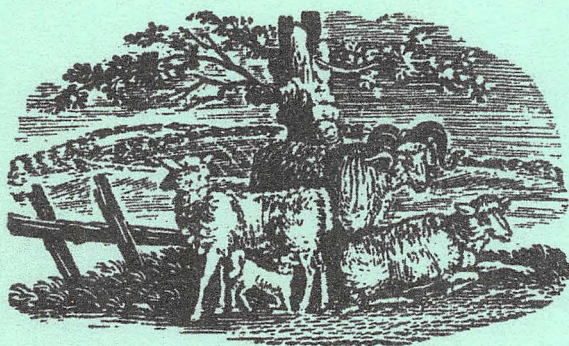


NORTH WANSDYKE
PAST
AND
PRESENT



Keynsham & Salford Local History Society

No. 8, 1996

North Wansdyke

Past and Present

Journal of Keynsham & Salford Local History Society

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Memories of a Farming Life

Reg Gay (of Church Farm, Corston)

I was born at Stapleton, Bristol, on 14 August 1914, ten days after the outbreak of the First World War. My parents were both from large farming families and were also both members of the Plymouth Brethren. Father's family members farmed in the Bristol and Harptree area, and mother's in the Calne area of Wiltshire.

The Gay family has farmed Widcome Farm at Bishop Sutton since the 17th century. This farm is the property of the Duchy of Cornwall, and my uncle Colston claimed to have had tea at the farm with four Queens of England in his house.

Grandfather Gay farmed at West Harptree and Knowle. Most of the land he farmed is the site of the large Knowle West Housing Estate, and the public house known as The Happy Landing was the site of the farmhouse. My father could remember haymaking in fields surrounding the Broadwalk Shopping Centre.

Grandfather had a large milk round in Clifton, and milk had to be delivered twice a day by horse and cart from both farms. He was thrown from a horse and trap under a tram and killed at The Three Lamps when he was in his early forties.

He left a large family; seven sons and two daughters survived, though several died at birth or in early childhood. The sons attended the Merchant Venture School in Bristol and eventually became farmers in North Somerset. Father started farming at Stapleton and supplied Mullers Orphanage with milk. The whole of this farm is now built on.

I can only assume that my father met my mother through the Brethren, as she was living 40 miles away in Wiltshire. Courting must have been quite a problem as he rode a horse to see her once a month on Saturday, staying the night and coming back on Sunday.

Mother also had a large family, most of them farmers or married to farmers. They were also very involved with the medical profession in Clifton and Redland. Grandfather Bodman's family were very involved with the Homeopathic Hospital, two of them being specialists, and at one time mother had seven cousins practising in Bristol.

In 1917 we moved to Bradenstoke Abbey Farm in Wiltshire. Parts of the Abbey had been converted to living accommodation. The two reception rooms were very large and were situated above the crypt, with its large gothic arches. The tower and the crypt arches still remain. In 1920

the Abbey was bought by the American millionaire, William Randolph Hurst, who intended to take it to America. He was refused permission by Parliament to remove it to America, and eventually it was taken to Porthcawl. The main part of the Abbey is now the Assembly Hall of the International College, St. Donats.

I remember having an operation on the kitchen table in the Abbey to remove a splinter of bone from my thigh. This was performed by the local doctor Watson and his assistant, who arrived in a pony and trap.

I also remember a plane landing in a field of corn. This was a very rare sight during the First World War, and the whole village turned out to see it. As the corn was almost ripe father was not at all happy to see his crop being flattened!

After a few years at Bradenstoke we moved to Showell Farm, Lacock, near Chippenham. This farm was on the Sackham Estate, owned by the prominent racehorse owner, Lord Glanely. I do not remember very much about this house, except the bathroom seemed to have the biggest spiders in the bath that I have ever seen!

We had a maid named Kathleen, who had a passion for men in uniform. The double deck buses had just started running past the farm, and on Sunday afternoons, when she was supposed to take me, my brother and sister for walks, we were treated to rides all round the area on the top deck, while she was having an affair with the conductor below. Her next boyfriend played in the Salvation Army Band, which meant that we had to follow them round the nearby town of Chippenham.

As children we had two donkeys named Michael and Neddy. Michael would allow you to ride him and would trot very fast in a small trap, but Neddy just refused to move when you got on his back and tipped you off over his head as many times as you got on him. The blacksmith in Lacock used to start swearing as soon as he saw us bringing Neddy to be shod. The blacksmith's shop is now converted into a bus shelter and Lacock is now a National Trust village.

In 1924 father bought Tockenham Court Farm, Lynham, for £8500. It was a very productive, mainly grass, farm with 30 acres of woodland. It had a very big house and a lot of the farm buildings were thatched. There were lots of quite large ponds on the farm, all of which were a real haven for wildlife of every description. As boys, life never seemed to be dull. We were lucky to survive, as we took great risks going out on the ponds in half a barrel to get moorhens' and other birds' eggs.

This was the time of the 1920s depression, and money was very short. Farmers had the reputation of being 'careful', and father was no exception. I cannot remember a voluntary payment from him until I left home to get

married. Many farmers were going bankrupt, including some of my relations. In those days there was a lot of stigma and hardship to those unfortunate to be in that situation.

My parents' religious beliefs caused us teenagers many embarrassing moments, as they regarded everybody not of their faith to be likely to have a bad influence on us. Cinemas, theatre and wireless were all banned; cricket was allowed only if there was no haymaking or harvesting to be done. The only girls who were acceptable were those of the Brethren faith, so that gave you a very small field. One of father's sayings was 'How do you expect to work if you are running about half the night after those wretched girls?'

I am afraid Father's strict attitude made us children very dishonest. We had to resort to all sorts of ruses to get out at night. Fortunately he went to bed early, and we often pushed the car out of the garage and down the drive before starting it. There was a dense shrubbery on the lawn, in which we hid a ladder to get in through the bedroom window. I remember coming home from a dance and just getting into bed when he came in to call us to go milking!

Father and Mother slept in a large bedroom at the top of the stairs. One of the stairs about half way up creaked badly, and I remember standing at the bottom, wondering how to avoid this trap. Father snored very loudly, and if he stopped you knew that he had heard you and there would be trouble in the morning.

In those days there was very little employment other than on farms and in domestic service. I remember one girl who worked as a domestic servant for us for many years. She came from a large family; her father was a shepherd on a farm about five miles away. Although she worked very hard, and long hours, she played with my brother and sister and me, and seemed happy and content despite only seeing her family for a short while every week. She was a very pretty girl, and rather fond of the opposite sex. If my parents were away she was not averse to the young man on the farm tumbling her in the hay, or cuddling behind the dairy door.

I have vivid memories of attending religious meetings at Calne. On Sunday mornings a communion service was held. At this service, children were allowed to sit with their parents until they reached a certain age. After this, if they had not committed themselves, they had to sit behind a board situated towards the back of the room. This board stated that unbelievers should sit behind it.

My brother, two cousins, and I could not wait to get away from the eagle eyes of our parents. On the first occasion we had this freedom we pinned three old ladies to the seat with drawing pins and they were

unable to get up to sing the next hymn. This meant that we were sent to bed without any lunch. Fortunately father always went to sleep after his meal, and mother would often bring us some food.

Our first journeys to Calne were by horse and trap. There was a very steep hill, and we children often had to get out and walk to lighten the load for the horse. We later had a Ford T, and often had to turn round and go up this hill in reverse gear.

We later had a Bull Nosed Morris. This was an open car with celluloid side curtains. On market days the back seat was removed and calves were taken to market. They very soon put their heads through the flimsy side curtains, which meant that we children were almost frozen in the back.

One of the advantages of being on a farm was that there was always plenty of food, even if you had none of the modern facilities of today.

Walter was very good to my brothers and me. He never complained about the extra work he had inflicted on him because, when father went out for the day, we were off enjoying ourselves. With the family's weekly grocery order Walter always had a round tin of 50 Wills cigarettes, which he made last the week. If my brother and I asked for a cigarette, he carefully cut one in half for us.

I remember a terrific row involving the Crayfords; father was accused of telling one of the neighbours that he thought our Else was pregnant. Her brothers loyally defended their sister and said she was a good girl and would not do anything like that. Unfortunately our Kinsy arrived a few weeks later, and a local youth was accused of being the father. As it had come to light that our Else had not been quite as good as her brothers thought, the Magistrates dismissed the case. This must have been quite a burden on the family, as social security was unheard of in those days.

The Crayfords lived in a cottage on the drive leading to the farm. The local baker delivered bread to them on the way to our house, but soon found it was safer to deliver ours first. Mrs Crayford, a very aggressive woman, would be waiting for him on the way back to bombard him with what she claimed were stale loaves.

The farm workers were very dependent on the produce from large gardens, and I always felt very sorry for their wives and children, especially if the husband drank.

The local pub was the 'Duke of Beaufort', and as I remember it only had wooden benches to sit on, with containers under them filled with sawdust to act as spittoons. As the landlord kept pigs, the only topics of conversation were hunting and pigs.

We started our education at Miss Reasons', a small private school in Calne. After a short time we transferred to a small Dame School at

Hilmarton. This school was run by Miss Orchard and her niece, Miss Carrie. They were very religious and put great emphasis on good manners and respect for royalty. About 20 children, mostly farmers' sons and daughters, attended the school, about half of them weekly boarders. I and my brother Jack and cousin Gerald shared one bed. One night Gerald had an accident in his pyjamas and, as he had no spares, he had to spend the night in a large pair of Miss Orchard's bloomers!

For a short time, due to the depression, I went to the village school. The Headmaster was Mr Willoughby, known as Fogger. He was also the Church organist and collected the rates. The other teachers were both farmers' daughters, a Miss Webb and Miss Mifton. I was in Miss Webb's class, and I think that I learnt more from her than any other teacher in my school life. This was the only time that I really enjoyed school.

Some years later, after cycling ten miles to learn dancing, I went to a dance in the village school and danced with Miss Mifton. Although dancing was banned by my family, I was so excited I could not resist telling Mother. I remember she did not reprimand me as I had expected.

In 1935 Father sold the farm for £7000. This, after 12 years of occupation, indicates the state of farming and lack of inflation at that time. Our next move was to Twerton Farm, Bath, which we rented from Mr Malcolm Carr, the owner of Carr's Cloth Mill. When we moved the animals were taken by train. After morning milking the cows were walked to the station and loaded up for Bath. From Bath they were driven along the Lower Bristol Road to Twerton, which caused some traffic problems even in 1935. We got to Twerton Farm in time for the afternoon milking. I am afraid my brother and I were not interested in the viability of the farm. Our main interest was in how far the garage was situated from the house, so that we could use the car to enjoy Bath's attractions.

