

From the Chair

In our 2002-3 season we are aiming to expand our activities to include a guided walk in the Burford area and a visit to the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton, in Sussex. The museum has one of the largest collections of reconstructed historic buildings in the world, and a visit there will be a highlight of our year. If there is sufficient interest, we shall hire a bus and enjoy an old-fashioned charabanc outing (though I doubt that you can still get the crates of brown ale that seem to have accompanied such trips). We shall provide further information soon.

In the coming year we may have to reduce the number of issues of 224 from four to three. Of course, if there is a flood of material from members, we can always produce an extra issue! I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Colin for his work on 224, and for somehow producing it at such an incredibly low cost. It is amazing that we can include such a high-quality journal as part of our membership fee.

Chris Day

Programme for 2002-03

- 11 September** Simon Townsend: Banbury's new museum
- 9 October** Tim Porter: Medieval women
- 13 November** Brendan DuBock: The history of S H Jones, the Banbury wine merchant
- 11 December** Christine Bloxham: Christmas customs, including a display of artefacts and seasonal refreshments

The Deddington area in historical records 1:

Medieval court records

In the last issue of 224 we gave a brief introduction to some medieval legal records as a preparation to printing a few cases featuring people from our area. The introduction was needed so that readers could make sense of a legal system that was very different from our own.

What follows is taken from the Oxfordshire Eyre of 1241. As you will remember from the last issue, the word eyre comes from the Latin *iterare*, meaning to journey. The court travelled around a set circuit, taking royal justice to the shires. This circuit, of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset and Dorset began at Oxford on 14 April 1241. The commonest civil action was that in which a widow claimed her right of dower. In No. 1 below we have such a claim, part of a dispute between two great families. The case in-

cludes a recital of the resounding language of the charter by which Henry II granted Deddington to William de Chesney. It was the de Chesney family that laid out the market place and New Street c1200.

The cases below are taken from ed J Cooper, *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241* (Oxfordshire Record Society vol 56, 1989). Page numbers are in brackets after each case.

1 Eve de Gray, by her attorney, claims against William de Dive one third of the advowson [the right to present to the church living] of the church of Deddington, a fishpond, 1 yardland [a measure of land, c25 acres], and a mill as her dower from Ralph Murdac, her former husband. William comes and says that she should not have her dower there since, he says, that in the time of King Richard she was dowered with all the lands and holdings which Ralph had... Moreover, he says that he cannot answer her without the King, since, he says, Henry II gave William de Chesney the whole of Deddington by his charter in these words: 'Henry King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, Count of Anjou, to the Bishop of Lincoln and all his justices and barons and sheriffs and ministers and faithful men of Oxfordshire, greeting. Know that I have given William de Chesney the whole of Deddington, and I wish and firmly order that William and his heirs may have and hold the whole of Deddington of me and my heirs.' Judgement adjourned. (p 56)

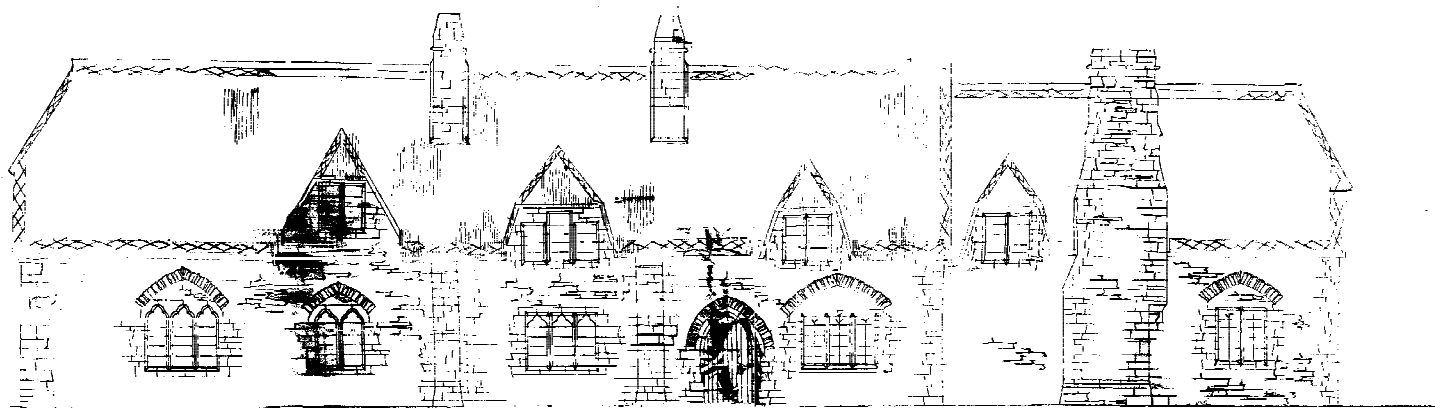
2 Gilbert son of William of Hempton gives 5 mark for licence to agree with William of Hempton; plea of assize of Mort d'Ancestor, by surety of Walter the tailor of Clifton and Henry de Mare of the same. (p 50)

[The Assize of Mort d'Ancestor required that the sheriff enquire if the



Our opening speaker for the season, Simon Townsend, opposite the new Banbury Museum earlier in the month

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153. Great Barford: Oxford: Design for Alteration of Parsonage.

