

THE MANOR OF MINCHINHAMPTON IN THE 12th & 13th CENTURIES

by Cyril Turk

Preface

The seed of this essay was sown when Mr. John Cooper called my attention to a recently published book in which the Customals for the Manor of Hampton in the 12th Century were printed in extenso. As I read these I was fired with the desire to know more about life here at that time. I sought to find other contemporary documents and set about a course of background reading. All for my own pleasure. But with the need to publish a new Bulletin for the Local History Group, Mrs. Diana Wall gently pressurized me into writing up the material. So this essay grew and took shape.

The customals from which it is drawn precede by a hundred years the customal of 1300 which the Rev. C. Ernest Watson translated, printed and analysed in his lengthy article in the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for 1932.

There is a further set of customals and rentals for the manor of Minchinhampton in the early 16 hundreds. These are very detailed and merit analysis and using for a description of life here at that time. We also have wills and churchwarden's accounts to give other details. These all put together would then give a further picture of our manor in the seventeenth century.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MANOR

“In Langtree Hundred. This same Abbey holds Hantom. The Countess Goda held it in the reign of King Edward. Here there are 8 hides. In demesne there are 5 ploughs and 22 villeins and 10 borders with 24 ploughs. There is a priest and 10 serfs and 8 mills of 45 shillings yield and 20 acres of pasture. The wood is two leagues long and half a league broad. Value 28 pounds.”

So Domesday describes the manor of Hampton -later to be Minchinhampton (i.e. Nun's Hampton) which William the Conqueror gave, along with other manors, to the Abbey aux Dames at Caen. A few years later when a customal — a list of services and dues owed by tenants - was prepared for the Abbess the description was “The firmarii of Hampton received 26 and a half virgates of land, of these 17 are to labour and 9 and a half to rent. There are 11 bordars, 2 swineherds who look after 20 pigs, 7 mills with millers and 1 mill in ruins, 6 freemen, 1 priest, 5 ploughs with 8 oxen, 2 horses, 27 animals of which 6 are cows, one however in milk with a calf of one year. 300 less 16 sheep, 200 less 17 wethers of one year, 5 sows, 1 boar, 14 pigs of one year.”

Some points to notice about this. A virgate is 30 acres, so the arable land of the manor would be 795 acres. A bordar, known later as a cottar, held no land but that round his cottage, which was at the will of the lord of the manor, in this case the Abbess. The reference to 6 cows, compared with 40 oxen, indicates the value placed on them -they were mainly producers of oxen. Finally the hundred is the long hundred of 120, so the number of sheep is 344.

The manor was extensive, stretching from the Downs to Rodborough, and from Cowcombe and Chalford to Nailsworth and Avening. To describe it we can break it up into woods, with isolated clearings, arable and pasture land, and the village of Hampton.

THE WOODS

The manor was surrounded by a ring of woods and scrubland. On the last was the large thorny brushland of the Downs and Lowesmore described as 'spinetum', with some meadow on which at certain times of the year one-year-old grazing animals could be pastured for which the peasants paid 2 denarii (pennies) one at St. Peter as Vincula (August 1st) and one at Vigilia Domini. Non-grazing animals i.e. fowl were excluded; any unlicensed intrusion or damage brought a fine e.g. in 1274 the Courth fined Adam de Golthinch 12 denarii for trespass ('transgressus') on the spinney, and Edilha Hyrdman also 12 denarii for damage there.

To the north were the woods of "Colecumbe" "Norbeg" and "Lincub", then after a gap came the wood of "Burleia" as far as "Muggemore" with a clearing at "Burimor" then there was a long stretch from "Brechecombe", "Rodeberowe" "Trulwelle" (now Box) enclosing the great clearing of Muggemore which, with thorn land as far as the Bulwarks, would become our Westfield.

All these woods were important for the manor, with beech, oak and ash expressly reserved, In 1272 William de la Mare was lined one day's carting service for cutting down and selling a tree. They provided charcoal which, with the absence of coal, was needed. This was another jealously maintained right of the Abbess. Thus in 1274 Roger of Holcroft was brought before the court charged that he made a fire in the wood and cut down branches for making charcoal. The woods provided pannage for the lady's pigs, and also for the peasants' animals, though they paid a rent of 1 denarius for each pig, and an obolus for each six-month old animal.

For the peasant there was the Custom of the Manor which allowed him to take 'by hook or by crook' timber from the custom wood — that is our present Common — to repair his cottage or fences. This was known as housebote and was another right of the lord carefully controlled. In later customals the right to claim Custom of the Manor was refused to incoming tenants. These woods were a temptation to peasants in need of timber for the fire or to sell so as to augment their meagre allowance, and the Court Rolls are full of fines for "transgressus bosei". In 1272 Osebius was fined 3 denarii for lopping wood in autumn.

ISOLATED CLEARINGS

Within the woods on the lower slopes of the hills were small settlements of two or three peasants, some cottagers and some successful - for the period - farmers. In "Colecumb" there was Alveredus, a cottar, who paid 8 denarii in rent and did harvest service in August and Ricardus with a virgate (30 acres) of land for which he paid 5 solidi and did "customary duties as Adam". (Adam Spilman of Rodborough was a freeman with a substantial holding of a virgate and a half, for which he owed the duty of ploughing three times a year and reaping once with his servants.)

"Hida" had another Ricardus with a half virgate for which he paid 2 solidi and did August work (haymaking); Godwinus with a quarter of a virgate for 2 solidi, and Reginaldus the most substantial freeman of all with 5 virgates for which he paid 10 solidi and did customary duties as Adam. In "Beseburi" was Adwinus with only a cottage whose services were like those of Wulvericus, the harpist. (These are detailed and will be discussed in a later section.) "Burleia" had Alwoldus and Rogerus both with half a virgate and paying 2 solidi and doing customary services. Next at "Bremescumbe" was Henricus with half a virgate. Alwinus was at Suul (now Swell's Hill). There was a large group at Rodborough with Adam Spilman, a freeman. At "Hareston" there was Edricus who had half a virgate, paid 7 solidid rent, and looked after the manor pigs. There was an assart at Trulwell (Box) which, later, Galfridus Murant took over at an entry fee of 4 denarii.

The introduction to the customal refers to seven mills, but only two are given in the list of tenants.

One of these, held by Godardus was at “Stoford” (or Astoford) which was at a ford across the Frome near Cowcombe. The other held by Radulfus was at Chalford.

Undoubtably the villeins would have been expected to take their corn there to be ground, as hand-worked querns were forbidden, but there is no reference to tenants having to use the mills.

ARABLE AND PASTURE LAND, ASSARTS, DEMESNE

The arable land of Hampton lay to the east of the village in the area now known as Hampton Fields, though much more extensive and containing between six and seven hundred acres. Since Hampton seems to have been farmed on the three-field system, we must picture this large field as divided into three more or less equal sections, one of which, in turn, lay fallow for a year. Not that the work ceased on it. It was ploughed three times in the year, in April when the ground would break up well, in June sufficiently deep to destroy thistles, and in October deeply in preparation for the winter sowing. In between ploughing the swineherd would drive on to it his neighbours' animals to pick what herbage they could from the growing weeds.

Each field was divided into strips of about an acre in area, with little to show their boundaries, and every villein possessed one third of his total land in each field, but certainly not in one piece. So we may picture Alricus of the Well in Hampton, who had a virgate, setting out from his cottage with his neighbours to plough, harrow, reap and cart when necessary on his few scattered strips in each of the cultivated fields for that year. There was no direct access to individual strips, and once the year's work began, neither animal nor cart could get to any one particular strip without going over neighbouring strips. Hence all work on the fields has to be done in common, and no-one could sow a crop which needed attention at different times from the other crops. In one instance the customal recognises this problem when, in reference to the men of Eston (Aston), it states that when waccenhulle is sown they will provide a road for themselves which animals can pass on.

To protect the fields from cattle hedges were erected. An old writer on husbandry, John Fitzzherbert, gives these instructions for them:

“Thou must get the stakes of hearts of oak for these be best; crab tree, blackthorn and alder be good; ash, maple, hazel and whitethorn will serve for a time. And set thy stakes within two foot and a half, except thou have good ‘eddering’ (i.e. long, flexible binding wood). And if it be double eddered it is much the best and great strength to the hedge. And lay thy small thornes that thou hedgest withal over thy quickset that sheep do not eat the spring nor buddes of thy settes.”

So there were opportunities for complaints and quarrels with which the Court had to deal. Here are some examples from the Rolls of 1272 to 1274. G. Murant was accused of unjustly putting up a wall where there should have been a hedge. This is a question of permanence. He demanded what we should call a site meeting and all was found to be in order. Alanus of Forewude was charged that he carried away some of the hedge from the Westfield. In reply he said that some women and others had already carried off some before he came, and that he had a right to collect any that was loose, but the bailiff declared that Alan was quite capable of making his fence. Benedict of Hampton failed to close Wysdeingate and was fined 6 denarii. Alan Acke was found to have moved a boundary, and Elyas Godard had broken down a hedge.

Hedges were of course essential to keep animals out of growing crops, and strays brought their owners to court. Hugo Palmer's horse was caught in a meadow, which cost him a fine of a day's carriage duty; James Falyth's one hen and one cow were found in the corn; four cows belonging to Radulfus of Westrop were in Lowesmore pasture - result a day's carriage duty to the manor; Margeria of Brehecumbe let four averi (draught animals) get onto Burimor pasture - another day's

carriage duty.

As well as the common arable land there was the demesne land i.e. that reserved for the lady's use and profit. This included our Park, which was being enclosed in the 12th century by Simon of Felsted. The men of Hampton reckoned that the damage to hedges in making the enclosure was 6 marks - a national coin with 13/4. (Query? - had other hedges been torn down to provide material?) The demesne extended across the hilltop to the Bulwarks which formed its western boundary. Walk along the Bulwarks as far as Box, mentally exclude all buildings to the south and you will get some idea of the area of the demesne. All this land was worked for the lady by the villeins who were required to give labour throughout the week, except for Saturdays, and had to give boon days, additional to customary work, in August during the busy season, and at other times as necessary, The beadle would tell them in the morning of this special need. This came as an unexpected duty which put work on their own strips out of kilter.

Pasture for the animals was most important and was in the hands of the lady, though the villeins might, by custom of the manor, and in accordance with the size of their holdings, put their animals out to graze at certain times. There was a meadow at Seincle expressly stated as being in the demesne of the lady for her own profit "ad proprium lucrurn" as was the pasture under Brehecumbe. Grazing on the downs was also reserved for her until after the feast of All Saints (November 1st) when villeins could have their animals there until the Purification (February 2nd). Pasture was always a problem. Virgators were unable to put their cattle on their own land, to provide manure to keep it in heart, so that the fields were impoverished, and return on seed sown was very small by our standards.

There were a few other small areas. These were the turbaries from which the turves for roofing came. They are given a separate section in the customal which lays down that each virgate in Hide was to enclose five perches, each virgate on the hill will enclose ten perches, whilst those who do not enclose by Ascension Day will forfeit a sheep and a lamb.

There was much waste scrub-land within the manor, particularly on the west, our Common. Here the villeins could, with licence, make an assart or clearing, though, since all land belonged to the lady Abbess, then they paid rent when the clearing was completed. In 1275, Robert, son of William de la Mare, entered into a new messuage and an assart, and paid 2 solidi and 6 denarii for it. The advantage of an assart was that it could be used for crops that could not be sown in the common fields, it could provide herbage for animals and a cottage might be built upon it. Besides the case given above, which occurred because of William's death, there was also Godwinus of Hide who had a plot of land near Pechesputte (this might be the area later called Pigs Pitt) and Wulvricus had a house and garden near Cucestane.

In this way the woods and the wasteland were gradually nibbled away and became arable and pasture.

THE VILL

More or less central to all this was the vill of Hampton - it had not yet gained the prefix Minchin - with a scatter of cottages around the church. We know nothing of the appearance of these, since all have been destroyed, or collapsed in ruins even to their foundations, which are hidden under subsequent buildings. But excavations in deserted villages have shown that these small dwellings were single-roomed, about ten feet square, made by planting timber (boughs) in the ground and filling the gaps with brushwood and mud. They were roofed with turves, leaving openings to the sky. The window space was covered with oiled skin, and the floor was beaten earth. Such structures decayed rapidly, but a new one was quickly built with boughs from the custom wood. Still there must always have been deserted and half-ruined cottages to be seen. There is evidence

of this in the services demanded of Ricardus the cleric viz. that he should send one man from each house on his land from which smoke came “unde fumus exit” which suggests that there were unused cottages.

There was usually some plot around each cottage. The customal notes that Wulvricus the reeve has a close before his door, that Rabite has extended his croft to half an acre; that the croft of Willelmus has been enlarged and that Sara of Burleia has an outhouse before her door. The villein could use this land as he liked, free from the requirements of communal agriculture he could grow the few known vegetables, perhaps have a fruit tree or grow herbage for an animal. He would certainly have hens since one of the services which each house “unde fumus exit” had to carry out was to give the lady a hen at Christmas and five eggs at Easter, though if the hens escaped into the arable fields there was trouble. In 1272 Henry of Bridleg was in mercy for one of his hens caught among the corn - he was fined 6 hens.

We know very little about the Hampton peasants personal possessions, if we can use such a word, as in theory the lady owned everything on the manor, but this note in the Court Rolls for 1273 indicates how little they had: ‘Memorandum that in the night before the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula thieves (“ladrones”) came to the house of Godessoth, broke in and carried away one sheet and one woman’s smock (“camisia”). The essential and most costly items were cooking pots and pans, often valued at 2 solidi or more; hearth equipment such as tripods, gridirons, trivets and were made by the local smith, valued at from 6 to 12 denarii. We can assume bed, stool and table of the trestle variety. A chest is sometimes recorded but tableware hardly ever because it was relatively cheap - clay tableware for the King’s household cost 12 denarii for a hundred pieces! Clothing was very expensive and none other than virgators would have more than one outfit.

There was, of course, an inn in Hampton provided by the lady, who laid down that all tenants owing labour service were to make malt for it, presumably from their own grain, though when it was drying they were free from other work. At brewing time they were to provide a dish, and everyone owed one denarius or a pennyworth of ale as a tax.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MANOR

No Abbess of Caen visited Hampton to supervise the manor, so the control of this and other Caen properties was left to stewards, as was common where a number of manors might be in the hands of a great lord or an ecclesiastical body. All then relied on the efficiency and honesty of the appointed man. The Abbess was unlucky with one steward, Simon of Felstead who was here during the disturbances of Stephen’s reign, 1135 - 1154, and took advantage of the lack of supervision. The customal contains a report from the villeins of the delapidation which he made.

He seized Lowesmore, which they valued at 10 marks and kept all the profit. He twice drove the cattle of the manor - cows, sheep pigs and horses - to Gloucester to the Abbess’ detriment whereby she lost 30 solidi. He laid waste the woods to an estimated value of 47 marks whilst his enclosure of the park caused 6 marks damage to hedges. Moreover, he allowed charcoal burners and potash makers into the woods, cut down and sold timber, and made gifts, so that where 2000 swine could previously find pannage, now less than 1000 could. In the end Simon’s son, William, came to terms with the Abbess in 1192 and for £100 renounced the properties. Thereafter the manor was supervised by annually appointed stewards, with bailiffs to see to the day to day working.

One such bailiff was William of Rodborough. In the absence of the steward the bailiff called the three-weekly manor court and there made clear his authority. In 1274 Radulfus, the son of John le Wythe, promised that he would not marry without the consent of the Lady and the bailiff; and in the same year Willelmus le Paula, the hayward of Avening, was fined 6 denarii because he

released some animals, caught in the fields, without the licence of the bailiff. His duties were the supervision of the manor, to check the ploughs and see that all work was carried out correctly and finished. Any errors and defaults he brought to court.

Other servants of the manor were to be found among the villeins. Of these the most important was the reeve, “*praepositus*”, chosen for his knowledge of the land and of his fellow villeins. He was responsible for the cultivation of the arable land, its ploughing, sowing and reaping. In 1170 the reeve was Alvicus who held half an acre for customary work. If as ‘head’ of the villeins he was successful he was most likely kept on for several years. Another villein officer was the beadle whose work was to levy distrains and to take pledges. The customal refers to him only as *Bedellus* (in one entry it equates him with the reeve) and notes that he has half a virgate for his duties.

The third official noticed is the *Haiwarderia* - hayward - also known as the messer. He had some holdings in Gatcombe and Cowcombe for which he gave as rent 6 solidi and one hen and 200 eggs - a large quantity. His duties were extensive - look after woods, corn and meadows, superintend the sowing, overlook the mowers and attend to fences and hedges. It was the kind of job which could cause much ill-feeling, which is probably what lies behind this entry in *The Court Rolls for 1273*:

“*Ricardus Syred* is in mercy for that he struck *John Elwyn*, the messer, in the village” *Ricardus* of the Ford was charged that he held *John* while *Richard Syred* struck him. *Richard Ford* denied this and went to law (i.e. asked for an inquiry) and was found not guilty whilst *Syred* was 6 denarii. A later entry though reads, “*John Elwyn* in mercy for making a false claim against *Ricardus da Forda*.”

