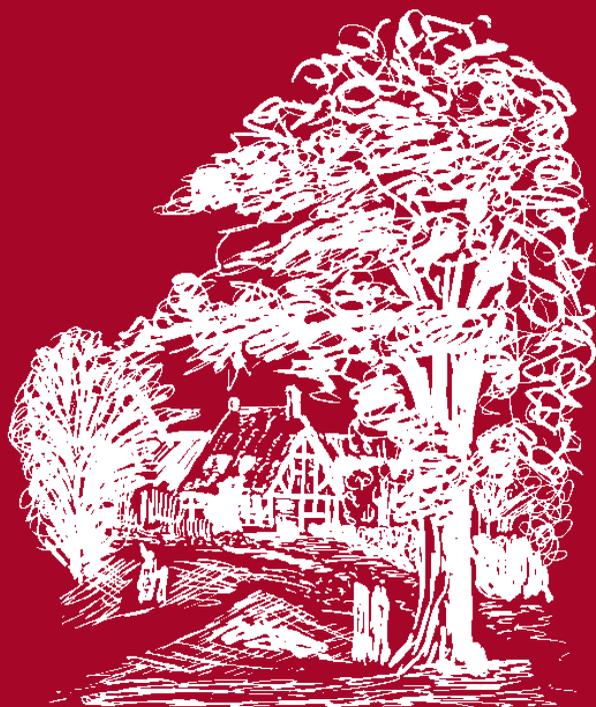


History of Finnmere



HISTORY OF FINMERE

OXON

To
Mrs Seymour Ashwell,

whose skilful hand
has adorned these pages with her drawings,
which must prove to many their chief attraction,
this history
of the parish, where she resides,
is gratefully dedicated.
Launton, A.D. 1886

If stationary men would pay some attention to the districts in which they reside, and would publish their thoughts respecting the objects that surround them, from such material might be drawn the most complete county histories, which are wanting in several parts of this kingdom.
Nat. History of Selbourne

HISTORY OF FINMERE
OXON

Compiled by

J.C. Blomfield M.A.

Rector of Launton and Rural Dean

Finmere
Finmere and Little Tingewick
Historical Society

1998

Published by Finmere and Little Tingewick Historical Society 1998
Desk Top Published by Keith A. Rogers
Electronic digital printing by LSL, Bedford

First edition Buckingham: Walford, Advertiser Office, 1887

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ISBN 0 9533253 0 X

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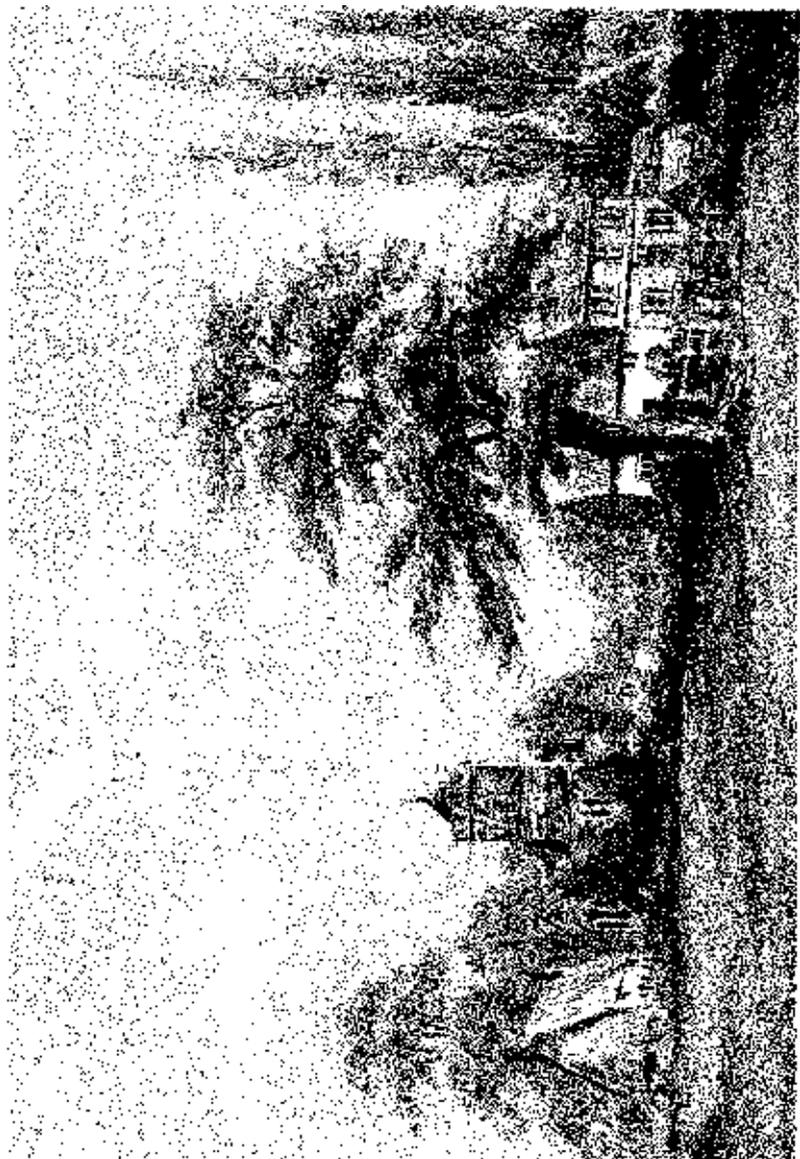
Contents

James Charles Blomfield	ix
This Edition	xv
I The Village	1
Fen-mor or Mere, Finemere, Finmere	1
The Normans	2
Freeholders and Lords of the Manor	6
The Manor House and Finmere House	13
The Paxton Family	17
Village Incidents and Customs	18
Land Value and Inclosure	22
The Nineteenth Century	26
Population	28
Private Houses and Farms	28
Other Buildings and Features	30
II Benefactions to the Poor	34
Keat's Legacy	34
The Poor's Plot	34
Ell's Charity	36
Frances James and Nathaniel Bacon	38
Baker's Charity	38
Stephen Painter and the Earl of Selbourne	39
III The Church of St Michael	40
Fabric and Ornaments	40
The Churchyard	50
IV The Rectors of Finmere	51
Rectors 1237–1630	51
The Dispute over Patronage	54
Rectors since 1632	56

V	Sketch by Dean Burgon	71
	Introduction	71
	Thomas Long, Rector 1733–71	73
	William Jocelyn Palmer, Rector 1814–53	74
VI	Churchwardens, Clerks, and Parish Registers	82
	The Churchwardens	82
	The Parish Clerks	88
	The Parish Registers	89
VII	The Rectory	91
	Value of the Rectory	91
	The Rectory House	95
VIII	Deed of Inclosure, 1667	98
	Glossary	109
	Subject Index	112
	List of Subscribers	121

Illustrations

View of Church from Old Yard	viii
Village towards Town's End	3
Bacon's House	7
View of Village	11
Mr Lepper's House	21
Cross Tree and Stocks	23
Exterior of Church	31
Interior, 1766	41
Interior, 1886	47
The Old Rectory	65
The Rectory, 1886	69



MR. H. W. WILSON, PHOT. CHICAGO

VIEW OF CHURCH FROM "OLD YARD."

James Charles Blomfield

In the south aisle of Launton church, near Bicester, a brass plaque below a stained glass window commemorates a former Rector:

To the Glory of God and in memory of James Charles Blomfield, Honorary Canon of Christ Church, Rector of Launton 1850 to 1895, Rural Dean of Bicester and historian of the Deanery, this window is erected by Parishioners and friends as a tribute of respect for his life and work.

James Charles Blomfield was born on 26 May 1821 and was educated at Bury St Edmunds School. He obtained a BA from Exeter College, Oxford in 1843 and an MA from the same College a year later. In 1845, he was appointed curate at Romford, Essex and in 1850 Rector of Offord Cluny, near Huntingdon. His stay there was brief. The Reverend Thomas William Allies at Launton had that year converted to the Catholic Church under the influence of the Oxford Movement (see below). The advowson for Launton was in the gift of the Lord Bishop of London. At that time the Bishop of London was Blomfield's uncle Charles James, who duly awarded Launton to his nephew.

James Charles had been born into an ecclesiastical family. His uncle was Bishop of London from 1824 to 1856, and his father, James, had been an earlier Rector of Launton (1813–42). His brothers, Arthur and George, also became rectors. The family had artistic talents too. Blomfield's nephew, Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856–1942), was a renowned architect whose commissions included the garden of Sulgrave Manor and the Merin Gate war memorial at Ypres.

Just three years after Blomfield arrived at Launton, Bishop Wilberforce appointed him Rural Dean of Bicester. By all accounts Blomfield was an effective, if strong-minded, Rector and Dean. By the mid 1860s he had started upon his systematic examination of the history of the Deanery. Although he began his research with Launton, his first published volume was *Early History*, a comprehensive summary of the topography and pre-Norman history of the Deanery (1882). A detailed study of Bicester and its Abbey followed in 1884. His *History of Finmere* was completed in 1886 and published by Walford of Buckingham in 1887. Eighteen further parish histories were to follow but Blomfield's *Finmere* was unique in the series.

It stands apart for the quality of the illustrations provided by Rector's wife, Mrs Seymour Ashwell, and its publication in the aesthetically pleasing *octavo* size. The other volumes of his *History of the Present Deanery* were published in the larger, scholarly *quarto* size.

We can learn something of Blomfield's research methods from his notes, many of which survive in Oxford at the Bodleian Library. They show him to be a methodical and meticulous scholar, though he often recorded his thoughts in impenetrable, scrawling handwriting. As he discovered historical facts, he crammed them onto any piece of paper that lay to hand. These scraps were trimmed and glued together to form narratives. Blomfield repeatedly cut and reorganized his compilations until he was satisfied with the flow and accuracy of his text. The resulting montages were then carefully transcribed by the typesetters and printers into the plates for his published works.

These literary montages do not just tell us about the history of the Deanery. They were written on the back of a remarkable variety of ephemera including advertisements, letters, invoices, income tax bills and parish documents. Unfortunately, many of these now survive only as fragments. Blomfield cut away any unwanted words and unused paper. Other papers were divided and dispersed throughout his notes as he reworked the order of his text. Nevertheless, this fragmented documentation provides a snapshot of the life of a Victorian clergyman.

We think of junk mail as a modern phenomenon. Blomfield also suffered. He was bombarded with advertisements for all manner of goods. They included vintage port and new books, and invitations to apply for share issues from companies as diverse as the Milford Docks Company and the NorthWestern Railway of Montevideo. Fortunately, most of this unwanted mail was printed on one side only and it formed a ready supply of paper for Blomfield's endeavours. Commercial mail alone, however, did not produce sufficient material for Blomfield's energetic quest: letters from parishioners, minutes of parish meetings, requests for employment references, income tax bills and invoices were all duly appropriated in the cause of history. In one set of notes, fragments of posters for a meeting of the Oxford Diocese Branch of the Church of England Temperance Society are intermingled with invoices for Blomfield's frequent purchase of fine wines.

The invoices also reveal something of Blomfield's lifestyle. The best London, Oxford and Bicester tradesmen supplied him with claret,

champagne, porter and oysters. Hill and Sons in Staffordshire delivered ironworks and seedsman James Carter of High Holborn dispatched garden supplies. Blankets and quilts were ordered from John Wilson in New Bond Street and watches and clocks from Regent Street. Blomfield seems to have regarded their invoices more as a free supply of paper than as requests for payment. In common with many minor gentry of his day, he frequently ignored any request to settle an account. Many petitions for payment were polite:

I feel sure you will excuse my reminding you that your subscription for the current year has not been received.

Honorary Secretary of local society.

We shall esteem it a favour if you will be good enough to send us a settlement of your account amounting to £13-0-5.

Haigh & Co, Oxford Circus.

We beg to [draw your attention to] our recent account rendered. [We have made] several heavy payments [...] we shall esteem [it a] great favour [if you would forward a] cheque within the week.

Thos. Grimsley, Building Contractor and Undertaker, Bicester.

Other requests were more strongly worded:

On three occasions we have forwarded this account [...]

E Smith & Co, Printers and Booksellers, Bicester.

We shall esteem it a favour of a cheque for the above am^t by return of post.

James Carter, London seed merchant seeking payment for £4-2-0 dating from Feb. 15 1873 writing on September 1 1874.

In 1889, Blomfield owed the Bounty Office of the Church of England £12-7-3 in mortgage arrears. They threatened legal action and Blomfield promptly paid: with a post-dated cheque!

Blomfield's notes reveal more than his love of good living and lack of interest in paying bills. They also throw light on his extensive scholarly networks. He regularly corresponded with like-minded vicars and rectors. The Rev. E. R. Massey at Marsh Gibbon was a regular contributor; he had formerly been at Merton and Blomfield had been his Rural Dean. Robert Holt at Hillesden Rectory established himself as Blomfield's place-name expert and G. J. Dean of Lower Heyford wrote about bells. There is British Museum [Library] Reading Room request slip for Richard Gough's 1768

British Topography and correspondence with the renowned artist, writer and antiquarian, W. G. Collingwood.

This correspondence concerned the Rev. Walter Brown of Wednesbury. Collingwood had transcribed the painter John Ruskin's recollections of Brown for Blomfield's proposed history of Wendlebury. Together with Augustus Pugin and William Morris, Ruskin was a founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement. This was a loosely linked group of craftsmen, artists, designers and architects and included Blomfield's nephew, Reginald. Their aim was to raise the status of the applied and manufacturing arts to that of the fine arts but they also embraced a romantic view of rural England. This is reflected in much of the art of the time, including many historical texts. It can be glimpsed in Blomfield's *Finmere*, particularly in Dean Burgon's rose-tinted portrayal of the village during the lifetime of Rector William Jocelyn Palmer (pp. 71–81). Seymour Ashwell was Rector at Finmere in Blomfield's time and Blomfield tells us that he carved the new pulpit and reredos in the church (p. 49). These are in the tradition of the Arts and Crafts Movement and Mrs Ashwell also reflects a romantic view with her gentle images of village life that illuminate Blomfield's *Finmere*. Blomfield evidently developed a close relationship with the Ashwells and he dedicated his book to Mrs Ashwell. Perhaps, too, they were an influence for its pleasing octavo format; unfortunately any letters between the Ashwells and Blomfield do not survive.

The book is further illuminated with a remarkable sketch by Dean Burgon. An outstanding biblical scholar, John Burgon was a curate to Palmer at Finmere (1851–53). After becoming Dean of Chichester in 1876, he rapidly developed a reputation for serious theological scholarship, as well as for his quick wit and sharp tongue. He staunchly defended church tradition including the King James Version of the Bible. Blomfield was also a traditionalist and he seems particularly interested in the Oxford Movement. This religious movement, also called the Tractarian Movement, originated in Oxford in 1833. It sought to develop an Anglican doctrine that was more faithful to its Catholic origins and to reduce secular involvement in the affairs of church. This High Church approach was adopted by William Jocelyn Palmer in Finmere. It is not a surprise, therefore, that Burgon and Blomfield should devote several pages to applauding Palmer's Finmere residency. The Oxford Movement formally

ended in 1845 with the conversion of its leader, John Henry Newman, to Catholicism, a move followed by Palmer's son, William, in 1855. Despite these and other conversions, the movement remained influential throughout the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Blomfield was not to complete his *History of the Present Deanery*. At his death on 7 June 1895, he had published histories of nineteen parishes as well as his *Early History*. Four further parishes were in preparation: Launton was nearly ready for publication, Merton, Goddington and Kirtlington required further work. His work was a remarkable achievement. From the age of sixty-one he published nearly two histories a year. He had continued his ecclesiastical duties too, and had been appointed a canon of Christ Church, Oxford, the year before his death. Many years of ill health, however, had taken its toll. The *Bicester Advertiser and Mid Oxon Guardian* reported his funeral on Friday 14 June, 1895 and noted:

[Blomfield's] health had been parlous at different times during the last two years and a severe attack of bronchitis followed by a paralytic seizure shortly before Easter left but small hope of a recovery. The illness at the same time of Mrs Blomfield made the condition of her husband appear even more tragic.

A nephew, the architect Reginald Blomfield, attended the funeral, as did many clergy, including Blomfield's brother Arthur and Reverend Massey from Marsh Gibbon. No one from Finmere, however, attended or sent flowers.

Blomfield was a collector and cataloguer rather than a storyteller. His style was to record, translate and organize information rather than interpret it or set it in its broader historical context. When compiling his *History of Finmere*, he extensively sought data from libraries and fellow scholars. Occasionally Blomfield's *Finmere* text is weighty and detailed, but there also are glimpses of humour, for example when he gently lampoons the troubled Richard Horn (pp. 58–59). The commentary on William Jocelyn Palmer shows Blomfield's willingness to embrace social history as well as manorial and ecclesiastical records. He always uses his data with care and our research shows that he makes few mistakes. There are omissions but, as Blomfield's notes relating to Finmere do not survive, we cannot usually determine whether he did not know or chose to ignore evidence that did not fit his narrative.

In Launton church, the memorial plaque to Blomfield is poignantly set below images of Bishops Grosseteste and Wilberforce. These images illustrate the back cover of this edition. Robert Grosseteste was born in Blomfield's home county of Suffolk, around 1170. He developed a reputation as theologian at Oxford. Both a scientific and historical scholar, he was appointed Bishop of Lincoln (which at that date included Launton) in 1235. Samuel Wilberforce oversaw Blomfield as Bishop of Oxford from 1845 to 1873. He was a reforming Bishop, able to gain the confidence of both the Evangelical and Oxford Movement factions of the church while improving pastoral administration. Among many reforms, he swept away the Bishop of London's rights to appoint the Rector of Launton. Blomfield was the last appointed that way.

Blomfield no doubt thought highly of both men. Had Grosseteste been born seven centuries later, he would have admired Blomfield's dedication to historical research. Wilberforce showed his respect for Blomfield by appointing him Rural Dean. Certainly, without the efforts of James Charles Blomfield, we would know much less about early Finmere and the Deanery of Bicester.

Andy Boddington

This Edition

This new edition of James Charles Blomfield's *History of Fimmere* makes more generally available a rare historical account of the village and its Church of St Michael first published more than a century ago. In our new edition, we have faithfully reproduced Blomfield's words and we have reset the text in order to make it more accessible to the modern reader. Our aim is to do justice to his account of an Oxfordshire village and Parish Church for which he had a great deal of affection, and to the ten drawings by his friend Mrs Seymour Ashwell which illustrated the 1887 edition.

Blomfield was a cautious and meticulous scholar. This edition respects his text, spelling, and transcription of source materials. Editorial intervention in this area has been confined to a minimum. In a small number of cases printing errors and omissions have been emended. Obvious mistakes and inconsistencies attributable to the printer are corrected without comment, and square brackets now enclose omissions made good, abbreviations resolved, and editorial footnotes. Mrs Ashwell's illustrations are reproduced from the first edition, in the order in which they appear there, and close to their original positions.

The Rector's strengths did not extend to imaginative presentation of his material, and he was not well served by his printer. The 1887 edition is characteristic of its period: the script is more or less continuous, there is little attempt to enhance understanding of the text by consistency of layout or variety of typeface, and very few indications, by heading or sub-heading, as to thematic grouping of topics. The result is a book in which the content is poorly served by the form. This edition aims at remedying some of these shortcomings. Punctuation, use of italics, parentheses, quotation marks, brackets and capitalization have been brought into line with present publishing conventions. The author's explanatory notes are retained at the foot of each page, and are now numbered consecutively. There are indications that Blomfield planned his *History of Fimmere* in eight parts, and I have provided titles for these. For convenience of reference these eight parts are further subdivided into thirty sections, each with a heading which gives a clear indication as to the material which it contains. Chapter headings and section headings are introduced into the text and summarized in the Table of Contents.

A small number of supplementary titles have been added for the subsections within the text, but the great majority of titles at this level are provided by Blomfield himself. No heading of Blomfield's has been omitted. A glossary and a comprehensive index complete the new edition.

I should like to express my warm thanks to all of those members of Finmere and Little Tingewick Historical Society who have contributed so energetically to the publication of this text. Andy Boddington provided the impetus, and scanned the text of the rare 1887 edition bravely offered for the purpose by Anita Bilbo. Rosemary Crabtree and Jenny Blake meticulously and cheerfully corrected the imperfections produced by the scanning software, and Sheila Macpherson was responsible for the final proofing. Mark Ashby undertook the preliminary formatting of the computer disc. Pat White designed the front and back covers, after the drawing by Mrs Seymour Ashwell which appears on p. 23 and the images of Bishops Grosseteste and Wilberforce preserved in Launton Church. Pat Tucker of Launton provided valuable information on Blomfield's life, and the staff of the Bodleian Library in Oxford have been characteristically co-operative and helpful. Keith Rogers scanned and printed the illustrations, and devoted many patient hours and much technical expertise to the final page formatting. Any editorial imperfections are likely to be my own. And finally the Historical Society wishes to express its appreciation for the response to this project of the present villagers of Finmere and their friends. Encouraged by Carol Cranfield and members of the Society, Finmere residents turned publishing ambition into reality by contributing generously to our appeal for advance subscriptions. The present edition is concluded by the names of those who responded to this appeal and who wished their names to be included in a List of Subscribers.

Ian Macpherson

I

The Village

Fenn-mor or Mere, Finemere, Finmere

A long line of country in the N.E. part of this district was no doubt once thickly covered with the gravels of the Boulder or Glacial period, but these have been removed by denudation from those parts which are below a certain level.¹ Accordingly a considerable stretch of low-lying land, sloping towards the river Ouse, thus denuded, has its clay bed, containing patches of limestone pebbles, exposed as the surface soil, while at its upper end, westwards, and southwards, the gravel bed remains. Two kinds of soil are therefore found hereabouts. The clay bed, retaining its moisture, became wet moorland, on which furze and scrub grew in wild profusion, while on the gravel oak, ash, and other forest trees flourished.

The Roman occupiers of this district, in forming their road from Dorocina (Dorchester) to the Watling Street, carried it across the moor in order to reach a spot where the British inhabitants had long used a ford through the river.² The line of this road is still clearly traceable. Running along the present road from Newton Purcell, from that point where the turn to Barton Hartshorne begins, to the Red Lion Inn, at Finmere, it proceeded thence in a perfectly straight direction to Water Stratford, where a footpath now runs.³ As simple travellers along this road, the Romans took no notice of the adjoining country, and it remained during the four centuries of their occupation as waste and wild, as it had been in the days of the aboriginal Britons:

Ere Rome's Imperial eagle, borne on high,
Had spread its pinions in our northern sky.

¹ Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet 45.

² *Early History of the [Present] Deanery of Bicester*, p. 6.

³ This remained as a bridleway until the railway was made, when a part of it was stopped for the passage of horses.

When the English invaders reached this district in the viith century they also journeyed by this road, looking out for land suitable for cultivation, but finding the moor unfavourable, they passed it by, only naming it 'Fenn-More' (AS. *fenn, fen, fæn, fænn, foen*, a fen, marsh, mud, dirt, and mor, waste land, a moor, heath) or 'Fenn-Mere' (AS. *mere, mære*, a lake, pool, or marsh).⁴

After the English had settled themselves in various spots in the southern parts of this district, many years elapsed before any attempt was made to occupy its S.E. angle. A settlement, much later than others, was made at Newton (Purcell), and after a further interval of time some bold adventurer, probably an emigrant from one of the neighbouring villages, pierced the woodland beyond this, and then fixed his dwelling-place on the edge of the Fen-moor, as it declined to the River Ouse, on the spot which in later times was known as the Manor and Bacon's House. The settlement thus formed in this hitherto uninhabited district was a very small one, consisting only of a single family and their few dependants.

This little settlement was soon included in an Hundred. The Hundreds, whatever may have been their original organisation, differed very widely as to extent in several parts of England, and thus, strangely enough, the Fen-Moor, with its neighbour Shelswell, were attached to that of Sudtone (Sutton), in Northamptonshire.⁵

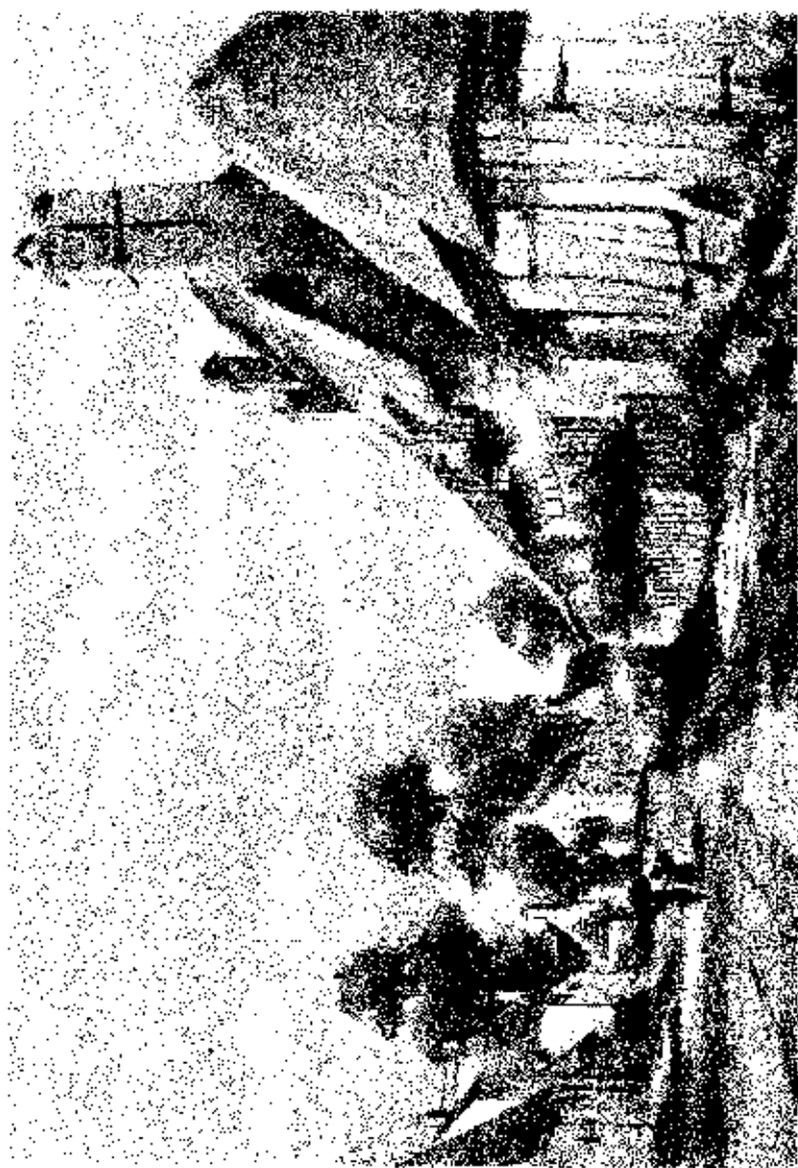
At the division of the country into shires or counties, the Roman road was taken as the line of demarcation here, there being no natural feature to form such, and hence at the present day a simple hedgerow, running along the line of the old road, is the only division between the counties of Oxon and Bucks in these parts.

The Normans

Three centuries and more passed before we reach any documentary evidence of the village history. The first fact thus brought to light is that of the 1,500 acres which now form the area of this parish, a very small part only, two carucates = 107 acres more or less, had been brought under

⁴ The same name was given to some land in the parish of Quainton, Bucks, and is still retained in 'Fenemore Hill' there. Care must be taken in reading Kennett's P.A. to distinguish between the two places.

⁵ *Early History*, pp. 44, 45.



NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHY

VILLAGE TOWARDS "TOWN'S END."

tillage about the middle of the xith century;⁶ that the pasture for the oxen employed on this land was reckoned at the same quantity; that this little estate was the property of an Englishman resident on the spot; that this English lord was a patriot, who, unlike the great landowner of this district, and some others, refused to yield up his possessions to the Norman Conqueror; that he was therefore treated as a rebel, and his estate confiscated.⁷

DOMESDAY SURVEY

King William threw in this little estate among the many gifts which he bestowed on his half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux.

Land of the Bishop of Baieux: Robert holds two hides of the Bishop in Finemere. There is land to two ploughs. His vassals have one plough there. It was worth xxx shillings; now xl shillings.

Four more facts appear from this entry in the Domesday Survey.

1. The corruption of the original name. 'Finemere' is puzzling, for it is difficult to see how the prefix *Fenn* should have become Fine or Fyne. The former remains in some local names (Fenny Stratford, Fenny Compton, &c.), and the latter in others (Finedon, Northamptonshire; Findon, Sussex; Finstock, Oxon; Finborough, Suffolk; Fininstall, Worcestershire), but the only AS. word *fin* means the fin of a fish. Again there is a difficulty in the suffix *mere*, for Fenn-mere is tautology. The probable solution is that Finemere, either through wrong spelling or pronunciation, is a corruption. Fenimore is still a common surname in this district.

2. The continued paucity and poverty of the inhabitants, shown in their possessing only a single plough team.

3. The largely increased annual money rent of the estate effected in the 40 years which passed between Edward the Confessor's reign and the taking of the survey.⁸ This plainly marks an important change in the condition of the land, and this change was probably the commencement of the present village. The rising ground at the upper end of the moor, distant from the original settlement, had probably up to this time been

⁶ A carucate or ploughland was such a quantity of land as a single team of oxen could plough in a year. *Early History*, p. 42.

⁷ *Early History*, p. 55.

⁸ This was not the real value of the estate, for to the money rent must be added the labour services rendered by the tenants.

left untouched, but now, under the new Norman possessor, parts of it were cleared and prepared for cultivation, and some dwelling houses for the workmen employed in the tillage were built upon it near a spring and brook.

4. The owner of the estate was still an Englishman. It is not certain who the Robert mentioned in the Survey was, but it is very likely that he was the same person as owned the estate before the Norman Conquest, who, like many other English owners of property, after its forfeiture had come to terms with the Conqueror to retain as tenant what he had previously held as his own possession.

THE HUNDRED ROLLS

At the forfeiture of Bishop Odo's estates, the King conferred this manor on Geoffrey, Bishop of Coustance, in Normandy, and Chief Justiciary of England, whom he had already rewarded with 14 other manors in Oxfordshire, and 250 in other counties. He died in 1093 (7 Will. II), when his lands appear to have escheated to the Crown. The fee of Finemere was then granted to the Earls of Gloucester.

In the course of two centuries the original settlement of a single occupier, with his two or three bond servants, grew into a village of considerable size, possessing the civil rights and responsibilities of such, which the Hundred Rolls of Henry IIIrd's and Edward Ist's reigns accurately describe.

Finemer: Laurence del Broc holds the village of Finemer, namely, x hides of land, of the Earl of Gloucester, and that the lords of the village and the freeholders used to come twice a year to the Great Hundred Courts, and now they are withdrawn by Laurence del Broc. Of the other articles of enquiry they know nothing, except that the Sheriff receives yearly for the view ijs.⁹

Finem'e: Hugh de Brok holds the village of Finem'e, of the Earl of Gloucester, for one knight's fee, and the same Earl of the lord the King in capite.¹⁰ And he holds in demesne iij carucates of land, and he has warren in the village of Finem'e, but by what warrant it is not known; and the Bailiffs of the lord the King used to hold there the view of frankpledge once a year, and to have ijs of certe money

⁹ Richard de Clare, 6th Earl [of Gloucester]. Ob. 1262. *Inquis.* p.m., 47 Hen. 3, No. 34c. Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, deed. Extent of his lands. The portion relative to Finmere is now wanting.

