

From the Chair

Members might, like me, find it hard to believe not only that the Society is five years old, but that this is the 21st issue of 224. The newsletter really is quite an achievement for a young society like ours. We have managed consistently to fulfil our original aim, which was to produce issues with news and local historical articles of good quality. Colin Cohen's production skills have ensured that we have done so in a handsome package that much larger societies would be delighted to emulate. Issue 21 is worthy of celebration: it features a fascinating and scholarly account of the Leaden Porch House by its present owner, society member Jo Eames.

If 224 is to remain successful we need members to continue to submit work for publication. If you have an idea for a piece (short or long), why not have a word with Colin as to its suitability. You, too, can be a published author and the envy of all your friends!

Please note that back issues of 224 are becoming available on Deddington Online: www.deddington.org.uk/history/ddhs224/index.html

Chris Day

Programme for the 2004-2005 season

8 December: Christmas social
12 January: Edward Shawyer, Recent archaeology in N Oxon
9 February: John Maddicott, Piers Gaveston
9 March: Deborah Hayter, Ridge-and-furrow: the pattern of the plough

Our meetings take place at the Windmill Centre at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of the month during the winter season.

The Leaden Porch House, Deddington

The Great Rebuilding

Introduction—Deddington and the Civil War

'Make all ye hast you can to us', wrote the Earl of Northampton to Prince Rupert on 22 December.¹ The year was 1642 and the Earl was quartered in Deddington. Six miles to the north, Banbury was held by a Royalist garrison but the townspeople favoured the puritan cause and Northampton's scouts told him that a rebel force with 300 horse and peasants brandishing pitchforks was converging to relieve the town.

The next day the Parliamentary force arrived and, having entered Banbury, spent all Christmas Eve bombarding the castle with cannon. Other Parliamentary units engaged the Earl of Northampton's forces near Deddington and were only forced back towards Banbury by the arrival of Prince Rupert and Sir Charles Lucas, whose troops had marched through the night. Prince Rupert marched on to chase the enemy from Banbury and then rode back to Oxford to spend what was left of Christmas at the King's court at Christ Church.

During 1643 Royalist units were often billeted around Deddington and Adderbury. In May forty-six cart-loads of Royalist arms trundled past escorted on their way from Banbury to Oxford by the Earl of Northampton. In July the King's forces advanced to Banbury when the King went to meet Queen Henrietta Maria at Kington, site of the battle of Edgehill the previous autumn. In September, Parliamentary forces commanded by the Earl of Essex encroached into North Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. At Aynho they met Royalist resistance and the skirmishes continued over two days along the road from Aynho through Clifton to Deddington. Royalist forces were in Deddington again in 1644 after the battle of Cropredy Bridge, when the

King himself was billeted at Castle House.

They must have been worrying times for the townspeople of Deddington. Expensive times too. It was no small matter to feed Prince Charles' Regiment of Horse for days or even weeks. The farmers and merchants of the town would have felt the war in their pockets, if nowhere else. The parish felt it too when the King's Commissioners spotted the church bells, unhung for ten years since the church spire collapsed onto the village green. On 21 January 1643² an order addressed to 'our trusty and well-beloved subjects the Parson, Churchwardens, Constables and parishioners' required the bells to be delivered to the King's treasury in Oxford where they would be melted down for shot. The King promised a new set when the war should be won and the church spire set up again to receive them. Dutifully, the parish officers conveyed a pair of bells to the magazine at New College (and were sent back to fetch two more). It would be a century before new bells

*As we celebrate the
21st 'birthday' of 224 I
would like to thank
Dennis and Jackie
White, Peter Apps and
Julie Goodlake and all
the staff at Kall Kwik in
Banbury without
whose help and
friendship there would
have been no 224*

were cast.

The route that the ill-fated bells, the wagon-loads of arms, the cavalry, the infantry, Prince Rupert, even the King would have taken through Deddington was the main road from Oxford to Banbury. It was laid out in the late twelfth century with burgage tenements.³ They called it New Street then. They call it that today.

Of the ironstone houses that line New Street today at least two would have witnessed the military traffic of the 1640s. Plough House (long The Plough Inn) is noted for groin-vaulted cellar of fifteenth-century origin. The Leaden Porch House stands fifty yards further north, a house already more than three hundred years old at the time of the Civil War.

The Leaden Porch House—before remodelling

It must have been exciting to watch a column of horse and foot soldiers marching up New Street, or to glimpse Prince Rupert and his escort galloping back towards Christchurch. It is tempting to imagine a child or a servant peeping down from an upstairs window at the helmets and halberds jostling below.

Except that The Leaden Porch House probably didn't have any upstairs windows during the Civil War. The stone-mullioned windows that give onto New Street today were part of a major remodelling of the house that took place some time in the seventeenth century.⁴ We have no documentary evidence for the date of the remodelling but all the architectural clues indicate that it took place after the Civil War.