Such was village life.

THE PEOPLE OF THE VILL AND THEIR DUTIES

The customal lists 85 men in Hampton. Using the figure of 4½ as a multiplier (accepted by *J. Titow* in “*English Rural Society*”) this gives 380, give or take a little, as the population of Hampton in the 12th Century. They can be divided into two groups, the free and the unfree.

THE FREEMAN

The origins and the conditions that show that a man is free have been a source of discussion for ages, but perhaps the best definition is that it frequently means that a man is free from onerous services such as week work, though a freeman may hold service land and therefore do duties for that land. He is also free of such burdens as the need to seek a licence from the Lord of the Manor before he can marry off his children; and of the requirement to attend the three-weekly court.

The customal of 1170 opens with a list of 65 franklins (“*francilani*”). A second customal, slightly later, elaborates on this starting with *Adam Spileman* who has 1½ virgates of land for which he has to plough three times (i.e. each of the ploughings of the year) and reap with his servants once, and carry once. There follow the names of two people who do the same services - *Helias* the son of *Avus* with 2¾ virgates, and *Johannes* son of *Fulc* with 1 virgate, but there is a difference creeping in, as *Helias* has another virgate for which he pays 2 solidi, and *Johannes* has another virgate at 3 solidi rent and pays a further denarii for the land before his door. Then we have a long list of men who are free yet pay rent and do the same services as *Adam*. Some of these are substantial farmers like *Thomas* with 2½ virgates, *Willelmus Helivant* with 2 virgates, *Reginaldus* of *Hida* with 5 virgates, whilst *Eilaf* and his son have 1½ virgates and a mill.

THE UNFREE

These are the villeins bound to the Manor who do customary services and boon work. They can be divided into groups - those who hold land and carry out duties; and those with little or no land, the cottars.

Of those who hold land, twelve have a virgate, twenty-eight have half a virgate and nine have only a quarter of a virgate - hardly enough to live on. The services on the Manor, as distinct from work on their own lands, is carefully laid down. Each will work on the Manor each week, and all the week, except Saturday (but note that this work may only take the morning, and may be done by grown children). When necessary they will plough and harrow; three acres of such work will be boon work i.e. outside and additional to customary services; and they will thresh the seed of those three acres having reaped it. They will also carry four cart-loads in harvest home. They will perform three "bedripes" at reaping time and their wives will also do "wivenrip". These are boon days. A two-virgator will bring a horse once a year and carry cheese and bacon to Southampton to be shipped out to Caen. If he sells a horse he will pay 2 denarii as a toll and the buyer also paid 2 denarii. The sale of a cow brings a tax of 1 denarius. Everyone who has a wife (except a freeholder) will give 1 denarius a year to St. Peter. With no wife he will give an obolus. The Lady will collect this and make it up to 5 solidi and send it to St. Peter (Rome). This was later known as smoke-farthing and continued until after the Reformation. When a villein died his best and most costly animal was taken by the Abbess as a heriot. Should the deceased have no animal then the heriot was the best inanimate object. e.g. in 1272 Alicia, the widow of Robortus de Fonte, when she pledged to maintain her house and land in the same state as her husband had kept it, gave as heriot an axe "delabrus". A little later though, Henry, her son, sought entry on to the land after his mother had surrendered it, and paid 2 solidi, There is no reference to the house, "domus". Did Alicia keep it for herself?

The freeman had to give his horse with saddle and reins and "alius pertinenciis ad equitandum" (other things pertaining to riding). The customal obviously does not mention the "death duties" payable to the parson, who took as "mortuary" the second-best beast and also claimed annually the great tithes on corn, and the lesser tithes on virtually everything else. The Church also required church-scot, light-scot and mass pennies.

The heirs of the dead man had not only these duties to pay, but had also to arrange to be allowed to take over the holding. Thus William, the son of Hugo Wynd, asked that he might have his father's holding; he swore "fidelitate", paid 4 solidi entry, "introitus" and agreed to do all services. In 1274 Matilda, the widow of John Civeloc, surrendered his holding to the Lady, then Henry, first born son "primogenitus" sought entry and paid 3 solidi. The Court was not concerned as to what would happen to Matilda. Indeed, it was rarely that the court was interested in widows - unless she happened to be able to undertake the holding, as Widow Fitun. could her quarter of a virgate, for which she paid 18 denarii and did "bedripes", or in the father who, too old or infirm to labour, surrendered his holding to his son; I have found only one example in the Court Rolls from 1272 - 74 of consideration for the retired parent. In June 1274 Robert, son of William of Brechecumbe sought entry into the land and tenement of William of Fulwelle who had surrendered into the hands of the Lady. It was granted for 2 solidi (key money?) on consideration that the house and croft around the house should remain to William for the rest of his life, and should he die before his wife, she should keep one third of the tenement.

Another charge the unfree faced was having to pay for permission to marry off their sons and daughters. It is recorded under the heading of "Redemption", but is generally known as merchet. Thus, John of Bridley asked for a licence to marry his daughter to William of the Spring (Well Hill) - redemption 18 denarii. Gunilda of Bremescumbe asked for a licence to marry her daughter

Juliana to Robert Acke of Avening - redemption 3 solidi. This was because she was going out of the Manor of Minchinhampton.

THE COTTARS

These are the poorest people in the vill. They range from Edit the shepherdess and Aldwin who have each a home and 2 acres in each field, “in utroque campo” (Note that this would suggest a two-field system of agriculture and conflicts with the statement about the pasture of Seincle, which pays 4 solidi for the two years on which it is sown and nothing for the year in which it lies fallow) -down to such as Gille who has only a home and croft around the cottage. These cottars or bordars have no means of growing crops for themselves. They are the pool of available labour for the substantial tenants, they are the tied workers on the demesne, and they are the providers of services. Among them we find Omer the fowler, Roger Parmenter the tailor or furrier, Edricus the skinner, the son of the potter (who is not specifically named), Wulvricus the harpist, Walter and Widow ?, his mother, have a mill.

Among the cottars the customal gives seven people as lundri i.e. “lundinari”. This means that their holdings were too small - probably under a quarter of a virgate - for them to be liable for customary services but they will do work on a Monday.

The duties and services owed by these people are carefully detailed. Edricus has to work on demesne two days a week, he must help in the brewhouse - when he does he will be free of a day-time duty and he, and other helpers with him will have a measure of ale -he is to search for missing animals, will help the shepherds especially at lambing time, will guard the cheese at night (presumably when it is setting) will help the pigman with the pigs, and with the ploughman will guard against thieves. The latter service foreshadows Henry III’s order of 1242 that in each village there should be held a watch by four to six men aged from fifteen to sixty who had been selected by the sheriff and two accompanying knights. There should also be one or two constables to keep the peace. One tenant in Hampton in 1170 is named as Constable with half a virgate for 2 solidi; he works in August and also does the same duties as Adam. Does his name represent his duties?

Wulvricus the harpist does the same duties as Edricus but, in addition, has to drive livestock wherever he is ordered.

The services of Faber, the smith in Hampton, were presumably the same as those for Alwoldus of Eston, the smith of Avening. He had to produce the irons for four ploughs, if there were as many in Lowesmore, also seven scythes and seven hoes; he was to hang the doors of two barns and one cattle shed and may make charcoal at the Abbess’ order. He will produce the nails for two horses before he shoes them, but the iron must not be new iron, but old iron got from the horsekeeper.

THE MANOR SERVANTS

Some men have specialised duties on demesne land. These are the ten ploughmen, two shepherds, cowherd and swineherd. The duties for the first three groups are carefully described.

Each of the ten ploughmen has 5 acres of land. On Saturdays each will plough for himself i.e. at the three ploughing times. Each will have one sheaf from each cart-load and one acre of grain (see below for discussion of this) in August from the Lady’s own field. From Hockaday to August each will have the milk from two sheep every Sunday, except on the day of Pentecost; they will have every third acre in ten, and the third lamb. (presumably these are divided amongst the ten, the customal gives no guide.) Their wives will milk the sheep with the shepherds and will work one Monday each week after the Feast of St. Michael, until it is time to milk.

There are two shepherds, each of whom has a virgate of land. They will guard the sheep each day of the week except Saturday, when they will have the vessel in which cheese is pressed full of salt. On the twelve days of Christmas they will have the fold on their own land. This was an invaluable concession since it meant some manure at least, but note the need to provide fencing. They will have milk at Pentecost, and be free of boon work, although their sons and daughters will do this, and their wives will do two boon days. In return each will have one fleece and one lamb.

The cowherd, Hustmarus, who has half a virgate, looks after fifteen cows and non-draught animals, and will have the oxen with them. He will milk them and make cheese in his own house as the shepherds do. He will provide the fold in Spring and Autumn. Otherwise he will perform the customary services.

THE MANOR COURT

“He whose turbary is not enclosed by Ascension Day will owe a sheep and a lamb as forfeit.” “All who hold land by Elseleya (which seems to be near Burimoor) whose land is not between two fields will enclose it each year with a wall”, and if this is not done by Ascension Day the forfeit is again a ewe in lamb. This is one of the offences for which the customal lays down the penalty. Others which can affect the well-being of the Manor are also referred to.

Trespass was a serious offence, “for crossing over the wall of Brurnsgrave (I think near Burleigh) both for entry and again for leaving”. The wall might be damaged and allow access to animals so the penalty should be 10 solidi. Trespass in the woods brought the same penalty. As mentioned in the section about woodlands, the Court usually demanded a lesser fine.

Shedding blood also brought a penalty of 10 solidi. This was a serious offence, really a matter for the King’s Courts. If blood was shed in the attack on John Elyat, then Ricardus Syred got off lightly. The customal does allow that the ? champion, who held no land, could cause bloodshed without penalty. There is no indication as to what his duties were.

There were two offences recorded for which women might be penalised. One was for daring to trade. If she did, then she needed to excuse herself in court with five women to pledge for her. Otherwise she was fined 10 solidi. The offence was due to the legal position that everything belonged to the Lord or Lady of the Manor, and nothing to the villein, who could not sell the Lady’s property. In practice licence would probably be granted. The other offence was for an unfree woman to be answerable “de stupro” which is perhaps best described as lewdness. This could be a serious matter if a child was born a bastard. The court would lose the mother’s labour on the land; and the Royal Courts were beginning to see the bastard as a non-person, and in consequence, would be lost to the Manor.

All these offences would come before the Manor Court which it was the right of every landlord to hold for his tenants. It was usually chaired by the steward if he were present, or by the bailiff. The law it administered was based on the customs of the Manor. Thus it regulated tenure, settled disputes according to custom, dealt with surrender of holdings and entry, punished failure to carry out duties and services imposed customary payments, dealt with problems connected with the cultivation of the fields and settled arguments. All tenants were required to attend, and though essoins, i.e. apologies for absence were accepted for up to three consecutive meetings no more were allowed and any default of attendance put the culprit “in mia” i.e. in mercy to the Lord. In practice the Court usually imposed a fine - hence our word amercement. Some examples are:- Robertus de Longford in mia for default of court (his son Robertus stood pledge for him) fined one day’s carriage duty; Jacobus de Hull default of court - fined one boon day in Autumn; Willelmus

Mercator Junior (i.e. merchant) for default of the Hundred Court - fine 12 denarii. This was a higher court attended by reeves from the various Manors in the Hundred, together with some villeins; it should deal with matters beyond the jurisdiction of the Manor Court, but in practice the latter were extending their powers.

The court's decisions, which all tenants had heard and had been concerned with, were recorded on the Court Rolls. Hence it became a court of record whose findings could be referred to, which were particularly valuable if tenants were in conflict with their landlords over rights and duties.

In the course of this article several cases that come to court have been mentioned. Here are some others from the Rolls of 1272 to 1274 to show the extent of its jurisdiction. The court tried to see that its rulings were carried out. In 1274 Elyas Godard was charged with having broken down the Lady's hedge. He denied this but put himself on the law, i.e. asked for jurors to settle the case. John of Chalcford stood surety for him. However, he failed to appear at the next court and some of his goods were distrained, i.e. seized and held until he should appear. At the same time John was fined one day's carting because he did not bring Elyas to court. Distrainment was the ultimate means of bringing a culprit to court, but was not always successful. In 1272 the persona (parson) of Avening, having failed to attend several courts, was distrained for this and for "pluribus" (many) trespasses in the woods. He did not appear at the next court, and thereafter drops out of the record.

The court concerned itself that bread should be of the correct size as laid down in the Assize of Bread, i.e. that a quarter of flour should make eighty loaves. In 1274 Ricardus Mile was amerced 6 denarii because his koket bread (cocket or low-grade unleavened bread) was underweight by 6 solidi and 4 denarii. William Piscator (Fisher) was fined the same sum for bread underweight by 5 solidi and 8 denarii, while several others - Matilda de Cruc, Radulfus de Grene and Willelmu Scyre were fined for wheaten bread underweight. It was quite customary to give weights in coins and a pennyweight was long in use. The weight of fine white bread should have been forty two solidi. Agnes Doderew and her daughter, also Agnes, were put in mercy for receiving stolen corn. There was also Emma Herper in mercy for bread not well cooked. There seems to have been a crack-down that year.

Robberies were reported to the court as shown in the case of Godessoth's house. Here all they could do was to raise a hue and cry after the robbers. With theft within the Manor they were on firmer ground. In 1274 John, son of Alexander, was fined two day's work in Autumn for making an assart in the woods and carrying off the earth to put on his own land. Later in the same year William Parker of Avening was found, after an inquiry, to have carried off a bushel of the Lady's oats and sown them on his own land - fined 4 solidi. But there were repercussions to this, Hugo Caracarus saw him do it and did not tell the bailiff - fined 2 solidi. Roger Strongbone knew all about it and harrowed William's land with his service horse when he should have been at work on the Lady's land - fined 12 denarii. In another case Robertus Watere and Gunnild his wife during the night before the feast of Saints Peter and Paul broke into the Lady's sheep pen and took her sheep. No fine is entered. This was an offence which would have meant consideration by the jurors who were sworn in at the beginning of the court.

The court may not have considered the welfare of elderly parents, but they did try to protect the young child. Thus Richard, the son of Henry Elyat, entered into the land and tenement of his father, but he was only nine year of age so the court left him in the custody of his mother "remansit in custodio matris" who took all the oaths and duties for him until he should become ten years old.

Another concern of the court was the state of the roads. In 1273 the decenarius - tything - of Rodborough was charged with concealing the stopping up of a road, and a little later the tything of Avening informed the court that the road below Gatcombe and Avening had deteriorated. The

decenarius was a group of men and boys, aged 12 and over, originally ten in number, who were responsible for each others good conduct. Their elected head was the tythingman, usually chosen from those with a half-virgate holding. After the Conquest the term 'tything' came to mean an area of the parish - it was long used in this way in Minchinhampton - and the tythingman became the constable. The various tythingmen met in a separate court for View of Frankpledge to ensure that all eligible men and boys were in a group. Only one such court appears in Hampton Court Rolls. This is dated as 1276 on the Thursday next before the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. Unfortunately except for the names of the four local tythingmen - Willelmus Linthmere of Hampton, Willelmus de Cumbe of Rodborough, Walter Olward of Avening and Hugh le Palmer of Eston - much of the rest of the record is illegible.

A final interesting case in the Roll is that of Alice Bird who worked as a dairy maid "in officio daiero". She should have been clean, know her business well, make cheese and help in winnowing. Instead she milked badly and was fined 2 solidi.

The court dealt with many items at each of its meetings. The Roll for October 1271 records over sixty cases. Though there are a number of occasions when the same man's name appears more than once charged with different offences, yet this total suggests that a large proportion of the population would be brought before the court in any one year, and it is probable that no peasant would avoid being in mercy several times in the course of his life.

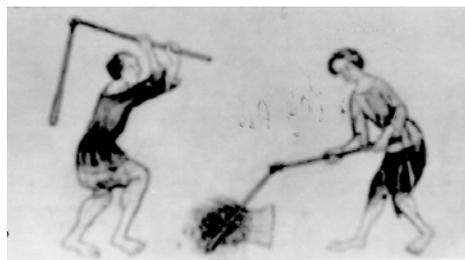
At the end of the meeting the court totalled, up its fines, and these range from the busy meeting of October 1271, when the total was 31 solidi, 8 denarii, 1 obolus and two hens through to 21 solidi, 9 denarii 1 obolus, 18 chickens and 3 days labour (May 1273) down to 8 solidi, 1 denarius, 1 hen and 4 days carriage duty (December 1273). All of which would go to the profit of the Lady of the Manor.

THE YEAR'S WORK

Except for three brief references which show the "clericus" or clerk owing services to the Manor - he will plough three times a year and plough once (this was not necessarily done by him personally); has a garden near his house, and as a favour has seven oxen and two sheep on the downs - the customal is not concerned with the Church, but it does show how the turning points of the year were determined by the Church calendar. Here is the cycle:

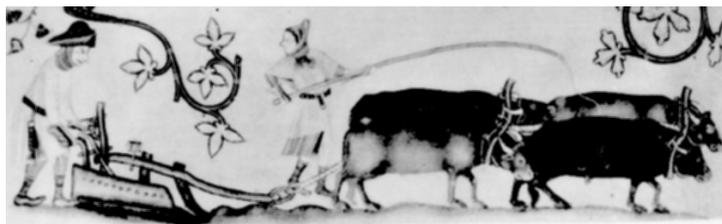
Michaelmas (September 29th) - the start of the new year's cultivations, ploughing of fields sowing of winter wheat.