G.E. Street, 21.11.1855

Researching house history

The Old Vicarage, Barford St Michael

Many of us living in the area are lucky enough to live in old houses with interesting histories. Some of these may already have been documented in published sources. For instance 'The buildings of England', universally known simply as Pevsner after its founder, is a good starting point for research. The style is terse, but in its nearly 1,000 pages in *Oxfordshire* [London, 1974] it covers huge numbers of houses. As well as all the churches and public buildings it describes a half-dozen houses in Deddington. For the Old Vicarage in Barford St Michael he does not waste a lot of space: 'Vicarage, W of the church. Originally C17, but almost entirely rebuilt by G E Street in 1856. His contribution is close to the traditional style, gables, with windows of three trefoiled lights on the ground floor and plain mullioned windows above'. Another printed source [and if your house is not mentioned it will provide many prototypes] is Raymond Wood-Jones' magnificent *Traditional domestic architecture in the Banbury region* [Manchester, 1963]. Finally there is *The Victoria history of the County of Oxford* [Volume XI, London, 1983].

If your curiosity is not satisfied by the published sources you will have to turn to the libraries and archives. For the Deddington area this means the county libraries [mainly the Centre for Banburyshire Studies and the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, though Deddington Library has, for instance, copies of the Packer photo archive in micro-

form]. For the truly dedicated there are the Oxford college archives—so much property in the area has passed through their hands and they seem rarely to have thrown anything away—and the Oxfordshire Record Office.

What you can do for yourself was clearly shown by Buffy Heywood in the last two issues of 224. A professional approach was shown in the description of Clifton Mill in the June to December 2000 issues.

My interest in the Old Vicarage springs from my work on the history of the Barfords. While working on the diocesan archive deposited in the ORO I came on two sets of documents. From a personal point of view the most interesting was the manuscript specification and drawings for the conversion of the original buildings to a vicarage by G E Street in 1855 when he was the diocesan architect. The drawings are on oil-cloth, signed by Street himself, and presumably in his own hand down to details such as the front-door hinges. The drawings are much folded and, as you can see above, were difficult to reproduce.

He was trained in the office of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, and trained William Morris who joined his office at the time the vicarage was being built. Street is most famous as the architect of the Law Courts in the Strand designed a decade later, and which, at the age of 57, killed him with overwork in 1881. He had worked on every detail of that building and personally prepared some 3,000 drawings. It was meant to be completed in 1877, but was still unfinished when he died. We may perhaps be grateful that he had not got into this, his full pointy and

stripy stride at the time he designed the vicarage. He was buried in Westminster Abbey and was said to be simply the most famous architect of his time: his funeral was almost a State occasion.

Both the Barfords have a long history of dilapidated vicarages and in the case of Barford St Michael the problem was again a running sore in the early twentieth century, leading to the present building's eventual sale by the diocese.

It was not possible to build a new vicarage if the old one was habitable and, if the incumbent had neglected it, he would be liable for the repairs.

On 20 November 1855 instructions were given to two local vicars to enquire into the state of the buildings on Barford St Michael Glebe, how long Rev Hookins had been Vicar, what he had received and if he had negligently let the buildings dilapidate.

The responses said that the Rev Philip Hookins had entered it in 1851, he had not neglected the property. However he had received £15/12/- in dilapidations from the former incumbent and spent £3/13/6 on the Glebe.

There is also a deposition by G E Street to the effect that he was experienced in surveying and valuing buildings of this type and he had examined the Parsonage House at Barford St Michael, the materials on the Glebe and the buildings.

The cottages [those to be converted to the present building] were in a fair state of repair with substantial stone walls and sound roof. Street proposed to extend it beyond the

existing buildings and take out the old windows/fittings and estimated that the cost of executing these plans was £358. There was also an undertaking by Henry Franklin [of Franklins of Deddington] to do the work as specified by 1 July 1856 for £358.

The Specification

Sadly, in those days, there was no drawing of the building as it was, only as it would be.

There follow some extracts from the specification.