In his book *Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Banbury Region*, Raymond Wood-Jones⁵ considers the evidence. He finds that the period from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century was the most fertile period for new building in the Banbury region. However, in the years 1640 to 1645 (roughly the years of the Civil War) there is a complete absence of dated buildings. By contrast, the period immediately after the Civil War was extraordinarily active. In Deddington alone the most important houses were renovated and new ones built. Castle End, on the Clifton Road,

was the first non-manorial building in the Banbury region to be fitted with the new ovolo design of stone window mullion in 1647.⁶ The biggest house in the village, Castle House, was renovated by 1654. In St Thomas Street a building now known as Orchard House was built in 1655.⁷ It has windows with ovolo mullions made from ironstone on the ground floor only. After 1660 there is only one other instance of the use of ovolo mullions in a dated building in the whole region.

Another helpful feature in dating the remodelling of houses is the appearance of a basement cellar. Cellars began to be incorporated into new houses in the late sixteenth century, taking over some of the functions of the service quarters. They appeared slightly later in the Banbury region and the first dated example is in Charlton in 1637, although Wood-Jones believes they did not become commonplace in dated buildings until the 1650s.⁸ Notably, they were almost invariably placed under the parlour, which was almost always at the higher end of the house. Presumably this made excavation easier and permitted the possibility of a cellar window, as well as allowing for a smart boarded floor to the parlour rather than cold flagstones.

It cannot be said for certain when The Leaden Porch House had its make-over but, on the evidence of its new fenestration and cellar, remodelling seems likely to have taken place in the late sixteen forties or early sixteen fifties. The occupier of the house in these years is unknown. Before remodelling the house would have been very old-fashioned. Open to the timber roof-frame, with a central hearth and just one (or maybe, as at Cogges Manor, two)⁹ pairs of tall, probably unglazed, lancet windows it lacked all mod cons. In new houses, fireplaces with chimneys had been commonplace for a century. The Leaden Porch House may still have had its kitchen in a wooden outbuilding, whereas newer houses had theirs indoors. With the improvement in heating technology privacy had become more practicable and upper floors with separate chambers were the norm in prosperous houses.

In those days (as for most of its life) Leaden Porch probably existed

as a farmhouse. Deddington retained an open field system until enclosure in 1808¹⁰ and so the Leaden Porch land would have been spread around the village. The freehold interest in the house belonged to one of the village's three manorial landlords, the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. At this time the whole of the Windsor manor was leased to Thomas Appletree, the man who renovated Castle House and whose initials are on the rainwater heads along with the date 1654. It was therefore probably Thomas Appletree who was responsible for Leaden Porch. Perhaps it was occupied by one of his husbandmen, or by one of his family. Perhaps it was he who decided to modernise it and restore its status to something approaching the one it would originally have had in the fourteenth century. Interestingly, Thomas Appletree was appointed to the County Committee for sequestration of royalist property after the Civil War and was responsible for the demolition of at least two local country houses. One of these was Woodstock Manor, which was partially taken down in 1651. He is therefore likely to have had access to a ready supply of building materials.

... and after

Whoever undertook the remodelling of Leaden Porch set about it with a will. Moving through the house from north to south the builders took down the northern gable end and excavated a cellar to adjoin the top end of the hall. It must have been hard work. At least five feet of the digging was through bedrock. Over the cellar they built a new parlour with an elm boarded floor and a five-light grey limestone ovolo mullioned window and over that an upper chamber with a similar window, this time with three lights.

The old hall was fitted with an intermediate floor and huge new hearth (currently nine feet wide) and chimney stack constructed through the centre of the building on the line of the cross passage between the front and back doors. The stack blocked the light from the original tall gothic window and the house's inhabitants probably breathed a sigh of relief that the draughty old shuttered window had been replaced by the modern



technology of leaded lights.

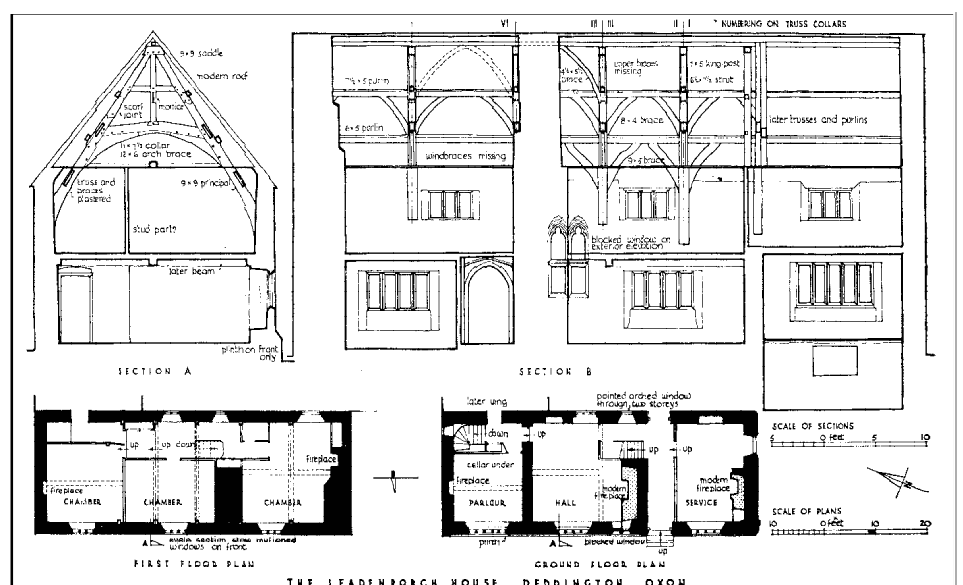
Moving south over the cross passage to the original service end it is hard to say what works took place as there was to be further extensive remodelling in the nineteenth century. This room also was provided with a stone window with ovolo mullions but it isn't possible to say with certainty whether it had five lights (like the parlour) or four lights (like the hall) or even fewer. The current four-light window is a nineteenth-century replacement and fragments of the original mullions were recently found thrown down as hardcore under the steps leading into the garden from the gothic revival French window on the south gable (see above).

