Berkshire
Old and New

Number 22

BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

£2.95

Berkshire *Old and New*

Number 22 2005

Journal of the Berkshire Local History Association

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ISSN 0264 9950

Berkshire Local History Association
registered charity number 1097355
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Berkshire Local History Association was formed in 1976. Membership is open to individuals, societies and corporate bodies, such as libraries, schools, colleges, etc. The Association covers the whole area of the County of Berkshire, both pre and post 1974.

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Editor Dr J Burchardt
The editorial committee welcomes contributions of articles and reports for inclusion in forthcoming issues of the journal. Please contact Dr Jonathan Brown, Museum of English Rural Life, Redlands Road, Reading. RG1 5EX (e-mail j.h.brown@reading.ac.uk) for guidance on length and presentation before submitting a contribution.

Details of books or journals for inclusion in the bibliography section should be sent to David Cliffe, Local Studies Manager, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ.

The Association would like to express their thanks to all those who helped by assisting with the various stages of producing this issue of the journal.

The front cover illustration is Maidenhead Old Toll Gate.

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photograph © R. Hunter

Dr Judith Hunter OBE

This issue of *Berkshire Old and New* is dedicated to the memory of Dr Judith Hunter, the journal's first editor. I was lucky enough to become editor of *Berkshire Old and New* whilst Judith was still part of the editorial committee and was very much influenced by her ideas about the journal's role in the Association and in fostering local history in the county.

As Gillian Clark describes below, Judith was determined that the journal should embrace the whole county, defined to include both the historic pre-1974 boundaries and the areas added near her home town of Slough in 1974. Hence the title *Berkshire Old and New*. She always tried to ensure that there were articles from different parts of the county in each issue, ideally east and west, north and south. We hope that the present issue corresponds to this, with two countywide articles, another on Coleshill in the far west and one on Datchet in the extreme east. The articles also reflect some of Judith's many research interests, which included roads and the history of the Windsor area.

Judith placed considerable emphasis on the appearance of the journal. It was important to her that it should not just be a scholarly record but also widely read. She saw it as a means of drawing together local historians from across the county and encouraging new interest in the subject. This was why she so much valued the often very accomplished line drawings, maps and carefully considered cover illustrations that have graced the journal over the years.

This attention to presentation was only part of the story, however. Judith's own scholarship was meticulous and she set equally high standards of accuracy for the journal. Yet if there was one thing Judith valued more than this, it was encouraging those who perhaps lacked confidence to develop their interest in local history and write up their research. How could these two objectives be combined? By endless patience and hard work on her part: carefully checking questionable claims, tactfully pointing out where would-be contributors could find the evidence they needed, persisting with articles even when the scale of the changes required to reach her standards would have daunted a less energetic editor.

It was a privilege to have worked with Judith on the journal and to have been one of her successors as editor. I am sure that the journal committee will continue to work in the editorial tradition she so successfully established.

Jeremy Burchardt (editor)

Judith Hunter as editor of Berkshire Old and New

a personal tribute

I first met Judith when I sent an article to *Berkshire Old and New* to be included in the second issue published in 1984. She was the editor of the journal and the chairman of the editorial committee. She asked me to join the committee the following year and I agreed, so beginning a friendship that lasted until her death. Judith was at that time the Honorary Curator of the Royal Borough Collection at Windsor, an extra-mural local history and WEA tutor and a researcher with a particular interest in the Bath Road. I found the committee a friendly group who worked easily together under Judith's leadership to read and comment on manuscripts, bringing them back for a central discussion. It was Judith who took the committee's opinions back to the authors and with tact and patience persuaded them to make alterations or even rewrite. It says a great deal for her approach that it was very rare for anyone, amateur or professional, to refuse to make changes.

Judith's first degree was in geography and she wrote in one of her editorial newsletters that her first introduction to local history was through English landscape. She said that W G Hoskins' *Making of the English Landscape* had opened a new world to historians and geographers but it was his *Local History in England* that really brought the subject into her life. Those who worked with Judith on the committee will recognise that the sentences she quoted from Hoskins in that editorial were the principles which she introduced to the journal and upheld throughout her editorship.

> I think that local historians ought to make an effort to improve their techniques and their knowledge of sources, however long they have been at it ...There is no excuse for amateur work being bad. ...But the better informed and the more scrupulous the local historian is about the truth of past life, the more enjoyment he will get from his chosen hobby. Inaccurate information is not only false: it is boring and fundamentally unsatisfying. The local historian must strive to be as faithful to the truth as any other kind of historian, and it is well within his powers to be so.

Judith felt very strongly that the journal existed for all levels of experience and that the articles in it should reflect Hoskins' values. She saw it as part of her role to encourage those who might otherwise not have thought of publishing the results of their research and to support them at every stage as long as their subject was interesting and it was based on primary material. She wanted each edition to have a balanced content that reflected what was going on right across Berkshire, including the old pre-1974 areas that

transferred to Oxfordshire and the new post-1974 area gained from Buckinghamshire. She was always pleased by articles that that had used unusual sources and she hoped that readers would see possibilities in them to 'improve their knowledge' and to apply them to their own research to supplement information from the better known censuses and parish registers.

When Judith initially became editor the articles were typed but even when they were produced on a basic word processor that did not allow much flexibility so that she had to take on the task of cutting and pasting the finished text so that it fitted the final pages. When electronic publishing arrived Judith enjoyed the challenge and worked with Henry Farrar of Hurst Village Publishing to learn the new techniques. She recognised the value of illustrations to give customer-appeal in the bookshop and encouraged authors to provide as many as possible. If they were unable to do so, then Judith would come up with just the right suggestion from her wide knowledge of sources. In the early years she was also responsible for bringing in advertisements and for the distribution of journals to points of sale. Judith resigned as editor after ten years in the post but continued for another ten years as a committee member, generously sharing her wide experience with later editors. I was very pleased when she told me one day that she had decided to apply for a place as a PhD student to continue her research on inns and inn keeping because, she said, she had seen how much I had enjoyed the experience a few years before. We were both part-time mature students from other disciplines, with families and jobs to compete for our time, and so had much in common.

During recent years she had begun to work on research topics with her husband, Rip, and this successful partnership gave her great pleasure. A joint article on the activities of the press gangs in Berkshire appeared in the last journal with which she was associated. It has all the qualities that Judith sought in contributions to the journal: an interesting article, based on unusual sources well-researched.

She is greatly missed by all of us who worked with her during her editorship and beyond. The establishment and the continuation of the journal is undoubtedly the result of Judith's commitment and effort. I miss her friendship and our shared interests but am the richer for them.

Gillian Clark

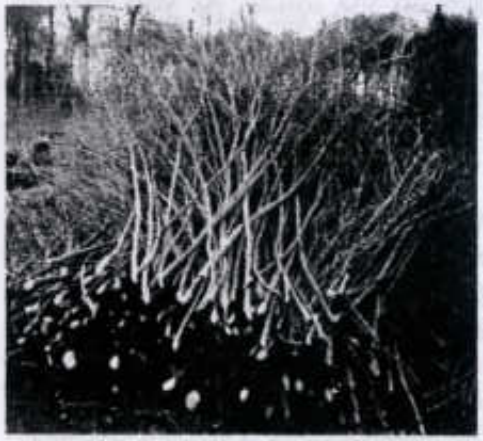
THE MANAGEMENT OF COPPICES IN BERKSHIRE

Pat Preece

This article is written in memory of Judith Hunter who, as editor of Berkshire Old and New, always encouraged me to write about woods.

In Chaddleworth, there is a small coppice or underwood now called Spray Wood, originally copse. It is surrounded by banks, one of which is a parish boundary and may also be that of a Saxon estate. It is composed of hazel underwood, now overgrown with oak standards. As it was springtime when the coppice was examined, there were primroses, violets and bluebells covering the wood floor. The indicator of an old wood, dogs mercury, was there in profusion. The name itself is interesting as it is from the Old English spraeg meaning brushwood or twiggy top of coppice shoots. Spray Wood is what could be considered a typical coppice.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the majority of woods in Berkshire were coppices or coppices with standards, apart from Windsor Royal Forest which originally had stands of oak. The standard trees in the underwoods were mostly oak and ash; a Statute of 1543 'Acte for the preservacion of woods' stated that the owners were required to have a minimum of 12 standells - (standard trees) to the acre in the coppices'.[1] It is unlikely this was adhered to, particularly when there was a great demand for oak for shipbuilding.