All Saints (November 1st) - start of winter, cattle brought into byre, pigs brought in from swine-pens in the woods and housed in pig sty, preparation of food for winter, slaughtering, threshing.



Twelve Days of Christmas - the first 'holiday'

Plough Monday (first Monday after January 6th) end of holiday with jobs to be done around the fields, hedging, ditching, repairing as necessary.



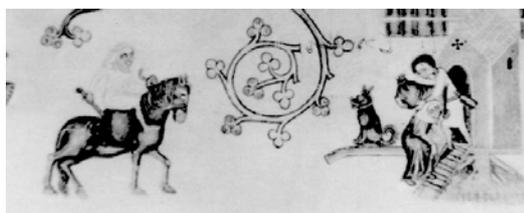
Candlemas (February 2nd) - Spring ploughing, straw and manure from the Lady's stables, byres and barns carried onto the demesne field and ploughed in, probably with heavy 8 oxen ploughs, for which the peasants had to provide beasts. On the communal fields the peasants spread what little manure they could find (manure was costed at half the price of corn) on their own strips and ploughed with light ploughs, used in common and drawn by 4 oxen. There is some evidence that on light soils a 2 oxen plough would be used. Ploughing over, there was sowing of oats and barley (or peas and beans which were dibbled in) and harrowing. Those not engaged in the fields would be at work in the manor garden (leeks, onions, peas) or orchard (apples for cider).

Easter to Hockaday (second Tuesday after Easter) Spring ploughing, except for fallow field, weeding, shearing. Second 'holiday'.

Nativity of John the Baptist and St. Peter ad Vincula (August 1st) - beginning of harvest, haymaking, mowing and harvesting of the various crops. Wheat and rye cut high to allow for ploughing in of straw. This was the heavy season of the year when many boon days were called for and when the court gave autumnal work as a fine.

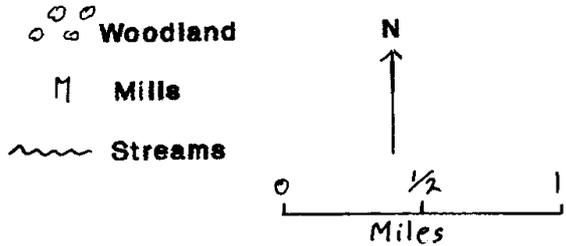
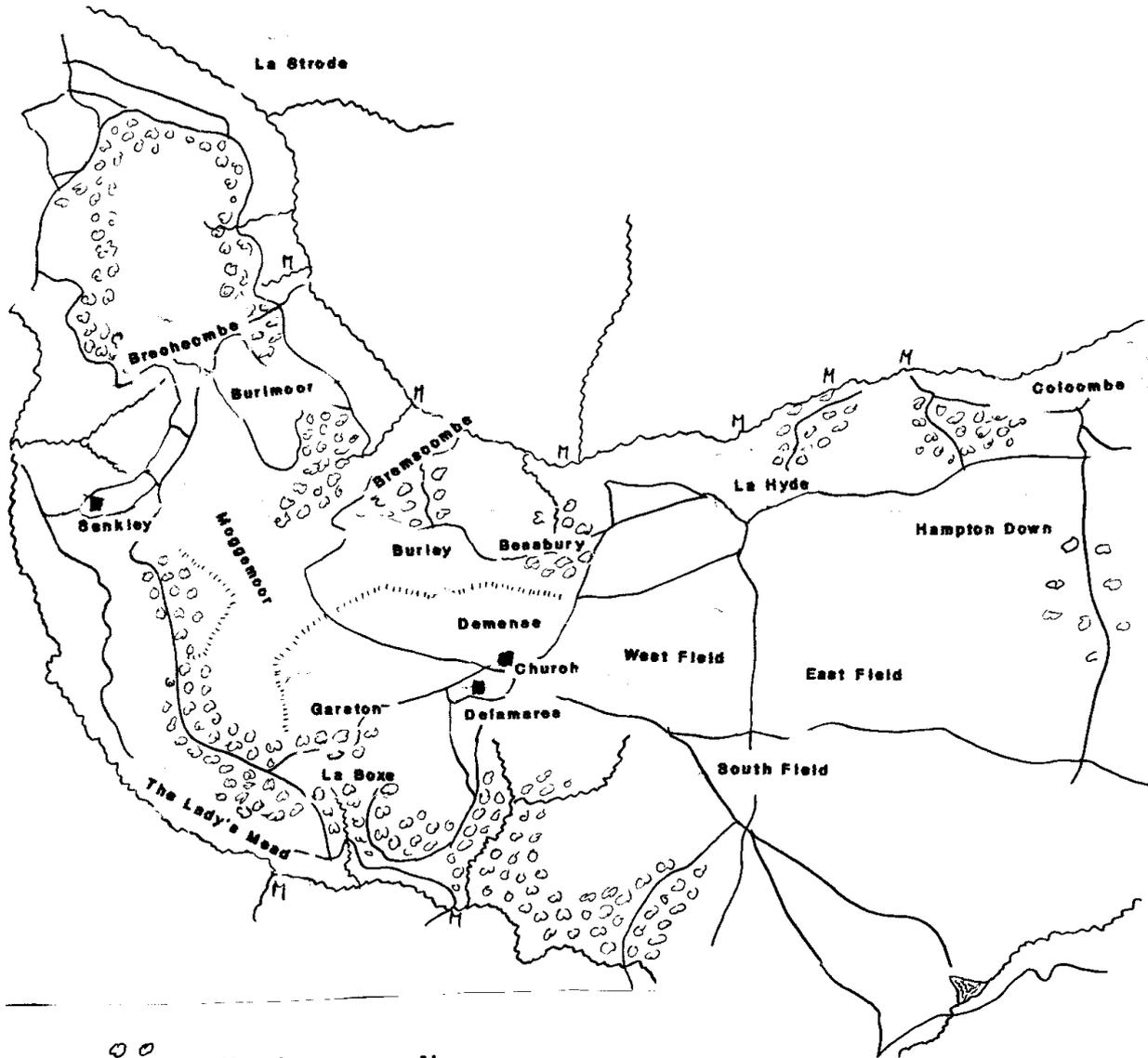


And so back to Michaelmas when the steward would arrive at the Manor, accompanied by his auditors to demand of the bailiff a detailed account of the items of income and expenditure throughout the year - rentals £16/11/3 in Hampton in 1298, pelts sold 19/5, fleeces sold 23/6/8, milk and cheese sold 3/6/8. With other items income came to £45/13/3½. Expenditure came to £39/3/0¾. So the manor was run at a profit that year.



During all the agricultural year the virgator, whether with 30, 15 or 7½ acres, would have been at work, not only on his own strips but also for three days a week on the Lady's demesne, though the latter work might be done by the peasant's children and help on the common field might come from paid labour from the group of landless cottars.

Possible Outline of the Manor of Minchinhampton
Early 14th Century (based on contemporary records)



PEASANT'S STANDARD OF LIVING

With the end of the year's cultivation the Lady's tenants could take pleasure in a good crop or concern at a poor one and, with the cottars, worry about getting through the winter. About the year 1200 Europe was entering into a period which has been called "a little ice age", average temperatures fell and there is evidence from England of a great deal of rain. Local conditions would vary, of course, but tenants with long memories, though few lived to a ripe old age, would undoubtedly talk of better crops in the past.

All this brings into question the standard of living in the vill of Hampton. Obviously the customal tells us nothing about this, but records from other manorial documents make it possible to produce a picture which could apply to Hampton.

The crops grown were wheat, oats and barley; wheat, hopefully, for sale, oats for such cattle as they had, and barley for food and drink. The land was impoverished, there was little manure and its only chance to recuperate was during the fallow year when in any case the growing weeds were nibbled off by cattle and sheep. They put little back - it was reckoned that an acre of fallow could support only two sheep. Hence the return on seed sown was only about four and a half. So the return on an acre, after deducting two and a quarter bushels for next year's seed, and the tenth required by the Church would, in a good season, be about five bushels of oats, or seven of wheat or ten of barley. J.Z. Titow in his recent book on English Rural Society, basing his figures on the amount allotted to manor servants for their maintenance, and that provided for the widow in some courts, and the corn sold to pay the Lady her rent, comes to the conclusion that the minimum land required to feed one person would be two and a half acres, given a three-field system. Notice that in comparison the ploughmen of Hampton have five acres, which in a three-field system would give a little over three in cultivation and the rest fallow. The next problem is the size of a peasant's family. Here the multiplier is usually suggested as four - remembering that this is an average and does not take into account individual differences. On this figure, then, the minimum land required for an average family is ten acres, i.e. a fifteen acre holding when fallow is considered. Hence a full virgator will have crops to spare, a half virgator will just manage and quarter virgator or less will be on the poverty line, if such a term can apply to medieval society.

What then would be the peasant's diet? It was largely a heavy, non-protein one. He ate quantities of coarse, dark bread (koket), supplemented with occasional dishes of pottage, mainly of oats with some vegetables when available from his croft, washed down with draughts of weak ale made from barley and oats. If his croft would allow it, and a cow, ewe or goat were there, then there might be the occasional supply of milk, cheese or butter. The Manor's requirement of eggs at Easter as part of the service owed means that there would certainly be hens. In this connection, notice the court often fines culprits hens or chickens, and also for hens being found among the corn. Also there could be a pig, since the customal lays down a tax on pigs.

All this brings into question the standard of living in the vill of Hampton. Obviously the customal tells us nothing about this, but records from other manorial documents make it possible to produce a picture which could apply to Hampton.

All things considered, the peasant's diet was a heavy, carbohydrate one.

The Manor, i.e. the nuns of Caen, fed better. At intervals supplies of cheese made from sheep's milk and bacon were sent over, travelling by cart to Southampton. Quantities of eggs, particularly at Easter, would go and the Manor profit in coins, carried in bean bags (because of the weight) on horseback by one of the freemen of the Manor.

THE PEASANT ECONOMY

All the peasants, whether richer or poorer, had to face outgoings of cash - several solidi or several denarii as rent to the Lady, and usually denarii but sometimes solidi for fines for the Manor Court. Besides these there was the cost of such items as they could not themselves provide - shoes at 2 denarii a pair, cheap cloth at 1 to 1½ solidi a yard, and the necessary utensils for cooking and fire. For these we must picture them visiting the local tradesmen; in 1170 Roger Parmenter, tailor or furrier, and especially Willelmus the mercator or petty-trader. They were not bound to the Manor the whole time; they might be sent with loads or messages to nearby towns. Thus the Manor made specific arrangements for those who received loads for carrying to Gloucester or to Bristol when they were relieved of a full day's customary work, and the Lady would, if necessary, provide accomodation for them to put up horses and loads.

This also gave opportunities to sell, mainly from their animals and arable husbandry i.e. meat, poultry, dairy produce, hides, wheat. The price of wheat varied between four and five solidi a quarter, and an ox could fetch thirty solidi. With the sale of his surplus the full virgator might well earn some four pounds a year. The small virgator would have little to spare, while the cottar would have to rely on his purchasable labour. The average wage for this was one to one and a half denarii a day. Beyond this there would be what he could make as a craftsman - smith, carpenter, or on special jobs - fuller. The miller is in a special class. The peasants would have little to live on.

An example of what might happen comes from the Hundred Court held in Hampton in 1273. (A Hundred was a division of the County, whether of a hundred families, tythings or acres of land is not sure. We live in the Hundred of Langtree). Here came various deccnarii who stated that "on the Tuesday before the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25th) Thomas de Bridley, seeking bread ("querendum panem") because of infirmity and cold, fell dead on the way near Bolenany in Hampton, and that no-one is to blame."

Life was hard in Hampton in the 12th and 13th centuries.

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A MINISTER'S ACCOUNT FOR THE MANOR OF HAMPTON

Mr. C. Turk

Each year, at or near Michaelmas, auditors came to Minchinhampton to audit all items of income and expenditure, and all details of produce such as grains, animals, wool, cheese, sides of bacon etc. since the last audit. They were not concerned with the villeins, but solely with the demense i.e. that land which was reserved for the profit of the Lady of the Manor the Abbess of Caen, Abbaye aux Dames. The answers to their established sequence of questions was written down in a document we know as a Minister's Account. In a more or less common form for all the manors in England such documents can give us, where they survive, a clear picture of life on the demense. For Minchinhampton four such accounts have survived for the first quarter of the 14th. These are for 1306/7, 1316/17, 1321/2 and 1329/30. The next survivals are for 1378/9 and 1360/1 and the series ends with six for the period 1410 to 1418. This article deals with the account for 1306/7, of which there is a translation in the Local History Section in Minchinhampton Library.

Since the Abbess could not exercise personal control over the manor she appointed a seneschal or steward to undertake this supervision for her. In 1306 he was Sir Thomas Goelon. His was a busy life. We see him visiting regularly, often staying for several days, bringing with him seneschals from the Abbess' other manors of Felstead and Tilshead; and his attendants, one of whom was his son, Robert. That they fed well is shown by the weekly record of expenditure on food which, for once, the reeve kept. Normal weekly costs for food for the famuli i.e. servants excluding any produce from the manor itself, varied between 8d and 17d. (Their coinage was the one we have now lost, 12 denarii = 1 solidus, 20 solidi = 1 libra, i.e. L.s.d.) But for the seneschal and his party the costs go up. For the week from the Thursday before the feast of St. Martin - November 11th - expenditure was 8s.3d. and for the following weeks - 2s.4d., 3s.3½d., 3s.11½d., and 4s.8½d. They ate best bread, Wastell, at ½d a loaf, wine at 4 gallons for 18d., conger eel at 6d. each. When one realises that the usual daily payment for a man's work about the manor was 1d. then these costs begin to look like good living. This was a much longer stay than usual, though broken up by his riding around on manor business, which took him to Cirencester, Gloucester and London as well as Felstead and Tilshead, so his horses were in constant need of care and attention. Hence many entries for shoeing at 18d. with horse shoes at 12 for 12d. Fodder for the horses came of course, from the manor itself at the usual rate of one bushel for two nights for each horse. Repairs too were needed for the seneschal's clothes, so we find such items as mending shoes — 3d., pair of shoes bought - 6d. footwear with hose - 12d., tunic 2s.3d., repairing gloves - 2d.

In day to day charge of the manor was the reeve. He was John of Beuley, a villein living at Hyde and holding a virgate of land in the common arable fields for which he did all villein services, though while he held the office of reeve he was excused them. He would have been appointed by the seneschal, possibly on the suggestion of other villeins as a man who knew the land and customs of the manor. His duties were onerous; he was responsible for the management of the demense farm, for collecting rents, preparing the manor court and dealing with all manor incomes and expenditures, so though he does not appear often in the Account, his presence is behind every entry. He could neither read nor write so in recalling the financial life of the manor during his year of office for the clerk, Richard Cook, to record, he had to rely partly on tallies, when he had received them, and mainly on an impressive memory for details. And it was necessary for him to be accurate in his statement of account for he was held responsible for any deficit.

We first find him acknowledging the year's income of £113.6s.8¼d. made up of last year's profit £7.12s.6¼d. received of Walter of Brimscomb, the former reeve; rents due from villeins, pannage of pigs, a payment of 15d. for digging of stones and Fullers Earth (an early quarry), money received from villeins in lieu of customary services - a sign of the growing freedom of the villeins — £12.15s.10d. for the sale of animals and 11s.11d. from the sale of 26 stones of cheese at 5½d. a

stone. But the main item of manor income was the sale of fleece and wool from the manor's 1500 odd sheep, which brought in £46.19.3d.

Now he must account for his expenditure. The largest item covered the expenses of the seneschal and his group on their journeys through southern England on manor business, a total of £6.1s.10d. with a further £6.7s.11¼d. for food. Then the account shows us the manor at work. Ploughing in Lent cost 4s.2d. largely for food — 16d. for 150 herrings, 2s for 3 mullets. The plough needed repair - thread for sewing the harness 2d., a pair of new wheels and the old ones repaired 2s.4d., 3 ropes and 4 traces for the halters with hemp 15d. Threshing and winnowing 33 quarters of grain 2s.4½d. Hoeing and weeding by 20 men at ½d a day, 2½ stones of sheep salve, 9 women paid for looking after ewes 4½d.

There was work about the manor house; stone walls repaired, the byre mended, steps made to the granary above the proch, the dairy whitewashed and holes closed and, a large item, a butcher's shope (sic.) being built — 14s. for wood bought at Sapperton, 12d, for two sawyers sawing beech boards, 10d. for a carpenter working for three weeks making four door and four windows (he also received food), hinges and latches bought. An early C19th map shows a butcher's shop along the wall from the side gate to the Church, was this where the C14th shop was built?

