Berkshire old and new

No. 14 1997

Roy Smith

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Reference article in volume 13 entitled 'Church House in Berkshire' since the article was published Joan Dils has drawn the author's attention to a number of references to Berkshire Church Houses in *Berkshire Glebe Terriers 1634* ed. Ian Mortimer (Berkshire Record Society volume II 1995. The entery for Bray p.17 confirms the authors belief that the Lynch Gate was the church house. Other church houses are noted at Barkham p. 10 East Garston p.51 Shrivenham p.136 and Ufton Nervet p.162.
Please note that in the first foot-noted sentence in paragraph one, should read 'restoration' rather than 'reformation'.

ISSN: 0264 9950

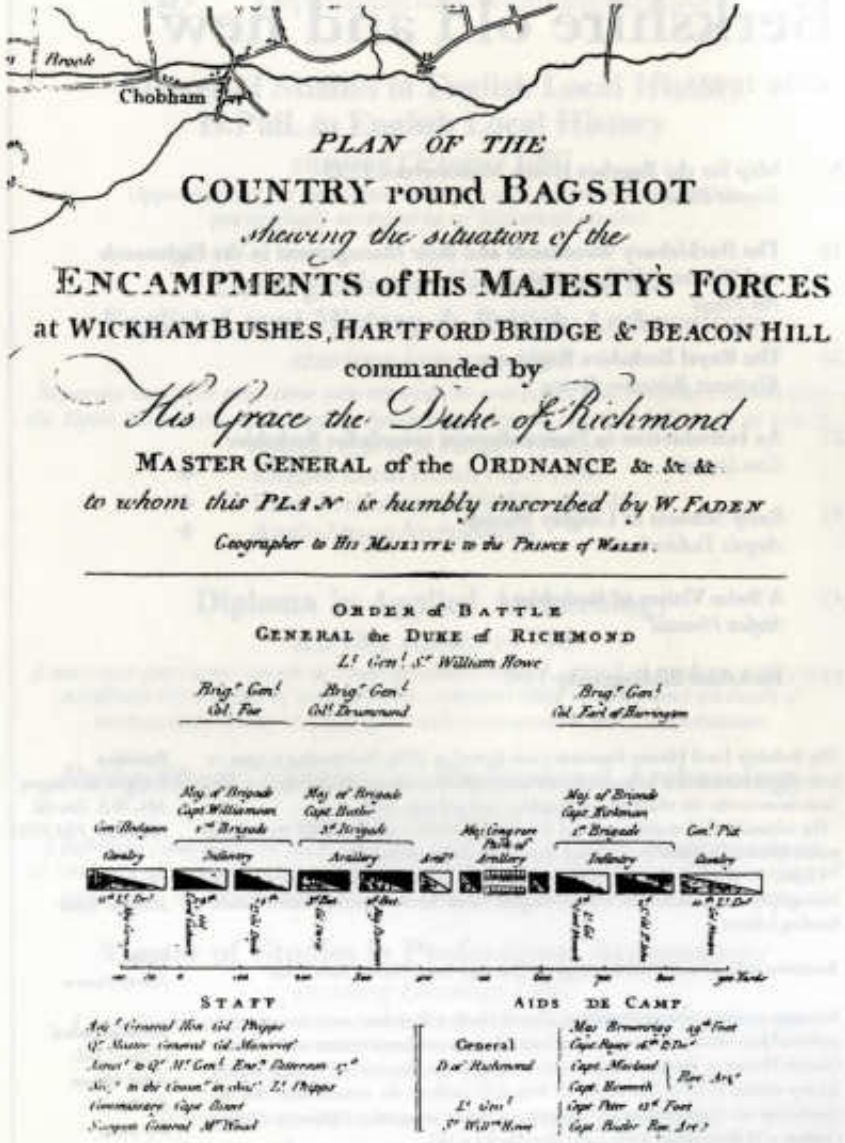


FIGURE 1

Eugene Burden

Bagshot Manoeuvres - 1792

Map for the Bagshot Heath Manoeuvres, 1792

Is it the first published map based on an Ordnance Survey?

On July 21st, 1792, William Faden published a map entitled "PLAN OF THE COUNTRY round BAGSHOT shewing the situation of the ENCAMPMENTS of HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES at WICKHAM BUSHES, HARTFORD BRIDGE & BEACON HILL commanded by His Grace the Duke of Richmond MASTER GENERAL of the ORDNANCE &c. &c. &c. to whom this PLAN is humbly inscribed by W.FADEN Geographer to HIS MAJESTY & to the PRINCE of WALES." (see figure 1). A dissected copy of the finished map in slipcase is in the British Library, Map Library.[1] The finished map shows three proposed camp-sites, numbered and marked in red, and the proposed timetable for the manoeuvres which were to end with a Royal Review. Large numbers of the public were also expected to attend and Faden, no doubt, expected to sell many maps as well as have them used by the officers. The manoeuvres were planned to be held from Monday, 23rd July, until Wednesday, 8th August, and the King, Queen, Prince of Wales and members of the Royal Family were expected to attend, no doubt with the events in France firmly in their minds (the French Royal Family were under arrest in Paris, and Louis XVI was executed shortly afterwards).

A proof copy of this map[2] was recently offered for sale at a London book fair. It does not show the camp-sites, which have been added, by hand, in red ink (see figure 3 for site 1). The red ink markings overlie pencilled alignments. The proof copy is signed by Captain Macleod, one of the aides-de-camp named in the Order of Battle (see figure 4). Various other additions and correction were made to the map, including a change in the date of the Royal Review, before Faden published it. It is clear that Faden co-operated closely with the military authorities in order to produce this map.

The map was based on a careful survey and was more accurate than other maps of the area produced to that date. It was on a 1" scale and the features are almost identical to those in Sheet VIII of the Old Series Ordnance Survey published in 1816. This prompted speculation on the identity of the surveyor and it is suggested that he was William Gardner.

Charles Lennox, Third Duke of Richmond, was appointed Master General of the Ordnance in 1782. He was the most map-minded holder of that office and had employed professional surveyors as permanent members of his staff on his estates at Goodwood since 1759 when he was only 24. He realised the military need for good maps of southern England and he supported William Roy in initiating the triangulation of south-east England in 1787-8.

The Duke employed Thomas Yeakell and William Gardner as surveyors on his estates, and he thought so highly of their abilities that, when he became Master General of the Ordnance in 1782, he engaged both of them as Surveying Draftsmen for the Board of Ordnance. Gardner became Chief Surveying Draftsman when Yeakell died in 1787. He was employed in making military surveys and was particularly praised for his 6" map of the Plymouth area which was recommended as a model for Board of Ordnance draftsmen.

In 1791, the Duke of Richmond, authorised the triangulation of the whole of Great Britain. This date is generally regarded as marking the foundation of the Ordnance Survey[3].

In 1792, the Duke, knowing he was to command the military exercises on Bagshot Heath, ordered Gardner to conduct a survey of the area[4]. Gardner's original drawings have not survived[5] but one may justifiably argue that the map produced by Faden used Gardner's survey as the base map. The fact that the proof copy is signed by one of the officers supports this theory. Additionally, the map shows the finely drawn long hachures that are a characteristic of Gardner's style. One may argue that this is an early example of an Ordnance Survey map and the first published example since it antedates the map of Sussex by Gardner, Yeakell and Thomas Gream published by Faden in 1795 which has hitherto been regarded as the earliest map based on the trigonometrical survey.

The Engraver is unknown, but may possibly have been Thomas Foot who worked as a freelance engraver for both Faden and the Ordnance Survey, and who engraved the Sussex map.

Faden clearly stole a march on his rivals. John Andrews was only able to rush out a map after the manoeuvres had started. He amended Sheet 12 of A Map of the Country Sixty-Five Miles Round London by adding a title and marking the camp-sites. He published it on July 24th, 1792.[6]

In the event, the manoeuvres did not go entirely as planned. During the first period at Wickham Bushes, by Caesar's Camp, near Bracknell, the King and Prince of Wales rode over daily from Windsor, but disaster struck in the form of a heavy rainstorm when the troops made the night march to Hartford Bridge, near Hartley Wintney.[7] The new camp-site was a swamp and officers and men were laid low by colds and "fluxes" caused by contaminated drinking water. The proposed march to Beacon Hill, above Farnham, was abandoned and the troops returned to Wickham Bushes to prepare for the Royal Review.

The Review and the final exercises went well but they were marred by the large numbers of spectators that came by coach, foot and horseback. One estimate said that 50,000 came in various vehicles. The exercises finished by the soldiers being pursued for miles across the open heath by coaches containing '*well-dressed sprightly females*'.[8]

There were other lighter moments. The story was told of the Duchess of Gordon who had a reputation for gullibility. A handsome Irish soldier was induced to stand in her path. She asked where he came from: "Scotland, Ma'am." She then asked him his name: "Gordon, Ma'am." Whereupon the delighted duchess gave him a guinea, and he went off to share the spoils with the Scottish soldier who put him up to the trick.

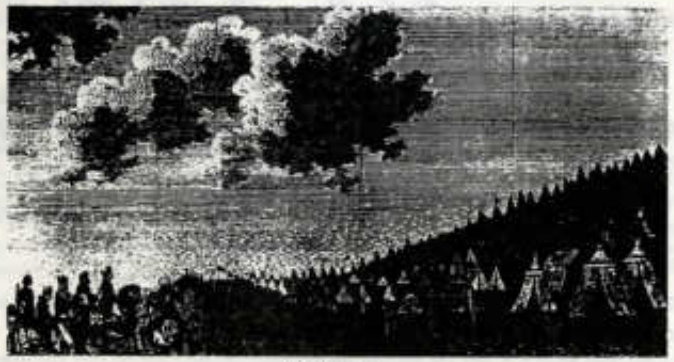


FIGURE 2

The following account of the royal review is from *The Lady's Magazine*, together with a copy of an engraving of the event (figure 2):

"Bagshot, August 7. The expected review had drawn together a concourse of people, incredible but to those who were witnesses of the numbers; of which, crowded from every quarter, it would be vain to form any calculation, but there certainly must have been upwards of fifty thousand, in all the varied vehicles that were capable of carriage.

