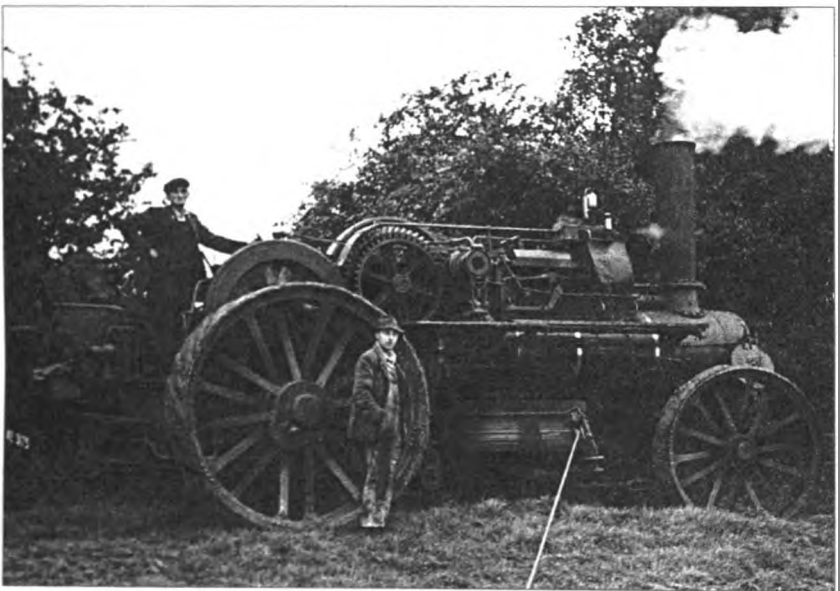


WYCHWOODS HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Number Twenty-seven, 2012



WYCHWOODS
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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in this Journal are those of their authors and not necessarily
those of the Society

Foreword

We lost a very valued member and friend of Wychwoods Local History Society when John Rawlins died on 26 January 2012. He joined us in the very early years when he retired from teaching and thereafter became one of our best researchers and photographers of the Wychwoods in time of change. His knowledge and memory of this area and people, particularly of Milton where he was born, were very deep and he was always prepared to help with information when needed. He was a good speaker and the halls were always full to overflowing when it was a 'John' night. He enthusiastically joined in all WLHS activities and served on the Committee, acting as Vice-chairman at one time. His health was not of the best and latterly he rarely appeared in public much to our loss - he will be sorely missed. For those who did not know him, the article by Trudy Yates in *Journal 24* published in 2009 will give you the measure of the man and why he was so appreciated.

John would have been one of the first to be out photographing the changing face of Shipton with the demolition of the village shop on the main road. The building served its purpose for just over a hundred years and Mary Dee remembers the life of the shop. We also have more memories of another past resident of Shipton as Dorothy Brookes remembers what life was like as a child growing up with no TV, radio or discos, and in domestic service. Another name that is now gone from Shipton is the Cross family who were weavers and parish clerks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, living in Gas Lane. Joan and Jack Howard-Drake have analysed a huge jumble of scraps of paper they left to describe the family and a way of life.

Another way of life that briefly existed in the area was the traction engines and their tackle of the Griffin family at Bruern Grange. We have a reprint of an article about them with an introduction by Bob Griffin's daughter, Joy Timms. Bruern has featured in several of our recent Journals and there has often been confusion about the original and later buildings on the site. Joy has also written a brief history of Bruern Abbey with an extract from Jacksons *Oxford Journal* on the fire that destroyed the building in 1764.

To complete our Journal, Trudy Yates addresses the conundrum of WLHS and 'What makes us tick?'

Trudy Yates, Joan Howard-Drake and Sue Jourdan

Memories of Dees' Stores

MARY DEE



Dees' Stores in the 1930s

Towards the end of the 1890s Thomas Dee and his wife Mary Catherine 'had a dream' which they put into operation. There was a small field in the centre of the village, which they were able to buy, and on it built a double-fronted shop with living quarters and outbuildings. It seemed a big project to take on at their time of life and having brought up their family of six in a fairly small house further up the High Street, one wonders why they wanted as large a property.

Their two sons had emigrated to Canada under a scheme to encourage young men to cross the Atlantic to farm parts of the Prairie. The two younger daughters were married and raising families. By this time there were twelve grandchildren who enjoyed holidays in the country so this probably explained the rather spacious living accommodation. I do not know the date of the opening of the shop but it must have been about 1900. Neither Mr nor Mrs Dee lived to see their brain-child reach its full potential, but she, at least, saw that it was meeting a need and doing well.

In 1910 Harold, the younger son, came home to help his sisters run the business and the three of them worked happily and successfully for the next



Hathaway's in the 1930s. Stan Gorton as delivery man standing beside the Model A Ford van with Mary Barnes. The railings around the shop went in the war effort

ten years. Mary Elizabeth ran the drapery department ably assisted by Margery Coombes who lived across The Green in Church Street. They sold all manner of haberdashery, curtain and dress fabrics, household linen, underwear etc. in the shop on the right of the entrance door. Stairs leading up from this led to a showroom for clothes but this was not a large part of the business. The downstairs shop was light and airy with two counters and shelves from floor to ceiling; with so much stock everything had to be put away in its right place between each sale or there would have been chaos, so this meant a great deal of climbing up and down steps.

The left-hand shop was even larger and equally well stocked though there were a number of things they did not sell on principle. The local pubs had their off-licences, farms supplied milk, a butcher and a baker were at the top of High Street, the Post Office in Church Street sold papers, magazines and stationery products and for many years Arthur Rainbow tracked round the village and surrounding area with his horse-drawn cart laden with a variety of fish and fruit. Of course everyone delivered their goods. Much of Harold's time was taken up with delivering the weekly orders over a wide area, originally by pony and trap, but after the First World War he graduated to a Ford motorcar, which made the job quicker and more comfortable in inclement weather. Ellen was the main bookkeeper, oversaw the grocery department and was cook and housekeeper for the family. Quite a full life! The shop was open from 8.00am

till 6.00pm four evenings a week, 8.00pm on Saturday; on Wednesday early closing day the door was locked at 1.00pm. Sunday trading was unheard of.

The year 1920 saw many changes. Thomas, the elder brother, sold his farm in Canada and returned to enjoy his retirement with his family in his native haunts after over thirty years overseas. He arrived home in time to be best man when his younger brother married the aforementioned Margery Coombes and the couple moved into the house opposite. They name it 'Qu'Appelle' after the area in Saskatchewan where he had worked for about twenty years. (I was born there the following year.) The name caused difficulty with spelling and pronunciation, often called Q Apple, so the present owners were very wise to change it to 'Monk's Gate'. In September Mary Elizabeth died suddenly in church during one Sunday evensong which was a great shock to the family, the congregation and her many customers. It was decided that the time had come to sell the property and the business, so in 1921 Mr J. R. Hathaway and his wife bought the whole shebang and carried on the business much as before. Mrs Hathaway ran the drapery department assisted for many years by Ivy Slatter who lived in the row behind the Red Horse, looking over the orchard to the shop. The garage was not there to block the view till much later on. Mr Hathaway managed the grocery side and kept the books. There were usually two assistants in the shop, the longest server being May Barnes (she may have been christened Mary, but was never called anything but May or 'Barnie'). Her cheerful, friendly personality was much missed when she married Rick Hall and went to live in Oxford.

Stan Gorton was the useful man-about-the-place as well as doing most of the delivery but now with a proper van with the name emblazoned on the sides. There was no pre-packaging or self-service and all goods had to be weighed and put into paper bags or wrapped in greaseproof paper. Chairs were available in front of all the counters and as many customers had a mile or more to walk to the shop, a sit down before returning while their goods were being prepared was very welcome.

The first time I was allowed to go to shop on my own was at about three years old. I was seen across the road (there was not much traffic in those days and what there was, either horse drawn or motor, was quite noisy so it was not dangerous) and sent to buy a lemon as we were having pancakes for dinner. A few minutes later I returned triumphantly with a tin of mustard. As this was something neither of my parents liked I had to go back to put the matter right. In common with most people we had a 'book' which was paid off weekly so no money was involved. When I returned a bit crestfallen I announced 'T'was a lemon I wanted not muttard', so we got the lemon in time for the pancakes. I do not remember the incident but heard the story many times. I wonder if it is the reason that I have never wanted to wear or own anything yellow. Electricity came to the village in approximately 1928 and the telephone soon after; both

added to convenience. Later on a fridge was installed which was useful, but, at first only used in the summer. The war years were not easy with rationing and shortages of many commodities, but maybe the extra people coming to the village as it was a comparatively safe area, and the troops billeted in the old St Michael's Home helped to boost trade.

After twenty-five years Mr and Mrs Hathaway decided to retire and return to their native Abingdon and the business and property were sold to Southern County Stores. It was no longer a family business and became 'Shipton Stores' with a manager and his family living in the house. I left the village in 1947 so know little of the progress during the last sixty years. After over 100 years it is natural that the building has come to the end of its useful life (but useful it has been over many years), and with the coming of the large supermarkets and increased mobility, many private shops are no longer viable although they are missed. I hope the Post Office and Stores in Milton Road will continue for many years to come.



Two views of Shipton House Stores near the end of its life, demolished in 2011



More Memories of Shipton

DOROTHY BROOKES

Mrs Dorothy Brookes, née Coombes, 1911–98, grew up in Shipton under Wychwood during the early part of the twentieth century. See also Wychwoods History 7 pp. 34–41 about her early days in Shipton, and Wychwoods History 10 pp. 30–33 when she remembers the village shops and roundsmen including Dees' Stores. These are her memories of what she did as a child with no radio, television or discos, and of life in domestic service.

No radio, television or discos, Granny? What did you do after school?

Actually there was plenty to do besides the washing-up and running errands.

When the village had its first tennis club, my brother often went to watch. Before long Dad had made us nice wooden bats. We had plenty of used tennis balls the aunties brought us from where they were 'in service'. My brother and his pal scratched a court in the road and put a rope across for a net. It was a change from cricket and, apart from having to move the rope when we heard a car or a horse-and-trap coming, we were able to enjoy ourselves. One evening a couple of 'posh' ladies appeared around the corner. After gazing at us for some moments, one of them remarked, 'Just look at these idiots'. I was in her company many times in later years but I never forgave her. I just wished that the ball had hit her in the back of the neck when she walked disdainfully away!



Bob and Dorothy Brookes, c.1980

There was little traffic in those days so we were able to play games in the streets. There were seasons for the games; spring-time was for skipping-ropes and wooden hoops. We bowled these hoops along to school where we hung them on the peg with our coats. On May-day they came into use for garlands. Bunches of spring flowers were tied on to them before we went 'a-maying'. During the long summer evenings we went bird nesting or played 'houses'. Old lace curtains were hung on bushes or made into long dresses. We made seats on the low stone walls and made imaginary journeys to visit our relations. Autumn soon came and out came the whips and tops and home-made trucks and scooters. As the days got shorter there were spooky games of hide-and-seek and 'warner' in the twilight.

Like my friends I joined the Band of Hope which was run by the chapel folk. We all gathered at the chapel on a Tuesday evening where we sang noisy hymns and learnt recitations and monologues. These were all about getting rid of the 'demon drink'. As none of us had any hope of getting a drink for many years, we signed the pledge willingly. In the autumn there was a Temperance Tea. For several weeks before this event, there were many new recruits.

The Strict Baptists in the next village ran a Reccabites Club. Once a year they were invited to join the Band of Hope for a short service followed by the usual recitations and short sketches, all with a moral to them. It was only polite to let the visitors go into chapel first. This gave us a good opportunity to pelt them with apples from the nearby orchard. If the ring-leader was not a member of our band he would be dragged into chapel by the scruff of his neck and persuaded to sign the pledge. He did not mind this as there was a good supper to be had before we went home.

Some of us were in the church choir as well. This was not nearly so much fun. There was choir practice on Friday nights when the church seemed very spooky without the lights we were used to seeing on Sundays. It was cold in there too and we were glad to run home again. There was, however, the choir tea to look forward to. This was often a little extra treat at the vicarage as there was the Sunday School Christmas tea still to come. After the tea (usually of paste sandwiches and blancmange) there was the prize giving. The prizes were always books suitably inscribed on the fly leaf. During the tea we had kept our eye on the huge Christmas tree standing in the corner laden with small parcels. There were dolls, boxes of soldiers, tin toys filled with chocolates and games. Jigsaw puzzles were not very popular as a piece was usually missing before getting it home. After singing a few songs we made our way home clutching our spoils. If all this sounds as if the children were all out for what they could get, it is well to remember that, for most of them, these 'treats' were all they had to look forward to all the year round. Life was very hard in the villages. Families were very poor and the poverty line of today would seem like the land of plenty.

I remember one Christmas morning when two little girls knocked at our door. When mother opened it they curtsied and said 'Mother sent us to wish you and yours a Happy Christmas'. My mother filled a paper bag with fruit and sweets for the children and sent a bit of tea and sugar and some mince pies 'to thank your mam for her good wishes'. Later on she sent us to the house with some of our old toys. As usual the aunties had stocked us up for another year. At the Pudlicote Turn there was an old lady living in a cave. I wonder what sort of Christmas she had?

