on our planes shooting at the German as they fought and brought his plane down. One day another German plane dropped a stick of bombs right across Ascott, but providentially, each bomb dropped just a yard or two short of a house so not much damage was done. One of the last bombs fell on the barn where my fiancé



Doris Warner née White (right) with one of Ascott's postladies, possibly Nellie Trinder's sister Lily, outside the post office in London Lane, Ascott, in about 1930.

[Ivor Warner] and the men had just stacked a load of corn: they had just gone back to the fields, but the corn and barn were burnt out.

One Christmas when things were getting very short, my friend Mrs Cox and I collected a lot of old toys, smartened them up and I sold them in the post office and made nearly £40 for the Red Cross. We joined the Civil Defence and learned first aid, and Ivor was a Home Guard. One night in the September when invasion was expected, it was nearly dark when several lorry loads of guardsmen (they were stationed at Bruern Abbey) drew up outside. They lined up, then sat down on the grass all around the house. I looked out and asked what was going on. The officer whispered 'All strategic points have to be guarded tonight'. I said that I'd never been called that before. He said 'Actually, it's the telephone and all lines of communication'. So when I went to bed I could see through each window

long legs stretched out and big boots sticking up. They went off at 3am and the invasion never happened. Then some 'Pioneer' troops were billeted in the Tiddy Hall: they unloaded coal lorries at Ascott station.

In March 1945 I retired from the post office after nineteen year's service, and on 29 September 1945 Ivor and I were married. The church was decorated for Harvest Festival so it was a real farmer's wedding. All the old choir members and ringers came, and we had a party in the Tiddy Hall afterwards, a really grand gathering of friends. In October, twelve months later, I was admitted to the Radcliffe hospital: I was 42 that month so was apparently considered a kind of freak to be having my first baby. Anyhow, we stuck it out the full time and my lovely boy was born on 22 November. We were home in time for Christmas. It was that terrible winter with deep snow – we were shut in and didn't get out with the pram until March when they cut a path out.

In 1952 I wrote a play telling the story of the Ascott Martyrs, the sixteen women of Ascott who were sent to prison in 1873 for their menfolk who had been sacked for joining the Agricultural Workers' Union. As far as possible all the actors were descended from or connected with the characters, and the scene was set in my grandmother's cottage in the Row. We had a lot of fun doing it, twice at Ascott and at Shipton and Churchill. Mr Baylis of Oxford who was a reader at the Bodleian Library kindly helped me by obtaining copies of the newspapers of the time, so I was able to get the details correct.

In 1962 it was the half-century celebrations of the Tiddy Hall. Those of us who still remembered Mr Tiddy with affection and gratitude for the difference he had made to our lives, had looked forward to having a real get-together with folk song and morris dancing as he would have liked it. But the hall secretary and committee would not have it. I thought it was an insult to his memory to have a bingo and twist sort of celebration.

There are so many things that Ascott had when I was a child and has now lost: the vicarage, with a resident vicar and family, the sexton, carpenter and undertaker, midwife, blacksmith, shoemaker, choir, ringers, sports teams, folk-dance club, WEA etc, and soon the railway too.

[Ascott station, built about 1855, was demolished in 1969 but the line is still open in 1997 and a few trains daily stop at Ascott.]

Sheepwashing and the Ascott Sheepwash

DENNIS MINSON

Until the middle of the 19th century sheep were usually washed to remove as much dirt and grease as possible from their fleece before shearing. The introduction of industrial methods of cleaning led to a gradual decline of washing on the farm until it had virtually disappeared from the UK by the middle of this century although still used in some parts of the Middle East.

The practice has a long history and is even mentioned in the Old Testament¹. Numerous old books about shepherds and their work say that sheep were washed before shearing but few describe the process or facilities used.

I first became interested in 1993 when shown the sheepwash at Ascott under Wychwood. This type of structure was new to me and so different from sheepdips made of concrete which are narrow and have no running water. A visit to the library at the Museum of Rural Life at Reading University revealed how little was known about this aspect of the wool industry. I then learnt that the Cotswold Voluntary Warden Service had renewed their interest in a sheepwash at Cutsdean in Gloucestershire and had embarked on a programme of restoring many local sheepwashes². The sheepwash at Ascott under Wychwood has now been included in this project.



Traditional sheepwashing

Sheep were traditionally washed in a river where the dirt was carried away by the flowing water. Washing was a hard unpleasant task with men standing up to their waists in cold water³. Some early photographs show washers standing in barrels to keep dry. During the actual washing the wool was rubbed to produce a mild soap from the natural grease which removed the dirt. The sheep were then made to swim upstream to be

rinsed before leaving the sheepwash. Shearing occurred about 10 days after washing when the fleece was dry and before the 'yoke' had started to rise in the wool.

The use of rivers for sheepwashing was rarely efficient or comfortable for the worker and led to the building of special facilities. These sheepwashes were usually privately owned and used by shepherds in the area. Where common land was involved the sheepwash was installed by the Board of Conservators².

Sheepwashes

Enclosure of the land was probably the main incentive to the building of sheepwashes throughout the British Isles in the late eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth century. They are to be found in all parts of the country with many examples in the Cotswolds. A recent search of the archives and Ordnance Survey large scale maps by Dr John Garrett showed evidence of at least 34 sheepwashes in the North Cotswolds³. Some of these are accessible from roads or footpaths but others are on private land.

There appears to be no fixed design, each wash being built to meet the special conditions of the site. It is these local features that make every sheepwash unique and so interesting. Three features are common to most sheepwashes:

1. Water supply. Many washes have been constructed on existing streams which may flow at a rate of only 10,000 litres/hr. On streams with a low flow rate, sufficient water is maintained by constructing a dam and outlet sluice above the wash. An excellent example can be seen on the road going north from Farmington. Other washes are supplied from ponds which are filled by diverting water from a river or stream. Water usually enters the wash at the top so it can cascade onto the sheep leaving the wash. The Milton sheepwash is a good example of a cascade⁴.

2. Shape of wash. All washes have a pool about 5ft deep with a strong stone edge from where the shepherd threw the sheep into the pool and with a long pole ensured they were thoroughly washed but not drowned. They are usually round, often in the shape of a nine with the leg of the nine the exit ramp. The water level in the wash is controlled by a sluice fitted with adjustable boards sliding in groove stones.