We were really enjoying ourselves for some time, until one of Father's religious friends asked him what his car was doing outside the Assembly Rooms at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Twerton Farm was about 300 acres in 1935, and extended up to the Hollows at Southdown. In about 1940 Bath City Council made a Compulsory Purchase Order against Mr Carr, and eventually built the Whiteway Housing Estate and Redland Park on the land.

The blitz on Bath took place while my parents were living in the house, which eventually became a doctor's surgery. A bomb dropped in the churchyard opposite and a tombstone landed in the hall, making the house uninhabitable for some time.

Mr Carr was a very good landlord and very fair, but he expected the rent for his properties to be paid as soon as it was due. He owned several

rows of terraced houses in the area, and his method of rent collecting was to send his gardener every Monday morning to call for the rent. If anyone failed to pay, he called every morning until the poor tenant was shamed into paying.

When I took over the farm from my father I was a month late in paying my first half year's rent, and I remember taking the cheque to the house. His comment was 'Do you realise it is now only five months until next rent day? Had you paid earlier it would have been six'.

The land at Twerton was being reduced all the time by the encroaching city, and in 1947 I was fortunate to obtain the tenancy of Church Farm, Corston.

This farm was on the Duchy of Cornwall Estate on which my ancestors had been tenants for many years. The formalities for obtaining a farm in those days were very minimal compared with today. Major Roberts, the Land Agent, came to look over my wife, the house and farm we were occupying, and asked me if I had the finance to stock the farm. I did not have a quarter of the amount he thought was necessary, but, as my father had to guarantee the rent for two years, he must have thought I was a reasonable risk.

On leaving our house it was agreed that we should each have two days to consider the proposition. He said 'If you decide to take it, don't write a long epistle, just put yes or no on a piece of paper'. Within half an hour of leaving the house he rang to say that he was willing to accept me as a tenant. That was the beginning of many happy and interesting years in the village of Corston.

The Newton Estate was bought by the Duchy of Cornwall on the death of Lord Temple in 1941. Over the years it had been reduced in size due to farming depressions. The rents for the farms would not support the lifestyle of the aristocracy of the day. Most of the residents of Newton St Loe were employed on the Estate as household staff, woodmen, gardeners and gamekeepers. The village of Newton almost closed for the grouse shooting season, when a special train was hired to take them to the Scottish estate.

During my time in Corston I have seen many changes, including the closure of the school, the loss of the rectory, and the building of the Meadlands Housing Estate. Many of the residents of Meadlands were living in an ex-army camp at Ashton Hill until about 1950, when Bathavon Rural District Council decided to rehouse them. It was first proposed to build 17 houses at Newton and 17 at Corston. Eventually it was found to be more economical to build them all at Corston, where there were more facilities than at Newton.

When we arrived in the village, the hanging tree still existed, surrounded by a six-foot-high wall that obstructed visibility for motorists. The original tree had died, and there were quite high elm suckers growing there. The roots of the trees were pushing the wall down, and a Parish Meeting was called to decide its future. It was a very stormy meeting, some residents wanting it removed completely. Eventually I think a very good compromise was arrived at, and we have what is now quite a nice feature in the village.

The Church and Rectory played a very important part in village life at that time; the Rectory lawn and house were ideal venues for social functions.

The village had no mains water, and relied on a local supply from tanks fed by springs on Ashton Hill. Some of the larger houses were connected to this supply, but many people had to collect their water from standpipes in various parts of the village. I do not think the water would have complied with present environmental standards; there were often complaints, and on one occasion it was reported that maggots were coming from the taps. This was eventually traced to a sheep having fallen into the catchment tank.

My farm transport at that time was a very old Austin van, purchased from a dubious dealer on the Upper Bristol Road for £12. Corston had many 'characters' at that time, including one I will refer to as 'Mr F', who was a farmer and dealer. He was always driving his animals through the village. I remember one occasion when my van would not start, and the Rector and I were exploring its innards when Mr F came by. He commented that I had a very good assistant, and would not be able to cuss him if he did not get it to start. After Mr F left, the Rector informed me that Mr F was a very interesting man, and on occasions revealed his innermost thoughts to him. He also told me that, when he was driving his animals through the village, if they went in the wrong direction we had to endure gross language, but if they behaved we were treated to the most harmonious hymn singing.

On another occasion he went over the white lines at The Globe and was fined £5. A few days later he committed the same offence, and was caught by the same two local policemen. They adopted an officious attitude by demanding his name and address; his reply was 'You silly buggers, you have only to turn back two pages and you have it all there'.

It was said that, after appearing several times before the local Magistrates for riding a bicycle without lights, the Chairman said 'We seem to be seeing rather a lot of you recently, Mr F'. His reply was 'I hope you have reduced fines for regular customers'.

In 1947 there were 22 men working on farms in the village. There were five dairy farms producing milk; these have now been reduced to one dairy farm employing two men and producing more than the five did. At that time there were two shops, two bakeries and an off-licence. St Teresa was a private house, with another large house in the grounds, facing the village green. This was demolished when St Teresa became a nursing home.

A large proportion of the village was then occupied by farm or ex-farm workers; now it is largely a commuter area. Hill House (now Temple Court) was one house that employed a large staff, and two houses on Ashton Hill were built for them.

One of the fields on the farm was known as Coffin Field, and I can only assume that a coffin had been found there in the past. This arable field must have been ploughed hundreds of times by horses and the very light ploughs of the day. The first time we ploughed the field with a heavy tractor plough it must have penetrated deeper, and took the lid off another coffin. The Bristol University Archaeological Society took a great interest in it, and suggested that as it was very well carved it must have contained an important Roman soldier.

Soon after arriving in the village we attended Corston Church, and I happened to sit with the late Mr Alec Blackmore, who was then Churchwarden and Chairman of the Parish Council. He suggested that I should become a member of the Parish Council, and I have been privileged to have been a member until today.

For many years I have represented the village on the old Bathavon Rural Council, and on Wansdyke Council since it was formed in 1973.

The Common Meadows of Keynsham

Barbara J. Lowe

The geographical position of Keynsham at the confluence of the Rivers Chew and Avon, with the latter's wide valley, wooded slopes and the very rich meadow land bordering the River Avon which flows to the north of the town, has attracted human settlement from very early times. Wide beds of alluvium have been deposited by the Avon's sinuous channelling between the lias beds over the centuries, the largest of these beds being within the northward loop forming an area which we know as Keynsham Hams. Lesser alluvial deposits on the Keynsham side of the River Avon are within the much smaller loops at Broadmead and Steadham to the east.

That Prehistoric Man passed through the Avon valley here is evidenced by the quantity and variety of artefacts recovered in the vicinity. On the edge of the Avon's steep gorge near Brislington (ST63587043) some 20 Palaeolithic axes and flake implements were recovered, and on Durley Hill (ST640696), mid-Acheulian chert, bifacial axes. I, personally, found a number of Mesolithic flint blades on the northern side of Keynsham Bypass NW of Durley Hill (ST643697). The Neolithic is represented by flint and quartz axes and flints, including a leaf-shaped arrowhead (ST64746810, ST66266754, ST655684 and ST655695).¹

The higher ground of the Hams was chosen by both Iron Age and Roman settlers. A large Roman Palace was situated on the site of Keynsham Cemetery and extended under the adjacent 'new' road of 1822. (Notice how the older Bristol road, the loop past the former Stockwood Vale tannery, carefully skirted the Roman Villa.) A smaller Roman building, with bath suite, was found during the construction of Fry's Number 2 factory unit in the 1920s, and more recently, in 1991, the existence of an extensive Roman settlement and road was revealed just NW of the main office building. These buildings were on Lower and Upper Dry Leaze (the 50 foot contour) (see Fig. 1).

The Romans called their settlement here 'Trajectus' (*Britannica Antiqua*), denoting a river crossing. Perhaps the present name of our town derived from our Ham. Hamme can mean low lying meadow land and ham or hame a homestead, manor, estate or village. The earliest known spelling is Caegineshamme, found in Aethelward's History, under the date 871 AD. So perhaps our town belonged to the Saxon, Caegine. In 1086 the spelling was Cainnessam; in a charter of 1150 it was

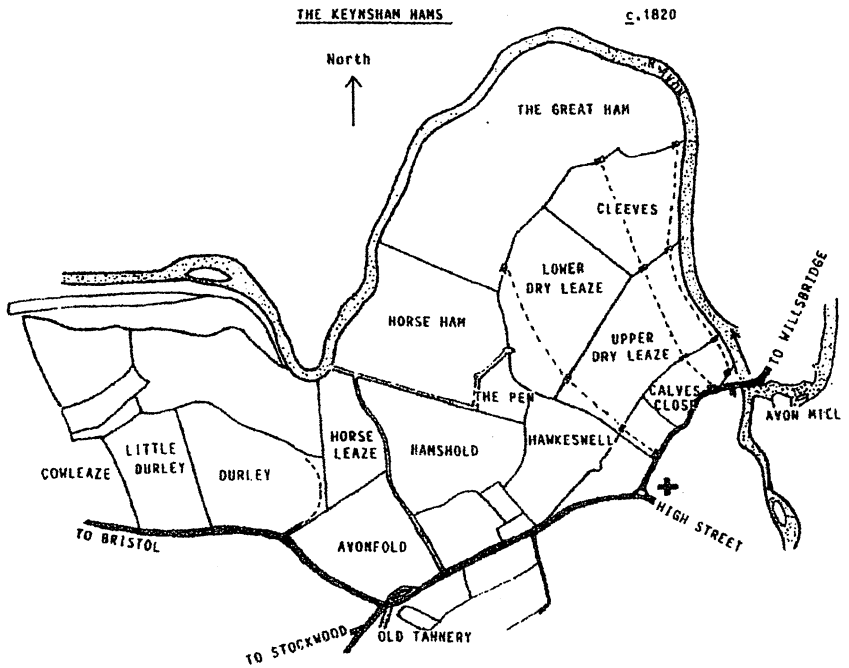


Fig. 1

Kineverdesham; in 1250 Canesham, and there were other later variations. There was a very lively newspaper correspondence in *The Bristol Times and Mirror* of May 1907 regarding the exact pronunciation of Keynsham—where should the emphasis lie? Should it be Keyns-ham or Keynshum? Kayn'zzum had the last word!

Of Saxon Keynsham we know little. There was certainly a settlement here and probably a Minster, but its location is unknown at present.

Keynsham was a Royal Estate, and subsequent to the Norman Conquest it became part of the large Honour of Gloucester. In c.1167 the Manor and Hundred of Keynsham was given to the Abbey of Canons Regular founded here by William, 2nd Earl of Gloucester. Thus the Abbot was Lord of the Manor.

Crop rotation may well have been introduced to England on the Roman agricultural estates, but medieval land management and cultivation was based on an open field system and was of a co-operative nature. Usually the land of a Manor was divided into two or three 'fields', each of which was cropped for two years and left fallow the third. In Keynsham the

Abbey farmed the best land, and the principal open fields were Upfield, Westfield, Middlefield and Downfield. A tenant's holding usually consisted of a virgate or yardland which was made up of strips in the various fields. The size depended on local custom and the quality of the land.