Like children of today we all had our 'collections'; birds' eggs, fag cards, car numbers, coloured marbles, pressed flowers and numerous other objects. Many happy hours were spent just swapping or comparing collections. Then there were the comics. Any boy lucky enough to get *Comic Cuts*, *Rainbow* or *Lot-o-Fun*, was never short of friends. My brother had the *Scout* and we followed the adventures of Frank Darrell and his young assistant 'Tinker' before swapping it for *Pals* or some other weekly.

Not many families could afford a daily paper so ours was often loaned for an hour. I collected it from the village Post Office on my way home from school. One lady would wait for me to appear and then grab it for a look at the adverts on the front page, 'the Fashes' she called them. She came from Worcester and considered herself a cut above the village women, but she couldn't afford a newspaper. Finally the paper was divided up between neighbours for fire-lighting. This was instead of straw.

Travelling concert parties came to the village and put on five evening performances and one children's matinée. I don't know how these people managed to make a living but somehow they did. There were usually eight of them. They booked the village hall for a week and spent the Monday delivering leaflets and putting up bills advertising 'East Lynne' and such-like plays. On two nights they did variety. Saturday afternoons were no trouble as they got the children to go on to the stage and recite or sing for most of the performance. They also had to get cheap lodgings in the village. They paid about 1s 6d (and a complimentary ticket for bed and breakfast) then had the rest of their food in the hall kitchen.

There was a 'posh' concert once a year when the vicar organised a musical evening in the hall. There were singers from Oxford, a few dramatic monologues, duets by well-known Oxford performers and violin and cello solos. Mother and dad took my sister and me to this. My brother got in free as he was a programme seller. A similar evening was organised to raise funds for the missionary society. Funds were always wanted for the starving Indians, earthquake victims, African tribes who were being 'converted', leprosy missions and many other worthy causes. Things do not seem to have improved much since my childhood. The call for help still goes on. Perhaps there was too much interference with the natural way of life in other countries.

During the 1920s the YMCA club was opened. Besides being a place where the young men could go to play billiards etc., educational lectures were held there during the winter months. My mother and dad attended these; sometimes there was a lecture with slides so my brother and sister were allowed to take me to these. These events were known as lantern lectures, as the projection was by lantern through glass plates. The screen was large so we had a good view of the pictures. One particular evening stands out in my memory as the subject was 'Oxford and its Colleges'. We were enthralled by the beauty of it all, particularly the 'fan tracery' of the vaulted roofs. When we got home we discovered that we had the same pattern on our humble glass sugar basin. We laughed so much that my mother smacked us and sent us to bed.

Aunt Eva had taught me to play whist so when she gave me a pack of cards I was soon able to teach the rest of the family to play, which was a change from Ludo and Snakes and Ladders. Thus the evenings were spent, families together round the fire and on Sundays friends to tea and a bit of hymn singing to round off the evening.

Domestic Service

It has been estimated that prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 that at least sixty per cent of the female working population of England and Wales was employed as domestic servants. *The Oxford Times* carried several columns of advertisements for 'places' on its front page. The word 'good' was nearly always included in these: 'Good Plain Cook Wanted'; 'Good General Servant Required, Woman for rough'; 'Good well-trained Parlourmaid Wanted, tall, good appearance, able to serve an advantage'. There were adverts for housemaids, first, second and third, between maids, still-room maids, kitchen maids, and scullery maids. In another column nannies, nursery and companion helps ranked along with ladies maids and nursery-governesses.

I always thought the worst aspect of 'service' was the almost total imprisonment. In the poorest of working-class families girls were free to run up and down to school, to play with their friends in the evenings and to enjoy Saturdays doing errands, perhaps minding a younger child or helping 'Mam' with the Saturday cleaning and getting ready for Sunday.

Once they were fourteen and left school everything changed, perhaps a drudging day place for a few weeks then off to 'service'. There were several ways of getting a 'place'. There were Registry Offices in most towns. Here there were long lists of 'places'. The fee was paid by the employer and interviews were arranged. References were required, a first-timer getting these from the schoolmaster and the local vicar. Local tradesmen often knew when there was a good place coming up and would act as go-between. Most villages had a 'maiden lady' who discreetly recruited girls for service in London. She might

give them a little training herself just being able to afford what she was pleased to call her 'treasure or little maid'.

In big establishments the food in the servants' hall was good, but in smaller households food was often rationed, as were soap and candles. Wages were poor and uniform had to be bought and kept smart. I only worked for one employer who provided both morning and afternoon uniform. A typical uniform for a parlour maid consisted of print dresses with starched white bib-aprons and huge stiff white caps for mornings, then change before lunch into black with stiff white collar and five-inch stiff cuffs; a lacy apron and cap threaded with narrow black velvet completed the outfit. Smart black shoes and fine cotton or black silk stockings were worn, all this on less than a pound per week.

I always say that employers assumed that parlour maids had cloth ears; the things talked about at the dinner table were often worthy of newspaper space. Whilst working in London I heard a great deal about the Prince of Wales and Mrs Simpson, Sir Oswald Moseley's goings-on and Hitler's treatment of the Jews, this from first-hand accounts from refugees. A regular guest at the house where I was held the head-buyers job at 'Jacmars'. She knew most of the scandal of the day. What the rag trade and the hairdressers didn't know wasn't worth worrying about.

I could not be said to be a good servant as I always considered I was every bit as good as the people I worked for. I never in any place got up until seven o'clock; if they wanted tea earlier than that it was just too bad. I read all their books and studied law with a 'young gent' who was reading to be a barrister, with questions and answers for hours. Very proud I was when he passed his exams and his name was called and the words 'I call you to the bar and name you barrister' rang out and the white wig was placed on his head. I also studied French with a young lady who was being educated at home. I went with the lady of the house to her dress maker and her tailor. The dress maker lived in a ghastly bed-sitter and was busy copying model clothes from a dress parade we had been to. 'Well, well', I thought, 'this is what goes on behind the scenes is it, designs pinched and copied and made for a third of the price of the originals. It only needed a bit wider pleat or an extra button to make it almost legal.'

The tailor was a Russian refugee. He too worked in a tiny room, but his costumes were a dream. I wore the lovely jersey dress for many years that Mrs S— bought for me from a collection he had. I took a valuable fur coat up to Harrods for cold storage during the summer, just went by bus carrying it over my arm. It was certainly an education living in that house. From conversations overheard in the dining room I gathered that war was coming, so not wishing to be in London when it came I gave notice and returned to Oxfordshire.

Some employers could never keep their staff. The same addresses and adverts would appear in *The Oxford Times* month after month. Fyfield Road in

Oxford was notorious for the comings and goings. Girls were expected to work all day and far into the night. Many houses had damp basement kitchens and long flights of stairs up to the drawing room. Coal had to be carried up and ashes down. I worked in Oxford for a very short while, the only place I went to where there were children. The least said about that experience the better.

Time off for most girls was one half day per week. As the washing-up had to be done and the dinner table laid up, it was usually three o'clock before one could get away. It wasn't so bad if you could get home for a few hours. The washing allowance was usually 1s 6d per week so if your mother would do it you had to remember to bring the dirty and exchange for the clean. No food after lunch on your half day, mother had to provide both tea and supper. When I was young I remember several girls coming to tea on Sundays, they just had nowhere to go. No-one worried or cared what the maids did on their half day, as long as they were in by 9.30pm.

Fortnightly Sunday mornings you were expected to go to church, and no matter how long the sermon you had to be back and changed ready to take the lunch in. In a smaller household you had to cook the dinner if it was the cook's turn to go to church. Retired Indian Army people were never popular as employers. The work in farmhouses was very hard too. Here there were big areas of stone floors and often dairies to clean. I liked working for the village doctor. I took care of the surgeries, did the cooking, made certain that the doctor had clean shoes and his coat was brushed before going on his rounds, and delivered the accounts for him. His wife never came into the kitchen or interfered with the running of the household. She had another maid who was willing to take her tea at 6.30am. I was just given a list of the food to order and cook.

This much loved man was kind and considerate. He believed in more freedom for the 'girls'. Dinner was early in the evening so that we could go out from eight until ten. I decided the time had come to move on and I went to London to stay with my brother and his wife and got work up there for four years. Sadly the doctor died a week after I left. When I came back again I went to work for his successor and soon had the place back to normal. I spring cleaned the surgeries and renewed my acquaintance with the patients. I knew most of them by name and was able to tell the doctor who was who. As before I did the cooking and insisted that he had his meals on time. His wife was able to devote her time to her babies and the huge garden. They were forever grateful and have remained friends with me ever since. I married Bob just before the war started when domestic service ended almost overnight. There was a 'call to arms' and plenty of vacancies in the better-paid jobs in the munitions factories.

Women who had never before struck a match to light a fire or even washed a tea-cup, found themselves taking orders from others. The old order

changed and is now part of history. Much more could be written about being 'in-service', the utter loneliness, the poor food, often jealous and unkind upper servants who made life a misery for the lesser mortals. I never had to send my wages home, but some girls did. There were the eccentric employers to contend with too. I had discovered years before that while the poor were 'daft' the rich were described as 'eccentrics'. Also a maid who pilfered small things was called a 'thief'. Her mistress who fancied pretty objects from her friend's drawing room was classed as a 'kleptomaniac'. There were tales of coins being hid under the stair-carpet. This was to test the honesty of the new maid.

The answer to this was to keep the coin moving a few steps down. Then there was the 'white glove test'. This was to ensure that the dusting was done properly. One mistress had her friends report to her if they saw her maids looking out of the bedroom windows. Another had them report if they saw the maids without their hats on. They thought nothing of enticing a good maid away from their friend. 'My dear, I know how fond you are of your mistress, but if you were thinking of making a change, perhaps another £2 a year, just mention it to your mother'.

Mrs Beeton's *Cookery and Household Management* was in most kitchens. I never saw the 'Missus' reading it. The new bride is advised not to give old finery to servants. A recipe is given for dripping cake suitable for the kitchen. One cook I worked with regularly copied out recipes from this book, which she sent to the woman's magazine of the day as original recipes. She gathered quite a useful store of articles for her 'bottom drawer'.

'No followers' was the rule in most households. As most houses had a back stair it was easy enough to overcome this. 'They' never came into the kitchen anyway. While the young ladies sat waiting for suitable callers, there was no shortage of back-door lovers. One could always water the wine, the whisky or the milk. It was a pity you couldn't water petrol. The little economies practiced would fill a book. The lining paper from packets of tea were saved to line cake tins, as were the bits of greaseproof from under the meat; these were carefully washed. Blue sugar bags were filled with damp small coal. The coal deliveries were watched too and the bags counted as they were carried in.

Pay day was a very sore point. 'They' could go out and forget it was the first of the month. That way they got another day's interest on their money. They didn't like paying the insurance contribution and would grudgingly pay a little money towards a few stamps. It was beneath their dignity to hold the card. Christmas gifts were usually lengths of cotton cloth to make into dresses to wear in their service. Only the doctor gave pretty necklaces, or nice gloves and matching scarves and a few extra hours off. He never needed to advertise for maids. One wished that there had been more like him.

My mother often told me tales of her days 'in service'. Most girls left school when they were twelve or thirteen years old. Those who were recruited

for work in London did not come home again unless they changed their 'place'. The young nursery maids had to help the housemaids once their charges were in bed. Should the family be going out to dine or to the theatre, mother was sent to the Mews to order a carriage. The streets were not very safe for young girls to walk at night. A friend of the family seeing her at the Mews one night walked back with her and told the house keeper that the manservant should go instead. Rose the housemaid was already missing; there was easier money to be picked up on the streets. These poor girls were called 'dolly-mops', some of them just went out in the evenings when they were supposed to be in bed. Another harrowing time was when she was at a big house at Stow. Once a month she walked home with a friend who was in the kitchen, they had miles of hard rough roads to travel carrying their washing. The other girl was poorly and they often rested by the wayside. They had a melodeon and played and sang their way back in the evening. At least they learned to cook and sew and eventually became good wives and mothers.

The Cross Papers

JACK AND JOAN HOWARD-DRAKE

When Dr Ware published her edited version of the Shipton Constable's Book¹ in 2005 she dedicated it 'to Mrs Kitty Wiggins who appreciated the importance of her great-grandfather Richard Cross's archives'. She added a note 'On the death of Mrs Kitty Wiggins, Shipton's elderly postmistress, the Shipton Constable's account book came to light among other papers carefully preserved in her great-grandfather's desk. Her sister Miss Jessica Coombes gave it to me "for safe keeping, because you will know what to do with it" ...' Later Miss Coombes gave Dr Ware the rest of Richard Cross's papers and she passed them on to the Society. These are the 'Cross Papers'. They are a miscellaneous collection of booklets, various pieces of paper, some no more than scraps, frequently written on in faint pencil, and a number of printed documents. All these have been transcribed and the complete transcription is available on the Society's website at www.wychwoodshistory.org. This article, which is also on the website, attempts to put the essence of the material in narrative form.

The Cross family

Members of the Cross family appear frequently throughout the Shipton parish registers. The earliest entry is a baptism dated 1596 but the first entry that can be identified as referring to Richard Cross's ancestors is the marriage of his grandfather. (There are three previous marriages, any one of which could be of Cross's great-grandparents.) His grandfather, Thomas Cross, married Mary Ivins in November 1730 and they had nine children, the youngest of whom, Richard, was Richard Cross's father. The parish registers record the baptism of Cross senior on 23 February 1755 and his burial aged seventy-six on 17 August 1826. Richard senior was a weaver and general merchant and there is a booklet in the Cross papers in which he kept notes of his business transaction. In it he wrote '1780 Richard Cross his Book he was Born March ye 15 in the year or Our Lord 1750'. He was probably wrong as his brother Thomas was baptised in December 1749 although there may be mistakes in the parish registers. His wife was Jane Cox who was seven months pregnant when he married her. They had four children, three daughters and a son Richard, our Richard.