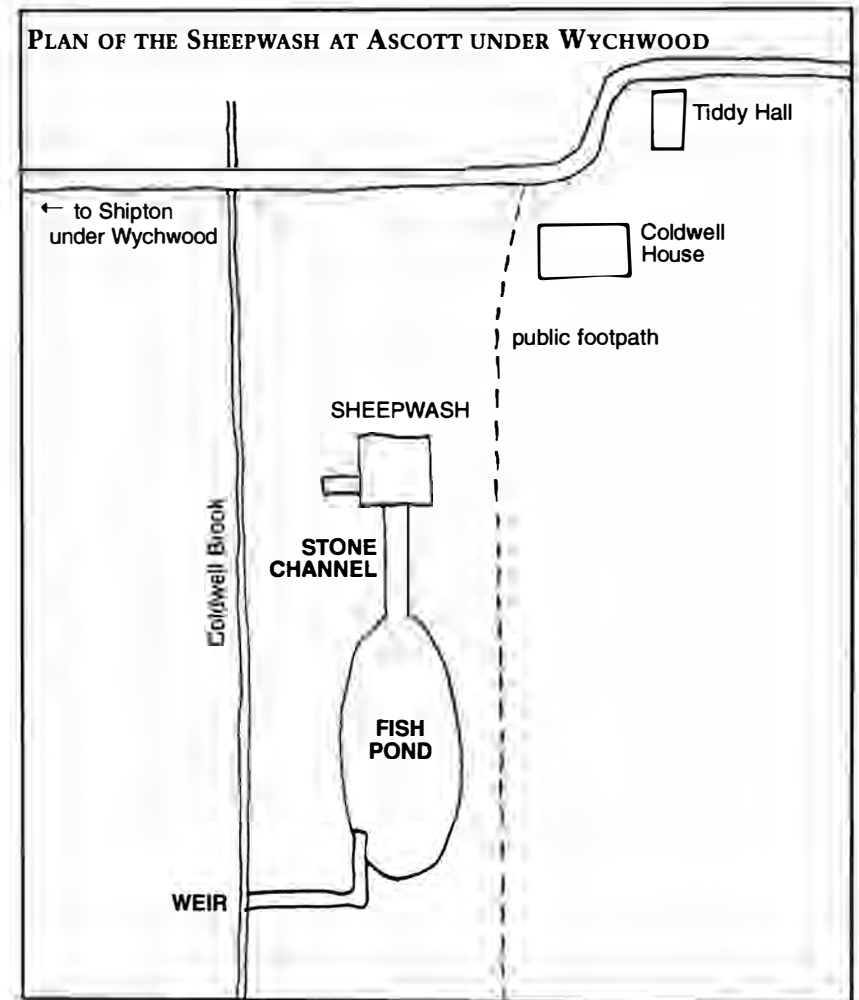
3. Exit ramp. All sheepwashes have a ramp starting near the bottom of the pool for the sheep to leave once washing is completed. In some washes the water enters by the exit ramp ensuring that the sheep are thoroughly rinsed as they leave.

A recent article by Ted Hodgkins of the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Service contains photographs of many Cotswold sheepwashes which have these features².

The Ascott Sheepwash

The Ascott sheepwash was definitely built prior to 1838 because it appears on the enclosure map of the area published in that year. No evidence has been found regarding its construction although Wendy Pearse tells me that the Hacker family had owned Coldstone Farm and the fishponds from 1764. Nothing is known about the use of the sheepwash although a long-term resident of Ascott, Harry Cook, tells me that he could not recall it being used in his lifetime!

The Ascott sheepwash has many features which led to the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Service including it in their restoration programme.



1. The shape of the wash pool is not the typical circle but a square measuring 10x10ft with a depth of 3ft.

2. Water for the sheepwash came from a pond, conveyed in a stone channel some 2ft wide and 15ft long. The enclosure map of 1838 shows the pond was one of many on the side of Coldwell Brook. Hugh Coddington thinks these were probably constructed as fish-ponds in the middle of the twelfth century to serve the needs of the motte and bailey castle at Ascott Earl. The water-level in the pond was maintained by a weir on Coldwell Brook.

3. Public access to both the sheepwash and associated fishpond are excellent. A public footpath passes the site and cars can be parked 100yds away on a wide part of the Ascott/Shipton road.

The main features of the Ascott sheepwash are shown in the plan.

References

1. *The Song of Solomon*, chapter 6, verse 6: 'as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing'.
2. 'Restoring Cotswold sheepwashes', T. Hodkins, *Cotswold Life* (1996), Vol. 29, No. 3 (March), pp.22-5.
3. *Sheep and Man*, M.L.Ryder, (1983), Duckworth, London
4. 'Woolwashing or Woolgathering', *The Wychwood* (1995/6), Vol. 16, No. 5.

Further Reading

Chapter 19 of Thomas Hardy's classic *Far from the Madding Crowd* has an excellent description of sheepwashing. Unfortunately the pool used as the source of Hardy's inspiration was recently destroyed by a farmer not realising its significance to literature.

M.L.Ryder's *Sheep and Man*³ describes all aspects of the sheep industry throughout the world and appears to be the only authoritative source of information on sheepwashing.



The Barthers of Sarsden and Salome of Natal

JACK HOWARD-DRAKE

Charles and Catherine Barter were the children of Charles Barter, rector of Sarsden from 1817 to 1868. (Their brother Henry was vicar of Shipton from 1868 to 1900.) Charles was born in 1820 and was educated at Winchester and New College where he was a fellow until his first marriage in 1853. From 1846 to 1849 he was farming and lumbering in America and Canada and on his way home spent some time travelling around Natal and other areas of South Africa. In 1852 he arrived back in Natal accompanied by Catherine who came with him 'in the hope of being useful to her bachelor brother.' He played an active and distinguished part in the affairs of Natal as a farmer and agriculturalist, as a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, serving on various commissions and enquiries, as a writer and editor, as an officer in the local military, as a magistrate, and in carrying out many other public duties. He died in July 1904.

Catherine was born in 1818 at Broadstone, Ward Hill, Enstone and baptised at Sarsden on 25 October. She described herself as '... a plain woman in every sense of the word: plain in person – as the looking glass informs me, plain in dress as a matter of taste as well as of principle, for it is hardly a wise policy to draw attention by means of decoration to that which is not in itself attractive; plain in understanding, preferring simple matters to those more complicated: and plain in manner as I have just cause to know for the fact that I was "brusque" was told me too often in my childhood to be forgotten.'

A contemporary described her as '... a very devoted lady ... deeply imbued with the desire to work in the cause of her Saviour. She dresses in the style of a sisterhood, in a close bonnet, with small white linen collar and cuffs on her black silk dress of a peculiar shape ...'.

