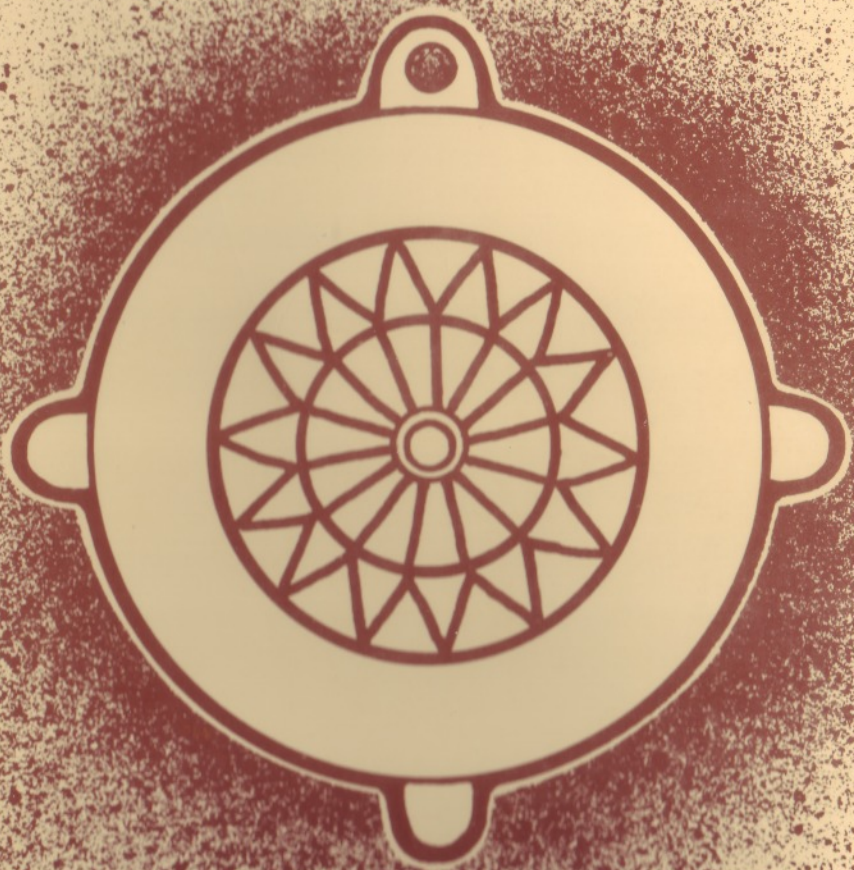


No 1

The Chronicle



The Journal of the
Long Wittenham Local History Group

No.1

THE CHRONICLE

**The Journal of the Long Wittenham
Local History Group**

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FORWARD

by
Kathleen Jewess

The Long Wittenham Local History Group grew out of the ad hoc group which came together to put on the History Weekend in June 1984. Since then we have put on two further exhibitions, and published an historical guide to Long Wittenham pubs. In addition, many members of the Group have done research on various topics connected with the history and people of the parish. We want to share what we have found with others, and we have therefore decided to publish an annual journal.

The articles in this, our first number, cover a wide period of time, from prehistory to the present. They also cover a range of topics: from the Church and its vicars, to a famous house and the contents of a not-so-famous house; from early churchwardens, to a famous artist, to a man known to many of us. In short, we hope that there will be something to interest everyone who wants to know more about the place where he or she lives. What is common to all of the contributors of the Chronicle - and to the rest of the Local History Group - is the feeling of deep satisfaction which comes from having reconstructed a bit of the history of the parish, and thereby coming to know people who are our neighbours in place, if not in time.

Kathleen Jewess

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor wishes to thank the following kind people who not only contributed to this, our first Chronicle, but also got their pieces in so quickly!

Julie Bright, Patience Empson, Jennifer Garlick, Nicolette Gray, Patricia Lay, Ian McDougall, Mona Macmillan, Juliet Surridge and June Woodage.

Heartfelt thanks must also go to Linda Francis who valiantly did the paste-up work, organised the printers, decided on the line drawings and generally coped with everything connected with the finished product.

The articles without Edith Cox's charming line drawings would have been far less interesting -many thanks Edith.

Without the typist and proof reader there would be no Chronicle, and I would therefore like to thank Ainslee Rutledge and Kathleen Jewess for the hard work they have put in, coping as they have with all my editorial chops and changes!

The whole idea of a Chronicle is the brain child of both Kathleen Jewess (who also wrote the Forward) and Janet Haylett - I very much hope that it will be the first of many under their direction.

