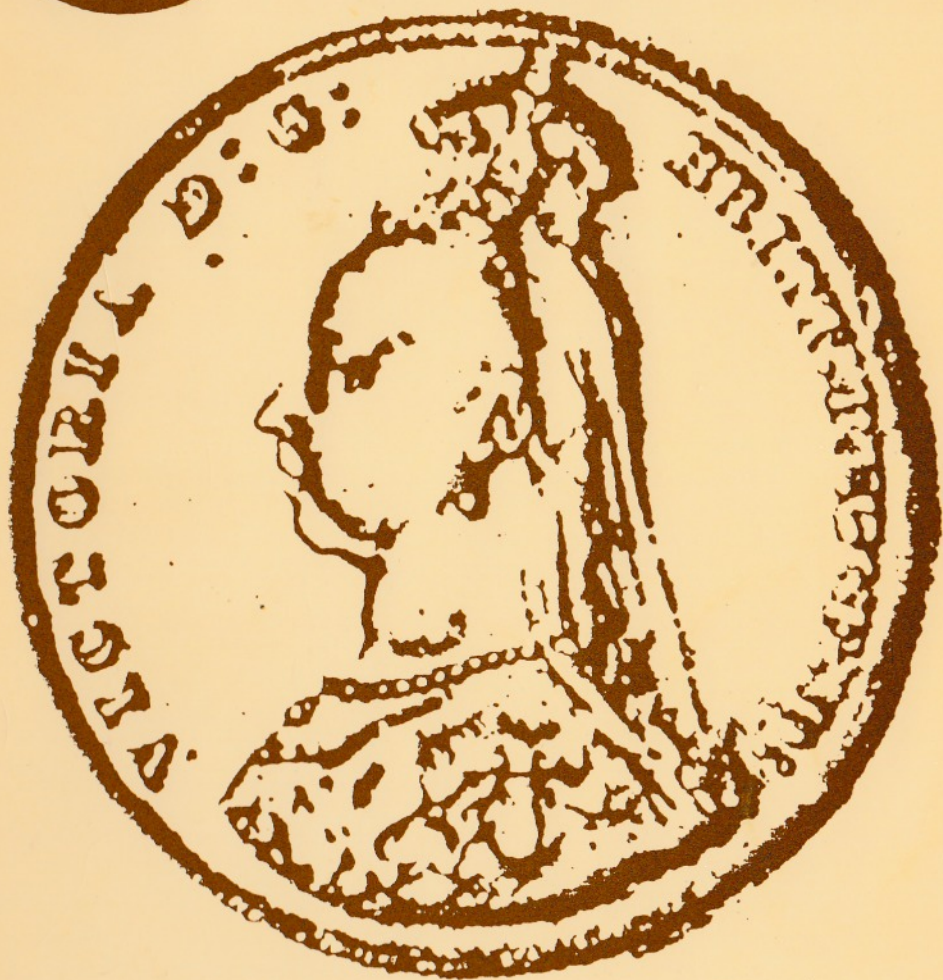


The Chronicle

No 5



The Journal of the
Long Wittenham Local History Group

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THE CHRONICLE

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Long Wittenham Local History Group

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Cover Illustration: *Victorian Gold
Sovereign, 1887. (see article "A Year in
the Life of Long Wittenham 1890")*

Acknowledgements

The contents page of this Chronicle reads rather like the chapter headings of a popular crime novel. This is not surprising as local history research is rather like solving a mystery - delving into the past to unravel the clues. As every good detective must know this is sometimes easy - the problems are solved without looking far - but at other times a great deal of work and thought have gone into retrieving the desired information.

This Chronicle, then, is a tribute to all the members of Long Wittenham Local History Group who have worked so hard, and now present their findings for us to draw our own conclusions.

Many thanks to all the authors and researchers and particularly to Trish Gilbert who valiantly typed it all up and to Linda Francis who, as usual, finalised and co-ordinated the printing.

Jenny Garlick
Editor

CLUES TO THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR THOMAS WHITE

by Janet Haylett



Arms of St. Johns College

England prospered under the Tudors. Although troubled by religious matters the reigns of Henry VII and then Henry VIII and his three children Edward, Mary and Elizabeth were politically relatively stable. Extremes of poverty and wealth existed side by side and this led to a greater division of society into classes. For many, however, it was a time of prosperity.

The population in England rose from about 1 million in 1500 to 2.5 million in 1650 and there were great opportunities for enterprising people to take advantage of this. Merchants in particular benefitted from the population increase and could make fortunes providing the extra food and clothing.

Many well-known educational institutions were founded in the 16th century. Edward VI founded schools at Eton and Harrow, and Cardinal Worsley founded Christ Church, Oxford.

The church had long been a patron and provider of education but with its power and wealth diminished by the reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries between 1536 and

1548, the Church could no longer sustain this role and other patrons were needed.

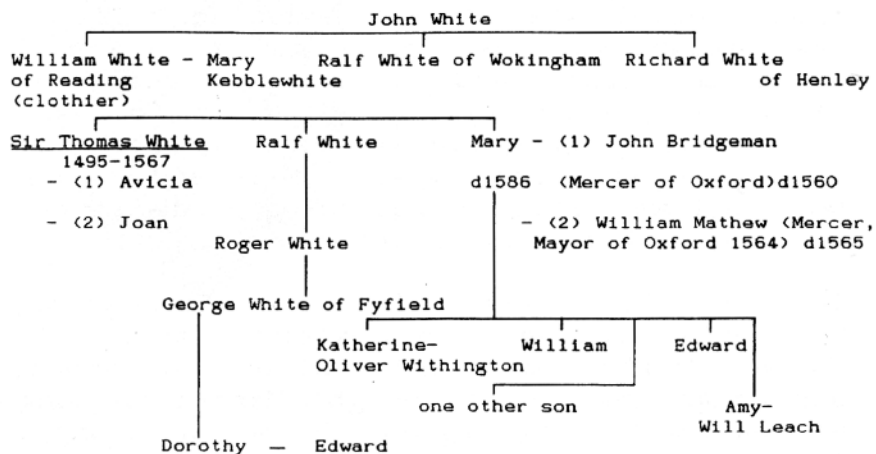
Who better to finance colleges and schools than the wealthy merchants who could thereby gain respectability and improve their social status? But endowing colleges was expensive. As well as the actual buildings, land had to be purchased and given to the College or school to provide an income. Agricultural land brought in food; barley, oats, wheat, meat and so on. Woodland was also useful to provide timber and charcoal for the kitchens.

It was to endow his new foundation St. John's College in Oxford, that Sir Thomas White, merchant tailor, alderman, and Knight of London, bought Manors in Long Wittenham in the 1550s. From then until late in the twentieth century, St. John's College has owned much of the land and many of the houses in the parish and the President of the College has been Lord of the Manor.

Thomas White was born in either 1492 or 1495⁽¹⁾. He was a son of William White of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, a clothier, and his wife, Mary, daughter of John Kebblewhite of South Fawley in Buckinghamshire. Thomas attended Reading Grammar School but when aged 12 was apprenticed to Hugh Acton, a prominent member of the Merchant Taylors Company, who died in 1520, leaving £100 to Thomas in his will. With this inheritance, Thomas was able to set up his own business and by 1533 he was a prosperous clothier and Master of the Merchant Taylors Company. In the early 1540s he was in a position to make large loans to the cities of

Coventry and Bristol. He was instrumental in founding Merchant Taylors School and also a school in Bristol.