Natal gave Catherine the opportunity for the missionary work she was keen to undertake. She had a good ear for languages and after six months of studying Zulu she could in her own words 'transact any business with the natives, and could further attempt to explain to those who were willing to hear, the outline at least of the history of man, his creation, and redemption, and the practical duties incumbent on those who had the privilege of becoming acquainted with these great truths'. She became

known by the Zulu name of No Musa, meaning the mother of mercy or kindness. She pursued her work energetically, sometimes walking miles in the heat to spend the day in a kraal and sleeping on a mat on the bare ground. Her brother's hunting and trading trips into Zulu territory enabled her to extend her activities. On one occasion she waited at a mission station while Charles and the others penetrated further into the interior trading and elephant hunting. Catherine got word after three weeks that all the party had been ill with fever and that their driver had died. She set out to find Charles with three African servants as an escort and on the way received a pencilled note from him saying that he would die if help did not come soon. When she had gone almost as far as she could through the bush by wagon she met up with some Europeans who were in the area and who went on by foot, coming back a week later with the invalids on litters carried by Tongas. It was a month before they could be moved further and another month before they got safely back to Durban.

The details of this expedition are told in her book *Alone Among the Zulus*, published in 1866 under the pseudonym 'A Plain Woman'. In it she also records the death of her youngest brother, William, who went to South Africa in 1859 and broke his neck in a fall from a horse. She published about 1867 a fictional account of life in Natal called *Home in South Africa*. Both these books appear in the British Library General Catalogue of Printed Books under the name of Charlotte Barter.

Shortly after the rescue of her brother Caroline came back to England because of her health, returning to Natal in 1857. During her first visit she had thought up the idea of buying African children from their parents, educating them and returning them to their families at the age of sixteen to instruct and influence them. On this second visit she was able to put the idea into practice. During her earlier missionary work she had taught a certain Uluhanga and at some stage adopted his infant daughter, Salome Welayo. When she returned to England again in 1864 she brought the infant Salome with her in order to give her an English education. As she could not find a suitable school for the purpose she opened her own school in Shipton.

The timing of this is not clear. The school appears in the 1871 census in two houses near the Shaven Crown, probably the present Ivan House and Gales Green. Salome is shown as a pupil there aged seven. It must therefore have been opened while she was still a very young child sometime between 1864 and 1871. There were ten other boarders, the youngest of whom was eight years old. The ages of the others ranged from 11 to 16. Four came from Milton, Chadlington, Churchill and Leafield, five from Staffordshire, Surrey, Middlesex and Gloucestershire, and one from Madras. Catherine is shown as a schoolmistress and there were also

an assistant teacher, a pupil teacher, a cook and a housemaid. Salome proved to be a good pupil learning two or three European languages and becoming an excellent pianist.

At the age of about 17 Salome was taken back to Natal, and in 1882 married a young Englishman, Alfred John Tyler, who was born in Suffolk in 1856 and went to South Africa in 1878. It is not known how they met. In 1874, in recognition of her services to the community, Catherine had been granted 100 acres of land near the Zwartkop in Pietermaritzburg, which she called Wychwood. She built the Tylers a house there and in 1883 transferred the whole property to Alfred having apparently made several unsuccessful attempts to transfer it to Salome.

The description of the wedding in *The Natal Witness* (see Annex) says much about the attitudes of the white population in Natal at the time. The couple were ostracised after the wedding – one story is that Salome was invited by a minister to play the organ in his church but the congregation strongly disapproved and very few went to the service. The marriage was not a happy one.

Catherine died in 1895 and was buried at Wychwood. Her brother wrote:

... I was not with thee, sister dear
 When thy last hour was drawing near...
 Yet loving hands and hearts were there,
 And tender touch and watchful care.
 The pillows smooth'd, the potion gave,
 Not wearied in the hope to save,
 But all in vain for thou art gone ...
 And now in Wychwood's shelter'd grounds
 Midst rural sights and rural sounds,
 Just under Zwartkop's forehead brown,
 That looms upon the distant town,
 Their slender tops above thy grave
 The cypresses incessant wave.

Salome apparently came back to England sometime after Catherine's death but it is not clear what happened to her. The only official record is a memorandum from the Master of the Supreme Court in the Natal Archives which says that 'A.J. Tyler's wife died in England in 1907 and nothing else is known'; but there were plenty of stories. Some said she died of a broken heart and was found draped over her piano at Wychwood. Others that she was involved in a hunting accident in the Karloof. Yet others that she returned to England penniless, acted in a film [*sic*] version of Uncle Tom's Cabin, worked in a low class cafe, sang in the streets and died of tuberculosis.

After Salome left South Africa, Tyler, known to his fellow colonists as Nunky Tyler, lived on at Wychwood as a country gentleman until 1939. He was occasionally seen in the early days cantering to the station on a large white stallion, dressed in a suit with a pink carnation in his buttonhole. His African servant would then ride the horses back and go to meet him off the five o'clock train. At some stage he had been given a bunch of imported flowers from Pietermaritzburg Botanical Gardens which he propagated. One result of this was that Wychwood became famous for its azaleas. He spent his last years at Ladysmith under the care of his nephew and died in 1947 in his 91st year.

Wychwood was then sold to a Maurice Braun who bred horses there. In 1950 it was again sold, this time to an R.G. Coombes, described as a very eccentric Englishman who had owned a horse and cart business in England before the war and sold out to a bus company before going to South Africa. He apparently installed his own electric light at Wychwood and the next owners found that every time there was a thunderstorm the electricity flashed from all the plugs.

Sources

Almost all the information in this article is taken from Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal*, Volumes 2 and 3, University of Natal Press, 1983 and 1985.

Annex

From *The Natal Witness*

NOVEL MARRIAGE AT ST. SAVIOUR'S CATHEDRAL

A large crowd gathered at St. Saviour's Cathedral on Saturday morning last, to witness a marriage which, we believe, has had no parallel in South Africa, between Alfred John Tyler, a European farmer, and Salome Welayo a young Kaffir woman who has been educated in England and is claimed by her patrons to be a lady. Alfred John Tyler is a short, slightly-built young man, of twenty four or twenty five years of age. Salome Welayo is also of low stature, of a coffee-and-milk complexion, and, apart from that self-possession which comes of good education and the moving in good society in England, has very much the appearance of the ordinary Kafir [sic]. This could hardly be otherwise, seeing that her father and mother are simply people of the kraal. The young Kafir girl must have been born under a lucky star. When quite a baby, her father Uluhunga came under the notice of Miss Barter, who at the time did missionary work amongst the natives at 'The Start' her brother's place (Mr. Charles Barter) in the Zwartkop. Uluhunga was baptised, and Miss Barter