This Richard was baptised on 16 March 1788. He married Elizabeth Slatter in Shipton on 1 January 1821 anticipating his marriage as his father

had done; his eldest daughter Sarah was born six months after the marriage in August. He had two other daughters, Harriet in 1824 and Sophia in 1826. His wife Elizabeth died in March 1827, aged forty-three, and among his papers is a bill from R.H. Pytt, a Burford doctor, for four journeys and for pills, mixtures and cough drops for her. Sarah died aged six in August of that year. This left him with two small daughters, Harriett aged three and Sophia aged eleven months.

One of Richard's sisters had married a John Powell and there is an embarrassingly sanctimonious letter dated July 1827 from John to Richard on the death of Richard's wife. Among many exhortations to Richard to bow to the will of the Lord is a paragraph which shows that Sophia had been placed in the care of her aunt. She was in good health, had one tooth and was very fond of her swing. John, was glad to hear that the children (i.e. Harriet and Sarah) were better; sadly Sarah died a month later.

Richard Cross died in August 1852 aged sixty-four. His will, in which he described himself as weaver and parish clerk, is disappointingly brief.² He appointed his daughter Harriet sole executor and required her to sell his freehold property, which consisted of a house, shop and garden, and left the proceeds to her. A year later Harriet married William Coombes, whose descendants later ran the Shipton Post Office.³

Richard Cross senior

Richard Cross senior's spelling in the notebook referred to above may perhaps be described as personal and some of his entries are difficult to interpret. Nearly half are for weaving ('waven' or 'waving') without specifying the product; named materials are cloth, apron, linsey⁴ ('lincy'), holland⁵ ('ol(l)e'), woollen and thread. 'Check' and 'medley' are presumably patterns. There are references to the dressing⁶ ('dresen') and plain dressing, ('plen dresen') of materials and to dyeing them.

One of the orders from one of Cross senior's customers, a Mrs Warner, shows the style of the entries in his account book.

Mr(s) Warner Hor Bill - 17 yards of lincy dres 2s 10d; 6 yards of lincy green 3s 6d; 4 yards of lincy dresen 8d.

4 yards and half of olen 2s 3d; 2 yad of olen nap 1s 8d; 4 pound of olen bluw 2s; 3 pound of bluw linen 2s 6d.

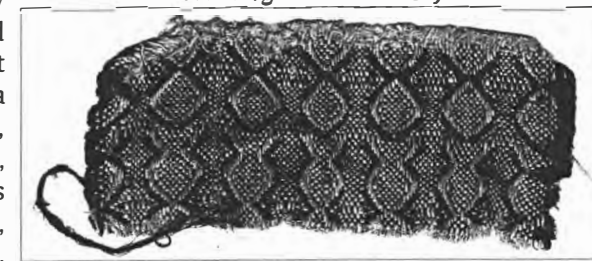
11 yards of medley 3s 8d; 3 yards of White Cod [? cord] 9d; 2 yards of brown nap 1s 6d; 1 pound and half Blu 1s 3d - £1 1s 7d.

Mrs Warner placed several such orders and it looks as though she, too, may have been in the textile business;⁷ but she also bought 'a pair of hose black' for three pence so Cross senior seems to have been selling made-up goods as well as material.

An interesting feature of Cross senior's booklet is his drafts of weaving patterns. They are for 'Hoka Back' (Huckaback), 'Dyament Lincy' (diamond linsey), 'Double Dicament (double diamond), and two unspecified, one headed 'Emms and oes'. There is also a small piece of woven double diamond material.



Weaving diamond linsey



Woven double diamond material

There are not many sales of provisions recorded in Cross senior's booklet but those that there are cover a wide range: barley, grain, beans, butter, cheese, sugar, brimstone, onions, potatoes ('tater'), peas, sows, pigs, pig meat, salt, meal, flour, bread, drink, candles, soap, boards, wood, lamp oil, stockings.

Cross senior also lent money. For example he recorded that 'Mr Tarn "Boroad" [borrowed] of me 1s'.

Richard Cross junior

Like his father before him Richard Cross was a weaver and general merchant and like him he kept a small book in which he recorded among other things sales of woven material between 1822 and 1828. The book is *The New Daily Journal or Complete Account Book for the Year of our Lord, 1778*, which contains some seventy-five pages of the sort of information usually to be found in diaries. A third of the weaving entries in the notebook do not record what was being woven, customers being charged by the yard or by the ell (1¼ yards) or for 'weaving'. The other entries show the product as 'aproning' (two orders), blanketing (one order), cloth (thirteen orders), huckaback⁸ (six orders), sheeting (twelve orders), table linen (seven orders), thread (fifteen orders), towelling (one order) and weaving (thirty orders). Here, too, the charges were for the most part by the ell or yard except for thread almost all of which was sold by the pound. The charges were 1s 11d a yard for 'aproning', 2s 0d a yard for blanketing, from 7½d to 2s 0d an ell for cloth, from 9d to 2s 0d a yard for huckaback, from 6d to 2s 0d an ell for

sheeting, from 9d to 2s 6d a yard for table linen, 10d a yard for towelling and 6d to 10d a yard or an ell for unspecified weaving. Thread was sold at about 9d a pound but two orders were charged one at 6d and one at 6½d an ell.

Cross's best customers in the period covered by the notebook were Sir John and Lady Reed of Shipton Court who bought seventy-five and a half yards of huckaback, 162¼ ells of sheeting including one order of 102 ells, four yards of table linen, forty-two yards of towelling, forty-six yards of cloth and 201 yards and 133 ells of unspecified woven material. They also bought one and a quarter pounds of thread. In all there were seventy-eight separate orders from thirty named customers, most of whom made repeat orders.

Three orders, recorded on separate pieces of paper, include one from Lady Reed which Cross wrote out as:

one Dozen pound of flax wove into knife Cloths which are to be plain & wove half yard wide.

The other Dozen pound is to be wove into the common Huckaback pattern for China Clothes, dressed Clothes & etc

The second, from a Miss Sheriff, was for:

one piece of towelling like Lady Reade's. 30 Yd close diamond like Lady Reade's for Kitchen table Clothes. 30 Yd of plain for Round Towels. 3 pr of sheets at 3/6 per Yard 3 pr of Do at 3/- per Yard.

The third was from a Mr D. Rodney Nunay who wrote to Cross from the Rectory, Brampton Brian, Ludlow on 9 February 1842 to say 'I beg you to send me 1 Peice of Towelling at 1/6 [and] 1 do. do. at 1/3'. Another note dated December 1842 says 'I send you a cheque for the amount of yr acc.'

We have a fuller record of Cross's purchases of the raw materials connected with his trade. One supplier was the firm of H. G. Busby of Moreton in Marsh⁹ for which there are receipted bills for the period 1828 to 1844 together with some undated. A couple of dozen were on printed billheads; most of them are on odd pieces of paper. The bulk of Cross's purchases from Busby was of unbleached yarn but there were occasional orders for, for example, white or grey yarn. There were no orders for bleached yarn from Thomas and Hannah Keck of Chipping Norton but several for white and brown yarn, fine yarn and flax. There were also payments for 'cleanings' by the dozen, one for ten dozen flax cleanings at 6s 0d a dozen. All Keck's bills were on plain pieces of paper. From J. Wall of Banbury 'Rope, Twine and Flax Manufacturer, Curled Hair &', Cross bought mostly tow.¹⁰ Wall's bills were all on printed billheads and dated 1827-28.

On 26 October 1826 Cross bought a number of items from J. D. Charles of Stow on the Wold, 'Linen & Woolen Draper, Haberdasher & Silk Mercer'. Not all the items on his bill are readable and one or two are somewhat obscure. What, for example, were one 'Callico' and eight yards of black stuff? What is clear is that he bought some silk thread, some ribbons and gauze, three-quarters of a yard of expensive cloth, (it cost him 4s 1d), two pairs of hose, a pair of kid, gloves for 1s 9d, a pair of long gloves for 1s 6d and a pair of short cotton gloves for 10d. Perhaps he was topping up his wardrobe.

The booklet in which Richard Cross recorded his orders for weaving also included sales of food between 1822 and 1826. The main item was cheese at prices from 4½d to 9d per pound closely followed by bacon at similar prices. Other foods were various cuts of meat, fat and lard and occasional sales of bread, flour and potatoes. There was one sale of a store pig. The vicar, the Reverend Mr Phillimore is recorded as buying only cheese and bacon from Cross and there are no purchases of provisions of any sort by the residents of Shipton Court which was presumably self-sufficient.

Cross also had a considerable business in wood. There were frequent orders for hurdles (once described as 'flakes') and for thorn, poles, willow sticks, stakes and bonds (presumably binding material) and of faggots, perhaps for fuel. We can also see from the booklet where he got some of his supplies. For example one page reads:

Load wood forest
2 Ditto Boynall
1½ Load Bruern
1 Load Poles Fifild Hill
1 Load Cockes Hill
2 Load East Ground
1 Load Shakin Hook

Among the Cross papers are three printed notices of sales of underwood by auction, two at the Crown Inn in Shipton and one in the auctioneer's office in Woodstock. The auctioneers were Mr London, Mr Churchill and Mr Turner. The wood came from Conduit and Cowlease (Cowleys) coppices in Bruern and from Hop Coppice and the upper part of Coombs Coppice in Tangley. Each lot was identified by the number of braids in it, ranging from five to twenty-eight and a half. There is nothing to show the size of a braid and no relevant definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

On one notice of sale, someone, presumably Cross, has marked the sale price of each lot and on another the sale price of half of them

There are two receipts for wood that Cross bought at auction in Shipton, not the auctions for which there are bills of sale. They indicate that the bidding

was for so much a braid. At the Crown Inn on 19 December 1845 Cross bought lot twelve, twenty-one and three quarter braids of underwood from Birch Coppice 'at 4' and paid £4 7s 0d; and on another occasion he bought at a sale at 'Shipton Wychwood', lot six, eighteen braid underwood from Highwood Coppice, Bruern, at 3s 6d and paid £3 3s 0d.

There are a few pieces of paper dated 1815-16 which show Cross in partnership with Mark Cox in transactions involving large quantities of timber. For example on 28 February 1815 Cross and Cox bought from Mr Pratt of Leafield 566 feet of 'elm timber' at 1s 10d per foot for a total of £51 16s 0d. On the day Cross paid £20 on account. Cox paid another £20 on account on 24 July. It is not clear how the account was settled. As an example of a sale Mr Clifford bought from Cross and Cox on 19 April 1815 '2662 foot of Inch Board at £1:1:0 per hundred £27:18:6, 293 foot 3 qrs Board at 18s per hundred £2:12:6' and on 23 June he bought '2027 foot of Inch Board at £1:1:0 per hundred £21:5:6, 1084 foot of 3 qrs Board at 18s per hundred £9:18:8' - a total of £61 11s 2d. The bill shows that Clifford paid £20 on 12 May and £20 on 25 June. Again there is no record of a final settlement. One note shows Cross and Cox settling between themselves - 'Mark Cox settled with Richd Cross for oak Timber Left Due £3:13:6'.

There are a few entries in the booklet other than for weaving and provisions, for example occasional bills for washing, for haymaking and for reaping wheat. One cryptic entry reads 'Faggots Notridge, Thorns 9 Hundred 70s 80 Longtails', longtails being the local word for pheasants.¹¹

One or two entries show that like his father Cross was lending money. When accounts were paid off he wrote 'settled', but there are three entries for example where he wrote that he had received money from R. Jones without stating the amount. More specifically 'he lent Mr Pratt one shilling'. There is no suggestion of interest being charged.

One entry appears to refer to a journey to London by coach and horse. It reads:

Turnpikes on the road	0	0	4
	0	1	2
At Beaconsfield	0	5	9
Knightsbridge	0	0	3
Smithfield	0	1	2
Turnpike	0	0	2
Knightsbridge	0	1	8
Smithfield	0	1	0
Smithfield	0	2	8
Coach	0	1	6

Knightsbridge Horse	0	4	10
Turnpike	0	1	6
	0	0	2

Was this perhaps a trip to Smithfield to buy meat?

Private purchases

There are some pieces of paper which appear to show Cross's purchases for domestic consumption. They are running accounts over quite long periods with purchases every two or three days and settlement at the end. For example, there are ten accounts for Richard Sims for the years 1823 to 1826 with one for 1842. One for 1823 runs from 20 August to 30 December before being settled. There is a Richard Sims, butcher of Shipton, in the 1851 census and Cross's bills are for various cuts of beef, mutton and pork, and for bacon and suet. There are also regular purchases of loaves and flour and one of six penny worth of 'blacking'.

There are bills for 1824 to 1826 with one for 1831 which show that he regularly bought bread from John Harris on six-month accounts that were settled each May and October with occasional purchases of beans, flour and sugar. In 1824 he bought currants, lump sugar, butter, tea, plums, lard, bacon, candles and yellow soap from M. Upstone; and in 1826 he bought lump sugar, butter, cheese, tea, loaves and candles from T. A. Haynes.