The Court Leet administered the regulations regarding the ploughing and harvesting of these fields—a communal activity.

In addition to these arable fields, there was usually a stretch of woodland or waste ground on which a tenant had the right to take wood (fire bote) and, as in Keynsham, a common withy mead, common grazing land and hay meadows in which tenants had proportionate rights of grazing. Overgrazing of pasture land had resulted in the introduction and practice of 'stinting' (restrictive grazing) from the 13th century. In the post-medieval period the actual regulations were drawn up by agreement with the strip owners themselves.

Unfortunately, few records have survived relating to local life in the medieval period. Bearing a still familiar local name, John Panter, in 1534, was granted the office of sub-Seneschal (steward) for life, and in 1538 he became 'generosus' for the whole grange for a term of 80 years. Also in 1538, jointly with his son, he obtained the office of bailiff of the Hundred. In 1544 the lease of the site of the monastery was granted to him. In 1553 Sir Thomas Bridges bought the site and much property of the Dissolved Abbey, including common of pasture upon the downs of Eastover and Westover and all pasture and waste lands within the same. In 1744 the Bridges' estate passed to the Duke of Chandos (in 1822 Chandos and Buckingham). The estates were sold and resold, piecemeal, between 1841 and 1858.

In 1613 Ann Whitmore bought the Manor of Keynsham, including land in Broadmead, Downfield, Middlefield, Upfield, Westfield and in the Ham. Samuel Parsons, Robert Randall (senior and junior), Andrew Innys (who married the daughter of Robert Randall junior) and Martin Innys, were her Stewards from c.1640 until after 1734. These early stewards had the lease of Rook(e)hill Farm (Wellsway) and the Randalls are believed to have lived and worked there. (Please see a description of this farm at the end of this paper.)

On 14 December 1752 Thomas Pitt, then acting as Lord of the Manor, held Court Baron with William Swinton as his steward. The Whitmore estates were sold to Arthur Greenwollers in 1767, who immediately resold parts of it, the remainder being bought by Edward Lyne in 1768. In 1817 Edward appointed John Lintorn Simmons as his steward, then Robert Clarke in 1827 and Edward King in 1842. The last of this family sold the Manor and the estate to R. D. Commans in 1895.

It is from documents relating to these purchases and subsequent leases and sales, that we have some knowledge of local agriculture.²

The Great or Common Ham, Broadmead and Stidham were the common meads or meadows of Keynsham. Different customs and regulations applied to the various meads.

The Great Ham

The first specific mention of La Hamme occurs in the Ordination of the Vicarage of Keynsham in 1308, whereby the Vicar is to receive a load of hay from 1 acre of the meadow called La Hamme.

The area shown in Fig. 1 is generally referred to as Keynsham Hams. The plan shows the layout before 1820, with field names. In deeds and leases (e.g. Harry Bridges to John Pinker in 1723) a condition states that no part of the area is *ever* to be ploughed, broken up, sown, or tilled, on penalty of what was then a large fine of £5 an acre.

In the area named The Great Ham various tenants had the right to the first shear or mowth of grass each year. In 1790 John Allison, James Dorey, and George Daniel, who each had a 1 acre strip, had this right.

The regulations here stated that all cattle had to be removed before the first Monday after the 6th April each year. The grass was hayned or hained up for mowing and the hay had to be harvested before 10th August. The right of pasturing from 10th August to 6th April belonged to certain tenants only. Manorial records 1631 to 1721 show that the size of doles on the Ham varied from 3 farandels, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, 1 acre, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 2 acres to 3 acres, and were held by copyhold or 99 year leases. The still well-known Keynsham names of Cattle, Eston, Flower, Ford, Hitchman, Lyne, Pinker, Pearce, Rawlins, Ring, Selden and Tether are mentioned.

In the records of the Bridges family, strips in the meads are referred to as 'doles' with no indication of their size. In some Manors these were allocated by lot or rotation but we have no knowledge of methods used at Keynsham. The word 'dole' can also refer to demense strips in the common mead. These latter were usually mown by certain tenants in return for customary privileges, for example, mutton, cheese and some hay. The doles, or strips, were separated or demarked by merestones with the owner's name or initials on them. The 1904 OS 25" to mile map for this area shows merestones still then remaining in the Great Ham and in Broadmead.

Renowned for its sheep and wool, Keynsham was granted a regular Thursday market and an annual three-day fair on August 15th by Edward I in 1303. This grant was confirmed in 1463. Elizabeth I also confirmed it in May 1574, and may have added permission for the second fair, which

is recorded in the list compiled by the Royal Commission in 1792, as being held on 25th March, the festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Commission also listed a third fair at Keynsham, on 26th and 27th April. In 1785 the August fair was noted for cattle and cheese, and a separate grant allowed roundabouts. By 1888, there seems to have been only the August fair. The weekly market, of course, continued until 1975. From 1923 it was held on the site now covered by HomeAvon flats.

Keynsham's old Market House stood in the middle of the High Street opposite Victoria Methodist Chapel but was knocked down in 1822 during road improvements. By 1622, the once thriving wool market was very depressed but Keynsham's corn market was thriving. In November 1729 Keynsham's market prices were published in the *London Weekly Journal* and were well above the average, which for wheat was £1.4.4d a quarter (8 bushels), i.e. 3s.0½d a bushel. Here, wheat fetched 5s to 5s.6d bushel, old beans 4s a bushel, new beans 3s a bushel and malt 4s a bushel.

The *Bath Journal* of 1 May 1775 advertised the Keynsham Upper Hams as being remarkable for cleansing and fattening horses and colts which were to be taken in from Monday 1st May, as usual, for 12 shillings a month. One shilling was to be allowed to the smith for pulling off and putting on the hind shoes. Bleeding and best of farriery and good care taken. This was not on the Common Ham but on the slightly higher ground of Hamshole, Horseleaze and Horse Ham.

In the 1780s Collinson's companion, Edmund Rack, noticed the fine, rich meadows bordering the Avon which were then feeding a great number of horses and cattle, and particularly sheep. He also remarked that corn was grown on the good stony soil but that agriculture was not generally well managed and not many turnips were grown for winter feed. The main crop, woad for dyeing, was sent to the Frome and Shepton clothmakers and the dry salters in Bristol. (There had been a wool and cotton spinning factory in Temple Street but it had closed down in 1794.)

Again, on 26 April 1806, *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* advertised 'Grass for horses. The Keynsham Hams will open on 1st May, for reception of horses at 28 shillings a month. Pay on entry'.

Records of named Bridges Estate tenants are not available until 1781, when we learn that 27 tenants shared 41 doles in the Ham. These were Francis Adams, Thomas Boulter, Peter Buck, John Bullen, John Church, Samuel Cantle, William Daniels, Daniel Durbin, Elizabeth Drake, Richard Eddolls, John Emery, Mr Lyne, Mr North, William Morley, Daniel Merriweather, William North, Ann Pinker, James Porter, Samuel

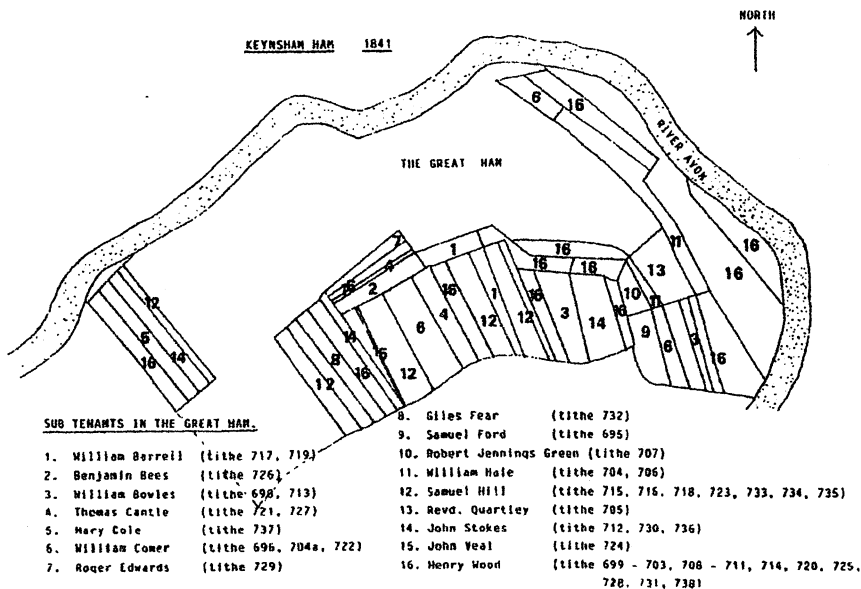


Fig. 2

Rawlins, John Rumsey, William Racker, Rachel Racker, William Saunders, Elizabeth Stephens, Samuel Skene, James Thomas, and Arthur Taylor.

The 1841 Tithe map gives 45 doles (tithe numbers 695 to 738). By the time the whole former Bridges estate (by then, Duke of Chandos & Buckingham estate) had been fragmented and sold (1858/9), the rights to most of the doles in the Great Ham had been purchased by J. and H. B. Smith, although still leased, mainly to members of the Wood family. The pasturage from 10th August to the first Monday after 6th April belonged solely to the Smiths (see Fig. 2).

In 1839/40 the GWR line was constructed through the Hams, mainly on an embankment, partly in a cutting, and the Willsbridge Road was diverted to pass closer to Keynsham Station. In the late 19th century villas were constructed on part of Calves Close, Pool Barton, and the site of the old Abbey barn.

In 1922 J. S. Fry & Sons bought up the whole of Keynsham Hams north of the railway line, including the remaining common rights.

Part of the site, the Great Ham, Horsham and part of Hamshold, is still used for rearing sheep.

When the area's mills were still working, the Hams probably did not flood each year as they often do now, in spite of extensive drainage schemes.

Today, the fate of the Hams is in the balance. The Great Ham is in the flood plain of the River Avon and Lower Dry Leaze cannot be developed because of its proven archaeological importance, but Upper Dry Leaze and Calves Close are subject to a current planning application.

Broadmead

Geologically, the River Avon here (ST675686) has crept towards Broadmead and Stidham over the centuries, giving rich alluvium on its north side at Holm Mead, near Bitton. Nevertheless, the small westerly loop contains rich meadow land and formed one of Keynsham's Common Meads.

An agreement was reached between tenants of Broadmead on 14 May 1736 regarding a stint. The gates to the mead were to be opened on the Monday after Midsummer's Day for taking off hay, then to be hained up until the Saturday before Keynsham Revels (15th August). Then to be shot for 3 weeks, no longer, then hained up until 16th October and afterwards to be shot for a fortnight with cattle as follows: 1 horse, 2 oxen, 2 milch cows, 3 two-yearling beasts, 4 yearlings and 8 calves to an acre. The mead then to be hained up until 17th November and then shot with 2 sheep to an acre until the last day of February. The ground to be cleared and everything to be taken out before 1st March.