'So much of the buildings at present standing as requires to be taken down in order to complete the works according to the accompanying drawings, to be carefully taken down, the materials which are fit for re-use to be cleaned & stacked for use ... The old walls where necessary to be cut away for windows & shored up, &c, so that no accidents may occur by settlement, &c. ...

'Fireplaces to be Box stone chamfered with heads &c 4" x 4" stone fenders as here sketched [there are marginal drawing in the specification, perhaps by Street]. All stone to be free from vents, shakes & all other defects. The old stone paving to be relaid in the new Kitchen & Scullery. The Hall and sitting room to be paved with Staffordshire red & black quarry tiles to be set in mortar on a bed of ashes 4" thick well rammed down over the whole surface ...

Carpenter and Joiner.

'The old woodwork to be used for lintels, joist, &c, if it is of oak & so far as it is in sound condition.

'All Windows, Doors, & other openings (where there are not arches turned to show when finished) to have lintels of oak 4 1/2" thick & longer by 12" than the openings, & as wide as the walls will admit. Where the walls are more than 9" thick the lintels may be in two thicknesses.

All the rooms to have inch skirting 8" wide chamfered on the top edge nailed to proper grounds. All skirtings to have proper ground plugs & stopping fillets.

'Doors to be hung with plain wrought-iron strap hinges, & to

have wrought-iron ring handles, plain scutcheons & key plates & 8" oak stock locks. Each door to have two 8" barrel bolts ... The stairs to have 1" Elm treads ...

'The new floors upstairs to be laid so far as possible with the old boarding from the parts of the building which are to be taken down. The deficiency to be made good with sound new boards of the same material, to be of good quality & seasoned. Floor joists upstairs to be _____ & old timber to be used as far as possible.

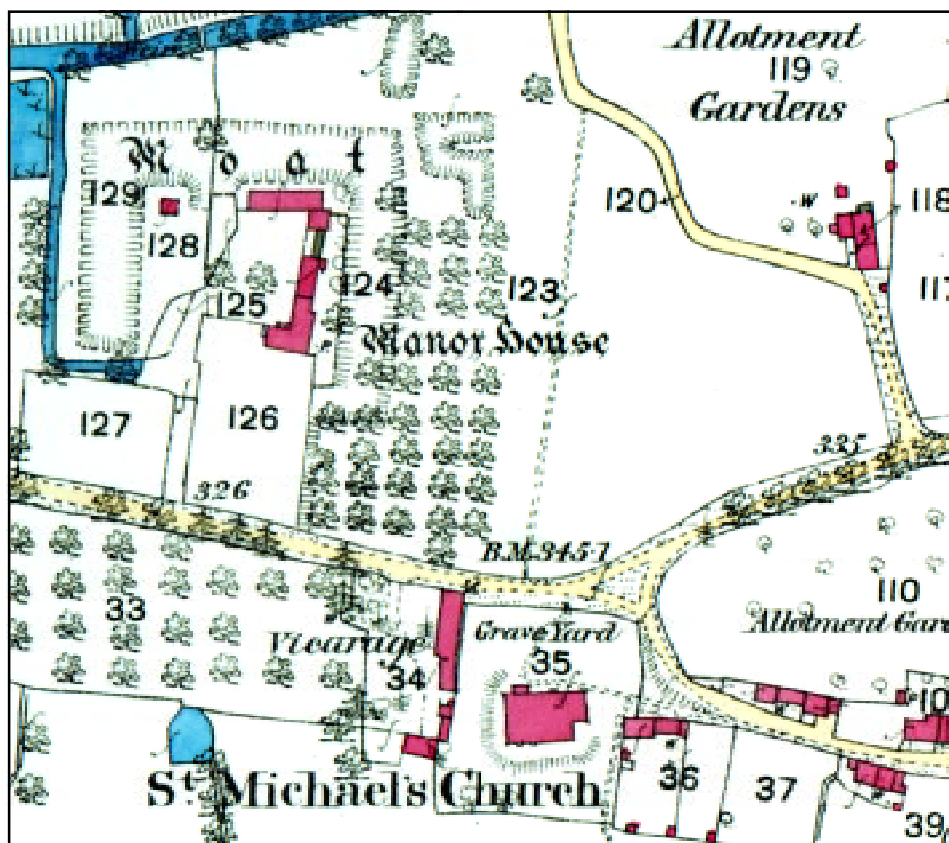
Smith & Founder

'Supply all bolts, straps, to the iron-work described or mentioned in the other parts of this Specification or shewn on the Drawings. All windows to have wrought-iron case-ments ... To be made perfectly water tight [I have a particular interest in this item as it has been impossible to make the windows waterproof, let alone draught-proof], with all proper hinges ... &c. All executed in best manner.'