One account with H. S. Franklin runs from 28 July 1829 to 17 November 1830 before being settled and shows Cross buying white and brown loaves, sugar, tea, soap, candles and tobacco on an almost daily basis, buying butter just twice and an ounce of coffee just once. One bill for the period 5 November to 23 June 1836 has him buying loaves regularly from William Reynolds. Another supplier was Thomas Gilson for whom there are accounts from 1839 to 1848. Cross regularly bought flour, loaves, cheese, butter, lard, sugar, tea, bacon and candles. He once bought some plums and some 'jap blacking'.

In 1840 and 1841 he bought meat regularly from Robert Spencer with one purchase of eight gallons of beer for 5s 2d. Cross bought some flour from J. Perkins in 1842 and then between 17 November 1846 and 24 August 1847 bought flour from him every few days and twice bought malt and hops.

It is difficult to reconcile the purchase of the earlier of these items with Cross selling some of them himself from 1822 to 1826 as shown by the booklet. There is nothing to suggest that he was buying wholesale to sell retail.

There are records of payments to Mrs Pugh for washing and of settling the lady's account for the ingredients for making beer, six ounces of hops, four ounces of treacle, four ounces of sugar and one quart of bran, all to be mixed with fourteen gallons of water with a little barm. In 1845 Cross paid H. Holland of Burford 1s 0d for a nipple for a gun.

Richard Cross became parish clerk on the death of his uncle John, the previous clerk and Cross inherited wide responsibilities not least in the administration of the poor law. (Civil parishes in the modern sense were not established until the Local Government Act of 1894 and at the time the ecclesiastical parish of Shipton still included Milton, Leaffield, Lyneham, Ramsden and Langley.)

Before the introduction of the new poor law in 1834, responsibility for the care of the poor lay with individual parishes. The first part of the accounts of Shipton's overseers of the poor for the period 1830 to 1847¹² show how the old system worked. Cash payments and some personal attention (outdoor relief) were given to individuals according to their need as assessed by the overseers. In 1830 Shipton made cash payments to thirty individuals and paid for a nurse. The new law did away with this method of helping the poor and replaced it with unions of groups of parishes under the management of guardians of the poor, and outdoor relief was replaced by admission to a workhouse. The Chipping Norton Union which included the Wychwood villages was formed in 1835 and a new workhouse was built in London Road, Chipping Norton.

Among Cross's papers are a couple of copies of a notice about the nomination of candidates for election as guardians in 1847. (These notices had to be fastened to church doors, and Cross's copies are holed in each corner. He used them as scrap paper to do calculations on the backs.) The notice gave the number to be elected for each parish in the union including one each for Ascott, Bruern, Fifield, Langley, Leaffield, Lyneham, Milton and Shipton. Voters, that is those who had paid the poor rate in their parishes, were each entitled to a certain number of votes depending on the value of their property. Those with property rated at less than £50 got one vote, between £50 and £100, two votes, between £100 and £150, three votes, between £150 and £200, four votes, between £200 and £250 five votes and over £250, six votes. Nominations on a prescribed form had to be returned either to the clerk to the guardians or to named individuals in each parish, in Ascott to Mr Gomm, in Bruern to Mrs Pratt, in Fifield, to Thomas Hambidge, in Langley, to George Wilsdon, in Leaffield, to Charles Ferriman, in Lyneham, to Edward Freeman, in Milton to T. G. Ansell and in Shipton to Richard Bould.

Under the 1834 poor law parishes had to contribute to the expenses incurred by the guardians who assessed what each parish should pay. Among Cross's papers is a printed notice dated 10 January 1848 from the clerk to the Union requiring the parish to send in an account of the amount for Shipton 'according to the last valuation or poor rate'. A small piece of paper, conveniently dated 14 January 1848, shows that Shipton sent a swift reply. It says 'The Rateable Value of Shipton Parish is £2023:12:3 Excused out of that 48:15:10 Leaving on the present Rate Book Rateable Value £1974:16:6'.

There are a number of hand-written notices on half sheets of paper in the Cross papers, again with signs of having been pinned to the church door and later used as scrap, announcing the making of the poor rates, one at sixpence in the pound, the others at one shilling in the pound. There are five for Shipton, four for Milton and some torn scraps. The collection of some of these levies in the period 1845 to 1848 is shown by the stubs in four purpose-made poor rate receipt books sold by W. Potts of Banbury, recording the individual assessment of the ratepayers in Shipton and the receipts for payment. At a shilling in the pound the highest assessment for 1845 was Richard Bould at £14 9s 1½d, closely followed by William Bould at £13 17s 11d and T. Young at £12 11s 0d. The lowest assessments were Mr Harris at 2½d and John James and J. Turner at 1s 0d. Richard Cross weighs in at a modest 1s 2d. For some reason Sir John Chandos Reade at Shipton Court gets let off with £1 15s 11d.

There are further detailed accounts in Cross's papers for the collection of what are called first, second and third rates in 1845 and 1846. There is nothing to show what these were for but they list the same names and payments as the receipt books and are clearly poor rates. Perhaps they were called first, second and third rates because they were collected at intervals each year and were linked with the quarterly returns which the parish had to make to the Union. They were collected by named collectors Richard Cross, John Spencer and Richard Spencer. John Spencer seems to have been mainly responsible as there are entries showing Cross passing on to him what he has collected himself. The amounts uncollected are noted and most accounts list the ratepayers and what they paid.

The quarterly returns to the Union appear in the overseers' accounts after 1835. There is, however a copy of a return in Cross's papers.

Union of Chipping Norton - Parish of Shipton
Half Year Ending Lady Day

Receipts

1847 In hand from Last Quarter 69:10:7½

1848 Jan^y 12th By a Poor Rate 98:14:10

168:13:5½

Receipts 168:13:5½

Disbursements 138:4:6

In Hand 30:8:11½

Disbursements

1847 Nov^{br} 10 Treasurer of Union 63:0:0

Constables Bill 1:3:6

Expences with Jury List 3:0

1848 Jan^y 26 Treasurer of \Union 71: 0: 0

R H Pytt Bill¹³ 1: 1: 0

Signing Poor Rate 1: 0

Receipt Check Book 1: 0

Clerks Fees on the Appointment of Constables 8: 6

Clerks Fees on the Appointment of Overseers 9: 0

Overseers Bill for Journeys to Chipping Norton 17: 6

138: 4: 6

The parish needed the authority of the Justices of the Peace before paying the constable the £1 3s 6d listed above from poor law funds and there is a printed order requiring the overseers to pay Arthur Cross, constable, for the performance of certain duties as specified. Unfortunately the specification is 'As per bill or account attached' which is missing. An earlier order authorising payment of £1 18s 6d and signed for the justices by James Haughton Langston and Robert Phillimore (the vicar as a JP), is no more informative.

There is also an order from the justices ordering the payment from poor law funds of the 8s 6d listed above on the appointment of constables. It is for 'Issuing Notices and appointment of Constables, Oaths of Office etc' 7s 6d, and 'Order on Overseers' 1s 0d.

The money raised by the parish was paid to the credit of the Union at the Chipping Norton branch of Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Stratford-upon-Avon Banking Company and there are receipts for payments of £51, £63, £71 and £76. The accounts were audited by the auditor of the Union and there are three printed notices about this in Cross's papers. Two say that Shipton's accounts will be audited in May and October (no year was given but a printed notice to the overseers suggests it was 1847), the May audit at the Chipping Norton workhouse, the October audit at the White Horse in Chipping Norton. The accounts would therefore be open to inspection by ratepayers, for the first audit at the Red Horse (William Baylis), for the second at the house of Richard Cross. The third notice was for Lyneham, the audit being in October in Chipping Norton and the accounts available for inspection at Mrs Pratt's house in Lyneham.

Another aspect of care in the community is found in a copy of 'Rules and Orders to be Observed in a Friendly Society', printed by J. Shayler of Witney. This society was established on 6 May 1811 at John Smith's house, 'known by the Sign of the Crown at Shipton under Wychwood ...' It was 'for the purpose of raising and supporting a Stock or fund to aid and assist each other on just and reasonable occasions, when sick, maimed, or superannuated, to bury their dead, and to promote and encourage peace, love, and unity'.

Constable's rate

There are three accounts headed constable's rate, one of which includes the assessments on which the rate payers were taxed and seven accounts headed 'bye rates'. These appear in the constable's book¹⁴ and are clearly the constable's rate by another name.

Other Taxes

A small piece of paper listing the Bye rates at £17 10s 10d and three other rates, Church rates at £16 9s 7d, Highway rates at £57 5s 3d and County rates at £35 11s 4d. On the back is written 'Shipton Church Levy 22:12:11 - Poor Rate at 1s in the Pound in the year 1843 98:17:8'. There are no details about these three rates in the Cross papers although the County rate appears regularly in the Overseers' accounts post-1834.

There is a copy of one account in the Cross papers which includes the County rate and gives some indication of the day to day administration of the poor law. It is written very faintly in pencil on a scrap of paper and some of it is unreadable.

Amount due to Thomas Brookes	10 12 3½
Due to [?parish] Officers	12 10 2½
Overseers Warrant	8 6
Rates & Receipt Books	
Constables fees	3 8 0
Removal services	19 0
April 30 - November ?	59 0 0
Unreadable	
Signed Poors' Rate	1 0
June 18th County Rate	8 17 10
Paid the Guardians' for the Examination & Removal Order of Caroline Hanby	17 6
Conveyance of " "	1 3 1
Postage & Letters	2 7
April 13th Paid the Treasurer of the Chipping Norton Union	57 0 0
Signed the Poors' Rate	1 0
September 24th County Rate	6 18 4

Clerk's fees & Expenses [next unreadable]	1 6
House room	13 0

There are various pieces of paper which bring to light other odds and ends of administering the poor law. There is a notice of a meeting in the vestry to nominate overseers, another of a meeting of ratepayers to decide how best to repay the overseers the money they had advanced to the poor and a bill from Mr Gibbard 'for the use of room to pay the poor from the 22 of May to the 22 of June 13 weeks 6s 6d'.

Putting together the various accounts in the papers it is possible to construct what is probably a pretty accurate list of Shipton ratepayers in the early nineteenth century. This is at Appendix A. They seem to have had quite a demand on their purses.

Measuring

There are several small notebooks and a bundle of odds and ends of paper which record a series of measurements of named areas of land, The length and breadth of the areas were taken and where they were irregular in shape, the maximum and minimum. The measurements were apparently made in links, a link being one hundredth part of a chain. They were then converted into acres, roods and poles on the basis of ten square chains to the acre, where necessary taking the mean of the maximum and minimum measurements. (A few entries include the long division used to work out the acreage.) For example in measuring one of the poor's allotments the breadth was given as 719 and 714 links and the length as 503. Taking the breadth as 716.5 this gives 36.15 square chains or 3.6 acres, recorded as three acres, two roods and sixteen poles. A more irregular shaped field farmed by Mr Maddox and called the 'field upon side road' was measured at breadth 1443/1812 and length 3310/3707. Taking the mean figures as 1627.5 and 3508.5 the number of square chains is a fraction over fifty-seven, recorded as fifty-seven acres, three roods and nine poles. Not all the calculations work out quite as neatly as this but it seems safe to assume that it was the method used throughout.

The purpose of these measurements is not clear. They look as though they may be measuring for either the tithe computation awards or the enclosure awards with Cross working for the official surveyors; but they are undated and there is no direct evidence to connect them with these awards. However, there is a printed document on which is a handwritten schedule of enclosure in Shipton, a notice of a meeting in the Butcher's Arms to hear objections to the proposed enclosure of Milton Common and a meeting, also at the Butcher's Arms, to consider the appointment of trustees and the management of an allotment

of nineteen acres, three roods and twenty-six perches as an equivalent to the right to cut furze on Milton Common field.

There is also a notice of a meeting to be held at the Crown Inn to consider whether those claiming common of estover¹⁵ and the right to cut furze and coarse grass on Shipton Downs were so entitled and whether two thirds of those present would agree that they should be treated as a class. There had to be at least twenty claimants at the meeting. There is a note on the back of the notice that copies had been affixed to the church doors in Shipton, Leafield [chapel] and Ramsden [chapel] on 29 June 1851. These documents would indicate that Cross was in some way involved with enclosure in Shipton.

Some of the measurements did not give just length and breadth but included farm work, the reaping and mowing of wheat, barley and beans, the hoeing of turnips and swedes, the picking up of swedes [pea aken] and breast ploughing, much of it on the Downs with mention of Milton and Milton Heath and a few other places including the Peat Pits. Some of the entries are dated, covering the period 1845 to 1847. One is dated 8 August 1851. Sometimes the name of the labourer doing the work is given as well as the name of the farmer employing him. An example taken at random is 'Mr Kimber. Wells Heads, Tho^s Carpenter, Breast Plowing' four acres, two roods, fifteen poles'.

Some of the measurements include in addition a price of three pence an acre which appear mostly as debts to Richard Cross as in

1846 May Mr Brookes to Richard Cross measuring of Breast plowing on the Downs @ 3d per acre	6a 3r 11p	1s 8d
24th July measuring of Turnips howing on the Downs @ 3d per acre	2a 2r 5p	7½d
14th April 1847 measuring of Breast plowing at Milton @ 3d per acre	17a	4s 4½d
May as above @ 3d per acre	2a 3r 9p	8½d
July " " " "	1a 2r 7p	5d
19th August measuring of Wheat reapen @ 3d per acre	8a 3r 1p	2s 2d
March 1848 measuring of Breast plowing on Milton Heath	3a 3r 4p	1s 0d
18th July measuring of Turnip howing @ 3d per acre	6a 3r 5p	1s 8d

It looks as though these are measurements of the amount of work done by hired labour, although it is difficult to see why a farmer should not know the extent of an area he was employing men to work on. But if this is what these figures cover they can perhaps be taken as showing that when Cross charged for measuring the area of work done he usually charged three pence an acre. There are inconsistencies. One measurement is at six pence an acre. A few of the bills are between individuals other than Cross and of four of these one is at 7s an acre, one at 7s 6d an acre, and two at 8s an acre; but no other explanation suggests itself.