¹⁰ Gilbert de Clare, 7th Earl [of Gloucester].

for all the perquisites of that day. And that Walter de Pridington, the bailiff of the Earl of Gloucester, has disseised the lord the king thereof, by what warrant we know not.

Villeins: Adam ate Tuneshende holds j virgate of land of the same for iiij s. He will work, pay tallage, and redeem his sons at the will of the lord.

Gilbert ate Welle holds of the same j virgate of land in the same way.

Ralph de Heche, &c. Adam ate Welle, &c. Hugh Baldewyne, &c. Thomas Lenveyse, &c. John de Firingford, &c. Roger de Wylanston, &c. William Beaumund,¹¹ &c. William Felawe, &c. Hugh the Carter, &c. William, Robert's son, &c. Thomas Baldewyne, &c. William le Toller, &c. William le Toweler, &c. Robert Felawe, &c. John Godwyne, &c. Roger Basdune, &c. Peter ate Brok, &c. Walter le Wylde, &c. William Wodeward, &c. William Duraunt, &c. Robert Atechurch, &c. Hugh de Bulkenhulle, &c. Hugh, Adam's son, &c. Robert, Faber's son, &c. Walter de Fretewelle, &c. Hugh de M'iton, &c. Robert the Smith, &c.

Freeholders: Walter, son of Robert Peronel, holds of the same half a virgate of land by iiij s for all services, and he pays scutage when it occurs, vid.

John de Kinebelle holds of the same j hide of land by military service for the tenth part of one knight's fee.

Thomas, son of Roger Petronille, holds of the same half an hide of land by xiiij yearly and scutage when it occurs, vid for all services.

Robert Peronele holds of the same half an hide of land by ijs for scutage, when it occurs, and the foreign service of the lord the king.

Thus we see the village as it appeared just 600 years ago. The extent of land under cultivation had largely increased, being reckoned at 10 hides = about 550 acres, five times its amount at the Domesday Survey, of which three carucates = 160 acres, were held by the lord in his own occupation, and seven, divided into 29 virgates = 390 acres, were held by inferior tenants. Two hides and an half ore were in the possession of free tenants.

Freeholders and Lords of the Manor

The chief residents were the family who held of the superior lords the whole village, and resided in the Manor House on the banks of the river,

¹¹ Probably Beaumont, in the adjoining village of Mixbury.



BACON'S HOUSE.

AN APPLICABLE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

commonly called The Brook (le Broc), from which its occupiers had long taken their surname. They were probably the descendants of the Robert mentioned in the Domesday Survey, and were a family of considerable local importance, sufficient to obtain the royal grant of claiming and preserving the wild game of their estate.

Charter 36, Hen. III., Laur de Broke, Finemere, libera waren.¹²

A manor 600 years ago meant something very different from a manor now. The lord was a petty king resident in the Manor House, which had its hall, its farm buildings, its dovecote, and its water-mill for grinding the corn of the tenants. From the Courts, the Court Baron, which regulated all the business connected with the land of the manor, and the Court Leet, which took cognizance of all matters concerning the prevention of crime, and the preservation of the peace, being always held in the hall of this house, it was called The Court House.

FREEHOLDERS

The chief tenants were the Freeholders, a class created since the Domesday Survey, who lived in houses of their own, and cultivated land of their own, who were free as to their persons, but bound to render labour and other services to their lord. They made a trifling annual payment for their land,¹³ as an acknowledgement of their lord's rights, and could compute with him for their personal services. There were four such at Finemere, of whom one was bound to serve the king by his attendance in war, if called out, and three paid a fixed sum of money yearly in lieu of such service. To their dwelling houses a croft or paddock, an orchard and small garden were attached. Twenty-nine other heads of families resided in dirty hovels, built of rough stone, and covered with turf or thatch, who were called villeins - i.e. the labourers or peasantry of the ville or manor.¹⁴ They held small quantities of land under the lord, and, besides paying a small money ground rent, were obliged to plough the lord's land for so many days in

¹² Calendar to the Charter Rolls, p. 76. By a misprint Finemere is described in Staffordshire.

¹³ This must not be confounded with the rent of land as paid now-a-days. It was more like what, in the case of house property, is now called ground-rent, and bore no proportion to the value of the produce that might be raised from the soil.

¹⁴ The art of brick-making seems to have been lost in England for some hundreds of years.

a year, assist in cutting and carrying his hay and corn, and perform other servile works. They, their persons, and their goods were considered to belong to their lord, and so if they, or any member of their family, wished to leave the village, they were compelled to pay to their lord such a sum of money as he was pleased to demand, as a compensation for the loss of work and services which he thereby incurred. This applied chiefly to their sons, whom they were then said to 'redeem at the will of the lord.' They were also obliged to pay tallage, which was a toll or tax payable to the lord at his will, towards the expenses of maintaining his estate. The adult male population thus amounted to 34, which implies a general population of about 100 souls. Of these, one family lived in a cottage close to the Church (ate Church); two just below it, near the spring (ate Welle); a fourth lower down on the bank of the brook (ate Brok), while the rest dwelt in houses on both sides of the road leading to Westbury, which thus formed the street or town. At one end of this street a cross had been erected, as here all the trade of the inhabitants in buying and selling was transacted, on the spot where now stands the tree, which has taken its name from it, The Cross Tree. The other end of the street, furthest from this, was called The Town's End (Tuneshende), a name still retained in Townsend pond. Much of the population had been of comparatively recent growth, many families having come from, or being the descendants of others who had come from, the neighbouring villages; and being still distinguished as such. The only tradesmen were the two most needed in an agricultural village: the miller, who ground the villagers' corn at the lord's water-mill, and the blacksmith, who shod their horses, mended their carts, and other implements. Wild fowl still abounded in the surrounding woodland, and geese in large numbers fed on the common, which gave employment to some fowlers. The ways and customs of former times were then undergoing a change. The fixed or certe money, 2/-, which had been paid yearly, probably from the Saxon period of our history, for the privilege of having a Court Leet held in the village, had lately been withheld, and the lord and the freeholders went no more to pay their accustomed suit at the great Court of the Hundred at Ploughley.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Early History*, pp. 67, 68.

LORDS OF THE MANOR

A long minority followed in the ownership of this estate. Gilbert de Clare, 7th Earl of Gloucester, died in 1296, and at the Inquisition after his death his estate at Finmere is mentioned:

The heir of Robert de Fynmere holds the knight's fee in Fynmere.¹⁶

Some change soon took place in the occupation of it. The family of de Broc (the heir of Robert) ceased their tenure, and Lord Nicholas de Audley, then resident at Stratton, in this neighbourhood, succeeded to it, and through the reign of Edward II held the demesne. In the year 1300 the right of free warren, which the occupiers of this estate had held for many years, was granted to William Tucket, Esq., a member of Lord Nicholas de Audley's family, who also obtained a like grant in the adjoining manor of Shellswell.

Gilbert de Clare, 8th Earl of Gloucester, aged 4 at his father's death, died in 1315, only two years after attaining his majority, and one or less after his marriage. His estate at Finemere is described at the Inquisition after his death:¹⁷

Osebert de Fynemere holds one fee in Fynemere of the said Earl as of the Manor of Caversham, which is worth per ann. 20/-.

It then passed to his next heir, his brother-in-law, Hugh Despencer, the royal favourite, who possessed it until the forfeiture of all his estates for high treason in 1326.

The king then bestowed Finmere on:

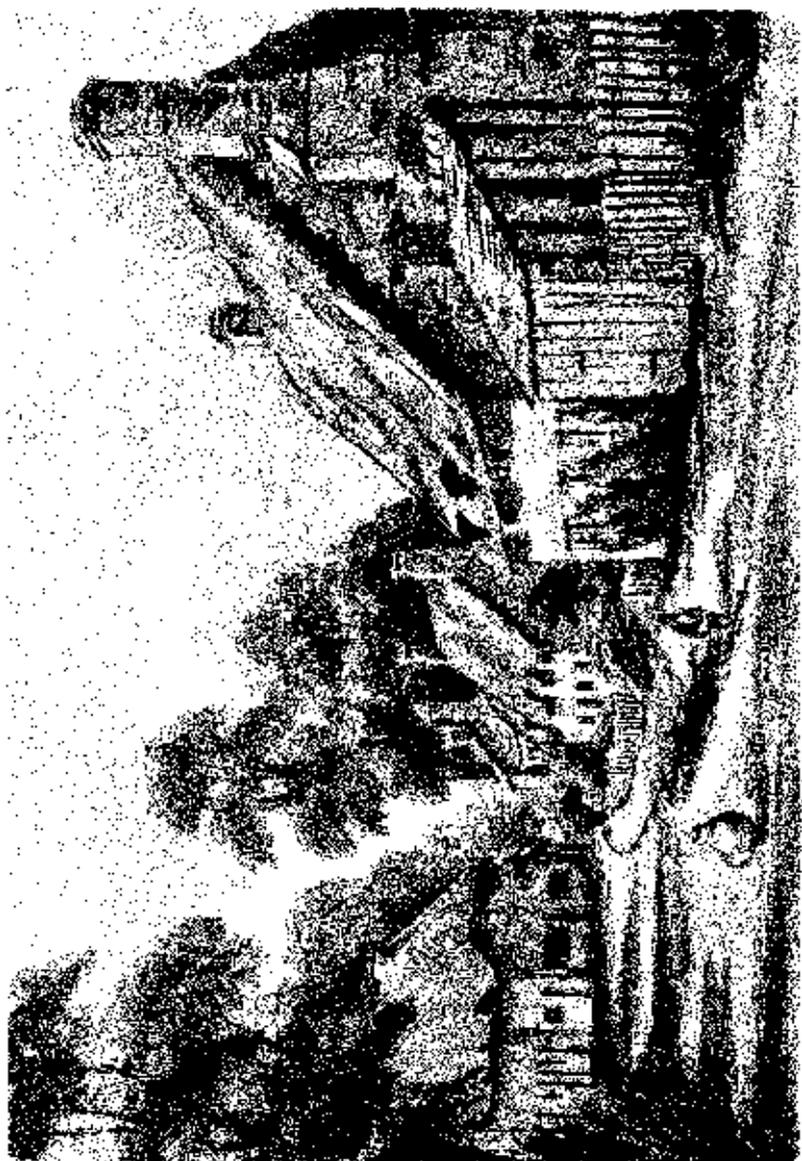
Bartholomew de Badlesmere, baron, who was descended from an old family long settled at a place of that name in Kent, and who received large grants from Edward II, and had property in many counties. He only held this estate for three years. At his death, in 1329, it was assigned to Margaret, his widow, as part of her dowry. It next passed to their son,

Giles de Badlesmere. He was only 14 years of age at his father's death, and only lived two years after coming of age.¹⁸ Dying in 1338, without issue, he left his property to his sisters. Finemere fell to the share of Elizabeth, third sister, then the widow of Lord Edmund Mortimer, Baron of Wigmore, who in the following year took for her second husband

¹⁶ *Inquis.*, p.m. 24, Edw. I.

¹⁷ *Inquis.*, 8 Edw. II.

¹⁸ He held an estate at Greenwich, granted by the Crown. See *L'Estrange's Chronicles of Greenwich*.



VIEW OF VILLAGE.

William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton. She died 20 years later, in 1358, when the estate at Finmere passed to the eldest son of her first marriage: Lord Roger Mortimer. He died on February 26, 1360, at Rouera, in Burgundy, he being then:

Commander of the English forces there, whence he was brought over into England, and buried in the Abbey of Wigmore, with his ancestors, being then seized of the Mannor of Finmere, in Com. Oxon, and many other mannors, &c.

This manor then continued with his descendants until the death of the last Baron:

Edmund, Ob. 1381.

Roger, Ob. 1398.

Edmund, Ob. 1424, s.p.

During this century and more of quick and constant changes of ownership there is little of local history to record. The changes without barred the way to any important change within, and thus the village life, its ways, customs, and population remained nearly stationary. Early in the xvth century Finemere was in the direct possession of the Crown, and in 1536 King Henry VIIIth granted it to Jane Seymour, as part of her marriage portion. Some years later he sold it with other estates to John Blundell or Blondell, a citizen and mercer of London.¹⁹ The deed of sale, dated October 21, 1547, recites:

And all that our manor of Fynmer, &c., parcel of the lands, tenements, and hereditaments by us lately given, granted, and assigned to Johanna, late Queen of England, for the term of her life, as parcel of her dower and jointure, and the advowson donation, free disposition, and right of patronage of the Rectory and parochial Church of Fynmer, in our said County of Oxford.²⁰

Mr. Blundell knew but little of his new purchase. He resided at Steeple Barton, Oxon, and on November 17, 1538, had married Alice, daughter

¹⁹ It was included in a sale of several other manors (Barton, Shirborne, Cudlington, and other places) to 'Leonard Chamberleyne, of Sherborne, Oxon, Esq., and J. Blundell, of London, Merc'r.' The total sum given for this whole purchase was £1,760 1s., which was said to be at the rate of 20 years' purchase. Particulars of Grants, Augmentation Office, 35 Henry VIII., §1.

²⁰ A copy of this is given in Rev. E. Marshall's *History of Sandford*, Appendix. See pp. 19, 22.

and co-heir of Thomas Huchen, citizen and mercer of London, and widow of Hugh Methwold, of the same city. He died in 1558, and was buried in Barton Church, where a monument to his memory, bearing the arms of the Mercers' Company, stood until it was removed during some recent alterations.²¹

The table on p. 14 shows the descent from him of the Manor and Rectory of Finmere.²² Thus in the year 1574 the manor of Finmere became divided into five separate estates, of probably equal size.

The Manor House and Finmere House

THE MANOR HOUSE OR COURT HOUSE

This house fell to the share of Mr. Hogan, who then largely increased and improved it. It was, until comparatively recent times, one of considerable size and pretension, with the usual accompaniments of a court yard, a series of fish ponds,²³ supplied by a strong spring, which rose at a little height above them, a bowling green,²⁴ garden, and pleasure grounds, the latter being planted chiefly with lime trees.²⁵ A road under an avenue of elm trees led from the entrance gate to Tingewick, and a large wood²⁶ bounded the premises on the N.W. side. Some pasture land surrounded the house, called The Court Closes. One of these was a close adjoining the old watermill, measuring 1a. 3r. 4p., known as The Mill Close. In this house the Hogan family through two generations occasionally resided. When Sergeant Waller succeeded to his father-in-law's estate, being resident in Holborn, London, he let it, and a Roman Catholic family occupied it for some years. The latter found here a burial place, and the gifts they bequeathed to the poor of the village are evidence of the kindly relationships which the Roman Catholics of that time maintained with their neighbours.

1663. Sepulta Jona Keat, uxor Gul. Keat Generi Julii 18°, que pauperibus Finmeranis £10 irrogavit de proprio; donaque consanguineis contulit plurima, conjugii £100 et eo plus.

²¹ The inscription is preserved in the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian Library.

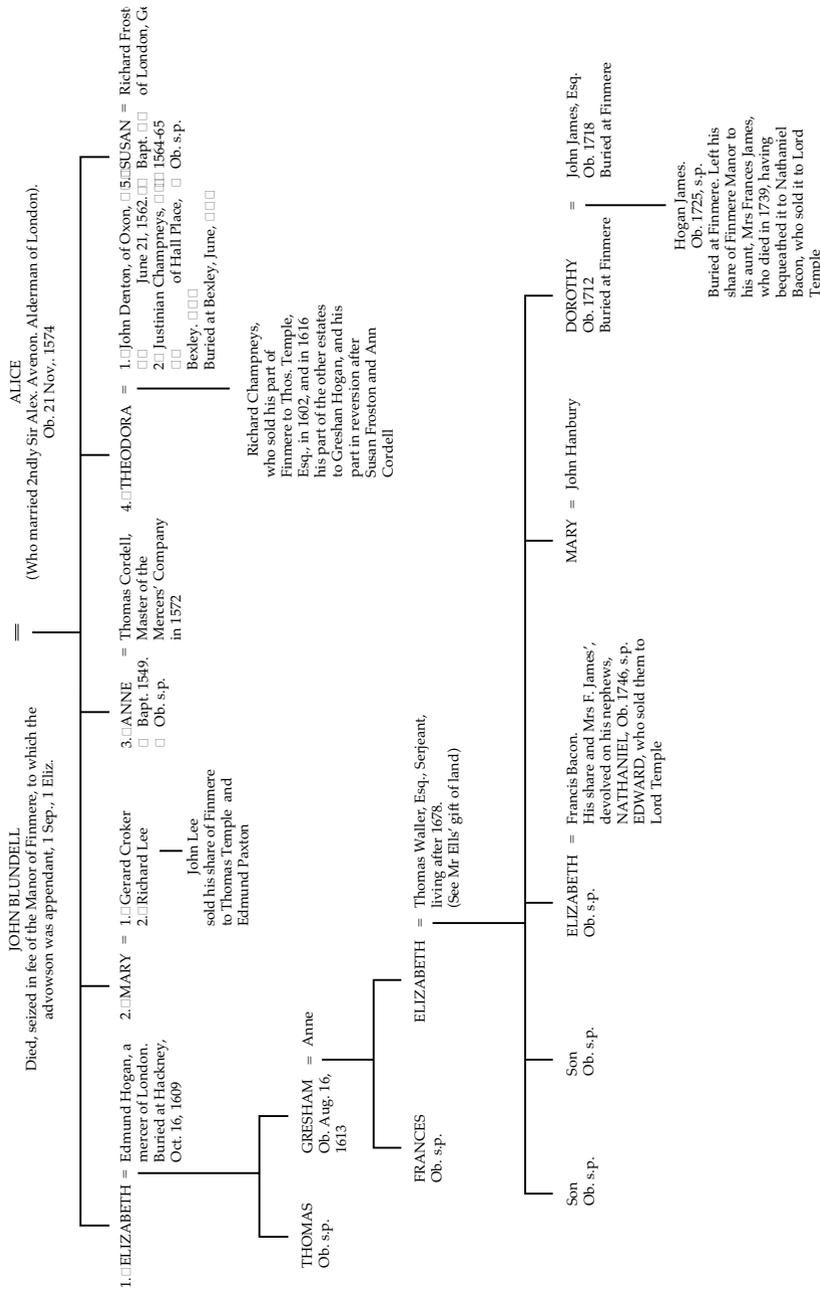
²² Gathered chiefly from the Rector's Book at Finmere.

²³ Traces of these remain.

²⁴ The garden of the present house.

²⁵ Some still standing.

²⁶ Both cut down within living memory.



1666. Gulielmus Keat, generosus Rom. Cath. pie obiit in Dno, qui suâ ultimâ voluntate sive testamento viginti quinque solidos 5 pauperibus Finmeranis irrogavit annuatim ad Christi Nativitate[m] in ppetnum solvendos, Jany. 29, anno p'd'o.

At this time the Roman Catholics in this country were under civil disabilities, and there is record of a baptism celebrated secretly in Mr. Keat's house.

1665. Elizabetha filia Jon Wheatley Joni Bewse uxor Londinensis Cath. Rom. peperit femellam Julii 10^o., quam ob causam huc vicinie comigravit Jun. 24, a Sacrificulo Romano in cedibus Keatianis clam baptizatam.²⁷

A subsequent resident in this house was John Gardiner, gentleman. He had previously lived at Croughton, and in the Finmere Inclosure deed he or his father is described of that place.

Eight of his children were baptized at Finmere between 1679 and 1689. He was followed by Shreeve Paynton, Gentleman. Children of his were baptised at Finmere between 1698 and 1703; and to two of these there are memorials in the Church:

Shreeve Paynton, the 2nd son of Shreeve Paynton, Esq., and Mary his wife. He died the 21st day of March, 1701. Cætatis 7mo.

Also Edward, the 5th son of the said Shreeve and Mary Paynton, died the 19th day of Jany., A.D. 1703. Cætatis 1mo.

He afterwards removed to Banbury, and was residing there from 1715²⁸ to 1731,²⁹ and until his death. Gravestones to his memory and that of members of his family existed in the old Church there. In 1718 Dr. Rawlinson mentions him as Patron of the Rectory of Finmere, but this mistake probably arose from his occupying the Manor House.

Mr. Bacon, soon after succeeding to this estate, came into residence, and from that time the house was known as Bacon's House.

²⁷ Finmere Church Register.

²⁸ He was trustee under Mr Ells' will of the land left for apprenticing children and in a lease of that land to Mr *Chaplin*, the Rector in 1715, he is described 'of Banbury, in the County of Oxon, Esq.' (Rector's Book).

²⁹ See a copy of a letter of his to Mr. Rand, Rector, dated 'Banbury, May 29, 1731,' in the Rector's Book.

FINMERE HOUSE

The name then given to the Manor House was for the purpose of distinguishing it from another house which had been built about the end of the XVIIIth century, and was styled 'Finmere House.' In the latter the James family resided. Memorials to the founder, his wife, son, and sister, were placed in the Parish Church:

John James, Barrister-at-law, Esq., second son of John James, of Felstead, in the County of Essex, Esq., who died April, 1718. (This stone has been much worn.)

Dorothy, his wife, third daughter and co-heir of Thomas Waller, Sergeant at law, third son of Waller, of Gregories, in com. Bucks, who died March 7th, 1712.

Here lyeth interred the body of Hogan James, Gent., son of John James, Esq., of Felstead, in the county of Essex, who died 25 April, 1725, in the 32nd year of his age. In memory of him his aunt, Mrs. Frances James, hath caused this monument to be erected.³⁰

In the Chancel:

Two Shields, Dexter, a Dolphin Naiant (James); sinister (Bacon) with crescent for difference.

Dexter: In memory of Mrs. Frances James, of Finmere, in the County of Oxford, who was the survivor of the issue of John James, of Felstead, in the County of Essex, Esq., buried in this Church near the remains of her brother, John James, Esq., and Dorothy his wife, and Hogan James, their only child. She died 30 June, 1739, aged 80.

Sinister: Nathaniel Bacon, of Finmere, in the County of Oxford, Esq., sole testamentary heir of his relation, Mrs. Frances James, younger son of Walter Bacon, of Erleham, in the County of the city of Norwich, Esq. He died a bachelor on the 18th of Nov., 1746, in the 34th year of his age.

Beneath: In gratitude to Mrs. Frances James, and in testimony of his affection for Nathaniel Bacon, his twin and only brother, Edward Bacon, of Erleham, Esq., caused this monument to be erected.

³⁰ Dorothea James, uxor Johannis James Armig sepulta die nono Martii, 1712. Johannes James, Armiger Sepultus die decimo Aprilis, 1718. Hoganus James. Armiger die ultimo Aprilis 1725 sepultus (Finmere Register).

After the death of this last descendant of the James family, Finmere House was purchased and occupied by John Pollard, Esq. He signed his name as present at the Easter vestry on April 7, 1740, and in 1757 and 58 presented some gifts to the Parish Church. Two entries in the Registers record the burial of him and his wife at Finmere:

John Pollard, August 19, 1761.
Mrs. Pollard, October 31, 1763.

The Paxton family

Contemporary with these, and chief among the yeoman of the village, was the family of Paxton. The first member of this family known to be resident at Finmere was Peter Paxton, whose name first occurs in 1581, several children of his being baptised in the Parish Church between that year and 1598. A descendant, probably a son, William Paxton, died in 1663.

1663. Sepult. Gulielmus Paxton, legalis homo, qui quotannis ex fundo suo xl. sterlingoru su^m potuit derogare Apr. 8^o.

This description of him in the register of his burial may admit of a twofold interpretation: either that he was a lawyer, who was able to lay by out of his estate xl. sterling every year, or that in those troubled times he had been a law-abiding man, able to contribute that sum to the necessities of the State. Another descendant, Peter Paxton, died in 1677, and is described in the last entry which Mr. Horne, the Rector, made in the Finmere Registers 'as the head of the people of our place.'

1677. Petrus Paxton, Nostratum Coryphæus, diu languidus, repentinâque morte sublatus pridie Annuntiationis Bte Virginis Marie, sepultus est Martii 27^o.

Some members of this family are described as residing at the adjoining parish of Barton.

Elizabetha Paxton, filia Petri, Bartonensis, et Eliz. uxor. baptis. Jany. 24, 1649, als 1650.
Maria, filia p.'d.' Petri et Eliz., bapt. July 31, 1651.
Petrus Paxton, Bartonensis, annos 77 natus, mortalitatem exiit, Decem. 12, 1673.

Others resided at Boycot House, near Buckingham, from which Henry Paxton, with his brothers, James and William, emigrated to the United

States of America in 1682. A descendant of theirs is now resident in Pennsylvania, having named his house from his ancestral home, Bycot House, but spelling his name Paxson.³¹

Members of this family have been resident on their estate at Finmere until recently.

Village Incidents and Customs

Some incidents of the village life have been left on record.

A notorious disturber of the public peace and morals was presented by the Churchwardens at the Court of the Archdeacon of Oxford through several years, and incurred ecclesiastical censure:

Oct. 12, 1583. The office of the lord against Alice Haiden of Fynmer, for a common scould, a disturber of her neyghboures:

The lord enjoined her to bring a certificate, under the hand of her neighbours to-day, a third precognizance having been made, &c.

27 Jan., 1598. Alice Heighton, of Fynmore:

She appeared, and having been sworn &c., she denies that she is a comon skold or sland'rer, and farther she sayeth that their were two strange men an a woman lodged in her house in one chamber together, but declareth that she warned that they should not lye in one chamber, as yt is puted. Thereon the lord enjoined her, and to-day she has made purgation³² by the fourth hand of her neighbours, besides herself, &c.

An unusual privilege had been early granted to the lords of Finmere Manor, whereby all questions concerning the wills of persons deceased within the manor were tried and decided in their Court Baron.

In the year of our Lord 1592, after the death of Ambrose Smith, Rector of this Church of Finmere, of our peculiar jurisdiction a question of proof of will arose; it was referred to the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, where the cause failed, the Venble. Anthony Blencow, LL.D., Chancellor of the Bishop of Oxford, being counsel, in that it was discovered by an Inquisition that the lords of the Finmere estates have at their will this privilege granted to them,

³¹ With the instinct so strong in Americans of love for their fatherland, he lately visited Finmere to trace his antecedents.

³² Purgation is one of the punishments of the Ecclesiastical Courts, of which the form is that the accused person takes his oath that he is clear of the charge made against him, and brings his honest neighbours with him to testify that they believe he speaks truly.

that, by ancient, laudable, and lawfully prescribed custom, matters of this kind may be conducted before them in their own judicial Court (which is called The Court Baron), and judgments delivered there.

Edmund Hogan, Esq., one of the lords of this manor, was long ago mindful of that dispute in this letter of his to Robert Higgens, formerly the Incumbent there, expressed in these words:

Mr. Higgens,

After my hearty comendatons advertising you that I received your letter this last week, so, also, I am to desyre you to call on those, who are behind, for their contributon towards the money I laid forth for the suits of probate of wills and graunting administrons in your parish in the Arches, and send me their names who refuse, be they old men or yong men, and I will have proved for them, and say to Chatwin, from me, that I look to be paid at his hands according to promise, and when time shall come I shall desyre you to call in for my rents. And so, guiving you thanks for ye couple of hens you sent me, I do comitt you to God. From my house in Sylvre Street, London, this vjth of Feb., 1599.

Yr loving friend,
Edmond Hogan.³³

Another old custom has come down to the present day. On Shrove Tide, or Tuesday, it was usual to ring one of the Church bells to summon the people to the confession of their sins (shrive or shrift, AS., meaning confession) preparatory to Lent. This, in later times, degenerated into a signal for preparing the pancakes, which were commonly eaten on that day. Taylor, the Water Poet, gives the following curious description of Shrove Tuesday:

At whose entrance in the morning all the whole kingdom is inquiet, but by that time the clocke strikes eleven, which, by the help of a knavish sexton, is commonly before nine, then there is a bell rung, cal'd the Pancake-bell, the sound whereof makes thousands of people distracted, and forgetful of either manners or humanitie; then there is a thing called wheaten floure, which the Cookes do mingle with water, eggs, spice, and other tragicall, magicall enchantments, and then they put it by little and little into a frying-pan of boiling suet, when it makes a confused dismall hissing (like

³³ Memorandum in Mr. Horn's handwriting in the Church Register.

the Lernean snakes in the reeds of Acheron, Styx or Phlegeton), until at last by the skill of the Cooke it is transformed into the form of a Flip-Jack, cal'd a Pancake, which ominous incantation the ignorant people doe devoure very greedily.

It was the daye whereon both rich and poore
 Are chiefly feasted with the selfsame dish,
 When every paunch, till it can hold no more,
 Is fritter-filled, as well as heart can wish;
 And every man and maiden doe take their turne
 And toss their pancakes up for fear they burne,
 And all the kitchen doth with laughter sound
 To see the pancakes fall upon the ground.

(Curious poem from Pasquil's *Palinodia*, 1634.)³⁴

The Pancake-bell is still always rung at Finmere on Shrove Tuesday, at 11-30 a.m.³⁵

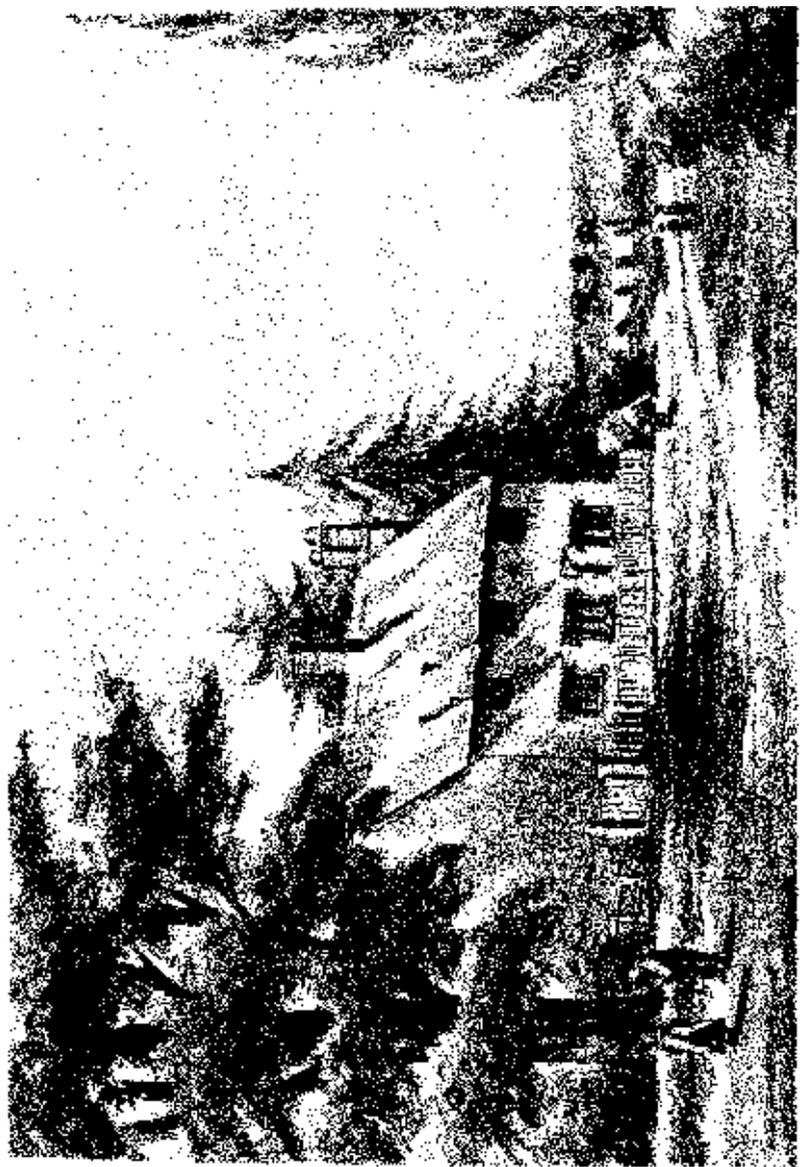
The Curfew-bell has also been continued. At the beginning of the last century it was rung only from Michaelmas to Lady-day. It is still rung from October 11th to April 5th.