adopted his daughter. By-and-bye Salome was sent to England and educated along with Mr Barter's neices [sic]. She turned out to be an apt pupil, is an excellent pianist and now speaks two or three European tongues, English like a native, and – not a word of Kafir. Very probably it was thought necessary, for her own sake, that Miss Welayo should be divided as much as possible from her wild relations, and become a 'white lady', so that there might be no heart-burnings when she came to make a permanent stay in the land of her fathers. Anyway it would appear that this is the result of the education. The ceremony of Saturday, as might have been expected, drew a large number of young ladies and gentlemen, and, as was certainly expected, a good many young men who were not gentlemen. The Cathedral was pretty well filled by eleven o'clock, the hour for the ceremony, but outside a large number of persons had gathered to see the wedding party enter. Mr. and Mrs. Barter first arrived in their spider, with the young lady who was to act as bridesmaid. A few minutes after the bride and bridegroom, and Miss Barter, drove up in the latter's carriage, and as the party passed up the aisle the flutter of dresses and remarks of the male portion of the onlookers were many and varied. The bride was dressed in rich ecru, a flowing veil partly hid her face, and of course she wore a wreath of orange blossom. The bridegroom, who was attended by the Rev. Mr. Carlyon, was dressed very quietly. All having taken their places, the Very Rev. Dean Green began the marriage service of the Church of England, every motion of the parties, as the ceremony proceeded being eagerly watched by those present – though several of the young men were indecorous enough to make absurd and contemptuous remarks on the bridegroom. If these young men had no sympathy with the union, they might have had some respect for the building they were in. The ceremony passed off correctly – the bride was given away by Mr. Barter, the Resident Magistrate – and when it was over, and the party adjourned to the vestry to sign the register, the spectators awaited their return. The crowd waited very patiently, and when the party walked down the aisle to the carriage the excitement was quite intense. There was only a little jeering and laughter as Mr. and Mrs. Tyler got into the carriage, but the gentleman had no sooner taken his seat than he was covered with flour, thrown by some of the young men. The wedding party then drove off to 'The Finish' where they were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Barter. After the breakfast the 'happy pair' started for their honeymoon amid showers of rice, old shoes, and other expressions of goodwill. Miss Barter, we believe, has built Mr. and Mrs. Tyler a house high up in the Zwartkop.

Lady Harriet Reade (1727-1811) of Shipton Court

SUE JOURDAN

In the early nineteenth century the Revd Thomas Symonds, vicar of Eynsham and antiquarian, recorded in nine manuscript journals notes about the history, people and places of Oxfordshire. This is the source of the anecdote related to him by Dr Brookes, vicar of Shipton, and quoted in *Wychwoods History 11*, about the men from Ramsden chasing a squirrel and losing in the snow a coffin which they were carrying to Shipton churchyard. He also wrote out the following in his fourth volume:

THE MANSION HOUSE, SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD

In 1812 commanded a delightful tho' not an extensive woodland view. The gardens, useful & ornamental, were of considerable extent. There were forcing houses for pine apples, vines, oranges and lime trees & other exotics & some remarkably large Myrtle Trees, known to be more than a century old. All the outbuildings bore evident marks of decay. But those beautiful lawns where the family & visitors in other Days used to promenade, were at this time & had for 30 or 40 years past, been covered with wooden Frame work, roofed above, the side made of strong wire, in which vast cages, an immense assemblage of Birds, chiefly foreign, were kept. Amongst the specimens then exhibited the most beautiful as to form & the most splendid as to Plumage, were different species of the Gold & Silver Pheasant. The Rooms abounded with fine family portraits but that which was by far the most captivating was the Likeness of the Lady Dowager Harriet Reade, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The features are fine, the Physiognomy benevolent & it is esteemed one of the happiest efforts of the Great Artist. As the author of this article stood admiring this beautiful work of art, & drew with the mind's eye the present features of this lady at this date between 80 & 90 years of age, he could not trace the slightest resemblance, not a vestige remaining of that Beauty, so eminent in her youthful years.

The History of this Lady (who was the only daughter & heiress of William Barker of Sonning in Berks. Esq) affords an eventful illustration of the Folly of making rash vows, & affecting an overstrained delicacy. When young, she is represented as having been proud & high-spirited.

But her Husband, Sir John Reade, hoped that time & Reflection would soften & ameliorate these her only failings. They lived happily till, unfortunately for both, she was delivered of twins (viz Sir John Reade 5th Baronet & Thomas born 8 March 1762 – the latter died [sic]). This Sir John, the 5th Baronet, resided chiefly at Oddington, Co Glos. an Estate which he purchased some years since, the Domain of which he greatly improved. His death at the early age of 28, was accelerated if not occasioned by his endeavours to counteract a Propensity he had at one time shown Corpulency. He was perfectly well-bred, without an affectation of being so his person was pleasing & his countenance strongly indicated that goodness of disposition of which his charity to the indigent, his Humanity, affability & Hospitality were ample proofs. (Gents mag vol 59 p1145)

From that hour a ridiculous idea of the Indelicacy of having twins filled her mind with such phantasies, that the advice of her dearest Friends was not powerful enough to induce her to reside with her husband, & a separation accordingly took place!

The effect of her rash vow upon her future Happiness was strikingly [sic] lamentable, & she that had been the Admiration of the County of the Beauty of her Person, & the Elegance of her manners, retired in Disgust from the polished circle of Society in which she had been reared. And from this period a marked change in her temper, manner & Habits was observed. She became attached to Birds & monkies, & from purchasing a few, she went collecting, resolved to possess the finest collection of Birds in England, & being unsparing of money, she realised her intention, & formed a most magnificent Aviary. Having obtained, sometimes as presents, but more frequently purchased specimens of the most beautiful or scarce birds from every quarter of the world, from the largest to the most minute. And to keep alive the gaudy natives of the Tropics she had stoves constructed that kept the air of the Rooms at a proper Degree of Heat. Lady Reade is said frequently to have given 150 guineas for a single bird! In passing thro' the apartments where these feathered prisoners were confined, the noise of the different species of Macaws, Cockatoos, Parrots & Parroquets was absolutely deafening. And the air was so foul, notwithstanding every thing that care & Regularity could effect in cleaning their cages, that it was quite noxious. The pale cheeks, & the dim eye of the Bird Maid, as the female was called who exhibited the collection to strangers, sufficiently proved the ill effects of the Effluvia they occasioned.

Several years since a Fire happened thro' a Defect in one of the Stoves, & a great number of her collection of Birds were burned, & more suffocated. The latter were embalmed, if the expression is allowable, & having died in the full Brilliancy of feather, they looked almost as well

as when living; & formed a study, whence some of our artists are said to borrow specimens to copy in their paintings. These are exhibited on the principal Floor, leading from the Great Stair Case to the Drawing Room.