Elizabeth McDougall
Editor

THE CROPMARKS OF ANCIENT LONG WITTENHAM

By

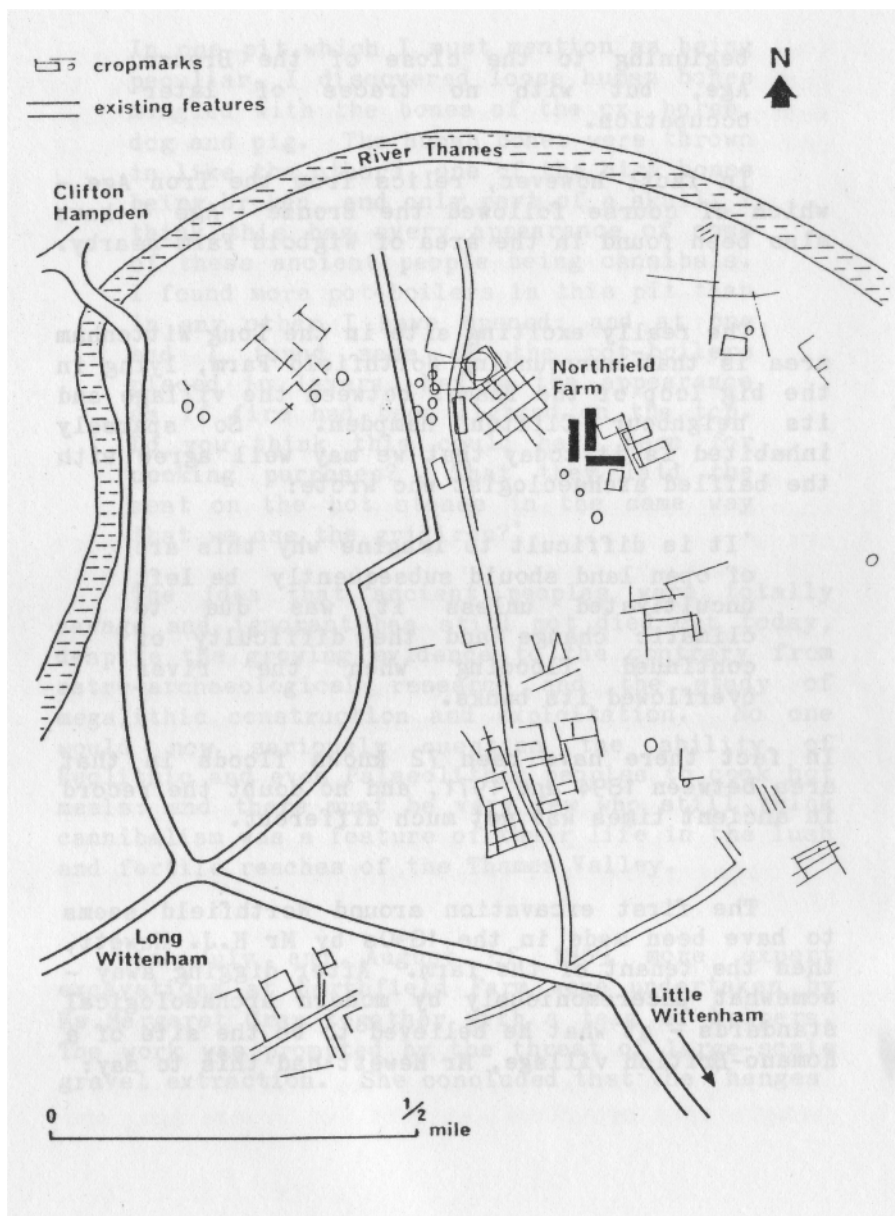
Ian McDougall

Long and Little Wittenham. rank amongst the oldest-inhabited communities in the whole of Britain. The presence of the river, the relatively sheltered site, the mild climate and the village's central position in the criss-cross of roads that were beaten out in Britain from the earliest times, have all contributed to this. The Romans were late arrivals in the Wittenhams, and the Saxons - measured on the timescale of the facts - came here only yesterday.

In recent years the development of aerial photography has made it possible to see where some of the very earliest inhabitants - those, for example, of the Late Stone Age some five or six thousand years ago - must have lived. Where their huts and public buildings were constructed, disturbance of the earth during the building process and later subsidence, erosion etc., have resulted in soil textures which differ from those of the surrounding land. In very dry weather this means that once-disturbed land shows up in a different hue from the rest. From the air such differences are especially clear.

Long Wittenham seems to have been a more widely-spread village in ancient times than it is now. Cropmarks, as the tell-tale colour shadings are known, are extensive in the area between the southern edge of the village and Appleford (the curious mounded feature near the junction of the Moor Ditch and the river may once have been part of an inhabited complex): around the T-junction leading off the Long-Wittenham-Appleford road at Pearith's Farm: and, most conspicuously of all, over a large area surrounding Northfield Farm to the north. Little has been done about exploring the southern site. Of the Pearith Farm site and its immediate surroundings, this report was written in 1937:

‘Gravel digging has produced, particularly within the last decade, scattered remains of Bronze Age burials. Amongst the finds are a fragmentary beaker decorated with horizontal grooves, and various types of 'cinerary' urn, ranging from one pale-red in colour with an overhanging rim neatly decorated with rouletted vertical sprays to a poorly baked, rough vase with a narrow, finger-impressed, applied band. There are, as well, small food vessels of derived overhanging-rim type and small barrel-shaped vessels with finger-tip bands, the former buff-coloured, the latter rough grey. The archaeological material seems to indicate an uninterrupted settlement from the beginning to the close of the Bronze Age, but with no traces of later occupation.’



In fact, however, relics from the Iron Age which of course followed the Bronze Age – have also been found in the area of Wigbold Farm nearby.

The really exciting site in the Long Wittenham area is that surrounding Northfield Farm, lying in the big loop of the Thames between the village and its neighbour Clifton Hampden. So sparsely inhabited is it today that we may well agree with the baffled archaeologist who wrote:

‘It is difficult to imagine why this arc of open land should subsequently be left uncultivated unless it was due to climatic change and the difficulty of continued flooding when the river overflowed its banks.’

In fact there have been 72 known floods in that area between 1894 and 1971, and no doubt the record in ancient times was not much different.

The first excavation around Northfield seems to have been made in the 1890s by Mr H.J. Hewett, then the tenant of the farm. After digging away somewhat unceremoniously by modern archaeological standards - at what he believed to be the site of a Romano-British village, Mr Hewett had this to say:

‘In one pit which I must mention as being peculiar, I discovered loose human bones mingled with the bones of the ox, horse, dog and pig. The human bones were thrown in like the others, one of the high bones being broken, and only part of a skull. I think this has every appearance of some of these ancient people being cannibals. I found more pot-boilers in this pit than in any other I have opened: and at one end I found some of the pot-boilers placed in layers, having the appearance as if fire had been lighted on the top. Do you think this could have been for cooking purposes? That they laid the meat on the hot stones in the same way that we use the gridiron?’

The idea that ancient peoples were totally savage and ignorant has still not died out today, despite the growing evidence to the contrary from astro-archaeological research and the study of megalithic construction and exploitation. No one would now seriously question the ability of Neolithic and even Palaeolithic peoples to cook hot meals: and there must be very few who still think cannibalism was a feature of their life in the lush and fertile reaches of the Thames Valley.

In July and August of 1969 more expert excavations at Northfield Farm were undertaken by Ms Margaret Gray together with a team of helpers. The work was prompted by the threat of large-scale gravel extraction. She concluded that the 'henges' (banked areas) which she traced were certainly pre-Roman, while one of those who assisted her, Mr David Miles, added a number of interesting details:

‘The cropmarks which occupy the area between Northfield Farm and Long Wittenham village form the largest surviving coherent complex in the Thames Valley...They were among the earliest to be investigated in the county, if not the country. The ring-ditch, most commonly interpreted as a ploughed-out Bronze Age barrow, offers a variety of options: Iron Age house gulleys, Neolithic henges or houses, animal pens, Roman temples and mausoles present similar forms in the crop...The backbone of the Long Wittenham cropmark complex is a N-S-running trackway which can be traced for 1700 metres. In the south there is a T-junction, or possibly a crossroads, with a track running SW-NE. We know from excavation that the trackway system was in use in the early Roman period...But many if not most of the Long Wittenham cropmarks seems to predate this track and seem to indicate different methods of controlling and utilising the land.’

In 1980 an article by Roger Thomas, and based on the findings of Ms Margaret Gray, concluded that the lack of domestic sites datable to the Bronze Age is a major problem in the archaeology of the Upper Thames region. However, interpretation of the Gray results suggested to him a possible example of a non-ritual site of the Bronze Age, and he was disinclined to accept Mr Hewett's discovery of Romano-British pottery as indicating a Roman date for the Northfield Farm site. In fact Farmer Hewett had himself written perspicaciously in the 1890s that

‘this must have been a very large settlement, and some of it must date back to the very early ages to judge from the number and kind of the different flint implements I have found - from the Palaeolithic flints down to the beautifully-worked arrow-heads of the later Britons.’

What emerges from all this is that there is no reasonable ground for doubting that the Wittenhams once spread themselves over a larger area than they do now, and that the land they occupy has been inhabited by settled, civilised (i.e. law-making) and cultured (i.e. artefact-making) peoples from a date not later than the Neolithic age. The reflection that our village streets were walked in 3000 BC by people on their way to fish or cut crops, just as they are now, and will be walked no doubt for much the same reasons in 3000 AD should help us to cut our daily problems down to their proper size in the tapestry of history.

GRAVESTONES

by

Julie Bright

The Churchyard Survey was carried out at St Mary's church, Long Wittenham, by members of the Junior Church Club. A local volunteer with surveying experience (and access to surveying equipment), Ian Shipton, prepared a map of the churchyard, showing accurately the position of each grave. Each one was given its own reference number. Members of the group were provided with a reporter's notebook and a pencil. There was also a limited supply of small 'vegetable' type brushes, heelball (used for taking brass rubbings) and some large sheets of Computer paper.