"The line was formed in the rear of the camp, and a pavilion was prepared for the reception of the royal family, commanding a view of the whole line from right to left.

"Their majesties were saluted on their appearance upon the heath, and all the general officers proceeded to meet, and conduct them to the camp, where they arrived at eight o'clock. The queen and all the princesses with a select party of ladies, ascended into the pavilion, while the king and his retinue rode along the line from right to left, and back again in the rear from left to right.

"Two royal tents had been previously erected at each end, but at about a mile distance, facing the camp. At nine o'clock the whole of the forces passed in companies and troops before the pavilion which the royal family occupied; and this was the most grand, and perhaps the only part of the review which was seen by many of the populace. Having thus passed, they took their stations on a ridge of hills, extending nearly in the form of a half-moon, about three miles distance, between the camp and the royal tents, which were on an opposite eminence.

Source 'authors collection' **FIGURE 3**

"The king, queen and royal family, with their party followed the army, and proceeded to the tent facing the right of the camp, which they occupied some time in familiar conversation among themselves and with their part, viewing also the arrangements which the armies were making for the sham engagement.

"Ten batteries or redoubts*, at various distances to the extent of the line, had been erected and taken possession of by the artillery, who on a signal being given, all began to cannonade from one end to the other, being the supposed enemy of the royal part.

"After some time they were attacked by the infantry, and silenced. The regiments of light horse charged in support of the infantry, and in pursuit of the supposed flying enemy, in different directions, with rapidity and regularity, though the ground was very rugged.

"Three of the light horsemen with their horses fell, without receiving any material injury.

"The army now proceeded to the left of the camp, and performed many evolutions, but at too great a distance from their former station, to be distinctly observed from that place. The army afterwards formed a line across the left of the camp, and fired a feu de joie from right to left, and from left to right, repeating this general fire five times, in honour of the victory supposed to have been gained by the king's troops.

"It now being half past twelve o'clock, and the men very much fatigued, they were ordered to take their respective quarters for refreshments till two o'clock, when they were to be drawn out again, and perform several manoeuvres and evolutions, with the grand and tremendous conclusion of springing mines and blowing up the forts. We understand this was carried into execution, but not with the expected effect.

"As an exhibition of curiosity, or interest for the multitude, it fell very far short of general expectation. The arrangements were so extended, and the evolutions so rapid and dextrous, that it was impossible for any but good horsemen to keep pace with them, and those were in such numbers, as to render it hazardous to mix in the crowd, and therefore four-fifths of the visitors might as well have been in London as on Bagshot heath for the purpose of seeing the review. They may indeed be warranted in asserting to their friends, that they saw a great deal of smoke, much dust, and many soldiers - but at a great distance.

"The Duke of Richmond, as commander in chief, was attended by two running footmen, dressed in white, while his aides-de-camp flew with them to the distant stations.

"So desirous were several ladies of campaigning through the day, that some well-dressed sprightly females, assumed the shoulder knot place behind the carriages, and were thus drawn many miles over

the heath. Many noblemen even condescended to ascend the box, and behind the carriages, in which were their particular friends."

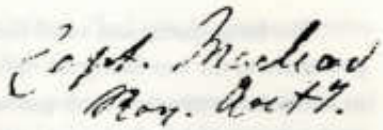


FIGURE 4

*The redoubts were mock forts which were subsequently mined and blown up with spectacular effect.

I would like to thank Peter Barber for encouraging me to write this short account and particularly I would wish to thank Dr Yolande Hodson for pointing me in the right direction and for her great interest.

References:

1. British Library (Maps C.21.a.13)
2. Now in the author's collection (The dealer sold the map at a reduced price because someone had been writing on it!).
3. Yolande Hodson. *Map Making in the Tower of London.* Southampton. Ordnance Survey. 1991.
4. J.B. Harley and Yolande O'Donoghue. *Introductory Essays to the Old Series Ordnance Survey Map of England and Wales.* Lympne Castle. Harry Margary. 1975.
5. Yolande Hodson. *Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings 1789-c. 1840.* Reading. Research Publications. 1989.
6. British Library (MT 6.d.1 (2)).
7. Newspaper reports in *The London Recorder and Sunday Gazette* and *The Public Advertiser.* British Library (Burney 841 and 843).
8. Report in *The Lady's Magazine* Volume 23, August, 1792. British Library (P.P. 5141).

Pat Preece

The Bucklebury Woodlands and their Management in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The woodlands of Bucklebury provided a considerable source of income until the middle of the nineteenth century. The coppices, some of which were let for cutting, provided wood for many articles. Some, such as hurdles and stakes of various kinds were used on the estate farms; hoops for barrels, handles for brooms and mops and wood for broom heads were exported to local towns and to London. Timber and bark fetched high prices at this period and were sold to timber merchants, wheelwrights and tanneries. Firewood was sold locally and in London until coal became cheaper through the construction of canals and railways.

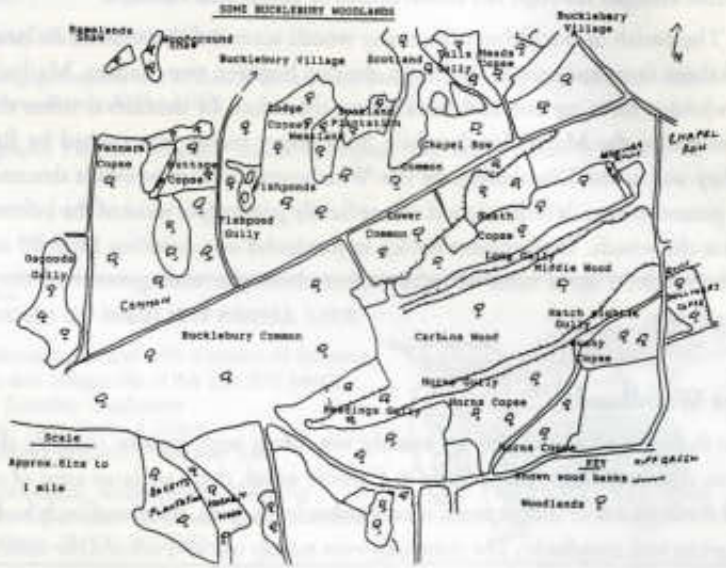
The parish of Bucklebury has many woods scattered throughout its landscape and these from early times have been divided between two manors, Marlston and Hawkridge forming one and Bucklebury the other. In mediaeval times the first belonged to the Martel family while Bucklebury manor was owned by Reading Abbey and at the Dissolution, by the Winchcombes from whom it descended to the present owner. It is the second whose family papers give most of the information about the woods. Two account books, in particular one covering 1803-09 and the other 1812-30 are a mine of information about the management of the estate woodlands.

The Woodlands

The Bucklebury woodlands are mostly wet, often with streams running through them. Although now, particularly in Carbins wood, there are large areas of conifer and some stands of timber trees, it seems that in the past, the woodlands had many coppices with standards[1]. The standards were mainly oak and ash and the underwood

hazel, ash and alder. A good surviving example of a coppice with standards can now be seen at Dollimers copse, which was part of Carbins wood. Characteristic of the area are, and were, the alder gullies (Dollimers has one on its northern border) which are steep sided little valleys usually with streams at the bottom. These mostly had alder coppice but there were also references to pollarded alders in the accounts[2].

'March 1828 Paid John Snell for lopping alder pollards £2. 1s. 10d'. One feature of the woodlands mentioned in the estate papers and accounts is the number of named coppices, many called after local woodmen, Iremongers, Tulls, Hornes and Berrys, who worked them. No less than sixty two of these coppices are listed, and although some names have been lost, of those that are known, few of them contain more than ten acres. Bucklebury Common, which is divided into Upper and Lower Common and has never been enclosed, covers many acres. Although it suffered in the 1939-45 war, it still has areas of woodland, in which are some surviving oak and beech pollards. These must have been common in the past as the Common was used for grazing and the pollards would have acted as 'high coppice' out of the reach of the animals, as was found in Royal forests and hunting parks.



The outside of most of the woods was surrounded by banks and ditches. The woods were often divided into separate coppices (see map) and these too were bounded by banks. On top of the banks were hedges or fences. One particularly dramatic stretch of surviving banking divides Carbins wood from the Lower Common and is up to 5 feet high and spreads to 8 to 10 feet wide with a ditch still on the outside. The bank probably is mediaeval and has the remains of an old layered hedge on top. This was probably an important barrier between the Common and the wood, the bank stopping grazing animals from entering the wood coppices. Underwood was particularly vulnerable to damage while the coppice shoots were growing. It was usual for coppices to be closed to animals for at least seven years after cutting to prevent damage. In Mapledurham, in a court roll of 1658, the usual practice in coppices is demonstrated: '...Dudsome coppice aught to lie common... seaven yeares after it is ffeld...'[4]. In the accounts are many references to the maintenance of hedges as for example:-

'Feb.1829 Pd a man for hedging at Carbins wood 9s'

Woodland Income

For hundreds of years coppices gave a steady income and the coppice agreements in the estate papers, starting in 1759, show the 'sale' or letting of them to local people for cutting. They were sold for an amount for an acre and the buyer was really buying the growth from the stools for a year. It is likely that before the coppices were sold they were measured and possibly markers placed to define the area to be cut, and this is suggested by several payments in the accounts to local surveyors:-

'November ye 5th suraid for W.Winchern (Winchcombe) Henry Hartley esqur the uper end of the furder guley in Carvins (Carbins) Wood

	Acres	Roods	Perches
In statute measuer	2	2	21
In customary measuer	2	0	33

By me Wm Bedding of Bucklebury' [5]

(The customary measure was by the woodland perch of 18 feet.)