Many of these features remain in place.
Colin Cohen



Above: The former [1] and present [2] sites of the Vicarage from the first edition 1" Ordnance Survey of 1833 with, below, a detailed plan from 1881. The OS drawings of 1814 appear to show two buildings on the former site.



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plaintiff's father was in possession of the property on the day on which he was alive and dead. This seems to be a family settlement. Of particular interest is the mention of a tailor in Clifton.]

3 Philip son of Rayner of Deddington, who brought an assize of Novel Disseisin against Ralph Hareng and others about a holding in Deddington, has not prosecuted; and he declared on oath because he is poor. (p 78)

[Novel Disseisin: the dispossessed holder of free land could buy a writ of ND which ordered the sheriff to summon a jury which would confirm (or not) that the plaintiff had recently been dispossessed.]

Criminal actions

The Borough of Deddington comes by 12.

[Towns were represented at the assizes by a jury of 12 representatives, who made presentments. Note that at this time jurors were expected to know what had taken place, the very thing that would disqualify them today!]

4 Robert Smith of Deddington was taken at Deddington with stolen cloth, and afterwards he escaped from the town prison and fled to the church, and he admitted the theft and abjured the realm. John of Tew, then sheriff, took 100s from the vill for that escape. Robert was in the tithing of Walter Thurugod in Deddington, so in mercy. Robert's chattels worth 4s 10d for which let William Hay the sheriff answer. (p 124)

[This is a most interesting case. We learn that Deddington was a cloth-trading centre. We also learn that Deddington had a town prison, though unfortunately we are not told where it was. Smith claimed sanctuary in the church and agreed to abjure the realm, ie he had to go

straight to a port and leave the country. If he delayed, deviated from the road or returned to the country he could be seized and hanged. The phrase 'in mercy' means that a fine will be levied, in this case on Walter Thurugod's tithing. A tithing was a grouping of 10 households, responsible for the good behaviour of each member. Most residents had to belong to a tithing.]

5 Richard le Enveyse stole some wax in Deddington church and fled to that church and would not leave. He admitted the theft and abjured the realm. He was not in tithing since he was a clerk. He had no chattels. (p 124)

6 The jurors say that Richard Buckechike and William of Tysoe and Adam le Draper sold cloth contrary to the king's assize. So in mercy. (p 124)

[Another reference to the cloth trade, and to a draper. They had probably been selling cloth other than on the set market day.]

7 They say that the church of Deddington was in the king's gift; now they do not know whether it is in the king's gift or Ralph Hareng's. (p 124)

8 Agnes daughter of Richard the miller of Barford was crushed to death by a mill wheel in Barford St John. The first finder comes and is not suspected, nor is anyone else. Judgement, misadventure. Price of the wheel 18d, for which let the sheriff answer. (p 148)

[A value was given for the wheel because it was a deodand, ie the object that had caused the death was regarded as being in some way responsible and was confiscated by the court and given to God in expiation. In effect, its value was usually given to the Church or to the poor.]

9 William son of Herbert of Bar-

ford, William le Franceis, and John Pare of the same burnt Thomas of Warblington's house in Barford St John. They fled and are suspected. So exacted and outlawed. They were all in the tithing of Alan son of Hugh in North Barford [Barford St John], so in mercy. Their chattels £7 8s 10d, for which let William Hay the sheriff answer. (p 147)

10 Maud daughter of Thory of Bodicote appealed Robert son of William the shepherd of Banbury of rape. She has not come, nor have her sureties. Robert was attached by Roger Champion of Banbury, and he [Robert] has not come, so in mercy. The other surety has died. (p 147)

[This gives some idea of how long cases could drag on. It seems likely that the case will fail.]

11 Richard son of Osbert of Bloxham fell from a cart and died. The first finder comes. No one is suspected. Judgement, misadventure. Price of the cart and 1 horse in it, 6 mark, for which let the sheriff answer. Deodand. (p 147)

12 John Grim of Milton and John of Barford killed Nicholas miller of Banbury and fled. So exacted and outlawed. John of Barford was not in tithing since he was a clerk, and John Grim was in the tithing of Hugh at Well in Adderbury, so in mercy. They had no chattels. (p 147)

[One forms a distinct impression that the Barfords were a dangerous place to live in the 13th century!]

The court cases no more give a balanced view of life in the 13th century than do the reports of court proceedings today. But there is great value in the incidental detail, and I hope you agree that these fragmentary pieces of evidence give us a rare insight, sometimes graphic, into the lives of our predecessors in this area. [To be concluded]

Chris Day

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