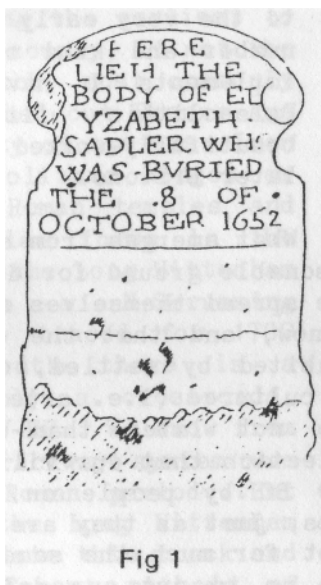


Fig 1

All the pages of the notebooks were numbered, and a 'one-grave-per-page' rule was applied. The first thing to be entered on the page was the grave number (taken from the map). Next, the type of monument was noted - headstone, altar tomb

(with brick sides), coped stone, chest tomb (with panelled sides), cross, cruciform coped stone. This can be useful in dating gravestones if the inscription is unreadable. The next thing to be noted was the direction in which the inscription on the grave faces - North, South, East, West, or, of course, upwards! We had to remember at this point to check all sides of the grave, as sometimes inscriptions appeared on more than one side.

The composition of the grave was noted - marble, limestone, granite etc. We actually have a few, very rusty, iron grave markers, which we suspect might have been removed from their original sites. The grave itself was then measured and these measurements noted. The lettering then had to be studied. If considered unusual, a note was made. Similarly with the artistic features – if any was thought to be out of the ordinary - a rough drawing was made to be possibly looked at again.

The surname was written in large capital letters, followed by the rest of the inscription. They varied considerably in readability, from ‘completely clear and understandable’ to ‘virtually unreadable’ or even ‘non-existent’. In difficult cases the vegetable brush proved very useful removing (carefully) lichen, moss etc. For the practically unreadable inscriptions a rubbing was taken - using the ‘brass-rubbing’ technique. This sometimes revealed sufficient clues to the wording. Again, great care was needed. Some of the very old graves are crumbling away badly. One of the other common problems encountered with the

older stones was that a number of them had actually sunk into the ground so far that the inscriptions were illegible.

Perhaps the most exciting gravestone we discovered was that belonging to Elyzabeth Sadler dated 28th October 1652 (see Fig.1). This particular stone is in excellent condition considering its age.

When all the graves had been studied, the information was transcribed onto individual cards (one card per grave) and then filed in alphabetical order.

ROBERT GIBBINGS & A.E. COPPARD

by

Patience Empson

Robert Gibbings's earliest acquaintance with Long Wittenham was in 1927 when he drove over from Waltham St Lawrence, where he was then living, to visit the writer A.E. Coppard at May Tree Cottage.

Coppard had recently moved from his wooden hut in the Henley woods to this sixteenth-century house. 'I used often to come over from the other end of Berkshire to see him,' Gibbings recalled thirty years later,

'for not only was I publishing and illustrating many of his stories at the Golden Cockerel Press but he was guiding my financial footsteps in that same small private press. Little did I think as we sun-bathed in this garden that the tumbledown bit of wattle and daub and thatch on the other side of his hedge would one day be my own snug habitat.'

'It was for his Count Stefan published in 1928, that I engraved his portrait as a frontispiece. Curiously enough it remains not only the one successful likeness that I have ever achieved but was, he used to say, the only successful one among the many attempts by artists who specialized in portraiture. Though his features

were strong and clear-cut as a gipsy's, their mobility gave them a quality of elusiveness.'

It was on one of these visits to Long Wittenham that Gibbings had first met Harry Chambers, landlord of the Plough.

"A nice man, Coppard," said Harry. "I liked to see him come into the bar. He wasn't young then, must have been getting on for fifty, but he'd have the football boots on and he'd be talking about the Saturday game as if the Houses of Parliament depended on it."

"I remember him buying a new pair when he was sixty," I said, "and swearing he'd wear them out."

"And when he heard anyone tell a good story he'd begin to twist that long black forelock of his - remember that habit he had? And then he'd get the boys singing. Folk-songs he liked. He'd sing them himself, picked up from all over the place. Augustus John brought that from Ireland, he'd say, or somebody else heard that in Suffolk. But Billy Boy was his favourite. 'Where have you been all the day, my Billy Boy?' and finishing up with his Nancy tickling his fancy. Yes, he went to live in Suffolk after. Believe he's living there still - and he'd be young yet by his standards."

'In January 1957, little more than a year later, Coppard died at the age of seventy-nine. The best of his stories, the Manchester Guardian commented at the time, are instinct with his vivid interest in human beings, his sense of the beauty and the sorrow of the earth, and of a heaven that is both magic and compassion.'

These reminiscences appeared in *Till I End My Song* which Gibbings wrote at Footbridge Cottage - the 'snug habitat' to which he came in the golden October of 1955 and where he spent the last years of his life.

A biographical note in the 1949 Register of members of the Double Crown Club (an association concerned with every aspect of book production) outlined the activities which had filled the intervening years:

'From 1924 to 1933 he was owner of the Golden Cockerel Press. Its bias had been literary; and it was Gibbings who gave the artists their chance by introducing that richness of typography and illustration of which *The Four Gospels* may be considered the peak. He brought in, among other engravers, Eric Gill, David Jones and Eric Ravilious.

'Gibbings has become a legend in many parts of the world. His genial, bearded features, his large frame and reassuring tweeds, are known from County Cork to Australasia. He has travelled widely and with immense gusto, even descending to the ocean bed to traffic with angel fish. As author illustrator, he has set down his relevant experiences in eight books of travel...He has illustrated over fifty books with wood-engravings, and occupational traces of crisply curling boxwood can be found deeply embedded in the texture of his clothes.'

Michael Black, the Oxford sculptor who created the great heads that guard the Sheldonian Theatre, carved Robert's headstone in Long Wittenham churchyard. Recently I took part in the happy ceremony of christening Michael's boat. Remembering Robert and the title of the first of his river books, we named her 'Run Softly'.

CHURCHWARDENS & THEIR ACCOUNTS 1690 TO 1733

by

Jennifer Garlick

The office of churchwarden was an important one and carried with it numerous duties, not all of which were related to ecclesiastical matters. The position was not eagerly sought after and was usually held by farmers or craftsmen, only rarely by gentlemen. Heavy expense could be incurred in carrying out a churchwarden's duties; money frequently had to be supplied from their own pockets and reimbursement often took a long time. The accounts for 1691 in Long Wittenham end with the note:

‘Owing to us from ye parish ye sume of 14s.11 1/2d.’

According to general practice, two churchwardens were nominated and appointed by the Vicar and parishioners at the Easter Vestry meeting and, if elected, were normally obliged to serve the office or were heavily fined, though there is no evidence of this occurring in the parish of Long Wittenham. The term of office was one year, but re-election often took place. In one case the joint term of office lasted as long as eight years.

Accounts had to be rendered and were closely inspected by the parishioners who noted in 1713:

‘we do allow of everything saving ye two shillings a day allowed to Sam Feild for his work which we thinks to be four pence a day too much, yt price of two shillings a day being never paid him before as it appears to us’.

Presumably the churchwarden had to reimburse the parish the excess sum!