Mr. Evelyn in his diary, April, 1694, records an incident of another kind, which no doubt disturbed some minds in Finmere:

A greate rising of people in Buckinghamshire on the declaration of a famous preacher (John Mason, presented to the Rectory of Water Stratford in 1674), till now reputed a sober and religious man, that our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to him on the 16th of this month, told him he was now come down, and would appear publicly at Pentecost, and gather all the Saints, Jews and Gentiles, and lead them to Jerusalem, and begin the Millenium, and, judging the wicked, deliver the government of the world to the Saints. Greate multitudes followed the preacher, divers of the most zealous brought their goods and considerable sums of money, and began to live in imitation of the primitive Saints, minding no private concerns, continually dancing, and singing Hallelujahs night and day. Great numbers of his deluded followers left their homes, and filled all the houses and barns in the neighbourhood of Water Stratford, and when they were prevented from meeting in their chosen field, they met in the town. Three pamphlets were published on this subject in 1694, the year after Mr. Mason's death.

³⁴ Brande's *Popular Antiquities*, vol. 1.

³⁵ The *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1790, p. 495, mentions this custom as still prevailing in some places.



MR. LETTEN'S HOUSE.

In the great civil war of the xviiith century sounds of war were in the air. They came near to Finmere in 1643, whilst the King was maintaining his head-quarters in Oxford, and the Parliamentary army was stationed in many parts of Buckinghamshire, and when, on Sept. 1 in that year, Lord Essex received at Brackley Heath a reinforcement of a brigade of the London trained-bands,³⁶ when marching to relieve the siege of Gloucester. The inhabitants of this village, like the rest of Oxfordshire, were loyal to their King, and a small party of 18 men of the royalist forces were stationed here in 1645. It is pitiable to observe how even after nearly three years' experience of war the King's generals marched and counter-marched their troops without plan or object. In the royal army there were too many equals in command, and hence arose a continual succession of divided counsels. The little unsupported detachment at Finmere was suddenly attacked by an almost equally small force from the Parliamentary garrison at Newport, and, being surprised, they fled in the direction of Bicester, when, attempting a rally near Fringford, they were overtaken, and surrendered.³⁷ It was probably after this expulsion of the King's soldiers that those of Cromwell took up their quarters at Finmere, stabling their horses in the Rectory house. The truth of the latter tradition was strangely confirmed a few years ago, when, on pulling down the old house, a quantity of oat husks were found under the floor of the lower rooms.

Land Value and Inclosure

The value of land in the xviiith century may be gathered from the sale of a close of pasture, measuring 1½ acres, by Edmund Yates, of Finmere, to Sir R. Temple, for £50. Very little alteration in the state of the land had been made for some centuries. Large spaces of the primeval moor and wood yet remained, the former being known as The Warren, and the latter, measuring 99a. lr. 20p., as Finmere Parke, both of which abounded with conies. In 1663, when the late troubles had ceased, and the times became more settled, the chief owners and occupiers agreed to attempt a general inclosure of all the waste land and open field. Their proposal was sanctioned by a decree of the Court of Chancery, and by a deed, dated June, 1677, was carried into effect. This inclosure is noteworthy as being the earliest in this district, and as effected without the intervention of any

³⁶ *The Parliamentary Generals of the Great Civil War* by N. L. Walford, 1886, p. 67.

³⁷ *History of Bicester*, pp. 29, 30.

Act of Parliament. The particulars of it are given in an appendix, and are interesting, as showing the contracting parties, and the names of several spots in the parish.

Mr. Horn, then Rector, according to his wont, chronicled the important change in the occupation of land brought about by this inclosure, with a latent sarcasm at the general effeminacy of manners then prevalent.

1663. *Mollia securæ peragunt nune otia gentes Angliacæ. Hie annus aliam vitam alium morem postulat, quippe Campi Finmenses inclausati paucis locantur tenentibus, plurimoque constantes nempe Templeiani, 220l. p^r annu. Juridici, 112l.*³⁸

Translation: The English people now pass their soft ease in security. This year demands another life, another manner; forsooth, the fields of Finmere, enclosed, and very much brought together, are placed in few tenants, namely, those of Temple, worth £220 per ann., and those of the lawyer, worth £112.³⁹

The land so rose in value after the inclosure that the rent of it was doubled. In consequence of the improved cultivation which followed this inclosure, a systematic plan was commenced of killing all birds and animals which were thought to be detrimental to crops, cows, sheep, and poultry, and were classed under the general name of vermin. Sparrows were netted and killed by hundreds every year, and were brought to the Churchwardens, who paid for them at the rate of 2d per dozen. Hedgehogs also abounded, and were treated in the same way, 4d being paid for an old one, and 2d for young one. Several foxes, too, were killed yearly (generally one or two, but in 1740 twelve, 1746 three, 1747 four, 1761 five), even though packs of hounds were kept at that time at Tusmore, Bucknell, and other places in the neighbourhood, 1/- being the price of a dead fox, or its head.⁴⁰

With improved agriculture the population gradually and slightly increased:

³⁸ In Church Register.

³⁹ Serjeant Waller.

⁴⁰ In the Churchwardens' Book of Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, from 1755 to 1799, payments are recorded for hoghogs, heghogs, hedghogs at 4d each, urchins at 1s 6d each, foxes at 1s each.

Decades of Years	Baptisms	Marriages	Burials
1632-41	43	18	25
[1642-59] ⁴¹	—	—	—
1660-69	45	17	42
1670-79	33 ⁴¹	80 in 8 years	31
1680-89	45		40
1690-99	48	4	21
1700-09	41	13	31
1710-19	47	11	39
1720-29	33	11	41
1730-39	50	12	39
1740-49	53	14	41
1750-59	58		34
1760-69	74		71
1770-79	84		65
1780-89	80		65
1790-99	95		64

The general health of the village appears to have been above the average. There is no record of any epidemic, or special sickness, such as was common in most places, and the following account of a single decade of years shows that the mortality was ordinarily of the common type:

Years	Number of deaths	Causes of death
1666	6	Old age (3) Infancy (1)
1667	2	Childbirth (1)
1668	1	'In the flower of her age' (1)
1669	8	Infancy (1)
1670	2	Pestilential fever (1)
1671	0	—
1672	2	Ague for 15 years (1) Infancy (1)
1673	3	Old age (2) Infancy (1)
1674	4	Dropsy (1) Consumption (1) Sudden Accident (1) Old age (1)
1675	6	Drunkenness (2) ⁴²
1676	7	Infancy (1) Phthiriasis (1) (the lousy disease)

⁴¹ Entries deficient.

⁴² *Cœlebs ebrietate obrutus interiit, Jany. 23. Grandœvus ebriosus interiit et sepultus est Martii, 16^{mo}* (Church Register).

The Nineteenth Century

Such were the days of old. It now only remains to record the onward steps of the present century.

The Roman road remained the main artery of traffic until the end of the last century. The turnpike road from Banbury to Buckingham was then formed, when the Roman road was left as a bridle-way only.⁴³ In 1813 the branch turnpike road from Bicester was formed. By these new roads Finmere regained its old advantage of easy communication with all parts of the neighbouring country. The railway made in 1845-6 runs through the eastern boundary of the parish, and so only affords its conveniences at the adjoining stations of Buckingham and Westbury.

The small estate purchased by Thomas Temple, Esq., towards the end of the xvth century was gradually increased by fresh acquisitions, until the greater part of this parish passed into the possession of the noble owners of Stowe.⁴⁴

The whole land of the parish, exclusive of the glebe, was reckoned at 51 yard lands. The occupiers of it, and their rents, are recorded on two occasions.⁴⁵

A levey granted April 18, 1786, to Mr. Preedy, Churchwarden of Finmere, for the year 1785, at 2d per pound:

⁴³ *History of Bicester*, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Thomas Temple, Esq. (created a Baronet in 1612), was son of John Temple, Esq., of the ancient family of Temple Hall, Leicestershire, and Burton Dasset, Warwickshire, the purchaser of Stowe. His son, Sir Richard Temple, Bart., K.B., and M.P. for Bucks, built Stowe House, and formed the gardens, and on the accession of George I (1714) was created Baron Cobham, of Cobham, in Kent. He died at Stowe in 1749, without surviving issue. His sister Hester, wife of Richard Grenville, Esq., of Wotton, Bucks, then became Viscountess Cobham, and was soon afterwards created Countess Temple. Her eldest son, Richard, Earl Temple, dying without issue in 1779, was succeeded in his title and estates by his nephew George, who, in 1784, was created Marquis of Buckingham. His son was in 1822 advanced to the Dukedom of Buckingham. A copy of the title to Lord Temple's estate at Finmere is recorded in the Rector's Book.

⁴⁵ In Churchwardens' Book.

	Rent per year.					
	£	s	d	£	s	d
The Rev. Mr. Bennett	117	10	0	0	19	7
Mr. J. Preedy	195	0	0	1	12	6
Mr. John Greaves	162	17	6	1	7	1 ³ / ₄
Mr. Dagley	150	0	0	1	5	0
Stephen Greaves	124	11	0	1	0	9
Mr. Wm. Paxton	123	10	0	1	0	7
Mr. Yates	23	0	0	0	3	10
Mr. Creed	3	0	0	0	0	6
Mr. J. Godfrey	3	15	0	0	0	7 ¹ / ₂
Mr. Wm. Strange	3	0	0	0	0	6
	<hr/>			<hr/>		
	906	3	6	7	11	0 ¹ / ₄

April 18, 1808. A levey was granted this day at 3d in the pound, as the rent now stands, as under:

	Rent per year.					
	£	s	d	£	s	d
The Marquis of Buckingham	6	0	0	0	1	6
John Newman, Esq.	41	10	0	0	10	4 ¹ / ₂
Mr. Preedy	195	0	0	2	8	9
Mr. Dagley	150	0	0	1	17	6
Mr. Paxton	175	0	0	2	3	9
Stephen Greaves	152	0	0	1	18	0
Stephen Greaves, jun.	141	0	0	1	15	3 ³ / ₄
Mr. Malin	41	0	0	0	10	3 ³ / ₄
Mr. Yates	23	0	0	0	5	9
Mrs. Creed	3	0	0	0	0	9
Mr. Godfrey	3	15	0	0	0	11 ¹ / ₄
Robert Greaves	3	0	0	0	0	9
				<hr/>		
				11	13	8 ¹ / ₄

A levey at 2d per pound is

7 15 9

A levey at 1d per pound is

3 17 10¹/₂

The estimated rateable value of the parish was this year £934 5/-. It is now £2,220.

In 1848 the late Duke of Buckingham sold this property, the chief purchasers being Merton College, Oxford, Messrs. J. Warner and J. Painter.

Population

A list of inhabitants, written in 1778, mentions 53 families, 238 persons, as the population in that year. The Census returns give the following numbers:

Census year	Population
1801	308
1811	337
1821	395
1831	373
1841	387
1851	399
1861	338
1871	327
1881	291

Private Houses and Farms

FINMERE HOUSE

After the death of Mrs. Pollard in 1763, this property descended to the family, who still possess it, and from that time has been let. The first tenant was John Newman, Esq., of Bedgrove, near Aylesbury. His name first appears in 1796, when he was present at the Easter vestry, and signed the Churchwardens' accounts. It appears constantly in the same way until 1809. In 1820 there is an entry 'Mr. Newmans owe, £1 5s 10d.' He was therefore resident for at least a quarter of a century.

The next tenant was Mr. Chandler, who came hither from Woolaston, in Mixbury. There are two memorials in the Church:

In memory of Henry Whateley Chandler, of Finmere House, who died Aug. 28, 1830, aged 44.

In memory of Elizabeth, his wife, who died Feb. 4, 1864, aged 71 years.

After 1830 this house was occupied by two brothers, Dr. James and Dr. Charles Clark (M.D.) The former was instrumental in effecting some much needed improvements in the sanitary condition of the village, by the removal of cess-pools and other nuisances injurious to health from the doors of the cottages, and by the covering over of the brook where it ran through the village. He was also a very clever mechanic, as was evident from the improvements he made in the Church clock in 1859, and the windmill for pumping water, and other ingenious contrivances, which

are on the premises of his late residence. The workmanship of his many inventions was carried out by William Bayliss, who for many years was in his service, and also deserves honourable mention, for, having learnt much of his handicraft from his master, he made the Church clocks now striking at Fringford, Barton, and Newton Purcell. During Dr. Clark's residence the garden at Finmere House was kept in excellent order, and many a traveller along the public road has stopped to gaze at the old-fashioned house with its bright flowers and well-kept grass plot, which told the taste of some resident within.

This house is now the property of W. H. Hall, Esq., of Six Mile Bottom, Cambridgeshire, who inherited it from his uncle, Major Charles Hall, and is occupied by the widow of Dr. Charles Clark.

MR. LEPPER'S HOUSE

A stone, bearing date 1638, inserted on the side of this house, tells the year of its erection. Together with the land attached, it belonged to two ladies of the name of Harding, who in 1810 sold it to Mr. Baldwin. The latter sold it to Mr. Kendall, who sold it to its present owner, Mr. Lepper. The house was then only one storey high, covered with a long thatched roof. Mr. Lepper has raised the walls, wisely retaining the character of the building, and thus adding an important feature to this picturesque village.

BACON'S HOUSE

Following the practice of many large landholders in recent times, the late Duke of Buckingham pulled down the greater part of the old Manor House, and reduced it to its present proportions. Destroying the water-mill, and most of the former features of the spot, he substituted for them the excellent barns and other farm buildings now standing. This house has been occupied for many years by Mr. J. Treadwell, and is now the property of Merton College.

FINMERE GROUNDS

A house was probably built here immediately after the enclosure about 200 years ago. The present house bears evidence of being erected about that time. The farm to which it was attached was called Thornhill Farm. This has been occupied for many years by Mr. Barrett, and is now the property of Merton College.

WARREN FARM

This takes its name from the old waste land. It was purchased in 1883 by Mr. T. Painter, who now occupies it.

Other Buildings and Features

THE SCHOOL

In 1784 a schoolmaster was resident in the village.⁴⁶ He was doubtless brought here by Mr. Cleaver, Rector, among his many efforts for good, but no further notice of him appears. In 1806 it was:

resolved at Vestry, that Benjamin Elkerton be appointed to superintend the conduct of the children upon the Sabbath day, and that he is to receive the sum of ten shillings and sixpence for his trouble.

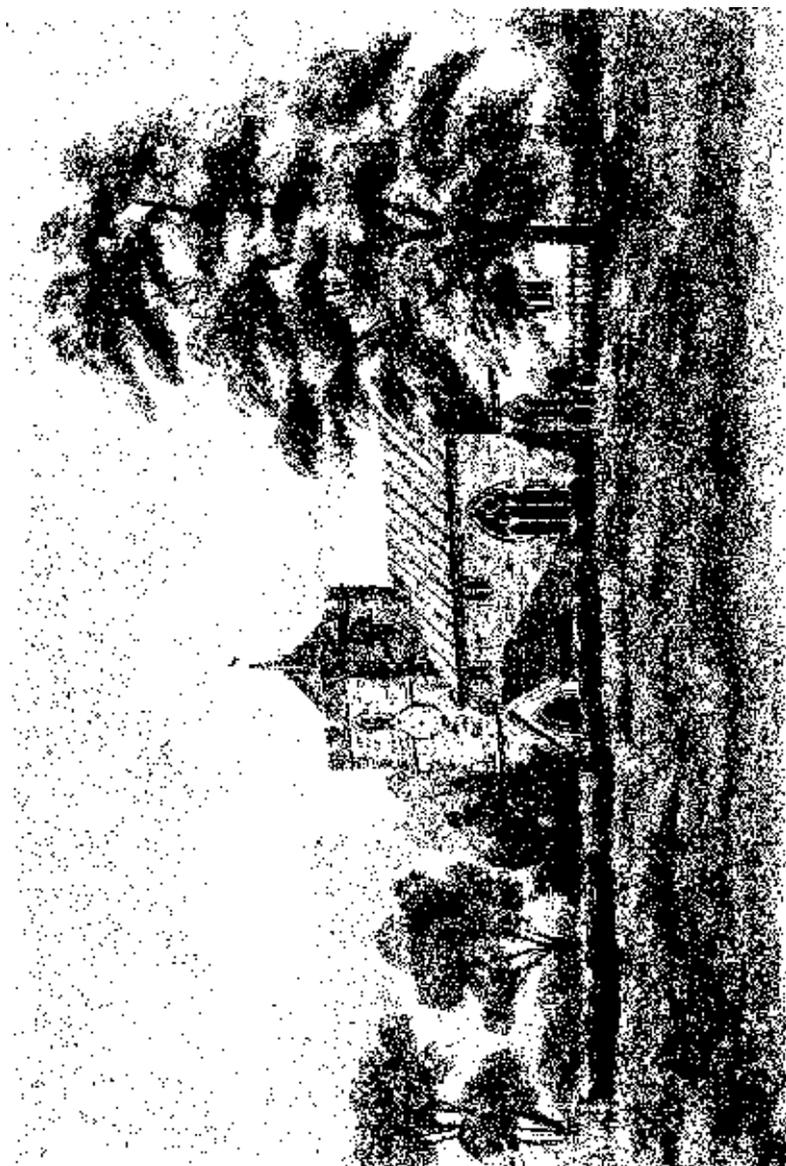
W. H. Barnard, Rector,
John Newman,
William Preedy,
Wm. Paxton,
Daniel Malins.

This payment was continued for many years, and probably implies the existence of a Sunday school at that time. Some years later a day school was established, at first in a dame's house. The present schoolroom was built in 1824.

Memorandum of the building and repairs of the school, made the 26th January, 1841:

In the autumn of the year 1824, His Grace the Duke of Buckingham, at my instance, built a schoolroom for the use and benefit of the poor children of the parish, under the direction of the Church and its ministers, adjoining the W. boundary of the plot of ground vested in Trustees by will of the Rector, Richard Ells, and now forming part of the garden of the parsonage, having a doorway from thence for the parson's use leading into a small yard between the school and the N. end of the Parsonage House, and into which the school opens, having a wicket gate to the W leading to the street or Church path, and opposite to the dwelling of the schoolmistress. The condition on which His Grace conferred this benefit on the parish was that the ratepayers should ever after keep the school-house in repair, which was assented to by the parish in Vestry, and is recorded in vol. 1 of the Vestry books, at page 109, and under date Jan. 8,

⁴⁶ See Register of Baptisms.



1. THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHURCH.

EXTERIOR OF CHURCH.

1824.⁴⁷ And note that it was first proposed that the school should form a lean-to to the Church, but upon reconsideration it was resolved that it should form a detached building, as described above, and that this should make no difference in the condition expressed in His Grace's letter, of which the opposite page of the Vestry book contains a copy.

W. J. P.

The Duke of Buckingham was also willing to build at the same time a house for the schoolmistress, but this offer was unwisely refused, and a small cottage opposite the school, belonging to the Duke, was hired for her residence. This cottage was bought in 1848, and conveyed to the Rectory, as part of the lot purchased at the sale of the Duke of Buckingham's estate.⁴⁸

ALLOTMENTS

The plan of small allotments of land for agricultural labourers was tried here earlier than in many places. The late Duke of Buckingham offered land at the rate of 50/- per acre to any poor man resident in Finmere, who had a wife and two children living, on certain conditions, one of which was:

that the occupiers of the land, so long as they shall hold it, shall engage after they have held the same for twelve calendar months, so as to make a money crop upon it, not to apply to the parish for any relief except in the case of long and protracted illness, or of such casualties as cannot be provided against by any rule.

This proposal was not carried out to any extent, until 1834, when the Duke subdivided a farm, which had lately come into his hands, into these allotments. But no great success attended this plan, chiefly because the allotments were too large for spade husbandry, and yet not large enough to allow of any other mode of cultivation.

THE STOCKS

The time of their first use in England is not known, but pictures of them are found among those of Anglo-Saxon punishments. In the reign of Henry IV. it was directed that every town and village should have a pair of stocks. The earliest kind were moveable.⁴⁹ They held the persons fixed in them by their weight, and the impossibility of walking with them on the legs,

⁴⁷ [The Rectory Book states that this agreement is recorded in 'the parish volume

⁴⁸ Entry in Rector's Book.

⁴⁹ 'Fetch forth the stocks.' (*King Lear*, Act II., sc. 2).

especially when more than one person was confined in them. The stocks lately seen near the Cross Tree, Finmere, were of the kind in use in the xvith and xviiith centuries. It was not any bodily pain inflicted, but the public disgrace to which the misdoer was exposed, which constituted the punishment. Many persons now living in the village can well remember seeing the stocks used.⁵⁰

THE CHURCH

The village still retains many of its original features. The Church, pleasantly situated on rising ground, the well by the side of the footpath leading to it, and houses near these are still there, but the brook, which had long lost its silvery stream, and was therefore covered over in 1872, has become lost to sight, and the old Rectory House at the foot of the hill has given place to its nobler successor on the hill top.

In 1840 the Dowager Queen Adelaide passed through Finmere on her way to Stowe, and the Church bells rang out a loyal welcome.

Dec. 30. Gave Ringers the day Queen Dow[a]lger went through Finmere 5/-

⁵⁰ *The Worcester Journal* of January 19, 1843, records that this old form of punishment was recently revived at Stratford-on-Avon; and the *Leeds Mercury* of April 14, 1860, says: 'A notorious character, named John Gambles, of Stanningley, having been convicted some months ago for Sunday gambling, and sentenced to sit in the stocks for six hours, left the locality, returned lately, and suffered his punishment by sitting in the stocks from 2 till 8 o'clock on Thursday last.'

II

Benefactions to the Poor

This parish has been benefitted by many charitable gifts. An enquiry was made by order of Parliament in 1786 into the state of the Charities of the country, and one of the Churchwardens of this parish, Mr. Stephen Greaves, duly attended the meeting of the Commissioners for this district:

1786 Sept. 1. A journey to Bicester to give account of Charities to poor of Finmere 3/6

Keat's Legacy, A.D. 1666

'Mr. William Keat, gentleman, of Finmere,' left by will an annuity of 45/- payable from land in Finmere; of which 20/- was to be assigned for the use of the poor of Hagborne in the County of Berks, and 25/- for the use of five poor people inhabiting in the said town of Finmere; the said five poor people to be from time to time nominated by the Rector of the Church of Finmere aforesaid, and the Churchwardens and Overseers of the poor there for the time being. At the Inclosure ten years later this bequest was secured by a payment of 45/- yearly from a close in Finmere, which was part of a furlong called 'Brach Furlong' to certain trustees.⁵¹

The Poor's Plot

'A piece of furze ground in Finmere, containing by estimation twelve acres,' had been for some time before the Inclosure of 1677 known as 'The Poor's Plot.' At the Inclosure this piece of ground was assigned to trustees,⁵² upon special trust and confidence and to the intent and purpose that they:

shall from time to time, and at all times hereafter, permit and suffer the Churchwardens and Overseers of the poor of the said parish of Finmere for the time being, or the major part of them, to pay, employ, and dispose the rents, issues, and profits of the said plott or parcel

⁵¹ Those named in the Inclosure Deed were 'E. Andrews, R. Bury, and J. Gardiner.'

⁵² The same as the above mentioned.

of Furze ground with the appurtenances, and of every part thereof, unto and amongst the poor of the said parish of Finmere in such sort as the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the poor for the time being shall think fit, in which number of poor people Bridget Tapping and John George shall be accounted as two.⁵³

Charity Commissioners Report, 1824:

It is poor land, mostly covered with ling, and affords very little pasture.

This rent, with part of the dividends of Baker's Charity, is laid out in the purchase of a stock of coals, which are sold to the poor during the winter at a reduced price. At the time of our enquiry in March, 1824, the parish officers were selling at 15d. a cwt. coals which were purchased at 17d., the poor having the advantage of this diminution of price, as well as of getting the coals carriage free. All the poor are supplied with coals in this manner generally from about Christmas to Easter. Each family is allowed to buy a cwt. a week.

The Poor's plot of land was for many years let by the Churchwardens and Overseers by auction on Easter Monday to the highest bidder, on a yearly tenancy, and the rent divided amongst the poor.

	£	s	d		£	s	d
1800	4	0	0	1813	10	5	0
1801	4	5	0	1814	10	7	6
1802	4	10	6	1815	7	5	0
1803	4	11	6	1816	6	7	6
1804	7	7	0	1817	6	6	0
1805 } 1806 } 1807 } 1808 }	4	4	0	1818	7	10	0
				1819	10	5	0
				1820	10	12	6
	6	0	0	1821	9	2	6
1809	9	17	0	1822	5	7	6
1810	10	0	0	1823	7	0	0
1811	8	8	0	1824	10	10	0
1812	11	10	0	1825	8	2	6

But the rents often failed, and the crops also, from the wretched cultivation which the changing tenants of a year necessarily adopted.

In 1827 the Duke of Buckingham, having observed the state and condition of the Poors' Plot in his shooting excursions, and taking into consideration the attempts now beginning to be made to improve the condition of the poor by letting them small portions

⁵³ Deed of Inclosure.

of land for spade husbandry, proposed to make a beginning at Finmere by taking in person of the Churchwardens the Poores' Plot, and underletting it in single chains to the poor, an offer which was readily accepted. Accordingly Mr. J. Taylor, His Grace's farming bailiff, measured and divided it into 112 pieces, of which the rent together at 3s. per chain amounted to £16 12/-.⁵⁴

The Duke continued this plan for seven years, but when some occupiers began to claim a right to hold this land rent free, and to exchange it as they pleased, he abandoned it. The Rector, Mr. Palmer, then undertook the hire of the Poores' Plot for the same purpose as the Duke had held it, and submitted a code of rules for the better management of the land to the tenants, which were agreed to, and signed by the greater part of them, to the number of 51, at Easter, 1834. The rent of the land paid by Mr. Palmer in 1834 was £12. Four years later he raised it to £14.

This land is still let to the Rector at £14 15/- per ann., and he sub-lets it to the parishioners at the rate of 3s per chain, he paying all rates and taxes, and the charge of an overlooker. It is well cultivated, and bears good crops. The rent, after deductions of the Tithe Rent-charge and £2 paid to the Clerk in lieu of the former house to house collection, is added to the payments made yearly to the Coal Club, which comprises almost every cottager within the parish.

A.D. 1703. Ell's Charity

In the name of God, Amen.⁵⁵ I, Richard Ells, Rector of the Church of Finmere, in the County of Oxford, being tho' weak of body, yet of perfect understanding, do hereby make, constitute, ordain, and declare this my last will and testament in form following:

And first, I commit my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the Chancel of Finmere aforesaid, and as touching my temporal estate wherewith it pleased God of His goodness to bless me in this life, I dispose thereof as followeth (that is to say), I do hereby give and devise all that my little Close adjoining to my Homestall, called by the name

⁵⁴[The note corresponding to Blomfield's footnote reference at this point is missing from the 1887 text.]

⁵⁵ The will from which I transcribed this is an 'authentick copy, with the probat affixed to it, in the hands of Mr. Richard Paynton, Town Clerk of Banbury, executor to his father, Shreeve Paynton, Esq., one of the Trustees mentioned in the will' (Rector's Book).

of the Rickyard Close, which I purchased to me and my heirs for ever, of Mr Sergeant Waller, unto my trusty and loving friends and neighbours, Shreeve Paynton, of Finmere aforesaid, Esq, and Edmund Butterfield, of Barton in the County of Bucks, gent.,⁵⁶ and to their heirs for ever, in trust nevertheless, and to the intent and purpose that out of the profits thereof there may be paid yearly unto my servant William Dawkins, of Finmere aforesaid, during the term of his life, eight shillings for ringing the 8 o'clock bell in Finmere aforesaid every year from the Feast of St. Michael to the Feast of the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary, and that the remaining part of the rents and profits of my said Close may be by them applied to the putting forth an apprentice, one of the poor boys or girls of the parish of Finmere aforesaid, as often as a sufficient sum can out of the same be raised for that purpose; and it is my express will and desire that my successors for the time being may be tenants of my said Close at such rent as to my said Trustees the same shall appear to be worth.⁵⁷

Charity Commissioners, Report, 1824:

This land (about an acre in size) forms part of the garden of the Rectory House, and the boundary marks between this and the rest of the Rector's premises do not seem to have been carefully preserved. We are assured, however, that the boundary line can be ascertained, and that it shall be secured by proper marks. The land is held by the present Rector without lease; he has paid an annual rent of £2 2/- from the time he came to the living, about the year 1815.

It appears, however, that the rent reserved in the old lease was, in 1715, £2 10/-, and that this continued to be paid till a late period; £2 2/- of it being applied to the charity, and 8/- to the clerk for ringing the bell. The present Rector was not aware of this circumstance, and has not hitherto paid the 8/-, but expressed his willingness to pay in future.

A rent of £2 2s seems to be quite as much as pasture ground of the same extent would be worth in this neighbourhood; and considering the peculiar provisions of this devise, we think the trustees ought not to require an accommodation rent beyond the real value of the land.

⁵⁶ 'Mr. Butterfield dying before Mr. Paynton, the estate and consequently, the trust, vested in Mr. Paynton and his heirs, exclusive of the heirs of Mr. Butterfield' (Rector's Book).

⁵⁷ [The will continues on p. 60].

When the £2 2/- a year has accumulated to a sufficient sum, it is to be applied in apprenticing a poor boy of the parish. The premiums given are from £15 to £20. Sometimes when an apprentice is to be put out, and this fund falls short of the required amount, an addition is made from the parish rates. The whole of the charity fund has been thus applied, and has proved insufficient to put out all the apprentices that have been bound.

A small addition of £10 10/- was made to this fund last winter by the sale of three trees which grew with others in the hedgerow that divides this land from the court close, and which were blown down.

In 1867 this piece of garden ground was purchased of the Charity Commissioners by the Patron of the Rectory, W. Ashwell, Esq., and added to the glebe. The purchase money was invested by the Commissioners in Consols, of which the yearly interest amounts to £3 4s 4d.

Frances James and Nathaniel Bacon

1739. from Mrs. Frances James. £5 by will. This was executed on Oct. 28, 1739, and the names of 20 recipients are recorded in the Rector's Book.

1746. From Mr. Nathaniel Bacon. £5 By will. The distribution was made on Dec. 5 in the same year by William Paxton, Churchwarden, Tarver Kinch, Churchwarden and Overseer, and John Hall, Overseer, and myself, to 24 persons. (Note by Mr. Long in Rector's Book).

1780. Baker's Charity

William Baker, son of Isaac (Ob. 1728, buried April 3,) and Susanna (Ob. 1744, buried Aug. 31,) Baker, of Finmere, 'of the hamlet of Hammersmith in the parish of Fulham, Middlesex,' by a codicil to his will, dated 17th October, 1770, directed his executors to place the sum of £100 in such manner as they should think proper in trust, and out of the interest thereof to pay 2/6 yearly to the clerk of the parish of Finmere to cut down and to keep the weeds clear from the tomb erected over his parents' graves in Finmere Churchyard; the overplus he gave to Ann Jones, of Finmere, widow, for her life, and at her decease directed that such overplus should be distributed and given to any poor persons of the parish that should not receive alms. Mr. Baker was buried at Finmere on Feby. 6, 1760, and his sister, Anne Swain, on Sept. 21, 1783, both described as of Hammersmith.