Whatever the explanation of the figures linked to farm work they afford us a glimpse of the work being done. Of that mentioned above turnip hoeing was the commonest with several entries being noted 'second time'. Breast ploughing appears frequently. A detailed description of breast ploughs and ploughing is at www.antiquefarmtools.info/page.htm. Quoting from it, the term breast plough is a misnomer. Essentially it was a large paring spade rather than a plough and was used mainly in the process of paring and burning, that is paring turf and other surface vegetation in short strips, turning it and leaving it to dry. When dry it was burnt and the ashes scattered and ploughed in or added to manure. The legs played a major part in pushing the spade through the soil. Breast ploughing rapidly died out from the 1850s although the spade was used in the Cotswolds as late as the 1930s and 1940s, mainly as a garden or allotment tool.

Another set of figures for which there is no explanation consists of four lists of names, each in a slightly different layout. In the first the names are numbered consecutively and are followed by three columns headed chs. s. d. thus:

		Chs	s	d
1	Robert Harris	1	4	4
2	Richard Becett	1	4	4
3	John Cross	1	4	4
4	William Faulkner	1	4	4
5	Simon Eatwell	1	4	4
6	Charles Turner	½	3	3
7	David Cox	½	3	3
8	Limbrow Townsend	¾	3	3
...
34	William Smith	¾	4	4

The second and third lists are in the same format but all entries are for ½ch and for 2s 2d.

The fourth list is numbered apparently at random and without chs. s. d.

Whatever the explanation of these various measurements and lists, they show that there was a fair amount of casual work in the farming community. From the odd booklets and pieces of paper it is possible to draw up a list, undated, of farmers, the men they employed, the work carried out and sometimes the area worked. For example, Thomas Carpenter worked for Mr Bould, Mr Brookes, Mr Kimber and Mr Young at breast ploughing at Well Heads and Egg Farm, barley and wheat mowing on the Downs, wheat reaping at Barn Piece and at something unspecified at Shipton Gate. George Turner worked for Mr Kimber, Mr Maddox, Mr Sims and Mr Young at breast ploughing on the Downs and 'on the stubble', pulling up swedes, turnip hoeing and wheat reaping. The farmers and workers have been identified and a full list is at Appendix B.

Incidentals

The Cross papers afford us occasional glimpses into the small change of everyday life in Shipton in the first half of the nineteenth century. There is a printed notice of a command by Queen Victoria ordering a general fast on 24 March 1847 'in consideration of the heavy judgements with which Almighty God is pleased to visit the iniquities of this land ...'.¹⁶ One wonders how many Shiptonians went without their meals that day; but as the Queen ordered that prayers and thanksgivings be read in churches on 17 October of the same year in 'gratitude for the late abundant harvest', it looks as though the fast had some effect in lightening the gloom. Furthermore she ordered that there should be a general thanksgiving on 15 November for 'the abatement of the grievous disease which has visited England and Ireland', presumably the widespread cholera epidemic of that year.

There was another call to good behaviour in two copies of *The Appeal* for 1852, 'a magazine for the people', price one halfpenny, which drew attention to Proverbs 16.25, 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'.

Even so, Richard Cross may have tried his hand at a flutter. There is a printed letter from George Voelcker of Frankfurt am Main about the 112th Frankfurt Lottery, with a schedule of '5,900 prizes, and 32 Extra premiums and 12,500 blanks in this lottery'.

Food for thought was provided by a series of six lectures organised by the Red Triangle Federation of Oxon, Berks and Bucks by arrangement with the Oxfordshire University Delegacy For Extra Mural Studies. They were on 'The Story of Man as a Craftsman' and were given by Mr A.H. Griffiths BA in the Red Triangle Hut in Shipton, illustrated by 'material examples and by epidiascope'.

There is a note of a vestry meeting on 28 February 1850 of the inhabitants of Milton at the Butcher's Arms to nominate four men qualified and liable to serve as constable, and to pass their names to the Justices of the Peace. The four named were John Ansell, saddler (served 1849), Philip Groves, mason, Anthony Gardner, farmer and Lewis Hulbert, farmer. Any objections to them would be heard at a Special Petty Sessions on 27 March at the Town Hall, Chipping Norton. The note was signed by two overseers, Richard Gilbert and Philip Harbert.

A vestry meeting in the church of the inhabitants of Shipton was called by the churchwardens in 1845 to discuss the wish of Sir Chandos Reade that 'two certain Highways and Footpaths' in the parish should be stopped. Reade's influence can also be seen in the following notice:

To The holders of the Allotments

As you have not complied with the Rules of the Garden Allotments in this Parish, I hereby Give you Notice except your rent is Paid by July 2nd 1849 To Quit, on or before the Twenty-fifth day of March next, the Garden Allotment which you now hold in the parish of **Shipton-under-Wychwood**, in the County of Oxford. Dated this 12th day of June One Thousand Eight Hundred forty none

By order of Sir John C Reade Bt

There is a letter to Cross from Thomas Atkins of Sarsden which reads 'I will thank you to call on me tomorrow Morning or if not then on Saturday Morning as I want to speak to you'.

On a notice of a Vestry meeting there is the draft of an unsigned letter in an educated hand:

Shipton, June 11th. Dear Sir I should be very much obliged if you could come and officiate at a wedding tomorrow Morning at 10 o'clock for me as I am sorry to say I have been very ill this week but am a little better. Mr Chetle advised me not to attempt to do my duty on Sunday if I could get anyone to do it for me. I thought perhaps you could do it on Sunday.

There is an undated estimate from T. Groves for building a 'cottage house' for Cross. It was to be 20 feet long, 16 feet wide and 12 feet high with one chimney stack. The cost for digging and finding stone was £8 8s 0d, for the carriage of the stone £4 0s 0d and for the carriage of mortar £1 0s 0d, a total of £13 8s 0d.

There is a small piece of paper showing Cross indebted to George Groves for building work. This was for putting in a door frame and window and for

building a chimney stack. For this Groves charged £1 2s 6d for nine days work by his brother William and 5s 0d for two days work by his son. For materials he charged 6s 0d for a quarter of lime, 10s 0d for new chimney jambs and mantel, 6s 0d for new stone to chimney tun¹⁸ etc. and £1 10s 0d for 120 feet of hewn planks. The account was settled on 30 May 1823.

There are nine half-yearly receipts from Edmund Smith for payments by Cross for catching. Those for 1846 to April 1850 are for £1 6s 0d; in October 1850 the rate was £1 2s 6d.

Music

There is evidence in the Cross papers of music in Shipton in both the church and elsewhere. There is a printed *Book of Psalmody* with a note on one page saying 'William Cross His Book ... 1759'. The book contains 'Instructions for Young Beginners after a plain & familiar a manner as yet Extant', psalms, anthems and hymns for three to four voices, a poem to all lovers of psalmody with instructions about learning music and various other items. In addition to the printed material there are several handwritten pages of music for psalms and anthems with instructions such as 'Basses to the 138 at ye 6 verse'. For some strange reason there is a cryptic note, repeated several times, which reads 'Samuell Boorman of the County of Midd[lesex] is a mocker and strong drinkis'.

There are several loose sheets of secular music, songs, marches and dances, including *The Queen* for 'brass trombone'. Most of these sheets have 'ophecleide', written on them but there is no evidence of the existence of an ophecleide, defined as an instrument developed from the serpent.¹⁹ A serpent which once hung on the wall of Shipton church is deposited in the Oxfordshire Museums Resources Centre. There was, however, a recorder-type wind instrument among Cross's papers with a note that it belonged either to Richard Cross the elder or to John Coombes. This, too, is now deposited in the Resources Centre together with the sheets of music.

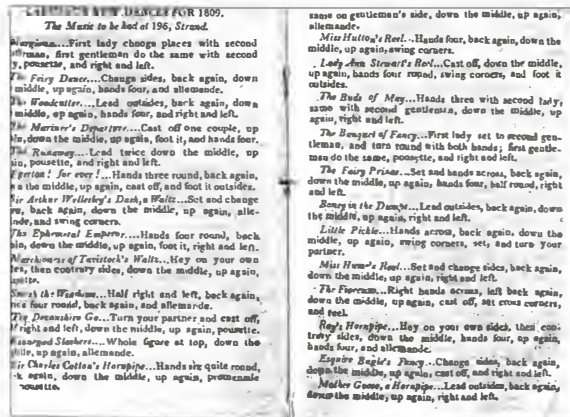


Music in Shipton

A tantalising fragment among the Cross papers is a few pages of *The Ladies' Select Pocket Remembrancer* for 1809 The original booklet was some 150 pages long with two pages for engagements in each month of the year and a few pages for a running cash account. The rest was a compilation of useful information, to wit:

Country dances; Holidays at the Public Office; Transfer days at the Bank, etc; Public Offices in London & Westminster; New Hackney coach Fares; Rates of Watermen; List of Commercial Stamps; Table of Interest; New Enigmas; New Charades; New rebuses; Anagram; Vauxhall Songs; Royal Family of Great Britain; Table of Kings & Queens of England; A catalogue of useful things; Chronological Table of remarkable Events, Discoveries, etc; The most remarkable events that have occurred during the French Revolution; Marketing Tables; A Table to cast up Expenses or Wages.

Sadly only the first twelve pages of useful information have survived in the table of interest but these include an entertaining list of new dances for 1809. The missing pages included the list of the most remarkable events that occurred during the French Revolution, a reminder that Cross and his contemporaries lived in the shadow of that event.



Dancing in Shipton

As parish clerk, weaver and merchant Cross was an important member of the community and had a leading role in most of the business, farming and social activities of the Wychwood villages. He lived in Gas Lane²⁰ in the centre of Shipton with his daughter Harriet who, after his death, married William Coombes, which accounts for his papers surviving with the Coombes family. Their survival has made it possible for us to bring Richard and many of his contemporaries briefly to life.

Notes

¹ *The Shipton under Wychwood Constable's Book 1808-1851*, Margaret Ware ed., Wychwoods Local History Society 2005.

² ORO 104.257; 230/2/43.

³ *The Wychwoods Album*, Sue Jourdan and Sue Richards, eds. Wychwoods Local History Society, 1985, p.6. As noted there a letter addressed to 'Mr Cross, Post Office, Shipton, Chipping Norton, Oxon' and dated 4 April 1845 suggests that the Shipton Post Office was the oldest sub-post office in the country.

⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) equates linsey with linsey-woollen which it defines as 'Orig. a textile material, woven from a mixture of wool and flax; now a dress material of coarse inferior wool, woven upon a cotton warp'.

⁵ 'A linen fabric, originally called, from the province of Holland in the Netherlands' (OED).

⁶ 'To finish (textile fabrics), so as to give them a nap, smooth surface, or gloss' (OED).

⁷ There is a will of Edward Warner of Burford, dyer, dated 1773, in ORO, W. Aff. 216.183:159/1/36.

⁸ 'A stout linen fabric, with the weft threads thrown alternately up so as to form a rough surface, used for towelling and the like' (OED).

⁹ The firm is variously described as Moreton in the Marsh [sic] - Henry Goodear Busby manufacturer of Cheese-cloths, Canvas etc. Busby - Linen Manufacturer and General Linen and Woollen Draper Silk Mercer & Hosier - Moreton. B G Busby - Wholesale & Retail Mercer Draper & Haberdasher - Moreton in Marsh. Busby & Co Manufacturers of Genuine Home-Made Linens Morton Henmarsh Gloucestershire. Henry Goodear Busby (1798-1867) was a prominent resident of Moreton in Marsh. He was the third and last Busby to own the biggest business in Moreton in the nineteenth century (Archives of Moreton in Marsh Local History Society). The firm was established in 1748.

¹⁰ Prepared fibres of flax, hemp or jute, particularly shorter fibres.

¹¹ I am indebted to Jim Pearse for this reference.

¹² ORO/PAR/236/05/F1/2.

¹³ R. H. Pytt was a doctor in Burford. There is a receipt in the papers signed by Dr Cheattle, another Burford doctor, on behalf of Pytt for a 'journey and certifying to the Insanity of [name suppressed].

¹⁴ Margaret Ware, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ The right to take necessities such as wood from the landlord's estate for the repair by a tenant of his house etc.

¹⁶ Financial crisis.

¹⁷ Burford doctor.

¹⁸ A chimney pot.

¹⁹ An ophicleide is defined in the OED as a 'deep wind instrument consisting of a U-shaped brass tube with eleven keys, forming a bass version of the key-bugle ... [It] was developed in 18th cent. Europe where it supplanted the earlier serpent. The earliest dated reference is 1834'.

²⁰ ORO MS Oxf. Dioc. Papers b 122b, tithe apportionment and map for Shipton under Wychwood.