The first duty of the churchwarden was attendance at the visitation of the Bishop in order to be sworn in. An allowance of 7s.6d. was usually made for a dinner on this occasion, but even this was sometimes denied. The churchwarden then had to ‘present’ twice a year at the visitation whatever might be amiss in his parish. This would include the morals of the parishioners, the way the services were conducted, untimely ringing of the bells, the number of Papists and other Dissenters in the parish, etc.

Sundry administrative expenses were incurred in the execution of these duties:

	£	s	d
pd at ye Visitation for ye book of Articles, for Pentecost money & warning of ye Court	0	3	7
It(em) for putting in ye Register	0	2	6
It for Parchment and Psentment	0	0	8
It spent at ye same time	0	11	0

This last, somewhat large, expenditure is not specified, but must have been satisfactorily explained for the parishioners to pass the accounts!

The main duty of the churchwarden was the upkeep of the church and its fabric, and much of the yearly expenditure involved payments to labourers and for materials to repair the church, e.g.:

	£	s	d
1721 half a hundard of tils & bushel of lim	0	1	11
1723 pd for worke and herds and nails	0	3	6
1725 ffor lime and haire for the Church	0	3	6
1694 To Samuells Ffeild for mending ye Church rayls and for chips for ye Glaziers fire	0	3	6

The windows were reglazed frequently and from 1691 to 1701, sixpence was paid each year to ‘Old Grove for sweeping or cleansing ye leads’. The furnishings of the Church were also kept in good condition by the wardens. For example, in 1691, 19s.0d was paid for ‘ye hearse cloath’ and in 1725 a new cushion was made for the pulpit which must have been very grand:

	£	s	d
Cloath and Lace for the pulpit cushin	0	10	6
Silk and makin	0	0	6

In 1693 the cost for the year of washing and mending the surplice came to 5s.0d.

The churchwardens' accounts sometimes show events of national importance. It was the wardens' duty to see that the church bells were rung to proclaim them and in 1715 a ‘barrell of beare’ was purchased for the sum of £1.6.0 in order to celebrate the coronation of King George 1.

Much money was spent on the upkeep of the bells. The bell ropes were renewed most years and in 1727 the ‘bells were rehung, the old sockets being sold to offset the cost:

	£	s	d
The Bell ffounders Bill is	14	13	11
Pd the carage of the bell	2	2	0
Spent at allehouse when the bell was hanged	0	1	8
	<hr/>		
	16	17	7

The oold brases waid 23 pounds at 6 pens the pound	0	11	6
here is the hole Charg	16	6	1

The Churchwardens were responsible for providing a Bible, a Book of Common Prayer and a Book of Homilies: In 1698:

	£	s	d
Pd for a Common prayer books of ye last edition	0	13	0
It for binding and perfecting ye Church bible	0	13	1

The goods, utensils and ornaments required by the Prayer Book also had to be kept in good order. In 1716, 5s.6d. was paid for a ‘flagon and platt’. In 1725, 15s.0d was paid ‘ffor mending the Cup and Cufer’, this being the Communion cup.

Another item appearing on every account was the provision of bread and wine for Communion. The fact that it was customary for the vicar to receive any unconsecrated wine left over may account for the large quantities indented for in these accounts.

A typical page from the Churchwardens Receipts

The disburstments of Wm harvord & Richard bowery 1716

	£	s	d
Pd att ye visitation att Micelmas 1716	0	12	0
The Alowanc fer ye dinners	0	7	6
gave to travellers	0	3	0
for bread & wine	0	18	6
pd for a flagon & platt	0	5	6
pd for 2 bell Ropes	0	5	6
pd William Cacy for work & bricks & lime	0	5	0
pd ye glasier	0	4	0
gave to travellers	0	1	6
spentt for Carring the bell to Nicolas Blackmans	0	1	0
Nicolas Blakmans Bill	1	2	0
John pools Bill	0	4	4
Sam: Fields Bill	1	3	3
theire Receipts	9	16	3 3/4
theire disburstments	5	13	11
Remains in hand	4	2	9 3/4
pd att ye visitation May ye 2nd 1717			
pd Evens his bill	0	5	6
pd James Clarks bill	0	2	3 1/2
pd John pooll	0	1	0
for writting ye presentment	0	0	6
ye alowanc for dinners	0	7	6
pd to ye Archdeacon's Clark	0	4	8
Remains in our hand:	3	0	8 1/4

(N.B. Receipts include remains in hand from previous year.
Slight discrepancies in the figures may be due to faulty sums or illegibility of the original - Author's comment.)

and Disburstments - Long Wittenham – 1690-1733

A Tax made by ye Minister and Churchwardens for ye parrish
of Longwittenham for ye year 1716 ye taxe is 13 9d ye yard
Lands

Thomas Buttler	0	13	3 3/4
Thomas Lovgrove	0	7	0
Jams prowse	0	19	3
William Leaver	0	2	2 1/4
Richard Straing	0	1	9
William harvord	0	7	0
Francis Lawford	0	8	3 3/4
Richard bowery	0	10	2 1/2
James French	0	1	3
Richard Justis	0	9	7
John Sadler	0	7	10 1/2
Robertt bateman	0	0	10 1/2
William French	0	5	3
Thomas pound	0	1	9
John pope	0	0	10
ye widdow Carter	0	7	10 1/2
ye widdow Lovgrove	0	14	0
Richard Sadler	1	0	1 1/2
Jams Smartt	0	1	3 3/4
Robertt Day	0	0	5 1/4
Thomas harvard	0	4	4 1/2
Joseph Moulden	0	6	1/12
John Dow	0	1	9
Richard Almond	0	0	10 1/2
<hr/>			
	7	16	7 3/4

Other duties of the churchwardens included ensuring services were correctly carried out and overseeing the manners and morals of the parishioners. The churchwardens also worked in conjunction with the overseers of the poor in attending to the parishioners' needs and ridding the parish of any beggars, vagrants or unfortunates who were likely to become a charge upon them - only paupers born in the parish had a right to support from it. In 1713 the sum of 3s.0d was 'given to a great bellyed woman to carry her forward in her journey to Appleford'. Sixpence was also given to a maimed soldier and one shilling was 'given to six more soldiers and to a seventh being all of a company - and to an officer'.

The money to cover the upkeep of the church and other expenses incurred in the discharge of the churchwardens' responsibilities was raised by means of a tax levied on land-holding parishioners. During the years 1690-1733, for which accounts have been preserved, the rate varied from 6d. to 4s. the yardland (a common unit of agricultural holding). One year (1710) it rose as high as 11s.6d. the yardland, when heavy expenditure was incurred - presumably for re-roofing. 'Goodluckes ye plumers bill' came to £27.15.2 and 'Sam Fields bill' (the carpenter) came to £17.8.0.

One of the strangest duties (in accordance with a law of 1566) obliged churchwardens to pay for the destruction of 'Noyfull Fowles and Vermyn'. The heads of the animals or birds had to be cut off after payment and left with the churchwarden for destruction, to prevent repeated payments being made. In 1732, 15s.8d was paid for 'sporows', 9s.4d for 'powlcats and hedghogs' and 5s.0d for 'foxkses'.

The multitudinous religious and secular duties of the churchwardens can obviously not have been easy. Their devotion to such tasks and the recording of them enable us to have a fascinating glimpse into the life of the times in which they served.