The same year "Further Carbins wood Gully next to Horns' was sold for £5.10s. an acre. Sales were

held for the underwoods, traditionally at local inns and at Bucklebury, possibly at the Blade Bone Inn at Chapel Row.

The conditions of the sale of the underwood, which remained virtually the same for many years, in 1769 were:-

1 The coppices to be sold separately.
2 Proposals to be delivered in writing. (This is interesting in that it presupposes the buyers to be literate).
3 The highest bidder to be the buyer.
4 The seller to have liberty to bid once.
5 If two or more bid the same, neither will advance. The seller to give preference to which he pleases.
6 The bidder to pay the tythe (tithe was payable on coppices but not on timber).
7 The samplers (saplings) and steem sticks (trunks) and young springs (coppice shoots) of wood to be left standing.
8 The seller to make the hedges, the buyer to allow proper and sufficient wood for that purpose.
9 All the underwood to be entirely cleared and carried away out of the respective coppices on or before the 6th July.
10 The buyer within 10 days after the sale to execute an article to the above and pay the van and counterpart' [6].

The sale of the coppices took place in September-October and most of the cutting was done in the winter when the leaves were off. The various products - faggots, hurdles etc. were then made up in situ around the woodmens huts in the woods and set up to dry against frames and then sold.

The coppices, so far as can be ascertained, were cut every 8-10 years and they varied in price between £3 and £8 per acre. This price variation was due to several factors:- the number of stools to the acre, the density of their growth, the variety of tree and of course the enthusiasm of the buyer. Over time the price for each coppice remained roughly the same; Iremongers coppice varied between £4.6s and £5 in 1765-66. Because of lack of knowledge of the actual size of many coppices, which do not appear on any map, it is not possible to decide how much the estate gained in a year from the sale but it must have been a considerable sum. The same names appear as buyers during the period documented, most of them local people. Phillip Wyatt of Englefield and Thomas Snell of Bucklebury jointly bought coppices in 1761, 63, 64, 65, 67 and 69 and in 1789 a butcher of Thatcham had two coppices. The Wigmores, a very well known local family, still living in the district bought many coppices.

Woodland Products

The alder gullies always fetched a good price - in 1764 an 'aldern' gully called Carbins wood gully was priced at £7.7s; this was intriguing, why were the alder gullies comparatively so high priced? In a *'General view of the Agriculture of Berkshire'* it states that alder was valuable around Newbury and 'served to plant the bogs where little else would grow. It furnished handles to rakes, mops and besoms which were sent to the west of England from Newbury'. The Kennet and Avon canal probably provided the transport. An old woodman said that alder was used particularly for brooms, both handles and heads. The wood being pinkish in colour and soft to work it was found to be attractive to the industry which chiefly operated in Thatcham.

In the census returns of 1861 to 1881 there are several brush turners employed in Thatcham, including a firm called Pinnock who employed 12 men and 2 boys. Among the brush turners was actually a broom hole maker in the 1861 census! Stephen Pinnock had a works in the Broadway Thatcham and had an Admiralty contract in 1815. This business eventually became Browns of Thatcham and made brooms until 1958[8]. Apart from these sophisticated brooms, besoms were made in the woods probably of hazel:-

'1812 Pd Mr Richard Wigmore for brooms (made in the coppice) 16s.6d.'

In one set of accounts where alder is being cut, there is a reference to wood money:-

'March 1813 Pd Thos. Naylor and companion for cutting 18 lbs of alder at 4s per load and making 34 score faggots (alder) and wood money £6.17s.9d.'

Wood money according to some elderly woodmen was a proportion of the value of the work, to be paid as an advance at the commence- ment, so the woodmen did not have to wait for the final payment. It was usually $1^1/_2$d in the shilling.

Other coppice products mentioned in the accounts were faggots of varying sizes including 'large' or 'huge' faggots sold to local kilns; hurdles which were used on the estate farms; cow cribs for feeding; cage rods for sheep feeding cages; rafter poles for under thatched roofs; and many stakes, poles and handles. One interesting entry was 1800 long rod for bark - was this oak coppice poles stripped for bark or poles to hold up the stripped bark? The whole area was known for the production of wooden hoops for barrels for dry goods. In 1789 Edward Wigmore was paid for hoop making in Wood Green Shaw:-

'2800	of middle hoops	£2.2s
200	long pipe	2s
60	short pipe	5s'9d.

The quantities would have been bundles of hoops and may have been sent by barge to London from either Pangbourne, Buscot[10] or Aldermaston by canal:-

'1828 Expenses of water carriage to London for hoops as bill £7.15s.6d.'

A trade that mostly used elm was that of the bowl turners who must have worked in Bucklebury for many generations. The first reference found to them, was not until the 1871 census when there were four wood turners who were working on the upper common, although only one of these called himself a bowl turner. Local tradition, however, says that the wood turners all made bowls on a pole lathe. In 1871 one of them was William Lailey whose grandson George made bowls until the 1940s; George's tools are in the Rural History Centre at Reading University.

Timber was sold from the estate and is mentioned both in the accounts and the list of timber sales[11]. Oak was fetching very high prices at this period, which includes the Napoleonic wars, and was used for ship building in particular. The amount of oak used in a ship was enormous - a ship of 2000 tons would consume 3000 loads[12]. A load of oak was 50 cubic feet and 100 year old tree might contain $1^1/_2$ loads. As well as the trunk the large branches of coppice grown standards would produce 'compass timber' - curved 'knees' and 'elbows' etc. used for the parts of the ship[13].

A year in which a great deal of timber was sold and prices were particularly high was 1806-7, when the estate obtained £3264 for oak and £1064.5s.6d for ash. Most of the sales records were not specific but 102 oak trees fetched £688.10s, a great deal of money at that time, also remembering that the demand was such that none of these trees would have been fully mature. Ash was commonly sold to wheelwrights as it has a certain elasticity useful in the construction of coaches, wagons and carts. A wheelwright who appeared in the accounts:-

'1807 sale to Daniel Wheeler 70 oaks in gully of Hornes coppice for £128, 55 ash and 6 elms for £60 and 25 beech for £30.'[14].

Elm was used for the planks forming the base of the wagon and beech for the felloes[15]. An evocative entry in the accounts was:-

'Edward Froment of Thatcham coachmaster 81 ash for £189.'

The bark from the oaks was sold for tanning and oaks were felled in the spring when the sap was rising and more tannin was present. There was a tannery in Stanford Dingley at the time of the accounts run by Thomas Godrich and he seems to have bought most of the Bucklebury bark. This tannery was operating in the Tudor period[16] and was still in existence in 1869 when it was owned by the May Bros.[17]

The bark was stripped with a barking tool in three foot deep strips. A cut was made round the trunk above and below and then down the centre and then lifted with the tool and stripped off.

According to an old woodman the stripping made 'a terrible noise'! Incidentally the 3 foot depth was probably the origin of the term 'a yard of bark' that has been found in Oxfordshire[18]. The bark was then set up to dry in the wood usually against a framework of poles; this was often done by women:-

'1817 pd a woman for setting up bark 3 days 3s'

It was then 'housed' or 'hatched' or taken to a barn where it dried until September and then was 'shaved':-

'1813 Pd James Jerrom for shaving 2½ loads of bark (according to a woodman - probably a ton) £3.12s.6d.'

Shaving was the removal of the 'crit' or rough outer bark with choppers similar to that of a butchers. It was a very dusty job, hence:-

'Paid J. Jerrom for beer 3s.'

Bark, being necessary for the tanning process, was valuable at this time because there was a demand for saddlery and harness for horses due to the increase of traffic on the roads and also a requirement for leather equipment by the armed forces in the Napoleonic wars.

Changes in woodland practice

In the accounts at the beginning of the 19th century one can see an alteration in the management of the woods. Some of the coppices were being grubbed up and the landowners were beginning to apply a more scientific approach. In 1808 and the following 10 years county reports on woodland management were being published with the object of encouraging better woodland management.[19] To improve timber production not only were coppices being destroyed but the wet woods were being drained and replanted:-

'1819 Pd John Lawrence as bill for draining in Berry coppice 12s.'

Later the whole process can be seen:-

'1827 Pd Wm Saunders and Jas Naylor trenching in Berry coppice £2.0s.5d.
Pd Wm Dormer as bill for trees, sets etc. £26.8s.'

and then in the same year -

'Pd Jas Naylor and son planting 1 week 11s
Stephen Johnson and son 6 days planting 16s
John Lawrence 7 days planting 9s.6d.'

and then:-

'1828 Pd John Naylor and Co for banking up trees £1.'

Before this time, although there was some planting of trees. It was usually by digging up young saplings (or samplers) and transplanting them. Mostly the woods were left to natural propagation. John Evelyn in the 17th century[20] described methods of propagation and his book continued to be published into the 18th

century, but they were not generally practised. By the 1820s nurserymen were supplying estate owners and Dormer was a local one. No trace can be found of where he was situated but it was probably locally. In the accounts at this time it seems that plantations were being established:-

'1829 Pd John Albury for digging 10050 holes at 1s.6d per 100 £7.10s.9d.
Pd 20 men for planting same with young oaks as bill £7.18s.11d
Pd Wm Dormer for oak sets as bill £5.'

Whether these plantations were in existing woods or were on arable land is unknown but it seems likely, as there are also two references to men grubbing stools, that the new trees were planted in old woods. What seems to be a new crop was also being planted, fir is mentioned for the first time:-

'1820 Pd 3 men for planting young firs £1.19s.
1821 Pd John Osgood for trimming young firs and thinning same in plantation as bill £5.4s.4d.'

These trees were carefully fenced, presumably partly against rabbits and deer, sounding very much like modern forestry.