The White Family Tree



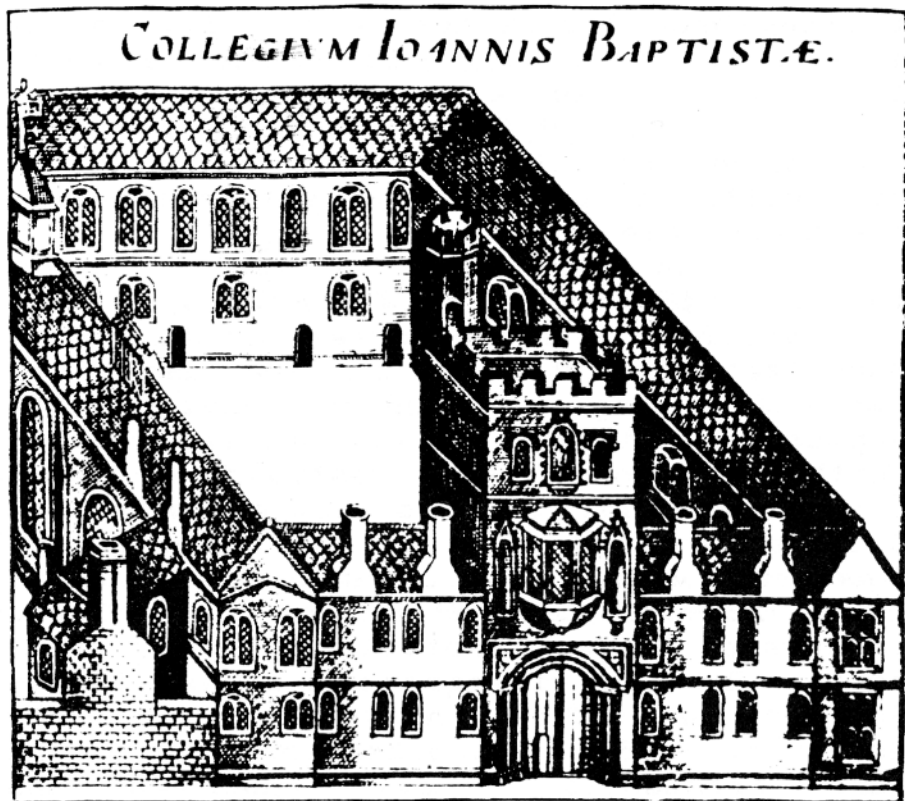
Thomas's first wife, Avicia, was a young widow with three children when she married Thomas. The family lived in the parish of St. Michael, Cornhill in London, but Thomas owned several houses. In his wills two houses in Reading and more than twenty houses in London are mentioned. In 1545 Thomas was elected 9th Alderman for Cornhill but for some reason refused to take up this office initially and was sent to prison. However, he must have relented and been forgiven because on 2nd October 1553 he was knighted by the Earl of Arundel, Lord Steward, in the presence of Queen Mary. On 29th October that year he was elected Lord Mayor of London with great splendour and pageantry.

Thomas was, by all accounts, a vigorous man, strong and well-grown. He was also a man of sound judgement and genuine piety. He was a Catholic supporter but disliked the wrangling and bitterness that existed in England over religion. Whilst Lord Mayor he issued regulations forbidding “games, morris dances and interludes”, a move which cannot have been popular with everyone and which seems at odds with the reported splendour and pageantry of his election.

At some point in his life Thomas had a dream. It is said that he dreamt that he was to found a college at the place where a tree grew in a certain shape - an elm with two or three trunks not necessarily on the same root. Following his dream he found this special tree near St. Bernard's College in Oxford, an old Cistercian College which had fallen into disrepair. At the height of his wealth and power Thomas set about making his dream come true.

In July 1554 Thomas White bought, for £1,908 16s. the rectories of Kingston Bagpuize and Fyfield, and the manors of Fyfield, Long Wittenham, Eaton (in Appleton), Frilford and Garford and land in Northmore. Thomas had invested in property before but now he was buying with his College in mind. The scholars would need food and wood as well as money. Exactly which manor in Long Wittenham was included in this purchase is not clear. The manorial history of the village is complex. Walter Gifford held the land in the Domesday Survey of 1086⁽²⁾ but after that the manors were frequently sold, bequeathed and amalgamated⁽³⁾. Thomas White made one major purchase from Christopher Assheton and his wife Katherine in 1554⁽⁴⁾ and another from

Alice Dynham in 1556⁽⁵⁾. He also bought, in 1557, seven messuages and land from George Pudsey (Pudsey's Manor?)⁽⁶⁾ and land from John Denton for £120 in 1565. These purchases meant that by the late 1560s, St. John's College was in possession of the manors of Strangeways-de la Poole and Pudsey's and also owned the farm called Louches. These together totalled about two-thirds of the parish lands of Long Wittenham. The remainder of the land belonged to the rectory, which had been held by Exeter College since 1322, and a number of freeholders⁽⁷⁾.



Drawing by John Bereblocke, 1566

Ten months later, in May 1555, Sir Thomas White was granted permission by the King and Queen (Philip and Mary) to found a college in Oxford for the study of arts, philosophy and theology. It was to consist of a President and thirty members both graduate and non-graduate. The College was to be known as St. John the Baptist College, after the patron saint of tailors and of the Merchant Taylors Company. Soon afterwards Sir Thomas was granted the lease of the derelict buildings of St. Bernards at a rent of 20s a year. A few days later the first foundation charter was issued but repairs and renovations had to be carried out so it was not until St. John the Baptist day (June 24th) in 1560 that the College could open its doors to scholars.

During the period of repairs, Sir Thomas was busy acquiring more land. As well as land and property in Long Wittenham, he bought part of Bagley Wood from Sir Thomas Mason in 1557. This was important in supplying wood for the hall fire and coal (charcoal) for the kitchens. Two further parts of the wood were bought in 1584 and 1619. The second foundation charter, drawn up in 1558, added civil and canon law to the subjects to be studied and in that year Sir Thomas granted the manors of Warborough and Shillingford to the College as well as his recent purchase of the manor of Clifton Hampden. He also acquired land in the open fields to the north of the College.

Avicia, Thomas's first wife, died in February 1558. Later that year he married Joan, daughter and co-heiress of John Lake of London and widow of Sir Ralph Warren. Soon afterwards Sir Thomas made his first will (he made five

altogether) which went into great detail about grants to his other educational foundations and scholarship provision at St. John's. He also requested St. John's to allow his cousin, George White, to have the main farm at Fyfield provided "he delivers to the College yearly four couple of conies (rabbits) weekly from Michaelmas to Christmas and six couples from Christmas to Candlemass, also he is to feed sixty sheep for the College of which the College shall take twenty yearly and give him twenty lambs. If the male (White) line ceases the College is to keep the farm, or part of it in demesne, to provide produce for the College."

Sir Thomas had family interests in Long Wittenham as well as in Fyfield. Kebblewhite (or Keeblewhite) relations lived in the village; one, Francis Keeblewhite married Elinor Webb, a widow, in 1583 and a son (Francis) was born in 1584. In 1616 either Francis junior or his father (presumably widowed by then) married Elizabeth Hyde, who came from the highest stratum of Long Wittenham society, being the widow of Thomas Hyde, gentleman. (See 'The Chronicle no.3', 'Riches to Rags'). The Keeblewhites farmed five yardlands (about 100 acres) and are mentioned in several documents of the time.

Sir Thomas's neice, Katherine, married a Dr. Oliver Withington. In 1506 The College, with the consent of Sir Thomas, granted to Oliver and Katherine Withington a lease for 60 years of the Manor of Long Wittenham for £3 10s. a year. Edward Withington, son of Oliver and Katherine married Dorothy, daughter of George White of Fyfield (and

beneficiary of Thomas's first will). Dorothy must have taken over the lease as there is no evidence that Dorothy Withington was party to a joint agreement over the lease of a farm, formerly called Louches, later called Willington's (possibly a misspelling of Withington's).