Appendix A

Ratepayers

Baylis	Bould, Richard
Bould, William	Brookes, John
Brookes, Thomas	Bunting, John
Castle, W.	Chapman, Richard
Cheatle	Clifford, C.
Coleman, W. E.	Combs, Charles
Combs, Daniel	Combs, John
Cross, Arthur	Cross, John
Cross, Richard	Crouch, J.
Ellis, Thomas	Franklin, Richard
Gardner, George	Gardner, Henry
Gibbard	Gibbard, Mrs
Gibbs, Edward	Gomm, John
Gomm, Richard	Hambidge,
Harris	Harris, Ann
Hawcutt	Haynes, Mrs
Herbert, Philip	Huckles, William
Hyatt, Richard	James, John
Jones, Mrs	Lardner, L. T.
Lardner, William	Maddox, John
Maddox, Thomas	Maddox, W.
May	Morris, Mrs Ann
Peugh, William	Phillimore, The Revd Mr
Pratt, M.	Reade, Sir John Chandos
Reynolds, T.	Sedgley, R.
Sharpe, J.	Shaw, William
Sims, Richard	Smith, John
Spencer, James	Spencer, John
Spencer, Richard	Trinder, Thomas
Turner, J.	Upstone, John
Upstone, Michael	Willesden, James
Willsdone, Jane	Willis, James
Willis, John	Wood, Col. Thomas.
Young, Thomas	Young, Mrs

Appendix B

Workers and their employers

In various booklets and on odd pieces of paper there are the names of farmers and the men they employed. Entries are undated. The type of work is sometimes given but not always. The places worked sometimes have the area or breadth and length of land plus a number. Farmers are in bold with abbreviations given. Names of workers employed are listed and where they are given without an employer's name they are noted by *.

Farmers

Mr Bould = **B**; Mr Brookes = **Br**; Mr Gilbert = **Gt**; Mr Gomm = **G**;
Mr Groves = **Gr**; Mr Hyot/Hiat = **H**; Mr Kimber = **K**; Mr Maddox = **M**;
Mr Pratt = **P**; Mr Sims = **Ss**; Mr Smith = **S**; Mr Trinder = **T**; Mr Young = **Y**

Employees

Acock, S., Fifield, the Heath; Little Hill; **Br**
Akerman/Acerman; **B**
Akers, John and co, turnip howing at the Downs; **B**

*Bartlett, E.; **Br**

Bason; **Br**

Beckley, W., up at the barrow; **M**

*Benfield, M., bean reaping; in Norgrove; piece of wheat; **B, Br, M, P**

*Bodington, T., two and four lands; **Y**

Bouls, T., breast plowing; **M**

Bown, E., breast plowing on the Downs; **B**

Bridgwater, G.; **K**

Brookes, Henry, wheat rick; **K**

Carpenter, Thomas, breast plowing at Well Heads; breast plowing at Egg Barn; barley mowing; wheat mowing; on the Downs; wheat reaping at Barn Piece; Shipton Gate; **B, Br, K, Y**
S.; **Gr**

Case, A., Langley; the Heath; Little Hill; on the stubble; **Br, K, M**

*Castle, G.; **B**

*Clack, William on Milton Heath; two lands; **Br, Y**

L.; **M**

Colicut, J., on the Downs; **K**

Cox, up at the barrow; barley mowing; **K, M**

*Charles; **Y**

D.; **Br**

E.; **B**
 *Thomas, bean howing; **B, Br, K**
 *Cross, Steven; **B**

*Davis, Robert, bean howing; Home Close; **B**
 Thomas; **Br**

*Dodd, Charles, breast plowing; **K**
 Dore, Daniel, in Norgrove, piece at the Elm; **Br, K**
 Samuel; **K**
 Thomas, on the Downs; **Br**

*Drinkwater, D., breast plowing; **M**

Eatwell, Simon, pulling sweeds; thatching; **B, T, Y**
 *Eden, Richard, the Heath; **Y**
 *Edwards, Charles, bean reaping; turnip howing on the Downs; **B, Gr, K, M**
 Steven, one land; bean reaping; **M, Y**

Ellis, S., two lands; **Y**
 T.; **B, Br**

Faulkner, piece of wheat; wheat howing; **B, Br**
 D., turnip howing; **S**
 *Richard, wheat reaping; **B, Br, S**
 Thomas, breast plowing on the Downs; **B, Y**

*Finstock, Daniel; **Br**
 *Franklin, at Finstock; **Br**

*Gibbard, Mrs, bean reaping; **B, M**
 *Grant, Robert; **Br, Y**
 Grey, John; **B**

Hall, Robert; **B**
 Harris, in piece upon the side of road; **Y**
 Mrs, two and three lands; **Y**
 J., in Barn Piece; **Br**
 *James, vitching/vetch at New Close; howing; **B, Y**
 *John, bean reaper in Home Close; **B**
 Joseph, four lands; **Y**
 R., in Barn Piece; **Br**
 *Robert, bean reaping; **B, K**

*Hart, Robert; **B, Br, Gr, T**
 Harvie; **Y**
 Hedges; **B, Br**

*Joseph; **Gr**
 *Thomas, Home Close; **B**
 Himson, S.; **B**
 *Holaway, M., bean reaping; **B, K, M**
 Howes, Richard; **Br**

*Ierland, J.; **Br**

Jackson, in Norgrove; **B**
 *James, John, on Downs; vitching/vetch at New Close; **B**

Lardner, T., Ascott; **B**
 Long, R., bean reaping; **M**
 *Longshaw; **B**
 Richard, in Norgrove; **Br, M**
 * Steven; **Br, T**
 Thomas, in Home Close; turnip and bean howing; **B**

Maddox, W., turnip howing at the Peat Pitts; bean reaping; **M**
 *Miles, R. wheat reaping; the Heath; at the Mill; **Br**
 John, bean reaper; **B**
 *William, turnip howing; **Gt**

*Millin, E, bean reaping; **M**
 *Mose, William, seven and eight lands; **H**

Palmer, John; **Y**
 Richard; **Y**
 *Pittaway, Thomas; **B**
 Poddle/Puddle, T., four and six lands; **H**
 Prattley, Charles, bean reaping; **K**
 *Jacob, turnip howing; **B**
 Joab, turnip howing in the field; **B**
 *Richard, on the Downs, in Barn Piece, in Pea Aker; **Br, Y**
 William, turnip howing on the Downs and at the Peat Pitts; bean reaping; **M**

Price, C., at the barrow; **M**
 Purbrick, James, wheat reaping; bean howing; **K**
 Pugh, W.; **Br**

Radborn/Radbourne, Richard; **K**
 *Rainbow, William; **B, Gr**
 *Right, Lucy, Pea Acre; **B**
 W, Pea Aker, in Barn Piece; **Br, M**

*Rolins/Rawlins, in Norgrove; **B**
 Thomas, bean reaping; **M**

Shayler, W., bean reaping; **M**

Shurman, Robert; **Br**

*Silman, J., at the piece at the Elm; **Br**

*Smith, piece of wheat; **Br**

*James; **M**

*John, sweed howing; Home Close; **B, S**

Joseph, pea field raking, turnip howing; **B**

*Robert, at Finstock, Sweed Piece; breast plowing; **B, Br, Gr, S, Y**

*Steven, on the Downs; **Br, Y**

*Thomas in New Close; **B, Br, M**

*William at Digers Pit, wheat reaping; in Norgrove; **B, Br, M**

South, Joseph at Egg Barn: **B**

Robert, round about; **Br**

W., **M**

*Sparks, Joseph, turnip howing; wheat mowing; **K**

*Steed, J.; **B**

W., wheat reaping; **S**

Stepto; **Y**

Stringer, D.; **Br**

Gerry, wheat reaping; **K**

Jerome, sweed howing; **S**

Taylor, George, pea howing; **M**

Timms, Mary; **S**

*Townsend, E., Home Close; **B**

Henry; **B, Br, Gr**

*John, bean reaping; three[or 8] lands; **B, K, H, S**

*Limboro'; **Y**

Thomas, in Barn Piece; **B, Br, Y**

*William, wheat reaping; **B, K, Y**

Turner, piece of wheat; **Br**

George, breast plowing; pulling up sweeds; breast plowing on the
 Downs; breast plowing on the stubble; turnip howing; wheat reaping;

K, M, Ss, Y

*Thomas, on the Downs; bean reaping; breast plowing on the Downs;
 wheat reaping(&co); **B, Br, K, M, Y**

William;

Upstone, Robert, Little Hill; **B, Br**

Upton, the Heath; **Br**

*Watts, John, bean reaping; **M**

T., Milton; **Br**

West, T., Little Hill, the Heath; **Br**

Wiggins, George, turnip howing; sweeds; **M**

*James, in 9 acre Piece; breast plowing; **Br, T**

Wilks, D.; **B**

*Thomas; **S**

Williams; **B**

Wright, three lands; **Y**

L., Pea Aker, wheat reaping; **M**

Acknowledgements

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The Griffin Family of Bruern Grange and their Steam Engines

MICHAEL THEXTON

This article is a reprint, with the kind permission of Michael Thexton, from The Steam Thrashing Trade, chapter VII, published in 1997, with an introduction by Joy Timms, granddaughter of Joseph Griffin.

Introduction

In the years leading up to 1900 farming had been, and would continue to be, a very hard industry in which to make a living. Due to many factors, farmers were being forced into bankruptcy and the tenant of Bruern Grange was no exception. The farm had become a complete wilderness, everything reduced to 'rack and ruin'.

It was now that Lord Buckhurst put his trust in James Griffin by offering him the tenancy of Bruern Grange Farm, rent free for the first year, to see if it were possible to bring the land into some sort of good order. This he did, through sheer hard work and determination, helped by his wife Mary Georgina and their children, Esau, Joseph, Alice and Ethel. The boys were educated at Burford Grammar School as boarders. After leaving school, Esau took over Staits Farm at Westcote which belonged to his mother and Joseph remained at Bruern Grange and neighbouring Workham Farm. The total acreage of the three farms was nearly 1000 acres.

James died suddenly in 1910, leaving nineteen-year-old Joseph to go it alone, which he did very successfully. In 1916 Joseph married Ada Letticia Cooper of Ascott Mill and they had three children, Dorothy, Robert (Bob), and Mervyn. Like their father, the boys were boarders at Burford, while Dorothy was a boarder at 'Miss Bedwin's' in Chipping Norton. Bob, who was sent away to school at the age of four years, 'hated every minute of it', absconding or getting suspended at every opportunity in order to pursue his life-long love of 'steam'. In 1926 Joseph had the chance to buy Grange Farm. He had the £7000 asking price, but on reflection decided against doing so. 'After all', he mused, 'why do I need to own all this land?' So he bought a fleet of traction engines instead and the dream began.

The season for steam thrashing usually ran from early August to late April/May while the season for steam ploughing started in April/May and continued until October/November. The traction engine hauled the thrashing machine, baler and other machinery from farm to farm, sometimes over many

miles in different counties, in order to thrash the crop. During the months from May to August other work was found for the traction engines, as diverse as hauling sand, stone, coal and hauling boilers to forestry work and land clearance. The winch was used for loading trailers before the traction engine hauled the load of timber to the mill or to the railway station. Saws were driven by traction engines on site. Cable ploughing engines were used for dredging work during and after the season. Areas of land were cleared, trees, scrub, stumps and anything where great power was required. Traction engines were used extensively during the First and Second World Wars.

The main users of steam plough engines in England were the contractors. This was partly due to the price of a set of tackle that in 1918 cost around £5,000. The hours worked by the steam plough gangs were long, hard and dirty. The day started for them at dawn and continued until dusk, even beyond if the moon was bright. The double engine sets usually consisted of a plough, cultivator, living van and water cart. A five-man team was required to operate each set of engines. In March the steam plough tackle would probably have left the yard and trundled off in convoy, looking something like a travelling circus en route, working a set round of jobs, returning to home base in November, where major repairs could be carried out.

Joseph Griffin died in the early 1950s. At the farm sale the much-loved engines were sold for only scrap value. The highly important and much-prized steam traction engine had been superseded by the arrival of the internal combustion engine.

Contracting

The Implement and Machinery Review pointed out that before the First World War, it was not uncommon for contractors to purchase four-fifths of the thrashing machines which were sold for use in the U.K., whereas farmers purchased one-fifth. In other words, ownership of a thrashing machine, and the engine to drive it, was regarded as an uneconomic proposition by a large section of the farming community. That this should be so need not surprise us when it is remembered that the cost of an engine and thrasher represented a considerable expenditure for the limited working season which was available. Hiring a contractor provided the usual alternative under the prevailing conditions of the time

From the contractor's standpoint, the move into contracting sometimes arose from established links with farming, typically a farmer with his own thrashing set 'filling out the season' by working for his neighbours. He might combine this with engine work 'out of season' or, not to mince matters, with whatever engine work could be found.

Contracting took many forms. The author researched Joseph Griffin's business, including the thrashing round to which Esmond Kimbell contributes.

Bob Griffin recalled that his father Joseph, who lived at Bruern Grange in Oxfordshire, bought the first thrashing set with which he established his business in 1916. This was a second-hand Ransomes steam tractor and Humphries thrashing machine from Rowell's of Chipping Norton. Although the tackle was primarily for use on his three large farms, Joseph began to thrash for others. The outfit was completed with a wagon, built by a local wheelwright, and after tea each day Joseph hauled the sacks of grain to Matthew's Mill at Shipton railway station. Truly a 'maid-of-all-work', the Ransomes was used at other times for direct-traction ploughing, and it was by no means uncommon for twenty-eight acre fields to be worked in this manner.