As Lady Reade advanced in years this attachment grew stronger, she neglected her person, paid not regard to fashion, intermixed but little with the world, & by imperceptible degrees, lost every Trait, not only of female Beauty, but feminine reserve & Delicacy; as if she regretted her sex, & wished to conceal it. Lady Reade was never a vicious woman. She had not disgraced her character, but her eccentricities in Dress & Manners, being talked of far around, she was followed by crowds, whenever she appeared in public, which irritating & offending the Pride of Wealth & Birth, it helped to put an end to the influence of native Benevolence, & she became an insulated being & Misanthrope.

When she travelled between London & Shipton, Lady Reade attracted as much attention as Monarchy itself. At the Inns where she stopped the gates were usually closed, to afford her an opportunity of disembling & Landing her cargo of monkeys & Birds, & other living attendants, who were stowed in her carriages. As soon as she reached Magdalen Bridge at Oxford, a crowd was sure to collect, if it were in the Day time who followed or proceeded, accumulating as she advanced, so that by the time she arrived at the Star Inn, it was sometimes difficult to make way & it must be owned that her grotesque appearance in the midst of her living animals, was calculated to excite curiosity in an eminent degree.

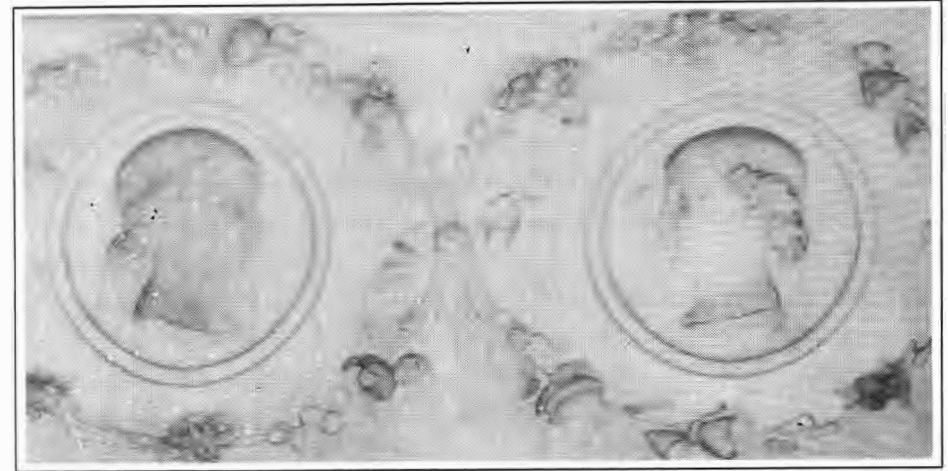
However she possessed the power to reassume the Lady & kept up a correspondence with the late Duke of Marlborough & two or three other old acquaintances.

With her daughter-in-law, the widow of her son, she held no intercourse whatever, but was reported to feel, amidst all her singularities, towards her grandson a strong affection. And if among what were termed The Old Standards, any case of sudden distress occurred, she would secretly administer Relief.

This singular woman died at her home in Curson Street, May Fair, London Dec. 23 1811 in her 85th year. Her aviary she left partly to Queen Charlotte, & part to the Duke of Marlborough & the whole collection was dispersed, & the cages destroyed. She bequeathed £300 3% Old South Sea Annuities to the Radcliffe Infirmary & a considerable sum in her neighbourhood. She was a niece of Viscountess Fane.

Her assemblage of birds was magnificent & presented to the eye the wondrous variety of the feathered tribe, in all the pomp of radiant plumage. But it may be long before any person of Fortune is again seized with a similar taste.

From an unpublished MS of a Tourist



Relief portraits of Harriet and Louisa Reade, the twin grand-daughters of Lady Harriet Reade, at the bottom of the wall monument erected in memory of her son, Sir John Reade, in the chancel of St Mary the Virgin, Shipton under Wychwood.

The chancel in Shipton church has impressive wall monuments to the two Sir John Reades mentioned by the 'Tourist'. (There are several factual errors in his writing including his numbering of their baronetcies). Dame Harriet had married Sir John the fifth baronet in 1859 and had twin sons in 1762 from which time the writer attributes the decline in Lady Harriet's mental health. It is stated on the cenotaph-shaped monument, after an excessively grandiloquent description of her husband, that 'His widow with tears of gratitude erected this monument' – a statement possibly open to misinterpretation. Her name and an inscription were added after her death in 1811. Their son, the sixth baronet, married Jane Chandos Hoskyns in 1784 and they also had twins. One of the two little girls, Harriet, died a few days before her father when he was 27, and her little sister, Louisa, died shortly after. The wall monument erected by his disconsolate widow has the little girls depicted in relief within a wreath. Sir John had died in his house in Harley Street, London on 24 November 1789. Six days later *The Times* printed the following report:

The premature death of Sir John Reade has been pronounced by Mr John Hunter, who opened the body, to have been entirely due to the pernicious use of Acids which he took with an intention of reducing his corpulency.

The whereabouts of the Reynolds portrait is not known.

An Acknowledgement and an Apology

JOHN RAWLINS

Since its beginning the Wychwoods Local History Society has relied on much information gathered from local people, either written or the spoken word. Some of this information has been included in the two *Wychwoods Albums*, scripts of talks and articles in the Society's journals. On behalf of the Society I would like to acknowledge the help given by hundreds of persons in the Wychwoods. At the same time I would also like to make an apology, for the Society has been guilty in failing to record our informants' voices on audiotape.

I spoke with over one hundred people on the events of the war years 1939 to 1945. I have brief written notes of these conversations but only three have been recorded on sound tape. Recently I have been preparing a talk on the 60 years of change in Shipton. Not being a native of Shipton I sought out those who were and who had reliable memories and records. One of these was the late Bill Kimber. Bill was fond of talking, and he

Shipton Hospital Carnival 1922. Wychwood Forest Lodge of Oddfellows. Bill Kimber's father, Bill, is sixth from left in the back row.



Shipton Drum and Fife Band 1904. Reuben Rainbow, Bill Kimber's maternal grandfather, in the centre.

could recall both his own memories and the memories and opinions passed on to him by his parents.

After being wounded in the First World War, Bill's father, another Bill Kimber, came to Shipton to find work, first at the Till Yard in Upper High Street, and then with Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd in Milton. Bill's father's home was in Headington where Bill's grandfather, another Bill Kimber, had achieved some fame with the Headington Quarry Morris Men, associated with Cecil Sharpe the folksong collector (*Wychwoods History* 11 p.9). In Shipton, Bill's father married into the Rainbow family, again with musical connections, for it was Bill's maternal grandfather, Reuben, who founded the Shipton Drum and Fife Band in 1901 (*The Second Wychwood Album* p.15).