An extract from this will, enclosed in a glazed frame, was hung on the

west wall of the Church by Mr. Cleaver, Rector, in 1783. One requirement of this will was that the iron-work round the tomb was to be painted once in every six years.

Charity Commissioners' Report, 1824:

It appears from a stock transfer ticket, dated 22nd August, 1782, that the executors of William Baker transferred on that day to the Rector and Churchwardens the sum of £100, 3 per cent. reduced annuities. It is supposed that this was done instead of paying the £100 money.

The stock now stands in the names of Robert Paxon and William Yates.

It is stated to be impossible to follow the directions of the testator in giving this money to poor people not receiving alms.

Stephen Painter and The Earl of Selbourne

1834. Mr. Stephen Painter's Bequest

I give to the Minister and Churchwardens of the parish of Finmere in the said County of Oxford, the sum of £100, to be applied by them for the benefit of the Sunday Schools in that parish in such manner as they shall think fit.

1872. The Earl of Selborne's Gift

This consists of a sum of money invested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Fund, producing a yearly interest of £1 17/6, which is to be given to the Clothing Club, and in case of that failing, to be divided among five old men, at the discretion of the Rector and Churchwardens.

III

The Church of St Michael

The oldest thing now existing in this, as in most villages, is the Parish Church. The Manor House and the dwellings of the residents 500 years ago are all gone, but the Church still stands where it stood then. A church had existed on the same spot in the xiiith and xiiiith centuries, but no visible traces of it have been left. The present building was erected in the course of the xvth century. It was dedicated, like most churches standing on hills or rising ground, to St. Michael, and thus the Feast has been always kept on the Sunday after Michaelmas Day. At the time of its erection it looked somewhat different from what it looks now, and was smaller, consisting only of chancel, nave, and west tower. The chancel has a good decorated east window of three lights, with flowing tracery, and the scroll moulding for a dripstone; the side windows are also decorated, of two or three lights; the chancel arch is of more modern date. The nave has a good decorated window of three lights, and small clerestory windows. The south doorway and porch were of the same style, but very plain. The tower is also decorated, the lower windows of two lights, those of the belfry single lights; it has a battlement, but no buttress, and three bells. The font is plain round, tub-shaped.⁵⁸

Fabric and Ornaments

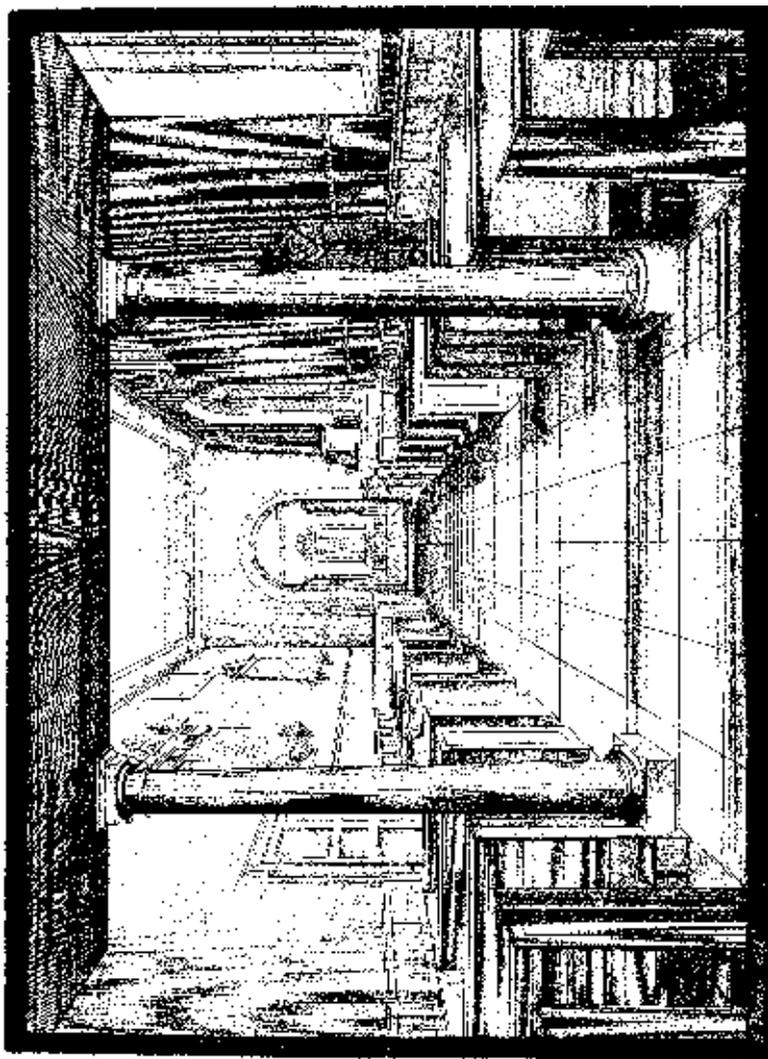
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The fabrics of many parish Churches in England were fast falling into decay previous to the Reformation, and the troublous times which followed only added to the mischief. No work of any importance was done to this Church through three centuries, and so it is no surprise to read:

The Church walls of Finmer propt with timber, May 29, 1651.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Ecclesiastical Topography of England*, Part IV, J. H. Parker, 1850.

⁵⁹ Entry in the Church Register by Mr. Horn, Rector.



INTERIOR. 1780.

W. & A. G. S. 1780.

Immediately after the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, attempts were made to restore in the Church generally the order which had been so rudely broken, and first in the repair of its ruined fabrics. Accordingly the Churchwardens of this parish were summoned before the Bishop to attend to this matter.

1664, May 14: Barnard Chappel and Thomas Smith, wardens of Finmere. Both cited at Ffinmere aforesaid, on the 12th day of the present May, by Petty, the apparitor.

Having been sworn they appeared before mid-day in the presence of Master Nicholas Vylett, Surrogate, and willingly submitted themselves, and they acknowledge That their Parish Church of Ffinmere is in decay and ready to fall, but the major part of the parishe being rack renters, they are not able sufficiently to contribute to the rebuilding thereof; they further alledge that Sir Richard Temple, whoe liveth at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, and Serjeant Waller, who liveth at Holborne in London being the lords of that towne having lately enclosed the same did double their rents at the time of the enclosure, and did p[ro]mise between them, and covenant with the p[ar]ishioners that they would build up the said p[ar]ishe Church. The lord decided to deliberate, and that this answer be intimated to the Vicar General in spiritual things of the lord Bishop of Oxford.

From that time to the present the history of this Church is a record of continual repairs and gifts, whereby it has been gradually brought out of the ruin into which it had fallen to the good and comely condition in which it now appears. The needed repairs were begun soon after the summons of the Churchwardens, as appears from the date inscribed on a stone in the porch,

John Archer is my name.

I laid this ston and rit the same.

1666.⁶⁰

Further efforts to improve and ornament, according to the taste of the age, the interior of the Church were made a few years later,⁶¹ and the names of the Churchwardens, by whom they were effected, were inscribed on the north wall of the nave.

⁶⁰ This became illegible many years ago, but it has been preserved on the first page of the Rector's Book in Mr. Long's handwriting. This stone was taken down in 1875, when the porch was re-built.

⁶¹ In a cottage near the Church some fragments of the tracery of a window may be seen, which probably belonged to the Church.

Thomas Chappell, William Philips, Churchwardens, An^o Dni, 1695.

The chancel roof at the same time was covered with a low plaister ceiling which concealed the upper part of the east window, and its walls were panelled with plain painted woodwork, concealing the sedilia and piscina.

Gifts of furniture next followed.

The present clock was placed in the tower at Michaelmas, 1697, the cost being defrayed by voluntary subscriptions.

The persons undernamed gave to the Clock as followeth:⁶²

	£	s	d
Mr. Purbeck Temple	2	0	0
Mr. James	1	0	0
Mr. Ells, Rector	2	0	0
Mr. Painton	1	10	0
Mr. Chaplin	0	10	0
Mr. Horne	0	5	0
Thomas Crow	0	5	0
Thomas Chappell	0	5	0
James Robbins	0	2	0
Henry Tappin	0	2	0
Nicolas Finch	0	1	0
Richard Edwards	0	1	0
Richard Boughton	0	1	0
Anne Middleton	0	0	6
William Cheynells	0	1	0
John Hatton and Beatrice	0	1	6
Tho. Neele	0	1	0
John Stevens .	0	0	6
Thomas Savage.	0	1	0
William Archer.	0	1	0
George Middleton.	0	1	0
Elizabeth Warre.	0	2	6
	<hr/>		
	8	12	0
	<hr/>		
The clock cost	8	10	0
Given to Mr. Ford's man	0	2	6

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

'A note of the goods belonging to the Church of Finmere' was written on the first page of the Churchwardens' Book by Mr. Long, Rector, 1733-1771:

⁶² Entry in Rector's Book.

Communion Table.

Carpet of Green Cloth, marked R.E. 1699 in gold lace.

Table Cloth of Callico muslin, about 2 ells long, marked M.E. 1699 being gold lace tack'd to the cloth.

Napkin of Damask, mark'd F. 1737 in red silk.

Silver Cup, having graven on the foot 'Finmere, Oxfordshire.'

Pewter Flaggon.

Plate of hard metal, with FINMERE: stampt on ye bottom.

Surplice.

Master's Hood.

Two Prayer Books.

Bible.

Pulpit Cloth, mark'd R.E. 1699 in gold lace.

Cushion for the Pulpit.

Desk Cloth.

Chest, with one lock without and another within.

Three Bells.

Clock.

Bier.

Book of Homilies.

Table of Prohibited Degrees of Marriage.

Pewter Bason, with FINMERE stampt on ye bottom, for the font.

Table of Benefactions to this parish.

2 Forms in the Church porch.

Some of these goods were subsequently renewed.

This old Communion Table is destroyed, a new one of mahogany being given, July, 1755, in the place of it.

The place where the north door formerly was, having been fitted up with all the conveniences (and many more) afforded by a Chest for keeping the Surplice, Communion Table, Carpet, Pulpit Cloth and Cushion, &c., together with a drawer, having three locks and keys for keeping the Register. The Chest, having thus become useless, and no good place in the Church being to be found for it, has been destroyed.

John Pollard, Esq., of this parish, having made a present to the Church of a new Pulpit Cloth and Cushion, a Carpet for the Communion Table and Cloth for the Reading Desk, all of a very fine purple Cloth, and ornamented with a yellow silk fringe, the whole costing £13 1s 6d, the old things of this sort, numbered above 1, 2, 3, 4 have been put to other uses. This gift was Anno Domini 1757. A Flagon and Paten in French Plate. This gift of John Pollard, Esq., A.D. 1758.

The area of every Parish Church is by law free and open for the use of all the parishioners, but a custom of appropriating parts of it for the accommodation of a few favoured individuals arose, and was followed in the last century in almost every Church in the country.

Oct. 28, 1700: Memorand. That in a full meeting of the Rector, Churchwardens, and parishioners of Finmere, there was granted to Mr. James, lord of the town, and Patron of the sayd Church, leave to erect a convenient pew in the upper part of the sayd Church for himself and family.

Rich. Ells, Rector.

Oct. 26, 1700: Memorand. that the same was granted some time before to Mr. Painton to erect a pew for himself and family next to the Reading pew by the full consent of the Rector, Churchwardens, and Parishioners.

R. Ells, Rector.

The jurisdiction of the Churchwardens only extends to the body of the church. That of the Rector alone is exercised over the chancel. In this Church the Rector also yielded to the mischievous custom.

Whereas Thomas Long, Rector of Finmere, hath given leave to John Perkins to erect a pew in his Chancel, the sd John Perkins doth hereby acknowledge that he hath obtained the sd leave under the following restrictions and covenant, viz., that the sd Pew shall be only for the use of him and his family, whilst he shall reside in the sd parish, and this only, during the pleasure of the sd Th. Long and his successors, and that it shall not in any way be understood to belong to the house, in which he dwelleth, and that he shall not assign it over to any other person or persons without the consent of the sd Th. Long, or his successors, being first obtained. And the sd John Perkins doth covenant to pay yearly to the sd Th. Long and his successors upon the Feast of the Nativity one Pepper Corn by way of acknowledgment. In witness whereof the sd John Perkins hath hereunto set his hand this 26th day of October 1738.

John Perkins.

Witness Mary Telford.

Dec. 28, 1751: Received of Thomas Long, Rector of Finmere, two pounds, and two shillings, being the money formerly expended by me in erecting the pew on the South side of the Chancel in the Parish Church of Finmere. And I do hereby acknowledge that I have no right for myself or my family to sit in the said pew, but only by the permission of the said Thomas Long. Witness my hand the day and year above-written.

Jne. Perkins Signed by Mr. John Perkins in the presence of us: J. W. Pollard. Mary Telford.

To compensate for these encroachments, a gallery was erected at the west end.

But the interior of the Church was occasionally far from proof against wind and weather. Constant entries occur in the Churchwardens' accounts for the repair of glass in the windows, and this was often done with such bad success that the sparrow did literally find a house, and the swallow a nest within the sanctuary.

1737. April 27: P^d Rabard Mannin for stopping ye birds out of ye Church: 3s.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In 1841 repairs were again undertaken, which were defrayed by a special rate.

Bills deliver'd on the Repares of the Church:⁶³

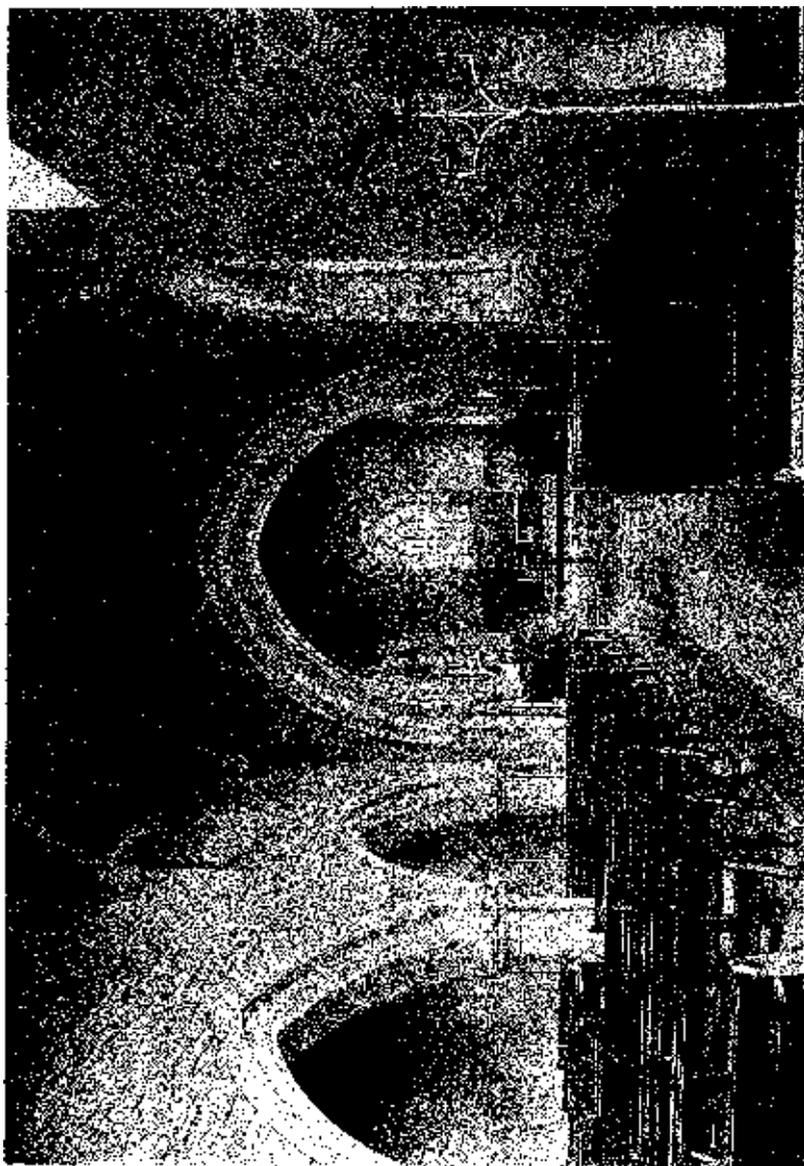
	£	s	d
Mr. Jarvise's Bill for Repairing the led, and Painting and Coulering the Church	40	6	5
Mr. Kirby Bill for Oak for the roof, and Staircase of Do.	7	0	0
Mr. Werley's Bill for Deals	4	3	2 ³ / ₄
Mr. Pettey, Bill for Work	7	2	4
Mr. Tappin's Bill for Masentring	1	3	0
Mr. Fincher, Bill for Repairing Bells	0	3	0

	£	s	d
By Levey at 1s in pound	52	11	6 ¹ / ₂
By Levey at 41/4 in pound	18	12	4 ¹ / ₂
	70	3	11

A handsome Bible and a Prayer Book were presented by Roundell Palmer, Esq. (Earl Selborne), after his father's death in 1853.

The repairs just recorded were chiefly of the roof of the nave. A thorough restoration of the whole fabric was yet needed. This was begun in the chancel, at the sole cost of the Rector, F. Walker, in 1856. The south and east walls were then re-built, except the quoin at the south-east corner. A new south-west window was inserted, while the doorway and south-east window were repaired. The east window was again opened and raised to its original height, and a new cross and coping were placed upon the

⁶³ Churchwarden's Book.



INTERIOR, 1886

100-10000-100-10000

wall above it, another cross being also placed at the east end of the nave in place of the broken cot, which once held the Sance bell. Two years later, the aid of the parishioners and landowners was invoked to restore and enlarge the nave. Plans were prepared by G. E. Street, Esq., architect, and contributions amounting to about £800 were collected.⁶⁴ The south wall of the nave and the chancel arch were then re-built; a new roof was placed over the entire nave; and a new aisle added on its north side. The west gallery was also removed, and new open seats placed throughout the Church. The restored Church was re-opened for divine service on Nov. 15, 1858, when, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, large congregations filled it at the two services which were held on that day. The Bishop of the Diocese preached and celebrated the Holy Communion in the morning, and the Rev. J. W. Burgon, then Fellow of Oriel Coll., Oxford, formerly Curate of Finmere, and now Dean of Chichester, preached in the evening.

The clock, which had been taken down in 1858, was set up again in 1859 in the south wall of the Tower, where before had been a doorway. Dr. James Clarke, M.D., of Finmere House, bore (with the exception of £7 voted by the Vestry)⁶⁵ the cost of alteration; he likewise invented its escapement, and had the alterations and additions executed under his own care. The clock of 1697 had no minute hand.

The Church, thus thoroughly repaired, still lacked ornaments, and some adjuncts needed for convenience. These have been of late years supplied.

1865. The Lectern, the gift of friends of Rev. F. Walker.

1868. The Vestry, built at the expense of the Patron, W. Ashwell, Esq.

1869. The Organ.

1876. The south Porch, re-built at a cost of £62 2s 9d, raised by voluntary subscriptions, according to the plans proposed in 1858 but not then executed.

⁶⁴ The chief contributors were the family of the late Rector, Roundell Palmer. Esq., £100; Rev. G. H Palmer, Rector of Mixbury, £100; Mrs. Palmer, £100; Miss Palmer, £50; Rev E Palmer, £25; Merton College, £50; Church Building Society, £50; Diocesan Church Building Society, £45; Rev. F. Walker, Rector, £25; Offertories on the Day of Re-opening, £93 14s 9d. Other gifts were the lime and the sand by Merton Coll.; much carting by the Rector and Farmers; the altar cloth by Miss Palmer; trefoil window by Rev. T N. Langhorne.

⁶⁵ Entry in Rector's Book. 'April 10. Paid William Bayliss Bill for repairing the Church Clock, £10' (Churchwarden's Book).

The following are gifts of the present Rector, most of them being the skilfully carved work of his own hands.

1874. The Pulpit:

A new pulpit has just been fixed in the Church of St. Michael, in Finmere, Oxon. It is of carefully selected English oak, in a base of Corsham Down stone. The pulpit is octagonal in plan, shafted at the angles, and panelled with walnut wood, richly carved. The panels, caps, and cornice have been carved by the Rector, the Rev. S. Ashwell, from full-sized details drawn by the architect. The turning and joiner's work, which is elaborate, has been done by Mr. G. Watson, of Stony Stratford. The brass pulpit light was furnished by Messrs Richardson, Slade, & Co. of London; the whole from the designs and under the supervision of Mr. E. S. Harris jun., architect, of London and Stony Stratford.⁶⁶

1878. The Font Cover.

1883. The Reredos

In July, 1883, a new Reredos was added made of English oak, richly arcaded, mounted and carved and fitted with painted panels on gold ground. The walls of the chancel were also decorated at the same time. The panels are painted representing the four Evangelists. The whole of the carving on it was done by the Rev. Seymour Ashwell, Rector of the parish, and the joinery by Mr. W. Watson, of Stony Stratford, the whole of the work being carried out from the designs of Mr E. Swingen Harris, architect.⁶⁶

1885. The West Screen in Tower.

1886. The Carvings on the stall ends in the chancel, and on the stone corbels of the roof.

1884. The Painted Glass in east window. Subject: The Ascension.

1886. The same in west window. Subject: The Annunciation.

Thus has this house of God now reached a beauty never known to the many generations of past time.

The fabric was first insured against fire in 1878.

⁶⁶ *The Architect*, Oct. 17, 1874.

The Churchyard

In the year 1760, Mr. King (Lord Temple's steward) built a stone wall on the E. and N. sides of the Churchyard instead of the posts and rails, with which it was mounded before, (the S. side, namely, along by Richard Gaseley's garden, was walled by Mr. King the year before). The mound of posts and rails was so crooked and stood so irregular that there was no building the wall as they stood, and therefore we consented, in order to carry on the wall straight, to give and take; and accordingly there was given out of the Churchyard on the E. side, 2053 square feet, and taken in on the N. side 1760 square feet, which with 265 square feet (the measure of the walk from the little Orchard to the Churchyard inclosed between pales making the E. side of R. Gaseley's garden, and which I had no other right to but leave from Mr. Edward Bacon in the year 1752), makes 2025 sqe feet. This falls short of the ground given out by 28 sqe feet, which may be allowed for, when that part of the Churchyard, which is mounded at present by G. Parker's garden hedge, is walled in. The little walk by this exchange becoming the Rector's property, as being now part of the Churchyard, is a most desirable thing, as it affords him a clear and private way to Church, and cannot be taken from him.⁶⁷

New oak gates and some iron fencing have been lately given by the present Rector.

⁶⁷ Entry in Rector's Book.

IV

The Rectors of Finmere

The Patrons of the Church of this village, whoever they were, early sought to relieve themselves of the responsibility of nominating clergymen, and therefore, according to the custom of that age, they made over the advowson to a religious house.

A monastery, consisting of an abbot and 20 monks, called St. Augustine's Priory, had been founded at Bristol by Robert Fitz Harding, Mayor of Bristol, in A.D. 1148, or, as some say, in 1120.⁶⁸ It is not possible to say what connection there was between that distant monastery and the Patron of this Church. That there was some special connection with this neighbourhood seems clear from the names of some of the brethren, who were first sent to take charge of this parish, for they are those of places in this county. But whatever the motive of the gift may have been, it is certain that, not long after the foundation of the Priory, this Church was given to it, and that through three centuries the Abbot and Convent presented to the Bishop of Lincoln, within whose diocese Finmere then was, the clergy for institution to this rectory.

Rectors 1237-1630

The Abbey of St. Augustine, Bristol, Patrons.

Rectors instituted:

RALPH DE WELL, sub-deacon. Instituted 1237. Vacated by (?).

JOHN DE STANTON, sub-deacon.⁶⁹ Instituted 1248. Vacated by (?).

RALPH DE OXON, ALS DE CROKESFORD, i.e. Cotesford (Cottesford), resident at Pope Nicholas' Taxation, 1292. Vacated by death.

JOHN DE LANGTON, clerk. Instituted 14 Kal. June 1299. Vacated by resignation.

⁶⁸ Now Bristol Cathedral. The monastery was changed into the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity in 1542.

⁶⁹ [There was also a parson named Rannulf in 1241. See *The Oxfordshire Eye 1241*, ed. Janet Cooper, Oxfordshire Record Society, 56 (1989), pp. 49 & 123.]

RICHARD DE ABINDON, acolyte. Instituted 14 Kal. Aug. 1306. Vacated by death.

RICHARD DE ADDERBURY, clerk. Instituted 4 Non. May 1339. Vacated by(?).

ROBERT HOLBROK, clerk. Instituted April 12, 1392. Vacated by exchange with the Rector of the Church of Chilton Camelowe.

JOHN CHIPPENHAM. Instituted Dec. 17, 1396. Vacated by (?).

SIR HUGH TIBBE. Instituted (?). Vacated by exchange with the Church of Eversleigh, Winton Diocese.

SIR WILLIAM LOWTRY AL^S LOTRI. Instituted Oct. 15, 1407. Vacated by exchange with the Church of Arley, Coventry & Lichfield Diocese.⁷⁰

WILLIAM THOMAS ALS TOMMES. Instituted Dec. 21, 1407. Vacated by resignation.

JOHN BABYNGTON. Instituted Nov. 10, 1411. Vacated by exchange with the Church of Pampeworth.

JOHN MARCHAUNT. Instituted Dec. 24, 1416. Vacated by resignation.

MASTER GEOFFREY DAVENPORT, licentiate of laws. Instituted March 14, 1416. Vacated by resignation.

THOMAS WHYTCURCHE, priest. Instituted Sept. 18 1421. Vacated by (?).

SIR JOHN LANCASTER. Instituted (?). Vacated by exchange with then Church of Esylburgh.

WALTER KYNGHEN. Instituted Nov. 13, 1443. Vacated by (?).

RICHARD KERE. Instituted (?). Vacated by resignation.

THOMAS FEYLY, priest. Instituted March 4, 1446. Vacated by (?).

MASTER THOMAS VESE. Instituted (?). Vacated by resignation.

SIR RICHARD SMYTH, chaplain. Instituted Aug. 2, 1454. Vacated by (?).

RICHARD STRILLEN. Instituted (?). Vacated by death.

RICHARD ELYOT, priest. Instituted May 3, 1500. Vacated by (?).

RALPH PONSONBY, als Ponsbery. Instituted (?). Vacated by death, 1559.

(‘Pentsbury or Ponsbery, Ralph, sup. for B.A. 30 May, 1516, adm. 30 June, sup. for M.A, 6th Nov., 1519.’) Also Rector of Mixbury, 1520–59.⁷¹

The clergy above-mentioned were the Brethren of the Bristol Monastery,

⁷⁰ The following refers to one of the early Rectors: ‘William by divine permission Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, to the Abbot and Convent of St. Augustine of Bristol (Brastoldie). The writer’s clerk I de B for some time held the Church of Finemere, which is in the Abbot’s Patronage, and on account of its small worth is about to resign it at the writer’s request. Ask the Abbot and Convent to appoint the writer’s nominee’ (Historical MSS., Report IV, Appendix p. 393.)

⁷¹ Register of Oxford University.

most of whom held their cure but loosely, constant exchanges and resignations taking place. Of the 24 mentioned, four only are known to have died at their posts. In this particular they form a striking contrast to their successors. Of the 20 clergy who followed through another three centuries in the Post Reformation period, all, with six exceptions, were resident from their institutions to their deaths. Thus this parish escaped the evils, apparent in many, of the absenteeism of the clergy from their flocks, which became common from the middle of the last century, and lasted far into this, and it had also the further advantage of having for its resident pastors many men of learning, culture, and piety.

After the dissolution of Bristol Priory, the advowson was seized by Henry VIIIth, and soon sold by him to the purchaser of the manor.

J. Blundell, Esq., and Heirs, Patrons

Rectors instituted or inducted:

JOHN SANKY AL^s SANCKYE. May 1, 1560. (Sup. for B.A. Mar. 154_, adm. 7 April, disp. Mich^s term twice, det. 1545).⁷¹

JAMES BRICKHILL. (presented by the Queen, 1573).

LUKE SMITH. April 2, 1576. Resigned. (Sup. for B.A. 1570, adm. 29 Mar. 1572).⁷¹

AMBROSE SMITH. April 4, 1577. Died 1592.

As parish priest, and so guardian of the spiritual life of the souls committed to his charge, he frequently undertook the office of sponsor for the children of his parishioners.

Ambrose Jarvis Wadup Hayton Jeffs William Waren per nomen illud sortiti sunt ab impositione (uti credible est) susceptoris sui Ambrosii Smith prtⁱ Incumbentis, qui inductus fuit in Rect^m de Finmere April 4, A.D. 1577, et mortuus est Mar. 24 A.D. 1592. Robertus Higgins successit p^d et inductus est Julii 24.⁷²

Sir John Temple and Heirs, Patrons

ROBERT HIGGINS

[Inducted] July 24, 1592. [Vacated by] death.

The records of the Bishop's Court tell of a troublesome parishioner towards the end of his incumbency, against whom he appealed.

1630. Feb. 26: Def. Thomas Chatten de Finmere. He appeared, and the lord obliged him by an oath to answer faithfully, and to him he objected, that he did disturbe Mr. Higgins in his p[er]ambulacons

⁷² Entry in Church Register.

by scowlinge and rangling with one John Jeffs, of Ffinmere, and scowlded likewise at him the said Higgins, and said he was a forsworne man, and likewise he objected to him that he did not make his accompte of v^{li} which he had in his hands when he was Churchwarden, whereunto the said Chatten desires that he might have time and respest to answer this presentment untill this day fortnight, but for his accompte he saith that he made his accompte to the next succeedinge Churchwardens. Whereupon the judge gives him respest to answer his misdemeamour against Mr. Higgins between this and the 12th of March, and to bring a certificate under the next Churchwardens' hands, and some other of the parish, that he did make his accompte, and deliver'd over such moneys as was in his hands unto the next Churchwardens, and did likewise warn him to appear the 12th day of March to see further proceedings in this cause.

1630. Feb. 26: Johem Wrighton, sen., de Ffinmere. He appeared, and the lord obliged him by an oath to answer faithfully, and objected to him, that the said John Wrighton did call Mr. Robert Higgins, minister of Ffinmere, knave, and tould him that he was a dishonest man, and that he would prove him a dishonest man, and he tould him that my lord Bpp called him knave. Whereupon he desires respest to give in his answerre untill this day fortnight. Whereupon the lord admonished him to appear on the 12th of March, &c.

The Dispute over Patronage

At this vacancy a question arose as to the right of patronage.

The Title and several Presentations and Collations to the Rectory of Finmere in Com. Oxon, and true state of the case as to the Advowson.