The regulations for this mead were revised, re-asserted and fully defined at a meeting of the landowners held at the Lamb and Lark Hotel on 22 August 1854.

'We, the undersigned do agree that the following ancient rule of the mead be strictly kept and that the following persons be appointed Stewards of the said mead: Charles Harris Wood and George Chappell.

Rule 1. That all stock of every description be taken out of the mead on every 12th of March and the hayward do lock the gate and keep the key.

Rule 2. That the gate shall not be opened for any purpose between the 12th of March and 14th June and as soon as the hay is carried the gate to be refastened.

Rule 3. That the gate be reopened on the last Saturday in August for the purpose of shutting with cattle on which day every landowner will be entitled to turn in the said mead for every acre of land, 1 horse, 3 beasts, 4 yearlings or 8 calves for 3 weeks and then to be taken out and

the gate to be refastened for 5 weeks and then to be reopened for the purpose of shutting with cattle the same number as before for 2 weeks and then to be taken out for the season when the gate will be refastened.

Rule 4. That the gate will be reopened on 20th November for the purpose of shutting with sheep at which time every landowner will be entitled to turn into the said mead for every acre of land 2 sheep or couples until the 12th March next ensuing. New Rule 5. That all strayed cattle found in the mead will be impounded and 1d per head charged also 1d for every score of sheep or any number under a score.

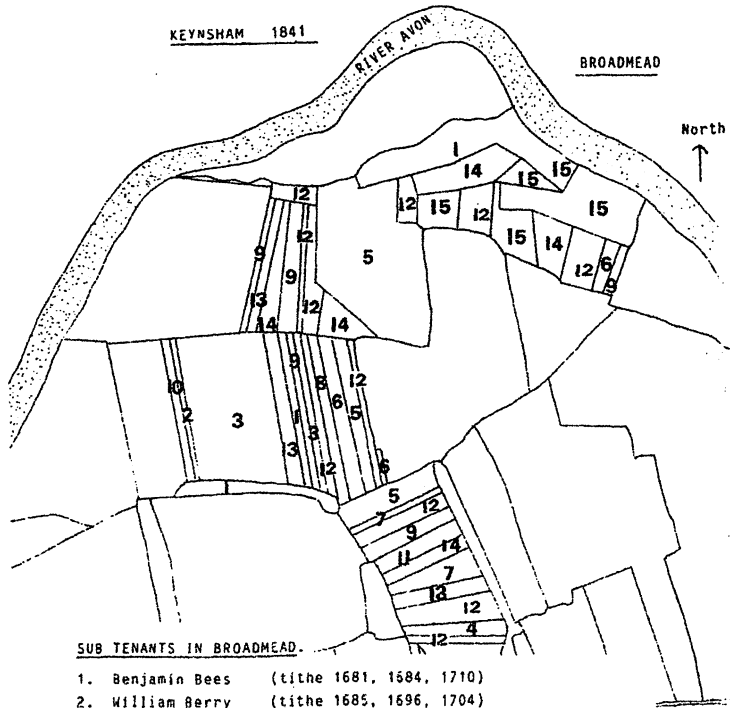
Signed: George Chappell (Chairman), Charles Harris Wood, Henry Richardson, John Gerrish, George Cattle, John Bees, Silas Phillips, James Light.'

The original grant of the Manor of Keynsham to Ann Whitmore, 1613, entitled the Lord of the Manor to half the aftermath (remnants of a hay crop used for grazing) in Broadmead. The manorial records 1672-1718 name five tenants with doles (or shotts) in Broadmead. They were: Thomas Eston who held 2 acres 1 farandel in 1672, Hester Ring who held 1 acre 1 farandel in 1682, Mary Pearce and Deenes Selden who each held 1 acre in 1718 and Thomas Ford who held 1a 1 rood in 1718.

In 1781 these Bridges tenants held 62 doles between them (size not stated): Bees, Blinman, Boucher, Boulter, Buck, Bullen, Daniels, Emery, Fawkes, Ford, Friend, Harding, Hitchman, Mereweather, Mills, Morley, Oldfield, Purnell, Pyes, Racker, Selden, Seymour, Shepherd and Stephens.

In the Tithe survey of 1841 there were 56 doles (tithe numbers 1663 to 1711) between 16 owners: Baynton, Cattle, Feoffees, Great Western Railway, Harris, Lyne, Milward, Oldfield, Peters and Neat, Quarman, Rumsey, Smith, Thomas, Tomkins, Whittuck and Wood (see Fig. 3).

In 1908/9 an interesting case was heard at Bristol County Court, which appertained to Keynsham's manorial rights and common rights in Broadmead. Plaintiff Ruddle against defendant Cooper. Henry Cooper, a painter of Keynsham, assisted by William Chapman, a groom, had destroyed fences erected on Broadmead by Robert Ruddle and impounded his cattle and sheep. Mr Harford Lyne, then aged 85 years, gave evidence that his father had been Lord of the Manor for 40 years until his death in 1868, when he himself had inherited the title. After 20 years he sold the Manor to Robert Dyer Commans of Bath (1889). His father had held a Court Leet at the Lamb and Lark in 1849 when Edward King of Bath was the Steward. Mr Harford Lyne had held no courts himself and had allowed his rights to go into desuetude. Only the office of Hayward and Poundkeeper was continued.



SUB TENANTS IN BROADHEAD.

1. Benjamin Bees	(tithe 1681, 1684, 1710)
2. William Berry	(tithe 1685, 1696, 1704)
3. William Bowles	(tithe 1679, 1683)
4. George Cantle	(tithe 1663)
5. Joseph Cantle	(tithe 1672, 1675, 1698)
6. John Cantle	(tithe 1673, 1676, 1705)
7. John Cronin	(tithe 1666, 1671)
8. Robert Green	(tithe 1677)
9. James Hale	(tithe 1669, 1680, 1690, 1693, 1706)
10. James Light	(tithe 1686)
11. William Perry	(tithe 1668)
12. John Stokes	(tithe 1664, 1670, 1674, 1678, 1688, 1689, 1694, 1695, 1699, 1701, 1707)
13. John Tomkins	(tithe 1665, 1682, 1691)
14. John Veal	(tithe 1667, 1692, 1697, 1703, 1709)
15. Samuel Wood	(tithe 1700, 1702, 1708, 1710a, 1711)

Fig. 3

The (Bristol) Court established that John Chapple had held the office of Hayward and Constable some 60 years ago until the County Police came. Then James Dorey, thatcher, was Hayward and Poundkeeper until his death c.1891, then Mr Buckingham, followed by James Godfrey, haulier, and then, the present one, Henry Cooper. The manorial Hayward

and Poundkeeper had *no* jurisdiction over the common meads or fields. Only a Steward or hayward elected by the tenants of the mead could enforce the regulations, and he was entitled to a shott/shutt in right of his office.

Mr J. E. Commans stated that he was joint Lord of the Manor with his brother under his father's Will. He had deeds back to 1613 which were a translation of the original written in French. He did not own any part of the mead because Harford Lyne sold it to Bush.

Mr H. E. Bush of Chard gave evidence that c.1887 his father purchased about seven-eighths of the shuts or slacks in Broadmead. The Plaintiff, Robert Ruddle, of Prospect Farm, Keynsham, rented these from Mr Bush, and acting on the instructions of Mr Bush senior, had erected a wire fence to divide off the western half of his holding in Broadmead in 1894.

Ruddle said the land had been exceedingly swampy, with no ditches or rhines, when he took it over and he had put these in himself. He paid £118 per annum rent for 30 acres of land. As the largest land holder he acted as Steward. He had purchased all the aftermaths except from the one plot of E. J. Bath (owned by Wood) who would not sell. There were then only three other strip owners apart from Bush, and these were Cooper, Alfred Wood, and Budgett.

Judge Austin found in favour of Cooper because it was illegal to fence off any part of common land and all cattle were entitled to graze freely over the whole mead. Eventually, all the shotts and aftermaths must have been purchased by one person because the common rights died and the land is now privately owned, but I know not by whom. At all events, the strips have gone and the common lane to them is now private and has been extended northwards, partly skirting the old strips and partly through them, to the old Polysulphin Works.

Stidham or Steadham

This was a much smaller mead than the others. The regulations here stated that the meadow was to be hayned up from 10th April to 10th August, with the right of cutting hay only. The pasturing rights, 10th August to 10th April, belonged solely to the Bridges' estate.

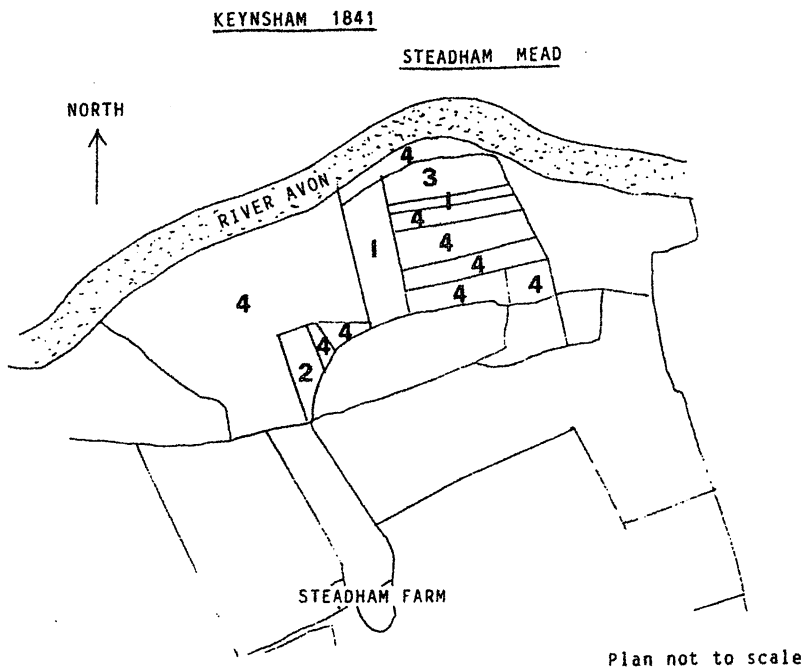
In 1651 we only know of Thomas Shepherd who held 1 acre in Stidham mead. In 1781 8 doles are mentioned, two to John Bullen, one each to Joseph Kelson, Thomas Mills, Rachel Racker, Mary Seymour, Samuel Skene and Elizabeth Stephens.

In the 1841 tithe there were 14 doles, all owned by the former Bridges' (Duke of Buckingham and Chandos) estate, but leased to seven different people, including the Feoffees (see Fig. 4).

By 1913 all these rights were being bought up by the owners of Stidham Farm. All the merestones were removed c.1971 because they got in the way of the plough. We think Stidham Farm was built after 1767, and in 1777 it had 36 acres of land. By 1976 there were 183 acres.