Coppice stack

Theoretically any broad leaf tree can be coppiced. Coppicing means the cutting of the first shoot of a sapling, or sampler as they were known locally, and

then the cutting of further shoots when they reach the required size. The root base formed after successive fellings is known as a stool. This stool increases in size as the years pass and according to Oliver Rackham one can gauge the age of a stool by its size.[2] He says that stools more than 6 feet in diameter will seldom be less than 400 years old, except for elm and sweet chestnut. He also says that stools which exceed 20 feet in diameter are probably over 1000 years old. Ash stools are unusual as they form a sort of trunk over the years. According to John Cottrell, a woodman now deceased, they grew upwards at approximately an inch a year. I have seen ash stools 5 feet high and also great in diameter. In an agreement in Donnington in 1793, the woodmen were not to be 'grubbing the stem or stool'.[3]

The Outline of the Coppices

The woods were surrounded (and most still are) by banks and ditches, the latter being on the outside. The only time when the ditch was on the inside was in Royal Forests and hunting parks. The reason for this variation was that the ditch would keep the deer in and they could enter where the ditch was on the inside. There is a hunting park that belonged to the De la Beches of Aldworth, called Beche park and this has some remaining ditch on the inside. As you pass an ordinary wood, it is worth while to note the size of the banks; wide spreading banks are likely to be mediaeval in origin and if a bank is narrow and pointed it is probably Victorian. The maintenance of these banks was very important -and still is -to prevent the entrance of 'travellers'! In 1681 tenants in Bradfield must 'sufficiently hedge, diche and mound'.[4] The earlier references to banks call them mounds. These banks surrounding the woods were often surmounted by hedges or fences, which mostly consisted of 'pales'; these fences were the equivalent of our garden fences probably with overlapping boards or pales.

The woods were often divided into several coppices and the banks that we sometimes see running through the interior of the woods, separated the coppices. These banks probably used to have fences on top which were made of wattle work, which in Berkshire and South

Oxfordshire were called 'flakes'.[5] It is interesting that this name was derived from the Latin and was mediaeval in origin. Rackham refers to these fences being used in Hatfield forest and says that they were made in the Neolithic manner.[6] A flake is a hurdle work of stakes driven in at intervals and interwoven with flexible rods of hazel. These same stakes were made in Bradfield in 1769 : 565 flake stakes 2s 3d.[7]

The hedges that sometimes formed the boundaries were often 'dead hedges', that is bushy wood pieces woven together. On the Craven estate in 1732 Lawrence Hearth was making '63 lug of dead hedge'.[8]

> [Lug, sometimes spelt lugg, seems to be a measurement that was applied to coppices. It is either a linear measurement or a measurement of area by a perch of 18½ feet, the latter was stated by Marshall in 1810.[9] Incidentally the woodland perch is usually 18½ feet.]

The banks, fences and hedges were very important as the coppices had to be guarded from beasts while they were growing up after cutting. In the sixteenth century court rolls of Bucklebury there were presentments by the woodward:

> John Lowche has made waste in the coppices and groves by pasturing his cattle in them; and also John Goddard and John Brown - all have forfeited their estate.[10]

Over the centuries the estate owners were very protective, and we would consider harsh, to anyone who damaged their woodlands.

Woodways

The coppices had a network of tracks along which the carts could remove the rods, timber etc. Rackham states that geometrical wood ways are more recent than the rather wandering ones that have grown up over the centuries in old woodlands.[11] Down Copse south of Chaddleworth has a largely rectangular pattern of tracks, whereas Spray Wood north of Chaddleworth has a wandering pattern. Spray Wood has a history, possibly back to Saxon times but the age of Down Copse is not recorded before the tithe award of 1841.

Composition of the Coppices

The underwoods comprised whatever wood would grow on the soil, and what was required for use. The most commonly grown was hazel which could be grown very thickly. Although there are residual overgrown hazel coppices, none have been found still being worked in Berkshire – the author would be glad to hear of any.

Mark Cottrell coppicing

There is a very thick hazel coppice near Woodcote in Oxfordshire which is still being cut, and this year is being felled for wattle hurdles (for use in gardens!) by John Cottrell's son Mark. Ash underwood nowadays is cut for walking sticks and was used for handles of tools and by wheelwrights. Chestnut coppices are to he found in the Mortimer area and it is believed are still cut to make chestnut fencing. Beech and oak underwoods were found everywhere in the past and were used for billet for firewood, much exported to London by barge, notably from Maidenhead.[12] Alder coppices or gulleys were found around the Bucklebury area. Rackham writes of many lime and hornbeam coppices which were common in East Anglia but seem to be rare in our district. The only lime and hornbeam coppice locally

has been found north of Caversham and that was very overgrown but had very large stools.

The Cutting of the Coppices

The favourite tool for cutting and trimming underwood poles has been the billhook, though nowadays for rapid cutting a chain saw is used. In mediaeval illustrations woodmen can be seen using the bill hook and it seems probable that it was a tool used from the Iron Age onwards, with flint tools before that. According to George Bowman, who was 90 when I knew him 10 years ago, the woodmen would often make the handles of their tools, probably out of ash, and then they went to the blacksmith for the blade, which would be made in the shape they wanted. The woodmen would have several billhooks, some of them with a pronounced hook so as to pick up the pieces of wood as they cut them. George said that he used to go to Pyke the blacksmith in Thatcham.

The underwood would be cut according to the materials required, the type of tree and the speed at which the vegetation grew. Hazel was the most often cut and as it was mostly used as 'rods'; every seven or eight years was the usual rota. Faggots, wattle work and besoms were among the articles formed from hazel. Beech or oak was used for furniture legs, beech for felloes for wheels and other parts of carts and wagons, and of course for firewood; and so was grown for fifteen or more years. Oak poles were sometimes grown for bark, which was stripped while they were standing. There is an entry in the eighteenth century Bucklebury accounts for 'poole bark'. Ash, when walking sticks or broom handles were required, was cut every ten to twelve years but might be grown longer if used by wheelwrights in particular. Chestnut was cut about every nine years and birch every five to seven years, for besoms or the jumps at Newbury races. The twiggy part of coppice shoots was known as 'spray' and was used for the besoms and dead hedges. In 1804, in Donnington, one of the woodmen was cutting and making 'rods, sprays, and hedging' for £3 14s 5d.[13]

Coppice Agreements

The coppices would sometimes be kept in hand by the estate owners who employed woodmen and with any luck there will be wood accounts that can be studied and the working of the underwood can be understood. Many wood owners, however, sold the vegetation of a particular coppice for cutting. The coppice to be sold was sometimes surveyed by a country surveyor who specialised in woodland measurement. Two Berkshire surveyors about whom we know a great deal were the Beddings of Bucklebury:[14]

> 1804 Robert Bedding for measuring 2 coppices at Beenham and a piece of woodland at Bucklebury 13s.[15]

The coppices were mainly 'sold' to local people and the estate manager, or earlier, the woodward, would often do the negotiating. Bucklebury, extraordinarily, had sixty-two named coppices in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, many of them quite small in extent. The names of the coppices were often the names of the people who had worked them in the past. Such names as Wigmore, Tull, Collins, Berry, and Bedding, all well known in the district, are a very few of the family names found in Bucklebury accounts. Elsewhere, although family names are found there are not nearly as many. Some of the names of coppices are descriptive, such as Spring Copse at Chaddleworth - the spring being the new growth of underwood. Spray Wood in the same area and Shrub Wood in Beenham are amongst others. In the Easthampstead Tithe Award the twenty coppices listed vary in size from 1 rood to 26 acres with most of them being roughly 5 acres in extent; there are a few family names in the list such as Garston, Cook and Pullen.

The price paid for a coppice to be worked was per acre and varied according to the thickness of the underwood, the type of tree and the demand for it. An early agreement for Lilley Copse near Brightwalton in 1542:

> A coppice called Lillyes contains 64 acres sett with oke and asshe of 40 yeres growth (the standards) the underwood and soyle of which is demised at 26s the acre amounting in all to £80 6s 8d.[16]

There are early nineteenth century wood accounts surviving for Brightwalton and district including Lilley Copse and the underwood was being cut and 180 feet of ash timber was being sold at 2s a foot.[17] Lilley Copse now has overgrown underwood of hazel with oak standards; unfortunately the centre of the wood has conifers. It may be Saxon as there is a charter of 935, thought to be original despite being a copy of c. 1200, which refers to Lilling lea.[18]

Interesting entries in the Bucklebury and Mortimer area relate to alder gulleys, the price for them being about £8, which although not the highest price paid, is quite high. I was intrigued by this and wondered why the price was high and for what alder wood was used - so I asked George Bowman. He said that the alder gulleys were probably more valuable as they grew quickly and thickly; alder was used for brush and broom heads which were roughed out by the woodman and sent to the several firms in Thatcham who were broom and brush makers. Alder wood is slightly pink in colour and easy to work and therefore had its attractions.