John Blundell, Esq., seized in fee of the manor of Finmere in Com. Oxon; to which the advowson of the Church of Finmere was appendant, by his last will in writing dat 1^o Eliz. April 5, devised the 3^d Manor (inter alia) to Alice his wife for life, and after her death to his five daughters and co-heirs, viz., Elizabeth, then wife of Edmund Hogan, Esq.; Mary, then wife of Gerard Croker, Esq.; Theodosia, Frances Ann, and Susan, and to the heirs of their bodies; with remainder to the right heires of John Blundell; and afterwards 1^o Sept. 1 Eliz. dyed. After his death (Alice living), Ralph Ponsbury, the Incumbent, dyed, and 2 Eliz. John Sanky, Clerk, was by lapse presented by the Archbishop, and inducted. Afterwards Sanky

dyled, and James Brickhill, Clerk, was 17^o Eliz. presented by lapse by the sd Queen (the sd Alice being still living), but was not inducted. Afterwards the 17^o Eliz. Edwd. Hogan and Elizabeth his wife, Gerard Croker and Mary his wife, Justinian Champneys and Theodosia his wife, suffered a recovery, whereby a fifth part of the manor was estated upon the said Ed. Hogan and Eliz. his wife, and the heirs of her body, and in lack of such issue to his right heirs; and another fifth part in like manner to Gerard Croker and Mary his wife, and the heirs of of the body of the said Mary, and for lack of such issue, to the right heirs of the sd Gerard; and another fifth part to the sd Justinian Champneys and Theodosia his wife, and the heirs of her body, and for lack of such issue, to right heirs of the said Justinian for ever. 2 Apr. 18^o Eliz. the Queen presented by lapse Luke Smith, who was instituted and inducted (living the sd Alice). Afterwards Alice dyed. Afterwards 19^o Eliz. Edw. Hogan and Eliz. his wife, Mary Croker, widow (the sd Gerard Croker being then dead), Justinian Champneys, Esq., then husband of the said Theodosia, and the sd Theodosia, Thomas Crodall, then husband of the sd Ann, and Richard Freeston, then husband of the sd Susan, and the sd Susan made partition whereby several parcels of the sd manor, amounting to a fifth part of the sd manor, was allotted to every one of them, but in the partition no particular mention is made of the Advowson. Afterwards Ann, the wife of Crodall, and Susan, the wife of Freeston, dyed issueless. Afterwards, viz., 19^o Eliz. ye Church became void by the resignation of Luke Smith, and thereupon Ambrose Smith was presented thereunto by ye sd Edw. Hogan, whose wife was then living, and by Richard Lee, then husband of the said Mary, who was then also living, and by Justinian Champneys, then husband of ye sd Theodosia, who was also then living. Afterwards Theodosia dyed, leaving Richard, her eldest son, and afterwards Mary died, leaving issue John, her eldest son, who 28^o Eliz. sold his part to Thomas Temple, then Esq., now Knight and Baronet, and Edmund Paxton, who made pts: that the part of the Advowson sold to them by John Croker was allotted to Sr Thomas Temple. Afterwards the Church became void by the death of Ambrose Smith, and thereupon Robert Higgins, Clerk, was 34^o Eliz. presented by John Temple, father of the sd Thos. Temple, Edw. Hogan, whose wife was then still living, and by Justinian Champneys. Afterwards 34^o Eliz. Justinian Champneys dyed, and afterwards 44^o Eliz. Richard Champneys sold his part to John Temple and his heirs. Sir Thomas Temple is son and heir of John, the Church being now void after the death of Robt. Higgins it pertains to Sir Thomas Temple to present in right of that part, which was bought of Champneys.

Edwd. Hogan and his wife are dead, whereby their part of the manor of Finmere cum ptin did descend to Thomas Hogan their son and heir, who dyed issueless, whereby it descended to his brother Gresham Hogan, who dyed leaving two daughters then and still in ward to the King, in regard that the manor of Finmere is holden in capite by service. The King hath leased all, whereunto he by the office is instituted unto the Committee, in which lease there are these words, or to the sd effect: 'And it is provided that if any Benefice or spiritual promotion shall during the minority of the wards become void, the Committee shall give notice thereof to the Master, and Counsell of the Court of Wards and Services to the intent that their approbation may be had for an able man to be presented to the sd benefice, the Church being void by the death of Higgins as supra.⁷³ [Lewis Wemys], Doctor of Divinity, is upon a presentation from the Court of Wards, and another under ye great seal presented, instituted, and inducted unto the sd Church, but the Committee of the Wards hath given no assent or consent thereunto.'

Rectors since 1632

DR LEWIS WEMYS

The Court of Wards then presented Dr. Lewis Wemys, who was actually inducted.

1632, April 15: Ludovicus Wemis S. T. Professor a Curiâ Warderu^m pntatus inductus first in possessionem de Finme[re post] mortem Rob. Higinis ult. Incumb. vacant^m raone, min: et hæres Hogans presen^s

But this presentation was soon cancelled, Sir Thomas Temple having succeeded in asserting his right to the advowson, and then presenting:

RICHARD HORN, M.A.

Instituted Oct. 9, 1632.

Richardus Horn Artium Mag non obstante reclamatoe Ludovici Wemis inductus fuit in realem possessionem hujusce Ecclie de Finmere. Novem. 1° A° prd.

Mr. Horn resided at Finmere for 45 years through the eventful crisis of the xviith century. He was a scholar and a careful observer of the chief events of his time, both national and local, and has left many records of

⁷³ Entry in the Rector's Book, 'copied from Mrs. James' Papers.'

these in the Church Registers.

Gratitude to his Patron:

1636. Sepultus Thomas Temple miles auratus, Dominorum Manerii de Finmere alter, Patronus Ecclesie mihi plurimum observandus, Feb. 10, apud Burton Dasset sedes avitas paternas.

Appointment as Rural Dean:

Hoc anno Decani Ruralis munus obii, habitâ concione apud Islip die Lune, Sept 6th.

Death of his brother:

1639. My brother, Mr. Edw. Kenwrick, of Paddington, died Dec. 23.

Beginning of the Civil War, 1642:

Bella per Angliacos plusqu^m civilia campos, jusque datum sceleri est nunc, &c.

Translation: War, more than belongs to citizens, through the fields of England; and a legality is now given to wickedness, &c.

The Intrusion of a Presbyterian into his Office:

1647. Horridu^m jam ingruebat bellu^m et inter arma silent Annales; male mecum agebatur, qui vi et armis domo pulsus triobulari cuidam Sacrificator Rico Warr ministr; ill. horrendus mihi infelici Rectori, viget. Pene dixera^m cedere coactus fui, omnibus exhaustus, fere casibus omnibus egenus.

Translation: A horrid war had now broken out, and among arms the Chronicles are silent. I have fared badly, having been driven from home by force and arms, and am being now sacrificed to a paltry (literally 'three-halfpenny') fellow, Richard Warr, minister. He, dreadful to me, the former unhappy Rector, flourishes. I had almost said I was compelled to depart, having been drained of everything and become almost destitute through all kinds of misfortunes.

The Death of Oliver Cromwell:

Oliverus Cromwell Ts &c. Gigantum istorum omniu qui adversus Serenissimum Regem ustum Car. 2 dum (sic) Martyrem conjurarunt, longe maximus, diem obiit Sept. 30, A^o Dni 1658.

Translation: Oliver Cromwell, Tyrant, &c., by far the greatest of those giants, who conspired against our most Serene King, Charles the Martyr, died Sept. 20, 1658.

1662. 'Sine Militis usu.'

This may refer to the general disbanding of the Parliamentary army, which was one of the early acts of Chas. II., but it is more likely that it is intended to note the cessation of Richard Warr's (probably a soldier) ministry, and Mr. Horn's restoration to his office.

The Death of the Unfriendly Hand, who had taken an active part in his Ejection.

Tho: Apletree, Horneromastix, nostri fundi calamitas, expiravit
Dedington 3^o Aprilis A^o Dni 1666 extentu cœli;
Sciant quod Tu, cujus nomen est Jehova solus excelsus super omnem
terram. Gloria Pat. et fil, &c.

Translation: Thomas Appletree, Horn's scourge, the ruin of our estate, breathed his last at Deddington, April 3, 1666, by the stretched out (hand) of Heaven.⁷⁴

That men may know that Thou, whose name is Jehovah, art only high over all the earth. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, &c.

The Dates and Circumstances of the Deaths of many of the Neighbouring Clergy and others⁷⁵

Though ejected from his Rectory, Mr. Horn continued his residence at Finmere.⁷⁶ It would be interesting to know how he conducted himself during this trying period of his ejection. That he met with some persecution and vexations is certain, but we may imagine him fearlessly maintaining his churchmanship, worshipping God as he had been accustomed, and perhaps, like many others in like circumstances at that time, making his house a meeting place for such of his parishioners and neighbours as still clung to the forbidden services, and looking forward in good hope to better times. After the Restoration he regained his Rectory, but he was then nearing his three score and ten years, and ill fortune still followed him, for his house was twice much injured, first by a great storm and secondly by a fire. In his declining years he appears to have gone a little

⁷⁴ Th. Apletree was a magistrate resident at Deddington, who performed marriages (under the Act, 5th of the Protectorate, which came into operation Sept. 29, 1653), in 1656, 57. (See a Paper on Parish Registers by C. Faulkner, F.G.S., in *Transactions of North Oxon, Arch. and Nat. Hist. Socy* 1855, pp. 108-10). Thomas Apletree, of Deddington, was disclaimed at Oxford, on (?) day of Sept., 1634 (See *Visits of Oxon*, Natl. Soc., 1871, pp. 333-5).

⁷⁵ These are collected, and published in Vol. II of the *Genealogist*, No. 5 pp. 48-9, 1885.

⁷⁶ Children of his were baptised at Finmere, 1632-51.

astray on the subject of marriage, for in the last seven years of his incumbency a strange number of marriages were celebrated at Finmere. In previous years the average number had been about two yearly, but between 1670-77 there were no less than 80, of which the greatest number were between non-residents. This may be accounted for on high or inferior motives. There may have been a little laxity of order in his declining years, such as was too common in that age, or, what is more probable, Mr. Horn was anxious to provide as many and as easy opportunities as he could for marriages to be celebrated according to the religious rites of the Church, in times when civil marriages before magistrates had been licensed and sanctioned. His forms of registering marriages gave pleasant scope to the exercise of his scholar lore, and are strangely various.

The Church Register records his burial:

Richard Horn, Rector de Finmere, sepultus Sep. 30, 1677, ætatis suæ 82, in Festum Trin.

But no memorial of him exists. One of his sons, a landowner in the parish, continued his life-long connection with his native place, and on his gravestone was the only public record of his father's long and eventful incumbency.

On a white freestone gravestone in the chancel:

In Memory of Gustavus, son of Richard Horn, who was formerly Rector of this parish, who departed this life, Jany. ye 27th, 1716, in the 74th year of his age.⁷⁷

RICHARD ELLS, B.A.

Presented by: Pope Danvers, Esq.⁷⁸ Instituted. Jany. 22, 167⁷/₈

Richardus Ells, inductus fuit in realem possessionem Ecclesiæ de Finmere primo die Martii anno Dni millesimo sexcentesimo septuagesimo septimo.

He lived a celibate life at Finmere for a quarter of a century. He was buried, and that, as it appears from the large sum directed in his will to be appropriated to this purpose, with considerable ceremony in the chancel of the Church, where through so long a period he had so often ministered. On a black marble stone there is inscribed:

Hic situs est Richardus Ells, hujus ecclesiæ rector. Obiit vicesimo 1° die Febr. Anno Dni 1703, Ætat suæ septuagesimo.

⁷⁷ Rawlinson's MSS. in Bodleian Library.

⁷⁸ Probably related to the family of that name then resident at Fritwell.

His useful benefaction, already mentioned, testifies to his affection for his old parish, and the remainder of his will to his thoughtfulness and care for those who had been in his household and service.⁷⁹

Item. I give and bequeath unto my nephew John Ells, of the City of Coventry, Clothier, the sum of £30, and to my niece Hannah Walker, of Coventry aforesaid, the sum of £30, and to my nephew Richard Ells, of Coventry aforesaid, £20; and to my servant Thomas Ladyman the sum of 40s, and if my servant Thomas Ladyman shall desire to be bound an apprentice, I do hereby desire that to the said sum of 40s by my said Trustees out of the rents and profits of my said close there may be added so much as they in their discretion shall think fitt in order to the setting my said servant Thomas Ladyman to some trade; and to my servant Elizabeth Crowe I do hereby give the sum of 40s, all which above-mentioned legacies I do appoint to be paid by my Executrix hereafter named within one year after my decease. All the rest and residue of my goods and chattels, ready monies, jewels, debts, and specialties whatsoever I give and bequeath to my trusty and faithful servant Elizabeth Warre, of Finmere aforesaid, spinster, paying and discharging all my debts and legacies aforementioned, and my funeral expenses for the more decent performing whereof I do appoint and desire there may be expended the sum of £30; and lastly, I do hereby ordain, constitute, nominate, and appoint the said Elizabeth Warre sole Executrix of this my will, and I do hereby desire that there may be distributed by my said Executrix unto such of the poor people of Finmere aforesaid, as she shall think to be most in want, the value of 20s in Bread at the Feast of Christmas for the four years next after my decease. In witness whereof I have set my hand and seal this 25th day of March in the year of our Lord 1701.

Richard Ells.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ [The first section of this will is on pp. 35–36].

⁸⁰ Signed, sealed, published and declared to be the last will and testament of the said Richard Ells in the presence of William Paxton, Thomas Crow, Nicholas Finch. Memorand: And there was part of the 10th line blotted out before the publication of the within written will. Elizabeth Warre, mentioned in this will, was probably a descendant of the Presbyterian intruder, who had occupied the Rectory during the Commonwealth.

WILLIAM CHAPLIN, LL.B

Presented by William Chaplin, sen. of Lamport, Bucks.⁸¹ Instituted July 22, 1704.

He has recorded in the Finmere Register the main particulars of his life here.

His Admission to Merton College, Oxford:

Gul. Chaplin in Collegio Mertonensi Oxon^e in numerum Academicorum admissus in Anno Dom 1694.

His induction to Finmere Rectory:

Gul. Chaplin in possessionem realem Ecclesie de Finmere inductus vicesimo tertio die Augusti Anno Dom. 1704.

The death of his mother:

Elizabetha Chaplin, uxor dilectissima Gulielmi Chaplin animam divinam efflavit apud Bath ultimo die Februarii. In loco illo sepulta die tertio Martii 1719. Sit Requies ejus Gloriosa.
Heu vita incerta! semperque heu! certa nec unquam sit mortis praevisa Dies!

His marriage:

Wilhelmus Chaplin, Rector hujus ecclesie et Alicia Compton per virtutem Licentiae, prerogativae matrimonio juncti ultimo die Decembris 1724.

The baptism of his only child:

Acton filius Gulielmi et Alicie Chaplin baptizatus die septimo Februarii 1725.

Another hand has recorded his death in the next year:

Gulielmus Chaplin, hujusce ecclesie Rector mortalitatem exiit circit hora^m secund: temp. matutino et sepultus duodecimo die Aprilis 1726. Anno aetat 49.

There is a monument in the Parish Church:

Sacred to the memory of William Chaplin, LL.B., late Rector of this Parish, he died April the 10th, 1726, aged 49 years; and also Mrs. Alice Chaplin, relict of the said William Chaplin, she died October

⁸¹ In the Registers at the Record Office, London, the name is 'John Chaplin, Gent., de Lamport, Bucks,' probably a son of Sir Francis Chaplin, Lord Mayor of London in 1678.

the 9th, 1740, aged 39 years. Their only son, Acton Chaplin, late of Buckingham, having desired some monument to be erected in the memory of these his Parents: This is accordingly raised, and is with the same affectionate regard dedicated to his memory by his relict Mary Chaplin (daughter of Mr. Willm and Elizabeth Harding), by whom he had two sons, William and Acton;⁸² he was an affectionate &c.; he died Nov^r 7th, 1762, aged 36 years.⁸³

CONWAY RAND

Presented by Richard, Viscount Cobham.⁸⁴ Instituted Aug. 5, 1726.

Educated at Merton College, Oxford.

E. Ashwell, Curate 1731–33. Ob. March 10, 1733. Buried three days later at Finmere.

THOMAS LONG, M.A.

Presented by Francis Edwards, of Tinwick, Bucks. Instituted Sept. 3, 1733.

He began the desirable custom of recording the chief and notable events of the parish in a book, which he named 'The Rector's Book.' His first entry in this was an abstract of the Deed of Inclosure. His plain handwriting is also visible in the careful keeping of the Church Registers until the end of 1768.

His name still lives in grateful remembrance as the donor of some land in aid of the Clerk's salary, and in augmentation of the Rectory.

He was a man of strong individuality. A bachelor,

Remote from towns, he ran his godly race,

Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place.

1771. The Rev. Thomas Long, M. A., who had been almost 40 years Rector of this parish, a man of the most exemplary piety and charity, died the 6th of April, was buried the 13th.⁸⁵

No memorial marked his grave. There is a tablet in the chancel, to the memory of his sister and her husband, (described in the register of burial as of Buckingham):

⁸² His son, Acton, removed to Aylesbury, where he became Clerk of the Peace, and held other county offices, 1790-1814. A descendant of his on the mother's side, Lt. Col. Acton Chaplin Havelock, is living, and has lately visited Finmere to trace out some links in his ancestry.

⁸³ Buried in Finmere Churchyard, where also are buried his son William, his grandson, and great grand-daughter.

⁸⁴ 'Two turns in Lord Cobham, one in Mr. James' (Rawlinson's Notes in 1718).

⁸⁵ Register of Burials.

Francis Turner and Mary his wife. He was the youngest son of William Turner, Archdeacon of Northumberland, and Rector of Stanhope in the Bishoprick of Durham, nephew of Francis Turner, Bishop of Ely, and of Thomas Turner, President of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, and grandson of Thomas Turner, Dean of Canterbury. By his mother he was descended from William Smith, Bishop of Lincoln, Chancellor of Oxford, and Founder of Brazenose College, and other charities. His wife was of the Longs of Wiltshire, with whom he lived twenty years, both of them being eminent examples of conjugal affection, piety, and charity. She died Nov. 27, 1747, and he died Jany. 7, 1752, leaving behind them one daughter, married to William Hutton, LL.B., Rector of Maids Morton, in the County of Bucks, who erected this monument to their memories.⁸⁶

WILLIAM CLEAVER, M.A.

Presented by Richard, Earl Temple. Instituted May 8, 1771.

Far advanced in years when he came to Finmere.

Woolley Leigh Bennett, Curate during the 12 years of his incumbency.

There are two memorials in the Church:

In memory of William Cleaver, M.A., Rector of this Parish. Who died July 7th, 1783 aged 72.

In memory of Martha Cleaver, the wife of the Rev. W. Cleaver. She died May 13th, 1776, aged 69.

Their bodies lie interred under two flat stones in the Churchyard, a little northward of the east end of the chancel.

1783, July 9th. The Rev. William Cleaver, A.M., Rector of this parish, and Vicar of Stowe, in the County of Bucks; whose merit and abilities were not only an ornament to his profession, but worthy of its highest honours.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ There is a memorial to him in the Tower of Finmere Church. Rev. William Long (formerly Hutton), and of Mary his wife, and five of their children. He was Rector of Maids Morton 17 years, and died 17th May, 1780, aged 57. She died 28th July, 1784, aged 55. Another to their son, Francis Turner Richard Long, Esq. (formerly Hutton), who died 28th May, 1812, aged 52. This monument was erected by Rev. James L. Long (formerly Hutton), Rector of Maids Morton. Another to the Rev. James Long Long (formerly Hutton). He was Rector of Maids Morton 53 years, and died Sept. 25 1846, at Newby Bridge, Lancashire, aged 80. This monument was erected by his two surviving daughters, Mary the wife of the Rev. W. Andrews, and Jane Lucy, the wife of the Rev. R. A. Uthwatt.

⁸⁷ Register of Burials.

WILLIAM CLEAVER, M.A.

Presented by George, Earl Temple. Instituted Dec. 4, 1783.

Was son of the former Rector, and had been tutor to his Patron, the first Marquis of Buckingham. He came to fill his father's place, young and active, zealous to restore some usages which had lapsed. Since the days of the Commonwealth, very infrequent Communion had become the custom in almost all churches. In villages the celebrations were seldom more than three or four yearly, if even so many, at Christmas, Easter, perhaps Whitsuntide, and before or after harvest. The second had been the custom at Finmere, even in the days of so faithful a pastor as Mr. Long, until the last year of his incumbency, 1770, when the celebrations were increased to five.⁸⁸ They so continued until 1784, when they were increased to eight.⁸⁹

Another improvement inaugurated by Mr. Cleaver was the introduction of musical instruments in the church services. The 'No Popery' cry, heard from time to time in modern as well as former times, had been long raised against all instruments of music in holy offices, and it was not until the reign of Queen Anne that the objections against their use were removed, and the lawfulness and even desirableness of it firmly established. Mr. Cleaver introduced into the Church two wind instruments,⁹⁰ (1) the Bassoon (Bass), made of two pieces of wood fagotted together, and played by means of a bent mouthpiece and reed;⁹¹ (2) the Hautbois (Treble), shaped somewhat like a clarionet and sounded through a reed. With these, no doubt, fresh force was added to the singing of Sternhold and Hopkin's old version of the Psalms, then in general use.

		£	s	d	
88	1770	June 3. Paid for Bred and Wine	0	3	1
		Sep.20	0	3	1
		Dec.24	0	3	1
	1771	March 30	0	6	2
	1779	Paid for Bread and Wine for the whole year	0	15	5
		For Bread and Wine, 5 times	0	15	5
		(Churchwardens' Accounts)			

		£	s	d	
89	1784	Pd. for Bread and Wine, 8 times	1	8	0
		(Churchwardens' Accounts)			

		£	s	d	
90	1785	Pd. for Basoon and Hautboy reeds	0	5	0
		No entry of this kind in any previous year. (Ibid).			

⁹¹ Hence called 'fagotto' in Italian.



110-PROV. 1874-1875. 1875

THE OLD RECTORY.

To Mr. Cleaver also seems due the merit of the first effort at imparting elementary instruction to the children of the poor, for in 1784 there is mention of a schoolmaster resident in the village. But his connection with this parish was of short duration. In 1785 he was elected President of his college, Brasenose, Oxford; three years later he was preferred to the bishopric of Chester, when he vacated this rectory, and yet later, in succession, to that of Bangor and St. Asaph.

He began his married life at Finmere, and here lost his first child, born 25th Aug., died Sept. 11, 1785. A memorial with these dates, and some lines of poetry, exists in the Church.

The home here must have been endeared to his wife, for after her various changes of place and position, she sought a burial place in the quiet churchyard beside it. A tablet in the Church is

In memory of Mrs. Anne Cleaver, widow of the Right Rev. William Cleaver, D.D., Bishop of St. Asaph, and formerly Rector of this parish, daughter of Ralph Ashton, Esq., of Downham Hall, in the county of Lancaster. She departed this life at Little Missenden, Bucks, August 20, 1835, in the 81st year of her age.

W. L. Bennett, Curate.

WOOLLEY LEIGH BENNETT, B.A.

Presented by George Grenville Nugent, Marquis of Buckingham. Instituted Nov. 22, 1788.

Had been Curate 17 years. Lived only a year and half in his new position. His memorial is in the Church:

To the memory of the Rev. Woolley Leigh Bennett, Rector of this parish, who died 15th of July, 1790, aged 57 years. Also of Rachel his widow, who died 25th of June, 1813, aged 69 years.

ROBERT HOLT, M.A

Presented by Marquis of Buckingham. Instituted Aug. 23, 1790.

Five children baptized at Finmere in 1791–97; one buried in 1796.

Curate, 1790: John Knipe.

The last trace of Church discipline appears at this time, and is evidence that ecclesiastical censures retained their influence on social life later than is commonly supposed. An offender, presented by the Churchwardens, was conveyed to the Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court at Oxford, and there found guilty of the fault laid to her charge. After her return home, she was directed to do public penance in her Parish Church.

	£	s	d
1792. June 9. Paid the expenses of William Crow going to Oxford with Mary Makepace	2	9	6
For 2 horses for Wm. Crow and Mary Makepace	0	10	0
Paid for a sheet for Mary Makepace to go to church in ⁹²	0	1	0

In the same year Choir practice was commenced.

	£	s	d
Dec. 16. Paid Mrs. Mumford for 2 pounds of candles for the singers	0	1	3
Paid Mrs. Mumford for 3 pounds candle ⁹²	0	1	10½

Mr. Holt died in early life, and apparently in unhappy circumstances.⁹³
Buried at Finmere. His memorial is in the nave.

MS. Roberti Holt, A.M., hujusce ecclesie Rectoris, qui &c. die Jan.
19, A.D. 1802, æt. 41, quievit. Posuit Ricardus Comes Temple.

GEORGE GLOVER, B.A.

Presented by same patron. Instituted Aug. 4, 1802.

Never came into residence. Preferred two years later. Afterwards Archdeacon of Sudbury in Diocese of Norwich.

Curates: 1801–2 Thomas Clarke; 1803 H. J. Rider, minister.

WILLIAM HENRY BARNARD, LL.B.

Presented by same. Instituted Aug. 5, 1804.

THOMAS WINFIELD

Presented by same. Instituted Nov. 12, 1811.

The Rev. W. H. Barnard, LL.B., late Incumbent of the parish of Finmere, vacated the same by the act of taking possession of the Rectory of Bighton in Hampshire on the 14th day of July, A.D. 1811, and was succeeded in the rectory of Finmere by me, Thomas Winfield, on the presentation of the most noble the Marquis of Buckingham, K.G., &c., &c.⁹⁴

A child buried on Dec. 16, 1811, soon after his coming into residence. He was buried by its side on May 20, 1812, after only six months' incumbency.

⁹² Churchwardens' Book.

⁹³ In the account of the rent of Mr. Ells' land, there is a note: 'Mr. Holt enjoy'd it till Jany. 19, 1802, but he dying insolvent, the money was lost.'

⁹⁴ Rector's Book.

CHARLES SHIPLEY

Presented by same. Instituted Sept. 18, 1812.

The Rev. T. Winfield, late Incumbent of the parish of Finmere died on the 15th day of May, 1812. I was instituted to the Rectory of Finmere on the presentation of the most Noble the Marquis of Buckingham, on the 18th day of September following. Charles Shipley, Rector.⁹²

Two years later Mr Shipley received other preferment, when Sir George Lee, Bart., of Hartwell House, near Aylesbury, was presented to this vacant Rectory. But before he was instituted an exchange was effected. The Rev. W. J. Palmer had been presented to the adjoining parish of Mixbury in 1802, and to Beachampton, Bucks, in 1811. Finding the distance between these two parishes inconvenient for the proper charge of both, he sought an exchange with Sir G. Lee. The latter then accepted Beachampton, and Mr Palmer was instituted to Finmere.

WILLIAM JOSCELYNE PALMER, B.D.

Instituted Dec. 22, 1814.

Resident himself at Mixbury, he had a succession of Curates resident at Finmere during the first ten years of his incumbency (Loveday 1816, J. G. Littlehales 1817-18, Thomas Marwood 1818-20). During this interval signs of Church life are apparent in the further efforts which were made to improve the Church Psalmody.⁹⁵

		£	s	d
1817	Jany.15. P ^d R ^d Butcher for writing new tunes, and instructing the singers	1	15	0
1818	May 11. P ^d Mr. Seeley for 3 psalm books	0	6	2
1819	May 26. P ^d Mr. Barrett for a new clarinett	2	2	0

In 1824 Mr. Palmer undertook personally the charge of both his parishes, with the assistance of a non-resident Curate in the Church services, while he placed his eldest sister (commonly styled Mrs. Mary Palmer) in the Rectory house at Finmere. He was an unflinching observer of all Church rules and order, and carried out this principle in every detail of parochial machinery. During his long incumbency two services were held at both parishes on Sundays, Christmas day, Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday, and after 1839 on Ascension day. The eight celebrations of the Holy Communion begun in 1784 had been maintained until 1803, but in that year, under a new and non-resident Rector, they again lapsed to three only. With some exceptions the celebrations continued thus rare until 1814,

⁹⁵ Churchwardens' Book.



THE RECTORY, 1887.

Lowrey, Mrs. J. C. 1887.

when an increase is immediately apparent.⁹³ In 1820 there were seven, in 1826 nine, and in 1834 and afterwards always twelve. It was Mr. Palmer's custom to officiate at each parish on alternate Sundays, while his sister performed all the duties of an exemplary clergyman's wife at Finmere, visiting the schools, and attending to the wants of the sick and poor with the greatest diligence. In 1846 he again placed a resident Curate at Finmere, and then began here the daily Church service, as he had already done six years before at Mixbury.

Curate, 1846-51, Cyril William Wood. He relinquished the curacy to accept the office of Warden of St. Thomas' College, Colombo in Ceylon, then recently founded by Bishop Chapman.

Curate, 1851-3, John W. Burgon (now Dean of Chichester). Though the length of his residence was fitful and short, his zeal and kindness were very great, and his name and person yet live in the hearts of many of his old parishioners. The affection and respect he had for his old chief have drawn from him the interesting sketch which follows of his connection with this parish.

Mr. Palmer resigned Mixbury in Jany. 28, 1852, and in the following summer removed with his family to Finmere to reside with his sister. Here he died in September of the following year.

At the sale of the late Duke of Buckingham's property at Finmere, the advowson of the Church was purchased by John Walker, Esq.

FREDERICK JOHN WALKER, M.A.

Presented by his father. Instituted 1853.

He has left his mark, a lasting one, in the restoration of the Parish Church. Soon after coming into possession of the advowson after his father's death, he sold it to W. Ashwell, Esq., and a little later resigned his charge.

SEYMOUR ASHWELL, M.A.

Presented by his father. Instituted 1866.

Ch. Ch. Oxford B.A. 1859, M.A. 1861.

Thus an unbroken chain of succession is seen to reach through six centuries to the present day, from the celibate stipendiaries of St. Augustine's Abbey at Bristol, who were sent and soon departed, to the married clergy of post Reformation times, who spent various lengths of their lives in the continual oversight of their flocks. Each link in the long chain has been well sustained. May He, who has ordered all, continue it firm and unbroken to the end.

V

Sketch by Dean Burgon (1851–53)

Introduction

There yet remains a precious chapter to be written concerning the history of the Church of England. It will relate to that century of years, rather more than less, which occupied the interval between the day of Bishop Butler and that great revival of Churchmanship which became conspicuous when the present century had run about a third part of its course. That the period referred to was one of exceeding gloom and lifelessness, and that actual unbelief very largely prevailed, may not be doubted. 'It is come, I know not how' (wrote Bp. Butler in 1736, in the 'Advertisement,' prefixed to the first edition of his *Analogy*), 'to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.' It is evident, moreover, to any one who will be at the pains to examine the works of subsequent writers, that our great Divines (for 'there were giants in those days') had to contend with a marvellously low public standard, alike of faith and of morals. That the prevailing estimate of ministerial responsibility should have shared in this depression was even inevitable. But the point to be contended for is, that it is a heartless misstatement to represent the unfaithfulness of that period as universal: a calumnious falsehood to blacken the English Clergy of more than a hundred years with indiscriminate censure. I will but say that I am constantly discovering brilliant exceptions to the rule; and am persuaded that it would not be difficult to appeal to an unbroken succession of Divines, who, in spite of every external disadvantage and discouragement, resolutely upheld the Truth, and zealously handed it on to their successors in its primitive

simplicity and sincerity. Certain of these were persons famous in their generation for their apostolic earnestness and evangelical piety: but I am thinking rather of those who pursued the even tenor of their way, in town or country, without exciting the attention of their fellow men and without public applause: whose names are no longer recognisable by any, and who have scarcely left behind them any memorial whatever of their worth.

I am saying that it is a debt long overdue to those departed benefactors of our Church that we should, even thus tardily, seek to recover and reproduce their names, long since forgotten here on earth, yet surely remembered eternally in heaven. We owe it to the living, no less than to the dead, that we should do this: for it would strengthen the hands of the feeble, while it would confirm the hearts of the strong, to be reminded that our Church in her darkest days has never lacked faithful witnesses to her Lord. Let it be freely admitted that, to look no further back than the first quarter of the present century, Church feeling in many places seemed extinct. In the city from which I write, and where, at this time, faithfulness and sound teaching are, I believe, universal among a body of singularly devout, earnest, and painstaking clergy, Socinianism prevailed very largely indeed, no further back than 50 or 60 years ago. And it is in particular the good and faithful men of that comparatively recent period to whom I desire that honour should be done. 'One soweth and another reapeth.' Pioneers were they of the great religious movement which has since been witnessed in our Church, and is still bearing us all onward on its bosom. Who shall say how much of its widespread intensity is due entirely to them?