All this area is now used for large scale commercial fruit farming and there is a privately owned riverside trail.

Study of various descriptions for the sale of the Keynsham farms in 1889 and 1895, shows that blocks of doles in the Ham, Broadmead and Stidham meads had been incorporated with the holdings of the larger farms. There had been a land tax, initially 4 shillings in the pound, from



SUB TENANTS IN STEADHAM MEAD.

1. William Berry. (tithe 1783, 1786)
2. Josiah Cantle (tithe 1789)
3. William Hutchins (tithe 1784)
4. Samuel Wood (tithe 1778-1782, 1785, 1787, 1788, 1790)

Fig. 4

1692 until 1832. In 1892 there was a revised land tax until 1949. In the 19th century the 'gate' (number of beasts allowed to graze doles) was calculated by reference to the amount of land tax paid by each farm.

Rook Hill Farm.

This farm is the one on the west side of the Wellsway overlooking the Chew valley. It was restored some 20 years ago and is now divided into three dwellings. The original farm house is labelled 'Rockhill'.

Quoting from the sale of Keynsham Manor of 1889, the farm was described as a convenient Homestead with Garden, Paddock and Orchard and various closes of arable and pasture land totalling 127 acres and also timber valued at £114.17s.0d. The house consisted of Parlour, Sitting Room, Kitchen, two Back Kitchens, Dairy, Larder, large Cellar and China Pantry with six bedrooms over. The farm buildings comprised Cow Shed to tie up 13 cows, Trap House, Boiling House, Barn, Chaff House, Stable for 6 horses with loft over, Wagon House in field, Cart House, Open Shed and Yard. Today, much of the land is covered by the Chandag Estate.

Notes

- 1 *Gazetteer of Sites* kindly supplied by the President of KSLHS, Charles Browne.
- 2 E. White, *Keynsham and Saltford: Life and Work in Times Past, 1539-1945* (1990), Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society.

References

- Elton & Costelbe, *Royal Commission on Markets and Fairs* (includes 1792 and 1888 lists).
- Hulbert, *A Survey of Somerset Fairs* (1936).
- Keynsham Tithe survey and map.
- Friar, S., *Batsford Companion to Local History* (1991).

Acknowledgement

I am greatly indebted to KSLHS. Archivist, Margaret Whitehead, for assistance with this article and for access to the archives of our Society which provided much of the relevant information.

Keynsham Great Park

Barbara J. Lowe

The local possessions of Keynsham Abbey included 'Hankcliffe Woode' next to the Avon in 'Westhannan', twelve loads of firewood annually out of 'Filwoode', an underwood called 'Ilsyngrove', free warren (the right to kill and keep beasts and game) in all their lands lying in (Queen) Charlton, a walled pasture called 'Wynterleye' in which was their rabbit warren or conyger,¹ and a pasture called 'Keinsham Park', with free warren, free chase, free preservation and hunting of deer and every liberty of a park within that pasture.²

Attempts to identify the location and original extent of these areas today have been frustrated by disafforestation, enclosure and the alteration of boundaries and field names over the years. Originally lands were identified just by position, type of terrain, acreage, name of owner or occupier (or of a previous one), or its position relative to the land of others. For example, in 1308 the Vicar of Keynsham was to have 'culture in the field of Keynsham which extends in length from the land of John Smallcube unto the land of Richard the Cook, and in breadth between the way which leads to Fylton and the meadow called Stobbesmead'.³ Not until the Tithe Survey of 1841 was each field and house given a number on the Tithe Map.

At present we have historical references to three different Keynsham Parks, three Park Farms, two Lodge Parks, a Long Park, a Little Park, a Great Park, Saunders Park, Park Close, Park Corner and two rabbit warrens. This article is the result of research into which of these was where and when.

All that remains of the Abbey's Handcliffe or Hamcliffe Wood is Cleeve Wood, on the Hanham side of the River Avon, opposite the Great Ham.

Ilsyngrove fortunately still appears on current OS maps as Isyngrove, although obviously depleted and reduced in extent. Underwood was valuable for feeding deer, and in 1238 the Abbot was allowed to have a ditch around the thickets of Ilsyngrove. The approximate location of Filwoode is marked on Donne's map of 1769, to the NW of Whitchurch, but the original size of the wood is now unknown. In 1550, when leased to Sir John Sharington, it was assessed as 140 acres.⁴ Norden, in his survey of 1615, stated that he could not find the extent of Fillwood, but Depositions affirmed that deer from Kingswood Forest roamed across the Avon as far as Dundry. Also, that four areas still then retained the name

of Fillwood and they were originally one large impaled area of 249 acres, but Hugh Smythe senior kept the park for six years and then disparted it and took the pales to Ashton Court. Norden thought that Bedminster, Bishport, Knowle, Whitchurch and Norton Malreward were formerly within the perambulation of Fillwood Chase because all those places paid (or should pay) 32 shillings yearly for wood-lease-silver, supposed to belong to Bristol Castle.⁵

As for Wynterleye, the site of the Abbey's rabbit warren, this is almost certainly in the area still known as Conygar, on the west of the River Chew below the Hospital (Tithe 1153 to 1157). There was another warren to the north of Chandos Lodge but this is likely to be post-medieval.

The Normans introduced rabbits into Britain during the 12th century. The adults were known as coneys, hence conyger (or conygar) for the warren. At first the rabbits found the climate in Britain too severe, and the ground was often too hard for burrowing, so they had to be supplied with food in winter. Medieval warrens were usually on common grazing land or near deer parks, surrounded by a hedge and ditch or, as at Keynsham, walled.⁶ In 1280 the Abbot obtained a licence to inclose a 'several pasture called Wynterleye, within the Chase of Bristol, with a stone wall, to make a rabbit warren'.⁷

Post-medieval warrens, pillow mounds, perhaps 100ft by 30ft, (sometimes called burys or berrys) were artificial burrows provided to encourage breeding. A long iron auger may have been used to bore out tunnels within the mound. Some were still in use up until the last century. Rabbits were 'protected small game' and tenants were not allowed to kill rabbits on their land until after the Ground Game Act was passed in 1880. Franchises of free warren were abolished by the Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act of 1971.⁸

There appears to be a pillow mound to the north of Conygar Farm, but extensive disturbance of the whole area, caused by 19th century lime kilns and quarrying, has masked the evidence and no surrounding stone wall is now visible. When Conygar Close was sold to Thomas Hargrave of Yorkshire in 1549, no mention was made of the wall.⁹ However, the Will of Valentine Saunders, 1669, stated that the ground called conigar was then surrounded by a stone wall. I think we may safely accept this as being 'Wynterleye'. The Conygar lands were originally two closes but are represented on the Tithe map by plot numbers 1153, 1154, 1156, 1157. In 1792 these 35 acres were owned by Harry Baber (who had married Ann Saunders) and tenanted by Hannah Ford, but the lease was sold to Thomas Lawes. The farm had not been built by 1819, and in 1861 there is only mention of a lime kiln and quarry in the occupation of

William Young. The farmhouse was built by 1866, and in 1909 Mary Martin sold it to Joseph Gifford.

Today, we know of three different Keynsham Parks. Our most modern one is the Memorial Park occupying the old Abbey precinct, west of the River Chew. This became the Home Park of the Bridges Family when they restored and enlarged the Abbot's Hall on the northern part of the site (just east of Station Road Bridge, and now destroyed by the bypass).

The second park, now known as Durley Park or Lodge Park, was north of the old A4 by Durley Hill and extended to the River Avon. It was emparked, probably by Sir Thomas Bridges, in the mid-17th century. (It is shown as an enclosed park on Donne's map of 1769.) A deer park was then a status symbol, and a wealthy family had to have its own deer park and hunting lodge. In this area the deer population had been decimated by the hungry Civil War armies and local coal miners. So much so, that in 1669, the King ordered the re-stocking of Filwood and Kingswood Chases, and Sir Baynham, the Ranger, released 500 deer there.¹⁰ Perhaps Sir Thomas followed suit.

There was once a monument on the east wall of the South Chancel in Keynsham Church dedicated to a servant of Harry Bridges. It read:

'The Park-Ward Henry Boucher lieth here, Who a good Woodsman were to choose a deer, And valiant also to defend his Game, Against invaders whensoever they came.'

In a Bridges family deed of 1728, a pasture named 'Cowleaze' (Tithe 783) and the adjacent 'Dry Lands' were mentioned as being used to supply deer in the park with hay. Ann Whitmore bought 'Cowleaze' and the Durleys as part of the Manor of Keynsham in 1613. She leased the land to Nicholas Lacy in 1615, so Sir Thomas Bridges must have bought it from her when he made his deer park. In 1858 'Cowleaze' had been recently drained. The 1966 roundabout at Hick's Gate partially destroyed this land but the new Ring Road there has completely obliterated it.

In 1839/40 the former deer park was bisected by the railway cutting, the deer having long departed. The park recently has been bisected again, and its old walls destroyed by work on the Hicks Gate to Warmley section of the Bristol Ring Road.

The third park, 'Keinsham Great Park', was the oldest and most important of Keynsham's parks. Its former general location is indicated by the few field names that survived until the Tithe survey of 1841; 'Great Park', 'Little Park', 'Long Park', all being in the vesica-shaped area between Charlton Road and Parkhouse Lane. This may not have been the full extent of the original park, because the several fields named 'Leighs' (derivation of leahs) to the west indicate areas of cleared woodland (see Fig. 1).