On leaving Shipton Church of England School, Bill became apprentice carpenter and joiner with Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd and he recalled that one of his first 'outside' jobs was at his old school altering a cupboard for the then headmaster, Mr Sharpe. On checking the school logbook there is an entry dated 20 April 1942: 'Cupboard in my room removed, remade to hold books. Old books sent for salvage'. However, not all went to salvage





Shipton Church of England School Standard 1, 1935. Bill Kimber bottom left.

as Bill 'rescued' a set of 1935 photographs of various school groups which were taken to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. The Society now has copies of these photographs and one is included in *The Second Wychwood Album* on pages 12-13.

From the late Bill I gained much information on Shipton and in particular on organisations now gone – the Wychwood Forest Lodge of Oddfellows, the Home Guard, the British Legion, Observer Corps Post Y1 at Shipton (*Journal 8*) and the till yards. When listening to Bill I made brief written notes and recorded our conversations on microcassette-recorder. On returning home I played back the sound tape to myself and made further written notes which were added to those I made earlier. After Bill's death one of his family asked me if the family could have a copy of any tapes on which Bill was talking. Sadly all the hours of Bill's conversations had been wiped off by the subsequent recording of other people. I hope I will not make the same mistake again.

The Society has some audiotapes made by Mike Linfield and myself, and Trudy Yates is currently out and about with her tape recorder. We aim to keep audiotapes on which the speaker has a pronounced local dialect or has important information. All tapes will then be provided with an edited written transcript which will be filed for future reference.

Thanks to all those persons who have provided so much information, some already used, some awaiting use. All carefully stored and all gratefully received.

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



Alfred Groves and Sons Ltd were the builders employed on the refurbishment of the Crown Inn in 1930-31. The inn, together with two enclosures of pastureland including Shipton cattle market, was sold by the trustees of the Crown Inn Charity in June 1930 to the brewers, Messrs Flowers & Sons of Stratford upon Avon who changed the name to the Shaven Crown. Bill Kimber's father worked on the new staircase as a carpenter and joiner.

The Society is grateful to the firm for its donation towards the cost of producing this issue of the journal.

A COMMENT ON THE 'GENERAL VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURE OF OXFORDSHIRE'

In 1813 Arthur Young, the Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, wrote his *General View of the Agriculture of Oxfordshire* where he continued his argument for enclosing the open field system. Much of Oxfordshire had been enclosed in the eighteenth century and he considered that 'this has been the capital improvement of the county'. The advantages he saw for enclosing the strips into larger, individually owned fields included getting rid of communal restrictions, less waste of time travelling from one end of the parish to the other, animal disease control, better superintending of labourers, drainage and prevention of quarrels about trespass by animals and the plough. He was very keen to see Wychwood Forest cleared, and among the reasons he gave were his allegations about the characters of the inhabitants, the criminal offences that abounded and distress caused to quiet and well-disposed persons in the locality. Some think that he went too far.

THE WYCHWOODERS' LAMENT

*Do you know, some time ago, a man called Arthur Young
Spread the news about us, the Wychwood Forest Scum!
Poachers, thieves and pilferers, he made us out to be.
A shameful, slanderous slur he cast upon the likes of we.
Oxford Gaol, he said, would rot away, no prisoners inside
Without the Wychwood scavengers to keep it occupied.
And honest folk from hereabouts, liveth out their time
In mortal fear and terror of this fertile source of crime.
Drunkards too, they christened us, with helpless, fearful wives,
Bawling babes, neglected kids and hopeless, futile lives.
Now, do you think it proper that a high class gent, like he,
Should cast such cruel aspertions on poor lowly, humble -THEE.*

Wendy Pearse (1997)

Springhill Farm, Plum Lane, Shipton under Wychwood

WENDY PEARSE

Richard Ellis, grazier of Shipton, married Anne Furley at Shipton church on 25 January 1768. Through his marriage he acquired land in Shipton including Springhill Farm in Plum Lane although it is not known if they lived there. A series of documents shows how ownership of the farm was passed on, although never through a direct line of father to son, until it became part of Shipton Court estate at the end of the nineteenth century over one hundred years later.

The first document is Richard Ellis' will dated October 1812. Richard and Anne had had two children, Henry and Ann, but they both predeceased their parents, so on Anne's death in September 1812, Richard had to make provision for his estate. It was left in trust to his friend John Jordan Ansell of Fulbrook, later of Burford, a prominent local solicitor. Oxfordshire Archives has many references under his name. Provisions of the will included annuities to a brother and sister of £6 and £12 per annum, and bequests to many relatives ranging from £20 to one sister who was considered 'amply provided for', to £300. Even a servant, Joseph Hedges, was left £30 which in his position must have been real wealth.

However the major part of the estate was to be equally divided between Richard's nephew and niece, Ralph and Mary Ellis, with strict provisions regarding the future disposal of the property. It must pass to legitimate heirs of the two beneficiaries or must be legally disposed of, by a will witnessed by three or more credible witnesses. The affluence of Richard's relatives must have varied greatly since he later added a codicil leaving £10 for the funeral expenses of the sister who received the annuity. Then on 4 November 1812, a codicil concerning Mary Ellis was included. She was apparently living with her uncle at that date, and was to receive all the furniture and household goods including the clothes of Richard's 'late dear wife' together with the chest in which they were kept, all plate, china, linen, his silver watch and the mare which he usually rode. Finally on 5 January 1813 a third codicil was added which provided £10 mourning money for a nephew and a niece. Richard died in February and was buried in Shipton churchyard. The will was proved on 4 March 1813 when administration was granted to John Jordan Ansell and Mary Ellis.

The second document, dated 26 December 1822, is a settlement on the intended marriage of Mary Ellis to William Bould, a yeoman of Shipton. They were married a month later. William and his brother, Richard, who was renting Grove Farm at the time of the Tithe Award map in 1839, were born in Oddington, Gloucestershire. However, as Cordelia and William Bould who appear to be their parents and were both buried in Shipton in 1816 and 1837 respectively, they were certainly in the village by 1816.

The settlement preserved Mary Ellis' inheritance under her uncle's will, and stated that if she died without disposing of the property, half would go to William Bould and half to her niece Caroline Martha Churchill who was then living with her at Shipton. This was all with the agreement of John Jordan Ansell, solicitor. One of the witnesses was William Akerman, butcher of Burford. I think it possible that he has a connection with the other half of the property bequeathed to Ralph Ellis, as in December 1814 Ralph had married Hannah Akerman of Wick Rissington, Gloucestershire, daughter of William Akerman. Could he have moved to Burford? Another connection with William Akerman was in Mary Bould's will. When she died in February 1837 she appointed him her executor together with her husband William and George Bennett, the husband of her niece Caroline, née Churchill. These two had been married at Shipton in January 1836.