The task (not by any means an uncongenial one) which has been imposed upon me of committing to paper my recollections of a little village in Oxfordshire, of which, some five and thirty years ago, for two successive years, it was my privilege to be the Curate, has suggested the foregoing remarks. I am to speak of Finmere only in respect to the pastoral supervision it enjoyed when I first became acquainted with it, viz., in 1851. Nothing whatever was I able to do for the place beyond carrying forward (with such zeal as God gave me) the system I found already established there. It is right also to mention that I was not continually resident, and spent my vacations in Bedfordshire. I may therefore write freely, without risk of being thought guilty of self-laudation. My Rector was the Reverend William Jocelyn Palmer, M.A., sometime of Brasenose College, Oxford, a man revered by all the country round. He had held

Finmere since 1814, in conjunction with Mixbury, to which he had been appointed in 1802. (The villages are but two short miles apart). The greater part of Mr. Palmer's forty and fifty years of stewardship was therefore comprehended within that period of spiritual torpor to which reference has been already somewhat freely made.

Thomas Long, Rector 1733-71

But before I begin my narrative, let me record, (for there will not occur a more suitable place for doing so), that I accidentally found in the hands of an inhabitant of the village two little printed productions (anonymous) relating to the parish of Finmere in the middle of the last century. Their title-pages are inscribed:

(1) *A Sermon preached at Finmere in Oxfordshire, November 29th, 1759, being the day appointed for a Public Thanksgiving to God for the signal success of our Arms, both by Sea and Land: and particularly by the defeat of the French Army in Canada, and the Taking of Quebec: And for most seasonably granting us this year an uncommonly abundant Harvest. Inscribed to the Parishioners of Finmere.* London: Printed by J. & W. Oliver in Bartholomew Close, 1770.

At p.19 we read:

Several reasons have induced the Author to print the foregoing Thanksgiving Sermon, though it is many years since it was preached: and one particularly is that he might annex the following Catechetical Lecture to it. And though this Lecture be not immediately connected with the preceding Discourse, he hopes it may in some degree be useful, and contribute to answer the purpose for which both are intended: For the Parishioners of Finmere.

Then follows [pp. 21-30] 'A Catechetical Lecture for the Parishioners of Finmere.'

(2) *The Holy Scripture the best Teacher of Good Manners and Civility. A Lecture addressed to the young persons of Finmere.* London (as before), 1762. The author says:

I have usually once every three years gone through a course of Lectures upon the Catechism; but considering my age and great infirmities, it is not very probable I should continue this practice any longer. I am willing therefore, as a small monument of my care for and affection to you, to print the last of these Lectures and make

a present of it to you, and those others of this Parish who have gone before you in this method of instruction. My great business all along has been to lay down the principles of a religious education: but in this Lecture I consider this matter in a civil light, &c., &c.

This little tract begins:

As it hath been my custom, after the young persons of the parish have been confirmed, to give them a Bible as a reward for their attendance on my Catechetical Instructions; I intend accordingly to make each of you a present of one now,' &c.

The author of these addresses was the Reverend Thomas Long, Rector, 1733-71.

Here then is an apt illustration of what was remarked at the outset. The name of this author does not occur in the catalogue of printed books in the British Museum, nor in the Bodleian catalogue, nor in the catalogue of the University Library at Cambridge. Yet here is a Churchman of the true English type, with whose sound teaching and bright example the remote and undistinguished village of Finmere was blest throughout the middle of the last century.

William Jocelyn Palmer, Rector 1814-53

The reader shall be told now of one who, 73 years ago, revived that teaching and restored that example, until, in 1853, he too went to his rest and to his reward.

1. In the north-eastern extremity of Oxfordshire, about four miles west of Buckingham, stands the little village of 395 souls, of which I am invited to recall the memory. I learned to love it and its people very dearly: yet truth constrains me to admit that a humbler village one has seldom seen. The Church was singularly deficient in architectural beauty: the School might have been mistaken for a cottage: the Rectory house, a very 'modest mansion' indeed, (built I suppose in King James' days), was thatched and a single storey high. The road through the village was decidedly bad: moreover, the pathway in front of the cottages was so irregularly 'pitched,' that after dusk no one but a native could walk securely. The tenements which skirted the public way were for the most part of a truly lowly type.

2. And yet, when you came to know Finmere better, you grew conscious that the village was both picturesque and interesting. Humble as the cottages were, few, if any, were dilapidated. There was an air of cleanliness, of decency, even of comfort, about the place and about the people. Squalid poverty there was none. The peasantry behaved respectfully to strangers. The Church, however unattractive æsthetically, was fully adequate to the requirements of the parish, and was filled twice every Sunday with a truly devout and attentive congregation - happy at least in containing no single feature calculated to distract attention from the proper business of the sanctuary.

3. The School, kept by a firm but sweet-tempered dame, was the handmaid of the Church. Its business seemed to be to train up children in the fear of God and in dutifulness to their parents. Wholly unacquainted, as they were (happily), with 'the higher criticism,' boys and girls alike could 'say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue:' could read the Bible and could write. The girls, all modest and virtuous, remained in the school until they had been confirmed. It was considered disreputable for a girl to be out of doors after dark: in fact, it was not allowed. They wore no sort of finery. Instead, they were fairly acquainted with the Scriptures: could repeat the Psalms for the day without book: were skilful in the mysteries of the needle: made all the smock-frocks in the parish.

4. As for the Rectory-house, it was really a picturesque old structure: roomy, rambling, and irregular, as all such tenements should be, and quite large enough for the modest income of the cure. A spacious projecting window on the south side admitted you into an umbrageous garden, which was simply delicious. Quite evident it was that some friendly Duke of Buckingham must have directed the artist who created Stowe, (for Stowe is only a few miles off), to do what he could for the Rector's garden - a long narrow slip of lawn. Never were orders more skilfully executed. The garden seems interminable, and at every season of the year is an interesting sight. But the best ornament of the Rectory was its occupant, Mrs. Mary Palmer, the Rector's aged sister: a lady full of almsdeeds, well read, and of a most excellent understanding.

5. High time it is that I should speak more particularly of the pastoral method of the Rector; a grave good man, who exercised supreme parental and patriarchal authority throughout the parish. He entirely loved the flock committed to his charge, and they responded to his affection by the most absolute deference to his wishes. He had been himself Curate to 'Jones of Nayland,' and I suppose had derived his parochial traditions from him.⁹⁶ As a Divine, however, he will have been under even greater obligations to his uncle, Bishop Horsley, whose MSS., bound into many volumes, occupied a shelf in his study. Mr. Palmer allowed me to read several of his own Sermons. They were pre-eminently sound, simple, short. Their aim seemed always to be the edification of his humble auditory. He preached only once on Sundays; in the afternoon he used to catechize. Holy Communion was celebrated monthly. On the previous day, Gabriel Friday, the parish clerk, perambulated the village and made out a schedule of those who proposed to communicate. On the Sunday morning in church this worthy man was able to recognise at a glance such communicants as were not down on his list. Having supplied their names, he at once handed the document to the Rector, who preserved these lists and occasionally annotated them. On an old list I found noted that because a certain person had, in defiance of his repeated admonition, persisted in listening to an itinerant ranting preacher under 'the cross tree,' he had interdicted her from presenting herself at the Lord's Table for a year. On Easter-day (April 11th), 1852, our communicants were 80 in number: 44 men and 36 women. The average number of those who communicated on a Sunday was about 30.

6 Mr. Palmer's solicitude for the temporal welfare of his parishioners was only exceeded by his anxiety respecting their spiritual needs. He struck at the root of not a few of the mischiefs which spring up in agricultural parishes by himself becoming the proprietor of at least 18 of the cottages. The 5th of his 'Conditions of holding' was: 'Tenants not to keep children at home after they are of fit age for service, whether boys or girls:' the 6th: 'Not to give lodging to son or daughter after marriage:' the 7th: 'Not to take a lodger of any description without leave first had in writing:' the 8th: 'Not to use the premises himself, nor suffer another person to use them for the purpose of religious meeting of any description

⁹⁶ I often invited my Rector to tell me something about Jones of Nayland. The sum of what I got from him was that Jones was very fond of smoking a clay pipe: and that every Sunday they sang the hymn tune 'Nayland.'

whatever: but to be himself and his family frequenters of the Church, and to use the Ministry of the Church only:' the 9th: 'To maintain a fair character for honesty, sobriety, decency, and good neighbourhood in all respects, and at all times, and toward all persons.' The rent of these cottages varied according to the value of the tenements and size of the gardens attached to them - from 30s up to £3; but all were let for much less than their actual value. Rent was paid in equal portions half-yearly - at Michaelmas and Lady-day. Two or three weeks' indulgence was usually granted, (notice having been already given), before the rent-day was fixed: when a hot supper of beef and plum pudding was provided for those who paid. All paid. It was thought disreputable to be a defaulter. The supper was excellent.

7. I soon found out how it came to pass that Mr. Palmer's cottage tenants were so comfortable. He had a mason and a carpenter in his constant employ. They came to him in the morning for orders, and by his directions re-built this, restored that, repaired the other thing. There was always plenty for them to do. He allowed to every labourer in his employ a quart bottle of home-brewed beer daily all the year round - to be drunk at home or where they pleased.

8. I may no longer withhold the declaration that Mr. Palmer was without exception the most faithful 'steward' of his means and opportunities I ever knew. Everything he did was done most liberally, but all was done on system; and as there had been no extravagance, so was there no waste. The Rent-dinner was turned to good and charitable accounts. The liquor in which the beef had been boiled, and the remains of the meat and vegetables - with the addition of dumplings and two or three loaves of bread - made excellent soup, and next day dined one hundred children. (For these and similar details I was indebted at the time to the friendly confidence of one of the Rector's modest daughters. After so many years, and when almost all are departed, no one may upbraid me for divulging what I have hitherto kept religiously to myself). How often was I reminded of the Divine precept: 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost!'

9. The medical officer of the district was instructed not to trouble himself

to supply the sick with medicine, but only to prescribe. One of the Rector's daughters, in her piety, charged herself with the task of preparing, and (with the aid of Anne Shakspeare, Friday's daughter), sending out the drugs. Obviously enough, it was not unfrequently explained that not medicine, but a more nutritious diet - sometimes, that a more bracing air - was the thing needed. The want, whatever it was, was supplied. I often witnessed with joy the small slices of mutton punctually called for at 12 o'clock, and the prescribed quantity of porter medicinally drunk by certain feeble bodies. Once, on returning from London, I found myself in charge of a cask of cod-liver oil. All this was done in so unobserved a way that no one but the Curate could have been aware of it.

10. About ten acres of land of a very poor sort had been bequeathed in times past (or acquired) for the benefit of the poor of Finmere; and had been let to a farmer for the grazing of a few sheep for 80s a year. No one liked to have the land. The Rector, more than sixty years ago, offered to take it under his own charge for allotments, and to be responsible for the annual rent. When I knew Finmere, he was therefore the tenant to the trustees of the Charity. It yielded to the parish under his management £16 a. year, which was chiefly expended in fuel. The boon to the tenants, who held one, or at most two, 'chains' each, was considerable. A 'Pinder' superintended the allotments, and received £1 a year for his trouble.

11. The Rector's anxiety for the bodily comforts of the village folk, as I remarked before, was extraordinary. Parishioners who subscribed during the summer at four stated periods, were entitled to a ton or half-a-ton of coal, according to their subscription, for their winter supply, at 3s less per ton than the cost price. The farmers kindly carried the coal for them. Poor and destitute widows received as a benefaction five cwt. twice in the course of the winter. About 1000 fagots of underwood or peeled oak-tops were bought annually, in the spring of the year, for next year's consumption. These were carried round and sold to the poor at the cost price, being delivered at their doors at the Rector's expense, and paid for on delivery. Five fagots were obtainable for one shilling. It was a frequent remark of his - 'No greater charity can be done for the poor than to help them towards getting fuel. They must have it; and if they cannot get it, they will take it.'

12. To a great extent he may be truly said to have fed the village. Besides the 'School tea' (with cake and bread and butter) on May 1st, and again after the harvest was gathered in - there was a 'School dinner' (of boiled beef and plum-pudding) at Christmas, which was followed, as in the case of the 'Cottage Tenants' supper,' by soup-dinners for upwards of 100 of the village children. On Innocents' day, the mothers of infants born in the preceding year (and therefore over one, and under two, years old) were regaled with hot boiled beef and plum-pudding. All the infants who could be kept quiet came to church with their mothers first, (a special sermon being preached,) and were brought to the dinner - a most amusing exhibition. This entertainment also - the liquor being eked out with the remains of the meat and vegetables - provided a general meal for the children next day.

13. But besides all this, soup-dinners for the children of the village were provided twice a week, for six weeks, of half an ox-head each time. In addition to oatmeal to thicken, and onions to flavour, peas, potatoes, carrots, turnips, artichokes, were liberally thrown into the huge boiler, which a village Amazon kept stirring all day, and received sixpence for her pains. This, with bread, fed 120 children. What remained from the girls' dinner in the schoolroom abundantly sufficed for the boys; who, on returning from their labour at night - cold, hungry, and weary - evidently rejoiced in their bason of hot soup. It was a humble spectacle that meal of theirs, truly, but it was a very delightful one. (I still see the array of candle-ends feebly illuminating the gloom of that barn: still hear the dear dirty urchins snoring over their eagerly-expected supper).

14. With reference to the 'Finmere Provident Clothing Society,' (passing by all minute and curious details), it shall only be stated that the average gross deposits used to range between £40 and £50, on which the Rector allowed the depositors interest at the rate of 33 per cent.

15. But what precedes gives a very imperfect idea of the pains which were taken with the parish. The minuteness of certain of the provisions, and the details which were not thought undeserving of attention, will seem to many persons extraordinary. Something has been said already about the provision which was made for the children's food. I will briefly

recite what was done for their clothing.

All the unconfirmed children of a sufficient age were expected to belong, and did belong, to the School: their parents, unless they sent them, being regarded as unqualified to partake of the village charities. Lace-making had been discouraged for the girls, and having been discontinued by them, was at last prohibited. All children were required to attend the Day-school as well as the Sunday-school regularly, except when special leave was given. The boys' attendance at the Day-school was, of course, dispensed with before that of the girls. Clothing was provided for all: cloaks, shawls, bonnets, frocks, &c., for the girls. For the boys, Sunday clothes (smock-frocks, trousers, waistcoats, &c.,) were provided. The hair of boys and girls alike was cut once every six weeks, and their heads were examined by a wise woman weekly. The eldest boy and the eldest girl in a family were furnished with a brush and comb. The penalty of uncleanness was the withholding their best clothes from them. No girl might wear long hair. They were earnestly recommended to go into service. Places were found for boys and girls alike, as soon as they were fit to take them.

16. I am not able to describe my Rector's personal assiduity in his parish-manner in the pulpit, or method with his parishioners in private - for the sufficient reason that for the last two years of his life (I did not know him till then) he was almost confined to the house by infirmity. But whatever he did, as I had plenty of opportunities to discover, was judicious, was thorough, was considerate and kind, was done like the father of his people. He was an excellent Divine, a good scholar, a singularly grave, thoughtful, and judicious person.⁹⁷ Supremely happy too he was in having a large family of good and dutiful children. But on this head I must not speak. It is not indeed just now my business.

17. Something has been said in an earlier page about the method observed at Finmere in respect of Holy Communion. Corresponding pains

⁹⁷ Of the many valuable lessons which I derived from him as a Divine, I will set down one. He taught me to consider that the great personages of Scripture do not come before us for us to adjudicate on their merits. We are not competent to pass sentence upon them. They are our warnings or our examples, as the case may be; but are not exhibited to us for our censorious condemnation or for our patronising acquittal.

were taken with regard to the other Sacrament. Previously to a baptism, Gabriel Friday manufactured a little document, invariably framed on an established type of his own, e.g. 'A Count of John and Maria Couzins Christen the Name Frances the Godfather William Berry of Tingewick the godmother Mary Berry of Finmere red Lion and Elizabeth Hopcraft.' Take another specimen - 'A Count of George and Ellin Davis Christen the Name Fedrick the Godfathers be Thomas Davis and Edward Tomkins the Godmother Pashence Davis - Maria Couzins Churched.' Two 'Christening frocks' of white muslin and caps were kept at the school, which were lent if asked for. There were also kept six white calico frocks to be worn when wanted by as many of the school-girls at the funerals of infants. The girls were encouraged to discharge such offices of charity without reward of money or food, as sometimes happens, and were therefore required after a funeral to return straight to school.

18. It is time to draw this retrospect to a close. I can but say that, to the best of my belief (and I watched it very closely) the system pursued at Finmere was productive of the best results. We had a Confirmation of 39 persons (15 men and 24 women) on the 21st March, 1852. It was held at Mixbury. Thirty-four of these were residents in Finmere - every one of whom was seen at Holy Communion on Easter day (April 11th). It was solely due to the excellent traditions which the Curate found established in the village, and the zealous assistance ever most modestly and unobtrusively rendered by the Rector's admirable daughters.

19. This saintly man entered into rest on the 28th September, 1853, aged 74 years and 7 months; greatly loved and deeply revered, as well as sincerely mourned by all who knew him. A memorandum in his handwriting was found after his death, expressive of his desire that I should be invited to read the Burial Service over his loved remains. It came to me like a comfortable message from Paradise. In compliance with his orders, he was interred in the simplest manner, and sleeps among his children on the south side of Mixbury Churchyard. I cherish the memory of his friendship, and of my connexion with that humble village, as one of the choicest blessings of my life.

John W. Burgon, Deanery, Chichester, Advent, 1886.

VI

Churchwardens, Clerks and Parish Registers

The Churchwardens

Years

1601	John Warry	John Rightoy ⁹⁸
About 1629	Thomas Chatten ⁹⁹	
1634	Thomas Watts	William Elliot ⁹⁸
1664	Barnabas Chappel	Thomas Smith ¹⁰⁰
1679	Edmund Yates	Henry Paxton ⁹⁸
1685	Same	Thomas Bates ⁹⁸
1695	Thomas Chappel	William Philipps ¹⁰⁰
1729–32	John Smith ¹⁰¹	Richard Strange
1733–34	John Kinch	Same
1735	Tarver Kinch	Edward Horwood
1736	John Kinch	George Linton
1737	Henry George	Richard Strange
1738	William Yates	Same
1739–42	Same	Nathaniel Kinch
1743–44	William Hobcraft	Tarver Kinch
1745–47	William Paxton	Same
1748	Same	Daniel Kinch
1749–54	William Hobcraft	John Kinch
1755–56	(?)	(?)
1757–68	William Harding	William Paxton
1769–71	William Paxton, jun.	
1772 (?)		
1773–74	William Malins	

⁹⁸ Their signatures are attached to the Terriers of the Rectory in these years.

⁹⁹ See account of Rectors, Robert Higgins.

¹⁰⁰ See Parish Church History, p. 34.

¹⁰¹ The names which follow are from the Churchwardens' Book.

1775	Same	William Paxton
1776–78	John Greaves	
1779–84	Stephen Greaves	William Paxton
1785	Same	John Preedy
1786	Same	John Greaves
1787	Same	William Paxton
	(Now first called Rector's C.)	(Parish C.)
1788–89	Same	John Preedy
1790	Same	Francis Dagley
1791	Same	John Greaves
1792	William Paxton	William Preedy
1793	Stephen Greaves	Francis Dagley
1794	Same	John Greaves
1795	Same	William Preedy
1796	Same	William Paxton
1797	Same	Francis Dagley
1798	Same	John Greaves
1799	Same	William Preedy
1800	Same	Stephen Greaves, jun.
1801–02	Same	William Paxton
1803	Same	Daniel Malins
1804	Same	William Preedy
1805	Same	Daniel Malins
1806–07	Same	William Paxton
1808	William Paxton	Daniel Malins
1809–11	Same	Stephen Greaves
1812	Thomas Friday	Lawrence Baldwin
1813–18	Same	Robert Paxton
1819	William Taylor	Same
1820	William George	Same
1821	Thomas White	Same
1822	James Greaves	Same
1823–24	William George	Thomas White
1825	William Tredwell	William Stuchbury
1826–34	Same	William Barrett
1835–39	Jeffrey Tredwell	William Hall
1840–41	Same	William Tredwell

1842-44	William Barrett	Richard Harding
1845-48	Same	Robert Greaves
1849-51	Thomas Sheppard	Francis Dagley
1852-56	Same	Thomas Dagley
1857-61	Same	William Barrett
1862-77	Henry Painter	Same
1878-80	Thomas Painter	Same
1881-86	Alfred Lepper	Same

ACCOUNTS

The accounts of the Churchwardens have been preserved in a book, laid before the Vestry at Easter in each year, and signed as approved by the Rector, when present, and other parishioners. The two earliest give no particulars.

The a Count of John Smith, R^d Strainge, Churchwardens for this year 1729.

	£	s	d
Disburst upon the Church a Count the sum of	4	6	0
Recd. by way of Leuvy	4	5	0
Out of poket	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Con. Rand, Rector.			
Wm Paxton.			
John Kinch.			

The a Count of John Smith, R^d Strainge, Churchwardens for this year 1730.

	£	s	d
Disburst for ye Church a count the sum of	2	6	7
Recd. by way of Leuvy	2	11	0
Paid for the book	0	3	6
Out of poket	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Con, Rand, Rector.			
W ^m Paxton.			
Henerey George.			
John Kinch.			

The accounts, which follow, contain the usual items of Church expenses - Bread and wine for the Holy Communion, occasional forms of prayer, supplying and washing surplices¹⁰² and altar linen (called table-cloth and napkin, latter first-mentioned in 1770), repairs of fabric, churchyard walls and gate, bells and bell-ropes, supply of 'kneeling pads' (first mentioned in 1841), 'looking after,' 'doing,' 'tending' the Church clock ('5s and 2d for oil'), fees at the Bishop's and Archdeacon's visitations, with the Churchwardens' expenses thereat, the latter in charge of the young at Confirmations; and besides these, because they could not conveniently be put to any other parish account; the sums paid continually for the sparrows, hedgehogs, and foxes killed within the parish.

The a Count of R^d Strainge, John Smith, Churchwardens, 1731.

	£	s	d
P ^d for washing ye Surplis	0	0	8
P ^d 3 duson Sparows	0	0	6
P ^d for a focks' hed	0	1	0
P ^d for a heg hog	0	0	4
P ^d for Sparows	0	1	2 ¹ / ₂
Do.	0	0	6
Do.	0	0	4
Do.	0	0	10
P ^d for 2 heg hogs	0	0	8
In 12. P ^d for bred and wine	0	1	7
In 14. P ^d for a heg hog	0	0	4
In 19. P ^d for Sparows	0	0	2
Do.	0	2	4
In 21. Do.	0	0	2
In 23. Do.	0	0	6
July 5. P ^d for a heg hog	0	0	4
July 28. Paid at Visitation Carge	0	4	6
Spent myself and hors	0	2	2
Paid for Sparows	0	0	4
	£	s	d
¹⁰² 1752 P ^d Mr. Chaplin for 12 ells of Irish Cloth for the surplice. £1 12s 0d for thread 4d	1	12	4
1753 Rec ^d for Holland being more than surplice took up	0	4	6
1824 Paid for new Surpliss	2	12	0
1847 New Surplis	2	10	0
1864 New Surplice	2	0	0

	£	s	d
Paid Charlsnuss for mending ye tower and ye Church poarch	0	2	6
Paid for Lime and aire	0	3	4
Paid for 2 duson sparrow	0	0	4
Paid for a heg hog	0	0	4
Do.	0	0	4
Ot. 11. Spent at the Visitation	0	1	0
No. 10. Paid 8 duson Sparrows	0	1	4
De. 11. Paid for Sparrows	0	0	3
De. 24. Paid for Bred and wine	0	3	1
P ^d for Sparowes	0	0	1
P ^d for washing ye surplis	0	0	8
P ^d for bred and wine at Ester, and parm Sunday	0	4	8
P ^d for washing ye surplis	0	0	8
Paid Tho. Chenels for looking after ye Clock	0	5	0
Paid for oyle for ye Clock	0	0	2
Bister visitation	0	4	0
P ^d for 3 heg hogs	0	1	0
P ^d 6 duson Sparrowes	0	1	0
Islip Visitation	0	7	0
P ^d the Glaser	0	2	8
The disburtments are for this year	<u>2</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>10¹/₂</u>
Raised by way of Leuvy	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>0</u>

Con. Rand, Rector.
Ed. Horwood.
John Kinch.

It is to be noticed that the music in Church was paid for by the Churchwardens, as from 1785–1807 the following item appears:

Paid for Bassoon and Hautboy Reeds, 5s.

Similar accounts follow until 1754, when the items for the slaughter of vermin cease. These re-appear in 1822, and are continued until 1848.

In many Churchwardens' accounts entries appear of sums of money given in relief of poor travellers. Either very few such came this way, or the Churchwardens had not authority to assist them. The only entries of this kind are:

1741. Given to 2 seamen, 1s.

1838. Given to a shipwrecked party, 1s 6d.

The Churchwardens through the last century were summoned to attend two Visitations yearly, generally at Bicester before midsummer, and at

Islip about Michaelmas. The Church expenses were met yearly by a rate levied on land, generally from 1s to 2s on each yard land, and on the houses of such inhabitants as held no land always at 6d per house. Occasionally the former amounted to 3s 6d, to 4s (in 1752 to meet a special outlay in the repair of the nave roof to 3s 10d, in 1754 for the same in recasting one of the bells £10 17s 9d). In 1785 the rate was transferred to the estimated rent of the land, varying from 1d to 6d in the pound, and so it continued to be made until the abolition of Church rates. Since that date a voluntary rate has been passed, which has been aided by collections in Church and other gifts.

OFFENCES AGAINST THE CHURCH

One part of the office of Churchwarden is to report to the Ordinary all offences, or supposed offences, against the laws of the Church, whether committed by the clergy or laity of the parish. To assist them in making these presentments, 'Articles of Enquiry,' according to the injunction of the 119th Canon, are issued previous to every Visitation of the Bishop. The presentments of the Churchwardens of Finmere from 1733 to the present day are extant.¹⁰³ They generally report 'All's well,' or 'Nothing presentable,' to which is occasionally appended 'to the best of our knowledge,' but instances of immorality and neglect of public worship are taken notice of, e.gr.:

1747. The Churchwardens of the parish of Finmere have to present [...] But having at the Bishop's last Visitation presented Richard Hall and Thomas Channels for absenting themselves from divine service, and in hopes of some reformation in the meanwhile desired they might not be proceeded against before we should exhibit our next presentment, we must now inform the Court that they have since both of them been at Church, and we have some hopes of their doing better in the future.

Tarver Kinch, William Paxton, Ch. wardens.

1750. The Churchwardens of the parish of Finmere think it proper to inform the Court that whereas they had at the last Visitation presented Francis Hall, John Hall, and Richard Hall for absenting themselves from divine service, since that time the last of these has left the parish, and the other two have several times attended public worship, and we have nothing now to present.

John Kinch, Wm. Hobcraft, Ch. wardens.

¹⁰³Now preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

GOOD DEEDS

The Churchwardens now and then reported good deeds, e.gr.:

1788. The Churchwardens, &c., present that the parish Church of Finmere, and parsonage house, and other buildings are in exceeding good repair, and that divine service is duly performed twice every Lord's day, and Sacrament administered at proper times.

Stephen Greaves, John Preedy, Ch. wardens.

1822, June. The Churchwardens, &c., present that the Church and Churchyard wall is now under repair.

Robert Paxton, James Greaves, Ch. wardens.

1833. The Churchwardens, &c., [present] that the repairs to the Church presented by the Rural Dean are not yet completed, but are proceeding with, and will be done quickly.

W. Barrett, W. Treadwell, Ch. wardens.

The Parish Clerks

Thomas Channels, the present Clerk (1760), says that his dues are 8d for every house, and 2d for every yard-land, but that many poor people do not pay him anything, and if two families live in one house they will pay him but 8d between them, so that he reckons his place not to be worth more than £1 3s a year. He has likewise for every burial (for the making the grave and ringing the bell) 1s 4d, and one year with another there are about 3. For a wedding he has a shilling, but hardly one in a year. He has likewise 8s out of Mr. Ells' Charity for ringing the bell at 8 of the clock at night during the half-year from Michaelmas to Lady-day and 5s for winding up the clock, but both dearly earned.¹⁰⁴

For the purpose of increasing this scanty salary, Mr. Long, then Rector, subjected his gift of land to the Rectory in this year with a yearly payment of 15s.

To the intent and purpose and upon trust that he, the said Thos. Long, and his successors, Rectors of the parish of Finmere aforesaid for the time being, shall and do thereout pay to the Clerk of the said parish of Finmere for the time being the yearly sum or stipend of 15s by equal half-yearly payments at and upon the Feast days of St. Michael the Archangel, and the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, free and clear of all taxes and other deductions whatsoever [...] as a consideration and encouragement for the due and constant attendance of such clerk upon his office, and his

¹⁰⁴Memorandum by Mr. Long in Rector's Book.

performance and execution thereof on all Fast and Festival days, when required thereunto by the Rector of Finmere aforesaid for the time being, Provided nevertheless that in case such clerk shall at any time or times fail to attend, and duly execute his trust on any Fast or Festival days as aforesaid, not being hindered by sickness or some other reasonable cause to be approved of by the said Rector, then and so often the said Rector of the said parish of Finmere for the time being shall and may deduct, and retain out of the said yearly sum or stipend sixpence for every such time of failure, &c.

Clerks	Died
Joseph Jones	1666
Edward Halton	1675
Thomas Jarvis	1710
Thomas Chanells	1761
Gabriel Parker	1772
John Fox	1795
William Crow	1820
Gabriel Parker Friday	1857
William Davis	Resigned
John Trafford	Resigned 1873
John Paxton	Died 1883

Emanuel Horwood, present Clerk.

The collection of 8d from each house towards the clerk's salary was found to be so troublesome, and to cause so much ill-feeling, that at a vestry held on April 14th, 1873, it was resolved that, in lieu of it, the Rector and Churchwardens should pay on Easter Monday, yearly, the sum of £2 out of the rent of the Poor's plot land.

The Parish Registers

Before the Reformation no parish books were kept, but the Monasteries recorded from year to year various matters of interest concerning the parishes which belonged to them. After the final dissolution of the latter in 1539, the clergy throughout England were enjoined by an order from Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Vicar General of Henry VIII, to keep a register book of all christenings, weddings, and burials within their parishes. 812 parish books now exist, which date from that year. The same direction was again given in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth, and

a far larger number of books date from their times (1538–58, 1,822; 1558–1603, 2,448).¹⁰⁵ Among the latter is the earliest existing Register at Finmere. This was begun in 1560, no doubt by Mr. Sanky (in that year instituted to the Rectory), and was continued, with more or less regularity, until the ejection of Mr. Horn in 1647. Mr. Horn endeavoured to keep possession of this book, but unsuccessfully:

A contest about a Register in Cromwell's time at Bister, April 16, 1654. Warr got it, and quite neglected y^e duty.

As soon as Mr. Horn was re-instated in his rectory, he purchased a new book, and on the outside cover of this he wrote the foregoing and some other memoranda.

To Mr. Horn, Rector of Finmer.

Sir,

I have sent you a Register Booke containing 120 leaves of Parchment at 2d a leafe, wh^{ch} comes to 20s. The binding in Vellum, Clapsed and Pastboard, 3s.