In the coppice agreements at Bucklebury in the eighteenth century the buyers were 'to have all samplers, pay the tithe, leave sufficient wood to make fences, the coppices to be cleared by midsummer day. They must not maim or prune any maiden tree or stub up any oak, ash or elm sapling likely to become timber with a penalty of 20s per tree or sapling...also to leave all fences, gates and stiles in good order. The wood to be cut in a workmanlike way'.[19]

Another method of 'selling' coppices was at auction, mostly at inns; one of these was the Hinds Head at Aldermaston and this continued until the end of the nineteenth century. An extract from an auction catalogue of 1888 for the Hinds Head survives where there was 225 acres of underwood sold, the property of several landowners. A preliminary statement said that 'The lots would be shown by the respective keepers' and somebody had written the amounts some had fetched and who were the buyers. The amounts paid varied from £2 15s to £9 5s per acre. One intriguing entry was G Bowman who bought several lots from Ufton, Englefield and Mortimer. This must

George Bowman's father's woodyard with George as a child (in skirts!)

be the aforementioned George Bowman's father and the products from these underwoods would be arriving at the woodyard. There is a note that 'Dinner on table at one o'clock for which a charge of two shillings per head will be made and this sum will be returned to purchasers and their bondsmen on paying their deposits and signing notes of hand', hoping to attract buyers perhaps.

The coppices in the Royal Forest of Windsor were cut only by permission of the Forest officials. There were probably few coppices in the Forest and those were in an 'Inclosed area'; this area seems to have been owned by various farmers. One of them a John Plummer of Cookham was granted the right to cut the coppices on his land ...'Whereas I have been certyfied by Sir Richard Harrison Knt, one of the Verderers of his ma[ties] fforest of Windsor as also by Sir John Thorowgood beinge ye chiefe fforester of ffynes Bayliwicke ... and by John Tyte and Richard Wescott, Regarders ...'.[22] All this to cut three acres of coppice in 1634 and later fifteen acres in 1638 but of course it may have been formulaic and probably signed by a clerk. In Hatfield Forest there was a coppice keeper who was paid £12 for supervising the north east coppices and there is no mention of licences there.[23] The type of wood is not mentioned but John Plummer had to have

'sufficiently fenced [the coppices] within fences and hedges according to the Assize of the Forest for 9 years – 'therefore the underwood might be hazel or ash. He was to have 'standells' left according to the Statute' so it was an area of coppice with standards.[24]

Maintenance of the Coppices

The coppices were meticulously maintained by woodmen. The banks and ditches mended where necessary:

1812 32 pole ditch at Parklane at 4d [per pole] 10s 8d.
1813 Thos Bosley for 1 year mending the mounds at Ramsbury Plat.[25]

The woods in the Kennet area are very wet and draining was carried out, so the roots of the trees did not rot:

1810 cutt drains 467 at 7s 6d per 100.[26]

The woodways had to be kept up:

1734 for meaking the way between the edge of Frenwood heg [hedge] between my lord Starling and Mr Dodd in Great West wooad [in Bradfield] fifteen shilenes and sixpence.[27]

The saplings or samplers were often grown up from a fall of acorns, ash keys or beech nuts:

1820 Planting of acorns etc £8 11s 4d.
Planting of ash keys 6s.
1813 Paid 17 men seaving (sic) samplers at coppices in Beenham 17s.

Some stools were rotted or not required but it may have been a conversion of coppice into timber wood:

1821 2 men for taking up tree stools in Rookery 18s.[28]

At present Rookery is an oak wood - with rooks! The saplings that were in Beenham were marked:

Dan Wheeler for paint and brush to mark the samplers 1s.

Sometimes as you walk through woods now, you see the paint mark on trees; this was mainly on thick barked trees such as oaks; beech was marked with incised Roman numerals with a 'scriber'.

The coppices were kept remarkably tidy:

1802 Weeding 19s 9d.
Thistling 24s 2d.
1832 Hoeing Garrets [Coppice] £3 6s 4d.[29]

The coppices had to be kept clear of cattle particularly when growing up:

> 1803 in Bucklebury 'Red Greens girl for keeping cattle out of Carbins Wood 5 weeks 5s'.[30]

She was probably a child and it may be that her family were glad of the shilling a week. The woods had to be secure and the taking of wood was strictly forbidden so the gates had to be in good order:

> 1724 Mending Compton wood gate and iron hooks 5s 3d.[31]

The woodmen sometimes worked in a hut in the woods. In it they would have their tools, broom horse, pole lathe etc according to the goods they were making; there would also be the means to have food and outside a tripod over a fire to boil their billies, and even a makeshift bed where they could sleep. The latter was used if the underwood they were cutting was a long way from home. The products such as hurdles, rakes, besoms and faggots would probably be hung on racks outside the hut to dry. The cut rods would sometimes be taken to wood yards either private or estate (for instance George Bowmans father's woodyard as illustrated) and the goods were made there.

The woodmen were paid as shown but also wood money was paid. According to Arthur Smith this amounted to 4s in the £1 in his day, 1920-40. In 1831 for cutting Spring Coppice 3 acres 1 rood 20 perches, a Mr Thos Brown was paid 15s 1d wood money out of £6 1s 2d, so he was getting roughly 2s 6d in the £1 wood money and looking through other accounts this seems to have been the usual amount in the nineteenth century.[32] Apparently this money was paid before they started work, so they had something to live on until they had their money when the task was finished.

The coppices were a source of income to estate owners, whether they employed woodmen themselves or sold the underwood for cutting. The stems from the stools were made into many diverse articles and one could consider them to be the plastic of former years. Quantities of firewood were produced and were a source of energy until the advent of easily obtained coal. Every scrap of wood was used

and the woodland floors must have been clear of the many pieces left on them now. Conservationists excuse the litter now found as providing habitats for many forms of life.

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4 BRO D/ESY (M)/E5.
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29 BRO D/EBY/A16.
30 Bucklebury papers.
31 BRO D/ED/F44/1.
32 BRO D/EW/A3.

Old Land Measurements

Statutory

1 linear rod, role or perch = 16½ feet.
40 square perches = 1 rood.
4 roods = 1 acre.

There are variations to the statutory i.e. woodland 18½ feet to the linear perch and customary perches which vary locally.

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to Brian Boulter for the information about Cookham and to Arthur Smith, George Bowman and John Cottrell, all deceased, who taught me a great deal about woodlands.

BERKSHIRE TURNPIKE ROADS

Alan Rosevear

Berkshire lies across the principal transport routes westwards from London. Although some goods were carried by river, the Thames is not a direct or dependable route. Consequently, travellers and traders preferred to use land carriage for reliable transport across the region. Furthermore, transport between market towns in the area depended almost exclusively on cross roads that connected the major radial routes from London. As a result, the maintenance of Berkshire's roads became an important issue when traffic along the Thames valley burgeoned in the Stuart period.

Elizabethan statutes had decreed that men worked for six days each year to maintain the highways in their parish. Although this arrangement satisfied the needs of an agrarian economy with local markets, it was overwhelmed on the major highways that carried goods and people from distant places to the large cities such as London. The turnpike trust was a legal device that evolved during the early eighteenth century to raise new resources for the maintenance and improvement of main roads. Each trust was established by an Act of Parliament and was given powers to maintain a specified section of highway that passed through several parishes. The preamble to the Act generally complained that the present road was dangerous, founderous and unusable, particularly during the winter season, and could not be amended by the present Law (i.e. Statute Labour). The trust, comprising maybe a hundred local gentlemen, was empowered to coordinate some of the parish Statute Labour but, more importantly, could also erect gates or turnpikes at which road users paid a set toll. With an assured future income from tolls, the trustees could borrow against this to pay for materials, additional labour and professional surveyors to remedy the poor state of the highway.

Typically trustees included local aristocrats, landed gentry, businessmen and clergy from parishes along the route. The trustees employed officials to operate the turnpike. A clerk, normally a local

solicitor, dealt with legal and administrative matters. A treasurer managed the income and the loan capital, and a surveyor managed the road improvements and the routine maintenance work. The first turnpike trusts appointed a toll collector but by the mid-eighteenth century trusts had begun to contract out the collection of tolls to a private individual. This arrangement eventually became the norm and by the end of 1800 trusts such as the Faringdon, Wantage to Wallingford Road were auctioning an annual lease to collect tolls at their four gates for £1,300. Toll farmers bid competitively for the lease and then installed their own pikemen to collect the money and recoup their speculative investment.

Bay Fronted Toll House

The major highways radiating from London were the first to be turnpiked. The Bath Road carried a large amount of coach traffic and to amend the damage caused by this traffic a turnpike trust was established for the road west of Reading in 1714. Acts covering heavily-used sections of the other main roads in the region followed, with parts of both the Salisbury Road through Staines and the great road to Worcester (the Oxford Road) under the control of turnpike trusts by 1718. The road from Reading to Basingstoke was also turnpiked in 1718, probably reflecting the importance of traffic to the Thames wharfs en route for London. The cross roads in Berkshire were swept up in the turnpike mania between 1750s and 1770s, leaving only roads around Windsor to be taken under the care of a turnpike trust in the early nineteenth century (see table page 30).