Household equipment was needed. 2½ stones of tallow costing 20d. was bought, along with 3d. of wick and a man was paid 5d. for three days making candles. A bucket for milk cost 1¼d; the cooper worked three days repairing metal objects, cost 3d. a linen cloth was needed for making cheese and a lot of salt was bought at 15d. a quarter. Salt was used in large quantities It took four bushels to salt four large oxen, one bushel for 8 sheep and one bushel for 4 large bacon sides.

The reeve's second in command was the messor or hayward, who generally, because of his duty to supervise villeins working on the demense, and to call them out when required to do boon work - special one-day labour at busy times - was an unpopular man. There were paid servants, famuli of the manor working on the land under his charge all paid half-yearly by the reeve, and fed and possibly accommodated in the manor house. These were a chief ploughman to guide the plough at 2s.6d. a half-year, two ploughman for the oxen at 2s. Their work extended throughout the year since they had to look after the oxen at all times and even sleep with them! Two drovers for the manor carts at 3s., a shepherd for the ewes at 2s. and 3s.6d. more for two looking after lambs, 18d. for a cowman and 18d. for the dairy-maid.

Now the financial Account was almost complete. Expenditure totalled £44.5s.7½d. suggesting a substantial profit on the year's working when Richard Cok deducted expenses from income. But the reeve still had some further large sums to expend. These were allowances to the seneschal, £35 for selling wool, and 13s.4d. for selling a bullock.. 106s.4d. went to Master Thomas for selling ewes and 108s.4d. to John Amor. With other small allowances the total came to £51.6s.1d. So, said Richard Cok, there remained £17.14s.4d.

Now the Account turns from finance to issues from the grange, beginning with wheat. John of Beuley answered for 67 quarters 3 bushels recd. issued, from the previous year's crop for the manor as a whole, including Avening. Remember that his year started at Michaelmas. Of the remainder 18 quarters and 2 bushels went to the hayward for the current year's sowing, for which the reeve received a tally. Tithe would have been from the crop on the field by the Church. When this was added to the figures they show that the expected four—fold increase had been achieved; and, since the sowing rate for wheat was 2½ bushels an acre, they also show that some 40 acres were under wheat. Of the rest of the crop 35q. went to making fine bread for the seneschal and visitors, 1½q. were used for the famuli, 5q went to malt, 7q. was sold and there were some small gifts.

Barley was next to be checked and here the figures were - last year's crop 57 quarters 1½ bushels, seed for this year 10½q. Since barley and oats were sown at 5 bushels an acre this gave again a

four-fold increase with some 19 acres sown. The main issue was for bread - 40q. 2½b. for the household - with only 2q. 7b. issued for bread for the seneschal.

The reeve then acknowledged the receipt of 75 quarters of dredge, a mixture of oats and barley and allowed 26½q. for seed - only a threefold increase. Most of the remainder went in malt, a total here of 25q. A further 7q. fed the pigs, one quarter fed the doves in the dovecotes at Cherington, while 7q. were made into bread for alms for the poor and for the famuli.

Oats give a different picture. The reeve received 135 quarters 2 bushels from the grange and allowed 71½q. for seed. He therefore expected 100 acres under oats. If this was the same as the previous year then the return was scarcely two-fold. The surplus was used at various times for fodder, and 6q. was made into pottage for the famuli, one boy thereby earning 2s. for summer and autumn work.

Now the account turns to stock. Firstly the seven draught horses, mainly used for cartage, were recorded. Then 1 bull, 24 bullocks and 14 cows. This difference is due to cows being primarily the producers of oxen for the plough. Though each was expected to provide enough milk for 65 lbs of butter or cheese, this was not recorded, except for a reference to butter being used for sheep-grease.

Hampton manor had a large flock of sheep. At the end of the year, after allowing for those slaughtered for the larder, those who died before or after shearing, and those given as presents or rewards to famuli, John of Beuley passed on to his successor 14 rams, 173 wethers, 274 ewes, 124 two-year old rams, 304 hoggets and 302 lambs. For comparison, he had received the previous Michaelmas 14 rams, 311 wethers, 422 ewes, 232 two-year old rams, 344 hoggets and 591 lambs. Some of the differences are explained by allowance of over 150 animals to the reeves of Avening and Lowesmore, while there was a large mortality (142) among the lambs.

The last of the stock to be listed were the pigs. With 59 young pigs at the start of his year he had 36 left at the end, after slaughtering 20 for the larder and giving the flesh of one which had died to the poor on Shrove Tuesday. He finally acknowledged 286 hens received from the five woodwards, selling 172 at 1½d. each, and the seneschal and famuli eating the remainder.

With so many sheep there was a mass of fleeces, wool and skin for leather. The reeve recorded 1615 fleeces with 1529 sold, after deducting a tithe of 85. These fleeces, put into sacks, weighed 130 stones — the fleece of a ram should have weighed 2 lbs and that of a ewe 1½ lbs.

The account ends with cheese made from ewes' milk - a ewe was expected to produce 3½ lbs of milk. First the reeve answered for 37 cheeses weighing 12½ stones left over from last year's making; then for 35 cheese, weighing 7 stones made after the feast of St. Michael. He next records 189 cheese made two a day from the Saturday of the Vigil of Saints Philip and John (May 1st) to the Wednesday after the Feast of St. Peter in the Chains (August 1st). Thereafter 39 were made one a day up to 8th September and 9 every other day up to St. Michaels Day. All these, together with 136 received from the reeve of Lowesmore came to 445 cheeses weighing 13 weys 3½ stones (at 28 stones a wey). What happened to them all? Most, 307 weighing 11½ weys, went to the Abbaye aux Dames at Caen for the sustenance of the nuns; the seneschal took 13 weighing 2½ stone, the household 18 weighing 10 stones, 47 weighing 13 stones were sold, 23 went for tithe and the rest were presents -an 81b cheese to the dairymaid, another to William Turner for making a cheese basket and a 41b one to the boy who went with the cheeses "to sea".

With the accounts now completed and approved the reeve and the famuli could now enjoy the meal which the Lady Abbess regularly gave at the end of the audit. Then John of Beuley could return to his virgate and his customary duties,

THE MANOR OF MINCHINHAMPTON IN THE EARLY 17TH Century by Cyril Turk

In the 1550's the Churchwardens returned the number of communicants here as 500. Since this did not include anyone under the age of 16 it would suggest a population of about 700. In 1608 Smiths "Men and Armour" lists the number of men in Minchinhampton capable of bearing arms. The total is 186. Adding young males, aged and infirm men, those excused service (clergy and gentlemen and all females) this would give a population of 800+, a figure confirmed by the Churchwardens then total of 600 communicants.

Of these 800, some 400 are shown as tenants of the Manor in the four Custumals compiled in the 1630s -- a Rental, giving the rent paid by each tenant, a Survey giving details of each holding, a Valuation with the estimated value of each property, land and building and a Memo Book. This latter is a valuable record of the tenants of the Manor at that time. Lords of Manors were beginning to demand full details of their holdings from all tenants, which meant that each had to produce his or her authority for the holding either by copy or by indenture. These were then transcribed in a Memo Book giving the exact date of the copy and indenture.

In the case of the copy, which was often for three lives, the names of these three and their relation to the main holder were listed; in Minchinhampton's Memo Book, in order that the Lord or his Steward could judge when a copy might run out, the scribe placed above each name either M for dead or the age at the time of the Memo book. For example there is "*By a Coppie dated the Xth day of February in the XXXV year of Eliz. Henry lord Winsor graunted to Ferdinand Hopkin (M), Marjorie (64) his wyffe and Humphry (40) their sonne for three lives one messuage or tenement and two little plots of ground and one mead att Forwood by the name of Balls Green*"

Copy goes back to the early Middle ages. The Lord of the Manor held all the land and everything on it. He or his Steward granted it in specified parcels to the villeins in return for services on the Manor and for rent. These details and any future changes were recorded in the Manor Court Rolls, and this record was the villein's proof of his holding, hence "copyhold". As Manor Courts faded and Royal Courts of Justice expanded copyhold cases began to be taken there, and with the increasing use of freehold and lease, which served lord and tenant better, copyhold was being severely eroded by the 17th Century. It was finally abolished by the Law of Property Act in 1922.

Indenture was coming into use in the late 16th and early 17th to the advantage of the Lord of the Manor. By this means when a copyhold fell in and the land became vacant, he could lease it out for a fixed number of years, usually twenty one, instead of the open-ended three lives. He could increase the rental and, perhaps more important, he could include conditions in the tenancy, demanding that the rent must be paid twice yearly at the feasts of St. Michael and St. Mary, thereby knowing exactly when the money would come in, ordering that if the rent was not paid within a certain period of time, usually twenty—eight days, then he could re-enter and take back the land. There were also such conditions as the tenant to carry out all repairs at his own cost, he must leave the property in the same condition as he found it and he must not claim right of common or on the wood.

Omitting the Nailsworth and Avening section of the Manor, the Custumals show 167 tenants of Minchinhampton of whom 61 held land in the common arable fields, now Hampton Fields, 26 by copy, 15 by indenture and 20 whose authority was not given. The remaining 106 have only a dwelling varying from very small to relatively large, with adjoining small plots and sometimes more extensive scattered plots of meadow, pasture or arable. The larger dwellings are given as "tenements" e.g. Jeremy Buck, by an indenture dated 25 April 5 Charles¹ had "*provided the rebuilds ...a Tenement called Broadgates divided into two tenements with a backside, garden and*

stable situate between the Well and the Parsonage House.” He was a mercer, with a good house in 1630 and sufficiently substantial to erect his own seat in the church in 1633. He married Alice Pinfold in 1606, and “Men and Armour” two years later gives him as in his twenties, of middle stature and capable of using a musket. His son, also Jeremy, born in 1619, became a captain in the Parliamentary Army, and A. T. Playne in his book on Minchinhampton and Avening devotes several pages to outrages committed by him in 1642, notably against Henry Fowler, then Rector of Minchinhampton.

Eleven tenants had tenements. A further twenty—nine are described as having messuages i.e. dwelling houses with outbuildings and set in their own land. An example here is John Newarke. He, his wife Agnes (both dead by the time of the Memo) and their son John (then 60) held by copy dated XX September XIIIJ Eliz. a “*messuage and one Cottage with a Curtiledge and a half yard of land*” i.e. 15 acres. John had died in 1593 and his will shows him to have been a wealthy man. He left 3/4d to “*repayre the churche*”, a further 20/- to be distributed amongst the poor, 40/- to one daughter, £10 to his son John at 30, together with “*beddes in the little chamber, sheets, coverlets, pots, platters and porringers*”, a further £20 to second son Edward at age 22, together with the bedstead “*that standeth in the outer chamber at the Townes end*” and the chest in the parlour with the “*writinge that explayneth unto the Lande I hold at Cherinton*” Other “*free land at Cherinton*” goes to wife Ann, who keeps it till Edward is 21, when it passes to him and his heirs, provided he does not sell it and that he gives his mother 20/- yearly. Son John obtained the other lands on his father’s death. These are recorded as a messuage called Reynolds, one and a quarter acre meadow at St. Loe, a further one and a half acre meadow by the Wells and 28 acres of arable in the common field. A later indenture dated 28 April 7 Charles gives him permission to erect a row of poles or posts on the south of his house, as far as the side of his house, the posts not to stand above 3ft.

The remaining 66 tenants, whose record was a brief one, were cottagers having little or no land. Richard Long holds by copy dated 25 April 12 James one house and garden for the three lives of “*Richard Long (30), Anne (50) his wyffe and George (15) theyre sonne*” For Thomas Haynes his copy, dated XVI April XXVIII Eliz., gives more detail “*to Thomas Haynes (M), Elinar (80) his wyffe and Thomas theyre sonne a little cottage containing XX foote in length and XVI in breadth*”. Some of these cottagers were held, not for lives, but “*at will*”, which meant that the Lord could repossess whenever he so wished.

The cottagers paid yearly rent to the Lord as did all tenants. For Thomas Haynes this was 2/- for a cottage valued at 10/-, whereas his brother Giles for a cottage of the same value paid only 1/-. Daniel Gilman, whose copy (5 May 13 Charles) gives him as 30, his wife the same age and brother Robert, the third life, as 12, held “*a certain piece of grounde upon which he had built*”, paid 6/8d rent when the “*howse and garden*” were finished and valued at £2. Francis Chambers held, with his wife Elenor (sic) a cottage and garden with a “*courtelage*” valued at £1 for which he paid 4/- rent. The widow Margaret Flower, now 80 and the last of three lives since her husband John and son Gies had died (their copy 19 October 2 James) held a cottage at the “*Hide*” for which she paid 4/- rent. An item in the churchwardens accounts for 1615 helps to put these rents in proportion to wages “*to Francis Chambers for three and a half days work on the bells 1/4d*”

Though the heavy servile duties of earlier days were no longer demanded of tenants, some of the lighter duties were still claimed. Tenants could still be required to supply the manor house with a hen at Christmas and six eggs at Easter, though sometimes 3d was allowed as an alternative. This was permitted to William Cambridge, who also had to provide two fat capon. He also had to carry out another of the lighter duties, i.e. to repair a specified length of the Park Wall. This was laid down by copy dated XXVIII April XLIII Eliz. By the time the Memo Book was compiled he had died, leaving his wife Alice (80) and his daughter Sarah (40) to carry out the terms of the copyhold “*repaireing a pearche of parke wall*”. He held “*a Toft called Cowcombe, a quarter yard land (seven and half acres) a meadow called Stokebridge, a parcell of meadow called Styles*”. Edward Hopkins (80) holding by copy XXVI May XXXIX Eliz. with Joan wife of Ambrose Bishop (M)

pasture called Claycombe, wood and pasture called Parkers, various other closes and 48 acres in the field had to repair two perches; while Edward Pinfold (60) and wife Kimberow (50) nee Buck who held by copy 24 October 8 Charles a number of closes named Gardiners, Home, Quanley, Over and Lower Croft, Readings, Well Close and Holloways² had only half a perch to repair.

A heavier duty from the past which was still claimed was the heriot. This was based originally on the claim that the Lord had loaned to the peasant the articles he used and therefore could demand them back when the peasant died. Usually the demand was for the best beast or, if the peasant had no animals, then their best article e.g. an axe. By the 1600s, if heriot was still claimed it was often a money payment. When Samuel Rowles died (he was a shoemaker, in his twenties in 1608 and of low stature) holding by copy 20 Oct. 8 Charles a cottage and having common of estovers i.e. the right to take timber from the woods, for all of which he paid a rent of 13/4d, his widow Hanna had to pay a heriot of 4/-. Their young son Henry had obtained the reversion of the cottage so he could take it over when his father died. The copy dated XX Oct. XXXV Eliz. by which Samuel Gough and his wife Anne (both dead by the time of the Memo Book) and their son Samuel (60) held a messuage called Hewlett's (rent 6/4d) and a clay pit called Grymores (rent 9/7d) brought a heriot of £1. Jeremy Buck who had five subtenants - Thomas Hawkes, Edward Lord, Joseph Bishop, Thomas Hall and William Watts - paying a total of £14.14s in rent, was required to pay a heriot of 10/- "*on the death of every Tenant during possession*".

Beasts could still be required. Richard Pinfold, who held by two copies, a mansion called Hamerells, two shops (near the present Market Stores) meadows at Hyde called Riggs Pit and Ambrose and a 10 acre toft called Pages; and who by indenture 20 April 43 Elizabeth got for a rental of 50/- the baliwick of the market, all tolls of burgages, fairs and markets there provided he built sufficient, market house³ was charged with a heriot of two best beasts. Joanna Deane, widow of Richard Deane, was charged with the heriot of the best animal or 4/-. They had held by copy, dated 13 April 17 James, for their lives and that of their daughter Elizabeth. a cottage, fifteen acres of arable, two closes called Moores and an acre of land called Hitchcock. After he died, Joanna, by an indenture dated 5 May 8 Charles, obtained a twenty-one year tenancy of the cottage, then described as "*betweene the parsonage house on the south and the streete on the north*". Richard died in 1624 and his will shows a comfortable man with land scattered about the area. He gave £10 to the poor of Minchinhampton and a further £10 to Katren "*my maid*", daughter Elizabeth got "*all my land at Byrly called hygyns ground*" taken of the Lord Buckingham 16 September 1621. For "*want of heyers lawfully begotten of her bodie*" it was then to go to son Clutterbuck Dean, and then to Richard, brother Charles' son. Clutterbuck also got land in "*Sankle*" taken of Robert Tayler of Matson. Richard also got a "*parcell of pastur ground caled by the name of Pool Meadow adjoining a field called the Furlong*" and also ground in Sankle called Pool Fields. Brother Charles got land in Woodchester known as "*Allends*". Richard Deane was a tenant in the Manor of Minchinhampton by copy, but he was also a substantial yeoman with land bought from other landowners.