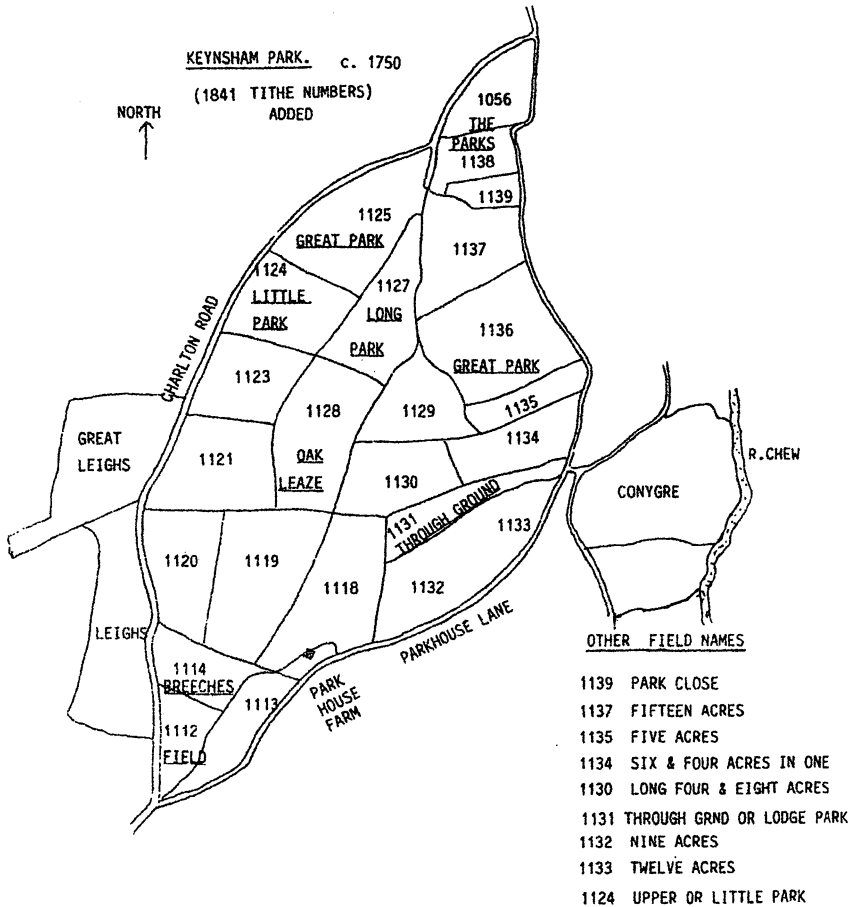


Fig. 1

Whilst researching the history of Keynsham Abbey I found that little was recorded about this ancient park. For some 300 years writers have argued about whether any of the Abbey's woods, thickets and parks were within the Royal Forest of Kingswood, or within Bristol Chase, or neither. Bristol and its castle, woods and chase, were originally part of the Honour of Gloucester. When William, 2nd Earl of Gloucester, endowed Keynsham Abbey with part of this Honour, he included local woods, pastures and park land. These were necessary for everyday living—firewood, building timber, pasture for beasts, cover, and food (vert) for deer and

small game. Unfortunately, when John of Mortain became Earl of Gloucester, he obtained the Castle of Bristol and its Forests and Chase, and refused to relinquish them when, later, he became King. In 1207 he granted the fee farm of the town of Bristol to its Burgesses, but the Castle remained a Royal possession, as did the baliwicke of the Barton, the Chase of the Brul of Keynsham, and Furchis wood.¹¹ Technically, it included that given to Keynsham Abbey, so successive Abbots had to prove their ownership at enquiries set up by successive Kings. In 1218 Hugh de Vivon was appointed Constable of Bristol Castle and Warden of the Forest. Later that year he was ordered to deliver up to the Earl of Gloucester (Gilbert de Clare) the Barton of Bristol with Furchis Wood and Keynsham Chase, as being part of the Honour of Gloucester. He refused to obey the mandate, which was repeated in June 1219 and again in May 1220 without success. This time he was given 40 days to obey or all his lands would be seized until the mandate was obeyed. It appears that he acquiesced. In 1224 Henry III appointed Ralph de Willinton, Governor of Bristol Castle, as Warden of the Forest and Chase of Keynsham.¹¹

To obtain a clear picture, one has to envisage Kingswood Forest covering an immense area, mainly north of the River Avon but possibly partly on the south side too. This was not a forest of trees, but a large area of mixed countryside; heath, moor, water meadows, woodland, cleared land, waste ground, and enclosed land, etc. Strict laws applied to Royal Forests. Poaching or removal of timber was punished by fines or imprisonment. Dogs could be 'lawed' (mutilated) or their claws clipped to prevent them injuring deer. The purpose was to preserve the deer (red, fallow and roe) and wild boar, and the young saplings and undergrowth that fed them.⁶

In 1228 a Charter of Henry III decreed that all the woods, towns, and lands within the former Kingswood Forest be for ever disafforested. A portion was left as a Chase, that is, a hunting ground subject to Common Law as opposed to Forest Law. Common Law was just as strict in protecting deer and vert, but sanctions were limited. This Chase appears to have encompassed 3,432 acres in Bitton, Stapleton, Mangotsfield, St Phillip's and St. Jacob's parishes in Bristol, and apparently part of Filwood as well.¹⁰ Probably, part of Filwood and Keynsham Park were not included, because in 1238 the King ordered the Constable of Bristol Castle to allow the Abbot to have a ditch around his thickets in Isingrove. King Edward I stayed at Keynsham Abbey for several days in September 1276. Obviously the Abbot managed to verify his rights because, one month later, the King ordered Bartholomew Jeovene, then Constable of

Bristol Castle, to allow the Abbot to 'fell trees in Filwood, which is in the King's Chases of Kingswood, without view of the Forester, provided the King's deer may enter and leave freely as before'.¹

Amusingly, in January 1285, the King's deer broke into the Abbot's park and, after most of the deer had been recovered, the King granted the Abbot a licence to enclose his park and keep the rest of the King's deer left within.¹

The Chase of Filwood was quite distinct from the Abbot's deer park off Charlton Road. A deer park was intended primarily for breeding and raising deer, and was usually enclosed by a substantial earthen bank and ditch with a palisade (a ring fence of upright paling). The Abbot must have reinforced his enclosure with stone walling because Leland, in 1535, as he travelled from Keynsham to Pensford, recorded that there was 'a park of the King's walled with stone hard without Keynsham'.¹² Traces of the wall remain. We know that it also had a bank around at least one side because, after a massive landflood in early July 1768, Lays Lane was badly damaged, and the banks had to be thrown in and the hedges grubbed out in order to widen the road.¹³ (Lays Lane was the upper part of Charlton Road bordering the Leighs (Lays) fields.)

After the Dissolution and death of Catherine Parr (who held the Manor of Keynsham), the lands were split. Sir Thomas Bridges bought much of the Abbey property in 1553, but not the major part of Keynsham Park which was already in the long-term tenure of Sir John Seintlowe.

Our knowledge of this park is limited. Until recently we only knew of one Lodge Park; the one at Chandos Lodge. The chance discovery at Somerset Record Office (T/PH/tm) of a transparency showing a plan entitled 'Kensham Park in Somersetshire', together with a reference to 'Somerset Lodge Park in Keynsham, lands of William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, Close Rolls 1652', caused great consternation. The plan bore no relation to that of Chandos Lodge Park, even allowing for the changes of 350 years. After considerable research and re-examination of numerous documents, reference to another Lodge Park was found in leases of the Bowles family. Eventually, it transpired that the Cavendish lands represented over half of the assessed original 250 acres of Keynsham Great Park. The plan is most interesting because it shows field (or Close) boundaries, names of tenants and also includes some symbols that I believe indicate areas where male and female deer were bred and raised (see Fig. 2).

It is probable that Red Deer (4ft tall) were being bred here. The stags and hinds naturally live in separate groups for most of the year. The rut is mid-September to mid-October and the calves are born May to June. The

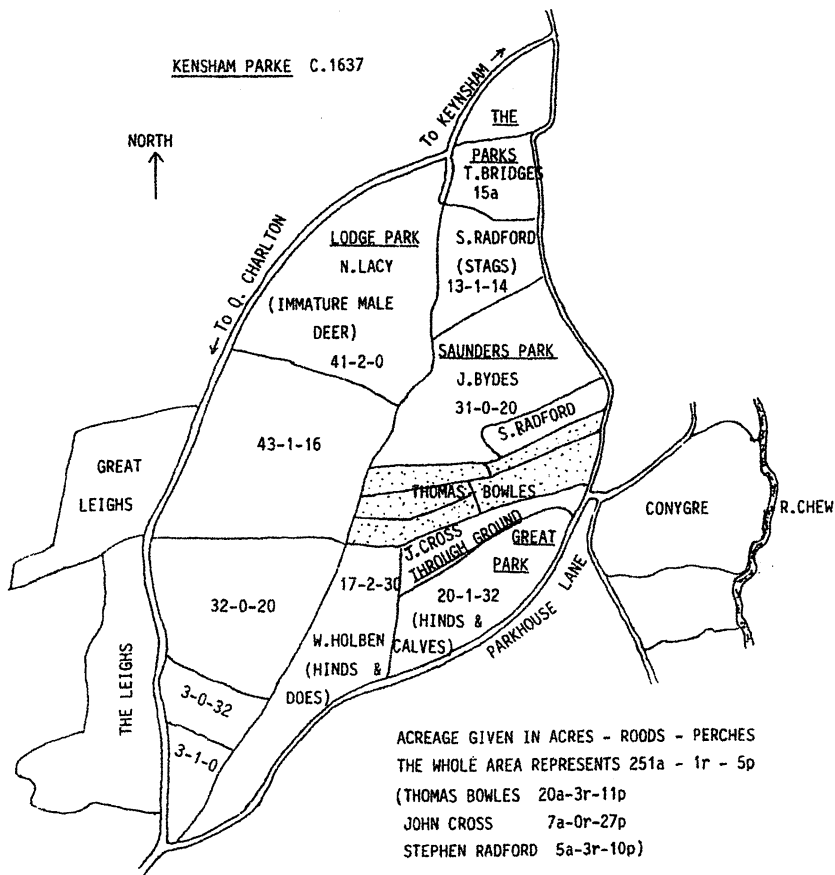


Fig. 2

native Roe Deer (buck, doe, kids—often twin) only 2ft tall, and the Fallow Deer (buck, doe, fawn) 3ft tall (which were imported by the Romans), were also bred in deer parks, but these tend to stay in family groups.

By c.1621 the Earl of Newcastle had purchased 155 acres 3 roods 20 perches of the park formerly leased to the St Loc family. In 1642 John Byde purchased part of this, called 'Saunders Park' (31a 0r 20p) from the Earl. In 1661 Thomas Bowles bought part of 'Great Park' (20a 3r 4p), then in the tenure of his father Edward Bowles, and also 'Lodge Park' (7a 0r 7p) then in his own tenure.¹⁴ Fig. 2 clearly shows that the Bowles and

Byde lands formed a 'buffer' between the enclosures of male and female deer. The land was wooded and mainly meadow or pasture. (The ground to the west of the Bowles holding was an oak wood at that time.) There was obviously co-operation between the various tenants of the park in controlling the animals and their feeding grounds. Perhaps Park House Farm was built at this time and housed a bailiff. For a deer hunt, selected deer would be released into the open countryside of the Chase, in this case, around Queen Charlton.

The Whitmores, who purchased the Manor of Keynsham from the King in 1613, did not receive any of the Great Park. However, in 1699 the lands of John Cross, Thomas Bowles, John Bydes and Stephen Radford, were sold in trust for Edward Lyne, who later became Lord of the Manor. This park land was leased to the Wood family and became the holding of Dapps Hill Farm when it was built sometime before 1789. In 1788 Edward Lyne had appointed George Lewis, Yeoman, as Gamekeeper to the Manor and Hundred of Keynsham with 'authority to kill hare, pheasant, partridge or any other game whatsoever for my sole use. Also to take and seize all such guns, bows, greyhounds, setting dogs, lurchers or other dogs to kill hares or conies, ferrits, tunnells, snares or other engines for the taking and killing of conies, hares, pheasants, partridge and other game within the Manor and Hundred of Keynsham'.¹⁵ Later Gamekeepers were Alexander Edwards (1827) and William Robertson (1831).