BENEATH OUR FEET

by

Juliet Surridge

Few of us in the Wittenhams can have dug our gardens without discovering some evidence of those who lived here before us - all those small pieces of blue and white china, stems of old clay pipes and pieces of green glass. As we put them to one side, we have a passing thought for how they came to be there and continue with our digging.

Richard Taylor, however, while digging in and around Church Cottage (in the process of renovation), has gone to great lengths to examine what his spade has exposed. The earth removed, he has painstakingly sieved through it, so that nothing should be missed. The items he discovered have been examined and identified by the Ashmolean and the Oxford Archaeological Unit. The earliest artefact found dates back 1900 years.

Directly below the brick floor, thought to have been laid about 1750, were found buttons and beads from that date, a small thimble and a bone lace-maker's bobbin. A rose gold keeper ring (date unknown) was discovered about one inch down beneath the floor.

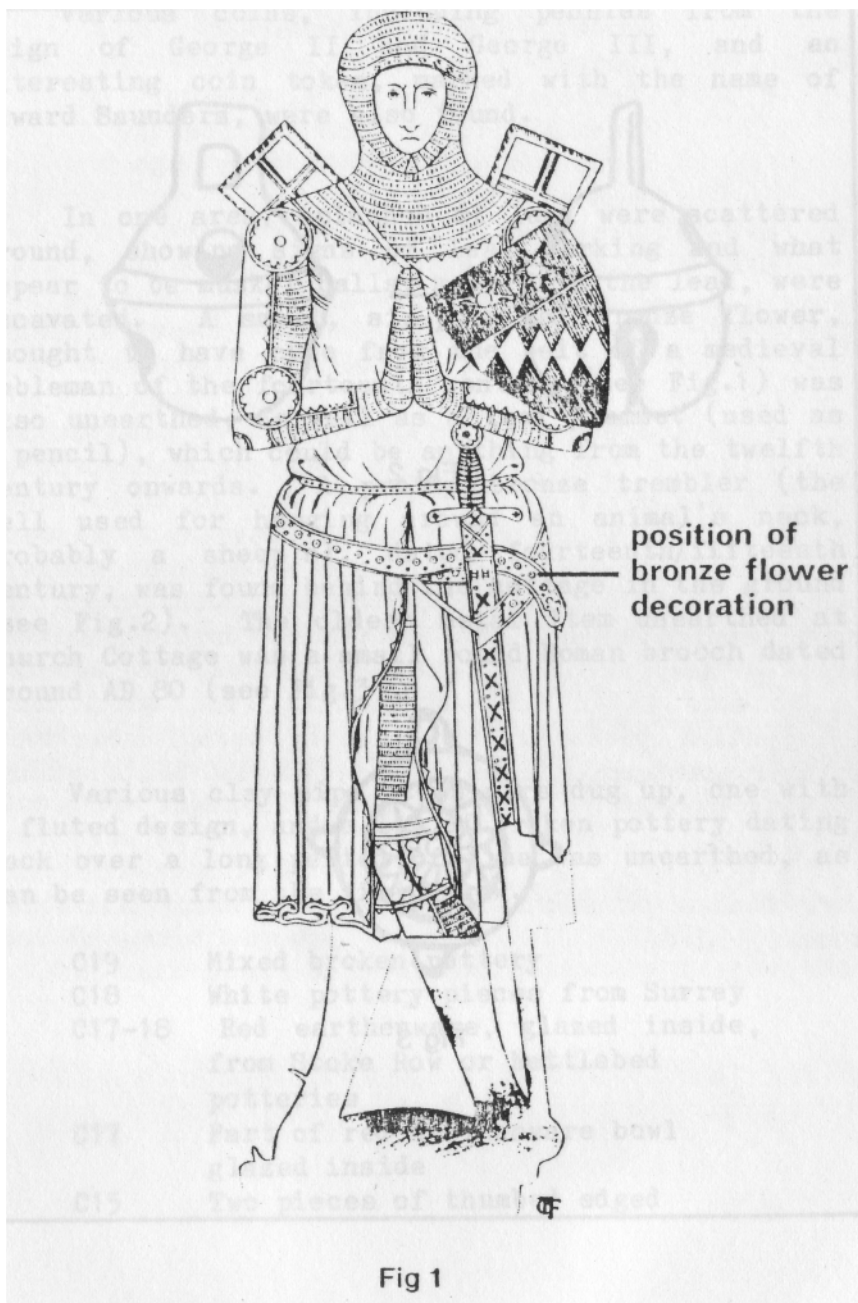


Fig 1

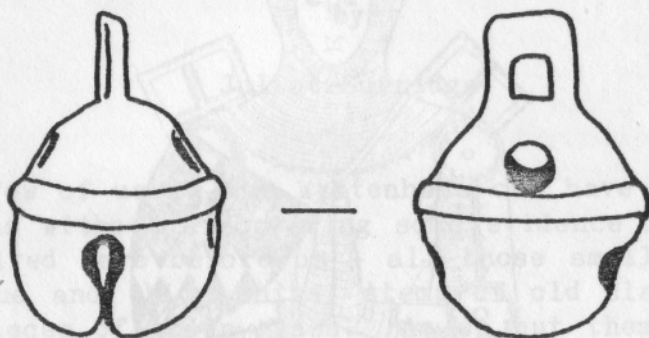


Fig 2

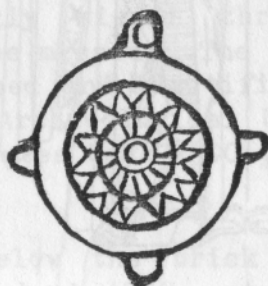


Fig 3

Various coins, including pennies from the reign of George II and George III, and an interesting coin token, marked with the name of Edward Saunders, were also found.

In one area, splashes of lead were scattered around, showing signs of lead working and what appear to be musket balls, made from the lead, were excavated. A small, six-petalled bronze flower, thought to have come from the belt of a medieval nobleman of the fourteenth century (see Fig.1) was also unearthed, as well as a lead plummet (used as a pencil), which could be anything from the twelfth century onwards. A pretty bronze trembler (the bell used for hanging around an animal's neck, probably a sheep's), dated fourteenth/fifteenth century, was found behind the cottage in the ground (see Fig.2). The oldest metal item unearthed at Church Cottage was a small round Roman brooch dated around AD 80 (see Fig.3).

Various clay pipe stems were dug up, one with a fluted design, and a lot of broken pottery dating back over a long period of time was unearthed, as can be seen from the list below.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| C19 | Mixed broken pottery |
| C18 | White pottery pieces from Surrey |
| C17-18 | Red earthenware, glazed inside,
from Stoke Row or Nettlebed
potteries |
| C17 | Part of red earthenware bowl
glazed inside |
| C15 | Two pieces of thumb edged
pottery and green speckled
pottery from Brill |

- C13-15 Medieval coarse ware, pieces
from a pitcher from the Newbury
area and pieces from more jugs
and a pitcher
- C12-13 Glazed pale coloured pottery
- C12 Black pottery with speckle and
thumbmarks, part of a bowl from
the South West
- C3-4 Roman pottery - base of a goblet

Church Cottage is thought to have been built about 1450. It is possible, as often happened, that it was built on or near the site of an earlier dwelling, hence the much earlier pottery. We can only speculate on how the Roman items got there; perhaps they were just dropped beside the track by some passing Roman. The Wittenhams have been the site of many valuable historical finds, now housed in Museums in Oxford and Reading, but small and interesting items are continually being unearthed in our gardens and fields. It is well worth keeping careful note of anything you find.