The woods were the most valuable asset of the Manor, but they were being whittled away by the Manor's sale of heavy timber from the demesne woods, by tenants use of small timber for housebote and hedgebote and by clearances for pasture for sheep and cattle. By the end of the 15th century Rodborough Wood disappears from the record, but Amberley Wood still stretched around Box, as is shown by an indenture of 1703 which recites that on the 27 January 1656 Charles Wood, yeoman, granted to Samuel Wood, broadweaver., land in Westfield "*at a place called Trullwell with the land of Richard Driver on the East and Custom Wood on the S. and W.*"

When Henry VIII in 1541 "induced" Andrew Lord Winsor to surrender to him his manor in Stanwell in exchange for the manor of Minchinhampton, the indenture dealing with this listed the woods — Gatcombe, Cowcombe, Amberley, Holcombe, Brimscombe, Hazelwood, woods to the north and east of the Park (that to the north had been sold by the Abbey of Syon to Thomas Shewell) and *Winnate hedge wood*" (also sold by Syon to John Stumpe, gentleman). These woods with a total area of over 700 acres were described as "*sett*" with beech varying from forty to a

hundred years' growth and worth £2 to £3 an acre. Though they were described as common woods, they were mostly demesne woods and common only so far as tenants of the Manor had pasture and woodcutting rights, controlled in copies and indentures.. William Dartford (54) and his wife Sara (50) who held by copy (8 October 17 James) a two acre close at Burley, which had formerly been held by his mother Alice, was "*not to cut or allot any wood*".

Samuel Day (70) and his wife Marjorie (60) held a number of small plots. In 1608 he was given as in his forties, a tall man capable of using a pike and a trained soldier. The plots included a half yard land called Tillhay, a meadow called Littlebane, a close called New Tynings, a wood "*adjoynynge to the Commonwood well grown, at pasture*". His copy, dated 19 March 13 James, laid down that he "*shall not cutt any timber tree or tree like to be timber*". He died in 1641 leaving small bequests to his children - to Nathaniel 5/- "*if he Com to demand it*", Henry "*all my wearinge Aparent*", Daniel 10/-, Jerome £1, Stephen £10, Josiah 2 sheep, and the bequest to his daughter Elizabeth is worth quoting in full, £20 "*always provided that if she doe in her marriage goe with her mothers consent shee is to have it. But if shee goe agaynst her mothers consent then my will is that my son Stephen shall have five*".

George Reynolds (69). Johane his wife (60) and George their son⁴ held a cottage and two acres of land together with common of estovers, but, small though his holding was, his copy (9 April 19 James) had a "*Proviso not to sell without license nor make any spoyle in any of the Lords woods*" i.e. that he should not use the common of estovers so as to turn some part of the wood into waste fit only for pasture.

Common of estovers was often granted to cottages. James Witcombe (34), who was an apothecary, and his two sons John (16) and James (8) held by Copy 20 October 12 Charles "*one Cottage in the West End Hampton*" and one acre of land for which he had common of estovers, all of which at a rent of 10/-. This is the origin of our present commoners' rights, attached to a property and not to a person. The right to take hedgebote might be granted to a particular person e.g. Richard Holder, who held property by three separate indentures dated 10 April 2 Charles, 1 May 12 Charles and 17 June 12 Charles. Putting them together these gave him "*one quarry of stone called Aldreges with liberty to dige for as much as with the quarry shall not mount above 4 acres*" and for this he paid 10/- rent; one acre and a half of land "*lying at a place called pinfarthing but anchantly known by the name of doddisground*" all timber trees and woods excepted, and permission to take sufficient wood to "*repare the fences*" at his own cost. If he claimed right of pasture or took wood without leave he would lose the land. Finally he got "*Holcome Quarr*" with license to dig on "*condition that he shall not digge in wood nor on any highway.*"

Common of pasture was often refused, particularly when the holding was by indenture. John Elchar (in his forties in 1608, given of meanest stature, fit only to be a "*pyoner*" and of little other use) held by indenture 24 June 17 James "*one cottage lying in the parish of Minchinhampton woodside called Sathcote*" i.e Southcot with three closes "*containing 3 acres all woods growing or to be growne excepted*". He could cut down wood for hedgebote but "*if he shall clayme any right of common of pasture in any of the Lessees woods then the grant shall cease.*"

William Skirton, also known as Parsons, was a tailor and held by indenture 28 May 8 Charles "*a parcell of ground called Mattock*" some 2 acres in extent, also Amberley Green and a tenement in Hampton called "*Crabbes Croft*". All trees - oak, ash, beech and elm - were expressly excluded from his grant.

The indentures and copies sometimes state the name or area where a particular building stood, which makes it possible approximately to site them. Robert Henry (40) and Joan (40) his wife, had by copy 28 April 16 Charles a cottage "*at the Well*" for which they paid 2d. rent with a hericot of 2d. The low rent suggests a very small cottage; it could have been one of those referred to in the Manor Court Rolls for June 20, 1651 "*waste ground heretofore three shops lying between the Well*

House and Market House". This was the Upper Island. Josias Close, a weaver, in his forties in 1608 and of medium stature, held by copy 19 October 2 James "*one cottage new built with a garden adjoininge at the Pool near the Wells*" for which he paid 2/- rent with a heriot of 4/-. John Cowethorpe and Marjorie Field held by copy XVI March XXIII Elizabeth a yard and half land at Forwood and two cottages near the Parsonage House. Both had died by 1635 and the Memo Book does not record who followed them. By the 1630s the Church House was held by Richard Taylor, a weaver, and his two sons, William and Richard for 99 years "*if any of them shall so longe life*". The rent was 10/- with heriot 10/-. The property is detailed "*a messuage — called the Church House with the Penthouse grounds adjoininge and all those 2 shoppes or shambles standinge between Well House and the Market House*".

Penelope Nott (Copy XVII January XXVIII Elizabeth) was 67 at the time of the Memo Book and was one of the largest landholders, with 340 acres of arable in the common fields. She had a tenement "*near the Lord's new house*" — was this the Lammas? There are several references to cottages at Balls Green and Forwood, but the main sitings are in West End. George Chambers (64) and his wife Marjorie (67) held by copy 19 March 12 James a cottage in "*le West End*" for which they paid 10/- rent and a heriot of 5/-. James Symes and John Witcombe, the apothecary, were there, Charles Hawkes had the "*Cross Place or Inn*" and his son, John, the Swan Inn. Charles, given as husbandman in his will of 1636, bequeathed his son *one paire of breeches, a coate and my doublett, a hat and one paire of showes and stockings of the very best*". His wife Marion got the best bed and the fittings together with "*one little kettle, one coffer and two sawcers*" as well as 30/-. John Edchew and Johanna his wife, the original tenants by copy, had died and their son Henry now took their "*one Cottage called the Almshouse*" for a rent of 2/- and heriot of the same. Finally in Box we have John Driver who held by indentures 3 June 11 Charles "*one mansion commonly called The Great House and also a little peece of land Liig in the field belowe the way to Avening*". For this he paid a rent of £7 for a 21 year lease with the Covenant "*that the Lord Winsor shall have free liberty for his deputies to keepe the usual Courts in the great Chamber during the sayd term*".

The large common arable fields were still open, unenclosed land, though some plots were no longer scattered, but were being gathered together. This is shown in the record of Mr. Henry Steward's land — he was the Lord's steward for the Manor — which tells of "*308 acres, 1 rod 36 perches of arable in the Common Fields whereof 30 are inclosed and 110 acres more lie entirely together*". He held, at will, the Manor House, the Park adjoining of 20 acres. Culver Close. two meadows called the Downs of 56 acres, two pastures called Great and Little Down of 139 acres, pasture called Rashalls Green of 41 acres and Mill Mead Meadow. All of this was demesne land for which he paid a rent of £115.

There were other large holdings. Geoffrey Bath held 100 acres and other small plots named as Box Close, Skipping Close, Haynes, Doddie Meadow (given as at Longford), Hampton Mead, Dereharn's mead as well as "*An Ancient Farme house in Hampton towne*", and five cottages each let at 20/- rent, all for 80 years by indenture 26 April 6 James for himself (46) his wife Elizabeth (40) and his daughter Joan. Philip Clissold held 60 acres but most folk held much smaller plots well below 50 acres with George Reynolds holding only 1 acre. He was a weaver holding by copy 9 April 19 James for himself (67), Johann his wife (60) and son George (20) one cottage with common right of estover,

Most of these holders of land in the common fields were copyholders with their copies going back to Elizabeth's time e.g. Penelope Nott (28 Elizabeth), John Cowlthorpe (23 Elizabeth) and Thomas Parslow (30 Elizabeth). Some date from James I e.g. Samuel Cowling (17 James), but those who obtained land during the reign of Charles I mainly did so by indenture e.g. William Painter (2 Charles) whose 30 acres of arable, a messuage called Beanly and three small pastures cost him £5 in rent and 4 bushels of oats for the Manor within one week of demand.

The majority of tenants of the Manor, including the larger ones, held small plots land either around their dwellings or on the edges of the Manor, and the Valuation deals with all possible variations. The comm arable land was valued at 2/6d an acre, meadow at 20/- an acre, meadow and pasture also at 20/-, pasture alone was valued at 13/4d and 12/-, pasture and wood 10/- (this would indicate some clearing) and arable and wood 8/-. The plots are also described as adjoining the house, or another plot as a close (an enclosed plot), a parcell and moiety (a shared plot). The widow Margaret Hopkins held the moiety of a meadow by Stroud Water with William Painter. Many plots are given names but unfortunately many of our field names have been lost. For example:

Henry Fowler, clerk - the minister for Hampton

	<i>Value</i>
<i>A messuage called Duttons</i>	<i>01.00.00</i>
<i>2 meadows adjoining to the house cont. 3A 16P at 20/- p. acr</i>	<i>03.00.00</i>
<i>2 closes of pasture or arable cont. 7A 10P at 13/4 p. Acr</i>	<i>04.10.04</i>
<i>Another close called Fry Close cont. 5A 17P at 13/4 p. Acr</i>	<i>03.06.08</i>
<i>Pasture and wood called the Grove 11A 3R 1P at 12/- p. acr</i>	<i>06.18.10</i>
<i>30A of arable in the Common Fields at 2/6 p. Acr</i>	<u><i>03.15.00</i></u>
<i>Suma</i>	<i>23. 03. 00</i>

For which he paid a rent of 11/4d.

One further example from the Valuation shows the layout of a tenants holding:

John Hawke, innkeeper

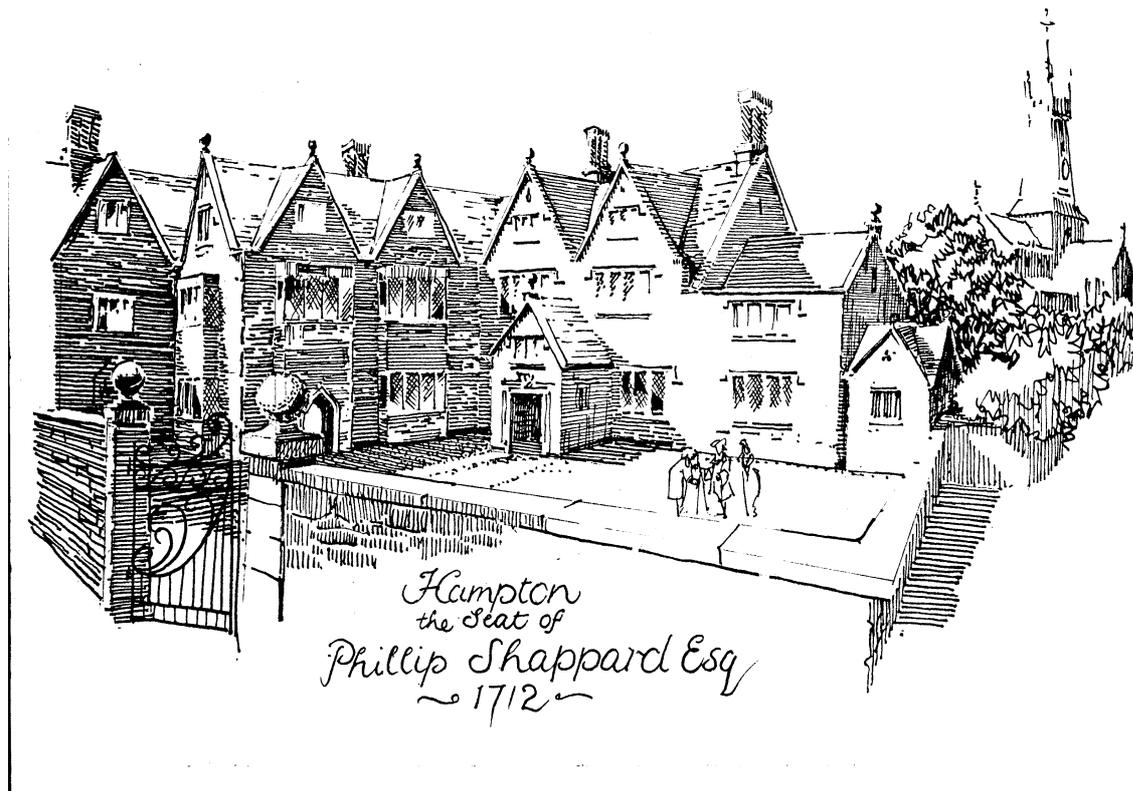
	<i>Value</i>
<i>A muessuage in Hampton</i>	<i>01.06.08</i>
<i>2 cottages to one of which belongs a small Pightell of ground enclosed</i>	<i>02.06.08</i>
<i>An inn called the Swan</i>	<i>09.00.00</i>
<i>A meadow adjoininge to the dwelling house cont. 2R 4P in toto</i>	
<i>A meadow called Brokacres cont. 1.1.4. in toto</i>	<i>01.10.00</i>
<i>2 meadows one called Lyme Kill Close cont. 1.3.9. and the other near the cottage cont. 1A 2R 30P at 16/- p. Acr</i>	<i>02.16.00</i>
<i>2 pastures one called More Leaze cont. 4.1.14 and the other Home Leaze cont. 1.1.20</i>	<i>07.06.08</i>
<i>8 acres of arable at 2/6 p. Ac.</i>	<u><i>01.00.00</i></u>
<i>Suma</i>	<i>06.06.00</i>

For this he paid 10/- rent.

Thus we have a picture of life in the Manor of Minchinhampton in the early part of the Seventeenth Century.

Footnotes

- 1 Dates were commonly given with day & month and the year of the sovereign's reign. Thus the year 1630 would be 5 Charles.
- 2 Does anybody recognise these plots?
- 3 This became Upper Island which predated our present Market House.
- 4 George was a weaver, given in his forties in 1608 and of middle stature.
- 5 This value is blurred on the original.



A REVOLT AGAINST THE RATES IN MINCHINHAMPTON

by Cyril Turk

The Minchinhampton Vestry at successive meetings on April 24th and May 1st in 1758 noted that there had been little response to their notices in Church of a meeting for a new and regular assessment for the Poor Rate; they adjourned again to May 10th. At that meeting it was ordered that a notice should "be fairly written and affixed to the Church door the following Sunday" and that the following notice "should be read by the Clerk after Evening Sermon.

"Whereas at a Vestry held the 10th of May last for altering the Poor's rate after several Vestries called for this purpose a General Rate was unanimously agreed upon for making the same upon an equitable and just equality as near as may be according to the annual Value of every Parishioner's Property in Lands, Houses, Mills and Woods liable to be rated in this Parish.

"Therefore all the said Parishioners for the more speedy and easie completing the said Rate are desired to give in the true annual Value of their respective Estates as near as may be to the Officers at a meeting to be held for receiving such Information on Friday 19th for accomplishing the same."

What was the reason for this? To find out it is necessary to go back several years into the history of Minchinhampton Poor Rate.

The method of assessment for rates in this Parish was a very unusual one. Each rate-payer - 87 for the Town, 97 for the Tithing of Box, Amberley and Rodborough, and 37 for Hyde and Chalford -

was assessed at a monthly figure. Thus Samuel Sheppard, Lord of the Manor, was assessed at 9/7d a month; Thomas Pinfod, a clothier at 1/1d a month; William Cook, proprietor of the White Hart Inn, at 8d a month; John Hill, butcher, at 1d a month; and. so on down to the small cottagers, such as John Key, at ½d a month. When therefore the Overseers had decided how much money they needed for the care of the poor during the coming year - Easter to Easter - and had obtained. the approval of the Vestry, they set a rate of so many months. In 1735, when the newly obtained workhouse at the far end of what is now Chapel Lane, was coming into use, they set a rate of 82 months.

Thereafter for the next eighteen years the demand varied between 69 months and 90 months, with two high exceptions of 100 months in 1740 and 118 months in 1741; these higher rates being due partly to an increase in the workhouse account to over £270; but also to an increase in the number of those being given relief of rates because of poverty and of those poor whose rents were paid to their landlords by the overseers.

But in the 1750s the rate demands increased rapidly - 114 months in 1754, 114 months in 1755, 150 months in 1756 and 120 months in 1757 - with the workhouse account going up to £430 in 1756 because of the increase in the numbers of poor. In August 1756 the Vestry approved out-payments amounting to £8/15/0d a month to 46 poor, mainly elderly women and widows with children. In June of that year they ruled that in order to “defray the necessary Expenses” for the upkeep of the poor in the workhouse now “much more numerous than of late they were” the Overseer should pay monthly the Governor of the Workhouse “the several sums following” the Town Overseer £15, the Tithing Overseer £9, the Chalford Overseer £6. Even so, in October, they had to order an extraordinary one month’s payment to the Governor for the “immediate and necessary support of the poor.”