The beginning of the 19th century was one of recession. There was much poverty and hardship and the man digging 10050 holes for 1s.6d. a 100 is indicative of the lack of work and poor wages. For the first time in the accounts crime is mentioned:-

'1828 A reward to John Naylor for detecting J.Garret in stealing fences from the young trees 1s.
1830 Pd Robert Bedding for searching Sharps and Herridges houses for cutting young trees and taking them to prison.'

The wood of fencing and young trees was a temptation when heating was expensive. At this time the wages of estate woodmen were reduced from £60 annually to £40 and even the estate steward suffered - £200 per annum became £150. So it may be that despite all the new planting the woods were not paying. The steady income from the coppices may have declined due to lack of demand for firewood and the industrialisation of household equipment. Timber also may not have been so profitable although this probably did not happen until about 1850. At this point the account books finish.

After 1830 with the arrival of coal by the canals and railways, the construction of iron ships, the use of less wood in house construction and with many other factors, the woodlands value declined. Hoops and brooms were still made, hurdles

constructed for the farms and handles of all sorts required. Timber was being imported more cheaply, so although some coppices continued, the demand for timber waned and with it the prosperity of the woods. Now we walk through neglected coppices and see fine oaks becoming over mature and the banks and hedges tumbling down. Now only the plantations of conifer are showing signs of care, although some new broad leafed trees are being planted. There is just one form of coppice which is still being cut, birch on Bucklebury Common, not now for besoms, but for the jumps at Newbury race course and elsewhere.

References

1 Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland.* Arnold. 1980
2 Ibid p.396.
3 D/Ehy A17, Estate Account Book, 1812-30, Private papers.
4 A.H.Cooke, *Early History of Mapledurham,* Oxford, 1925.p.196.
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Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to George Bowman and Arthur Smith, woodmen of Mortimer, for sharing their knowledge with me and to the Thatcham Local History Society for their help.

Kitchener Battalion Project

The Royal Berkshire Regiment

The last issue of 'Berkshire Old and New' contained a progress report by Colin Fox on the Kitchener Battalions Project at Reading University. In case you missed Colin's article, the project is being run with the support of the Extended Education Studies department of the University, and has the aim of documenting the history of the three battalions of the Royal Berkshire Regiment who served on the Western front in France and Belgium during the Great War. There was a fourth Kitchener battalion (7th Royal Berks), but they served in Salonika, and are not covered by the project.

The first booklet, which covers recruitment, training, and the battle of Loos, has sold out, but has generated more information from descendants of the men who served. Our second volume was published by the University in October, and covers 1916*. The year was dominated by the five month campaign on the Somme, the opening day of which has become synonymous in our collective memories with all the futility and sacrifice of war. All of our battalions took part in the campaign, but only one, the 6th, saw action on the first day. They actually did very well, producing one of the few success stories of 1st July, taking and holding, as part of 18th Division, all their objectives near the village of Montauban in the southern section of the battlefield.

The Somme battle lasted until the end of November, a fact often overlooked by writers and television documentaries who concentrate on the tragedy of the first day. Although it failed to achieve the hoped-for breakthrough, it succeeded in relieving the pressure on the French at Verdun, and was as costly to the German army as to our own.

All three of our battalions were involved in several of its phases, during which

they sustained 445 fatal casualties. In WW1, the proportion of wounded to killed on the Western Front was usually 2:1, so it would be reasonable to assume a total casualty toll of at least 1350. At that time, the establishment of a battalion was 1000, but, as they are unlikely to have been at full strength, a soldier serving through 1916 would have seen half of his comrades become casualties - a sobering thought.

Statistics

Our data base continues to grow, and has recently been augmented by a listing from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) containing the burial place or commemorative memorial, together with details from the book of remembrance, of all Royal Berkshire fatalities of the war. This is a new service, recently announced by the Commission, and one of which we were quick to take advantage.

Although the data base was originally established as a computerised card index, to hold information on each individual as we uncovered more of their history, we have also been able to produce statistical data on a range of topics:

Prisoners of War

One large gap in our research concerns other ranks taken prisoner. Many men of the 8th Battalion were captured during the German advance on 21st March 1918, and others during the various actions of the war. A few are mentioned in the local press in late 1918 and early 1919 when they returned home, but a definitive list is hard to come by. Cox and Kings, who handled officer's pay accounts at the time, published a list of officer POW's, with date captured and date repatriated, but, so far as we know, nothing similar exists for NCO's and Privates.

Average Age

We have the ages of 1548 fatalities from the CWGC listings, evenly spread across the four years in which our battalions served. In 1915, with a rush of eager volunteers, the average age was just below 25. Fatalities included seven 17 year olds, who must have lied about their age when they joined. In the middle two years, 1916 and 1917, the average rises to 26, probably due to conscription. The casualties of 1916 included the oldest fatality, 53 year old Sgt. Frederick Hurn from Taplow, whose epitaph mentions that he served in the Egyptian campaign of 1892. By 1918, grimly reflecting the attrition of war, the average has dropped to

23, and, sadly, includes a high proportion of 18 and 19 year olds.

Year killed	1915	1916	1917	1918
No. whose age we know	259	445	377	467
Average age	24.9	26.1	26.8	23.7

Place of Burial

A sad fact to emerge from the data is that fewer than half of the men killed received the dignity of a marked grave. 1400 bodies were never recovered, or could not be identified, and their names are listed on memorials at Loos, Thiepval, Cambrai, and elsewhere. 1278 are buried in cemeteries on the Western Front, while a further 84, who died of wounds after being repatriated, are buried in the UK.

Origins

Although the Royal Berkshire Regiment was based at Brock Barracks in Reading, only a third of the original Kitchener volunteers came from Berkshire. The regiment set up recruiting offices in London and Birmingham to make up the shortfall. Regional accents must have been much stronger in 1915, which led one officer to comment, in a letter home, that any one third of his platoon could never understand what the other two thirds were talking about.

As the war progressed, casualties sere replaced by drafts from the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light infantry, the Hertfordshire Regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the Devonshire, the Hampshires, and several other specialised units, such as the Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, and the Ordnance Corps. By the end of 1917, the association with Berkshire in many of the platoons must have been limited to the name on the soldier's cap badge. In the list of next-of-kin addresses, practically every county in England and Wales is represented, plus Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Canada, New Zealand, and, curiously, Private Isaac Darvarashvili, who gave his home address as Jerusalem, Palestine, and lost his life in August 1918 when the 8th Battalion stormed the German line at Sailly-Laurette. As Jerusalem was part of the Ottoman empire, how he came to be serving in the Royal Berkshires must be a story in itself.

The Future

Work has started on Volume III of the history, which will cover 1917, and is scheduled for publication in the autumn of 1997. The three battalions experienced

mixed fortunes during the year, with the 5th taking part in the battles of Arras and Cambrai, the latter hailed as a glorious victory, which turned to disaster at the German counter-attack ten days later. The 6th sustained very heavy losses at Third Ypres, while the 8th battalion enjoyed a summer by the sea, undergoing special training for an amphibious invasion of Belgium, which never took place.

We continue to unearth original material about the men who served in the Royal Berkshires from many unlikely places, and would be most grateful for information about any relevant documents or photographs that you may have. All material loaned to the project will be acknowledged, copied, and returned with thanks.

* *On the Somme*
by Colin Fox, et al.
ISBN 0 7049 1160 4
Published by the University of Reading
Price 5.95
Copies may be obtained from: Extended Education Dept.
University of Reading
London Road
Reading

Lisa Spurrier

An Introduction to Nonconformist records for Berkshire

The history and records of nonconformist churches have often been overlooked by local historians. The *Victoria County History*, for instance, devotes 40 pages to the Church of England, and 8 to all other denominations[1], despite the fact that the Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 showed that (nation-wide) approximately half of all worshippers chose to attend a nonconformist place of worship[2], and the peak in nonconformist church membership came in c.1906.[3] I believe these omissions have coloured the received impression of ecclesiastical history in the county. What historical research has been done has most frequently been based on the experience of an individual congregation, divorced from its local, denominational and national contexts. An example of the work that can be done using nonconformist records is Stephen Yeo's fine study of the impact of religion on society in late 19th and early 20th century Reading.[4] I hope this article draws the attention of local historians to the wealth of material to be found, particularly in the records available at Berkshire Record Office. I have restricted myself to records of "old dissent", i.e. those of the Baptist, Congregational and Independent churches, as Methodist records are in many respects very distinct, as are those of the Society of Friends (Quakers).[5]

The earliest known nonconformist congregation in Berkshire is the Reading Baptist Church which later met at Kings Road, which was, according to tradition, founded in 1640, with documentary evidence from 1656. Churches founded in the aftermath of the "Great Ejectment" of Puritan ministers from Anglican parishes in 1662 included Abingdon and Longworth Baptist and Maidenhead, Newbury and Reading (Broad Street) Congregational Churches. Also dating from the late 17th century is Abingdon Presbyterian (later Congregational) Church. Nonconformity was represented in the majority of Berkshire towns, and also in a

number of villages as early as 1669[6], and believers might also be found in villages without a formal congregation. Nonconformist churches had a much wider "catchment area" than Anglican parishes; the Reading Baptists, for instance, had members from Bray, Calcot, Cookham, Goring, North Moreton, Shinfield, Streatley, Wokingham and Caversham, and a number of other Oxfordshire and Hampshire parishes.[7] Collections in Berkshire Record Office which may be helpful for nonconformist history include quarter sessions records. From the 16th century until 1689 (when the requirement was abolished by the Act of Toleration), excluding the Commonwealth period, individual dissenters were presented at quarter sessions for non-attendance at the parish church. The existence of nonconformity in particular parishes may also be recorded in the churchwardens' presentments.[8] Between 1689 and 1852 the Toleration Act required chapels and meeting houses to be certified by the relevant bishop, archdeacon or quarter sessions. Berkshire quarter sessions registrations have been indexed, and may be identified in the BRO place indexes. If a particular church is not found, it may have been registered with the Archdeacon of Berkshire [9] or at the diocesan court in Salisbury[10]. Chapel registrations after 1852 are held nationally at St Catherine's House in London. Another source for early nonconformist activity is Walker's Calamy Revised, which gives biographies of Puritan ministers ejected from Anglican benefices in the 1660s.[11]