Thanks to Richard Taylor for doing all the work. J.S.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM MACMILLAN

by

Mona Macmillan

William Miller Macmillan came to live in Long Wittenham in 1959, just before his 75th birthday. In a way it was a return to his youth, for he had first known the area as an Oxford undergraduate at the beginning of the century (1903-6) when he cycled all over the county, and got to know most of the villages. Little Wittenham was, in fact, the place he knew best for he would cycle out to Day's Lock where tea could be had at the Lock Keeper's house - not the same house as now, but somewhere nearer the Lock.



He was born in Aberdeen, but went from Scotland to South Africa with his parents at the age of seven, and came to Oxford from Stellenbosch University as one of the first batch of Rhodes Scholars. After taking his degree, he continued his studies for some time in Aberdeen and Germany. He then returned to South Africa to teach history, first at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, and then as Professor at what was then the School of Mines, but a few years later became the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Here he created what became known as the 'Liberal' school of history, often referred to as such by modern historians, and which had a great influence on the development of history and political thought in South Africa. His work was based on documents of early missionaries, which showed the activities of the white settlers in a less favourable light than they liked to see themselves, and for the first time included the black peoples in an historical view. He published two books of history, 'The Cape Colour Question' and 'Bantu, Boer and Briton', and a study of the general situation in the country, 'Complex South Africa'. Not surprisingly his work was not received with favour by the Government, particularly when the Afrikaner Nationalists (under Hertzog) came to power. They made things difficult for the University. In 1934 Macmillan, seeing very little hope of further progress in South Africa, resigned his Chair and came to England.

By this time he had ceased to be interested only in history, and felt the need to do something for the advancement of Africa as a whole. Seeing no prospect of that in South Africa he turned his attention to the British colonies, and to the effort of persuading the Colonial Office to take a new attitude to development and political progress in Africa. He published in 1938 'Africa Emergent', a major review of the situation in Africa; this, together with 'Warning from the West Indies' (a similar review of the British West Indian Colonies), helped to bring about a new policy which included funds for colonial development. More would have come of this had not the war intervened in 1939.

During the war the British Government made use of Macmillan's expertise, first as an adviser to the BBC on the colonies and Commonwealth, and then to establish branches of the British Council in the four colonies of West Africa. After the war he went to St Andrews University in Scotland as Director of Colonial Studies, and while there carried out several assignments in Africa. It was from St Andrews that he came to Long Wittenham on his retirement, finding it a convenient centre from which to keep in touch with African studies both in London and Oxford, and not too far from Heathrow for ventures to Africa itself.

He came with his family, wife Mona and children Duncan, Hugh and Catriona. The eldest, Lindsay, had been married early in 1959 and was living in Zambia. When they moved, his last book of historical studies, 'The Road to Self Rule', was in the press and he set about revising his two South African historical

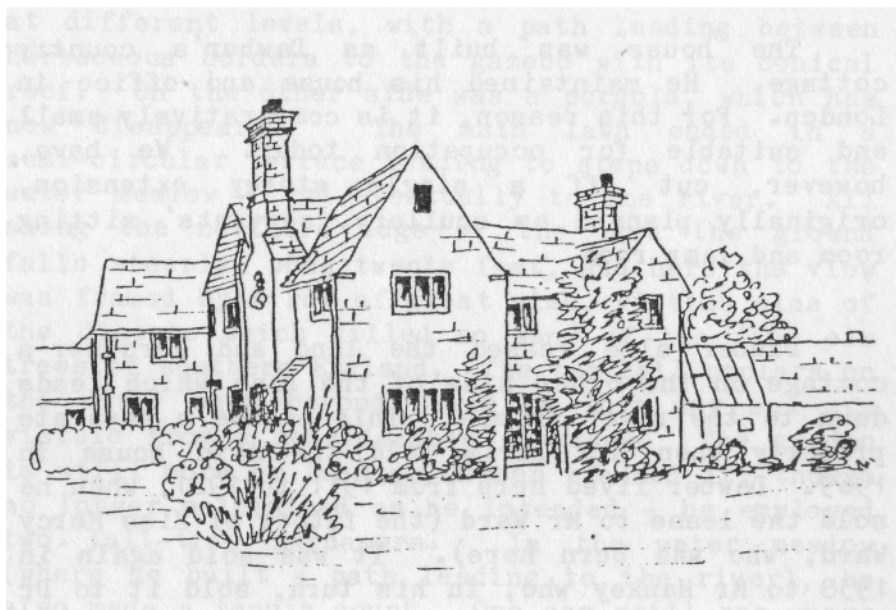
works for reprinting. A book of reminiscence, 'My South African Years', was completed during his last years at Long Wittenham, but only published the year after his death. He died at Yew Tree Cottage, Long Wittenham, on 23rd October 1974, and is buried at the United Reform Church, Aston Tirrold. A symposium based on his works was held at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London to mark the hundredth anniversary of his birth in October 1985, and the papers from this are to be published.

While at Long Wittenham, Macmillan (who was a keen walker) was much concerned to keep open the footpaths, and he got the County Council to reopen path No.5, from The Vine to Sires Hill. He also tried to establish the right to a village green, with a path to the river at Willingtons, now The Manor. To this end he got a number of the older people in the village to write accounts of the previous existence of 'The Green'.

DAWBER'S HOUSE

by

Nicolette Gray



Dawber's House was built in 1911. This is recorded on a stone plaque built into the outside with the letters:

E
1 9
G & M
1 1
D

Originally the name was Wilson's Close, Wilson being a former farmer who leased the land. We altered the name as it seemed more appropriate to commemorate the architect and original owner, Sir Guy Dawber, P.R.I.B.A.

The house was built as Dawber's country cottage. He maintained his house and office in London. For this reason, it is comparatively small and suitable for occupation today. We have, however, cut off a single storey extension, originally planned as scullery, servants' sitting room and lamp room.

Dawber also leased the land and gardener's cottage on the other side of the lane which leads down to the river Thames. This became a separate property when Mrs Idris sold the main house in 1969. Dawber lived here from 1911 to 1921, when he sold the lease to Mr Ward (the father of Miss Mercy Ward, who was born here). It was sold again in 1938 to Mr Hankey who, in his turn, sold it to Dr Idris in 1946. All this time the house and land, like most of the rest of the village, belonged to St John's College, Oxford. The College sold the freehold to Mrs Idris at the same time that she sold it to us.

Dawber planned the house and garden together, as he generally did in his work; he specialised in building country houses, particularly in the Cotswolds. One can get some idea of the original garden from the photographs in 'Small Country Houses of Today' by Lawrence Weaver, published in 1919.

It was planned in several sections, terraced at different levels, with a path leading between herbaceous borders to the gazebo with its conical roof. On the other side was a pergola, which has now disappeared. The main lawn ended in a semi-circular terrace leading to steps down to the water meadow - and eventually to the river. All along the northern edge of the lawn the ground falls steeply, some twenty feet, and here the view was framed by a row of great elms, victims alas of the disease which killed so many of the fine elm trees of southern England. The two tall poplars on the river bank beyond stand to this day and are visible from a considerable distance. The garden is still more or less as Dawber planned it, though no longer maintained as he intended - he employed two full-time gardeners. In the water meadow (where he built a path leading to the river), he also made a tennis court. One can still see where it was raised and levelled, and he not only had a boat house (still surviving) but a landing stage. We found in a shed, when we arrived, two striped poles which must have marked it.