In 1663 the Earl of Newcastle sold 'Lodge Park' (then three closes, 'Great Park', 'Little Park' and 'Long Park') to Walter Vaughan who, in 1690, ceded it to his son-in-law Walter Cecill. In 1696, it was purchased by Jeremiah Pearce.¹⁴ By 1841 it was owned by John Whittuck Palmer and is now covered by the Federated Housing Estate.

Regarding the south-western part of Keynsham's Great Park we have found no such helpful plan, as yet. The two most northerly closes called 'The Parks' (Tithe 1056, 1138, 1139), and the two most southerly ones, 'Breeches' (Tithe 1114) and 'Field' (Tithe 1112) in the vesica-shape were owned by the Bridges family. 'The Parks', enclosed in a ring fence, passed to the Boucher family under a long lease, eventually reverting to the Duke of Chandos,¹⁶ as did 'Breeches' and 'Field'. ('Breeches' indicated land recently brought into cultivation, formerly pasture.)

In 1769 Harry Boucher arranged the sale at the Lamb and Lark Hotel, Keynsham, of 500 oak trees, 100 ash, beech and maple then 'growing in Keynsham Great Park'.¹⁷ Chandos Lodge Park was never called 'Great Park', so these trees must have been growing in 'The Parks' (15 acres). Some trees still remained there in 1841. It is possible that the 600 trees

formed a wood alongside the eastern side of Dannes Lane (Charlton Road), between Westview Road and Charlton Park, where the eight 'Rush Cottages' were built about 1800, owned by the Duke of Chandos. In 1870 seven of the cottages were owned by James Ford, retired Gamekeeper. (Quince Cottage is a good example of these.) 'The Parks' was leased to Samuel Panter, then, in 1755, to Samuel Coles. Ann Whippie was tenant in 1771 but she subleased to Rachel Racker.

By 1813 'The Parks' formed part of the holding of Lay's Farm, then leased to the Sheppard family who still held the lease at the time of the sale of the Chandos estates in 1858. Mr Wood then bought them. They were eventually purchased by Messrs Fry's and later developed as the Charlton Park Estate. The 'Breeches' and 'Field' closes were sold in the first Chandos sale of 1851 and still remain as rough pasture. The small plot east of these came into the ownership of Peach, Peach of Chewton Keynsham and has since been developed. The remaining closes of the Great Park seem to have constituted the holding of Park House Farm. Possibly this was built by Walter Holben (Holbien) who was a benefactor of the Keynsham poor,¹⁸ but more research is necessary to confirm this. In 1778 this farm was offered for sale with about 120 acres 'within a ring fence', and was then in the occupation of Henry Hobbs at a rent of £120 per annum.¹⁹ There was no mention of a park or of deer, just 'improvable land'. In 1797 Isaac Bennett was the tenant,²⁰ and in 1823 Thomas Ford.²¹ The house and 115 acre estate became the Glebe of Frenchay when the latter became an Ecclesiastical Parish in 1834. George Worrall occupied it in 1841. The whole was sold in 1912 by the then Rector of Frenchay Church, but the farm had a reduced size of 39 acres,²² the rest of the land having been sold separately (i.e. Tithe 1128, half of 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123). The farm and 39 acres were sold again in 1945 by the owner W. F. George.²³ More recent owners were Councillor and Mrs James, and Mr Pegram who restored the buildings. Today, the farm remains in good condition and its barns have been converted to dwellings.

It appears that, in 1652, the whole of Keynsham Great Park was known as 'Lodge Park'. Had Park House Farm then been built as the park lodge? This is a subject for further research. Of the few surviving closes at the SW of the Park, one (Tithe 1120) contains children's swings and two others (1119 and part 1118) have been planted with young trees. Houses cover Tithe 1121, 1123 and 1128 (originally an oak wood).

All that survives to remind us of the Great Park is the boundary along the SE part of Parkhouse Lane. The actual lane, a right of way, is virtually impassable N/NE of the farm, but the SE end clearly shows that it was once a hollow way between two walled banks, a suitable boundary for a

deer park. The western boundary (Charlton Road) has been completely distorted by road widening and house development.

Notes

- 1 *Proceedings, Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society* 53 (1907).
- 2 Letters & Papers Edward VI, 1553.
- 3 Composition of Keynsham Vicarage.
- 4 Letters & Papers Edward VI, 1550
- 5 P. Domestic James I, 84, 46.
- 6 S. Friar, *The Batsford Companion to Local History*, (1991).
- 7 Cal. Pat. Edward I, 1272-81.
- 8 R. Bird, *Osborne's Concise Law Dictionary*, (1983).
- 9 Letters & Papers Edward VI, 1548-49.
- 10 A. Braine, *The History of Kingswood Forest*, (1891).
- 11 Latimer, *Annals of Bristol in 17th Century*, (1900).
- 12 *Leland's Itinerary*, 7 (1535).
- 13 Bristol Turnpike Records.
- 14 Bowles Family leases.
- 15 Enrolment Certificate 16th September 1788.
- 16 Bridges Family Documents.
- 17 *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (1769).
- 18 Keynsham Charities records. LHS Archives.
- 19 F.F.B.J. 24th October 1778.
- 20 Keynsham Rates Book 1797.
- 21 Keynsham Vestry Minutes 1823.
- 22 Minute Book of Keynsham Parish Council 1912.
- 23 Sale brochure for Parkhouse Farm 1945, Cooper & Tanner.

Acknowledgement

Information not separately referenced has been obtained from the Archives of the Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society and documents in my own possession. I am most grateful to Archivist, Margaret Whitehead for her assistance.

A Tale of Two Farms

Margaret Whitehead

In 1889 Harford Lyne, Lord of the Manor of Keynsham, put the Manor with its 'Manorial Rights, Privileges, and Appurtenances' up for sale. The sale included 'All That Charming Residence known as The Manor House' together with Important Freehold Estates, Accommodation and Building Lands, Dairy Farms, Rights of Common in Broadmead and Steadham Meadows and Beds of Valuable Limestone comprising an area of 634a 1r 19p producing with the lands in hand and the sporting rights nearly £1100 per annum'.

This sale ended the ownership and leasing of property and land in Keynsham by the Lyne family stretching back to the mid 17th century, if not earlier. It signalled the beginning of the gradual development of all the agricultural land encircling the town of Keynsham, as landowners realised how much more profitable it was to sell off the land to the highest bidder. Edward Lyne had purchased the Manor of Keynsham with the land in 1767, although this was not by any means all of the land originally attached to the Manor when the Whitmores owned it. The purchase included Wick House Farm² (also called Week House in some sources), on the Bath Road, Rookhill Farm, Wellsway, and Dapps Hill Farm. The first two are very old established farms.³

Dapps Hill Farm

In 1840, when the Tithe Commissioners of England & Wales carried out their survey of Keynsham, Henry Lyne, father of Harford, held altogether just over 666 acres, 111 acres of which were free of tithes. A comparison with the acreage for sale in 1889 is interesting, because in 1858 the estate of the Dukes of Buckingham & Chandos was up for sale owing to bankruptcy. One might have expected Edward Lyne to buy up some of this land. However, he too was in financial difficulties at that time, mortgaging and remortgaging his property (including Dapps Hill Farm) from around 1847 up to the sale in 1889.⁴

On 1 November 1889 Robert Dyer Commons Esq., of the City of Bath, purchased the estate and began selling it off almost immediately. On 1 May 1890 he sold Dapps Hill Farm to the Bath Land Co. Ltd. (who bought the land for development) for £5,202.5s.3d.

The schedule in the 1889 sale shown below is identical with the holding in the Tithe survey when Henry Wood leased it from Lyne, and

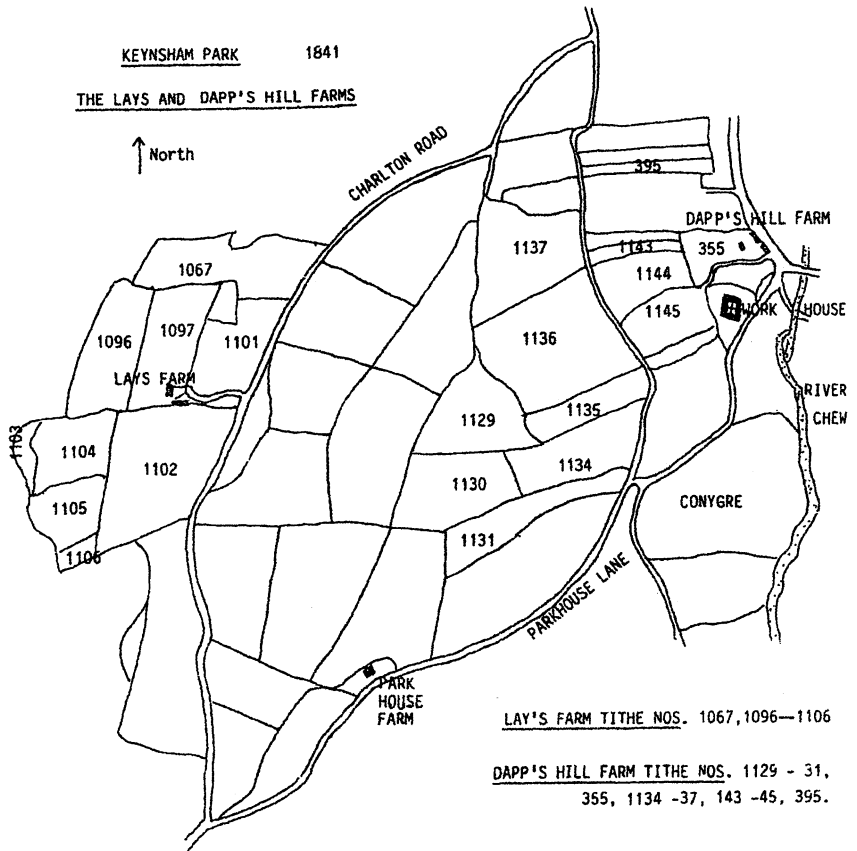


Fig. 1

also with the schedule when Commons sold it on. An undated map in the Society archives is also similar, with the addition of some small strips in Northfield. This was Chewton Keynsham's north field, and lies on the Congre Farm side of the river valley opposite Wellsway.

Fig. 1 shows the extent of the farm, which includes all the area between Dapps Hill and Park Road (or Park Lane as it was then called) which had always belonged to the Manor, and the area beyond which incorporates roughly half of the medieval deer park.