The principal division was between those who practised infant baptism, and those who accepted the validity of adult believers' baptism only. Among the former, denominational division could be very fluid. The congregation at Abingdon, for instance, was at various times described as Independent, Presbyterian and Congregational, before becoming part of the United Reformed Church in 1972. It was subsequently to join a local ecumenical partnership with the local Methodist Church. Initially one of the factors which distinguished dissenting churches was the principle of autonomy of each individual congregation. Most Congregational churches did eventually abandon this practice; in Berkshire the significant period was the 1790s, which saw the formation of the Berkshire Association of Independent Ministers and Churches (later the Berkshire, South Oxon and South Bucks Congregational Union).[12] Baptist churches continued to embrace independence, and indeed today even those churches which have chosen to affiliate themselves to the Berkshire Baptist Association and/or the national Baptist Union remain essentially independent. In addition, there were always some churches which never

had a denominational link. Local examples include the Hosier Street Congregational Methodist Church, Reading (formed by seceders from the Reading Wesleyan Methodists), and the Fifield Village Mission, which consisted of a group of small rural independent evangelical chapels at Ascot, Fifield (in Bray), White Waltham and elsewhere. Records of such churches are less likely to survive, or to be available for research. Records of the Fifield Village Mission were deposited in Berkshire Record Office in 1996 by a former officer who had moved away from the area with the records, the mission having folded.[13]

Some smaller churches, particularly those in the hinterland of a flourishing church of the same denomination, might in fact not be independent, but a daughter or branch church. In such cases, some of their records may be found among those of the mother church. Reading Broad Street Congregational Church, for instance, was active in evangelising the villages around Reading, particularly during the pastorate of the Revd Archibald Douglas (1796-1840). He was instrumental in founding both the Berkshire Association (see above), and the Reading Evangelical Society, a joint initiative with other Reading nonconformists.[14] Among the churches planted in this way was Tilehurst Congregational Church, records relating to which are to be found within the Broad Street archives.[15]

The Records

Although each church's management practices might be different, the basic governing body was normally the church meeting. This was a regular (often monthly) gathering of all church members. It appointed church officer, usually including "deacons" or "elders", who carried out the day-to-day management of the church. Most usually Independent and Congregational churches called these officers deacons while some Baptists and most Presbyterians might call them elders.[16] Whatever the title, their functions were essentially the same. They normally met separately, but reported back to the church meeting for approval.

One class of record commonly found in 17th and 18th century nonconformist churches is the church book. This was basically a single volume in which all church business was entered, including church meeting minutes, deacons' or elders' minutes, committee minutes, accounts and records relating to church membership. It is not uncommon to find a history of the church up to the date the records commence. For instance the earliest church book of Abingdon Congregational

Church, started in 1813, includes an account of the church's history since its foundation before 1688.[17] As time went on, the church's record keeping became more sophisticated, and the levels of business increased, and separate series of records began to be kept.

The title to church property was normally vested in trustees, who might be individuals (not necessarily church members[18]) or a corporation, such as Mansfield College, Oxford, which held the title, and also the deeds, to a number of Congregational chapels. The terms of the trust could also affect changes in doctrine by the congregation. The interests of trustees and congregation could therefore conflict. Where available, trustees' records can be well worth examining. Other property records, relating to the erection and maintenance of church buildings, would normally be created at the church or deacon's level.

Surviving Sunday School records are also of great significance. Nonconformists felt excluded from the provision of education because of the established nature of the Church of England. In the early 20th century many were to follow the passive resistance movement of refusing to pay those rates which contributed to the teaching of Anglican doctrines in state-funded schools.[19] The first Sunday School in Reading was a nonconformist one, established in 1802 by Broad Street Congregational church, with a separate girls' school in 1815[20], while Abingdon Congregationalists were even earlier, with schools by 1785.[21] Before the provision of state education in the late 19th century, Sunday Schools taught literacy and numeracy as well as providing religious instruction and were often open to adults as well as children. Broad Street also pioneered local adult education in 1895 by establishing the Broad Street Working Men's College, which held evening classes in subject including bookkeeping, shorthand, music, arithmetic, writing and "duties of the citizen"[22].

Other church organisations might hold significance for the local community. Again the prime example is found in Reading, where in the 1890s and 1900s more than 400 working men belonged to the Broad Street Brotherhood Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Society.[23] Activities included annual day trips to places as far distant as Liverpool (1905), the Rhondda Valley (1906), Blackpool (1913) and Brighton (1923). In Wales they supported miners who had been "locked out" from their pits the previous year - an interesting glimpse of early union activity and working class solidarity.[24] There was also a rather less prominent sister society for women, founded after the main body had passed its peak in 1919.[25]

Registers of birth, baptism, marriage, death and burial are among the most frequently consulted nonconformist records. In 1837, with the advent of civil registration, the government required the surrender of all existing nonconformist registers, which are now held at the Public Record Office.[26] Compliance was patchy, although the benefit to nonconformists and their families in doing so was that entries in surrendered registers only were henceforth accepted as legally proven. A second collection was made in 1854.[27] Berkshire Record Office has microfilm copies of the Berkshire registers, and they are all indexed on the IGI. Researchers should note in particular that baptism entries in Baptist church registers will relate only to adults, although a separate list may have been kept of births of children to Baptist parents[28]; not all churches had their own burial ground; and between 1754 and 1837 marriages in nonconformist churches were not legally recognised. Between 1837 and 1898 marriages could take place, but required the presence of the local registrar, in whose register the marriage would be entered.

Membership records can also be valuable. They may include registers of members, correspondence relating to the transfer of members between churches in different areas, or, perhaps more interestingly, between different denominations, and even confidential reports on the spiritual standing of prospective members.[29]

Records relating to beliefs and religious services are not particularly common. For details of a church's doctrines, the best sources, where they survive, will include the trust deed (see above), and the church covenant. This was basically a written declaration of faith, often signed by individual members. Comparing covenants of different dates can identify any changes of emphasis in the church's spirituality. For instance, Kings Road Baptist Church, Reading, produced signed convenants in 1712 and 1771[30], and printed ones in 1799 and 1949.[31]

Most churches kept records relating to their ministers, particularly regarding their selection and call to the ministry, as the choice of a suitable man[32] was one of the most important issues facing nonconformist churches. A vivid example of the perils in choosing unwisely is revealed in the records of Broad Street Congregational Church, Reading, where in 1868 a dispute arose between the two joint pastors, the elderly Revd William Legg, and the Revd Samuel Clarke Gordon, who had been appointed to assist him in 1866. The trustees dismissed Mr Gordon, who denied their right to do so, continuing to act as pastor to his supporters in the congregation, and drawing on church funds. The deacons then brought a Chancery case against

him (Cooper and others vs Gordon and others, 1869), which they eventually won at the cost of considerable bad feeling and wide publicity. The congregation was split, supporters of each side producing handbills and even rather scurrilous anonymous letters during the dispute. Mr Gordon's supporters subsequently seceded from the church, and formed the Augustine Church in Friar Street.[33]

Some churches administered charities, and these records can be of interest to the more general local historian. For instance, during the severe winter of 1894-5, Hosier Street Congregational Methodist Chapel made gifts of food and coal to local people in need; their records give details of specific cases.[34]

Church magazines are always useful in that they record church activities which might not otherwise be known. Other publications may include privately published histories of the church, which may call on oral evidence no longer available.

Unlike the records of the Church of England, there is no legal requirement for nonconformist churches to maintain their records, or provide for access to them. Berkshire Record Office has recently contacted members of the Berkshire Baptists Association and the United Reformed Church, and a number of these have responded by depositing their records. Perhaps the most exciting of these deposits was that of the records of Newbury Congregational Church, dating back to 1695 - the earliest Congregational records held here, and the first Congregational deposit

from western Berkshire. The records are not catalogued at the time of writing, but should be available for research some time in 1997. It is hoped that more churches will deposit their records in future. The records of some churches are known to be held elsewhere; for instance, records of Newbury (Waterside) Presbyterian Church are held at Dr Williams' Library in London, and those of Abingdon and Wallingford Baptist Churches are at Regents' Park College, Oxford.

Finally, I hope that I have outlined the value of nonconformist records to local historians, and perhaps inspired some of you to make greater use of them.

Note: Records of Berkshire areas, formerly Buckinghamshire. are held at Bucks. Record Office.

References

1 *Victoria County History of Berkshire* vol II, pp 1-48.

2 Ecclesiastical Census returns: Public Record Office class HO129 (available on microfilm at Berkshire Record Office). Also see Kate Tiller, *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire 1851* (Oxfordshire Record Society vol 55, 1987), an edition of the Oxfordshire returns, with a useful introduction.

3 Michael R Watts, *The Chapel and the Nation:* Nonconformity and the Local Historian (Historical Association 1996, Helps for Students of History No.97).

4 S Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (Croom Helm 1976).

5 Good collections of both are however available for research at BRO; refs D/MC, D/MS, and D/F.

6 J Lyon Turner, *Records of Early Nonconformity* prints Episcopal returns of that year showing congregations in many villages, including Shrivenham, Lambourn, Brimpton and Boxford. Abingdon Presbyterians chose to meet discreetly in the nearby hamlet of Tubney (BRO D/N 1/1/1/1).