Discontent was beginning to show in 1754 when the Overseers recorded that they had not collected rates from seven people, among them John Hill, the butcher and Peter Perrett the Overseer in 1734. By 1757 the total of the defaulting rate-payers had reached 31, several of them quite substantial e.g. John Fowler a mercer, rated at 3d a month and therefore due to pay £1-10-0 that year; Daniel Keen, also assessed at 3d and an Overseer in 1741, Samuel Remington of the Tithing who should have paid £3. In 1758 with the rate again set at 120 months there was widespread nonpayment. Robert Harar, Overseer for the Town, whose demand came to £321, showed £139/1/1d. not collected, Joshua Thomas for the tithing failed to collect £72/1/6d out of a total of £203/12/6d, whilst John Teale for Chalford collected only £34/18/4d out of a demand for £98/10/-. By now, those not paying spread through the range of ratepayers. Samuel Sheppard paid £57/10/- in 1757, nothing in 1758. John Blackwell, a clothier in Chalford paid nothing - he was rated at 9d a month. Others paying nothing ranged from Thomas Feuster, a breeches maker rated at 4d, John Hill at 1d and William Smith a clothworker, at ½d.

The Vestry tried, unavailingly to stop the revolt, and then on 10th May, with 12 members present, prepared the notice to be read in Church. At the same time they tried to ease the Individual burden by extending the rate areas and making liable to rates

- a) lands of a yearly value of 20/- to be rated at ½d a month.
- b) ½d a month on houses and mills of a yearly value of 40/-.
- a) ½d a month on every four acres of woodland. (This was to cause trouble later on.)

On May 19th the Vestry met again, with 19 members now, and recorded that “very few of the Landholders have complied with the said Public Request” to declare the value of their Estate. They therefore adjourned once more to May 25th in order then “to choose and nominate proper persons to view and judge the annual value of each man’s Estate”. So on that date 35 leading parishioners were appointed to determine “each persons annual profit in Land, Houses, Mills and Woods” and were urged to begin work on May 29th.

Of these 35 Gentlemen, headed by Samuel Sheppard and Rev. Philip Sheppard, 14 had previously been Overseers, one, Edward Clutterbuck, was an attorney; three were substantial landowners like Samuel Heiron; six were clothiers such as Samuel Peach and Daniel Deverell; four were tradesmen such as the ironmonger Robert Pool and the mercer John Fowler; while one, John Clift, had been Sheriff's Officer.

But, on May 30th Quarter Sessions quashed the 1758 rate, and ordered that payers were either to have their money returned or to have it allowed against future rates. By now the shortage of cash in the Overseer's hands was beginning to show. Instead of receiving the ordered £35 a month, the Governor of the workhouse received in June £23/8/8d, in July £28/19/- and in August £19/10/8d; while from June no out-payments were made to the poor. There are no records of course, but one wonders the effect on widow Clark of the Tithing with five children who lost 10/- a month, on John Stratford, blind, and Ann Mellard, 90 years old, both of Chalford who lost 4/- a month and on Richard Casey, bedridden, of Minchinhampton with his 80 year-old wife who lost 7/- a month. Those are only a few of the 46 in receipt of out-payment whose lives, until the Poor Rate was settled, must have been one of miserable anxiety.

And they had a seemingly endless wait. The Vestry did not meet again until July 24th and promptly adjourned to the 26th and again to the 29th. This suggests that the 'commissioners' were finding it difficult to get the information they sought, On November 20th the Vestry held a public meeting in the Crown Inn and agreed for "avoiding further difficulties and delays" that "the following seven be Chosen as a Committee for making and settling the said Rate upon the most equitable and just Proportion as they judge shall be most reasonable". The seven were Thomas Deverell, Nathaniel Perks, Samuel Whitmore, Samuel Heaven, Joseph Mayor, James Chambers, junior, and John Clift. Now a solution was in sight. On January 15th 1759 the charges for lands were agreed. On April 4th the Vestry accepted the Quarter Sessions order and at Easter 1759 the new Overseers, Thomas Saunders, Daniel Day and John Isles, levied a rate now no longer at a monthly value, but at 3/6d in the £. It is difficult to assess the impact of the charge on individual ratepayers. The number liable to rates increased - the Town list shows 25 new names. Some paid more - the Rev. Philip Sheppard, assessed at 7/3d a month paid £43/10/- in 1757, £43 in 1759 and a further £5/11/7d in 1759. John Blackwell, assessed at 9d paid £4/10/-- in 1757, nothing in 1758 and £6/7/4d in 1759; while John Fowler assessed at 3d paid £1/10/- in 1757, nothing in 1758 and only 9/7d in 1759.

So the revolt was over. But the vestry was not clear of trouble. In April 1759 Samuel Sheppard appealed to quarter Sessions that his rate was too high and that his woods should not be chargeable. In July 1760 the verdict came. The charge of £13/2/6d on his houses and tenements was too high and should be £9/7/6d and no more. As to the woods, Sessions found he had 250 acres of woods, with no coppice; much beech was cut for firewood at 23/- to 26/- a cord; and such wood was 30 to 80 years old and 10 to 20 ins, square. It was sold also for gun stocks, saddle trees, cardboard and building and pigs ran in the woods. They found therefore that the woods were not liable to Poor Rate by law and the Vestry lost £11/1/-.

Sources:

Minchinhampton Overseers Accounts 1734 - 1759 GRO 217a OV 2/1.
Minchinhampton Vestry Minutes 1756 - 1771 GRO 217a VE 2/5

VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN MINCHINHAMPTON - AS SEEN IN THE PAGES OF THE PARISH MAGAZINE

Mrs. Sue Smith

In 1879 Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton, issued its first own Parish Magazine. At first it was published with a national magazine 'Home Words' but gradually more and more local news was included. It is from these monthly accounts of happenings in the Parish, in the years up to World War I, that we can gain an insight into the lives of the ordinary people of the Town. In this first selection I have concentrated upon the celebrations of the period.

ROYAL OCCASIONS

Jubilees, Royal Weddings and Coronations provided an excuse for a celebration in the Town. In the days before deep freezers and refrigerators there were marvellous feasts prepared for the participants.

The celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee took place in 1887. On Monday 20th June all the children of the ecclesiastical Parish, between the ages of five and sixteen, were invited to a Jubilee Tea by Mr. & Mrs. Playne, at Longfords. Four hundred and seventy children assembled at the schools and after having a Jubilee Medal pinned on, formed up four abreast behind the Hampton Band and marched down amidst "a forest of flags" to the grounds of Longfords House, to be welcomed by the host and hostess.

Punch and Judy were there, and it is to be hoped that it was not taken too seriously as Punch "is a naughty old man and should be locked up in Nailsworth". "We are afraid we saw at least one Justice of the Peace actually laughing at him when he was beating his wife so cruelly". Tea followed the show and then everyone adjourned to the meadows for sports. Each child was given more refreshment before leaving and "with hearty cheers they all went home happy and grateful".

Jubilee Day was later in the week and started with the pealing of bells and a service of thanksgiving. On Camp Field a tent had been erected and beautifully decorated. Here 930 people were able to sit down for a meal, served by a small army of volunteers - 52 carvers, 104 waiters and 26 serving beer and lemonade. Mr. Baynes proposed the Loyal Toast, the National Anthem was sung and Hampton Band played. Later the volunteers sat down to their lunch, as sports were being enjoyed by many people. In the evening there was a torchlight procession to the Common, headed again by the Band, meeting at the bonfire, some 35ft. high. As 10.00 p.m. arrived the Rector lit the fire, by means of a long pole, and all around on the hilltops could be seen other beacon fires, and the sky was lit by signal rockets. "Let us hope that we shall not only be one on this day, but that we shall keep united and that we shall be known henceforth as 'Merry Hampton'. God Save the Queen".

Ten years later, on 22nd June 1897, the Diamond Jubilee was celebrated, a fact commemorated now by the clock on the Church tower. The organising committee had tried to arrange a programme to occupy everyone, from the youngest to the oldest inhabitant. The day was hot and fine, the streets were decorated and an illuminated star hung in the High Street. A free luncheon was provided for the over 60's, tea for the children and again there were sports and dancing. The Hampton Band took an important part, and the bells sounded again.

The torchlight procession met with another from Brimscombe at Tom Long's Post, and proceeded to the bonfire site. Those at Rodborough, May Hill and Malvern could be seen and "it was nearly eleven before these hill fires abated."

Queen Victoria died in 1901, and the Coronation of her grandson, Edward and Alexandra was planned for June 1902. However, the King fell ill, and the actual ceremony had to be postponed. In Hampton, like so many small towns and villages the plans for festivities were at an advanced stage, and the King let it be known that he wished all these to go ahead. Thus, the schools were closed from 23rd to 30th June, and although the bells remained silent, and the bunting was put away, the children enjoyed a tea, with 500 adults sitting down an hour later. The traditional bonfire was lit by Mr. Ricardo on 30th June, and was "a fine sight, a token of joy for the King's recovery."

On August 9th the Coronation took place, and the bells were duly rung, and services held. Edward's reign lasted just nine years, and at his death, as a mark of respect, the Sunday School treat was cancelled.

HER MAJESTY'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

REJOICINGS AT MINCHINHAMPTON QUEEN'S DAY, JUNE 22nd.

PROGRAMME.

- 6.0 a.m. ROYAL SALUTE.
- 7.0 a.m. PEAL ON THE BELLS-also at intervals during the day.
- 11 to 12. TOWN BAND will play "God save the Queen" and a varied selection in the High Street.
- 1.0 p.m. FREE DINNER in the SCHOOLS to all inhabitants 60 years of age and above.
- 2.0 p.m. CHILDREN'S SPORTS in the CAMP FELD, among the events being a
MECHANISMS, MENTAL CALCULATIONS, PAIRWORK.
- 4.0 p.m. TEA FOR ALL CHILDREN in the Parish between the ages of 4 and 14, and Presentation of Medals in the Schools.
- 5.0 p.m. FOOT RACES, TUGS OF WAR, BICYCLE RACES, JUMPING COMPETITIONS, SACK and OBSTACLE RACES, as per Programme.

N.B.--All Competitors must give in their Names at the Cricket Pavilion before One o'clock.

DANCING WILL FOLLOW THE SPORTS.

- 9.0 p.m. AN IMPOSING TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION will start from the Market Place, and headed by the Band, march to Tom Long's Post, where it will meet the Brimscombe Procession at 9.40.
- 10.0 p.m. BEACON FIRE, which is included in the Government List, will be Lighted

July 11th 1911. was the Coronation Day for George and Queen Mary. Unlike its predecessors, the day was wet, with frequent heavy showers. In Minchinhampton the day started with 8.00 a.m.

Communion, followed by the pealing of bells. Just before noon there was much amusement caused by a parade of animals walking in line from the Market Square to the Park, led by the Town Band and flanked by outriders in fancy dress, for which prizes were awarded.

At 1.30 p.m. the Union Flag was hoisted on the Park, the sports were held and the children entertained to tea in the Schools. This year 800 adults sat down to a meal in a tent on the Park, and the day finished with the traditional bonfire.

Just three years later the rejoicing had turned to horror at the outbreak of war.

PATRIOTIC CONCERTS

Even before World War I, the people of Minchinhampton had been exposed to the realities of a country at war. The outbreak of war with South Africa in 1898 (Boer War) brought patriotic fever to a high pitch. The girls in the school were told to include national slogans in their samplers, and several examples of these still exist. On January 15th 1900 a Patriotic Concert was held in aid of the War Fund, and the sum of £11.9s.11d. was raised. Of the 48 volunteers from the Town, 25 were called up for service.

Empire Day was celebrated in great style in the Edwardian era. On May 23rd 1906, the school assembled at 10.00 a.m. in the playground and the flag was hoisted. The National Anthem and 'Flag of Britain' were sung. The children then marched to the Market Square where Robert Sparkes read Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. The children then sang 'Rule Britannia'. After this the Patriotic Address was given, in this particular year by Major Ricardo. The boys then sang 'Union Jack' (possibly the same song as previously sung at school; there seems confusion about the name of the flag and the song!). Finally, everyone joined in the singing of the National Anthem before keeping the rest of the day as a holiday.

It seems Empire Day in Minchinhampton was celebrated in much the same form for many years.

LONGFORDS SHOW

Another important point in the Victorian calendar was the Longfords Show, held under the auspices of the Playne Family. In 1886 the Longford Valley Horticultural and Industrial Society extended an invitation to the children of the Parish to exhibit their needlework. This was later extended to allow cooking and dried flower arrangements by members of the Girls Friendly Society. When Miss Playne was speaking at the prize-giving for the cookery she commented, "good cooking is far more important than some of our cottagers seem to think"!

By 1889 the Show had grown to include 1600 exhibits, and three years later the Cheltenham Band was engaged to play at the proceedings. In 1894 it was decided to limit the show to cottagers only, but the festivities extended well into the evening, as the grounds were illuminated, and there were fireworks by the lake. "Everyone trudges home; even the children were tired."

The summer of 1896 was hot and dry, but the Show was still held. There was the added attraction of a bicycle tournament and "a display of fireworks seldom seen outside Crystal Palace". Children from the Infant School gave a display of Maypole Dancing and the needlework from the older girls was much commended.

This is just a small selection of some of the 'high days and holidays' with which the people of Hampton amused themselves. At times life must have seemed hard, with the threat of illness and hardship a burden for many families to bear, and yet within the community there were the opportunities for enjoyment and laughter.

ONE MAN'S WAR

Iris and Stan Dyer

In 1914, at the tender age of 17, George Ellins, a native of Minchinhampton, lied about his age and applied fourteen times to Join the army, before he was finally accepted into the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment. After training he was sent to France to fight in the trenches - and "over the top". In 1917 he received injuries to his face and back, but after regaining his health and strength(?) he returned to the Front.

He was again wounded, this time in his left leg and was taken prisoner. George never complained about being wounded or being taken prisoner - after all it was war - but he never forgave the German soldier who robbed him of his last packet of fags whilst lying wounded in "no-mans-land". He was taken to a prisoner -of-war camp in Stendal, Germany, where unfortunately, the leg wound turned gangrenous so he was taken with some urgency to the camp M.O. The following day, the Canadian N.C.O. in charge of the billet gave George the bad news that his leg was to be amputated, to which he replied, "Why didn't they take the blooming thing off whilst I was up there?" "Because we have to build your strength up first" replied the N.C.O. So it was that George lived like a king for a few days on eggs and meat etc. before the inevitable operation. As it was clear that he was no longer suitable for "gun-fodder", George was repatriated in an exchange of prisoners deal, set up by the Red Cross.

On arrival back in Britain he sold his kit, reported it stolen and got away with that! He should have gone to a hospital in Liverpool, but he swapped identity papers with another casualty who was due to go to Frenchay -he got away with that too, blaming what must have been an "administrative error"!

Years later when someone remarked that he must have "gone through the mill" he declared that he enjoyed the adventure, and he probably did being George Ellins! His brother Frederick lost his life in the fighting whilst other brother Johnnie was awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry.

George never bore any malice towards the Germans and was grateful to the M.O. for making a good job of his amputation - but the rotter who stole his packet of Woodbines was never forgiven. Despite his handicap, George later married Minnie Gosling, had two daughters Poppy and Iris, and lived life to the full. Despite being almost a chain-smoker he lived until his 87th year R.I.P.

MINCHINHAMPTON AT WAR

1914 TO 1918

Mrs. Sue Smith

The Rector wrote in a letter to the Parish in September 1914 "*That he deplored the state of unreadiness we found ourselves in - but it could have been worse. Do not store food or rush out and take all your money out of the bank. It is very probable that the outrages we have heard about the Germans are exaggerated and so don't let us be anxious. about any wounded or prisoners who may fall into their hands*". By October, however, "*unfortunately fuller knowledge now shows Germany waging war with ferocity towards Belgium and France and the same condition would prevail here if we do not have victory*".

By the middle of 1915 the Basses in the choir were slowly being depleted as the men continued to be called up. Every month the dead were listed in a Roll of Honour and muffled peal of bells was always rung when death was announced.

Food quickly became scarce and lessons were given in cooking, gardening, keeping goats and bees, and making something useful out of waste material. The Parish Council bought a potato sprayer which could be hired. An order went out later that men employed in keeping lawns and pleasure grounds trimmed must please help with the harvest!

Insuring the Church against air attack cost £12.10s. per year and a special collection was taken towards this amount. By 1918 there were restrictions on fuel for heating and lighting in the Church, so only half would be lit - at this time, of course, lighting was by gas.

Collecting and fundraising towards the war effort must have taken up all the parishioners spare time and energy. The Minchinhampton Patriotic Fund was formed in October 1914 and continued raising money throughout wartime. Parcels were sent centrally through the Red Cross, but others were sent to every local man. Parcels contained socks, shirts, belt, pins, bootlaces, buttons, pencils, paper, rubber pillow and at Christmas a book and a card. During the four years parcels were sent to 1549 men, and a further 1151 articles of clothing.