Suma tot £1 3s 0d.

London, Little Brittain, May 1^o Ano Dmi 1662.

Y^r serv^t Jo. Collins.

This is the oldest book now existing. On the top of the first page Mr. Horn wrote:

Nomina nonnulla e vetusto Codice transcripta, qui (ut præfatione liquebat) ab anno Dni 1560 exordium sumpsit ad hunc modum.

Then follow through four pages some entries from the older book, which must therefore at that time have been in existence, but from 1647 to 1660 nothing is recorded except one consecutive entry of the baptisms of Mr. Peter Paxton's children, evidently made from memory after his death in 1667. From 1660 the entries have been regularly made (with the exception of marriages after 1754) until 1812. On the second page of this book Mr. Horn has written, at the time when his mind was somewhat unhinged, on the subject of marriage:

Servat ab interitu Deus unus et unio mundum
Conjugium in terris unio prima fuit.

¹⁰⁵Official return made in 1830.

VII

The Rectory

Value of the Rectory

GIFTS AND PAYMENTS

Some land was very early given towards the endowment of the Parish Church. This is mentioned in 1204 as belonging to St. Augustine's Priory at Bristol.

Fin. Buckingh. 5 Joan. n. 125
de terris in Finemere.¹⁰⁶

At Pope Nicholas' Taxation in 1292, this Church was reckoned to be worth 12 marks yearly.

Church of Finmere £viiij

The same continued to be its value 50 years later.¹⁰⁷

Fynemere.

The Church of the same parish with all its portions was taxed at £viiij, of which the ninth lamb, fleece and sheaf are assessed at £vj xiijs iiijd, &c., because the glebe and tithes of hay are worth xxs, and there are 2 carucates of land lying uncultivated, of which the ninth would be worth xxs. There are no men of chattels, &c.

No special gifts were made to this Church through the two following centuries; but, on the other hand, nothing was taken from it. The Patrons did not exact any yearly pension from its revenues, neither did they impropriate them, as was done in almost all churches of any value, which belonged to the monasteries. This Church was allowed to retain its own, but this was not accounted much, as appears from the continual resignations of its early Rectors. A slightly increased value gradually arose from the additional tithes and offerings of a growing population, as appears from the return made in Henry VIIIth's reign.

¹⁰⁶See Dugdale's *Mon.*

¹⁰⁷Valuation of the Ninths in 1340.

Fynmere

	£	s	d
Richard Eliott is the perpetual Rector there, and his Rectory there is worth yearly with reprisals in common years by the recognizance of the aforesaid Rector on his oath	ix	-	-
Total thereof	ix	-	-
Payments	£	s	d
Namely. In procurations and Synodals of old paid yearly to the Archdeacon of Oxford	-	x	viiij
The whole allocation	-	x	viiij
And there remains clear	viiij	ix	iiij
Tenths to the lord the king	-	xvj	xi ¹ / ₄

A considerable rise took place after the Reformation owing to the increased value of land at that time:

Memorandm Martii 21^o Anno Dni 1595. Eliz. 37^o Mr. Robert Higgins, Rector of Finmer, demised his Parsonage of Finmer (his glebe and appurtenances, together with some rate tithes of Wood, Warren and Mill excepted and reserved), only paying back 3s 4d in lieu of the said rates being a moiety, unto his Tenants Edmund Paxton and Peter of Finmer for y^e yeare following at the sum of £34 in full satisfaction. Teste Indent. ipso sigill: in Reg. ext.

TERRIERS

A Terrier, dated Oct. 29, 1601, gives an exact account of the Rectory property in that year. The Glebe then consisted of 60 and more separate pieces of arable land, of various sizes and in various parts of the open field, and three plots of meadow, with rights of:

Common for eight beasts, five horses, and three score sheep in the fields of Finmere. Concerning the tythe, some places in the field pay no tythe Hay (six mentioned), and in consideration (as I think) thereof, the Rector of Finmere hath a place called The Tythe Meadow, and a place called The Parson's Holms, lying by Stratford side, which holmes is severall to the Parsonage of Finmere from the Annunciacion to St. Michael, and the towne have common in it.

Againe the Parke payeth but 2s 8d a year.

Againe the tythe of the Mill 2s 8d

Againe the tythe of the Warren 2s 4d

All other places of the field doth pay by the corne, and by the hay; tythe lambs is paid the third day of May, and the tenth night and

the tenth morning after we have tythe milk, and so every 10 night and every 10 morning until Martinmas day in the morning; the tythe of a calfe if killed is the shoulder, if it be sold the tenth penny, if it be weaned an halfpenny; the offering is a penny a piece at Easter; wee have tythe eggs on good Friday, and at Easter every garden a penny; tythe wool when they sheere; a mortuary when they dye; at cristening cresam; tythes hemp; tythe piggs; tythe of bees; tythe fruit of apples and peares, &c.

John Warry, John Rightoy, Church wardens.
Old Richard Baldwyne.

Another Terrier, dated Sept. 22, 1634, describes the arable land as consisting of a yet larger number of separate pieces. At the Inclosure in 1667 these detached and scattered pieces were exchanged for other land lying together and adjoining the Rectory house as described in:

A Terrier of the Rectory of Finmer, 1679¹⁰⁸
Imprimis One plott parcell or piece of land now divided into two parts, one of which called Inlands, and the other Haskallbottome, conteyning together by estimacon forty Acres three Roodes and twenty-five perches, lying and being in Finmere aforesaid, Tingwicke feild lying on the east part thereof, the towne closes of Finmere aforesaid on the south and west sides thereof, on the north and west side thereof bounded by Courte Closes and Courte Leys, being the lands belonging to Tho. Waller, Ser^t at Law; One parcel of meadow ground called Parson Holmes, conteyning by estimation two acres lying and being in Finmere aforesaid by the River there, bounded with the River on the north and west and Mill feild on the south, and a little slipe of ground belonging to Ser^t Waller on the east side; two acres of meadow ground lying and being in Finmere aforesaid by the River there, bounded on the east by the meadow grounds belonging to Sir Richard Temple, on the west by the meadow ground belonging to John Gardener, Gent.

Edmund Yates, Henry Paxton, Church wardens.

RENTS AND DUES

At the same time and by the same authority the tithes were commuted for a rent charge, 'to be paid in the Church Porch of Finmere' in equal portions quarterly.

¹⁰⁸ Another Terrier, dated Aug. 8 1685, gives the same account, only adding that 'the two lords, the parson, and the Freeholders have each of them a true Authentick copy in their owne keeping of the composition, whereby the tithes in kind were commuted for a money payment.'

Out of the lands allotted to Sir R. Temple,	£34	17	5
T. Waller Esq.	24	0	7
Peter Paxton	7	18	3
William Paslew	7	0	8
Edmund Yates	3	10	4
George and John Watts	1	15	2
George Chamberlayne, Esq., and Ambrose Holbech, Esq., Trustees for Cicely and William Paxton	£0	17	7
	£80	0	0

After Mr. Ells' incumbency (1678–1704), the Easter dues were discontinued.

I do not find that either Mr. Rand or Mr. Chaplin had ever collected Easter offerings, and therefore I have omitted doing it myself. If any of my successors think it worth their while, they will find their right to them secured by the Great Deed made upon Inclosing the common field.¹⁰⁹

In 1760 Mr. Long, Rector, purchased an 'half yardland of arable, meadow and pasture ground lying in the open and common fields of Tingewick,' then let at £4 per ann., and, by a deed dated April 9 in that year, conveyed it in trust to his brother-in-law, The Rev. William Hutton, Rector of Maid's Morton, Bucks, for the benefit of the Rectory, subject to a yearly payment of 15s to the parish Clerk.¹¹⁰

At the beginning of the present century, the Rectory property thus consisted of

Rent charge in commutation of tithes	£80	0	0
Old commutation from Park, &c.	0	7	8
Rent of land (56 acres)	46	0	0
	£126	7	8

It thus fell under the head of the small benefices, which, by an Act of Parliament passed in 1806, were exempted from the payment of land tax. A sum of £17 6s 3_d was thus saved from the yearly outgoings.

In 1814 a new valuation of the rent charge was made, whereby the value of the Rectory was more than doubled, so that in 1831 this was returned

¹⁰⁹Entry by Mr. Long in Rector's Book.

¹¹⁰A copy of this deed is preserved in Rector's Book. This land was in later times called Rag-hill.

at £345 per ann. In 1836 a third valuation was made, when the yearly rent charge was fixed at £457. When in 1847 parts of the Stratford meadow (2 acres, 0 roods, 28 poles), and the Lot meadow, were needed for the formation of the Railway, a sum of £825 was paid for the land, and the damage done by dividing the fields. This sum was in the next year laid out in the purchase of some land at the sale of the Duke of Buckingham's estates. In 1853 the land thus purchased was exchanged for some land purchased at the same time by Merton College. A loss of 3a. 1r. 2p. was thereby incurred, but an equivalent was supposed to be gained in the quality of the ground taken in exchange.

GLEBE LAND

The Glebe land at the present time is as follows:

Number on Tithe Map	Extent			Designation.
	A.	R.	P.	
76	3	2	20	Church Close
2	3	1	9	Home Close
135	1	1	18	Well Close
4	9	0	7	Barn Close
5	9	2	38	Middle Ground
63	5	2	36	First Ground
17	12	0	37	Little Court Leys
—	13	0	0	Tingewick Field
—	0	1	35	Churchyard
—	0	2	0	Garden and Paddock
—	0	1	20	Barn Yard and Spinney
54	2	0	28	Lot Meadow
78	0	0	30	House and Cottage
79	1	3	8	Two Cottages
80	0	3	5	Four Cottages and Infant School
134	0	2	8	Cottages and Gardens

The Rectory House

In 1601 there is mention of 'The Parsonage house with a Barne, and Backside thereunto belonging.' In 1634 a more detailed description is given: 'A dwelling-house of 4 Bayes sufficiently thatched, and in repaire; lately made a Barne of 5 bayes well thatched and walled; an old pease barne standing upon posts hovell-like, sufficiently in repaire.' This house was much damaged by a storm. Mr. Evelyn describes the latter:

Feby. 17, 166¹/₂: Also this night, and the next day fell such a storm of hail, thunder, and lightning, as never was seene the like in any man's memorie, especially the tempest of wind, being S.W., which subverted, besides huge trees, many houses, innumerable chimnies (amongst others that of my partner at Says Court), and made such havoc at land and sea that severall perish'd on both. Divers lamentable fires were also kindl'd at this time, so exceedingly was God's hand against this ungrateful and vicious nation and Court. 20. I returned home to repaire my house, miserably shatter'd by y^e late tempest.¹¹¹

Mr. Horn, just re-instated in the Rectory, recorded his loss.

1661. Februarii 18^o Turbo procellosus Occid: cum ulmi capi^o 10 Baies of Building e terris funditus evertit.

Translation: 1661. Feby. 18. A tempestuous hurricane from the west, with the top of an elm tree, completely threw down from the ground 10 baies of building.

Mr. Horn partially re-built what had been destroyed.

Procella ingens ab Occid. orta e nois Rect. 10 Baies diruerat Feb. 18, 1661, funditus, quarum 5 e nois sumptibus denuo erexi.

Seven years later another misfortune befel him:

1668: Proh dolor! hic jam Presbyteri dedit ampla ruinam vulcano superante, domus &c., 5^o Nonas Julias An^o prd.

Translation: Oh! Sorrow! Here now the great House of the Priest has fallen by a fire overcoming it, the 5th of the Nones of July in the year aforesaid.

Mr. Horn re-built the house, but in diminished proportions, for in 1685 it is described:

The dwelling house contayning three bayes of building. The Barne three bayes. The Stable one.

The fire was not forgotten years afterwards, for in 1708 Dr. Rawlinson recorded in his notes:

The Parsonage was burnt, and the Register destroyed.¹¹²

The new house was subsequently enlarged, for in 1738 the Terrier taken in that year, describes it:

¹¹¹ J. Evelyn's *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 189, by W. Bray, Esq.

¹¹² This is a mistake arising probably from the oldest existing Register commencing at about the same time when, as the tradition went, the house had been burnt.

The Dwelling House consists of 6 bays of Building. The Barn of 3; the upper Stable of 1; the lower of 2. The Garden and Yard may be about half an acre of ground.

This was the house, as many now living saw it, a low thatched irregular building, with a small enclosure between it and the public road, and the chief rooms looking southwards to the garden. The garden had the advantage of being laid out with pleasing effect, as seen from the house, by the famous landscape gardener, known as 'Capability Brown,' when he was in the neighbourhood to improve the grounds and gardens of Stowe House. This old house was pulled down in 1867, and the present excellent Rectory house was built in its stead, but on a different site, at the sole cost of W. Ashwell, Esq., the Patron.

VIII

Deed of Inclosure 1667

An Abstract of the Deed made on the Inclosing the Common Fields of
Finmere, 1667

The deed dated June 1st, 1667

PARTIES' NAMES

Sir Richard Temple, Bart.	1st Part.
Thomas Waller.	
Elizabeth, his wife	2nd Part.
Richard Horne, Rector of Finmere	3rd Part.
Henry Paxton, of Finmere.	
Peter Paxton, his son and heir.	
Elizabeth, wife of said Peter Paxton.	
Peter Paxton, of Beggars Barton:	4th Part.
William Paslew	5th Part
Edward Yates	
Ann, his wife	6th Part.
George Watts and Mary, his wife	
John Watts, son and heir of the said George Watts, and Elizabeth his wife	7th Part.
Cicely Paxton, relict of William Paxton, yeoman, and mother and guardian to William Paxton, the son and heir of the said William Paxton deceased, and William Paxton the son	8th Part.
Commissioners	
George Chamberlayne, of Wardington, Oxon	
Ambrose Holbech, of Mollington, Warwickshire	9th Part.
Knightley Purefoy, Esq., of Shalstone	
John Risley, Esq., son and heir of Thomas Risley, Esq., of Chetwode	
Robert Standard, Esq., of Shipton on Charwell,	

John Parkhurst, Esq., of Catesby	
William Lisle, Esq., of Evenley	10th Part.
Edward Andrews, of Cottisford	
Robert Bury, of Syresham	
John Gardiner, of Crowton	11th Part.

COVENANT TO LEVY FINES

Whereby [in pursuance of certain articles of agreement theretofore made for inclosing and dividing the lands therein afore mentioned] it is covenanted and agreed that they shall, before the end of Michaelmas term, levy a fine - of all the lands lying in the late open and common fields of Finmere - and of the Glebe Lands lying and being in the said late open and Common field - and of all the Tithes belonging to the said Rectory of Finmere.

GLEBE

The uses of which fines are declared to be as follows, namely: As to the Plot of Ground then divided in ten parts, containing together by estimation 40a. 3r. 25p., and Plot of Meadow ground called Parson Holmes, containing two acres of meadow ground lying by the river in Finmere aforesaid, and then in the tenure of Richard Horn, with a way and passage for cattle and cart to go to and from Parsons Holmes through Millfield, and to and from the way called the Millway; and a way and passage for carts and carriages from the Highway at Iron end through Court Leys to the Inn Lands belonging to the said Richard Horne for carriage of hay, timber, and fuel, and not otherwise, and a way and passage from the Town of Finmere to the Meadow gate, and from that gate through part of the grounds hereinafter limited to the said Sir R. Temple, to the said last mentioned 2 acres of Meadow ground.

To the use of the said Knightly Purefoy, John Risley, R. Standard, J. Parkhurst, and Willm. Lisle.

To the intent and purpose and upon Trust that they shall permit the said R. Horne and his successors, Rectors of Finmere, to receive the rents of last-mentioned grounds to his and their ownship and uses during all such time as the said Sir R. T., Thos. Waller, &c., shall respectively enjoy the several pieces of ground belonging to the Glebe Land of Finmere and then enclosed, lying in the allotments of ground hereinafter limited to them and their heirs respectively, without the interruption of the said R. Horne and his successors.

And on further trust that the said Knightly Purefoy shall within six months after such interruption satisfy and pay out of the rents of the said several parcels of ground therein before limited to the said Knightly Purefoy, unto such person or persons as shall be interrupted as aforesaid so much money as he or they shall be dampnified by reason of such interruption.

SEVERAL RENT CHARGES AMOUNTING TO £80 PAID TO THE PARSON

And on further trust that the said Knightly Purefoy, &c., and their heirs shall yearly for ever receive and take out of the several lands, &c., hereinafter mentioned the several annuities or rent charges thereafter expressed in lieu of all Tithes, &c., belonging to the said Rectory (except Easter offerings), a rate tithes of one shilling and fourpence for the Warren of Finmere, and a rate tithes of two shillings and eightpence for the Wood called Finmere Park, and two shillings and eightpence for Finmere Mill. The said annuities to be paid into the Church Porch of Finmere on Michaelmas Day, St. Thomas' Day, Lady Day, and Midsummer Day, by equal proportions, namely:

Out of the lands limited to Sir R. Temple	£34	17	5
Thos. Waller	7	18	8
Wm. Paslew	7	0	0
Ed. Yates	3	10	0
Geo. Watts and John Watts	31	15	2
Geo. Chamberlayne and Ambrose Holbech, trustees for Cicely Paxton and W. Paxton	0	17	7

CLAUSE OF DISTRESS

And if it shall happen that the said annuities or yearly rent charge or any one of them shall be behind or unpaid for the space of four score days next, over or after any of the day on which the same ought to be paid then it shall be lawful for the said R. Purefoy, R. Standard, &c., &c., or their heirs, to enter into and upon such lands, and there to distress, and to impound and detain the Distress so taken till all charges be fully satisfied and paid.

And to this further intent that the said Ed. Andrews, R. Bury, and John Gardiner, and their heirs shall from time to time for ever receive and take out of the close called the Bread Furlong, lying between Shelswell grounds towards the south part of lands limited to T. Waller on the west London Road towards the north and Barton grounds towards the east, containing

about 14 acres, the yearly rent of 45s, with power to distrein if the same remain unpaid for the space of 20 days.

20s TO POOR OF HAGBOURNE. 25s TO 5 POOR PEOPLE OF FINMERE

In trust that 20s of said annuity be paid at Christmas to the poor of Hagbourne in the County of Berks, and that 25s be paid to five poor people of Finmere, to be nominated by Rector and Churchwardens according to the tenor and meaning of the Will of W. Keate.

LANDS LIMITED TO SIR R. TEMPLE

And as touching that plot of ground in Finmere divided into five parts, containing 156 acres, late in the tenure of Richard Gardiner, Geo. Watts, and Thos. Smith.

And that other plot of ground then divided into two parts containing 65 acres more or less, late in the tenure of R. Edwards, together with the soil and herbage of the way called the Meadow way leading through a plot of ground limited to Peter Paxton, of Finmere.

And that other plot of ground divided into three parts, containing 125 acres, then in the tenure of Ed. Yates, Jo. Waddop, together with the soil and herbage of the way leading through some part of a plot hereinafter limited to Geo. Watts and John Watts, and way and passage to and from the last mentioned plot, limited to Sir R. Temple through the plot hereinafter limited to Ed. Yates, to and from the Highway called Fulwell way along the way then called North Street way.

And that other plot of ground, together 124a. 2r. 8p., comprehending the Warren of Finmere.

And that plot of Meadow ground, 9 acres and 9 poles, between the River on the north and the plot of ground limited to T. Waller on the east, and the Water Mill and Mill Hams.

And a plot of pasture and meadow ground adjoining to the said Mill, then divided into two parts, and with the mill containing together 1a. 3r. 4p.

And the close called Jones great close and Jones little close, and the little strip of ground adjoining to a mesuage in the tenure of Geo. Watts, and the close next adjoining to the mesuage in the occupation of Edward Archer, and the close called the Mill Close, and two parts of the plot of ground containing 8a. 1r. situated between the way leading from Finmere towards Barton Gate towards the east and the lands limited to the said Wm. Paslew on the south and west, and the Highway leading from Mix-

bury towards Buckingham on the north, and of the soil and herbage of the said ways so far as the said plots do extend.

And the plot of ground in Finmere aforesaid containing one rood extending from the gate standing in the Parsons Plot called Inlands below Porters House to the Ash Tree in Finmere at the Towns end there near Buckingham way, excluding the said Ash Tree and the close called the 'Over Close,' lately purchased by Sir R. Temple from Ed. Yates.

And those 68 acres of wood, part of Finmere park as then set forth from the other part of the same wood, hereinafter limited to Thos. Waller, and all tithes of corn, grain, and hay issuing out of said last mentioned premises, except the Rates, Tithes, and offerings at Easter. Together with liberty to scour and cleanse the river running to the mill at all seasonable times of the year. And all royalties, except such liberty for killing conies as thereinafter is agreed on. To the use of the said Sir R. Temple, his heirs and assigns for ever.

LANDS LIMITED TO THOS. WALLER

And as to the plot of ground then divided into six several parcels containing 111 acres in Finmere on the south side of the said Town, together with the soil and herbage of the way called Buckingham way from Stuttlepits gate to the lands therein limited to the said Wm. Paslew, and of the way leading from Finmere Park corner towards Barton, so far as the ground of the said Thos. Waller does extend.

And that plot of ground containing 29a. 1r. in Finmere, then in the occupation of Athanasius Middleton, together with the soil and herbage of the way leading through a plot before limited to Sir R. Temple on the west from Newton Pursell towards Mixbury.

And that plot of ground then divided into six parts containing 164a. 1r. 18p. between Court closes in part, and the Meadow way on the other part towards the west, and then in the occupation of Francis Horne or Gustavus Horne or one of them, together with the soil and herbage of the way leading through the said plot from Iron end to a plot called the Mill Acre.

And all those three other plots of ground containing 57 acres towards the south and west parts of lands before limited to the said Sir R. Temple.

And a little slip of ground lying between the said meadows called Parsons Holmes towards the west and Langford Mead in Tingewick towards the east; and a little close of ground behind the messuage in the

occupation of said Gustavus Horne; and that other close behind the messuage and homestall late in the occupation of Willm. Aris, and now in the occupation of Francis Horne.

And all those 9a. 3r. 12p. of meadow between the lands allotted to the said T. Waller in part, and part of the land before limited to Sir R. Temple towards the south, and the river towards the north.

And the toft and close known by the name of Chatwins Yard.

And all those several closes called Court Closes, containing 6a. 1r. with a foot way to and from the messuage, then in the occupation of Athanasius Middleton, through the said plots of ground before limited to R. Purefoy, to and from the said Court Closes and Court Leys, and a footway from Chatwins Yards through the plot limited to R. Purefoy to and from Court Closes and Court Leys.

And the other third part, the residue of the said messuage and closes in the tenure of John Waddop. And one third part of the plot of ground containing 8a. 1r., lying between the way leading from Finmere towards Barton Gate towards the east and the lands limited hereinafter to W. Paslew towards the south and west, and the highway leading from Mixbury towards Buckingham on the north, with a third part of the soil and herbage of the way so far as the said plot doth extend.

And those 31a. 2p. of wood part of Finmere Park with ingress into and from the said wood with horses and carts, through the ground before limited to Sir R. Temple to and from the gate leading into the said wood called Park Gate.

And all tythes, liberties, profits, royalties, &c., issuing from said lands, except such liberty for killing conies as is hereinafter agreed to. To the use of said T. Waller and his wife and their heirs for ever.

LANDS LIMITED TO WILLM. PASLEW

And as to the plot of ground then divided into eight several parcels containing 76a. 2r. 10p., to be fenced with quickset hedges and ditches, lying in Finmere aforesaid, then in the occupation of the said William Paslew, together with the herbage and soil of the way leading by the said plots from Finmere to Barton Gate, and of the way called London way, and of the way leading from Mixbury to Buckingham, so far as the said several plots do extend.

And that 1a. 1r. 6p. of meadow ground then in the tenure of W. Paslew lying by the river side with ingress into and from the said meadow ground

to and from the Town of Finmere, and to and from the meadow gate through the several parcels of meadow ground limited to the said Sir R. Temple and others; and all tythes and profits issuing from the same to the use and behoof of the said William Paslew, his heirs, and assigns for ever.

LANDS LIMITED TO ED. YATES

And as concerning all the plot of ground now divided into two parts, containing 43a. 2r. 22p., to be comprised as now set forth and fenced with quickset hedges and ditches, then in the occupation of the said Edward Yates; and all that 1a. 2p. of meadow in the occupation of E. Yates by the river side, with a way to and from the said meadow to the Town of Finmere through the several plots of meadow before limited to Sir R. Temple and others; with all tythes, profits, &c., issuing out of said premises and messuages then in the possession of said Ed. Yates, and out of one other messuage in Finmere late in the possession of E. Yates, to the use of him and his heirs for ever.

LANDS LIMITED TO G. WATTS AND J. WATTS

And as to that plot of ground divided into two parts containing 18a. 1r. 25p., then in the occupation of Geo. Watts and J. Watts, to be comprised as now set forth and mounded with quickset hedges and ditches, lying between certain lands before limited to Sir R Temple towards the south, Fulwell hedge towards the west, and a meadow called Harrold's Eye, and the meadow hereafter limited to Peter Paxton towards the north. And all that meadow ground called Harrold's Eye, late in the occupation of the said Geo. Watts, with a way from Fulwell way through one plot before limited to Sir R. Temple by Fulwell hedge, and all that piece of ground inclosed, commonly called Geo. Watts' Lammas Close, containing one rood, adjoining the homestall of the said Geo. Watts; and all the tenths and tythes issuing from these last mentioned premises, except the Easter offerings. To the use of said G. Watts and J. Watts, and the heirs of said J. Watts for ever.

LANDS LIMITED TO PETER PAXTON

And as to that plot of ground then divided into several parts containing 62 acres now in the occupation of said Peter Paxton, mounded and divided with quickset hedges, lying between certain lands before limited to Sir R. Temple towards the east and land limited to Geo. Chamberlayne, and the plot now called the Poor's Plot towards the south, and another plot limited

to Sir R. Temple towards the west, and certain other lands limited to Sir R. Temple towards the north, with the soil and herbage of the way leading from the Town's end of Finmere towards Fulwell. And all that other plot as is now divided into six closes containing together 52 acres, now in tenure of P. Paxton, lying between certain land limited to Sir R. Temple on the east and south-east, and lands limited to E. Yates on south, and lands limited to G. Watts on west, and the meadow towards the north now in occupation of P. Paxton, and those three acres and half of meadow lying in Finmere by the river side, with a way and passage to and from Fulwell way through the plot before limited to Ed Yates into and from the said last mentioned plots, and to and from Finmere to the meadow gate, and from there through the said plot of meadow before limited to Sir R. Temple into and from the said last mentioned plots. And all tythes and profits issuing out of the said last mentioned premises and out of the ten messuages in Finmere aforesaid then or late in the tenure of said P. Paxton. To the use of the said Peter Paxton and his heirs for ever.

POOR'S PLOT

And as concerning that plot of furze ground called the Poor's Plot, containing by estimation 12 acres, to be bounded on the south and west with lands limited to Sir R. Temple, and with lands limited to P. Paxton, and with lands limited to Geo. Chamberlayne, &c., towards the east, and with the plot limited to P. Paxton on the north; with all tythes and profits of whatsoever kind (except the free liberty to Sir R. Temple and his heirs for the feed of conies in the said plot of furze).

To the use of Ed. Andrews, &c., upon trust to the intent and purpose that they shall from time to time and at all times hereafter permit the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Finmere to pay, employ, and dispose the rents and profits of said plot into and amongst the poor of the said parish in such sort as the Churchwardens and Overseers shall think fit. In which number of poor people Bridget Tapping and John George shall be accounted as two. Provided also that if any conies shall burrow in the said plot, and the said Sir R. Temple or his warrener shall not upon a week's notice destroy the same, then the tenant may destroy the burrows and kill the conies. Nevertheless the tenant or occupier and the Churchwarden and Overseers of the parish may chase out the conies, but not killing any except such as shall burrow.

LANDS LIMITED TO THE USE OF CICELY PAXTON & W. PAXTON

And as to the plot of ground containing $9\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and that plot of ground 3a. 1r. then in the occupation of William Paxton the son and Cicely Paxton, with way and passage to and from Fulwell way through the plot before limited to E. Yates, and from thence through a plot before limited to Sir R. Temple. And all tythes and profits issuing therefrom, except offerings at Easter. To the use of Geo. Chamberlayne and Ambrose Holbech, their heirs and assigns on trust, to permit said Cicely Paxton to hold the premises till the said William Paxton the son attained to 21 years of age, and from such his attainment. Then upon trust that if said William Paxton or such person or persons as shall be his heir or heir-at-law in case he dies before 21 years of age, together with said Cicely Paxton, shall convey to the said Sir R. Temple, Thos. Waller and wife, William Paslew, Peter Paxton, of Finmere, Edward Yates, Geo Watts and John Watts, Knightly Purefoy, John Risley, R. Standard, J. Parkhurst, W. Lisle, Ed. Andrews, R. Bury, John Gardiner, and their heirs respectively, all such estate which the said William Paxton and Cicely Paxton may have in any of the lands thereby limited to the said Sir R. Temple. Then the said Geo. Chamberlayne and Ambrose Holbech shall convey the said premises limited to the said William Paxton and Cicely Paxton, their heirs and assigns, to the following uses, that is to say: As to one moiety thereof to the said Cicely Paxton for life if she shall so long continue a widow; and from and after the marriage or death of the said Cicely, which shall first happen, to the use and behoof of the said W. Paxton the son, his heirs and assigns for ever.

COVENANT FOR KILLING CONIES ON THEIR OWN LAND

It was also mutually agreed and concluded by all parties to those present that they shall from time to time and for ever hereafter hunt and destroy all such conies as shall come on to the said plots limited to them respectively.

COVENANT ABOUT DIVIDING AND CUTTING FERN GROWING ON THE WARREN

It was also mutually agreed by said parties that the fern growing on said Warren shall be yearly for ever taken and allotted by the Yard Land between the said Sir R. Temple, Thos. Waller and his wife, the Rector of Finmere for the time being, Wm. Paslew, Peter Paxton, Ed. Yates, Geo. Watts, John Watts, Geo. Chamberlayne, A. Holbech, so that it be allotted before 21st day of September, and carried away before the 18th October, and none be cut or taken till it be allotted.

Covenant from Sir R. Temple not to destroy the fern other than by ploughing:

Proviso that no fern shall be cut where there is any corn sown during such time as the corn shall be growing.

Proviso that Sir R. Temple may have such fern as is not allotted and carried away as aforesaid.

AGREEMENT ABOUT KILLING THE CONIES BURROWING IN THE POOR'S PLOT

Agreement that no occupier of the Poor's Plot or the Churchwardens or any other person other than Sir R. Temple shall kill any conies that shall feed there. But if any conies shall burrow there, and the same shall not be destroyed by the said Sir R. Temple on a week's notice, then the occupier of the plot or his agent, but no other person, may destroy the burrows and kill the conies therein.

Liberty for tenant of said plot and Churchwardens and Overseers, but no other person other than the said Sir R. Temple and his heirs, in the day time to chase the conies out of the said plot, not killing any of them.

COVENANT AS TO REPAIRING THE MOUNDS, &c.

Covenant concluded between all parties for themselves and heirs that every mound, hedge, and ditch now inclosing the several parcels of ground shall for ever hereafter be repaired and amended, and for free ingress, egress, and regress for that purpose and for carrying away all things arising from cutting or scouring the same, and that upon such cutting or scouring the parties so doing the same may lay on the plot adjoining all such wood or mold as shall arise therefrom, and take away the same within convenient time at their pleasure without being liable to any action of trespass, and may set up upon such of the said plots as adjoin unto the fences of the premises a dead hedge or fence within one foot of the ditches of the said fences for the preservation of the quickset, and with liberty to carry away the said dead hedge at their will.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN SIR R. TEMPLE AND THOS. WALLER ABOUT THE WATER IN MARKHAM'S WELL SPRING

Agreement between Sir R. Temple and Thomas Waller: That the said Sir R. Temple shall for ever, from and after the first of November till the 24th of June yearly, permit the water running from the spring called Markham's Well to run through the new ditch where the same now runneth, and that when the same cometh into the ditch which divides the grounds of Sir R.