Map illustrates the final turnpike network that developed across the county

This road network grew from uncoordinated, local initiatives, not government planning. The Bath Road for instance was turnpiked under a series of Acts with individual trusts based in the main towns along the route. The first trust was established for the road over wet ground through the Kennet valley. The initial Act in 1714 only dealt with the road from the *Black Bear* in Reading to Puntfield (Theale) but a second Act in 1729 extended the powers of this trust as far as Speenhamland (Newbury) and from the *Seven-mile stone* to the Kennet wharf at Aldermaston. A third Act in 1746 extended their powers to the branch road up to Pangbourne and a side road down to Burghfield. The second trust on the Bath Road, created in 1718, was centred on Maidenhead. This was established with three divisions that were to work autonomously. The Maidenhead Division dealt with roads near the town, the Hurley Division was responsible for the Worcester Road from the Bath Road junction on Maidenhead Thicket to Henley Bridge and a third division covered the road from

Maidenhead Thicket to Twyford. In 1735 this division took responsibility for the final section from *Sunning Lane End* to *Crown Corner* in Reading. The third trust, the Speenhamland to Marlborough Road was established by Act in 1726, the Speenhamland Division covering the road to the county boundary at Froxfield.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that from and after the first Day of May, One thousand seven hundred and twenty eight, before any Coach, Berlin, Chaise, Chariot, Chair, or Calash, drawn by Four or more Horses, shall be permitted to pass through any Turnpike or Turnpikes erected, or to be erected by virtue of the said former or this present Act, there shall be paid the Sum of Six Pence.

And for every Waggon, Cart, or Carriage, laden with Hay or Wood for firing, drawn with Five or more Horses passing, there shall be paid the Sum of Six Pence.

And for every Waggon, Cart, or Carriage, laden with Wood for firing, or Hay, drawn by any number of Horses, under the number of Five, the Sum of Four Pence.

And for every Score of neat Cattle, or Oxen passing, the Sum of Five Pence; and so in Proportion for any greater or lesser number.

Reading to Puntfield tolls 1728

There was a similar pattern of development on the main north-south route through the old county from the crossing of the Thames at Oxford to Newbury. As now, this was the main highway from the Midlands to the Channel ports. In 1755 an Act set up a trust to deal with two branches of the road south of Oxford from *Fryar Bacon's Study* to *Chilton Pond* (on the road to Ilsley) and to *Foxcombe Gate* (the old Faringdon Road). The highway from the base of the downs at *Chilton Pond* to *Newtown River* at Newbury was a division of a

larger trust for the road to Andover and Hursley, set up by Act of 1766. On the main east-west route through North Berks, the Hursley Division had turnpiked the eastern end in 1718. The western section from St John's Bridge (Lechlade) to Fyfield was turnpiked in 1733, contemporary with the section through Oxfordshire from the bridges at Henley to those at Abingdon and Oxford (Act of 1736). The final section, over the heathland, from *The Mayor's Stone,* Abingdon to Fyfield was not turnpiked until 1754.

The pattern of road traffic in North Berks was altered in 1767 when construction of a new bridge at Swinford and improvement to Botley Causeway created a shorter route west from Oxford. The old turnpike over Foxcombe lost its function and was soon allowed to lapse. A new north-south road was turnpiked from Besselsleigh through Wantage to Hungerford in 1770. At a similar time roads leading into the county from Oxfordshire across Radcot and Tadpole bridges were turnpiked (in 1771 & 1777). New routes were created through the centre of the county when the Shillingford to Reading Trust (Act of 1764) raised capital to build a new bridge over the Thames, north of Wallingford. This brought traffic down to Reading and could have been an alternative route

Anno sexto

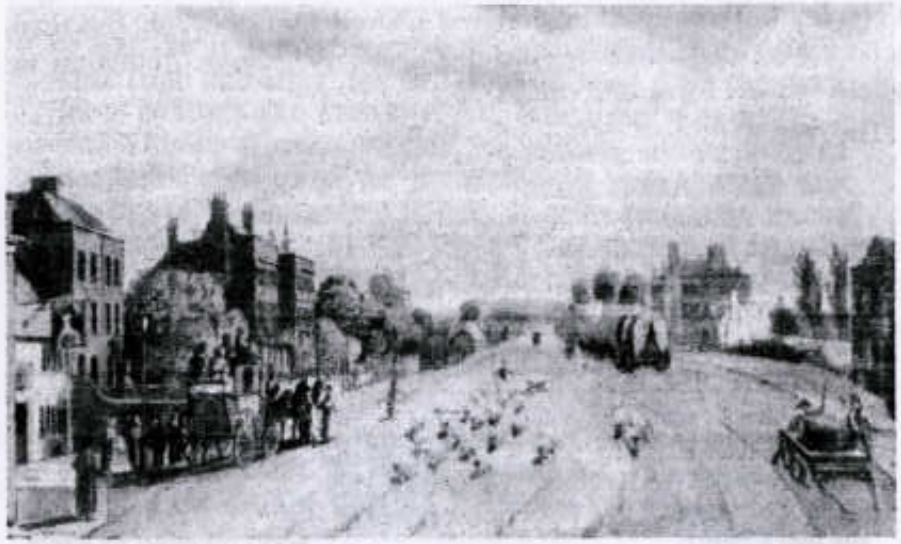
Georgii II. Regis.

An Act for repairing the Roads leading from a Place called *Saint Johns Bridge* in the County of *Berks*, to a Place called *Fyfield* in the said County.

WHEREAS the Roads leading from a Place called Saint Johns Bridge in the County of Berks, to a Place called Fyfield in the said County, are, by reason of many heavy Carriages frequently passing through the same, become so very ruinous and bad in the Winter Season, that Passengers cannot pass without great Danger: And whereas the said Roads cannot by the ordinary course

south into Hampshire, but the turnpiking of roads from Aldermaston to Whitchurch (1770) and to Basingstoke (1772) failed to attract traffic.

Reading became an important hub with turnpike roads radiating across the county. As well as the Bath Road there were two other



London Road Reading

routes to London. The Windsor Forest Turnpike (Act of 1759) ran past the cattle market at Loddon Bridge, across to Wokingham and through Bracknell Street to meet the Exeter Road at Virginia Water. An alternative route, the Forest Road, had been improved in 1770 by subscription rather than a turnpike trust. This route ran from the Loddon through Winkfield and then (with permission) across Windsor Park to the Exeter Road at Egham. These forest roads were renowned as amongst the most scenic routes in the Kingdom. The Reading to Basingstoke Trust controlled two roads south from *Crown Corner,* Reading. The shorter branch through Shinfield ran to Swallowfield and the major branch went through Sherfield to Basingstoke itself. Northwards was the Shillingford road along the southern bank of the Thames to Oxford. The other turnpike road

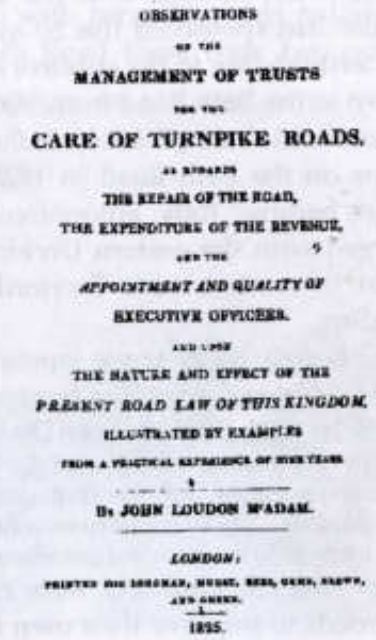
north began on the far side of Caversham Bridge, in Oxfordshire. This was the southern end of the Reading to Hatfield Turnpike (first Act 1768), often referred to as the Gout Road. The Spencers of Hatfield House had sponsored this 50-mile alternative route from their home in Hertfordshire to the curative spa at Bath. A branch of this road ran down to the Bath Road from Marlow. The importance of Reading at a commercial hub probably influenced the major reorganisation of trusts on the Bath Road in 1826. The Divisions of the Maidenhead Trust became fully autonomous and the Twyford Division was merged with the eastern Division of the Reading to Speenhamland Trust to create a new Twyford & Theale Road Trust, centred on Reading.

Although these trusts operated independently, key individuals acted on several adjoining trusts or were officials employed by several trusts. In 1790, the Universal Directory said:

> By the zealous exertions of Sir William Blackstone, who was their representative (MP for Wallingford), two new turnpike roads were formed; ...These roads have contributed much to the restoration of business to the town and its consequent improvement.

Some larger landowners were clearly enthusiastic about turnpiking the roads to improve their own locality. Although trustees could not benefit directly, the better access to markets meant that agricultural land values rose. In the case of employees of the trusts, individuals with particular skills emerged. Surveyors were crucial to improving the roads and keeping maintenance costs down and so the best men could find work with several larger trusts. The McAdam family stand out as being particularly important in providing high quality engineering input to the improvement of the main roads in Berkshire. John Loudon McAdam had developed a system to improve highways at relatively low cost. He used stones and gravels already deposited haphazardly into the roadbed but graded and profiled these to create a well-drained, stable highway with domed profile and fine gravel surface. The trusts along the Bath Road and the Worcester Road employed McAdam as General Surveyor in the 1820s and sent their local surveyors to be trained by working alongside the McAdams.