These connections with the village mean it is likely that Sir Thomas took an interest in the village and made visits. In his second will (1564) he left 40s to Thomas Aldworth, an apprentice and son of a Long Wittenham family. In his fifth and final will of 1566 he left £40 to “William Gifford, my brother-in-law”. Several centuries before, a Walter Gifford had owned land in the village. Perhaps there were still Gifford interests in Long Wittenham. The last will of Thomas's was signed in the presence of John French, a descendent of John French who was mentioned in Foxes Book of Martyrs as having been martyred in 1530.

In May 1566 Sir Thomas fell ill of “the palsy” and the college prayed daily for his recovery. He died in London on 12th February 1567 after a long illness. His funeral in Oxford must have been an impressive ceremony with doctors, MAs, BAs and scholars attending in large numbers. A hatchment bearing Thomas's coat of arms and other banners were carried.

After the service a great feast was held, at the end of which Campion delivered an oration in Latin extolling Thomas's virtues. Sir Thomas was buried in St. John's College chapel.

There are conflicting views about the extent of Sir Thomas's wealth when he died. It is often said that he died poor⁽⁸⁾, but this is disputed by Stevenson and Slater, authors of the college history who credit him with a huge fortune⁽⁹⁾. They say:

“He had real estate in London which, when it passed into the hands of the College, was sold for more than £3,600, and from his personal property, which was large, as with many merchants, the College obtained £3,000 and his widow (Dame Joan) was entitled to at least as much since, by law of London, a widow, where there were no children, could claim one-half of the personal estate of her late husband. If we add legacies mentioned in his last will he must have had £10,000 at the time of his death. It is possibly true that his trading profits were not so large in the last twelve years of his life but he had spent £4,000 on endowments to the College, £1,000 more on repairs to St. Bernard's and in paying annual defecits from 1557 - 1566. But in the last six years of his life he had not added much to augment the inadequate endowments”.

Thomas White was a man of energy and vision, a self-made man and a great benefactor to civic bodies and to education. He was a pious and moderate man, tolerant of religious sympathies different from his own. He had no children of his own but looked after his apprentices well and was keen to provide them with scholarships to St. John's and opportunities for education.

Some years after his death, this verse was written about Sir Thomas and printed in 1592 in “The Nine Worthies of London”.

Whyte is my name and milk-white are my hairs
White were my deeds, though vain is proper praise.
White for my country were my kind affaires,
White was the rule that measured all my dayes.
 Yet black the mould that couched me in my grave,
 By which more pure my present state I have.
I cannot sing of armes and blood red warres,
Nor was my colour mixt with Mars his heir.
I honour those that ended country jarres;
For therein subjects show that they are true.
 But privately at home I showed myself
 To be no lover of vain wordly pelfe.
My deedes have tongues to speak though I surcease;
My oratour the learned strive to be,
Because I twined paulmes in time of peace.
And gave such gifts that made fair learning free.
 My care did build them bowers of sweet content,
 Where many wise their golden time have spent.

References

- (1) Dictionary of National Biography says 1492, Stevenson and Slater in ‘the Early History of St.John's College’ say between February and August 1495.
- (2) See “The Chronicle no. 2”

- (3) See Victoria County History entry for Long Wittenham.
- (4) St. John's College Archive.
- (5) St. John's College archive XII 3-7
- (6) St. John's College archive XII 8,9
- (7) Barbara Todd in 'Freebench and free enterprise - widows and their property in two Berkshire Villages' in "English Rural Society 1500 - 1800" edited by J. Chartres and D. Hey, Cambridge University Press 1990 suggests there were 14 freeholders.
- (8) Dictionary of National Biography
- (9) "The Early History of St. John's College" by Stevenson and Slater, Oxford Historical Society, 1939.

THE MISSING LINK

by Edith Cox



Family Tree

In the late summer of 1988, whilst looking through the Didcot Herald for any news for our history scrapbook, I noticed at the foot of the paper a letter from a Robert Cox of Taroona, Australia who was trying to trace a Henry Cox of Abingdon. My late husband's grandfather was Henry, and although there are dozens of Cox's in Abingdon (from where we came to Long Wittenham) we had absolutely no relatives at all; other than my late husband, Ronald, and his late father, Vickers; however, something prompted me to write, really to eliminate our family. Imagine my surprise when almost by return of post I had a letter to say that he was undoubtedly Ron's third cousin and asking for further details. He told me he himself was an editor, publisher and freelance writer, and gave me details of his family. He said he had been working for twenty years on the family tree, and I was the only one able to give him some vital information to help him delve further (and also I did). I found out from Henry's birth certificate that his father was John, a carpet

weaver, and that Henry also had a brother and sister which no-one knew about. The brother died at the age of 16 in 1874, we do not yet know what happened to Mary Ann, the sister.

At Christmas 1989, I received a large envelope which looked like a calendar; when I opened it, inside was a 30 page printout of details of all the families, a lot of details of their lives on board ships etc and where they served, also information about what happened in the various years in their towns and countries, and of their families and where they lived. He told me he was hoping to get a reunion together in January 1990 and this was held in the bush open countryside at the foothills of the Great Dividing Range not far off from Taroom. Apparently it was a marvellous day, warm and humid with a cool seabreeze and 50 - 60 people attended. Five generations were present, the two eldest people being 87 and 79. Most had never met before, but three people had met before and worked together unaware of the fact that they were close cousins.

There is now to be another meeting at Easter 1992, when he hopes further information will have been found. Meetings are also to be arranged on a regular basis, with family picnics.

Robert Cox hopes to publish an interim history next December or January, which is a quiet time for him but realizes that he still has a long way to go to complete the family tree, if indeed a family history ever can be complete. So far 250 relations have been listed dating from 1740.

He has promised me a full copy of the tree so far, also photographs of the reunion. It has turned out to be a very interesting outcome for the price of a stamp.



At Abingdon, the shoals are worse and worse
That Swift Ditch seems to be the better course
Below which town near Sutton there are left
Piles that almost our barge's bottom cleft;
Then Sutton locks are great impediments,
The waters fall with such great violence,
Thence down to Culham, stream runs quick and
quicker,
Yet we rubbed twice aground for want of liquor.
The weir of carpenter's sans fault I think,
But yet near Wittenham town a tree did sink,
Whereas by fortune we our barge did hit,
And by misfortune there a board was split;
At Clifton, there are rocks, and sands, and
flats,
Which Made us wade, and wet like drowned rats,
The passage bare, the water often gone,
And rocks smooth worn, do pave it like free
stone.
From Clifton down to Wallingford we fleet,
Where (for annoyance) piles are placed unmeet--

Extract from stage 9 of the doggerel verse of John Taylor, who voyaged down the Thames in 1632. Apart from being a famous pedestrian, he was also at one time a professional London Waterman. He once walked 400 miles from London to Edinburgh for a bet.

INTERPRETING THE CLUES THE SALE OF LOVEGROVE FARM

by Kathleen Jewess

Deep in the archives of St. John's College, we found two sale posters (figures 1 and 2), apparently full of information if only we could decipher them. For example, we know that the 'comfortable farm house' was and is Lovegrove's but which house is the 'large cottage with garden'? Where is the 'plot of land in Westfield', or the 'piece of rich arable land'? What does it mean that the cottage and land are subject to corn rent, land tax, and quit rent, not to mention a fine? We decided to look a bit more closely at these examples of sale posters, both for their own sakes and to work out just how to approach such evidence of local history.