The third document is a mortgage dated 3 March 1853 between William Bould, the enclosure commissioners and James Harbridge and Jabez Kimber, farmers. Half the estate was to be mortgaged to the two farmers for £93 at 5% interest over 500 years. The mortgage was necessary to cover the cost of fencing the holding with stone walls and gates and improving the land after enclosure in 1852. The land was jointly held by William Bould and Joseph Plumb, who had married Hannah Ellis after Ralph's death, thus bringing one half under her new husband's name. A receipt for £93 by Harbridge and Kimber in June 1875 was attached when the mortgage was repaid after William Bould's death by his executors.

The 1841 census recorded that William Bould, widower, was living at what appears to read as Rose Hill with two servants. But in the Tithe Award of 1839 he is listed as occupying the house on the corner of Ascott Road, owned by Sir John Chandos Reade. By 1851 he had remarried, another Mary from Todenham, Gloucestershire. By 1861 William with his wife were still farming 300 acres. In the Tithe Award 1839 William rented a large acreage from Sir John Chandos Reade of Shipton Court as well as his first wife's land at Springhill Farm. William was certainly a prominent figure in the community as he served as village constable, overseer of the poor and churchwarden. In 1869 William's second wife died and he followed her six years later.

An Inland Revenue Return of 1875 gives an account of the succession of Caroline Bennett of Westcote, Gloucestershire with a description of Springhill Farm. She received one moiety of a messuage, farm, hereditaments and appurtenances in Shipton of 235 acres 3 rods and 21 perches, together with a small dwelling house and cottage on the premises. Hannah Plumb was living in the dwelling house. The tithe rent charge was £68 16s 4d and the outgoing were fire insurance 10s and repairs £10. Caroline Bennett's signature confirming that she was the true heir was followed by her date of birth, 22 November 1810. At last Caroline Martha Bennett now aged 65 years came into her half share listed in Mary Ellis' marriage settlement made when she was 12 in 1822.

Joseph Plumb and Hannah were also included in the 1851 census but his occupation was given as Landed Property, seeming to indicate that the farm was run by William Bould. The Post Office Directory 1847 also lists Mr Joseph Plumb as gentry whilst William and Richard Bould were farmers. Joseph died in April 1867 and was buried in Shipton, leaving Hannah a widow for the second time. There seems little doubt that both her marriages were most advantageous financially, for her will and codicils dated 1874-77 before she died in November 1878 included considerable bequests.

Hannah Plumb's will and codicils are the next documents to consider. She left a long list of legacies ranging from £10 to some of her tenants to £1000 to relatives. She directed that the estate was to be sold privately or auctioned and the money was to be used to pay the bequests. The remainder was to go to her nephew, Thomas Akerman, a butcher of Churcham, Gloucestershire. One curious bequest of 19 guineas was to Helen Willis 'a descendant of the old shepherd of that surname formerly in the employment of Mr Patrick of Shipton'. The poor of Shipton and Wyck Rissington, her childhood home, were not forgotten for she left £100 in trust to the churchwardens and clergymen of each parish to be invested in 3% consolidated bank annuities. The interest was to pay for coal for the poor without regard to religious creed or persuasion.

The Inland Revenue Return of 1878 for Thomas Akerman's succession to the moiety adds another 20 acres to the property but as the rods and perches were the same it seems some mistake must have occurred on one of the returns. In three years the fire insurance had gone up 13s to £1 3s and the repairs by £2 to £12. We also learn that Thomas Akerman was born on 6 July 1834, succeeding to his inheritance at the age of 44 years.

Regarding later tenants, by 1871 William Bould would appear to have retired from farming as the census of 1871 lists William Baker at Springhill Farm, with 342 acres and employing ten men and three boys. He was still there at the time of the Inland Revenue Return 1875. By 1878 it was let to William Ellis with ten fewer acres but with 20 men. Despite

Sale of Pedigree Stock

SPRING HILL FARM,
SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

One Mile from Shipton station on the Worcester & Walsleyhampton Main Line of the G. W. R. 1/2 Mile from Hurford & 7 from Uppingham Station

17 CART HORSES
STRONG, ACTIVE

AND COLTS,
 Including 5 SHIRE MARES AND FOALS,

26 WELL BRED CATTLE
HEAD OF
 The Pure-bred Flock of

83 OXFORD DOWN SHEEP
 84 CROSS-BRED SHEEP & LAMBS,
3 IN-PIG SOWS, 40 HEAD OF POULTRY, &c.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS,
 AND NUMEROUS OTHER EFFECTS,
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY MESSRS.

PAXTON & HOLIDAY

ON THE PREMISES AS ABOVE.
On Tuesday, September 27th, 1898, at 12 for 1 o'clock,
By direction of the Board of Executors of the late Joseph Reade.

Auction notice for the sale of stock and equipment at Springhill Farm when Joseph Reade sold the farm in 1898

Hannah's injunction to sell the farm in 1878 this occurred at the beginning of a period of agricultural depression and no buyer seems to have materialised until 29 September 1897 when a conveyance was prepared on behalf of Joseph Reade, the butler who had inherited Shipton Court on condition that he changed his name from Wakefield to Reade. Caroline Bennett who owned the other half was still alive at 87 and married to William Jay, a retired brigade surgeon of Westcote, Gloucestershire. Thomas Akerman, presumably with the proceeds of his inheritance had become a farmer, living at Springfield House near Gloucester.

At the time of the conveyance to Joseph Reade 1897 the farm was stated as being 'late in the occupation of Frederick William Jeffreys', seeming to confirm it by John Simpson Calvert's recording in his diary as 'Mr Jeffreys farm at Shipton' which was offered for auction and received no bidders.

Springhill Farm, now consisting of 257 acres, 1 rod and 10 perches was to be sold for £3800, Thomas Akerman to receive half whilst the other half was to go to Richard Gay Francis of Stow-on-the-Wold, the remaining trustee of the property with power to sell it. The next day Joseph Reade took out a mortgage with Akerman and Francis with a stipulation which prevented the right of complete repayment for five years.

A very good illustration of agricultural practice at the turn of the century can be gained from the Springhill Farm auction notice dated 27 September 1898 when Joseph Reade relinquished farming the land. The auction was held at the farm at 12 noon for 1 o'clock and luncheon tickets could be purchased at 1s 6d per head to be returned to purchasers of £2 upwards. The lots included a wide range of agricultural implements and equipment such as feeding troughs, harness, ploughs, harrows, haymaking and harvest machines, carts, wagons and a shepherd's hut on wheels. Farming was obviously becoming increasingly mechanised. The auctioneers called attention to the pure-bred flock of 83 Oxford Down sheep, bred from rams by Messrs Worley and Jeffreys. Eighty-four cross-bred sheep were also listed. A herd of 26 cattle, Shorthorn and Kerry, included calving heifers, and Shorthorn steers nearly fit for the butcher. There were also 3 in-pig sows, a store pig and 40 poultry. The 17-strong active cart-horses, mostly with their pedigrees, included five shire mares and foals.