Turnpike trusts were intended to be temporary, the Act generally limiting their powers to 21 years. This would be sufficient time to achieve a step change in the quality of the roads, which would then be handed back free of tolls to the parishes. In practice, before the Act expired a trust would petition Parliament for a renewal or enlargement of their powers. The justification was generally that loans had not been paid-off, that traffic had increased and tolls were still needed to deal with continuing maintenance. On other occasions new engineering improvements were included in the Act such as the rebuilding of the original wooden bridge at Shillingford by the present stone structure in 1818. The trust did significantly improve the main roads, particularly from 1800 onwards. The easing of hills, straightening of roads, realignment to avoid ancient holloways and improvement of the road surface made road travel safer, more comfortable and much faster. Lighter coaches pulled by teams of horses, changed at stages every ten miles, meant that by the 1830s coaches were averaging over 10 mph for long distances. Traffic increased as trade and prosperity grew. The Bath Road, initially dependent on private coaches carrying the rich to the resort at Bath, became a arterial route carrying public stagecoaches, lumbering stage wagons, carriers' carts and droves of cattle bound for market.



OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF TRUSTS

FOR THE

CARE OF TURNPIKE ROADS.

AS REGARDS

THE REPAIR OF THE ROAD,

THE EXPENDITURE OF THE REVENUE,

AND THE

APPOINTMENT AND QUALITY OF

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.

AND UPON

THE NATURE AND EFFECT OF THE

PRESENT ROAD LAW OF THIS KINGDOM,

ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES

FROM A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF NINE YEARS.

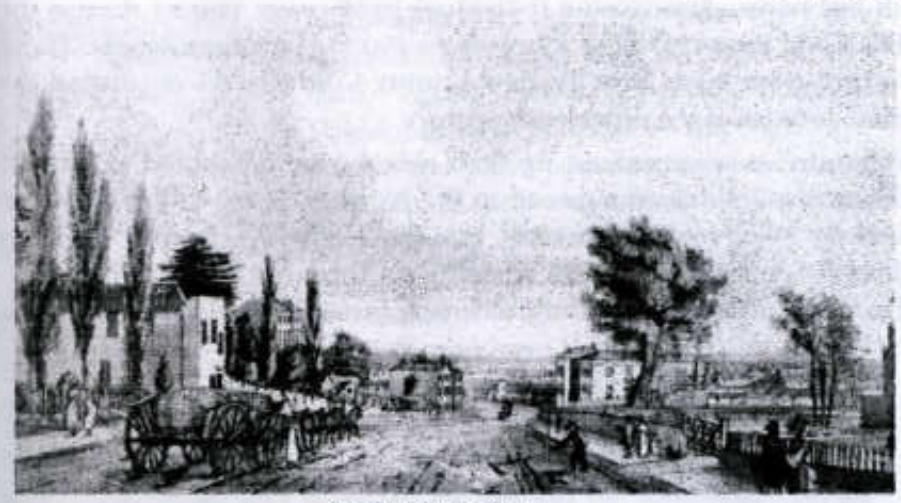
By JOHN LOUDON M'ADAM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN.

1825.

The regular renewal of powers kept turnpike gates in use until the 1870s. However, the end of the trusts had been apparent from the 1840s when the railway revolutionised land transport. Railway trains



Castle Hill Reading

catering for mass travel were faster and cheaper than horse-drawn vehicles. When the railway opened, stagecoach services ended almost overnight. Tolls paid by long-distance coaches and wagons had been a significant proportion of the turnpike's income and so, as the Great Western Railway grew the value of leases for tolls on the Bath Road fell to a third or less of its peak in the mid-1830s. Local traffic to the new stations, such as Steventon, boosted the income from tollgates close by. The trusts moved tollgates to reflect this change in traffic (e.g. the Ludbridge Gate was moved to Didcot and new bars were set up near Grove and West Challow stations). However, turnpikes were increasingly resented as urban development spread along the main roads, engulfing gates intended to catch long distance travellers, not locals. Frequent barriers requiring payment were at odds with the Victorian liking for free trade. Corruption that inevitably came with petty officials handling many small payments at remote locations became less tolerable. The large debts of some trusts were a barrier to their closure; although the Bath Road trusts were virtually free of debt these trusts were not prepared to subsidise less successful neighbours. Nevertheless, over time liabilities were moved and trusts merged in

all but name. Acts closing individual trusts were passed during the 1870s and responsibilities for roads passed to Highways Boards. These in turn were taken into the new County Councils, set up during the final decades of the nineteenth century.

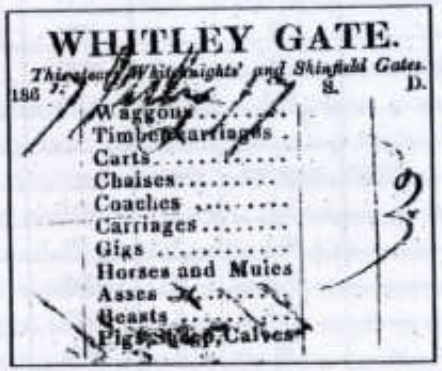
When trusts were wound up their assets were liquidated to pay off debts; any residue was passed to the parishes. Some tollhouses were sold to adjoining landowners, but the Highways Boards chose to demolish many toll houses since they protruded into the highway. The twin octagonal building at Castle Street Gate Reading and the

Toll House Tidmarsh

Pangbourne Gate were amongst those 'caste into the road' and the materials sold by auction. Some, such as the two-storey bay-fronted designs at Thatcham and Hurley stood until the mid-twentieth century before succumbing to neglect and road improvement. Only a few, such as the octagonal brick tollhouse at Tidmarsh, have survived to the present with only minor alterations. Turnpike trusts had been

Mile post c.1826

required to erect milestones from the 1740s onwards and some, such as those on the Bath Road, were elegantly carved. Milestones were adopted by the Highways Boards and later maintained by the County Councils as important roadside features. The majority of the Berkshire milestones survived into the 1930s. Some were never re-instated after the mass removal of 1941, but sufficient have survived to give almost unbroken sequences along the lines of the old turnpike routes. The modern network of trunk roads that knit Berkshire towns together are laid on the foundation set by the turnpike trusts of the eighteenth century. The corridors they cut through the rural and suburban landscape are a testament to the public benefit that came from local, individual action responding to a common challenge.



Toll gate ticket 17 July 1867

Turnpike Trusts in Berkshire (data from 1840)

COMMON NAME OF TRUST	LENGTH (MILES)	MAIN GATES	FIRST ACT	DATE EXPIRED
Abingdon & Fyfield	6	1	1780	1873
Abingdon, Wootton to Swinford			1768	1833
Besselsleigh	22	4	1771	1878
Chilton Pond & Abingdon *	8.3	2	1755	1867
Forest Road (not a Turnpike)	14	0	(1770)	
Fyfield, Newbridge & St John's Bridge	15.6	3	1733	1876
Harwell & Streatley	8.6	3	1803	1877
Hinksey Road *	7.5	1	1755	
Hurley *	5	1	1826	1878
Leckford or Sousley Water	13.3	1	1772	
Maidenhead *	9.3	1	1718	1878
New Windsor & Twyford			1832	
New Windsor to Datchet			1801	
Reading & Basingstoke	17.6	4	1718	1870
Shillingford & Reading	18	4	1764	1874
Speenhamland to Marlborough	11.3	1	1726	1872
Speenhamland to Reading	8.8	1	1729	1872
Theale Road	merged 1826	2	1714	(1826)
Twyford*	merged 1826	1	1718	(1826)
Twyford & Theale (merger)	18	3	1826	1872
Wallingford, Wantage & Faringdon	25	4	1752	1873
Windsor Forest	16.5	3	1759	1868
Mainly	in another	county		
Astall & Buckland	9.5	2	1777	1874
Great Faringdon to Burford	10.5	3	1771	1875
Reading & Hatfield	51.5.	10	1768	1880
Aldermaston & Basingstoke	21.3	4	1772	
Andover & Chilton Pond	28	5	1766	1880
Whitchurch & Aldermaston	14.4	3	1770	

* indicates roads that were Divisions of an earlier trust

IRREGULAR MARRIAGES AT DATCHET c.1680

A 'PECULIAR' PROBLEM?