The Voluntary Aid Detachments of Minchinhampton and Nailsworth were combined. The Chestnuts at Balls Green was turned into a hospital and every week hampers of food were collected at the Gables on Well Hill and sent down to the 17 wounded. The school children also collected for this cause, and the Sunday school gave up their prizes and the money was used to buy comforts for the troops.

As part of the National Egg Collection, Mr. Hughes of the High Street arranged to pack and despatch any eggs on Friday and send them to London. The gassed men needed the eggs, which could also be left at the Gables. Working parties met twice a week to make slippers from old carpet and felt and these were sent to France and Serbia as well as to hospitals in England. By the end of the war 3160 slippers had been made. Mrs. Bateman was pleased to receive any scraps of kid or soft leather, as there was a use for old leather gloves - making windproof waistcoats for airmen and other defenders exposed to severe weather.

At Longfords Mrs. Playne very kindly gave two rooms which became the Longfords War Hospital Supply Depot. Meetings were held twice a week. Goods were sent to London and then on to France, Flanders, Malta and Egypt. By the end of March 1916 the articles dispatched included:

4790 roller bandages
2720 gauze sponges
32 limb pillows

The Rev. Sears actually went to war to run a YMCA for the troops and he wrote regularly during his year on active service. He describes action by "Fritz" - bombing, searchlights and anti-aircraft guns, admitting on such nights that quiet Minchinhampton had its points of advantage. He was criticised in the Parish for taking a year "out" but wrote a very strong letter to his parishioners saying he felt this was the best way he could help the war effort.

In 1918 the Rector writes "*St. Martin's Day 1918 will rank as one of the great days in history*". Names were still being added to the Roll of Honour, and the men of Minchinhampton received the following awards:

- 3 Distinguished Service Order
- 4 Military Cross
- 4 Mentioned in Despatches
- 1 R.A.F. Medal
- 3 Military Medal



By 1921 the War Memorials in the Parish had been completed and are as follows:

The old font was restored by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson of Hyde in memory of their oldest son who fell at Gallipoli.

The Calvary in the Churchyard was offered by Mrs Lawrence in memory of both her sons, and all the men who fell from Minchinhampton and Box.

The Rood Screen in the Church cost £500, raised as a memorial by Church members.

The Town War Memorial was built at a cost of £1236.13s.3d. - a huge sum of money in 1921. Some of this was donated by the Australians who had been stationed in the Town.

REFERENCE

All information obtained from copies of the Parish Magazine.

MINCHINHAMPTON IN THE 1930's

John Cooper

The aim of the exhibit at the 1995 exhibition was to set the scene by comparing the town in the 1930s with Minchinhampton today. It outlined the many and varied activities in the three main streets, High Street, West End and Tetbury Street, and with the aid of aerial photographs illustrated the extent of the post-war development, both public and private. It concluded with a series of photographs showing places and people in the 1930s.

The comparison of aerial photographs and large-scale maps shows that Minchinhampton in the 1930s was comparatively compact with many fields quite close to the centre in Glebe Farm and Park Farm, for instance. Post-war developments have greatly increased both the size and population of the town; the population of the civil parish increasing from 3,753 in 1931 to 5,163 in 1982.

The building of council estates was started in the Tynings and Box Crescent before the war, but these were extended later, and the large Glebe Estate was developed from the mid-1950s onwards. Private housing also grew rapidly, including Blueboys Park (1950s), the large Cotswold Park and Beacon Park sites (1960s), Besbury Park in the late 1960s and more recently smaller sites at Highcroft and Dr. Crawford's Close. Many individual houses were also built in the post-war years.

In addition to the expansion of housing, the post-war period also saw the provision of many new public facilities, often replacing old buildings. The old Primary School, built in 1868, was demolished in 1968 and the modern school built nearby; a new Rectory replaced the large older rectory (The Priest's House). In the 1930s surgeries were held by Dr. Brown at Highcroft and by Dr. Roberts at the Close in Well Hill, but in the 1970s a large, new surgery block was built within the old walled garden in Bell Lane. The Library which formerly occupied space in the Minchinhampton Institute in Tetbury Street is now accommodated in purpose-built premises also within the walled garden. The old Police Station in West End, which is now a private house, was replaced by the present Police Houses in Butt Street in the 1950s.

Provision for the elderly has also been an important feature of the post-war years. The old farm buildings of Park Farm, used in part as a coal depot in the 1930s, have been tastefully converted to the flats of Park Farm Court, and Simmonds builders yard in West End to the sheltered housing of Simmonds Court. George Pearce House formed a central feature of the Glebe Estate, whilst more recent additions include Cecily Court and the Minchinhampton Centre for the Elderly at Horsefall House. Stuart House, another old rectory, used for billeting troops during the war, was opened as a day centre for the disabled in the early 1980s and extended in 1990, the same year that the Cotswold Care Hospice opened in Burleigh Lane. Nor were the young forgotten. The well-appointed Youth Centre and its associated sports facilities were built in the 1960s in the former grounds of Stuart House.

Kelly's Trades Directory for Gloucestershire for 1939 shows a wide range of professional and commercial activities in the town. Thanks to the kind help of Mr. Clifford Hooper and Mr. Frank Simmonds it has been possible to locate details of these in the three main streets - High Street, West End and Tetbury Street.

Many of these activities still continue in 1995. The chemist's shop, two butchers and the outfitters at the Cross still continue on the same sites, as do the Post Office and the stationers in West End. Others, however, have disappeared or been reduced in number. In 1939, for instance, there were five inns in the town the Crown, the Ram, the Salutation, the Swan and the Trumpet - now only

the Crown remains. There were six grocers or provision dealers, now only two remain. Hughes Store in the High Street is now Arden House, Walkers Stores forms the office of Yew Tree Properties, whilst the Stroud Co-operative Society's store in West End is now a private house. Walkers Cycle Shop in the High Street is now occupied by the Coffee Bean and the smithy in Tetbury Street has been converted into flats. Neither of the two bakers, nor the two shoe repairers, now remain. Of the two builders yards in West End, Simmonds' Yard has been converted, as previously mentioned, and Daniels' Yard is now a private house.

Photographs of the 1930s illustrate a much quieter town with only a few cars and no parking problems. A pony and trap was still a common form of transport. There was a regular bus service to Stroud and railway stations at Chalford, Brimscombe and Nailsworth, but much travel was by foot or bicycle. It was not until the 1950s that the buildings by Parson's Court, behind the Ram, were demolished to provide much needed parking space.

The town had an active social life, based on the church and the chapel, and on the Minchinhampton Institute and the British Legion Club (now the Cotswold Club), together with a wide range of sporting activities. Photographs of the choir, the cricket and football clubs and of the children in the school in the 1930s, brought back vivid memories of the time to many who visited the exhibition.

INVASION AS FEARED, 1942

Mrs. D. Wall

The fall of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain brought the threat of invasion close to the shores of Great Britain. For the first time in our history, the majority of the British people could feel themselves personally threatened. How did this affect a small community like Minchinhampton, on top of the Cotswolds, well away from the English Channel.

Much of the answer is provided by the War Book, produced by the Minchinhampton Invasion Committee in 1942, preserved with copy and appendix, by the Parish Council. I have not looked at War Books for other villages, but ours provides a highly detailed account of precautions and preparations for an invasion - even down to an inventory of household items like bedpans that could be provided by townsfolk for use in Rest Centres!

The Home Guard were asked to identify the probable course an invasion would take. In a letter to the Invasion Committee from Capt. C. R. Brown, Second-in-Command, 'B' Company, Home Guard, he thought it probable that the major German attack for the area would be directed at Aston Down Airfield, the nearest important military objective, and "if these preliminary attacks were successful the enemy might signal for airborne reinforcements. Troop carrying planes require more space for landing and would probably choose the common between Amberley and Minchinhampton. Here again the general movement would be eastwards, and Minchinhampton or its approaches would almost certainly become involved in fighting, as the town lies in the direct path of the hostile operation envisaged."

If the worst happened, and invasion of the area occurred, the Home Guard would of course come to 'Action Stations' There were 184 Home Guard personnel of all ranks in 1942, but twenty of these were employed on essential war work and would not report immediately. There were four platoons in the 'B' Coy. and these would be backed up by Police and Civil Defence personnel.

An extract of the Secret Orders for the Operational Role of the Home Guard states that the duty of

the Company is “the defence in depth outwards of the Western and South Western perimeters of Aston Down Aerodrome.” On receipt of the order to ‘Action Stations’ the intentions were:

- (a) to man observation posts
- b to “occupy the line BESBURY COMMON -BLUE BOYS - MINCHINHAMPTON - HAMPTON GREEN - HALFWAY HOUSE - with one platoon based on GATCOMBE LODGE to cover the dead ground S. W. of Aston Down.”
- (c) to prepare for the “destruction of Petrol Pumps, with the exception of those in Minchinhampton, which will be maintained for our own use until the last moment,”

The observation post was the church tower, where two men were to be positioned. It was suggested that there be “a connecting link on the ground to take verbal or written messages dropped from the tower.”

The tower could form another link in the call to ‘Action Stations’. Major J. Davidson, the Officer commanding the Minchinhampton Company would probably pass on the order from H.Q. through his chain of command (detailed in the War Book) but “any man who, himself, sees not less than 25 enemy parachutists descending in or near the Company area will cause the church bells to be rung at Minchinhampton, Amberley and Rodborough. Church bells will not be rung on hearsay evidence, nor will they be rung because other church bells are heard. The ringing of church bells in the Company area is equivalent to an order to man action stations.”

Thus we can envisage, by means of a direct command, or by hearing the church bells, at other times silent, that the men of the Home Guard would assume their responsibilities. No.1 Platoon, who had their headquarters at the British Legion, which also served as Company H.Q. would “man all defence posts covering Road Blocks in Minchinhampton.” evidence of one road block can still be seen in the posts and rings along Tobacconist Road. “One Lewis Gun team will be in reserve at Company H.Q. evidently ready to move to any point in the defences which may be hard-pressed.” Two men would be dispatched to the church tower, another two to the Ragged Cot to form a contact patrol with Aston Down, the stretcher-bearers would be at H.Q. and guides would “be stationed in front of the Post Office”

Thus the first stage of the invasion is complete. Orders and preparations appear very thorough, and the military training of the Home Guard would hopefully have won the day. But what of the civilian population, should an invasion take place, either here or further afield? That is the next topic to explore.

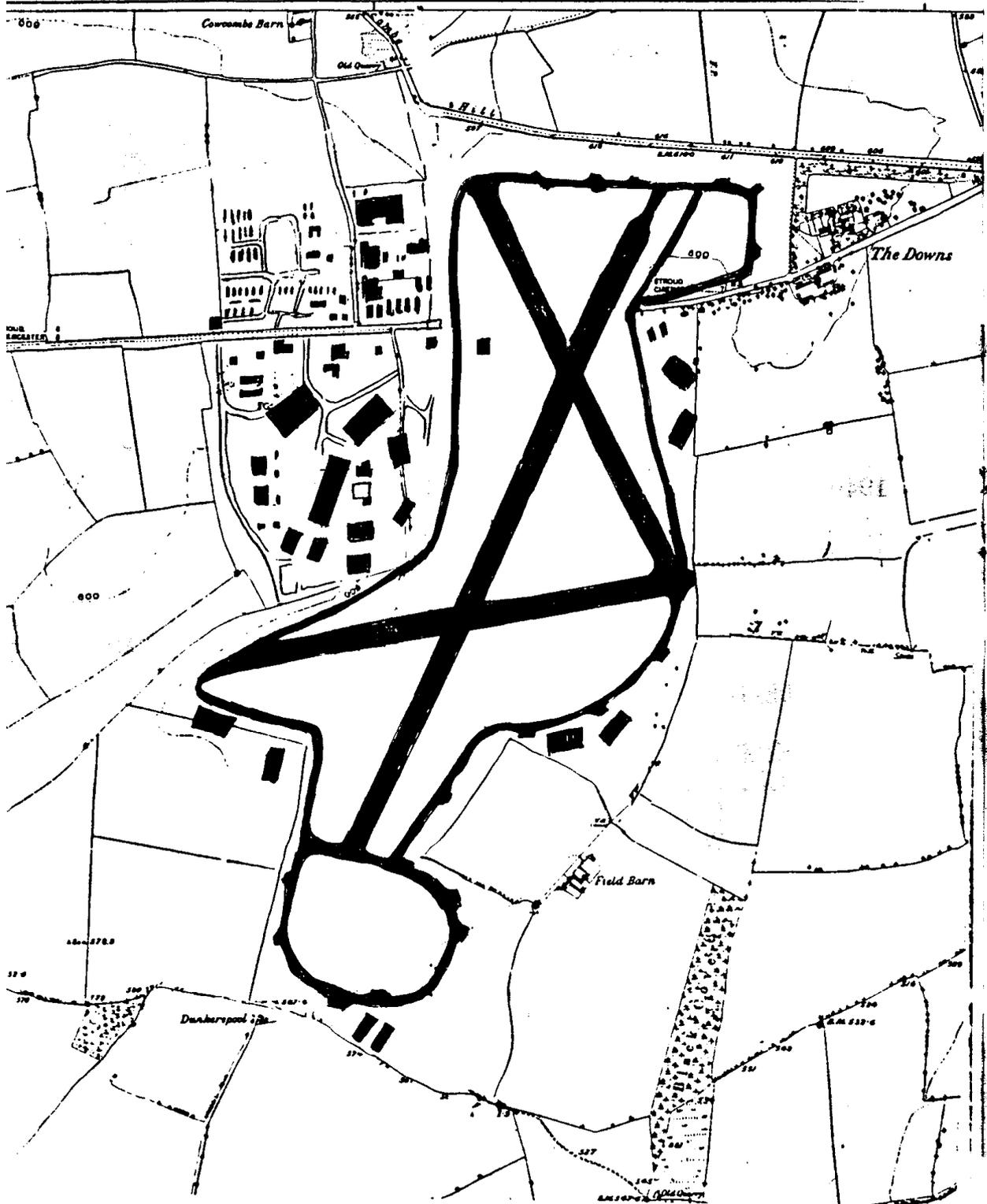
R. A. F. ASTON DOWN IN WARTIME

Mrs. Diana Wall

In March 1935 the Luftwaffe was formed in Germany by Adolf Hitler, a move viewed seriously by the R. A. F. who in turn planned a major expansion to 75 squadrons. The powers that be looked to former locations of airfields, to factories and to new sites in Gloucestershire, and on 12th October 1938 Aston Down Airfield was opened.

Within the boundaries of the new airfield lay the whole of the World War I Minchinhampton Aerodrome, which had played host to the Australian Flying Corps in 1918-1919. Some of the old buildings were adapted for new uses, but the early hangars had been of canvas and had been removed in 1920, so the firm of Wilson Lovatt and Sons Ltd. were engaged to build the W Type hangars, which can still be seen today.

Wartime Aston Down Airfield



The new airfield was to be much larger than its predecessor, so land was requisitioned to the south, part of Aston Farm. The Minchinhampton to Cirencester road was blocked off, allowing a runway extension. The grass runway was not replaced by concrete until 1941, and for most of its operational life construction work was being carried out. Accommodation was only provided slowly; in 1940 W.A.A.F. lavatories were built, alongside a lecture room and an armoury. The final airfield included several dispersal sites, as well as administration buildings, workshops and accommodation for personnel.

Throughout the war Aston Down fulfilled two main functions — that of aircraft maintenance and operational training. No. 20 Maintenance Unit, or M.U., were the first to occupy the base and their role throughout the conflict ensured the maximum number of planes were available for frontline squadrons. At first work was mainly on fighter aircraft, but later this was extended to bombers, both British and American. Apart from engine servicing, work was carried out in painting camouflage, electrical installation and modifying aircraft for tours in the Middle East. Many of the personnel had been recruited from peacetime skilled occupations; for example, the Western Electric Company provided many of the electricians. Female workers were especially skilled in instrument repair, and worked on the wiring looms of Typhoons. Many also installed the early forms of radar in Lancasters and Mitchells. Civilian female workers were often billeted in Minchinhampton and surrounding villages.

Accommodation was a problem when the first Operational Training Unit (O.T.U.) came to Aston Down in August 1939. The George Hotel at Nailsworth became an Officers Mess; twelve officers also lived there, for which the Air Ministry paid six shillings a day! O.T.U.s had evolved after the Munich Crisis of 1938, when Mobilisation Pools were formed. 55 O.T.U. and 52 O.T.U. were the main units on Aston Down during the war, and the latter set up a satellite airfield at Chedworth in 1942. Both units also regularly used Babdown Airfield, near Tetbury.

In the days up to the Battle of Britain there was a shortage of fighter pilots and aircraft so the training took place on Gloster Gladiators, Harvards and Blenheims. By 1941 both Spitfires and Hurricanes were available on Aston Down for training purposes, along with two-seat Miles Master aircraft. In the build—up to the invasion of France a Tactical Exercise Unit was formed at Aston Down, which taught ground attack techniques, very necessary for the move into France. These pilots were equipped with older Hurricanes, but also the faster Typhoons and Mustangs.