7 BRO D/N 2/8/1/1.

8 BRO D/A2 c.100-145.

9 BRO D/A2 c.163.

10 Records at Wiltshire Record Office.

11 An example is Benjamin Woodbridge, rector of Newbury 1648-1662; in the 1660s he preached at Newbury, Wantage and Childrey, and in 1672 was licensed as a nonconformist minister during a short-lived period of toleration. In 1700 his widow's house in Newbury was licensed as a place of worship.

12 The traditional date is 1796 (as stated in 1847) or 1798; it was certainly in existence by 1798. See BRO D/N 25.

13 BRO D/N 27. Records of Hosier Street Chapel were deposited more conventionally by church officers after it closed.

14 BRO D/N 11/13/1.

15 BRO D/N 11/13/4.

16 In 1972, former Congregational deacons were renamed elders of the newly formed United Reformed Church.

17 BRO D/N 1/1/1/1.

18 One of the trustees of Reading Broad Street Congregational Church at the time of the Gordon-Legg controversy was actually a member and deacon of Reading Kings Road Baptist Church. See below for further details of this conflict.

19 BRO D/N 11/14/3/3-4. Passive resisters saw their goods seized and sold at auction to pay the debt incurred. They would often buy back their own possessions, thereby in effect paying the rate.

20 BRO D/N 11/7/1.

21 BRO D/N 1/1/1/1.

22 BRO D/N 11/7/9.

23 BRO D/N 11/7/7.

24 BRO D/N 11/7/712.

25 BRO D/N 11/7/8.

26 Public Record Office class RG4.

27 PRO RG5.

28 e.g. BRO D/N 2/8/1/1, a register of births of children to members of Kings Road Baptist Church, Reading, 1735-'8'9.

29 An example of the latter is to be found in the records of Tyndale Baptist Church, Reading BRO D/N 28/1/2/6,7,9,10.

30 BRO D/N 2/1/1/1-2.

31 BRO D/N 2/9/3/1-2.

32 The first female minister in Berkshire that I am aware of was Sister Eileen Stevenson at Tyndale Baptist Church, Reading, in 1945, who was not formally ordained.

33 BRO D/N 11/10/2; records of this church are not known to have survived.

34 BRO D/N 19/11/1/1; addresses are given, although personal names are omitted.

Further Reading

Michael Mullett, *Sources for the History of English Nonconformity* (British Records Association, 1991) - a very useful introduction, with suggestions for further reading.

Michael R Watts, *The Chapel and the Nation* (Historical Association Helps for Students of History 97, 1996) - another useful introduction, particularly good on early persecution and 19th century social impact of nonconformity; poses some questions local historians may wish to consider.

R W Auster, 'Nonparochial registers and the local historian', in *The Local Historian* vol 10 no.2 (1972).

David Shorney, *Protestant Nonconformity and Roman Catholicism:* A guide to sources in the Public Record Office (PRO Readers' Guide no.13, 1996) - clear and accurate survey of the history of nonconformity nationally, with a good bibliography, as well as a brief guide to relevant PRO classes.

David Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* (Headstart History Papers 1992) - useful overview on the 19th century, with bibliography including work on the 18th century.

Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (Croom Helm 1976) - specifically relates to Reading, using records of a number of churches not deposited at BRO.

W H Summers, *History of the Congregational Churches in the Berks, South Oxon and South Bucks Association* (Newbury 1905) - includes histories of the individual churches; properly suspicious of unsubstantiated evidence.

Ernest A Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire Through Three Centuries* (London 1951) - a useful general outline, with bibliography including individual church histories.

D J H Clifford, *My Ancestors were Congregationalists in England and Wales* (Society of Genealogists 1992)- aimed at the family historian, but still helpful.

Geoffrey R Breed, *My Ancestors were Baptists* (Society of Genealogists 1995) - as above, but more informative than Clifford.

A G Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford 1934) - very useful for the early period.

A Gordon, *Freedom After Ejection* (1917) - a review of Presbyterian and Congregational nonconformity in England and Wales.

J Lyon Turner (ed), *Original Records of Early Nonconformity* vol I (1911).

I Watts, *The Dissenters from Reformation to French Revolution* (1978).

Angela Tuddenham

Early Schools in Langley Marish

By 1846, the need to build a boys' school had become apparent. As yet there was no weekday school and even if it were decided to use the Depree School for this purpose, there were far more poor boys in the parish than could be accommodated in the boys' room. Correspondence with the National Society stated that at least 70 poor boys ought to be educated.

In the 1960s the inscribed stone of the Depree Charity School was salvaged when Church Cottage, in St Mary's Road, Langley, was demolished, for the widening of the road. The building was the original charity school given by Mr Charles T Depree in 1830. In order to preserve this piece of Langley's history arrangements were made to place the commemorative stone in an exterior wall at Parlaunt Park Junior School, Kennett Road, Langley. Last year it was decided to remove the stone from the school wall and place it in the churchyard wall, opposite the site of the original charity school.

This article describes the schooling which existed in the parish of Langley Marish prior to the foundation of the school and traces its development until Forster's Education Act of 1870, which set up school boards and changed the pattern of school schooling in Langley.

The earliest indication that there was a school in Langley Marish comes from a 17th century reference to an attempt by William Cathedrall to provide schooling for children in Langley. At this date, 1692, a licence was required to teach, and as William did not have one, he was brought before the Bishop, who closed the school. The earliest evidence of a school building is found on the Langley Inclosure Map of 1809 which shows an old enclosure named 'Old House School' owned by Dr Moser Hoper. It lay just north of the Bath Road in part of the parish known as Langley Broom. The property was described as 'the old schoolhouse, buildings and yards and garden.' No other records of these schools appear to have survived, only the evidence of their former existence.[1]

In 1816 the government carried out a survey into elementary education under the auspices of the Select Committee on Education of the Poor. According to this, there were no schools in Langley and 'Some few of the poor are desirious of education, but many are indifferent, and even decline sending their children to Sunday School.' In contrast most of the other local parishes had some kind of school and the poor were keen to send their children to school.[2]

Within six years, however, Charles Thomas Depree had arrived from London to live in Langley Marish. His first home was a tenement owned by a Mr Atkins, but by September 1822 he and his wife, Lucy, and daughter Charlotte Mary Ann, had made their home in the old school house at Langley Broom[3]. He was 53 years old and had been a master pavior (one who was paid by the town to see to the upkeep of the paving stones); he had been admitted to the Worshipful Company of Paviors on 15 April 1795[4]. Now in his retirement he was to take an active interest in the development of the parish of Langley Marish and the well-being of its parishioners, and a key figure in the local community. He became a member of the parish vestry, one of the overseers of the poor and eventually a churchwarden.

As overseer of the poor, it is likely that he would have soon learnt about what had been reported in 1816 as to the lack of schooling in Langley. No doubt it was a concern which soon began to occupy his thoughts, and in 1830 he gave money for a school to be built on the waste land (once a bowling green) on the north side of the Red Lion. The land (and also the public house) were part of the Church House Estate belonging to the parish church, and was thus an easily negotiable site for a school.

He also invested £100 in stock which brought in interest at 3%, providing an income for running the school. The long low building contained two rooms, one for boys and the other for girls. A total of forty children - 30 boys and 10 girls - met on Sundays for as yet the Depree school was only a Sunday School. Forms for the children to sit on were provided by the first three half-yearly dividends. Frederick Locke was the school master in charge of the boys and his wife, Ann, was the mistress in charge of the girls; they lived rent-free in a nearby cottage.[4]

The following year, at the Easter vestry meeting on 25 April 1831, Charles Depree and John Bamford, a farmer at George Green (one of the several small villages in the parish) were elected Churchwardens[5]. The duties of a churchwarden were many and varied. They were responsible for the guardianship and upkeep of

the church fabric and church property. Amongst other things they were also required to report to the appropriate ecclesiastical court on the morals of the minister and the parishioners; to and to keep information about their parishes. At this date the Rector the Rev Charles Champnes was spending much of his time in London, leaving his curates - the Rev Zachariah Nash at Langley Marish and the Rev G A Hopkins at Wraysbury - caring for the parish. It was not an unusual situation, but no doubt put additional demands upon the churchwardens.[6]

Three years after the founding of the new Sunday School the government ordered another education enquiry. There were now five small private day schools in Langley, attended by 49 boys and 66 girls, and two private boarding schools for 50 boys, all of which were educated at the expense of their parents. Two Sunday Schools were identified. The oldest was a Sunday School run by the Baptist denomination; for 26 boys and 36 girls[7] at Colnbrook 1818, at Colnbrook, a detached part the parish of Langley Marish. The other was the Parochial Sunday School, the gift of Charles Depree, with 31 boys and 34 girls, which suggests a rapid increase in numbers.

In 1839 the Charity Commission published a report on charities and education in England and Wales. This not only recorded the gift of the Sunday School, but also praised Depree's work in the parish: 'Charles Thomas Depree is commended for his zeal and industry with which he has investigated and administered the other charities of the parish during his capacity of churchwarden.'[8]

Charles Depree remained actively involved in parish government until shortly before his death in 1837. He died on 9 September, aged 68 years. His death is recorded in the Langley burial register, but although his wife and daughter had died a few years earlier in 1832 and are given on the memorial in the church, their names are not recorded in the register and so it must be presumed that they were buried elsewhere.[9]

By 1846, the need to build a day school for boys had become apparent, as there were more boys of the poor who should receive weekday education than could be accommodated in the classroom at the Sunday School. A committee was formed in the summer to discuss and resolve how this need might be met. The members comprised the vicar, his curate and six other parishioners, each of whom were to be subscribers to the new school of at least twenty shillings during the current year. The secretary was Maurice Swabey, a local landowner and magistrate. The

members calculated the subscriptions necessary to meet the annual expenses of the new school and they engaged a trained schoolmaster. It was agreed that weekday school would begin on 29 September 1846, even though the room was too small for the purpose. The secretary therefore wrote to the Incorporated National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church - known as the National Society - setting out their problem and requesting the Society's advice on how they might obtain financial assistance towards the building of a boys' school.