The large cottage with garden was to be auctioned first, and so we will look at it first. It seemed probable that it was one of two houses: Lovegrove's Cottage, simply because of the name, or Maytree Cottage, which we knew had somehow been connected with Lovegrove's Farm. Independent evidence determined that it was Maytree: a document dated 20 February 1846¹ two and a half years after this auction, records the sale of the farmhouse and Maytree together to Joseph Hewitt, and an accompanying sketch proves their identity. The auction was to include the house and homestall, the latter being defined as a field adjacent to the house, as well as the west part of a close of arable land. We assume

Valuable Small **FARM** *Tithe Free,* **LONG WITTENHAM,** **BERKS,**

Late the Property of and occupied by Mrs. Sarah Lovegrove, deceased,
To be Sold by Auction,
By JAMES CHAMPION,

By order of the Executors of the Will of the deceased,

AT THE GEORGE INN, WALLINGFORD,
On FRIDAY, the 19th JULY, 1844,
AT FOUR FOR FIVE O'CLOCK PRECISELY,

The Estate is held under the President and Scholars of St. John's College, Oxford, on Lease for 20 Years, from 5th April, 1843, and consists of

A Large Cottage with Garden,
Occupied by John Kirby, Tenant at will, and part of the Farm Yard including
Two Piggeries with Pump and Trough, a Barn and Cart Hovel and

LAND

AS UNDER.

	A.	R.	P.
House and Homestall - - - - -		1	7
West part of a Close of Arable Land - - - - -		1	2 38
Plot of Land in Westfield - - - - -	39	2	6
Plot of Meadow Land - - - - -	4	1	28
	45	3	39

And is subject to a Corn Rent, which for the year ending Michaelmas last was commuted for £10. 17s. 11d. and a Money Rent of £1. 11s. 4d. Land Tax on this and a small Freehold Estate adjoining is £5. 17s. 8d. which will be apportioned at the Sale. Quit Rent

The Lease has hitherto been renewed every 7 years, and the fine paid on the last renewal was £93.

(The measure is taken from the Award of the Commissioners for the Wittenham Inclosure.)

The Purchaser will have the option of taking to the Growing Crops, consisting of about 9 Acres of Wheat, about 13 Acres of Barley, 13 Acres of Turnips and Sweets, and the remainder of Beans and Clover,---2 Rick Stadles, a Rick of Hay and Wheat Straw, which must be determined immediately after the Sale, and actual Possession on completing the purchase according to the Conditions of Sale.

Further Particulars may be had by applying at the Office of Messrs. HEDGES & SONS, Wallingford, where the Lease may be seen, or to JAMES CHAMPION, Estate Agent and General Appraiser, Nethled.

BRADFORD, PRINTER, &c., WALLINGFORD.

Valuable Small
**FREEHOLD
FARM,**

**Tithe Free,
Long Wittenham,
BERKS,**

Late the Property of and occupied by Mrs. Lovegrove, deceased,

To be Sold by Auction,

BY

JAMES CHAMPION,

AT THE GEORGE INN, WALLINGFORD,

On FRIDAY, the 19th JULY, 1844,

**At FOUR for FIVE o'clock precisely, immediately after the Sale of the
Leasehold Estate.**

Lot 1.

A Piece of Rich Arable Land,

**In the Westfield, from the Stone Land Marks therein, (dividing this from the
Leasehold) to the other side of the row of Elm Trees, on the Road as set out
by the Commissioners under the Inclosure.**

Lot 2.—A

Comfortable Farm House

With attached and detached Offices,

Orchard and Garden, part of the Farm Yard,

Two Large Barns, Stables, Cow, and Poultry House.

**The Timber on this Estate, and the Fixtures in the Farm House to be taken at a Valuation in the usual
way, actual Possession will be given on completing the Purchase. Apportioned Land Tax, 10s. 8d.**

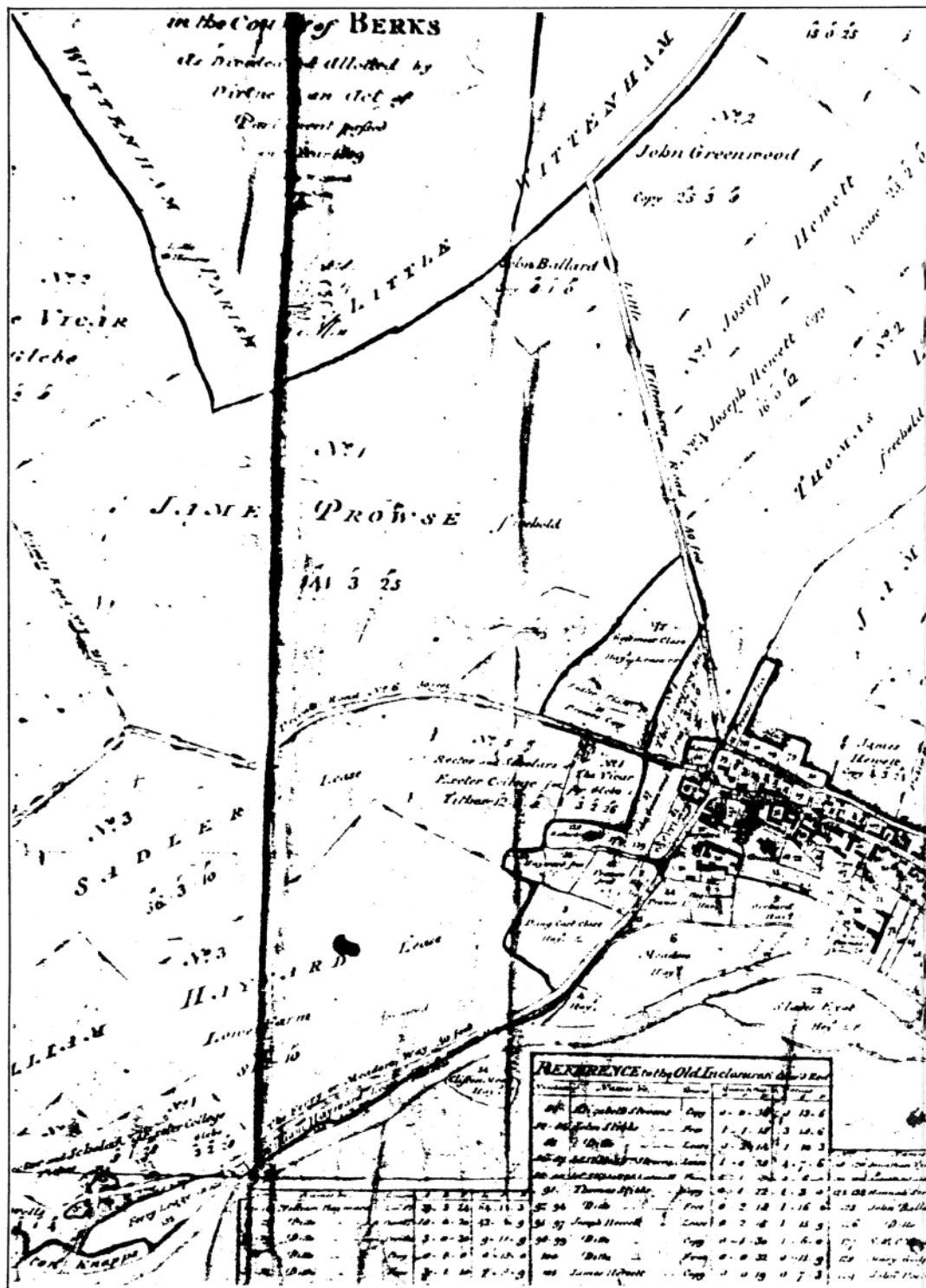
**W. THATCHER will show the Lots, and further Particulars &c. may be had of Mr. LOVEGROVE, Solicitor,
Reading, or JAMES CHAMPION, Estate Agent, Appraiser, and Auctioneer, Nettlebed.**

BRADFORD, PRINTED BY W. WALLINGFORD.

that the homestall was really the large garden belonging to the cottage.