Sadly, as with all O.T.U.'s, accidents were common, and a full list of incidents is to be found in "Wings over Gloucestershire" by John Rennison. In 1941 a nursing orderly, L.A.C. Payne rescued the pilot of a Miles Master, which had caught fire after a heavy landing, at considerable personal risk, and was later awarded the George Cross. The worst crash was late in the conflict, in 1945, when a Typhoon crashed onto a Nissan Hut, killing the pilot and two ground personnel, and injuring fifteen others. Many other crashes were less serious, and rapid repairs kept the maximum number of aircraft in the skies at any one time.

Many nationalities were trained in the O.T.U.s of Aston Down. In 1940 a special squadron of Yugoslav pilots was trained and equipped with Blenheim bombers, later acquitting themselves well in the Balkan campaigns. Others found on the station included Chinese, Canadians, Rhodesians and Americans serving with the R.A.F. Some of the more extrovert trainees attempted to fly under the Severn railway bridge, en route to the firing ranges of the Bristol Channel, with varying degrees of success!

Aston Down was considered to be fairly safe from enemy attack, although regular inspections of camouflage were carried out, and a dummy field, or Z site, was constructed at Horsley to confuse the Luftwaffe. Only one real "near miss" occurred, in 1942, when a bomb fell on Gypsy Lane, leaving a large, deep crater. This relative safety attracted other units to the base during wartime - No. 9 Ferry Pool, engaged in the delivery of frontline aircraft, 81 Group Communications Flight, and an Ambulance Flight in 1944. A year earlier, a flight of Mitchell Bombers of 180 Sqn. spent a month on the airfield.

During the war years even the Food Effort was supported, with activities like pig—rearing and hay making, with sheep grazing the more remote parts of the field. The preparation for the Normandy Invasion saw a brief increase in activity, but after V. E. Day Aston Down was to take on another role. It became a gathering place for surplus aircraft. Lancasters, Typhoons and other marques were

broken up. Spare parts, Jigs and machine tools from all over the country were sold off for scrap. The task of overseeing all this work was given to 20 M.U.(Maintenance Unit), who for so long had worked to keep the aircraft aloft. It was a rather ignominious end to a distinguished wartime career for a non-frontline R.A.F. base.

THE HOME FRONT

Mrs. Sue Smith

As the first siren sounded on the 3rd September 1939, few women realised how their lives would be changed in the next five years. Feeding, clothing and heating their families was going to take all their ingenuity.

Blackout of the home started straight away, but the first Christmas was one of plenty and held out no promise of the spartan Christmases to come. Food rationing was introduced in January 1940 and cod liver oil tablets and orange juice were handed out to supplement the diet. Rabbits became popular on the menu, and home grown vegetables, fruit and livestock if possible, were additions to the household. Produce from the garden was salted, preserved and the fruit was made into jam. With a ration of one shell egg, per person, per week, the use of dried egg in cooking became common-place. The population was urged by Potato Pete to eat more vegetables and in actual fact the health of the nation improved. Many of the recipes issued by the Ministry of Food were very tasty, and would be quite acceptable today.

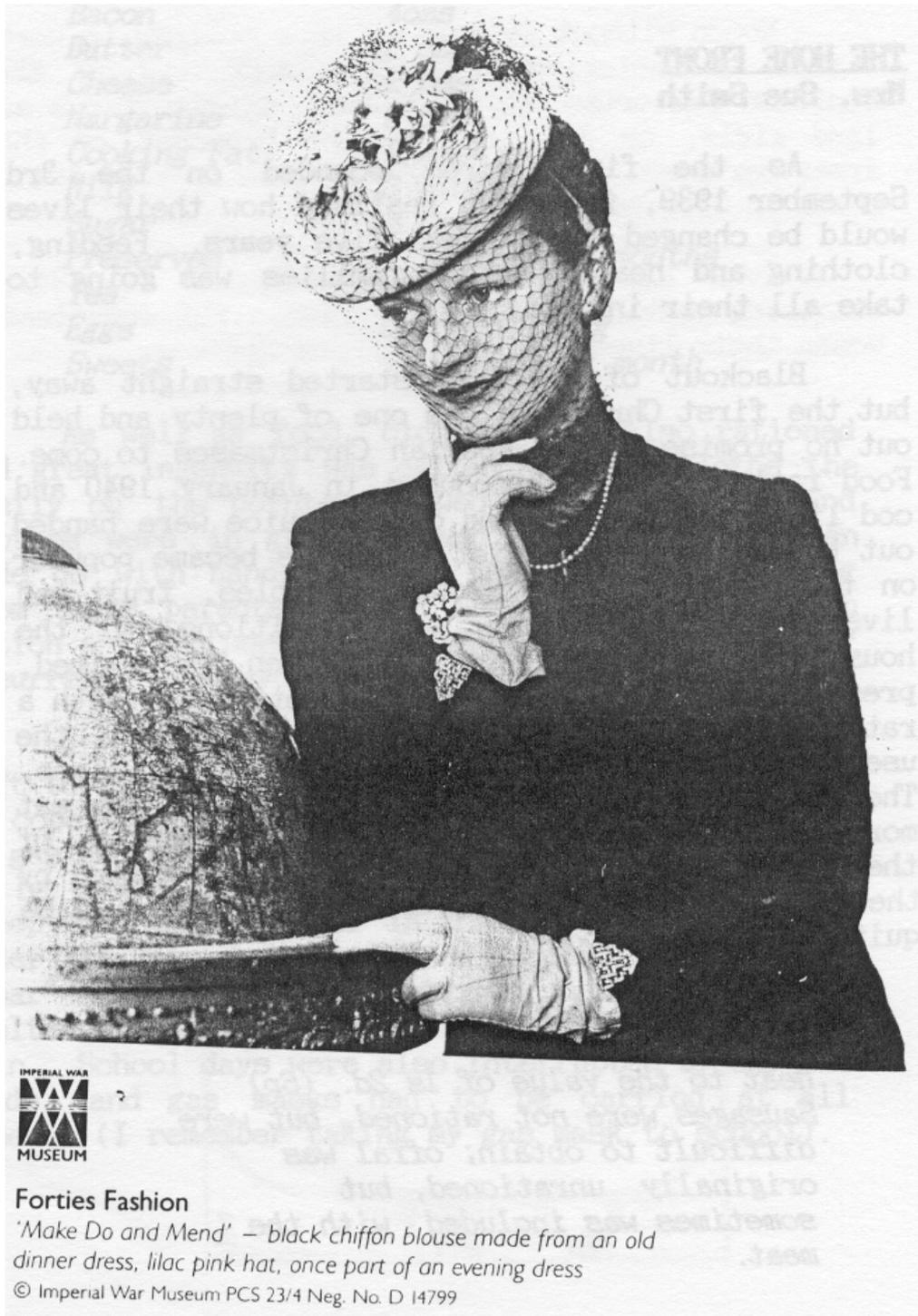


ADULT WEEKLY RATION

Meat to the value of 1s. 2d. (6p)

Sausages were not rationed, but were difficult to obtain; offal was originally unrationed, but sometimes was included with the meat.

Bacon	4 ozs	Sugar	8 ozs
Butter	2 ozs	Preserves	1 lb every 2 months
Cheese	2 ozs	Tea	2 ozs
Margarine	2 ozs	Eggs	One shell egg
Cooking Fat	2 ozs	Sweets	12 ozs every month
Milk	3 pints		



Forties Fashion

'Make Do and Mend' – black chiffon blouse made from an old dinner dress, lilac pink hat, once part of an evening dress

© Imperial War Museum PCS 23/4 Neg. No. D 14799

As well as food, clothes were also rationed and great ingenuity was called upon to clothe the family on the points allowed. Good second-hand clothes were in great demand, so children often made do with hand-me-downs and recycled clothing from their parents. Soap and coal were also on ration and the weekly family bath became a regular occurrence - everyone sharing the same water.

With their men away fighting many women were left to cope at home alone, and, as well as having to cope with the shortages, very often the supply of gas and electricity would fail and the meals had to be cooked on an open fire. Nights of broken sleep were spent either in the Anderson shelter or under the stairs awaiting the sound of the "All Clear". Many city women returned from the communal shelter after an air raid to find their homes in ruin. School days were also interrupted by daytime raids, and gas masks had to be carried at all times. (I remember taking my gas mask to school).

Women without dependents were obliged to work either in factories doing war work, as in the munition factories at Quedgeley, on the farms as land girls, or join one of the branches of the armed services. Many "outsiders" came to make their homes in Gloucestershire in this way.

Even after peace was declared in 1945, rationing continued for many years. For countless women their lives had been changed for ever.

WARTIME VISITORS TO MINCHINHAMPTON

Stan and Iris Dyer

In the build-up to the War, in January 1939, Local Authorities were asked to draw up plans for the evacuation of children from vulnerable areas. On September 2nd of that year a group of 500 children from Birmingham came to the Stroud area, some of them to Minchinhampton. During the "Phoney War" many drifted back to the cities, but after the fall of Dunkirk the threat of invasion became very real, and in June 1940 the area played host to over 700 school pupils from Walton-on-the-Naze and Clacton-on-Sea in Essex. Some, with their own teachers, were made welcome at Brimscombe Polytechnic, but other, younger visitors were incorporated into the rolls of Minchinhampton and Amberley Schools.

There were other overseas visitors as well. In 1944 U.S. forces of the General H.Q. Company set up camp on the Great Park, with an array of tents, huts and roads. For a few months the preparations for Operation Overlord, the invasion of mainland Europe, took place in the Cotswolds. G.I.'s, aircrew and even prisoners-of-war were visitors to our small town.

We found it a most enjoyable task getting in touch with the evacuees, and G.I. Berardelli for the exhibition, and we'd like to tell you how it all began.

We first heard of evacuees Patricia and Marjorie Thomas when Stan's brother sent him a copy of the Birmingham Evening Mail showing a photograph of Minchinhampton Parochial School in 1939 with these two sisters on it when they were evacuated to Minchinhampton and stayed with Eva and Jesse Kirby in Well Hill. This we followed up by visiting Jesse, who put us in touch with them; the end result was the lovely tribute they wrote for the exhibition.

Deborah Spiers had lodged with Mary Amor in West End and was a name Iris knew, although not

her whereabouts. Monica Bond in Windmill Road (who married into the Amor family) contacted Maureen Sears (that was her maiden name) who let us have Deborah's address. When we rang to ask for photographs, we had a nice friendly chat and she too was delighted with what we were doing.

Evacuees from Walton-on-the-Maze, Eva Wyatt and the Wilby's had earlier answered advertisements in the Clacton press, sent by Stan and Sheila Bruton on the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of war, so these were easy to contact. The Wilby's tape inspired us to narrate all the other letters as well, so that those with poor eyesight could listen rather than try to read what was on our stands. Making the tape was great fun. Amateurish we admit, but fun all the same, especially when Mr. Schwatz recorded Phil Berardelli's letter with a genuine American accent.

G.I. Phil was contacted through articles in 'The Citizen' which alerted Geoffrey Ellins in Kent. Eventually Phil was written to in Pittsburg. He was thrilled and delighted to be asked to contribute to our exhibition, hence the interesting and quite moving report which we had on display.

Pilot Officer Oren Noah's story came to light literally at the last moment when talking to Poppy Cooke and John Trowill who happened to mention it. A hasty phone call to Harry and Jean Trowill at Chalford and we were invited over to be told the whole story and willingly lent the press cuttings.

The German prisoner-of-war Edmund Bastin was a post-war experience of the Ellins family in the Institute (now the Church Centre). A very shy young man, he had no desire to fight in a war but just wanted to get back home. We came to know him through our lodger Jesse Brown who had Edmund working under him in the canteen at Aston Down. Jesse was allowed to bring him to the Baptist Chapel and George and Minnie Ellins invited him to several meals, and befriended him.

We enjoyed the exhibition immensely, especially meeting so many people who used to live in Minchinhampton and who were interested in all there was to see. Everyone seemed most appreciative, and the feed—back has been most encouraging. We felt quite nostalgic by the end of the weekend, and didn't really want to dismantle anything, wishing it could have stayed up for another week!

[This article was written following an exhibition entitled "When Grandad was a Boy" which was staged by the Local History Group in 1995]

VICTORY!

VE-DAY CELEBRATIONS IN STROUD DISTRICT” “THANKSGIVING AND REJOICING”

On Tuesday May 8th, VE-Day, the people of the Stroud District joined with millions of men and women in all parts of the British Empire in victory rejoicings.

In the surrounding towns and villages there were scenes of enthusiastic joy and thanksgiving. Hardly a building in the district was without its flags and streamers. Bonfires were lit on some of the hilltops. V-signs in electric lights and floodlighting in Stratford Park helped to turn night into day, and music could be heard everywhere”.

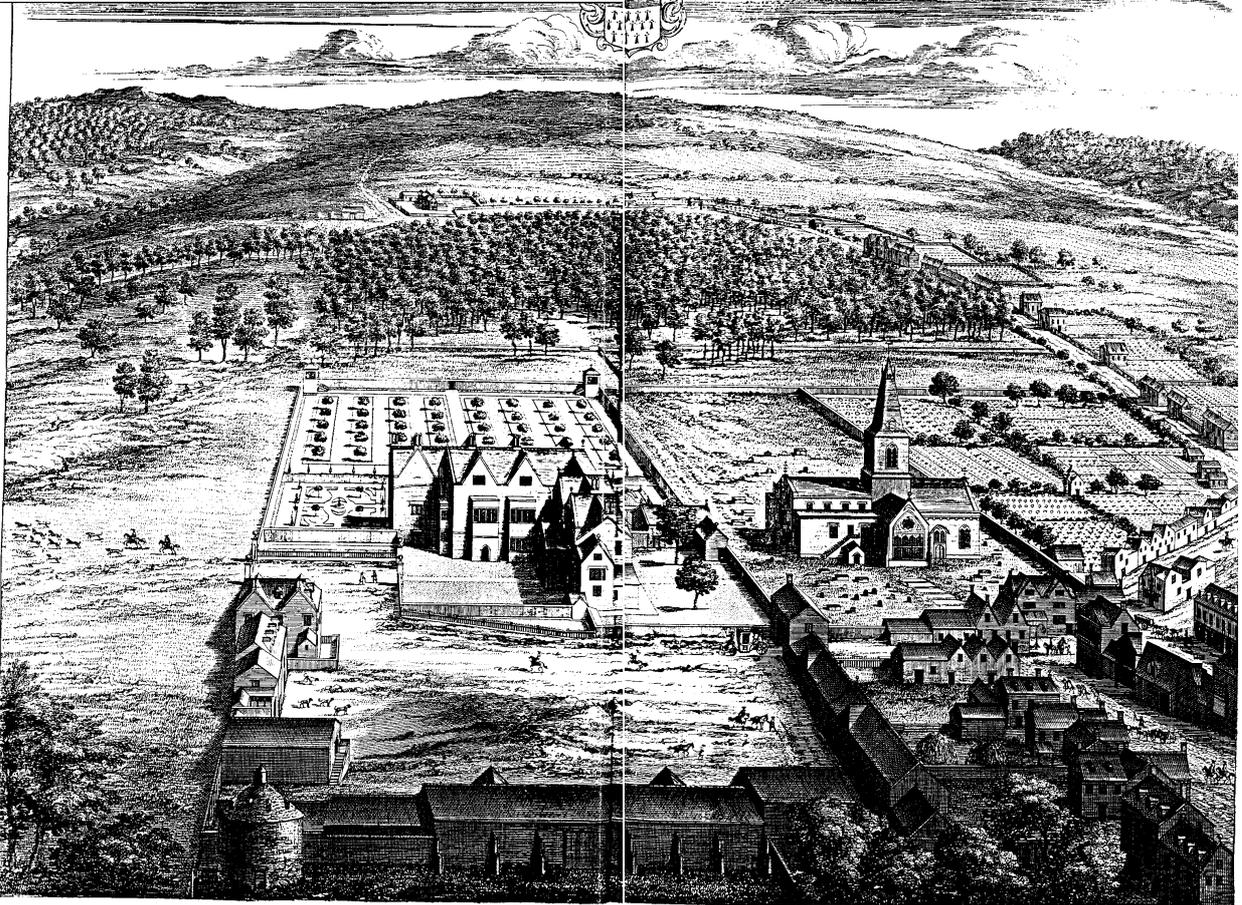
Stroud Journal Friday May 11th 1945

The celebrations in Minchinhampton were as joyful as elsewhere. A band of people with a barrel organ and monkey made an impromptu collection of £50 for a children’s tea and sports. A church service was held, and a bonfire lit in the Market Square.

Friday Street was decorated with beech boughs, renamed “Hero Street” and the oldest resident crowned “Queen of the Street” Chairs were put out, wine drunk from the barrel and a piano was produced for dancing.

In August the Town again celebrated, this time the Victory over Japan. Many residents donned fancy dress and entertained the children. In the evening a torchlight procession made its way to the Park where a bonfire was lit.

“From three o’clock, when the Prime Minister’s announcement of the end of hostilities was broadcast, until long after midnight, thousands of men, women and children danced and sang and cheered. Many broke away for a while to give thanks to God attending the special services in the Churches of the town, whilst others joined in a short service conducted from the balcony of the Holloway Institute, just prior to the King’s speech at 9 o clock.”



MINCHINHAMPTON 1712