[The Marish]
[Middle Green]
Langley Marish
28 August 1846

To the Revd Secretary
National Society

Sir

The above parish has been without any weekly school for the boys of the poor. During the summer a Committee has been formed. Subscriptions sufficient for the annual expenses calculated and a National Schoolmaster engaged. We shall open on the next Quarter Day but the room at our disposal built for a Sunday School is very insufficient for the purpose. From 30-40 boys would more than fill it.

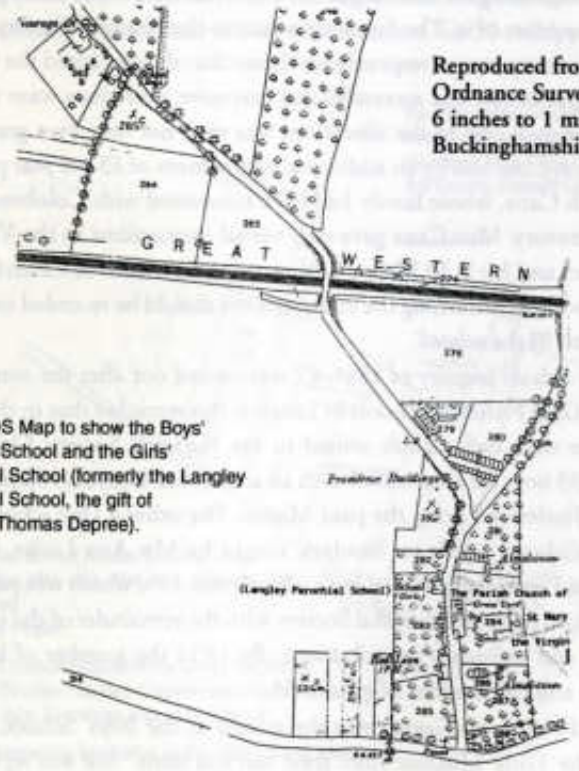
We ought to educate at least 70. It is proposed that we should give up this room to the girls school which is under the same roof and build afresh a school for the boys and a Master's lodging.

For that purpose I apply to you to know what conditions you require to be fulfilled before you give assistance or money. For any further information advice on the matter I shall be obliged to you.

Our Parish is scattered, in number 2,000 and upward of 500 of these as far as Church and School matters go are in Colnbrook where there is a chapel of ease.

(Sgd) Maurice Swabey
Sec. to Committee"

Unfortunately the vicar objected to the committee's decision and the churchwardens had to seek help from the Bishop of Oxford who enquired into the circumstances surrounding the need for the Langley Marish School. He found in their favour and so negotiations proceeded and the Committee looked for a suitable site. Mr Maurice Swabey, Secretary to the Committee, a local landowner and magistrate, gave 1 rood 12 poles of land which he owned, known as Grove Meadows, Middle Green on which to build the new school. The site was north of the Great Western Railway on the west side of St Mary's Road and by the end of the century, the Slough arm of the Grand Union Canal formed its southern boundary. The land was conveyed as a Life for a School under Act 4/5 Victoria Cap. 38 (which dictated the condition under which the land was conveyed). Maurice Swabey added a codicil to his will whereby the site could only be used for a school.



Reproduced from the 1876 Ordnance Survey Map 6 inches to 1 mile Buckinghamshire Sheet LV1.3

Part of OS Map to show the Boys' National School and the Girls' Parochial School (formerly the Langley Parochial School, the gift of Charles Thomas Depree).

The committee completed the appropriate form stating that the estimated cost of building a boys' school would be £390, which included a teacher's residence. The Parish could raise £254 11s.6d, leaving a deficit of £135 8s.6d. Donations towards the cost of the building, in addition to grants made by the National Society, included £10 from the Dean and Chapter of Windsor and £15 from the Windsor and Eton Churchwardens. The total was finally met by the National Society with a grant of £72 representing £1 for every 6 square feet of room.

At the end of October 1847, the boys' National School opened on the new site in St Mary's Road Middle Green, leaving the girls at the Depree school. Their building needed to be extended and altered to accommodate the growing number of girls in Langley, and so an application was made to unite their school to the National Society. The application, however, was held up by the Vicar who refused to sign his name requesting the aid. He gave no particular reason but stated generally that he did not approve of it. The Secretary wrote to the National Society to seek their advice and subsequent correspondence shows that they accepted the Curate's signature. The application was successful and extensive alterations were made to the building. The total cost of the alterations was met, not only by a grant from the National Society, but also by an additional endowment of £3 per year provided by Miss Elizabeth Cane, whose family had been connected with Colnbrook since the eighteenth century. Miss Cane gave only verbal instructions to the Vicar, the Rev W D Scoones and Mr R M Major, landowner and a trustee of Church House Estate, that her wishes concerning the endownment should be recorded on a brass plate to be erected in the school.

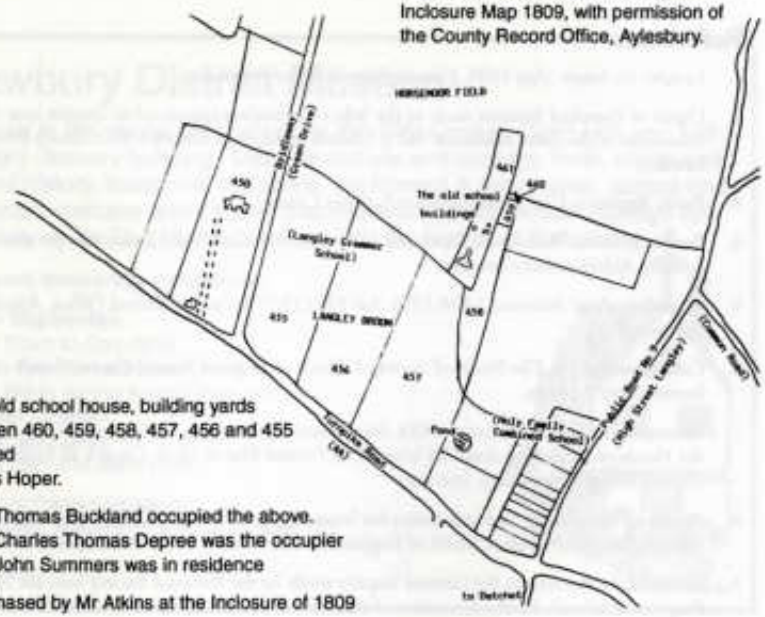
The Church-School Inquiry of 1846-47 was carried out after the completion of the Boys and Girls National Schools in Langley. this recorded that in the parish of Langley, there were two schools united to the National Society. One which accommodated 33 boys for Day school with an additional 4 boys on Sundays who were taught by Frederick Locke, the paid Master. The other a Day school for 32 girls with an additional 2 girls on Sundays, taught by Mrs Ann Locke, the paid Mistress. The total annual expense of both schools was £95, which was paid by an annual grant of £30 from the National Society with the remainder of the costs met by subscription and voluntary contributions. By 1853 the number of boys had risen to 46 boys and the number of girls to 55.

During the 1860s John Gough was the master at the Boys' School, and his wife Ann was the Girls' Mistress until their son was born. She was replaced by

Miss Margaret Blythe, who was eventually transferred with the girls to the new Board School when it opened in 1875, thus providing continuity and stability in the co-education of children. Edward Brooks succeeded John Gough in 1869. He was the last master at the Boys' National School his successor was Mr Tomkies, the first Headmaster of the Board School.

An infants school was also listed in the inquiry. At this time Mary Ann Mattingly was the schoolmistress at the infants' school which was housed in the old Poorhouse at Horsemoor Green. She was in charge and attended by 13 boys and 11 girls. The annual expenses were £20, which were met by an endowment, children's subscriptions and voluntary contributions. Six years later there were 38 infants at the school, and by 1863 Miss Mattingley had been succeeded by Mrs Pond. In 1859 a new Board School was built in Common Road for the infants, and Mrs Pond appears to have transferred to the new school. The only other school recorded in the Inquiry was a Dame school which catered for 30 children.

Part of Langley Inclosure Award Map 1809, traced and redrawn from the original Inclosure Map 1809, with permission of the County Record Office, Aylesbury.



KEY

461 the old school house, building yards and garden 460, 459, 458, 457, 456 and 455 purchased by Moses Hoper.

by 1822 Thomas Buckland occupied the above.
by 1830 Charles Thomas Depree was the occupier
by 1845 John Summers was in residence

450 purchased by Mr Atkins at the Inclosure of 1809

There was an infants school at George Green also built in 1859, where the infants were taught by Mrs Pond, until 1863, when Miss C Huggins became the mistress. In 1864 Mrs Rebecca Robbins replaced her.[10]

The Depree Sunday School building remained the Girls National School, until January 1875, when the boys and girls were united in the boys National School building, which had opened as Langley Board School the previous year, as a result of the Forster Act of 1870, which set up School Boards to provide elementary schools in areas where school provision was insufficient.[11] As with all major changes in education provision, there was the inevitable change of staff, but this Act also brought a more radical change. It gave parishes their first local authority run schools, and allowed them to use money from the rates to spend on education. This was so in Langley, but at the expense of the two church charity schools originally founded by Charles Depree. The Depree Sunday School house became a rented dwelling house. In 1881, the dividends from Miss Cane's bequest were transferred from the Church House Estate Account to the Vicar and Churchwardens, to be used to promote religious education in the parish.[12]

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10. Directories: Kelly's Musson & Craven and Dutton, Allen & Co. Bucks.
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(1) The official name of the parish is Langley Marish.

(2) Until 1856 Langley was not a parish in its own right, but part of Wraysbury Parish.

(3) This caused some difficulty in later years.