Janet Kennish

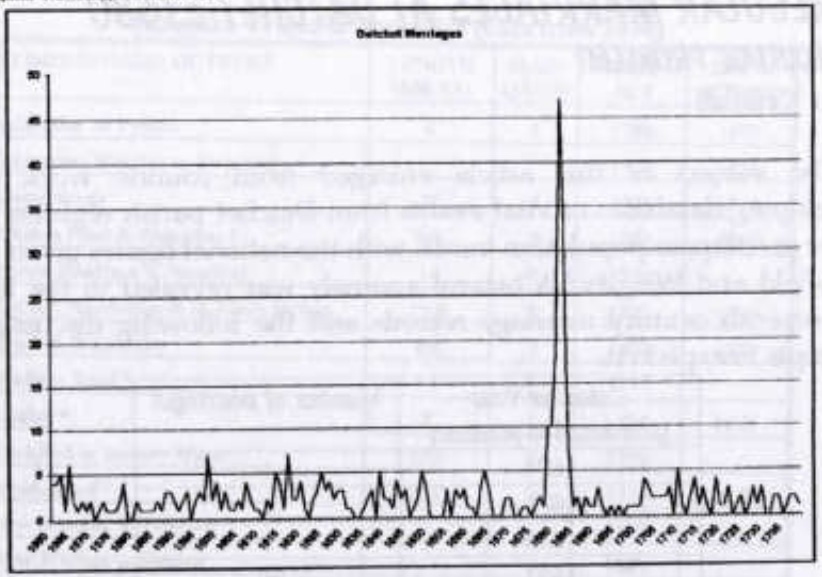
The subject of this article emerged from routine work on developing databases of vital events from Datchet parish registers in order to compare population trends with the national figures given by Schofield and Wrigley.[1] A bizarre anomaly was revealed in the late seventeenth century marriage records and the following discussion attempts to explain it.

Calendar Year (converted to modern)	Number of marriages
1674	1
1675	2
1676	1
1677	**10**
1678	**10**
1679	**18**
1680	**47**
1681	**31**
1682	**7**
1683	1
1684	2

Table created from Datchet parish registers

Just one glance at the table and graph is enough to suggest that something very odd indeed was going on in Datchet around 1680. The dramatic rise and subsequent fall in marriages is so extreme that natural causes could be quickly discounted; there was no apparent increase in population or significant difference in baptism and burial rates during this period. The registers themselves hint at disruption of some sort; pages were torn out, to be stuck in again at the back of the book and missing entries were copied into later pages.[2]

It is assumed that the majority of couples marrying at Datchet in such numbers must have come from elsewhere. But while the



Marriage frequency graph created from Datchet parish registers: peak years

registers both before and after this period did give a place of residence if it was not local, and recorded those marriages which were by licence, in only one case between 1677 and 1682 was a place of residence (New Windsor) given.[3] If a marriage was of genuine residents it might be expected that baptisms would follow within a few years and the registers have been searched for these events. Using the criteria of father's surname and first name (few mothers' names were recorded), for up to five years after the marriage, only two families baptising children were positively identified. There was also one case in which the wife was buried two years later, perhaps in childbirth. Apart from settling to produce a family, another indication of local couples would be the high incidence of the same surname appearing more than once. Eleven surnames are recorded as both a bride and as a groom, and there are ten more names shared by two or more brides or grooms; presumably these are brothers and sisters, at least where the surnames are not in the most common category. However, these recurring surnames are not recognisable from any other contemporary Datchet sources. Thus there certainly were some

marriages of village couples and while the provable numbers are almost insignificant, there is a possibility that there is another larger group in which the bride or the groom was local, even if Datchet did not become their place of residence.

A search has been made of Windsor parish registers as well, to see if any of these Datchet marriages were of Windsor residents, since the town is only just across the river Thames from the village.[4] Using the same criteria as for Datchet, fourteen of the couples may be identified as baptising children in Windsor a few years after their wedding. Most of these have names sufficiently unusual to be fairly certain, but only three families had two or more children baptised in succession, making their permanent residence more likely.

The first suspicion in searching for an explanation was that the church at Datchet was acting as a 'marriage shop' for clandestine marriages, one of the late seventeenth century irregularities which were eventually brought under control by Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1735.[5] Traditionally, a couple could either marry in one of the parish churches of their residence, after public announcement of banns, or in a different place by licence from the archdeaconry. This would involve close questioning and extra cost. A union under any other circumstances was considered to be clandestine and officially disapproved of, although huge numbers of such marriages did take place. The peak period for complaints about these irregularities was around the 1680s and 90s, when the worst offenders were temporarily suppressed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.[6] The events in Datchet coincide with these dates.

The most notorious marriage shops were at London prisons such as the Fleet, and the 'Liberties' around them where prisoners were allowed to live. There could have been many reasons for a couple wishing to avoid the public announcement of their intended wedding in their parish of residence. Those who were not legally free to marry, those escaping parental or parish authority, or wishing to conceal their identity, could take advantage of the services offered by impoverished clergy operating in unregulated chapels, or even in

taverns and alehouses. In London and throughout the country there were also lawless churches, usually 'peculiars' which claimed exemption from any bishop's jurisdiction and had a long history of marrying couples with neither banns nor licence.

Datchet Church 1707

The church, tithes and rectory of Datchet belonged to St George's Chapel in Windsor, which was a peculiar, although a thoroughly respectable one. It was the Dean and Chapter who appointed vicars to the parish of Datchet from among the Minor Canons of the Chapel, but the post was hard to fill because the stipend was particularly small. And it is from the Chapel archives that another curious fact has emerged; during the years when marriages peaked at Datchet, none at all took place in St George's Chapel.[7] There is nothing to explain this situation at the Chapel itself, since baptisms and burials continued to take place at the normal rate. Why would couples choose to be married in Datchet's ramshackle old barn of a church instead of in the glory of the Chapel, which was a prestigious venue then as it is now? This idea is so unlikely that it must be assumed they had no choice; that there was some reason why marriages intended for St George's by licence were diverted to Datchet instead during those few years.

At the parish church of Windsor the same thing appears to have happened, but for a shorter period. There is a gap in marriage records

from November 1679 to January 1681/2, although the transcribed volumes of the registers record one or two marriages picked up from Bishop's Transcripts in those years.[8] As at St George's, baptisms and burials continued uninterrupted. There is only evidence that fourteen of those couples marrying at Datchet were from Windsor, but if no marriages took place in the town during the most crucial three years then it is very likely that many more of them did in fact come from the town. Interestingly, the date of the first licence in a collection of Berkshire Archdeaconry licenses for Windsor parish church is 1685, when the irregularities had ceased.[9]

Elisabeth Poyser refers to the 'immense popularity' of the chapel as a place for weddings in the period 1660-1709.[10] She goes on to say:

> The contracting parties were by no means limited to residents in the district. Many of them were artisans and local tradesmen, but many were members of well-known county families and came from far afield.

This makes it all the more extraordinary that St George's should cease to be used and that Datchet, not even Windsor Parish Church, should be the substitute. If couples traditionally came from a wide area it is not surprising that so few local people can be identified by subsequent baptisms. And its use by county families may explain why the same non-local surnames appear quite frequently for both brides and grooms; presumably, families with children of similar age are settling down during the same years with a degree of intermarriage.

The poverty of the living available to the Vicar of Datchet offers a clue as to what might have been going on. The Chapter Acts in St George's archives record how difficult it was to persuade anybody to take the 'short straw' of this parish, and how unsatisfactory several of its incumbents were.[11] In the 1630s Edward Stamp was called to answer for his behaviour:

> Mr Stamp, a minor canon of this church and vicar of Datchet, upon a fame of incontinency [i e lax sexual morals], was suspended from entering the Choir by the Dean. Afterwards a public adjudication was read in the Chapel upon a Sunday, meaning to give notice unto as many as had anything to object or testify against him, that they should appear 2nd December. When the day came and all the witnesses were fully heard by the Dean, Mr Stamp did utterly deny the fact, answered all objections

and was admitted to a legal clearing of himself by his own oath and the oaths of his compurgates [i e character witnesses].[12]

Anthony Taylor took the post after the Restoration of 1660, but 'on account of the poorness of its income'; this implied that he did not have to rely on the stipend for his livelihood.[13] In 1673, on the death of Anthony Taylor, the Dean and Canons agreed that they themselves would take it in turn to preach at Datchet, in order of seniority starting with the Dean, until a replacement could be found.[14] They then decided that as a place was vacant for a Minor Canon, the person presented to that place should be prepared to take on Datchet's vicarage as well, because Datchet's living was too small for the maintenance of a vicar. John Davis was then appointed to both vacancies. By 1674 he was an unsatisfactory vicar by any standards, including his forbidden popish tendencies:

Mr John Davis, Minor Canon, has failed of doing his duty at the parish of Datchet, where he has been a person of light and scandalous behaviour. He has been called to answer allegations for defending the tenets of the Church of Rome in public places, both in the Town and the Castle. His place of Minor Canon is void.[15]

After his expulsion, Davis joined the Church of Rome and John Maidstone was appointed in his place in October 1674. Within a few years, in March 1678 he was complaining that his present maintenance was not sufficient for his occasions and that his friends had advised him to get employment in the King's forces, and that he now had a chaplaincy to HM forces in Oxford.[16] He remained as vicar and is also recorded as Chaplain in Windsor rather than Oxford from that date, a post which must have been more congenial to him since he had already in January of that year shown an unfortunate tendency to interfere in military matters:

I do acknowledge that I have indiscreetly affronted and injured Lt Bowes, one of His Majesty 's footguards, by reproachful language not becoming a man of my profession, having reflected upon his person and questioning his government of the Company under his command.[17]

The Dean and Chapter did attempt to control Maidstone's excesses, since in April 1678 he was charged with neglect of his duties both at