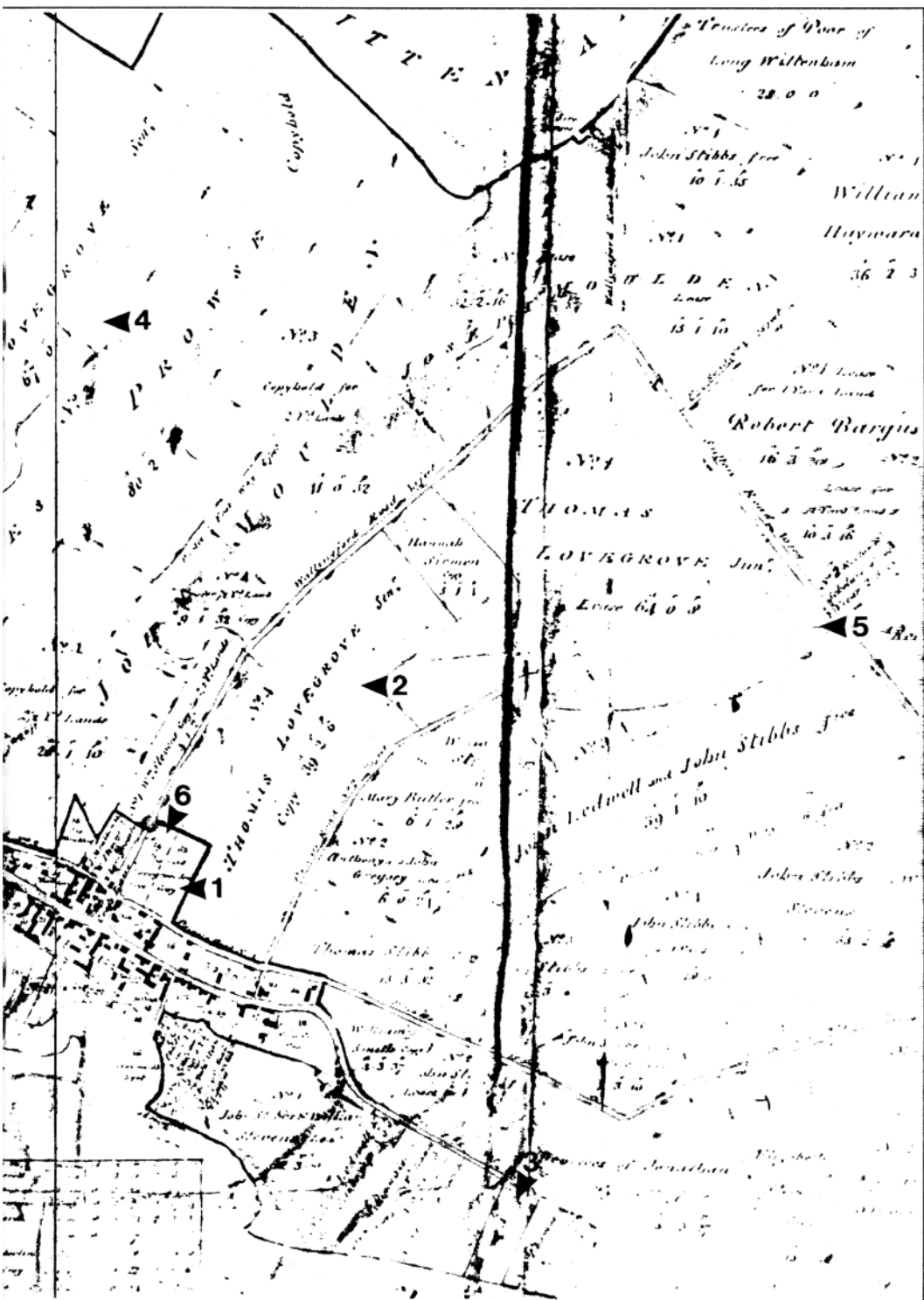
We know what a 'close' is - a field that has been enclosed or fenced out of open fields - and we think that it was the eastern half of the piece of land over which is now built the Crescent and part of Westfield estate (see map, arrow 1). The reason for this is that on the enclosure map (dated 1812) the size of Maytree Cottage and this piece of land together is given as two acres and five perches, and if the sizes given for the house and homestall plus the eastern part of the close are added together, they too add up to two acres and five perches.

We can also identify the other two pieces of land in this part of the sale. Because the size of the plot of land is given, we can match it with the plot assigned to Thomas Lovegrove the Elder by the Enclosure Award in 1812. (Recall that the Westfield and Northfield, which had been great open fields, had been enclosed and divided up amongst St. John and Exeter Colleges and certain landowners and tenant farmers in the parish²). As shown on the map (arrow 2), it covers most of the land on which today stand the houses along the Didcot Road (excepting the Crescent), part of Westfield Road and Saxon's Heath. By the same means we can see that the plot of meadow land matches that awarded to Thomas Lovegrove the Elder, which was situated in the fields known as Steel's Meadow and the Lakes, along the border with Appleford (arrow 3).



REFERENCE to the Old Enclosure Act of 1801

Enclosure No.	Owner	Acres	Value	Remarks
1	John Greenwood	1. 0. 0	13. 6	
2	John Ballard	1. 1. 10	3 12. 6	
3	Joseph Hemett	1. 2. 10	1 10. 3	
4	James Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
5	John Greenwood	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
6	John Ballard	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
7	Joseph Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
8	James Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
9	John Greenwood	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
10	John Ballard	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
11	Joseph Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
12	James Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
13	John Greenwood	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
14	John Ballard	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
15	Joseph Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
16	James Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
17	John Greenwood	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
18	John Ballard	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
19	Joseph Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	
20	James Hemett	1. 0. 0	1 10. 3	



What was for sale was the remaining seventeen years of a twenty-year lease, since the land was owned by St. John's College, Oxford. It therefore came encumbered with various charges - corn rent, money rent, land tax, quit rent, and a fine which had to be paid on renewal. It was also proclaimed 'tithe free'. What did all of these terms mean? First of all, let us look at what constituted a tithe. It was a tax paid to the Church of England, and it was made up of one-tenth of the main produce of the land (such as corn or wood, and called a *praedial* tithe), plus one-tenth of the produce of stock and labour (such as wool, pigs and milk, and called a *mixed* tithe), plus one-tenth of the profit's of one's personal labour (called a *personal* tithe). This was all paid to the local church. Tithes had been paid generally in England since time immemorial until 1836, when by the Tithe Commutation Act they could be commuted to a rent-charge based on the prevailing price of corn: this was the corn rent. But there is something very curious here. When the parish was enclosed in 1812, tithes were commuted then, and in exchange for the right to receive tithes the Rector and Vicar received over four hundred acres of land, including what is now Northfield Farm. Therefore it is unclear why corn rent has to be paid when tithes had already been eliminated.

There is another curious charge, and that is land tax. This had been collected by law from 1692 to 1831; why was it still being charged in 1844? It is just possible that it was an old name covering a different charge, that of the Poor Law rate; the only possible circumstantial evidence is that the land

tax on both properties for sale was £5 17s 8d and the Poor Law Rate in 1838 on the same two properties was £5 3s 9d³ but this is not very likely. The answer remains obscure.

Quit rent and fine are more straightforward. The quit rent was a leftover from the medieval period, when tenants owed services to the lord of the manor in exchange for being allowed to hold land; this might be military service, or the obligation to work for certain days on the lord's own land (the demesne), for example. The quit rent was a money payment made by the tenant to the lord to excuse himself from these customary services. The lord of the manor in Long Wittenham was St. John's College, and therefore they had the right to impose a quit rent, which by this time was just another charge on the land. Quit rent was not abolished until 1922.