During these wartime years there was a large demand for pressed hay for feeding the horses in service with the British Army in France. A baler was acquired, and in 1918 an old Fowler traction engine and thrasher were purchased, again from Rowell's of Chipping Norton. Joseph also supplied baled hay and cut chaff for Birmingham Co-operative Society's van horses. This was a trade which persisted for a number of years and proved to be highly popular, providing an outlet for the farm and work for the thrashing engines.

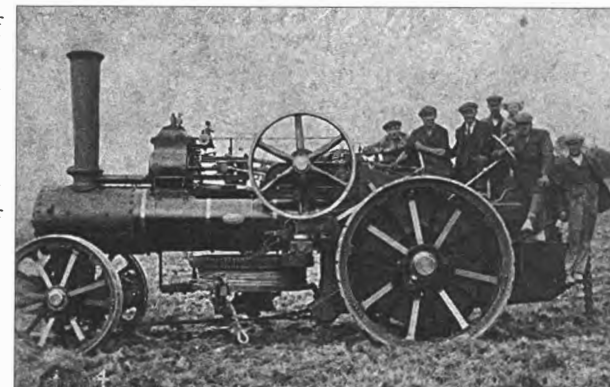


Bruern Grange Farm, 1917.

Joseph Griffin in panama hat standing in centre of photograph by wheel

The war over, Joseph decided to buy a set of steam ploughing tackle. This was not a step to be taken lightly: there were several well-established concerns in the region, such as the Oxfordshire Steam Ploughing Company, and the high capital cost tended to favour the concentration of ploughing sets in the hand of the larger contractors. For £4,999, Joseph purchased two brand-new ploughing engines and their implements from John Fowler and Company of Leeds. After receiving the 'full treatment' at the Steam Plough Works, they were sent to the Royal Show at Cardiff before delivery to the Fifield farm where the engines were kept. As was usual on these occasions, one of Fowler's men travelled down to train the thrashing drivers and supervise the handling of the tackle.

The introduction of steam ploughing augured well for the thrashing engine drivers. The perennial problem which plagued many thrashing businesses - that of providing work during the summer months - was now eased. Since the ploughing season occupied the summer months, Joseph could now provide continuous employment for a number of the thrashing engine drivers at the end of their season, thereby keeping the skilled team together.



*Joseph Griffin (right end)
on the just-delivered traction engine in 1919*

By way of comparison, Esmond Kimbell's experience in Northamptonshire was that 'Steam ploughing did keep the men more regularly employed but there was overlap at harvest time, with difficulty in spacing the men out. Those brought up to steam ploughing were seldom happy with thrashing, although thrashing men were the better, the other way round, providing they kept their rope from cutting a groove on a front wheel. An alternative to steam ploughing was steam rolling for tar sprayers, which had a shorter season ...'

At its peak, Joseph Griffin's farming and contracting employed twenty-five men and boys with a stable of twenty-six horses. Although a certain amount of steam ploughing was carried out at the home farms, which now totalled some 920 acres, the tackle was mostly out on contract, and here Joseph's acquaintance with the local farmers stood him in good stead. Work for the ploughing and thrashing engines very often resulted from his weekly meetings at Kingham market and in this way Joseph kept in touch with the local scene and built up a useful round in the neighbourhood.

On through the 1920s, which were, surprisingly, a time of growth for Joseph Griffin, despite the depression of the post-war years. Once a circle of customers had been established for the ploughing tackle, Joseph turned again to thrashing, which was always his principal activity, and began to expand with a Fowler traction engine and a thrashing machine from Frank Reading near Leamington in 1925. The following year he acquired a Wantage traction engine and Clayton and Shuttleworth thrashing machine from Mr Woolcock's sale at nearby Chadlington.

The arrival of the next engine for thrashing occurred in 1928 and was well remembered by nine-year-old Bob. One day in June his father took him to



The farm workforce hay-stacking, c.1920

be a handy little engine with a fair turn of speed and was ideally suited to stack yards and narrow lanes 'off the beaten track'.

The thrashing process demanded a competent team. There were 'tricks of the trade' - and regional variations - even in the apparently straight-forward task of 'feeding'. 'In Lincolnshire, they fed by hand', recalled Esmond Kimbell. 'wheat sheaves across the drum-mouth, over the arm, whilst barley was held "heads down", easier to feed with a little always left in the hand to "even out the hum" before the next sheaf. In Northamptonshire there were more thistles, so feeding was mostly by fork, sometimes twisted upwards to spread the sheaf out. Practice brought skill here so the engine's chuffs could be as regular as those in Lincolnshire. With beans, a hood went over the feed hole to keep the bouncing-back ones in.'

Bob Griffin, as a 'junior' member of the team, often followed the progress of the thrashing and ploughing sets on his bike, spending as much time as he could with the drivers. The occasional spell on the footplate was not unknown, and in Bob's own words, 'When I was ten, I first handled an engine under

the guidance of the driver, but was very soon left to it ...'. Of such material are budding drivers made, and it came as no surprise to those who knew him to learn that after leaving Burford Grammar School at the age of sixteen, he started work as 'cook boy' with the ploughing tackle. Throughout the next two years he worked his way up to become an engine driver, thereby gaining a rise in pay from five to thirty-two shillings per week, plus 'acreage' money.



*Hill Buildings on Bruern Grange Farm c.1920s.
The fleet bought by Joseph instead of buying the farm.
Bob Griffin with hand on flywheel with Mervyn beside
him on R engine*

Shipton station to unload a Ransomes steam tractor which had arrived from Nottingham on a flat truck. This engine had caught Joseph's eye whilst visiting the Royal Show, and he bought it straight off the maker's stand. Costing him £320, the Ransomes proved to

Steam ploughing usually occurred within twenty miles of Fifield. 'On the road', the leading engine hauled the plough and cultivator, followed by the second engine with the living van and water cart. Five men formed the crew, two drivers, a ploughman and the cook boy, with the foreman in overall charge. Between them ploughing was carried out continuously by changing around through the meal breaks, for it was a very keen market and payment was partly by piecework, or what was known as 'acreage money'. The drivers could earn an extra 'threepence per single acre, once over', or 'sixpence per double acre, twice over'.

On returning to the yard at the end of August it was very often a case of 'out with the four thrashing sets'. The Wantage was Bob's particular engine and he recalled a troublesome day in 1936. At the time, he was thrashing at Taynton, in the Windrush valley near Burford. Biking over as usual, he had steam up by seven o'clock and set off with the thrashing machine and baler to a nearby farm. It was raining heavily when he changed gear and turned off the road to begin the mile-long climb along the stone cart track. With the engine working hard he eventually had no alternative other than to winch the tackle up the track in stages.

This took most of the day and it was dark when Bob got to the rick-yard, so he had to set up by the light of oil lamps. As if this was not enough, he noticed more than the usual amount of steam coming from the chimney and realised that the tubes were leaking.

Deciding to put matters right, Bob cycled the four miles home to collect his tools. With the engine still warm, he dropped the ashpan and firebars to expand the tubes, and for good measure re-loaded the fusible plug.

Filling up the boiler and re-assembling, he lit the fire and 'banked up' ready for the morning, then back home again at twelve o'clock for a few hours' sleep before rising at 4.30am to get his food ready. Finally off to Taynton for what was to prove to be a trouble-free day's thrashing - a satisfactory outcome to his earlier endeavors.

Bob took occasions such as these in his stride, and as a fully-fledged contractor viewed the thrashing round in a routine manner.



*Setting off from Hill Buildings, Bruern Grange, 1944.
Ransomes steam tractor*



Bob Griffin, late 1930s

The objective of producing a 'clean' sample of grain involved a number of skills. Part of what was entailed may interest the reader, and was explained to the author by Esmond Kimbell. 'One looked for enginemanship and thrashing machine skills - balancing the adjustments for concave, blowers and screens - according to the crop to be thrashed. Good driving was essential: steam pressure and governing had to be steady, overspeeding increased the air which could blow away a light grain like oats. With beans, the concave was opened out so that it was "shelling" rather than "thrashing".'

The year 1936 marked the Griffin's purchase of the last set of thrashing tackle, an Aveling and Porter traction engine and a Ruston and Hornsby thrashing machine from Mr Fowler, a farmer at Taston. In 1938, the ninth and final engine was bought from the sale of Wilder's of Wallingford - a Fowler ploughing engine rebuilt by Wilder's using parts from John Allen of Oxford. Joseph particularly wanted this engine because it could be used 'left hand' or 'right hand' to match either of his ploughing engines in the event of a breakdown; all that had to be done was to 'swing the blocks over'.

This takes us up to 1939, and against the background of a troubled Europe, Joseph decided to stock up with all the spare parts he could obtain. At the same time, Bob himself overhauled one of the ploughing engines, whilst the other was driven over to Kingham to receive similar treatment at the works of E. J. Lainchbury and Sons.

Joseph's foresight was rewarded. With the opening up of large tracts of land, Bob and his men worked continuously on ploughing, cultivating and thrashing for the War Agricultural Committees. In fact Bob, who was appointed foreman at the early age of twenty-three, regarded the war-time years as the busiest he could remember. From Evesham in the north, to Highworth in the south, about forty miles, the roads were traced and retraced. During one six-month period in 1943, the team worked in five different counties and ploughed 1,600 acres, often working up to seventeen hours a day. Sometimes Bob worked until four o'clock in the morning to carry out essential repairs, but throughout the war he only had to bring the tackle home once.

And yet despite all this activity, the war to all intents and purposes 'saw steam out'. After the autumn of 1945, Bob could not find a single customer for steam ploughing. Thrashing by



Approaching Bruern level crossing, 1943



Engine leading the tackle coming home through Chipping Norton, late 1940

steam finished slightly earlier, at the end of 1944, and a complement of tractors was used until the introduction of combine harvesters in 1953.

Looking back, Bob has few regrets. 'It was a tough life, but I enjoyed it all ...'. He later took up farming and ran a machine shop, but steam was never far from his thoughts and until recently he owned and restored a Fowler ploughing engine which occasionally carried out the odd day's work. Now in retirement, he has a wealth of memories to draw on, and is never happier than when talking about 'steam'.



Bob Griffin in retirement with 'Ajax', 1976

Postscript

Bob died in 1997.

A Brief History of Bruern Abbey and The Great Fire at Bruern Abbey

JOY TIMMS

Immediately after the suppression of the Abbey of Bruern in October 1536, the monastic site was granted to Sir John and Sir Thomas Bridges of Cornbury on a twenty-one-year lease. This was renewed in 1546 in favour of Sir Thomas, who was Chief Ranger of Wychwood Forest. In his will of 1559 Sir Thomas mentions his 'His Mansion at Brewerne', whose site was most probably identical to that of the present house, having been erected within the precincts of the demolished Abbey, according to the law.

On the expiry of the lease in 1566, Thomas Markham, Chief Penair to Queen Elizabeth I, was granted a forty-four-year lease on Bruern. This included much of Bruern's ancient monastic lands and manors. Elizabeth I granted her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, a lease on Bruern in October 1586. This document gives a detailed description of these vast lands and of 'The Ancient Site of Brewerne'. Only a few years later, Sir Henry Uncton purchased the estate at an outright sum. (Alexander Uncton had been a tenant of the monks of Bruern at Denchworth, therefore family ties were retained.) Henry Uncton, never one to miss the opportunity to make a quick profit, in 1593 sold 'The Messuage, Site and Dissolved House Of Brewerne, Kingham, Shipton, Milton and Lynham' to Sir Anthony Cope, First Baronet of Hanwell Castle, Oxfordshire.

Sir Anthony's second wife was Dame Anne (née Paston), widow of Sir Nicholas Le Strange. Bruern was Dame Anne's marriage settlement and it was here that she died in 1637. A succession of Copes lived at Bruern, each leaving their mark. Sir William, son of Sir Anthony, married his step-mother's daughter Elizabeth, daughter of her first marriage to Sir George Chaworth. In the 1665 Hearth Tax Returns Bruern was listed as having ten hearths. Sir John Cope, Fifth Baronet, left a journal and many papers describing life, people and trade at Bruern during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Having been created First Baronet Bruern by Queen Anne in 1713, Sir Jonathan Cope set about a great refurbishment of his mansion. Richard Rawlinson (1690-1755), the non-juring Bishop, commented at the time, 'At Brewerne is A Fine Old House, now demolishing by Sir Jonathan Cope, as is likewise The Grainge a Place of Antiquity, Formally moated round, and many ruins in the Grounds about it'.

The Revd Edward Stone of Chipping Norton was chaplain to Jonathan Cope (born 1717), the son of Sir Jonathan. He ministered to the family in



*Bruern Abbey, early twentieth century,
before the demolition of the Victorian east wing*

the Chapel of Bruern, where marriages and baptisms took place. The two men had met at Wadham College in the 1730s and became close friends. From the time of the fire in 1764, the Abbey was lived in by a succession of tenants. The part least damaged was made good, the south wing in particular, providing a fairly grand home for the Baptist families of Pratt and Huckvale who were cousins, and Samson Pratt who was born at Bruern Abbey in 1811 and married into the Mathews family of Fifield twice!

Finally the Cope heirs sold Bruern with its 340 acres to their last tenant in the early 1880s, Mr Cecil D'Aguilar Samuda, who completely refurbished the Abbey, stables, outbuildings and ground. Groves of Milton were the builders and the plans of the work still exist, showing how splendid was the project. Mr and Mrs Samuda (née Cecile Mary Isabella Markham) had an only son, Cecil Markham Annesley, who was born 1878. He married Phyllis Beauchamp Caulfield-Stoker but died from wounds received in World War I. Mr Samuda died in 1928 and Bruern was sold soon after.