The ditch at the bottom of the steps leading to the water meadow is said to have been originally dug to obtain clay for making bricks; the withes which grow there were at one time used for making baskets.

The house shows the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement and of the Art Nouveau style, both current when it was built; the gateway leading into the lane has Japanese features. It is pleasing and restful because all the materials were carefully chosen, and the details meticulously planned.

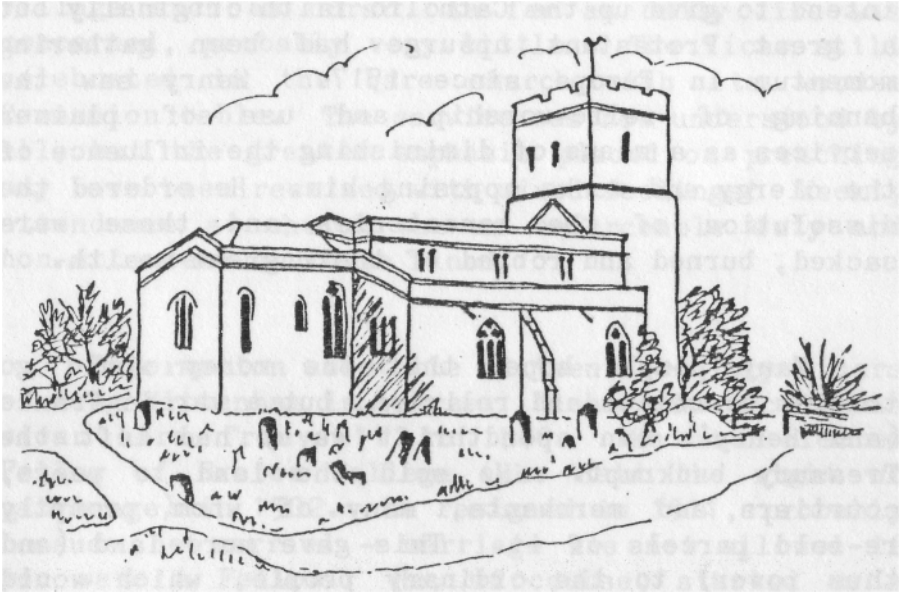
Upstairs, the ceilings are coved, echoing the angle of the roof outside. On the ground floor, one ceiling is slightly arched with a simple, floral, plaster moulding. The other room has a panelled and moulded wooden ceiling. All the mantelpieces are beautifully proportioned - stone on the ground floor - smaller, with a wooden shelf, upstairs. The windows are designed on a modular principle - 35" x 14", leaded, with panes 6 1/4" x 4 1/4". They are flush with the outside wall. Inside is a deep sill tiled throughout in green. Both picture rail and skirting board are plain. The doors are panelled with a simple rectangle above and below, separated by two lateral rectangles. A pleasing feature is the wooden grid of squares used instead of bannisters. This creates a plane - as it were a wall - in the hall, and continues above as a balustrade on the first floor.

In general, the house remains very much as it was designed by Dawber. For this one has, to some extent, to thank St John's College, which refused to allow even reasonable alterations. We found an interesting result of this policy when we wished to reopen the doorway between a bedroom and what had been a dressing room. We found, encased in the dividing wall, the original door - including its brass furniture!

THE CHURCH OF THE TUDORS & STUARTS

by

Patricia Lay



The sixteenth century was a time of great change for religion both at home and abroad. In England, Henry VIII came into conflict with the Pope over his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and his subsequent wish to divorce her because she was unable to bear him an heir and he wanted to marry Ann Boleyn. The Pope, Clement VII, was in the power of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, who was a nephew of Catherine, and Henry found it intolerable that he should be subjected to the will of Charles. He declared that England would be free of Rome by forming a new church - the Church of England.

Henry used Parliament to effect his reformation. The Reformation Parliament began its work in November 1529. In 1531 Henry was acknowledged to be the Supreme Head of the Church of England and by 1534 Papal authority had been abolished. It is probable that Henry did not intend to give up the Catholic faith originally but a great Protestant upsurge had been gathering momentum in Europe since 1517. Henry saw the banning of relic-worship and use of plainer services as a means of diminishing the influence of the clergy and monks opposing him. He ordered the dissolution of the monasteries and these were sacked, burned and robbed of their great wealth.

Many people hoped that the money would go towards education and religion, but a war in France (and Henry's own spendthrift ways) had left the Treasury bankrupt. He sold the land to peers, courtiers and merchants, many of whom promptly re-sold parcels of it. This gave more land (and thus power) to the ordinary people, which would never have happened if the monasteries had remained intact.

Henry then set about reforming the act of worship practised by his subjects. The services were in Latin and therefore not understood by the congregation. Archbishop Cranmer produced a new Prayer Book written in English, and Tyndale and Coverdale translated the Bible. Henry ordered priests to teach their congregations the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments and the Articles of Faith in English. Every church had to have a copy of the new Bible.

How did all this affect the inhabitants of a village such as ours? As far as daily life was concerned, probably very little. The Vicar still celebrated in the bare church with its wooden Communion table. The service was now understood by all, but the greater emphasis placed on preaching may have been received with mixed feelings! Weekly attendance at church was an enforceable duty and non-attenders could be fined.

Information about the sixteenth-century Vicars of Long Wittenham is sparse. Richard Northcott was vicar here from 1511 to 1540. He was elected Fellow of Exeter College (who held the right of patronage) in 1502. He resigned in 1511, probably because he married - marriage was not allowed if you were a Fellow. He, of course, started as a Catholic vicar and then had to transfer his allegiance to Henry as head of the Church of England. There was much turmoil locally with the dissolution of Abingdon and Dorchester Abbeys.

Northcott's successor, John Conner, became a Fellow in 1523 and Vicar of Long Wittenham in 1540. In his twenty-nine years as our vicar he too experienced much upheaval. Henry died in 1547. He was succeeded by Edward VI and then Mary. She turned England back to the Roman Catholic faith which all had to profess or be executed. Elizabeth, on her succession in 1558, re-established the Protestant Church. Conner died in 1569 and was followed by John Best who was not a Fellow of Exeter and was only styled as a 'Clerk'. He resigned in 1607.

Richard Reynolds - son of a Devon commoner - became Vicar, remaining so until 1616. During this time he was also Vicar of Egloshayle in Cornwall, amongst other benefices. This was quite usual. The clergy were poorly paid, and in order to maintain a decent standard of living, marry and bring up a family, priests took on more than one parish, This was known. as pluralism. If his parishes were too far apart, the standard of pastoral care was low. If the parish's patron was generous, then that parish would gain more of their vicar's attention.

Reynolds was succeeded by William Prowse. He was born in 1581, the son of a Devon gentleman. He became a Fellow in 1602 but resigned in 1610, probably on his marriage. He had four children, three sons and a daughter. He became Vicar of Culham in 1614 and I am indebted to Dr Oldfield, vicar in 1912, for the following:

'Prowse...having obtained the promise of the next presentation to Long Wittenham, seems to have gone there to reside probably doing duty for Vicar Reynolds who was a great pluralist.'