Finally, there was the fine, which was not a punishment, but a money payment made by a tenant to his lord on the transfer of property to him. The change in value of land can be traced by looking at the amount of the fine, not, as we would now, by looking at the money rent. The rent, indeed, was quite small - £1 11s 4d - while the fine was £93. On the whole, the rent remained the same: it was the amount of fine which changed. In this case, although the lease was for twenty years, the lease was renewed every seven years, and at this point the amount of the fine would probably be adjusted up or down.

Let us now turn to the other sale poster, that for the ‘valuable small freehold farm’. It is also tithe free, but there is no mention of corn rent, which increases our suspicions about the leasehold property - i.e. that St. John's was the recipient of the corn rent, not the Rector and Vicar of Long Wittenham. It is however subject to land tax.

The main problem with this poster was trying to decide the location of the ‘piece of rich arable land’, particularly since no indication of size was given. There are at least three different possibilities. Our first thought was that it was the L-shaped piece of land, measuring just over sixty-seven acres, which lay with its head along the road from Crossways to Little Wittenham (arrow 4) and its foot partly along the border with the parish of Little Wittenham. There were two reasons for this: firstly, the poster refers to the ‘Stone Land Marks therein’ and the piece abuts onto a field called Stone Hill; in addition, the road from Crossways to Little Wittenham Parish was a road newly-made by the Commissioners who had directed the enclosure of the parish. Furthermore, it was freehold land. But then comes a problem: before the enclosure, all of the land from the Didcot Road to the Thames by Clifton Hampden and Burcot had been one great field, and in the Enclosure Award this part of the parish was referred to as the Northfield; unfortunately, in the sale poster the land is referred to as being in the Westfield. If this was the correct piece, one possible explanation for the change in the name of the field may be that with the making of the road to Little Wittenham, people in the parish gradually began to think of the land directly

south of the village as belonging to the Westfield, rather than the Northfield as it was now cut off from it.

We then considered the second possibility, that the land might be another field allotted to Thomas Lovegrove in the 1812 enclosure, which measured a bit over sixty-four acres, and lay behind the piece being sold with the cottage, running to the Didcot Road where it runs east-west (arrow 5). This is undeniably in the Westfield, but at least in 1812, it was leased by Lovegrove, not held freehold, and since St. John's sold no land in the parish until the twentieth century, it is unlikely that the Lovegroves could have acquired the freehold between 1812 and 1844.

Finally, there is a third possibility, which is the small two-acre plot in the Westfield, running along the Didcot Road, which now accommodates the Crescent and a few other houses along the road (arrow 6). Firstly, Lovegrove owned the freehold; secondly, when Lovegrove's Farmhouse and Maytree Cottage were sold to Joseph Hewitt in 1848, this two-acre piece of land was included in the sale; and thirdly, the lease of the piece of land immediately to the west was being sold with the cottage, and it would therefore make sense for the freehold of this eastern piece to be sold with the freehold of the farmhouse. There is no evidence that there was any difference between the two, and since both were held by Lovegrove, they were probably farmed together.

In short, we do not know for certain to which piece of land this poster refers. Until we turn up a document which gives its size, thereby allowing us to match it with one on the Enclosure map, judgment must remain suspended.

For those interested in finding out the history of a house and its holdings, sale posters can provide much information. Sometimes they include maps, and sometimes they give more information on the size of the house and the number and use of the rooms. These two tell us a lot about the agricultural use of the land, while the sale document dating from 1846 gives us its value. Every local historian should be on the lookout for them.

1. XII.31 (E.3), St. John's College Archive, Oxford.
2. For a brief description of the enclosure, see Kathleen Burk Jewess, *The Parish of Long Wittenham 1800 - 1920: a Brief History* (1984), pp. 3 - 9.
3. Long Wittenham. Rate Book, D/P153/11/1 Berkshire Records Office.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF LONG WITTENHAM 1890

by Elizabeth McDougall

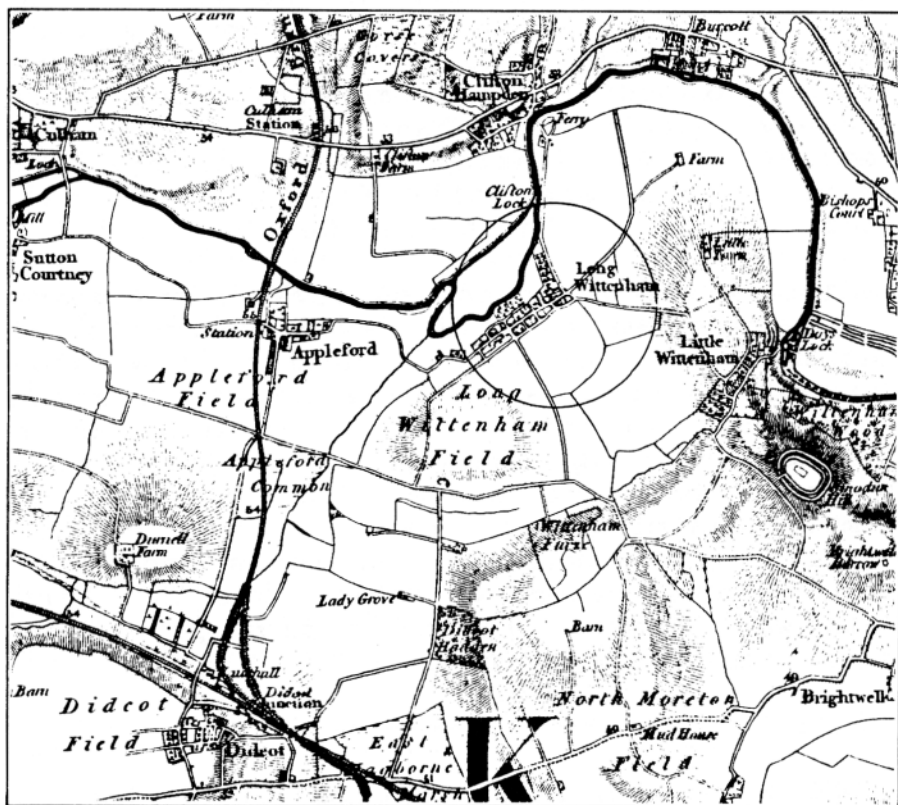
Changes in Britain between the end of the 18th and middle of the 19th century were profound. The country, from being an underpopulated rural community, became a densely populated urban one. A social revolution was taking place, a movement whose effects are still felt to this day. It is called the Industrial Revolution.

In 1890 Queen Victoria was seventy-one years old. There were still seven years to go until her diamond jubilee. Winston Churchill, born at Blenheim, was sixteen years old - at this point in his long career a non-achieving schoolboy. The Irish Troubles had got worse. The throwing of bombs, maiming of cattle, burning of hayricks and murder of landlords and their agents were becoming common events. Sinn Fein was formed. Ireland - *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

‘LONG WITTENHAM is a village and parish on the river Thames, 4 miles south-east from Abingdon, 5 north-west from Wallingford, 4 miles north-east from Didcot station on the Great Western railway and about 2 south-east from Culham station...’ (Kelly’s Directory of about 1890).

That was Kelly's description of Long Wittenham in 1890. We are still four miles from Abingdon and five from Wallingford.

Didcot continues to run trains, although they no longer carry the Great Western logos. Happily, in spite of the fact that passengers can now get to Paddington in just over half an hour, Long Wittenham is also still a village.



1830 1":1 mile Ordnance Survey Map, showing Long Wittenham ringed. Railway details revised up to Oct 1891.