By 1902, the farm had come into the hands of William Frederick Pepper, the new owner of Shipton Court who paid off the mortgage. The line of extended family relations dating back to Richard Ellis ninety years before was finally broken, with no direct heir being produced during that time. Hannah Plumb's legacy to the village is the name Plum Lane, misspelt for many years and now considered too expensive to correct.

Appendix

Oxfordshire Archives (OA), Shipton Court Estate documents, E2/5D/1-4; E2/22/1-3; E2/25/1-2.

OA, Shipton under Wychwood Parish Registers, PAR 236/1. Transcripts held in WLHS archives.

Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Oxford. Census Returns 1841-71. Transcripts held in WLHS archives.

OA, Shipton under Wychwood Tithe Award 1839, PAR/236/15. Transcript held in WLHS archives.

Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Oxford. Post Office Directories.

Book Review

ANTHEA JONES

Oxford Church Courts. Depositions 1589-93. Jack Howard-Drake. Published by Oxfordshire County Council, Dept of Leisure and Arts, 1997.

The partnership in Sinnels Field must be thanked and congratulated on producing in 1997 the fourth booklet in the series of Oxford Church Courts. Depositions, this one covering the years 1589–93. Joan Howard-Drake's expertise in transcribing the sixteenth-century script is the base for Jack Howard-Drake's remarkable calendar of the contents of each set of depositions. There is more to a calendar or summary of the 'substance' of each case than might appear. The record of depositions in any one case may be scattered through more than one ancient volume and has here been brought together, and some records are duplicated and have been compared. Careful indexes are also made which add greatly to the value of the booklet. The summaries are masterly compressions of complicated statements, and at times, as Jack Howard-Drake writes: 'The parties and the witnesses, who had their cases to make, frequently contradicted each other and occasionally themselves.' It might be deduced from reading these summaries that the contradictions were more common than occasional.

This sort of work makes available historical material which otherwise, by its nature, is extremely difficult to use. It may be suggested that it illuminates two particular subjects of enquiry into the past: it opens an amazing door onto the social relations of the late sixteenth-century inhabitants of Oxfordshire, and it provides suggestive evidence on the organisation of the village's agricultural business, in particular in relation to tithes.

Consider this door, or more properly window, onto a sixteenth century drama in case number 17.

Dramatis Personae: Thomas Snowe; Elizabeth Snowe;. John Sollet; Phillip Cope; Robert Androwes

TS: *I have a scheme to frighten that Robert Androwes into marrying my sister, Elizabeth.*

JS: *What shall you do?*

TS: *You and me – we'll take Elizabeth to that Robert Androwes'*

brother's house, and get Phillip Cope, his bedfellow, to let her into the house – that'll set him on fire!

Later: shouts are heard. *'Hi! Phillip! Here's Elizabeth out here! Let her in!'*

PC: *Coming. Coming. Wait a bit.*

Pause: RA appears at window.

ES: *Why don't you come to me?*

RA: *The door's locked. I can't open it.*

ES: *Haven't you got a ladder?*

RA: *There's one in the hay barn.*

ES: *I'll get it.*

Puts ladder up to window.

RA: *I can't get out! I'm stuck! The window's too small! If only I could have got out, we'd have been married this very day!*

There are a number of cases, nearly as graphic as this, which suggest that marriage was contracted very casually, on the spur of the moment.

It is no surprise after reading these books that tithes were very unpopular (taxes always are), that they were extremely difficult to assess, and that there were numerous ways of avoiding payment. Valuable evidence on parish boundaries is contained in the depositions made to show which parson was entitled to tithes in dispute. In Oxford there were often no clear divisions between the houses in the numerous small parishes; indeed, a house could be in two parishes. Here was a fruitful field for evasion.

Did people know each other's business in the seventeenth-century village? This evidence is certainly supportive of the conventional view. On the other hand, testamentary cases occurred where anything but standard nuclear family arrangements existed, which is contrary to a conventional view of the past. The lists of witnesses, similarly, indicate that people moved about the country, as the 'Index of Places not in Oxfordshire' reveals.

One famous national event obviously reached deep into the consciousness of Oxfordshire's inhabitants. At the end of July 1588, the militia was summoned to coastal stations in case there should be a Spanish invasion. Queen Elizabeth herself went to Tilbury and addressed the troops. Her speech is one of the reasons for her enormous hold on popular imagination. 'I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England, too.' Two depositions mention soldiers going to Tilbury as a means of dating other occurrences.

Thank you, Joan and Jack Howard-Drake.

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT

The Second Wychwoods Album (1990) Now £2.50 Eighty photographs illustrating life in Milton, Shipton and neighbouring villages, particularly between the wars.

Wychwoods History, Number 2 (1986) £2.50 William Master, Vicar of Shipton 1564-91; A Milton Field, 1842-1985; Survey of Baptist Ground, Milton; Letters of Thomas & Hannah Groves; Royal Manor of Sciptone in Domesday, Pt 2; Hedge Survey, Pt 2.

Wychwoods History, Number 3 (1987) £2.50 Published jointly with OUDES and edited by Kate Tiller. Milton & Shipton in the Nineteenth Century – Farming and community before 1850; Village government; Decade of change, the 1850s; Decade of decisions, the 1870s; Growing up 100 years ago; Life and work 1880-1914.

Wychwoods History, Number 4 (1988) £2.50 Earthworks at Lower Farm, Upper Milton (survey by James Bond); Fieldwalking in Evenlode Valley; Prebendal House, Shipton (excavation by Brian Durham); My Father's Days; Wartime Wedding.

Wychwoods History, Number 5 (1989) £3.00 The Poor of Shipton 1740-62; Shipton Milestone; St Mary's Church, Shipton; The Reade Chapel; Plague Tyme; Change in the Wychwoods, 1938-1988; Medieval Pottery Finds at St Mary's School, Shipton.

Wychwoods History, Number 6 (1991) £3.00 The Untons; Leonard Boxe, Gentleman of Ascott; Infantile Mortality 1565-94; The Wharton Charity; Medieval Fishpond at Bruern Grange (survey by James Bond); Shipton School Log Book 1869-1905; Mary Moss; Life in Old Milton.

Wychwoods History, Number 7 (1992) £3.00 Origins of Shipton Minster Church (John Blair); The Groves Family of Milton, Pt 1; Early Days at Shipton; Ridge and Furrow; Henry Mills, Vicar of Shipton 1593-1641; Death by Misadventure; The Milton Murder; A Cottage on the Waste.

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Cover illustration: *Horses grazing on The Green at Milton under Wychwood, 1920s*