Mr Brooks Crompton Wood purchased Bruern Abbey and its farm in the early 1930s. He was fondly remembered by his neighbours. The Hon. Michael Astor bought the Abbey with approximately 340 acres in 1947 from Mr Crompton Wood's trustees. Bruern Grange was also purchased by Mr Astor together with 100 acres in the mid-1950s after the death of Joseph Griffin. During the 1970s a large part of Bruern Abbey was taken down in order to make it more manageable.



The Hon. Michael Astor died in 1980 leaving Bruern Abbey to his third wife Judy. She put Bruern Abbey with nearly six acres on the market in 1983 with 'Offers invited in the region of £350,000'. It was bought by an American lawyer Stirling Stover who converted it into a boys' preparatory school for up to 140 boys. In 1999 Bruern Abbey was put back on the market at an asking price of £3 million and William Carey from Oddington was the next owner. After a few years the property was back on the market once more reputedly for around £6 million. It was bought by Sir Anthony Bamford of nearby Daylesford. In 2012 the house is still unoccupied, apart from security staff and once again this ancient place, with all its secrets is on the market at a reputed price guide of £8 million.

Sources

Wills from TNA and ORO; Letter Patent Henry viii(iv); Hanwell Parish Registers; ORO. ref. misc.B.R.A.XII/I; Jackson's *Oxford Journal*; *Oxford Mail* and *The Oxford Times*; *Country Life*; Hampshire Record Office; Alumni Oxonienses.

The Great Fire at Bruern Abbey

Jackson's *Oxford Journal* 7 January 1764

Last Thursday Morning a Fire broke out at Bruerne, near Burford in this County, the seat of Sir Jonathan Cope, Bart., which in about three Hours reduced the whole Building to Ashes, and entirely destroyed the Furniture, as well as Writings, Wearing Apparel, and other things of Value, leaving nothing standing but the Walls. It was providentially discovered about Five O'clock in the Morning by Sir Robert Jenkinson and his Lady, who were waked by the Crackling of the Wainscot, at which time the Room was full of Smoke, and the Flames had got to such a Head, that though they alarmed the Family with all possible Dispatch; some of the Ladies, and all the Women Servants, being obliged to run out almost naked, and shelter themselves from the Cold under Hay and Straw in the Stables; however it is impossible to describe the Distress of the Family, yet happily no lives were lost; and the Out Offices being some Distance escaped the Flames. The Fire broke out in a Room that was airing for the Reception of Company, and is most probably been occasioned by there being Timber which lay into the Chimney. - The Loss sustained, by this Fire, in the Building and Furniture, is computed at upwards of Ten Thousand Pounds.

The Cope Family

Sir Jonathan Cope's daughter Mary and her husband Sir Robert Jenkinson were in residence the night of the fire in early 1764. The cousins had been married in the chapel of Bruern in 1760. The house, the chapel and all the contents were lost. But for a bitter quarrel between two brothers of the Cope family, a valuable archive of documents relating to Bruern and many more estates would have been lost too.

Sir Anthony Cope Fourth Baronet Hanwell (1632-75), disapproved of his brother John (*d.* 1726) marrying Anne Booth. He thought she was of dubious character, and successfully excluded their children and descendants from succession to the ancestral estates although he could not debar succession to the baronetcy. Sir John Fifth Baronet had a son, born at Bruern, another John (Sixth Baronet 1673-1749) who therefore had to make his own provision for an estate. He purchased Bramshill at Eversley in Hampshire in 1700, as well as six other estates in Oxfordshire.

Buern, Bruern Grange, Tangle, and Hanwell estates were handed over to a cousin, Jonathan Cope of Ranton Abbey in Staffordshire in 1713. That same year Jonathan was created First Baronet Bruern. So all the deeds and documents went with Sir John Cope to Hampshire, where they were subsequently deposited in the Hampshire Record Office in 1950.

What Makes Us Tick?

TRUDY YATES

Our Wychwoods Local History Society is an interesting enigma. It moves along at a rather languid pace and, to the casual observer, it seems to consist of a pleasant group of generally like-minded villagers who meet the third Thursday of the month in autumn and winter for a talk on various topics of local history. (Thank you Pauline Holdsworth for organising the speakers.) There is time for tea or coffee and a visit with friends (refreshments always served by Janet Wallace and her committee) and, at the conclusion of the year's meetings, members receive a copy of the *Journal*, which contains articles of Wychwood history contributed by members or friends of the Society. Rather good value for a mere £12 a couple.

This, however, is a surface view of our WLHS. Deep inside the rather methodical, low-key organisation, a hive of activity exists. The 'committee', consisting of the five officers and seven other members who have expressed an interest in the future direction of the Society, meets three times a year and we discuss our finances, future programmes, the progress of the *Journal*, possible outings, and circulate information from other area societies about special meetings or events. Alan Vickers runs our website which has been in existence for five years and is responsible for a sharp rise in family history queries. He also takes our pictures and skilfully restores old photographs so that they can be reproduced. Sue Jourdan, Joan Howard-Drake and Trudy Yates plan and produce the *Journal*. Wendy Pearse, our secretary, fields inquiries that come in from Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand and passes them on to the person best placed to provide the relevant information. Most often that person is Joan Howard-Drake, our archivist, who holds all of our records. She is kept busy with requests for family history data - marriage records, births, deaths and photographs. Joan enjoys being able to answer queries but is amused by the varying degrees of gratitude from the recipients. 'All the way from fulsome with monetary remuneration to absolutely no response at all', she told me.

Last summer, one of the requests for information fell to me because, thanks to Mary McNeill's collecting skill, I now possess a wealth of Shipton Court memorabilia and old photographs. David Woodward from Winchester wrote that he was researching his great-uncle, John Millan, who was a servant at the Court during the tenure of the Pepper family (1902-13). Often it is not easy to find information on servants without a local family connection but,

luckily, Fred Pepper's daughter, E. P. Thompson, wrote a memoir of the family called 'Portrait for a Grandson' in which she describes in detail life in the several fine English country houses that always prospered in the hands of Fred Pepper. He was responsible for the careful restoration of Shipton Court in 1902 which took a year to complete. John Millan, it seems, was very well thought of by Mr Pepper and rated several paragraphs in the book. Mrs Thompson wrote that he served loyally in two posts - first, as a very young man he was the footman and then, quite quickly, he was promoted as 'a young but most efficient butler'.

Mrs Thompson related a graphic anecdote about John Millan's early days with the family. He served initially under a real curmudgeon of a butler, who chose to ignore the young man's name and called him 'Henry'. 'It was ages before we knew him by any other name', Mrs Thompson wrote.

Sometime later, when the curmudgeon had moved on, to be replaced by a rather spineless, excitable man, poor Millan was the victim of an unwarranted attack by the boot boy. It seems that the boot boy, in a fit of pique, had thrown a pail of water over the head housemaid. Millan interceded, as any well-bred young gentleman would do and was promptly floored by a blow from a heavy brass bell used to summon the staff to their meals. The boot boy had snatched it up as the first weapon he could lay his hands on. 'One rim cut Millan's forehead', the author wrote, 'and the other had nearly broken his nose.' It transpired that the boot boy was not only a 'tough' with any handy implement but he was also in possession of a revolver. It is amusing to conjure up the picture of Fred Pepper leading a parade of all those involved in the incident to the pond for the disposal of the offending firearm. The boot boy chose this punishment instead of Fred Pepper's offer to call the police. Mr Pepper soon parted company with the boot boy and saw to it that the lad enlisted in the army.

John Millan carried the scars of this encounter until his untimely early death. He enlisted to serve in World War I but was soon invalided out and never was able to work again. The Peppers kept in close touch with Millan and his wife and they continued to see his widow after the young man's death. It was a truly close relationship.

Wouldn't such a vignette delight you if you were researching the great-uncle you never knew? It puts flesh on the bones of birth, marriage and death statistics. Moral: write your memoirs and include everything. Your descendants will be forever grateful.

Our most recent foray into research had its roots in Burford. It was here that a group of energetic women was recruited for a course in palaeography (a study of writing and documents from the past). In 2004, the class was set up in conjunction with the Victoria County History project, which produced the definitive book on Burford. Dr Simon Townley from VCH and Mary Hodges from the Oxford Department of Continuing Education were the instigators.

After the class was completed the women, armed with their new skills, took on the task of transcribing Burford's records. They referred to themselves as 'the Wills Group'. This was euphemistically rather inaccurate because the women tackled all the probate documents from the middle of the sixteenth century when English began to be used. These included wills, bonds, inventories and accounts. They ceased to transcribe at approximately 1700.

When the Burford project was near completion, the group was asked to move on to Henley, which they did. Luckily for the Wychwoods, Aelfhryth Gittings from Shipton was a member of this, by now, very efficient group and she responded positively when Sue Jourdan approached her about tackling the Wychwoods records. Aelfhryth presented the Wychwoods challenge to Barbara Allison from Charlbury, the chairman of the group. With Henley well under way, the still-enthusiastic transcribers began work here in March of 2010. To the nucleus of four women from the Burford group, five volunteers from the Wychwoods joined the endeavour. As of January 2012, they have completed 159 wills, seventy-two inventories, twenty-six bonds and five accounts.

And so, some might ask, what is the point? Is this project anything other than a rather erudite project for bright middle-aged people with a bit of extra time on their hands?

Asa Stamps of Tulsa, Oklahoma, certainly could tell you about the value of this work. He has been researching his family in America and in England for many years. He traced the Stamps back to the Wychwoods and learned on a visit here that his ancestor, Timothy Stamps, lived in Bruern Grange. He also discovered, to his delight, a Stamps memorial near the altar in St Mary's Church, Shipton. Still there wasn't a complete picture. How, for instance, could Timothy's son John have left England for what was then

*The Stamp memorial
in Shipton Church*



'the colonies' of America at such an early date (mid-1600s)? Since there were three sons and two daughters in Timothy Stamps' family, was John singled out for special privilege or were all of Timothy's heirs equally endowed by their father?

The answer came when Joan Howard-Drake transcribed Timothy Stamps' will. The gentleman died in 1615 and left all of his children very well provided for. The male heirs received £500 each and the daughters only slightly less. There were the necessary resources for John's voyage and enough to set him up comfortably in the colonies. Asa Stamps learned even more from the will, however. Much of the document was given over to Timothy's numerous bequests to the poor of Burford, Milton, Shipton and Witney. Asa's wealthy ancestor was not only a loving and benevolent father but also a fine example of an early philanthropist.

With all the pieces of his family puzzle at last in place, Asa Stamps is a very happy man. There will be more satisfied petitioners in the future. The Wills Group has added a new dimension to our ability to answer local family history queries. And so, you see, WLHS is not so languid after all! Listen carefully. You will hear us tick!

Wychwoods Local History Society

Publications in Print

Wychwoods History, an Index to Journals 1-19 (2004)

All the Society's past *Wychwoods History* journals are in print. An Index of articles, contributors, personal names, farms, maps and subjects in journals 1-19 is available free on receipt of a self-addressed C5 (229 x 162mm) envelope with two first class stamps. See www.wychwoodshistory.org

Wychwoods History 21 (2006) £3.50

Reginald Tiddy; The Thomsons and the Walkers of Shipton Court; James Baggs and his Little Black Book; The Manor Courts of Ascott D'Oilly; Gordon and Jean Carpenter; Kelcot House; Gossip in Lyneham

Wychwoods History 22 (2007) £3.50

Bruern Abbey 1147-1536; To the 'Lee' of the Walkers; William Smith, Clock maker of Milton under Wychwood; The Society's Fieldwalk Programme - The Final Report; The Shipton Tillyards

Wychwoods History 23 (2008) £3.50

Defiant Women; Joan and Ben Townsend and Albert (Bim) Champness; The Society's Fieldwalk Programme - The Final Report Part 2; The Pottery; The Godfrey Case; The Little Girl From Salisbury Place; The St Michael's Connection

Wychwoods History 24 (2009) £3.50

Shipton under Wychwood Churchwardens' Accounts 1554-1696; Dear Mr Rawlins; Intrepid Travellers - Three Wychwoods Women in the 1880s; St Michael's: Another Connection; St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Wychwoods History 25 (2010) £4.50

Coldstone, an Ascott Anomaly; The Silence of Three Shipton Church Bells Explained; The Manor of Shipton in 1289; Great Scotts; The Shaven Crown, Shipton; The Crown Inn Charity; Annunciation Relief at St Mary the Virgin, Shipton

Wychwoods History 26 (2011) £3.50

The Butler of Bruern; St Michael's; Doctor Gordon Scott Revisited - The Wychwoods Social Centre

The Wychwoods Local History Society meets once a month from September through to June. Meetings usually alternate between the village halls at Milton and Shipton. Current membership is £9 for an individual and £12 for a couple or overseas member, which includes a copy of *Wychwoods History* when published.

Further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Wendy Pearse, Littlecott, Honeydale Farm, Shipton under Wychwood, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 6BJ (telephone 01993 831023).

To obtain further copies and back numbers of *Wychwoods History*, please see www.wychwoodshistory.org

An Index of articles, contributors, personal names, farms, maps and subjects in Journals 1-19 is available. See the website for details. The personal names index is also on the website.

Cover illustration:

Bob Griffin with his ploughing engine in the late 1930s.



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