‘The church of St. Mary is an edifice of stone in the Norman, Early English, Decorated, Late Perpendicular and Elizabethan styles, consisting of chancel, nave of five bays, aisles, south porch, and an embattled western tower with angle turret, 75 feet high and containing bells. The church

was restored in 1850, the chancel being rebuilt by the rector and fellows of Exeter College, Oxford who are the impropiators of the great tithe. The east window is a memorial to Lieut. Henry Charles Clutterbuck (more of this family later) son of the late vicar. There are 300 sittings. The register dates from the year 1561 to 1629: from this date to 1726 the registers are missing. The living is a vicarage, gross yearly value derived from 111 acres of glebe, £153 with residence, in the gift of Exeter College, Oxford and held since 1890 by the Rev. Thomas John Puckle M.A. of Exeter College, Oxford. (Note: Puckle succeeded Crosse - who resigned due to ill health during 1890). Here is a Primitive Methodist Chapel. There is a charity of £31 a year, the rent of 25 acres of land, which is given in coals to the poor. In the village is a fine old cross, restored in 1853 and supposed to be of Saxon date; there is also here an ancient burial ground of the West Saxons, in which various remains of that period were discovered. The Manor House is occupied, by Capt. William Robert Clutterbuck R.N. The chief portion of the land is copyhold or held on lease under the President and Fellows of St. John's College, Oxford who are lords of the manor and chief landowners. The soil in the southern part of the parish....

...the population in 1881 was 562'. (Kelly's Directory circa 1890).

There was a post office which received and despatched letters *twice* a day from and to Abingdon; a National School (Mixed & Infants - were the infants not also mixed?) with a Headmistress assisted by two assistant mistresses; and a

carrier who visited Long Wittenham Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays from Abingdon and who, on Fridays, was able to carry goods to Wallingford as well.

In the 1890's Long Wittenham boasted a grocer; a blacksmith; two bakers; five farmers; one basketmaker; one draper (who had a sideline as sub-postmistress); three beer retailers(!); one police constable; one wheelwright, joiner and undertaker; and a 'jun. Builder' . There was also Henry Lovegrove, farm bailiff to Captain Clutterbuck and, of course, the two pubs 'The Plough' and the 'Barley Mow' - with their respective pub managers.

The gentry are listed in Kelly's directory as a Mrs. Almond, the ubiquitous Clutterbucks, and, the Rev. Thomas John Puckle M.A. (Vicar). Probably quite enough *haut monde* for the citizens living in the village to cope with and kowtow to.

Ah! The Clutterbucks, the Clutterbucks - the name appears in just about every record one looks at of the times, both parochial and pastoral. They were, without doubt, the most notable people in the village, with Mrs. Clutterbuck appearing on most days in the village school. When she could not make it personally she made sure her daughter did, so poor Miss Anne Mawson (the Headmistress) had no respite from the constant, kindly, and - dare one say it - officious ministrations of both mother and daughter.

They were forever examining the pupils spelling, handing out buns, listening to their singing and (tactfully it is to be hoped), making sure that the Primitive Methodists mentioned

in Kelly's Directory who had a chapel at the west end of the village - were not infiltrating the school with their dangerous non-conformist ideas.



The Clutterbucks

However, in keeping with the spirit of the times, the Clutterbucks were philanthropic. The village school; village hall; the Long Wittenham Friendly Society (of which Mr. Clutterbuck was among the first Trustees) and the foundation of the Parochial Association for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (which he founded in 1839) all being memorials to this family's public spirited attitude, even if some of these worthy organisations no longer exist.

Captain Clutterbuck was away in China in 1890 and did not come home until February 24th 1893. One wonders whether,

he had to return to the Far East seven years later, to help put down the Boxer Rebellion.

On January 11th 1890 the Abingdon Herald ran this interesting piece:

‘... that patients in Paris used warm alcoholic drinks to treat the 'flu. Unfortunately on the strength of this, 1,500 persons were arrested in three days including Christmas day, and 1,200 people said they were simply following treatment prescribed’.

It is to be hoped that in Victoria's England people did not also turn to such dubious cure for their influenza.

This same month also saw other dramas in Long Wittenham. Again from the Abingdon Herald 25th January 1890:

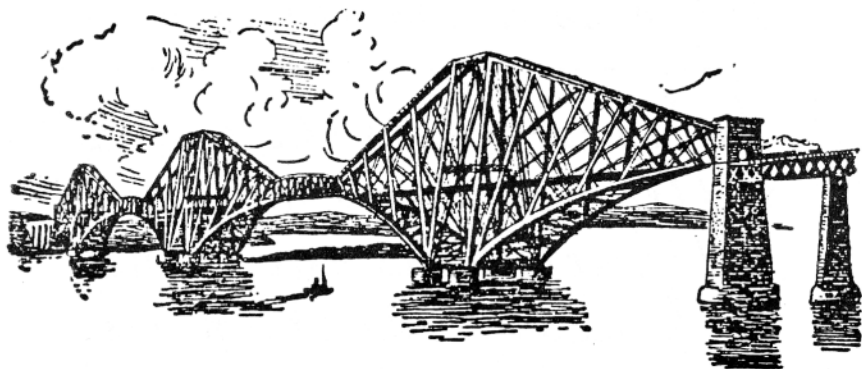
‘COUNTY MAGISTRATES' CHAMBER - Alfred Simmons. a travelling hawker, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Long Wittenham on 28th October. Pleaded not guilty. P.C.Pocock (the local bobby) stated that on the above date he saw the defendant in the village of Long Wittenham with two donkeys. He was drunk and obliged to catch hold of one of the donkeys to support himself. He abused and swore at Mr.Parsons for not buying one of the animals. Mr.Parsons Junior, of Abingdon, said the defendant was drunk and abusive. Inspector Heath produced a list of 22 convictions against defendant at various places. Defendant, who protested he was as innocent as could be, was fined £1 and 12s 6d costs. He tended a sovereign on

account, but was removed in custody until the full amount was forthcoming.'

On February 18th 1890 Miss Anne Mawson (Headmistress of the Village School since 1886) wrote in the School Log Book:

'The children had holiday as I was this day married to James Hewett carpenter and builder'. (School Record Book 1890).

In April she resigned her position as Headmistress. In the School Log Book it notes '...she was much esteemed with whom she had to do. She was an excellent disciplinarian and a teacher whose energies were entirely devoted to the well-being of those under her charge.'



The Forth Bridge

In early March the Forth Bridge was opened by the Prince of Wales. Locally, Long Wittenham's football team played against Dorchester at Didcot. The match ended in a tie, 2 - 2. There were no reports of hooliganism.

The Wallingford Union (the Work House) put out tenders to 'supply coffins, clothing, food, bedding, coal for 13 weeks for 1st April 1890. Bread for the outdoor poor in 4lb. Loaves'. (Abingdon Herald March 8th 1890).

Alas, an Examiner's Report of March 1890 is not overhappy about progress in our school:

'5th Standard - Reading is good, but in the rest of the school it lacks expression and intelligence.

Patching and button holeing in the fourth (class) require great attention.'

Luckily the Infants' Class somewhat redeemed the situation: 'Reading, spelling and mental arithmetic are very good.' Well done the Mixed Infants.

Idleness rusts the mind.

*Idleness rusts the mind
Idleness rusts the mind
Idleness rusts the mind
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Idleness rusts the mind
Idleness rusts the mind*

Victorian Copy-book Page

It was also noted by the Examiner that ‘new reading books and also some slates, properly ruled’ were needed. It was ever thus.

Long Wittenham was in the news again for petty crime:

‘BULLINGDON PETTY SESSIONS - ROBBING AN EMPLOYER. Harriet Hannah Hunt, aged 15 of Long Wittenham, domestic servant, was charged with stealing a purse and £12 in money and a postal order for 10s, the property of Thomas J. Smith her master. She said she was 16, but was in fact 15, so sentence was reduced from 4 months to 3 months with hard labour.’ (Abingdon Herald March 15th 1890).

Silly girl, not only to get caught but to deliberately give the wrong age, which would have made her sentence longer.