Datchet and as a Minor Canon, but without much success as in 1680 he was before them again:

He had missed being present at prayer, had come drunk to church, he openly had a scandalous frequentation with another man 's wife and has had a woman in his house suspected of being a lewd woman.[18]

He was clearly an unsuitable character to be acting as vicar. The problems of St George's Chapel with Maidstone ended with his death in March 1682, precisely the point at which the marriage rate in Datchet abruptly returned to normal. Also, it was after the last marriage entry before his death that the page was torn out of the register and at some time replaced at the end of the volume. This makes it almost certain that Maidstone was responsible for what was happening there, although the irregularities did not start until several years after he had taken up the living. We know he was married because after his death he left his wife in occupation of Datchet's vicarage house. Mrs Maidstone was recorded as being ready to depart in 1682 but destitute, so the Chapel Treasurer was instructed to pay her £5.[19]

The question remains how he managed to conduct such a large number of marriages at Datchet under the very noses of the Dean and Chapter. We have his own evidence that he was seeking ways of adding to his meagre income, and there certainly was a financial 'perk' involved in issuing licences through the Chapel's 'peculiar' status. In 1733 the Chapel's table of fees shows that the Dean was allocated 6s 8d for each licence issued and that another 5s was due to the priest who officiated, which would normally be the Dean's Curate.[20] The figures for licenses issued follow the Datchet figures almost exactly: Bruno Ryves as Dean issued over 150 between 1660 and 1677, but his two successors, John Durrell (1677-83) and Francis Turner (1683-4) apparently made no use of this prerogative. The next Dean, Gregory Hascard, resumed the practice on a large scale from 1684.[21] So it looks as if between 1677 and 1684 John Maidstone was somehow diverting the Dean's right in licenses and the Dean's Curate's right to conduct these marriages in the Chapel to his own use

in the parish church of Datchet. How was this possible? The Chapter Acts record other disciplinary matters, but no reference has been found in any of St George's registers or minutes to the use or misuse of marriage licences. Dr Scarff, Archivist to St George's Chapel, wonders whether it was the Dean's Curate who was central in all this; were he and Maidstone involved in some sort of deal from which both benefited?

At present it is impossible to develop any more satisfactory explanation of these curious events. And since the records of the Dean and Chapter have been thoroughly searched, it seems unlikely that further evidence will come to light. One suggestion is that after a formal marriage ceremony at the church door in Datchet everyone crossed back over to Windsor for a service in the chapel, but such a compromise would be impossible to prove.

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THE COLESHILL LAND AGENT 1840 - 76

Ros Downing

The Coleshill estate, now in Oxfordshire but in Berkshire before 1974, lies between Highworth and Faringdon overlooking the Vale of White Horse. Today the estate is owned by the National Trust, but in the nineteenth century it was the property of the Pleydell-Bouverie family, earls of Radnor. Jacob, the 2nd Earl, lived at the family's principal seat of Longford Castle, near Salisbury, while his eldest son, William, Viscount Folkestone, when he came of age, took up residence at Coleshill House. From the outset, Lord Folkestone showed great interest and ability in running the Coleshill estate, and even after he became 3rd Earl of Radnor, on the death of his father in 1828, he preferred to live at Coleshill rather than Longford when parliamentary business did not keep him in London. On retiring from active politics in 1848, the 3rd Earl spent the last twenty years of his life at Coleshill where he devoted himself to philanthropy and agricultural improvement.[1] His enthusiastic right-hand man in the latter endeavour was his land agent, Mr E W Moore.

Edward Wells Moore was born at Cofton Hackett in Worcestershire in c.1814.[2] It seems he grew up not expecting to have to earn a living but some difficulty occurred which, at the age of 16, threw him on his own resources and, on the advice of Earl Spencer, he entered a mercantile house.[3] In 1840 Earl Spencer was again helpful by recommending Moore to the 3rd Earl of Radnor who appointed him as agent over his Coleshill estate.[4] It is possible, but not proven, that Moore had received some training from John Beasley, the Spencers' well-known and well-respected agent at Althorp. David Spring says of Beasley that Landowners from all parts of England sought out their agents from among his pupils.[5] In 1846, on the advice of Beasley, whom he referred to as my esteemed friend, Moore applied for, and evidently received, permission from Lord Radnor to take pupils of his own.[6] These trainees lodged at the large farmhouse belonging to the Coleshill home farm, where Moore lived with his wife, children and servants.[7] By the time Moore left Coleshill

there were no less than fifty young men who owed their knowledge of managing land or estates to his instruction and example.[8] During his time at Coleshill Moore, became a respected member of the community, serving on both the Board of Guardians and Highway Board.[9] He also became known as a distinguished agriculturist, even beyond the immediate neighbourhood.[10]

Both Lord Radnor and Mr Moore were 'High Farming' enthusiasts. Broadly speaking, High Farming was the attempt to get the highest output per acre by high investment in the most up-to-date methods (of field draining, fertilising, crop rotation, mechanisation, livestock feeding etc.), and in new highly efficient farm buildings designed to facilitate more highly intensive techniques. One particularly significant aspect of High Farming was the idea of growing more fodder crops for livestock, and buying in feedstuffs like oil-cake, in order both to increase production of meat and dairy products and to create more and better quality manure for raising the fertility of the land. High Farming in its broad sense and in the narrower 'high feeding' sense were taken up wholeheartedly at Coleshill.

Leading advocates of High Farming, such as Philip Pusey (editor of the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England;* and James Caird author of the pamphlet *High Farming Under Liberal Covenants, The Best Substitute for Protection;* and the book *English Agriculture in 1850-51),* believed that their 'progressive' and 'improving' ideas should be disseminated as widely as possible, and Mr Moore was a significant participant in this process. He both actively gathered information on High Farming practices and did his utmost to pass on the ideas both to the Coleshill tenants and the wider agricultural community, using the various channels available at the time, including agricultural associations, printed literature, and practical example.

Locally, Mr Moore was a member of the Faringdon Agricultural Association. In addition to holding a ploughing match in October and its AGM and cattle show in December, Faringdon, in common with agricultural societies all over the country, benefited from the expert

advice of a wide variety of lecturers who, with the spread of the railways, could more easily reach speaking engagements at more far-flung venues. In 1858 Henry Tucker gave his address on the *Condition of the Agricultural Labourer;* in 1860 John Beasley spoke on *The Duties and Privileges of the Landowners, Occupiers and Cultivators of the Soil;* in 1862 a professor from the Agricultural College, Cirencester delivered a lecture on the *Natural History, Economy and Treatment of Meadows and Pastures.* All three reached wider audiences through publication, the first two as pamphlets and the third by being reported in detail in *The Farmer's Magazine.*[11] This report, by mentioning Mr E W Moore as the first (and only named) person to ask the lecturer a question, incidentally seems to confirm the status of the land agent in the hierarchy of the agricultural community.

At the national level, the Royal Agricultural Society of England was highly influential in both fostering and disseminating innovation during the High Farming decades.[12] Mr Moore joined the Society after gaining his appointment at Coleshill, and became an active and respected participant in the Society's proceedings.[13] For example, after a lecture on milk given by Professor Voelcker, a consultant to the Royal Agricultural Society, at one of the Society's weekly discussion meetings in 1862, Moore spoke about his own experiments, conducted some years previously, on the milk production of different breeds of dairy cows.[14] Moore also contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* reports on sheep-feeding and cattle-feeding experiments which he had conducted. [15]These experiments not only show Moore to have been in tune with the scientific and didactic aims of the Royal Agricultural Society but also illustrate the interest in, and development of, 'high feeding' at Coleshill. In his sheep-feeding experiment of 1844-45, hay, pulse, turnips, and swedes were given but not oil-cake, whereas cake was fed to the cattle in the 1854 experiment, in addition to hay, roots, corn, and 26 weeks at grass. The Granary Ledger of the Coleshill home farm shows cake being fed to both cattle and sheep in 1858. The increased popularity of oil-cake at

Coleshill was part of a national trend: the total of imported and home produced oil-cake rose by 50 per cent between the periods 1843-46 and 1854-58.[16]

Growing and purchasing the new and more varied animal feedstuffs gave farmers more flexibility, but the effect of weather conditions on crops remained a factor in stock management decisions. For example, in 1854 Moore wrote:

> I ought to effect considerable sales of stock by Michs. but as our root crops are so good it will answer better to keep Beast and Sheep till Dec' or January, than buying in more.[17]

However, in 1868, when drought conditions led to a diminished supply of winter food for stock, Moore preferred 'forcing through' both fat beasts and sheep rather than having them on hand during the winter; his detailed description of this process gives further evidence of how the high feeding regime operated at Coleshill. It also confirms Moore's involvement with and status in the Royal Agricultural Society because the information was given in response to inquiries sent out to' leading members of the Society' by John Chalmers Morton, the answers to which were compiled into a report for the *Journal* on Some of the Agricultural Lessons of 1868.[18] Moore also contributed to Morton's report on Spring Sown Wheats in 1873.[19]