Stefan Howald

A Swiss Visitor in Berkshire

Karl Viktor von Bonstetten (1745-1832)[1] was born a member of one of the leading families of Berne, the Swiss republic which in the 18th century was a regional power of great wealth. During his studies in Yverdon and Geneva he got to know Rousseau and Voltaire, the leading figures of the Enlightenment, and greatly influenced by them, rebelled against his patrician upbringing. His father agreed to send him for further studies to Holland, from where he came to England in the summer of the year 1769.

Ever since the Swiss officer Beat Ludwig von Muralt had published in 1725 his *'Lettres sur les Anglais et les Francais'* in which he compared the English favourably to the French, there had been a steady flow of Swiss travellers to England.[2] Liberal-minded aristocrats who realised that the patrician *ancien regime* in the Swiss republics was doomed, looked to England for a political system which combined a sort of parliamentary democracy with an enlightened monarchy.

Von Bonstetten was similarly attracted by the English political system which he had studied through the works of Montesquieu. He spoke little English, however, so after a few weeks in London he travelled to Berkshire to learn the language. In the middle of August he writes to his parents that he is now staying with a "Mr Poinz" who had invited him to his home near Newbury, having made his acquaintance two years before in a Swiss town and having recognised him during a ball in London.

I have been able to identify this "Mr Poinz" as William Poyntz (1734-1809), son of the well-known diplomat and politician Stephen Poyntz (1685-1750).[3] William Poyntz went to Oxford where he graduated in the year 1760. Afterwards he took over the manor of Midgham near Newbury which his father had acquired

in 1735. Von Bonstetten writes about his host: "His wife is very agreeable and speaks several languages, his house is very well kept; he has forty horses, twenty servants, ninety hunting dogs, and three children".[4] The wife of William Poyntz was Isabella Courtenay, the three children mentioned were the three eldest daughters, Georgina Ann (1763-1851), Charlotte Louisa (1766-1840) and Isabella Henrietta (1767-1843).[5] In a family history we can find some traces of him: "William Poyntz made no great figure in the country, as his father had done, but appears to have lived quietly on his estate."[6] Another source gives a slightly more unorthodox picture of him: "He had a large property and good ancestry, but was a very eccentric master, whose pleasure it was to do nothing as other people did."[7]

In his letters to his father, von Bonstetten paints some nice impressions of life in Berkshire: "The life of the English noblemen is generally quite respectable, and there is a greatness in their manners as in their souls. ... One lives quite casually in the countryside. Breakfast is at 10 o'clock, afterwards one walks, *la toilette* is just before lunch which lasts 4 hours, then coffee will be served followed by tea, and dinner is at 11 or 12 o'clock."[8] He describes the family: "The three children, aged two, four and six, are the prettiest girls in the world, the two younger ones are always without shoes and socks, running through dew and rain as is normal in England; the oldest one of 6 years wears out of decency shoes and socks. ... The children are polite and full of respect, but still they are the friends of their parents. What a lesson for us! They are obliged always to make their obeisances to father and mother when entering a room; in the evening, the father of the house speaks a prayer with all the servants and the children, afterwards the children come one by one to make their obeisances, firstly to their father, giving him a kiss and a goodnight, then bending their knees and their heads asking for his blessing, then they go to their mother. But all this quite casual and with all the gaiety in the world. How the necessities of nature are set to fulfil when they are respectable! My soul has been moved to tears, and I have asked myself, where are the fathers virtuous enough to receive without embarrassment such homages which remind them of their duties?"[9] As relations between von Bonstetten and his father were somewhat strained, his reflection on "respectable necessities of nature" is quite clearly a critique of the patrician lifestyle in Berne.

We have already noted that Poyntz was in possession of some 90 hunting dogs. Von Bonstetten follows the fox hunt with keen interest, sometimes baffled: "Mr

Poinz has quite a big house for his dogs; they have their own kitchen, eating every day a soup consisting of a quarter of a horse and lots of flour mixed with water. The raising of the dogs costs some 100 guineas a year. Mr Poinz spends all his mornings hunting; he never carries a gun. He calls our way of hunting a chicken-hearted murder; much nobler he finds hounding the game or letting it be tormented by the dogs."[10] Indeed, William Poyntz was a famous, sometimes infamous hunter.[11] In later years, he went hunting with the Prince of Wales, the future George IV. In 1768, just before the visit of von Bonstetten, he had been found guilty by magistrates of breaching the fences to the common land near Bucklebury.[12] Later, he served as a local justice.[13] There exists a picture by Gainsborough which shows him in hunting clothes with gun and dog,[14] and in Midgham there is still a plaque in his memory.

Although enjoying life in the countryside, von Bonstetten already foresees the problems of this lifestyle: "The national debt will result in a revolution of manners; the taxes on land have the effect that it is better to place one's money in a bank than to invest it in land, which disturbs the fabric of society."[15]

Von Bonstetten stayed for about two weeks in Midgham; on the 2 September he wrote to his father from a new address in South Moreton, some fifteen miles north of Newbury where he was with a "Reverend Smithies". This was the Reverend Humphrey Smythies, born 1724 in Colchester, who studied in Cambridge from 1740 to 1744, was ordained as a deacon in the year 1746 and as a priest in 1750. In 1759 he became vicar of Blewbury, where he stayed till 1781.[16] Evidently he lived at South Moreton, some miles to the west of Blewbury, where on the 15 February 1765 his first son, Henry Yeats Smythies, was born.[17] Von Bonstetten writes to his father about life in the rural community; his host took him also on a visit to Oxford. Always keen to stress the advantages of republicanism compared to a system based on aristocracy, von Bonstetten remarks somewhat overzealously: "The seventeen colleges are not monuments of the pride of kings but to the patriotism of citizens."[18] For the weekend of the 7th September, von Bonstetten planned to visit the commemoration of Shakespeare's birthday by David Garrick in Stratford-upon-Avon, but a Swiss colleague he invited declined and he couldn't afford the trip on his own. Later, he was invited by William Blackstone, member of Parliament who lived in a big manor in Wallingford. Sometimes he is puzzled by English customs and traditions: "The English have, underneath a cold and arrogant expression, warmth of sentiment and vivacity of spirits. ... In Oxford I met an old gentleman at the sculpture gallery; I greeted him but he didn't react. I

saw him again in the street and greeted him with a kind of recognition; he looked hard at me and passed without greeting. Some hours later he spoke to me, without lifting his hat, saying in great urgency, that he was drawn to me and that I had to visit him."[19]

Having a French-speaking servant and speaking French himself, von Bonstetten was intrigued to learn of the rather mixed esteem in which the French were held. "In general I'm surprised to see in this country the adoration of French fashion and manners. Nothing is valued unless it originates from France. Only the peasants still keep the old images one had of these enemies of England. My host has told me how his parishioners were quite surprised to see the tall figure and friendly features of Jean, my servant. They still thought the French were small and meagre as pictured by Hogarth. But as a compensation the women were quite frank that they were bored by their men and that there was nothing more refreshing than a handsome French face."[20]

Sometimes, everyday life had its surprises. One of his letters was "Returned to M.Bonstetten at South Moreton near Wallingford Berks to pay Inland Postage 3d having only Paid the Foreign Postage."[21] He met some other Swiss citizens living in Berkshire, one being Etienne Naville, a banker with a house in London as well. Then again, he visited Henry Temple, second Viscount Palmerston, in his magnificent house near Windsor of which he wrote to his mother: "You can imagine the wealth of some of these noblemen when I'm telling you that some of them have 200 horses and 100 servants."[22]

He became interested in a young, beautiful, rich widow. His host, the Reverend Smythies, had pointed her out to him when she was standing at the window of her house; he discussed quite seriously with his father a possible marriage as the woman, aged about twenty years, was heir to £30,000 to £40,000. In his letters he mentions her only by her initials JL. But when he tried to get to know her he learned that "a visit to a young lady is considered as a very serious business"[23], and so he didn't want to push his luck.

From South Moreton he went to Newbury where he stayed with another "young, extremely rich widow". One evening, the Mayor of the town gave a dinner for some 300 guests. Von Bonstetten describes it in a somewhat amused tone. "Everybody had already taken his place when I entered with my tall and quite masculine widow who was covered from head to toe in silver and diamonds. ... We

sat nearly half an hour in front of a beautiful dessert just looking at it and nearly dying from hunger but nobody ate. ... Finally the music started the soup was served, everybody found his voice again and started eating. You will be surprised to learn, my dear mother, that we had to drink out of a huge bowl which I had to lift with both arms and out of which I had seen some fifty people drinking before me; that we ate without any napkin, with long forks having only two prongs with which you could pierce the big lumps of meat, and that we had to use the knife instead of fork and spoon. I cut my lips several times before I managed to eat properly. Now I take the fork into my left hand to load the knife, and I use knife and fork with so much ease that I can nearly empty a bowl of soup with them."[24] Other manners seemed to be more protective: "I was honoured to be partner of my tall widow for all the dances of the night, because it is in this country out of the question to dance with more than one woman at the same ball."[25] In the light of English manners of the time it seems possible that von Bonstetten, contrary to his belief, got something wrong and committed, indeed, a faux-pas by dancing too often with his landlady.

In October 1769, he went to Bath where he met by chance Norton Nicholls, parson and man of letters, who in turn introduced him to the famous poet Thomas Gray, author of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Young von Bonstetten would become, during two precious months in Cambridge, the last love of the ageing poet; but that is another story.[26]

After his return to Switzerland, von Bonstetten became a well-known writer, politician and philosopher; as a political philosopher he was greatly influenced by the English political system and Scottish philosophers like Dugald Stewart. But his favourable impression of England arose in Berkshire. In his old age he still remembered those days fondly: "In my whole life I have never experienced so much love as in England. That was because I loved the English nation and liberty with all the warmth of my heart, and I think my nice features may have helped as well."[27]

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1 The author of this article is writing a biography of von Bonstetten which will be published in spring 1997. Any further information relating to von Bonstetten's stay in Berkshire, or indeed England, would be greatly appreciated.

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