The March 22nd Abingdon Herald has this interesting little snippet:

‘INDUSTRIAL & LOAN EXHIBITION - Working model steam engine made by R.Tyrrell, farm labourer of Long Wittenham.’ A very early Pendon Museum enthusiast?

Of rather greater moment was the Oxford v. Cambridge Boat Race, which, I’m glad to say, Oxford won in 22mins. 3secs - by one length.

APRIL brought cause for rejoicing’ to the village. On the third there was a rehanging of the church bells:

‘LONG WITTENHAM, CHANGE RINGING - The church bells have recently been rehung by Messrs. White & Sons of Appleton. The opening peal was 720 of Grandsire Minor by six members of the Appleton Society of Ringers, viz; S.White, treble; H.Walters, 2; J.Avery, 3; F.White, 4, H.Woodwards, 5; H.Tubb, tenor; conducted by F.White. The following is the report of the Rev. F.E. Robinson (Vicar of Drayton), Master of the Oxford Diocesan Guild, April 15th 1890.

“I have today examined and tested the bells of your church after their rehung by Mr.White. I find they all go well and that the work is completed in a satisfactory manner. They are now in good order and with proper care will continue so for many years.” (Abingdon Herald 3rd May 1890).

The Rev. Robinson's optimism. was not misplaced. The bells remained in ‘good order’ until they were recast in 1923.

After extolling the peal (‘excellent’), the Long Wittenham Parish Magazine goes on to say ‘... There is however still a debt on the bells’. This, in spite of the usual Clutterbuck donations, stood at £27. 17s. 6d. - not an inconsiderable sum in 1890.

‘JUVENILE BAND OF HOPE - On Tuesday in Easter week, April 8th, there will be a Tea Party in the schools at 4 o'clock for members of the Band of Hope.’ So it was not all button-holeing and mental arithmetic. Religion was, of course, taken very seriously (strict C. of E.) and Mr.Crosse

(Vicar) in his sad farewell letter (see June 1890) mentions both a day *and* Sunday school.

In MAY the parish magazine notes:

‘DAY SCHOOL - The school grant has been received amounting this year to £71. 65. 1d, a considerable increase upon last year's grant. We are glad to say that the report shows a distinct progress throughout the school. The “good” merit grant has been earned. We congratulate Mrs.J.Hewett and the Assistant Mistresses.’

After the rejoicing came sorrow. After a long illness Edward Ilbert Crosse, Vicar at St.Mary's, wrote in JUNE to his village flock:

June 12th. 1890

My dear Friends,

With a sad heart I write to wish you all farewell. It is long since I wrote, but I have found my sufferings increasing greatly. I feel I cannot undertake my work, and so with all my wishes for your happiness, young and old, with my heart-felt gratitude for all your kind warm sympathy and help to myself and my wife, I feel the time has come to say goodbye.

I know you will all remember us daily in our great trial in your prayers. I shall never forget you all.

I trust in God's goodness a kind and loving Pastor will be found for you, and that you will all treat him as you have treated me. I earnestly hope that Communicants will remain steadfast, and that both Day and Sunday School will continue to work and do their very best.

And now, dear friends, with all my gratitude and thanks, with the greatest grief that I could not see you all once more to say adieu, I must commend you all to God.

Ever your faithful Friend,
E. Ilbert Crosse.

From the Long Wittenham Parish Magazine, a June entry:

‘The school was examined in Religious Knowledge on Friday, June 16th. by the Rev. F.E. Robinson (Vicar of Drayton, among many other jobs). Appended to the Report:-

“I found the religious knowledge in a satisfactory state. The answers were ready and intelligent, and the writing was neatly done, the spelling in a few instances being weak. The children in the 1st. Standard should be taught a simple form of Morning and Evening Prayer. The tone and discipline need improvement. The Infants did sufficiently well - care should be taken to make them recite distinctly.”

PRIZE - Lucy Hewitt, best Paper
COMMENDED - Sidney Hunt, James Belcher

Signed F.E. Robinson, Diocesan Inspector of Schools.’

Does one detect a little backsliding in the Infants class?

JULY brought a report from the Abingdon Herald of help for a 'new church at North Hagbourne'. An American organ was lent by Mrs.W.Clutterbuck of course, 'until such times as funds will allow a pedal organ to be bought.'

AUGUST was hot, very hot and the Bank Holiday was celebrated under an 'unclouded sky'. It also brought the Liberal candidate to Long Wittenham (Abingdon Herald August 9th.1890):

'... There were loud cheers of agreement when the speaker pointed out that the land was owned by the Oxford Colleges, who take money away from the villages.'

The hot weather not only got the politicians hot under the collar:

'COUNTY BENCH - Eliza Vasey, Amy Green, Hannah Vasey and George Beckett (a boy) of Long Wittenham were summoned for assaulting a boy named Alfred Daniel Didcock. Hannah Vasey was also summoned for assaulting Elizabeth Belinda Didcock (a child) and Maria Didcock was summoned by Hannah Vasey'. The Didcocks said Hannah Vasey belonged to a "gypsy lot". No wonder Hannah Vasey got upset.

By SEPTEMBER the harvest was practically over, due to the good weather.

It would be nice to say that during the glorious month the village was misdemeanour - free, but that was not to be:

‘Young man and boys summoned for damaging a quantity of apples - value 4s. - the property of James Harper. Sidney Beckett, Horace Johnson, Alfred Weston, Herbert Greenough, Alfred Woodley, George Woodley, George Weston and Alfred Welstead pleaded guilty. They were fined 1s. 6d. damage and 6s. 6d. costs. The money was paid.’ (Abingdon Herald, Sept. 20th. 1890)

However, more positive things were going on back at the school:

From the Abingdon Herald of September 20th:-

‘The children were given a treat in the grounds of the Manor House (burnt down in August 1965. The new house, called Walden East, is built in the grounds) on Saturday afternoon, August 9th. There were races for boys and girls, and suitable prizes were given by Mrs.Crosse. All seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly, and the tea was much appreciated, judging from the rapidity with which cakes and bread and butter disappeared. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of “God Save the Queen” and rounds of cheering for Mrs. Clutterbuck, Rev. E. I . and Mrs. Crosse (nice to see them back in the village as visitors after his illness), ‘the Captain’ (Clutterbuck) and Mrs. William

Clutterbuck. On leaving each child was presented with a bun and bag of sweets by Mrs.Clutterbuck, who was assisted in the distribution by her grand-daughter Miss Crawley.

The holidays began on Monday August 11th, and the children will return to school again on Monday, September 15th.’ (When the harvest would be safely in, thanks to the help of the school children).

The winter of 1890-91 was bitterly cold. The river froze over, making it safe to skate upon.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER have these entries in the Long Wittenham Parish Magazine:

‘A proposal has been made to join our Magazine with one for Clifton; if this is carried out we may be able to supply it at a cheaper rate than at present.’

‘Commencing on the first day of next year we intend to combine our Magazine with one for Clifton Hampden. The magazine will be the “Dawn of Day”, instead of the “Banner of Faith”, and in consequence the price will be one penny instead of twopence. (Why? Did “Dawn” come cheaper than “Faith”?). Clifton will take 50 copies, and it will be necessary for us to take the same number in order to secure the Magazine at that price. Hitherto 55 copies have been ordered, of which, apparently, 53 are paid for. A few subscribers have indicated that they do not intend to go on. It will, therefore, be necessary to secure at least eight or nine fresh ones.’

So, before the present 'Bridge', there was already a magazine which united the two parishes - much as it does now.

There we have it. A year in the life of Long Wittenham, one hundred years ago. Much has changed, but much remains the same. In the simple and uplifting words of the Rev. T.J. Puckle written to his new parish '...may (we) all work together for his glory and for the good of the soul in this parish, and of the Church at large.' (Letter to the parishioners of Long Wittenham, October 1890).