To give access to the three new first-floor chambers a new staircase must have been built. The current staircase (which is Victorian at the earliest) leads up from the cross passage at the side of the main chimney stack. Its seventeenth-century predecessor may well have



done the same, although it was also common where cellars were introduced into houses for a single staircase to run from the cellar to the upper floors. Wood-Jones believed

the staircase had probably always been by the stack, although the listing notes for the house suggest that there may be the remains of a seventeenth-century stair projection in



Above: a measured drawing from Traditional domestic architecture in the Banbury region by Raymond B Wood-Jones. Top: the front and back of Leadenporch, with a detail of the gothic window referred to.

the rear wing adjoining the cellar. All the first floor chambers were furnished with three-light windows with grey-limestone ovolo mullions facing the road and the master chamber, over the old service end of the house, also had a window overlooking the garden side of the house. This window was made not in stone but in oak. But it too has ovolo mullions and it survives today.

Wood-Jones found¹¹ that it was fairly common in the eastern edge of the Banbury region (where the predominant walling material was brown stone) for window dressings to be made of grey limestone. The reverse was true in the western side of the region. These window dressings in 'foreign' stone would have been bought in from quarries, probably in Northamptonshire, on a pre-fabricated basis. Three or four light windows were the norm. Five light windows were reserved for important rooms in larger houses. Leaden Porch only has one, in its new parlour. Castle End has two, of a magnificent five feet four inches in height.¹² The one at Leaden Porch is only four feet four inches high. Whether Castle End copied Leaden Porch but went bigger and better, or Leaden Porch copied Castle End but couldn't afford to keep up may never be known.

I would like to know the name of the man who gave Leaden Porch its first and most drastic facelift, turning it from a two-unit medieval hall house into the model of a two storey three-unit house. As the lessee of the property Thomas Appletree does seem the most likely candidate, unless the works were carried out by the freeholders, the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. Appletree lived until 1666 and the evidence suggests the works had been done by then. As to who lived in the house, perhaps his name is amongst those recorded in the hearth tax return for the village in 1665.¹³ It is difficult to tell exactly how many

hearths the house would have had after the renovation—the new one in the hall definitely, one in the new parlour almost certainly, one in the service end, and probably one each in the two end chambers (the central chamber gaining enough heat from the fire below and the great stack). That would make five, the number suggested by Wood-Jones' plan of the house.¹⁴ The hearth tax return for Deddington in 1665 lists three taxpayers with five hearths: John Wadames, Richard Giles and Mathew West (although his house is recorded as not inhabited). George Elkington is the only taxpayer with six hearths and there are seven householders recorded as having four. Of these two bear the surname Appletree. Thomas Appletree, at the newly rebuilt Castle House, is recorded as having eleven hearths.

Perhaps we shall never know who carried through the renovation of The Leaden Porch House but (whoever he was) it may well be that by dragging it from the fourteenth century into the seventeenth century we have him to thank for securing its survival into the twenty-first.

Jo Eames

The writer wishes to thank Buffy Heywood and Betty Hill for their kind help in providing information on the history of Leaden Porch and would be very grateful for any other facts, anecdotes or leads anyone might possess about the house or its past occupants.

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Notes

- 1 Tennant, p 82
- 2 *ibid*, p 79-80
- 3 Deddington Map Group, p 4
- 4 Pevsner, p 571
- 5 Wood-Jones, p 11-12
- 6 Wood-Jones, Fig 65 [a convex moulding with a cross-section of a quarter circle or ellipse]
- 7 Wood-Jones, p124 and Fig 33
- 8 Wood-Jones, p104
- 9 Quiney, p 72
- 10 Deddington Map Group, p 52
- 11 Wood-Jones, pp 242, 255-268
- 12 Wood-Jones, p 261
- 13 ORS, 1940
- 14 Wood-Jones, p 32, Fig 6

What's in a name?

Barford St Michael

St Michael was a popular patron saint of parish churches. In one sense his popularity is unexpected: unlike most patron saints, he was not a real person. But his traditional role as the leader of heavenly armies and as the caster-out of Satan from Paradise attracted popular devotion. The fact that so many churches dedicated to St Michael are on hill-tops has been associated with Christian takeover of pagan cult sites. St Michael's church at Barford is on a hill, albeit a small one. Much more dramatic are St Michael's Mount and the chapel on Glastonbury Tor.

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