Generally speaking, the farms belonging to the Manor kept to the same plots, parcels, closes, pieces of ground, meadows, arable or pasture (to

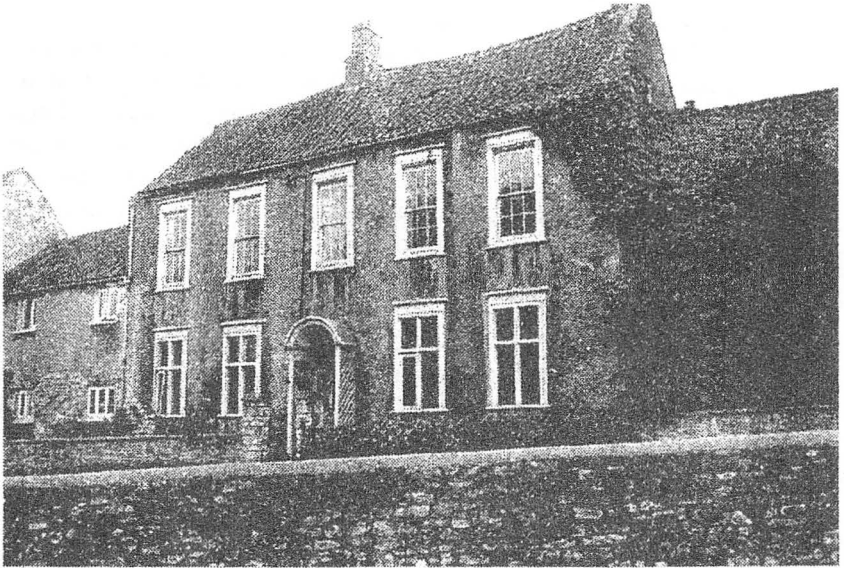


Fig.2. Dapps Hill Farm, c.1960. Photograph in K&SLHS Archives.

quote the various descriptions used in the leases) along with a number of doles or strips in the common fields.

In the case of Dapps Hill Farm, when Lyne purchased this from Arthur Greenwollers (the agent acting on behalf of Whitmore) in 1767 it only had the land between Dapps Hill and Park Road. Edward Lyne had purchased the additional land by 1789 and was leasing it to Benjamin Mereweather as 'Parks and Park Farm', title nos 1135/6.

Tracing the history of the farmhouses is more difficult. Both Wick House and Rookhill are old buildings and were in existence in the 17th century. The sale in 1767 of Dapps Hill Farm describes a 'messuage, tenement, garden, orchard and backside' already in possession of Edward Lyne, his tenant. It seems likely that the house or cottage was where Stentafords now have their yard, with the old stone barns still standing, with the entrance in Albert Road.

Sadly, the large farmhouse with attached dairy (which survives as a much refurbished house attached to the north side of the Dappifers House) had fallen into dilapidation by 1967, when Mrs Connie Smith,

then Archivist of the Society, wrote a report on it. The farmhouse was subsequently demolished.

The photograph (Fig. 2) shows a substantial and attractive building. A lease of 1811 lists an 'unfinished house called Dapps Hill with a garden small cottage barn yard stable and outhouses an orchard and three acres of mead all within a Ring Fence'. This must be the farmhouse in question as no other building in the Dapps Hill area would fit this description. On some documents Dapps Hill is called Dabbs Hill, and this variety in spelling of names extends to all parts of Keynsham. This is not surprising when one considers how few people were literate and the clerk writing the leases had to depend on the spoken name.

We have details of some of the later occupants of the farm. Henry Wood (of a large farming family in Keynsham over a long period of time) held it as tenant in the 1841 tithe survey. By 1849 John Brinkworth was

LOT 28.

DAPP'S HILL FARM,

A CONVENIENT

FARM HOUSE AND PREMISES,

Close to the Keynsham Union and Keynsham Town.

No. on Tithe Map.	Description.	State.	Quantity.			Total Quantity.		
			A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
pt. 353	Farm House, Yard, &c.
354	Garden ...	Garden ...	0	1	7			
365	Paddock ...	Pasture ...	2	3	37			
1143	The Close ...	Pasture ...	2	2	3			
1144	Eight Acres ...	Pasture ...	8	0	29			
1145	Barley Leaze ...	Pasture ...	5	2	31			
1129	The Eleven Acres ...	Pasture ...	11	0	2			
1130	Long Four Acres & Seven Acres in one ...	Pasture ...	11	2	1			
1131	Through Ground ...	Pasture ...	7	2	1			
1134	Six Acres and Four Acres in one ...	Pasture ...	10	2	4			
1135	Little Huru ...	Pasture ...	4	3	6			
1136	Great Park ...	Pasture ...	21	0	15			
						86	1	21

Land Tax 16/8.

The Timber in this Lot has been valued at £113:9s. 10d.

The Purchaser of this Lot to close the Door in the wall now leading into Lot 29.

The House contains Breakfast Room, Parlour, Kitchen, Pastry and Dairy, with four Bedrooms on the First Floor, and two Attics.

The House is supplied with Water from a pump and also from the West Gloucestershire Company's main.

The Buildings comprise Meal House, two Pigsties, long open Shed with Trap House, two more Piggeries, Barn, two Cow Sheds to tie up 13 Cows, two Yards with open Sheds, Stabling for 4 Horses with Loft over Hay

Fig. 3. Schedule for Dapps Hill Farm, 1889.

tenant and it was still described as Park Farm. This caused us some confusion at first as this title was given to Park House, Station Road, when it was a farm.⁵ In the 1851 census John Brinkworth, age 33, is described as farming 249 acres, considerably more than the holding, is married with four children, two servants and employing eight labourers. Obviously he was a well-endowed young man to be such a substantial farmer at this age. He is among a list of those eligible for the office of constable in 1850/1 in the General Vestry Minutes.

In 1881 Alfred Paget (of the well known family who have farmed in Chewton Keynsham and Burnett for over 250 years) was farming 170 acres, employing two men and a boy. By 1894 Alfred Benjafield was there, so perhaps he purchased it from the Bath Land Co.

In 1894 Temple Street Infant School was opened. It had been built on the paddock and home ground of the farm. With the development of Albert Road, with housing springing up, the land was very quickly eaten up as Keynsham became a popular residential town.

Lays Farm.

Lays, Layes, Leys, or Leighs (the various spellings that are to be found) would have taken its name from the field names of Leighs or Great Leaze, words derived from Old English. This area was most probably cleared woodland that became sheep pasture.

An Abstract of Title of 1874 when Robert Comer was selling 'Lands late part of The Chandos Estate situate in the Parish of Keynsham in the County of Somerset now called The Lays Farm Estate' comprises 166 large pages! A marathon to peruse indeed, it is a history of the Bridges/ Dukes of Buckingham & Chandos from 1672. This was the year of Harry Bridges' marriage to his first wife, and was drawn up as a marriage settlement for the wives of heirs to the estate.

It summarises an incredible number of people who were involved with the family's affairs, many of them titled and well known in aristocratic circles. It lists the positively staggering debts of the Dukes, which if translated into today's values would run into millions of pounds. It was these debts and final bankruptcy that led to the sale of the property called The Lays to Edwin Newman in 1858. Edwin Newman was probably an agent acting for the Duke's estates. The Abstract informs us that he purchased Lays Farm along with other land and property from the Marquis of Chandos on 12 May. He put it up for auction on 8 June the same year, at the Lamb & Lark Inn (now wantonly demolished).

The farm, comprising 78a 2r, along with two other fields owned by the Chandos estate and situated on the other side of the road in the old deer

Number		Quantity		
	<u>The Lays Farm -</u> (now Wood Lake District Inclosure)			
1067		12	0	9
1076		10	2	33
1097		10	6	36
1098		1		28
1099				
1100			2	3
1101		9	1	14
1102		20	4	25
1102a		7	0	21
1103				8
1105		6	2	3
1106		1	1	30
		72	2	0
	<u>Land let to Sheppard</u>			
1136		7	2	12
1138		5	2	31
		13	1	3

Fig. 4. Schedule for Lays Farm, 1874.

park totalling 13a 1r 3p, was bought by John Whittuck Palmer for £4377.10s. This was a substantial sum for that time and must reflect the productivity of the land. It was described as 'All that and those the Barn farm lands and hereditaments commonly called or known by the name of Lays Farm....then in the occupation of Charles Harris Wood'. By the time of the 1881 census Charles Harris Wood was in residence at Rockhill Farm on the Wellsway, farming 150 acres.



Fig. 5. Lays Farm house, c.1975.

Research has not yet revealed for how long the farm as detailed at the time, and comprising 72a 2r, had been called The Lays. Six acres of meadow called Upper Lays and five acres of arable called Lower Lays were auctioned in 1754. In 1782 the General Vestry ordered that certain children be placed out as apprentices to several 'estates' and The Lays is listed as among the 'next in notation'. The barn would have been necessary by this time, as farmers who were using the new agricultural methods no longer slaughtered their animals at Michaelmas: they were kept alive over winter by means of supplementary feeding. It does not automatically imply that there was a cottage or house at this time.

In September 1870 Palmer sold The Lays (minus the two outlying fields) to Robert Comer of Keynsham Gentleman for £4,290. The reason the 13 odd acres were not sold with it is because they were situated in the West View Road and Park Road areas that were just beginning to be developed.

In 1871 Robert Comer took out a mortgage for £2,500 from a Mr. Prichard as the messuage or Dwelling house was 'then in course of erection by the sd R. Comer...' A photograph of the house (Fig. 5) confirms this.

The 1841 Tithe survey lists the farm as tithe nos 1067, 1096-1106 (see Fig. 1) with John Brewer as tenant and farming the precise acreage of 72a 2p as listed above. The two fields in the Park were let to John Sheppard.

Robert Comer was selling the farm in 1874 but the abstract does not record the name of the buyer. Subsequent occupiers as listed in trade directories include:

1875, Mrs. Mary Ann Lane, Farmer.

1883, Samuel James Knight, Farmer.

1902, William Edgell, Farmer.

1919, Mrs. George Edgell, Farmer.

1923, Mrs. E. Gay & Son, Farmer.

1931, Fraser Wm. Sweet, Farmer.

In the 1881 Census, Hungerford Clapp at Lays House was farming 90 acres and employing one man.

On a personal note, the author's uncle Charles Morrish Down owned the farm for a short time before he died in 1960, and she can remember her aunt complaining of the difficulty in trying to look after such a large house, as it was very spacious.

Constant and persistent research continually reveals new information about Keynsham, and no doubt more information on the farms of Keynsham will turn up at a later date.

Notes

- 1 Harford Lyne's house in Manor Road, Saltford.
- 2 'Wick' from OE wic, meaning 'dairy farm'.
- 3 *Rookhill* is not to be confused with *Röckhill* farm, which has not turned up anywhere in research until the second half of the 19th century.
- 4 E. White, *Keynsham and Saltford: Life and Work in Times Past, 1539-1945* (1990) 7, Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society.
- 5 This highlights the problems caused by three different 'parks' in Keynsham. See Barbara J. Lowe, 'Keynsham Great Park', in this volume, for an analysis of the complicated evidence in the sources.

Acknowledgements

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