The theoretical and practical information which the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* contained also filtered down into the more widely read agricultural newspapers and was incorporated into reference books.[20] Some idea of the huge volume of agricultural literature published at this time can be gauged from the fact that G E Fussell could compile a list of some 500 authors whose instructive or at least advisory works were published between 1840 and 1900.[21] Mr Moore evidently believed that it would be beneficial if some of this wealth of information reached the tenants on the Coleshill estate. In 1842 he wrote to his employer:

> I think it would be a very useful thing if I was to form a small Library of Agricultural works for circulation amongst the farmers, which might gradually be extended.[22]

Lord Radnor apparently concurred with this suggestion as expenditure on the agricultural library is recorded in the estate accounts as follows:

Year to Michaelmas	£	s	d
1842	15	14	6
1843	5	19	5
1844	9	8	6
1845	4	19	0

As well as learning about High Farming ideas from local and national agricultural associations, and through reading agricultural periodicals, pamphlets and books, Mr Moore was able to benefit from the personal advice of some of the leading agriculturists of the day. The estate of Philip Pusey, who was related to Lord Radnor through the Bouverie family, was only about 10 miles from Coleshill.[23] Here he put into practice what he preached in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society,* and also hosted gatherings of the leading practitioners of scientific farming.[24] In 1847 Pusey made an inspection of Brimstone Farm on the Coleshill Estate and wrote to Lord Radnor describing how he had successfully drained land of the same type - the stiffest and coldest clay in England - and supporting Moore's advice that it should be taken in hand.[25] In 1852 Moore visited Sir John Conroy's farm at Arborfield Hall near Reading. That this was a good place to go to learn about High Farming may be judged by the fact that both the methods used and the buildings erected there are described at length and with great enthusiasm by that leading advocate of High Farming, James Caird.[26] As Sir John was 'very courteous and communicative' no doubt Moore was able to learn some useful lessons, especially as, at that time, the Coleshill home farm (310 acres) was similar in size to Arborfield Hall (320 acres).[27] Moore's visit to Woburn was less useful because, as he put it:

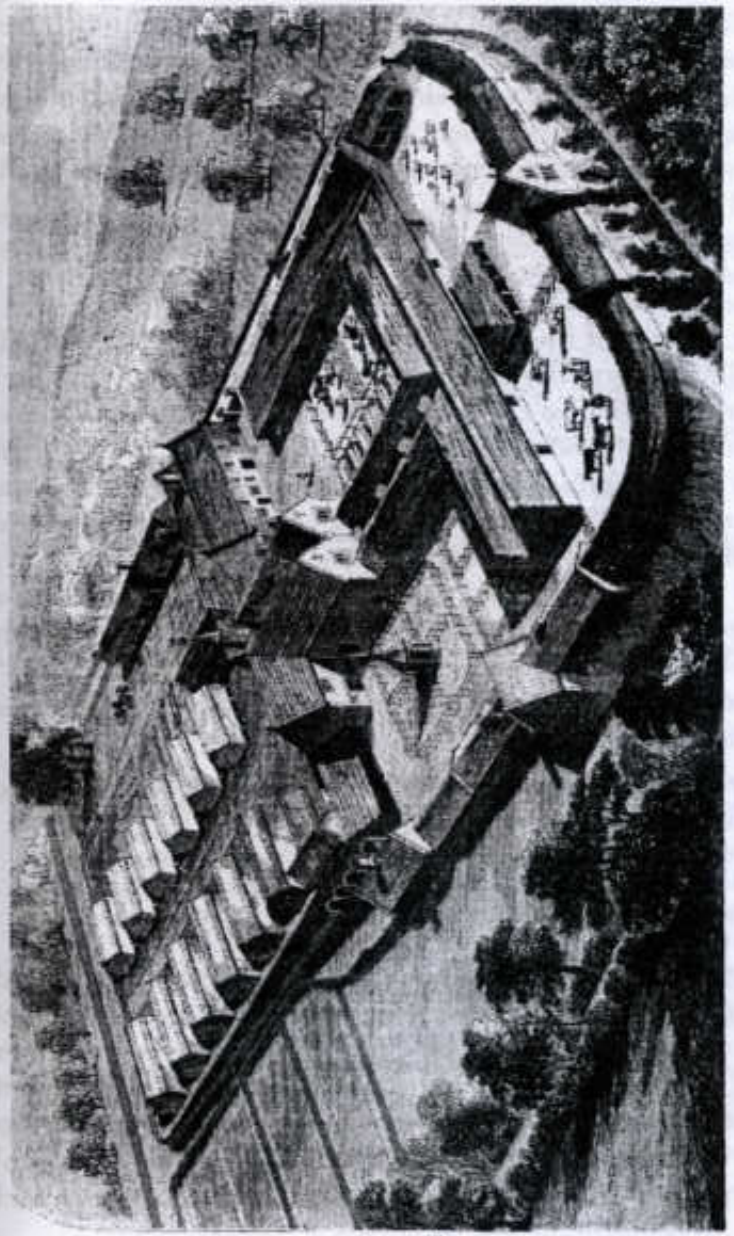
> everything is done upon a large scale, and they seem incapable of imagining how smaller things can be done with effect.[28]

As Mr Moore had learned from examining practical applications of High Farming theory so, many believed, leading by example was the most effective method of winning over the tenantry to new methods. As Mr Moore expressed it:

> Farmers generally are not prepared at present to receive abstract propositions however correct and calculated to improve their own prospects and exercise a beneficial influence on their own character - they look with suspicion on any deviation fr. the old beaten track 'till they see its advantages.[29]

A new farmstead, now known as the Model Farm, for the Coleshill estate home farm was to be the most important means of demonstrating new methods in practice, and it seems that the proposal for such a project came originally from Mr Moore in 1851.[30] After Moore had urged his employer that the expense would be worthwhile and that construction should go ahead because above all it would have 'a mighty effect upon the neighbourhood generally', Lord Radnor gave his approval.[31] Although a professional architect, George Lamb, was brought in as Surveyor to draw up the detailed plans and specification, and to supervise the construction work, Moore, with his agricultural experience and knowledge of Coleshill's requirements was acknowledged to have 'planned', 'arranged' or 'designed' the Model Farm.[32] It incorporated all the most up-to-date Victorian technology including steam power and all the latest features for the better pursuit of High Farming methods. It had yards, boxes, and stalls where cattle, sheep, and pigs could be fattened in warm but well-ventilated accommodation. There was a tramway on which trucks could be pushed to deliver food to the livestock and to take away the high-quality manure which was so important for increasing the yield of both grain and fodder crops. Building took place between 1852 and 1854, and the result won acclaim from contemporary commentators such as the *Agricultural Gazette* which said:

> ...for the principles of its arrangement, the skilfully managed connection of the different parts, the admirable adaptation of the circumstances of



The Earl of Radnor's farm buildings Coleshill

> the site, and the perfect adaptation of each part to its purpose, we know of none excelling it.[33]

By means of the Model Farm, and through his contributions to the local and national agricultural associations, his agricultural experiments, and no doubt much personal exhortation, Mr Moore seems to have had some success in winning over the local farmers. By 1863 it could be reported of Coleshill that:

> The great achievement here is land improvement by the original tenantry, who, stimulated by the owner or his agent, have adopted all the proved improvements of modern agriculture...[34]

However, in spite of his apparent success in running the Coleshill estate and all the experience which he gained over the years, Moore's starting salary of £200, plus £30 notional rent for his house, was never increased in the 29 years during which he served the 3rd Earl. Immediately on the Earl's death, however, Moore's remuneration was changed from a fixed fee to 5% of the total receipts of the estate. Overnight his income leapt to over £530 per year and continued at a similar level while he remained at Coleshill.[35] This is all the more surprising because the 3rd Earl is reported to have thought very highly of Moore's work, while his sons, Lord Folkestone (who became the 4th Earl and Moore's employer) and the Rt Hon E P Bouverie M P, were often sceptical of Moore's abilities.[36]

Mr Moore's work at Coleshill came to a sudden and surprising end in 1876. As the *Agricultural Gazette* put it:

> after 36 years of laborious and beneficent superintendence of a great estate - during which, material, moral, religious, influences have been brought to bear with almost unexampled energy, and with most admirable effect.

Moore was given only a month's notice to quit by the 4th Earl. Lord Radnor admitted that Moore's dismissal was 'not in consequence of any failure of duty as agent', but refused to give any further explanation.[37] Moore himself claimed the reason to be a disagreement over religious observance.[38] Many who knew Moore regarded this treatment as outrageous and unjust, as did the agricultural and local press. A large group, including noblemen, clergy, gentry, and

tenantry presented Moore with a testimonial (£350 and a gilt clock worth £50) and address 'as a token of their high estimation of his Christian worth and unblemished character during a residence of 36 years at Coleshill'.[39] Mr Moore, who had expected to spend the rest of his life at Coleshill, departed, and became agent to Sir Harry Verney at Claydon in Buckinghamshire.[40]

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