Prowse was eventually inducted in 1617. He remained vicar of both Wittenham and Culham until his death in 1644. He seems to have settled in the village, probably living in the original Tudor vicarage destroyed in the 1960s. His descendents played an important part in the life of the village until 1880, becoming landowners and farmers, but keeping church connections by acting as churchwardens.

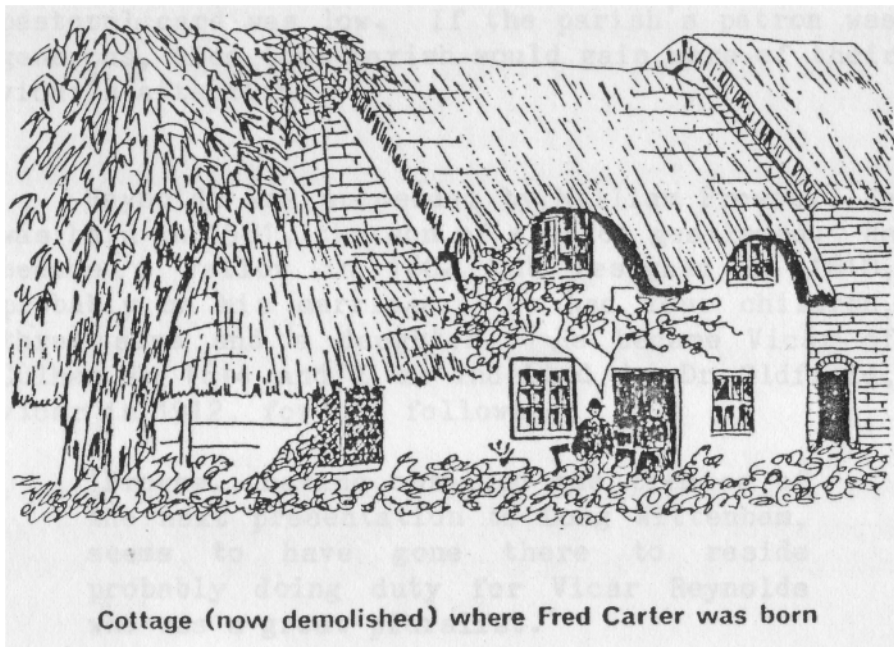
The death of Prowse brought to an end an era in Long Wittenham. This was the time of the Civil War, but it was the Reformation that finally came to the village. The next vicar was a Puritan.

FRED CARTER - VILLAGE PERSONALITY

by

June Woodage

In 1894 a twelfth child - another son - was born to Matthew and Hannah Carter in the village of Long Wittenham. They named him Frederick. He came into the world in a small thatched cottage at the extreme east end of the village. The house is no longer standing, having been pulled down many years ago. A modern bungalow now stands on the same plot of land. With one



exception, Fred's twelve brothers and sisters left the village. His brother William was the only one who stayed here until he died.

The only education Fred had was at the village Church of England school. Pupils did not move on to secondary schools in those days. Many children left school from the age of 12/13 onwards, depending on how long their parents were prepared (or could afford) to let them stay on. Whilst at school, Fred was taught the usual school lessons. He also played football, hockey and cricket. He recalled the time when Mr and Mrs Collins came to live in the village. Mr Collins was very keen to encourage junior football. He bought goal posts, football gear and later presented a cup for the youngsters to compete for. Fred went on to play for the village football team. He was in the winning side when Long Wittenham won the North Berks Cup - the first time it was played for in 1907.

Fred had several jobs after leaving school. At one time he worked in the village Co-op Stores. He worked as a delivery boy, using a pony and four-wheeled trolley, delivering groceries in Long and Little Wittenham and once a fortnight travelling to such places as North Moreton, some 3-4 miles away.

Another post he held was working with cart horses. One of his employers was Admiral Clutterbuck, a big land owner in the village. Fred described the Admiral as a very generous man who often gave his workmen an extra two or three (sometimes even four) shillings for a job well done. Fred would often recall the time he drove a pair of horses into Abingdon (some 6-7 miles away) and took part in a ploughing match. He was barely 18 years old at the time. His workmates made fun of him, saying he would never keep the team of horses in the field. He surprised everyone

by winning first prize. He took part in several ploughing matches in his younger days.

During the First World War, Fred was called up to serve in the Army. He spent a lot of his service in Kent in a Garrison Artillery. The enemy often made quick, surprise trips to the English coast, shelling the coastline, but Fred never actually came face to face with the enemy.

One of Fred's sisters married and went to live in Sutton Courtenay. He often visited her and on these visits he came to know Florence Kent. Later on, she and her parents came to live in Long Wittenham. Fred and Florence got to know one another very well and after the First World War they married and settled down in a new house, No.2 Fieldside, Long Wittenham where they spent all their married life. They had one child, a son, Horace. He in turn married and had three children, two daughters and a son. Fred was a good family man. When he married he vowed he would not leave his wife alone too often and he was not one for visiting the many public houses in the village.

There were in fact five 'pubs' at that time. The Barley Mow (on the Clifton Hampden parish boundary), The Machine Man Inn (right at the east end of the village), The Vine (in the middle of the village, opposite the school), the Plough Inn (situated very close to the village cross), and The Three Poplars, at the extreme west end of the village. The last named 'pub' was closed many years ago and The Pendon Museum now stands on the site. Florence died, and Fred continued to live at No.2 Fieldside on his own.

During the Second World War, he worked at Didcot Depot, engaged in what was known as 'through loading'. This meant he had to ensure that the rail trucks were fully loaded before allowing them to pass through the sheds. Whilst working at the Depot he would repair shoes in his spare time for his fellow workers and their friends.

During his life, Fred saw many changes. He recalled the village policeman, who then lived in the village and used a bicycle to get around. He well remembered the times when the policeman would join the poachers and share part of the catch, often two or three hares a night, and sometimes a pheasant.

He and his family were very keen Chapel people. The Methodist Chapel was closed many years ago, and the building is now used as the Village Shop and Post Office, situated at the west end of the village. His father was a lay preacher and would cycle many miles to preach at a distant Chapel on a Sunday, whilst outside preachers came to this village to take services. Harvest Festival was quite an occasion in those days. People would bring gifts of fruit, vegetables and flowers and dress up the Chapel. After the service, all goods would be auctioned and the funds raised were used to help run the Chapel.

Fred also went to St Mary's Church and spoke of the full congregations and good choir in his early days. He well remembered Feast Sunday when the Church congregation held a service at the Cross, in the middle of the village. After the service, everyone would parade back to the Church. On Feast Sunday a

fair would arrive in the village street in the early evening, the fair people jostling for places to put their stalls along the sides of the road. This fair would stay for two days, blocking the way for the little traffic going through the village. It was quite an event, with everyone turning out on the Monday, a few less on the Tuesday. By then the villagers had spent all their money.

During his latter years, Fred worked hard as a gardener in several big houses in the village. He was always cheerful, and had a friendly word for passers-by. You could rely on him for a very interesting chat about 'the good old days'. It was a very sad occasion when he died in March 1984, and he will be remembered by many, many people.

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Cover Illustration: Based on Roman Broach found at
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