Temple from those of Thos. Waller, the said T. Waller may turn the said water into the plot adjoining, they not turning the same from the water mill between the 29th of June and 1st of November, and not stopping the same between these days; and that they may as often as there shall be occasion come into Markham's Well and mend and make up the spring head there, and scour the ditch wherein the said water now runneth that the water may run in the ditch wherein it then ran and not in the old gutter, so that the said Sir R. Temple may make a watering place in the said ground called the Stocking in the place there for that purposed.

COVENANT FROM W. PASLEW TO SCOUR THE DITCH TO FINMERE WATERING PLACE
 Covenant from T. Waller and W. Paslew to scour and maintain the ditch or water course running through the several plots limited to them towards the pond or watering place in Finmere called Finmere watering, to the intent that the ditch may receive the water out of the plot adjoining thereto. Reciprocal covenants: For the quiet enjoyment of their several plots or parcels of ground. That the premises are free from incumbrances. And to produce title deeds if required.

Sealed and delivered by the within-named Richard Horne, H. Paxton, Peter Paxton of Finmere, and Eliza his wife, Peter Paxton of Beggars Barton, Wm. Paslew, Edward Yates and his wife, George Watts and Mary his wife, John Watts and Eliza his wife, Cicely Paxton, and William Paxton.

Signatures:

Richard Temple.

Thos. Waller.

Eliza Waller.

Richard Horne.

H. Paxton (χ) his mark.

Peter Paxton.

Eliza (χ) Paxton, her mark.

Peter Paxton, of Barton.

William Paslew.

Edward Yates.

Ann Yates (χ) her mark.

Mary (χ) Watts, her mark.

John Watts.

Elizabeth Watts.

Eliza (χ) Paxton, her mark.

William Paxton.

George Chamberlayne.

Ambrose Holbech.

In the presence of:

W. Chaplin.

Francis Horne.

Gustavus Horne.

George Hilyard.

William Trymnell.

Glossary

acre measure of land equivalent to 4840 square yards (approx 0.4 hectares)

advowson the right of presentation of a clergyman to a vacant church living

alms money or goods given in charity to the poor

appendant attached

baies of building bays, the spaces between two timbers, or the space under one house gable

behoof advantage or profit

bond servant serf; one bound to work on the land

calumnious slanderous, maliciously defaming another's character

carucate as much land as could be tilled with one plough and eight oxen in a year: see **hide**

certe money certain, regular, fixed payment

chain twenty-two yards or four poles (20.12 metres)

close small, enclosed field

coney rabbit

Court Leet court of record held in a manor before its Lord or his steward

dampnify cause loss of

demesne the lands surrounding a manor-house, kept by the owner for his own use and not let out to tenants

distrain to seize the goods of a debtor

distrein see **distrain**

dripstone projecting moulding at the front of a sill or over a doorway, designed to throw off the rain

escheat revert to the Crown (or, earlier, the feudal lord) in the absence of legal heirs

fagot bundle of sticks, especially when used for fuel

faggart see **fagot**

faggot see **fagot**

frankpledge the responsibility of members of a tithing (a group of ten householders) for each other's good behaviour

furze gorse, a low, prickly shrub with yellow flowers

glebe the land granted to a clergyman as part of his benefice

herbage the vegetation of pasture land

hereditaments property which could be inherited

hide in OE times, the amount of land needed by one free family and its dependants. It was as much as could be tilled with one plough in a year. It varied in size from about sixty to 120 acres: see **carucate**

Hundred old division of a County, originally supposed to contain a hundred families. Great Hundred Courts had civil and criminal jurisdiction within a Hundred

in capite in chief; holding directly from the Crown

inclosure the fencing in of open land to make more efficient use of it

Innocents' Day Childermas, 28 December

knight's fee the amount of land held by a knight in return for his military services to the King

Lady Day 25 March; quarter-day on which rents were paid

ling heather

mercier dealer in textiles

messuage dwelling house with its outbuildings and adjoining land

Michaelmas Day 29 September; quarter-day

moiety a half

Nones in the Roman calendar, the Nones fall on the seventh day of March, May, July and October and on the fifth day of all other months

paten communion plate

pinder one employed to impound stray animals

piscina in a church, a stone basin, with a drain, where water used at Mass is poured away

pole five yards (5.03 metres) or thirty square yards (25.3 square metres)

Poor's Plot land bequeathed for the benefit of the poor

porter dark, sweet ale

procuracion sum paid by clergyman to the bishop or archdeacon when he made a visitation to the diocese

quickset hedge formed from live plants or cuttings, especially hawthorn

quoin corner-stone

rack renter one who pays an exorbitant rent

relict widow

reredos screen, panelling or wall decoration behind an altar

rod see **pole**

St Thomas' Day December quarter-day

scould scold, a person, usually a woman, who constantly finds fault or quarrels noisily

scutage tax on the lands held in fee by a knight; money paid by him in lieu of military service

sedilia seats, usually three, for the officiating clergy, on the south side of the chancel

shrift confession, absolution, penance

shrive to make confession, or to hear confession and grant absolution

skold see **scould**

stipendiary salaried

surrogate person deputising for another

synodal payment made by a clergyman on the occasion of a Synod, an ecclesiastical council

tallage tax levied by a feudal lord upon his tenants

tenement anything held by a tenant

terrier register or survey of a landed estate; an inventory

tithe tenth part of agricultural produce or other income contributed for the support of the clergy

toft homestead

turnpike road road with a toll-gate

vassal person holding land and receiving protection from a feudal lord in return for homage and loyalty

villein peasant personally bound to his lord to whom he pays dues and services in return for land

virgate old measure of land equivalent to thirty acres

warrener keeper of the warren, an enclosed piece of ground kept for breeding game especially hares, rabbits, and partridges; a game-keeper

yeoman small farmer, usually a freeholder

Subject Index

- Abindon: see de Abindon
Adam ate Tuneshende, 6
Adam ate Welle, 6
Adam's son, Hugh, 6
Adderbury: see de Adderbury
Adelaide, Dowager Queen, 33
advowson, 12, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 70
allotments, 32
Andrews, Edward, 34n, 99, 100, 105, 106
Andrews, W., 63n
Appletree, Thomas, 58, 58n
Archer, Edward, 101
Archer, John, 42
Archer, William, 43
Aris, William, 103
Articles of Enquiry, 87
Ascension Day, 68
Ash Tree, 102
Ash Wednesday, 68
Ashton, Ralph, 66
Ashwell, E., 62
Ashwell, Seymour, 49, 70
Ashwell, W., 38, 48, 70, 97
Atechurch, Robert, 6
Audley: see de Audley
Aylesbury, 28, 68
- Babyngton, John, 52
Bacon, Edward, 16, 50
Bacon, Nathaniel, 15, 16, 38
Bacon, Walter, 16
Bacon's House, 2, 15, 29
Badlesmere: see de Badlesmere
Baieux, 4
Baker, Isaac, 38
Baker, Susanna, 38
Baker, William, 38, 39
Baker's Charity, 35, 38
Baldewyne, Hugh, 6
Baldewyne, Thomas, 6
Baldwin, Lawrence, 83
Baldwin, Mr, 29
Baldwyne, Richard, 93
Banbury, 15, 15n, 26
Bangor, 66
baptisms, 25
- Barn Close, 95
Barn Yard, 95
Barnard, W. H., 30
Barnard, William Henry, 67
Barrett, Mr, 29, 68
Barrett, William, 83, 84, 88
Barton, 13, 17, 29, 37, 100, 102, 108
Barton Gate, 101, 103
Barton Hartshorne, 1
Basdune, Roger, 6
bassoon, 64, 86
Bates, Thomas, 82
Bayeux: see Odo
Bayliss, William, 29, 48n
Beachampton, 68
Beaumont, 6n
Beaumont, William, 6
Bedfordshire, 72
Bedgrove, 28
Beggars Barton, 98, 108
benefactions, 34, 44
Bennett, Woolley Leigh, 27, 63, 66
Bennett, Rachel, 66
Berry, Mary, 81
Berry, William, 81
Bicester, 22, 26, 34, 86, 90
Bighton, 67
Bishop of Coustance: see Geoffrey
Blencow, Anthony, 18
Blondell. See Blundell
Blundell, Alice, 54
Blundell, Ann, 54
Blundell, Elizabeth, 54
Blundell, Frances, 54
Blundell, John, 12, 53, 54
Blundell, Mary, 54
Blundell, Susan, 54
Blundell, Theodosia, 54
Bohun, see de Bohun
Boughton, Richard, 43
Boulder Period, 1
Boycot House, 17
Brach Furlong, 34
Brackley Heath, 22
Brasenose College, 63, 66, 72
Bread Furlong, 100
Brickhill, James, 53, 55

- Bristol, 51, 52, 52n, 53, 70, 91
 Bristol Cathedral, 51n
 Broc: see de Broc
 Broke: see Peter ate Broke,
 Broke: see de Broke
 Buckingham, 17, 26, 62, 64, 66, 67, 68,
 70, 74, 75, 91, 95, 102, 103
 Buckingham, Duke of, 27, 29, 30, 32,
 35, 36, 70, 75, 95
 Buckinghamshire, 42
 Bucknell, 24
 Bulkenhulle: see de Bulkenhulle
 Burgon, John W., 48, 70, 71, 81
 burial, 13, 17, 25, 59, 62, 66, 81, 88, 89
 Burton Dasset, 26n
 Bury, R., 34n
 Bury, Robert, 99, 100, 106
 Butcher, Richard, 68
 Butler, Bishop, 71
 Butterfield, Edmund, 37, 37n
 Bycot House, 18
- Capability Brown, 97
 carucate, 2, 4n, 5, 6, 91
 Catesby, 99
 Caversham, 10
 census, 28
 Chamberlayne, George, 94, 98, 100,
 104, 105, 106, 108
 Chamberleyne, Leonard, 12n
 Champneys, Justinian, 55
 Champneys, Theodosia, 55
 Chandler, Elizabeth, 28
 Chandler, Henry Whateley, 28
 Channels, Thomas, 87, 88, 89
 Chaplin, Acton, 61, 62, 62n
 Chaplin, Alice, 61
 Chaplin, Elizabeth, 61
 Chaplin, Sir Francis, 61n
 Chaplin, John: see Chaplin, William, sr.
 Chaplin, Mary, 62
 Chaplin, William, 15n, 61, 62n, 94, 108
 Chaplin, William, sen., 43, 61
 Chapman, Bishop, 70
 Chappel, Barnabas, 82
 Chappel, Barnard, 42
 Chappel, Thomas, 43, 82
- Charity Commissioners, 35, 37, 38, 39
 Charles II, 57
 Chatten, Thomas, 53, 54, 82
 Chatwin, 19
 Chatwins Yard, 103
 Chenels, Thomas, 86
 Chester, 66
 Chetwode, 98
 Cheynells, William, 43
 Chichester, 48, 70, 81
 Chilton Camelowe, 52
 Chippenham, John, 52
 church, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 28,
 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44,
 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57,
 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74,
 75, 77, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 93, 100
 church clock, 28, 29, 37, 43, 44, 48, 78,
 85, 86, 88
 Church Building Society, 48n
 Church Close, 95
 Churchwardens, 18, 24, 26, 28, 34, 35,
 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 54, 66, 82, 84,
 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, 101, 105, 107
 Clare: see de Clare
 Clark, Dr Charles, 28, 29
 Clark, Dr James, 28, 48
 Clarke, Thomas, 67
 Cleaver, Anne, 66
 Cleaver, Martha, 63
 Cleaver, William, 30, 39, 63, 64, 66
 clock: see church clock
 Clothing Club, 39
 Cobham, Richard, 62, 62n
 Collins, Joseph, 90
 Commonwealth, 64
 Compton, Alice, 61
 conies, 22, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107
 Corpus Christi College, 63
 Cottage Tenants, 79
 Cottesford, 51, 99
 Court Baron, 8, 18, 19
 Court of Chancery, 22
 Court Close, 13, 93, 102, 103
 Court House, 8, 13
 Court Leet, 8, 9
 Court Leys, 93, 99, 103

- Couzins, Frances, 81
 Couzins, John, 81
 Couzins, Maria, 81
 Coventry, 52, 60
 Creed, Mr, 27
 Creed, Mrs, 27
 Crodall, Ann, 55
 Crodall, Thomas, 55
 Croker, Gerard, 54, 55
 Croker, Mary, 55
 Crokesford: see de Crokesford
 Cromwell, Oliver, 22, 57, 90
 Cromwell, Thomas, 89
 Cross Tree, 9, 33
 Croughton, 15
 Crow, Thomas, 43, 60n
 Crow, William, 67, 89
 Crowe, Elizabeth, 60
 Crowton, 99
 curfew-bell, 20
- Dagley, Francis, 27, 83, 84
 Dagley, Thomas, 84
 Danvers, Pope, 59
 Davenport, Geoffrey, 52
 Davis, Ellen, 81
 Davis, Fedrick, 81
 Davis, George, 81
 Davis, Pashence, 81
 Davis, Thomas, 81
 Davis, William, 89
 Dawkins, William, 37
 day-school, 80
 de Abindon, Richard, 52
 de Adderbury, Richard, 52
 de Audley, Lord Nicholas, 10
 de Badlesmere, Bartholomew, 10
 de Badlesmere, Giles, 10
 de Badelesmere, Margaret, 10
 de Bohun, William, 12
 de Brok, Hugh, 5
 de Broke, Laurence, 8
 de Bulkenhulle, Hugh, 6
 de Clare, Gilbert, 10
 de Clare, Richard, 5n
 de Crokesford, Ralph, 51
 de Firingford, John, 6
- de Fretewelle, Walter, 6
 de Heche, Ralph, 6
 de Kinebelle, John, 6
 de Langton, John, 51
 de M'iton, Hugh, 6
 de Oxon, Ralph, 51
 de Stanton, John, 51
 de Well, Ralph, 51
 deaths: causes of, 25; number of, 25
 Deddington, 58, 58n
 del Broc, Laurence del, 5
 demesne, 5, 10
 Despencer, Hugh de, 10
 Diocesan Church Building Society, 48n
 dolphin naiant, 16
 Domesday, 4, 6, 8
 Dorchester, 1
 Dorocina, 1
 Downham Hall, 66
 dues, 88, 93, 94
 Duraunt, William, 6
 Durham, 63
- Easter, 17, 28, 35, 36, 64, 76, 81, 84, 86,
 89, 93, 94, 100, 102, 104, 106
 Edward the Confessor, 4
 Edward I, 5
 Edward II, 10
 Edward VI, 89
 Edwards, Francis, 62
 Edwards, Richard, 43, 101
 Elliott, Richard, 92
 Elizabeth I, 89
 Elkerton, Benjamin, 30
 Ell's Charity, 36
 Elliot, William, 82
 Ells, John, 60
 Ells, Richard, 15n, 30, 36, 43, 45, 59, 60,
 60n, 67n, 88, 94
 Ely, 63
 Elyot, Richard, 52
 Erleham, 16
 Essex, Lord, 22
 Evelyn, Mr, 20, 95
 Evenley, 99
 Eversleigh, 52

- Faber's son, Robert, 6
 Felawe, Robert, 6
 Felawe, William, 6
 Felstead, 16
 Fenemore Hill, 2n
 Fenimore (surname), 4
 Fen-moor: see Finmere
 Fen-Moor: see Finmere
 Fenn-mere: see Finmere
 Fenn-Mere: see Finmere.
 Fenn-mor: see Finmere
 Fenn-More: see Finmere
 Fenny Compton, 4
 Fenny Stratford, 4
 Feyly, Thomas, 52
 Ffinmere: see Finmere
 Finborough, 4
 Finch, Nicolas, 43, 60n
 Fincher, Mr, 46
 Findon, Finedon, 4
 Finem'e: see Finmere
 Finemer: see Finmere
 fines, 99
 Finner: see Finmere
 Finmere, 1, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20,
 22, 24, 26, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43,
 44, 45, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59,
 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 70, 72, 73,
 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92,
 93, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105,
 106, 108
 Finmere Grounds, 29
 Finmere House, 16, 17, 28, 29
 Finmere Manor, 18
 Finmere Mill, 100
 Finmere Park, 22, 100, 102
 Finmere Watering, 108
 Finstall, 4
 Finstock, 4
 Firingford: see de Firingford
 First Ground, 95
 Fitz Harding, Robert, 51
 Fox, John, 89
 freeholder, 6, 8, 93n
 Freeston, Richard, 55
 Freeston, Susan, 55
 Fretewelle: see de Fretewell
 Friday Gabriel, 76, 78, 81, 89
 Friday Thomas, 83
 Fringford, 22, 29
 Fritwell, 59n
 Fulwell, 101, 104, 105
 Fulwell Hedge, 104
 Fulwell Way, 101, 104, 105, 106
 furze ground, 34, 105
 Fynemere: see Finmere
 Fynmer: see Finmere
 Fynmere: see Finmere
 Fynmore: see Finmere
 Gambles, John, 33n
 Gardiner, John, 15, 34n, 93, 99, 100, 106
 Gardiner, Richard, 101
 Gaseley, Richard, 50
 Geoffrey, Bishop of Coustance, 5
 George, Henry, 82, 84
 George, John, 35, 105
 George, William, 83
 George I, 26n
 Gilbert ate Welle, 6
 glacial period, 1
 glebe, 26, 38, 91, 92, 95, 99
 Gloucester, Earls of, 5, 5n, 6, 10: see de
 Clare
 Gloucester, siege of, 22
 Glover, George, 67
 Godfrey, J., 27
 Godwyne, John, 6
 good deeds, 88
 Good Friday, 68, 93
 Greaves, James, 83, 88
 Greaves, John, 27, 83
 Greaves, Robert, 27, 84
 Greaves, Stephen, 27, 34, 83, 88
 Greaves, Stephen, jun., 27, 83
 Hagbourne, 34, 101
 Haiden, Alice, 18
 Hall, Francis, 87
 Hall, John, 38, 87
 Hall, Charles, 29
 Hall, Richard, 87
 Hall, W. H., 29
 Hall, William, 83

- Halton, Edward, 89
 Harding, Elizabeth, 62
 Harding, Richard, 84
 Harding, William, 62, 82
 Harris, E. S., Jr, 49
 Harris, Swingen, 49
 Harrold's Eye, 104
 Hartwell House, 68
 Haskallbottom, 93
 Hatton, Beatrice, 43
 Hatton, John, 43
 hautbois, 64
 Havelock, Acton Chaplin, 62n
 Heche: see de Heche
 Heighton: see Haiden
 Henry III, 5
 Henry IV, 32
 Henry VIII, 53, 89, 91
 herbage, 101, 102, 103, 105
 Higgens: see Higgins
 Higgins, Robert, 19, 53, 54, 55, 56, 82n, 92
 Hilyard, George, 108
 Hobcraft, William, 82, 87
 Hogan family, 13
 Hogan, Edmund, 19, 54
 Hogan, Edward, 55, 56
 Hogan, Elizabeth, 55
 Hogan, Gresham, 56
 Hogan, Thomas, 56
 Holbech, Ambrose, 94, 98, 100, 106, 108
 Holborne, 42
 Holbrok, Robert, 52
 Holt, Robert, 66, 67, 67n
 Home Close, 95
 homestall, 103, 104
 Hopcraft, Elizabeth, 81
 Horn, Richard, 17, 19n, 24, 40n, 56, 58, 59, 90, 96, 98, 99, 108
 Horne, Francis, 102, 103, 108
 Horne, Gustavus, 59, 102, 103, 108
 Horne, Mr, 43
 Horsley, Bishop, 76
 Horwood, Edward, 82
 Horwood, Emanuel, 89
 Huchen, Alice, 12
 Huchen, Thomas, 13
 Hugh the Carter, 6
 Hundred, 2, 5, 9
 Hundred Rolls, 5
 Hutton, William, 63, 63n, 94
 inclosure, 15, 22, 24, 34, 35n, 62, 93, 98
 Inn Lands, 93, 99, 102
 Inquisition, 10, 18
 Iron End, 99, 102
 Islip, 57, 86, 87
 James family, 16, 17
 James, Dorothy, 16, 16n
 James, Frances, 16, 38
 James, Hogan, 16, 16n
 James, John, 16, 16n, 43, 45, 62n
 James, John, of Felstead, 16
 Jarvis, Mr, 46
 Jarvis, Thomas, 89
 Jeffs, John, 54
 Johanna: see Seymour, Jane
 Jones Great Close, 101
 Jones Little Close, 101
 Jones of Nayland, 76, 76n
 Jones, Ann, 38
 Jones, Joseph, 76, 89
 Keat, Joanna 13
 Keat, William, 13, 15, 34, 101
 Kendall, Mr, 29
 Kenwrick, Edward, 57
 Kere, Richard, 52
 Kinch, Daniel, 82
 Kinch, John, 82, 84, 87
 Kinch, Nathaniel, 82
 Kinch, Tarver, 38, 82, 86, 87
 Kinebelle: see de Kinebelle
 King, Mr, 50
 Kirby, Mr, 46
 Knipe, John, 66
 Kynghen, Walter, 52
 Lady Day, 20, 77, 88, 100
 Ladyman, Thomas, 60
 Lammas Close, 104
 Lamport, 61, 61n
 Lancaster, 66

- Lancaster, Sir John, 52
Langford Mead, 102
Langhorne, T. N., 48n
Langton: see de Langton
le Broc, Laurence, 8
le Toller, William, 6
le Toweler, William, 6
le Wylde, Walter, 6
Lee, Richard, 55
Lee, Sir George, 68
Leeds Mercury, 33n
Lenveyse, 6
Lepper, Alfred, 29, 84
Lepper's House, 29
Lincoln, 63
Lincoln, Bishop of, 51
Linton, George, 82
Lisle, William, 99, 106
Little Court Leys, 95
Little Missenden, 66
Littlehales, J. G., 68
London Way, 103
Long, Francis Turner Richard, 63n
Long, James L., 63n
Long, Jane Lucy, 63n
Long, Mary, 63n
Long, Thomas, 38, 42n, 43, 45, 62, 64,
73, 74, 88, 88n, 94, 94n
Long, William, 63n
Lot Meadow, 95
Lotri: see Lowtry
Loveday, 68
Lowtry, Sir William, 52 52n
- Maids Morton, 63, 63n, 94
Makepace, Mary, 67
Malin, Mr, 27
Malins, Daniel, 30, 83
Malins, William, 82
Manor House, 2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 29,
40
Markham's Well, 107, 108
Martinmas Day, 93
Marwood, Thomas, 68
Mason, John, 20
Meadow Way, 101, 102
Mercers' Company, 13
- Merton College, 27, 29, 48n, 61, 62, 95
messuage, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105
Methwold, Hugh, 13
Michaelmas, 20, 40, 43, 77, 87, 88, 99,
100
Middle Ground, 95
Middleton, Anne, 43
Middleton, Athanasius, 102, 103
Middleton, George, 43
Midsummer Day, 100
mill, 8, 9, 13, 29, 92, 93, 101, 102, 108
Mill Acre, 102
Mill Close, 13, 101
Mill Hams, 101
Millfield, 99
Millway, 99
M'iton: see de M'iton
Mixbury, 28, 52, 68, 70, 73, 81, 102, 103
Mollington, 98
monasteries, 91
Mortimer, Elizabeth, 10
Mortimer, Lord Edmund, 10, 12
Mortimer, Lord Roger, 12
Mumford, Mrs, 67
- Neele, Thomas, 43
Newby Bridge, 63n
Newman, John, 27, 28, 30
Newport, 22
Newton Purcell, 1, 2, 29, 102
Normans, 2, 4, 5
North Street Way, 101
Northumberland, 63
Norwich, 16, 67
Nugent, George Grenville, 66
- Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, 4, 5
Ouse, 1, 2
Over Close, 102
Overseers of the Poor, 34, 35, 105, 107
Oxford, 12, 16, 18, 22, 27, 36, 39, 42, 48,
61, 62, 63, 66, 67, 70, 72, 92
Oxfordshire, 5, 22, 44, 72, 73, 74
Oxon: see de Oxon
- Painter, Henry, 84
Painter, Stephen, 39

- Painter, Thomas, 30, 84
 Painton, Mr, 43, 45
 Palmer, G. H., 48n
 Palmer, Mary, 68, 75
 Palmer, Miss, 48n
 Palmer, Roundell, 46, 48n
 Palmer, William Jocelyne, 36, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77
 Pampeworth, 52
 Parish Clerks, 88
 Park Gate, 103
 Parker, Gabriel, 50, 89
 Parkhurst, John, 99, 106
 Parson Holmes (also Parson's Holms, Parsons Holmes), 92, 93, 99, 102
 parsonage, 30, 88, 92, 95, 96
 Parsonage House, 30
 Parsons Plot, 102
 Paslew, William, 94, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 108
 patronage, 12, 54
 Paxon, Robert, 39
 Paxton: see Paxton
 Paxton family, 17, 18
 Paxton, Cicely, 94, 98, 100, 106, 108
 Paxton, Edmund, 55, 92
 Paxton, Elizabeth, 17, 98, 108
 Paxton, Henry, 17, 82, 93, 98, 108
 Paxton, James, 17
 Paxton, John, 89
 Paxton, Maria, 17
 Paxton, Peter, 17, 90, 92, 94, 98, 101, 104, 105, 106, 108
 Paxton, Peter, of Barton, 108
 Paxton, Robert, 83
 Paxton, William, 17, 27, 30, 38, 60n, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88, 94, 98, 100, 105, 106, 108
 Paxton, William, jun., 82
 Paynton, Edward, 15
 Paynton, Mary, 15
 Paynton, Richard, 36n
 Paynton, Shreeve, 15, 36n, 37
 Pentsbury: see Ponsonby
 Perkins, John, 45
 Peronele, Robert, 6
 Peter ate Brok, 6
 Petronille, Thomas, 6
 Pettey, Mr, 46
 Petty, the apparitor, 42
 Philipps, William, 43, 82
 Pinder, 78
 Ploughley, 9
 Pollard, John, 17, 44, 44n, 45
 Pollard, Mrs, 28
 Ponsbery: see Ponsonby
 Ponsbury: see Ponsonby
 Ponsonby, Ralph, 52, 54
 Poor's Plot, 34, 35, 36, 89, 104, 105, 107
 Porters House, 102
 Post-Reformation, 53
 Preedy, John, 27, 83, 88
 Preedy, William, 26, 27, 30, 83
 Provident Clothing Society, 79
 Purefoy, Knightley, 98, 99, 100, 106
 Purefoy, Richard, 100, 103

 Quainton, 2n

 Rag-hill, 94
 Rand, Conway, 15n, 62, 84, 86, 94
 Rannulf, 51n
 Rawlinson. Dr, 15, 96
 Rectory, 12, 13, 15, 20, 22, 32, 33, 37, 38, 54, 58, 61, 62, 67, 68, 74, 75, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100
 Red Lion Inn, 1, 81
 Reformation, 40, 70, 89, 92
 Rent-dinner, 77
 Restoration, 58
 Richardson, Slade, & Co., 49
 Rickyard Close, 37
 Rider, H. J., 67
 Rightoy, John, 82, 93
 Risley, John, 98, 99, 106
 Risley, Thomas, 98
 Robbins, James, 43
 Robert, Lord of Finmere, 5, 8, 10
 Robert the Smith, 6
 Robert, Bishop of Baieux, 4
 Robert's son, William, 6
 Roman road, 2, 26
 Romans, 1
 Rouera, 12

- Sance bell, 48
 Sanckye: see Sanky
 Sanky, John, 53, 54, 90
 Savage, Thomas, 43
 school, 30, 32, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 95
 scutage, 6
 Seeley, Mr, 68
 Selborne: see Selbourne
 Selborne, Earl of, 39, 46
 Seymour, Jane, 12
 Shakspeare, Ann, 78
 Shalstone, 98
 Shellswell, 2, 10, 100
 Sheppard, Thomas, 84
 Shipley, Charles, 68
 Shipton on Charwell, 98
 Shrove Tuesday, 19, 20
 Six Mile Bottom, 29
 Smith, Ambrose, 18, 53, 55
 Smith, John, 82, 84, 85
 Smith, Luke, 53, 55
 Smith, Thomas, 42, 82, 101
 Smith, William, 63
 Smyth, Sir Richard, 52
 socinianism, 72
 Spencer: see de Spencer
 Spinney, 95
 St Michael, 40
 St. Asaph, 66
 St. Augustine's Abbey, 51, 52n, 70, 91
 St. Augustine's Priory: see St
 Augustine's Abbey
 St. Michael the Archangel, 88
 St. Thomas' Day, 100
 Standard, Robert, 98, 99, 100, 106
 Stanhope, 63
 Stanningly, 33n
 Stanton: see de Stanton
 Steeple Barton, 12
 Stevens, John, 43
 Stocking, 108
 Stocks, 32
 Stony Stratford, 49
 Stowe, 26, 33, 42, 63, 75, 97
 Strainge, Richard, 82, 84, 85
 Strange, William, 27
 Stratford, 20, 49, 92
 Stratford-on-Avon, 33n
 Stratford Meadow, 95
 Stratton, 10
 Street, G. E., 48
 Strillen, Richard, 52
 Stuchbury, William, 83
 Stuttlepits Gate, 102
 Sudbury, 67
 Sudtone: see Sutton
 Sunday School, 80
 Sutton (Northamptonshire), 2
 Swain, Ann, 38
 Syresham, 99

 tallage, 6, 9
 Tappin, Henry, 43
 Tappin, Mr, 46
 Tapping, Bridget, 35, 105
 Taylor, J., 36
 Taylor, William, 83
 Telford, Mary, 45
 Temple, George, Marquis of
 Buckingham, 26n, 64
 Temple, Hester, Viscountess Cobham,
 26n
 Temple, Purbeck, 43
 Temple, Richard (Earl Temple), 26n, 50
 Temple, Sir John, purchaser of Stowe,
 26n, 53, 55
 Temple, Sir Richard, Baron Cobham,
 22, 24, 42, 63, 67, 93, 94, 98, 99, 100, 101,
 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108
 Temple, Sir Thomas, 26n, 55, 56, 57
 Terrier, 82n, 92, 93, 93n, 96
 Thomas, William, 52
 Thornhill Farm, 29
 Tibbe, Sir Hugh, 52
 Tingewick, 13, 81, 93, 94, 102
 Tingewick Field, 95
 Tinwick: see Tingewick
 tithe, 91, 92, 93, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104,
 105, 106
 toft, 103
 Tomkins, Edward, 81
 Tommes: see Thomas
 Town's End, 9, 105
 Townsend: see Town's End

- Trafford, John, 89
 Treadwell, Mrs J., 29
 Tredwell, Jeffrey, 83
 Tredwell, William, 83, 88
 Trymnell, William, 108
 Tucket, William, 10
 Tuneshende: see Adam ate
 Tuneshende; Townsend
 Turner, Francis, 63
 Turner, Mary, 63
 Turner, Thomas, 63
 Turner, William, 63
 turnpike road, 26
 Tusmore, 24
 tythe: see tithe
- Uthwatt, R. A., 63n
- Vese, Thomas, 52
 vestry, 17, 28, 30, 48, 84, 89
 Vestry Book, 30, 32, 32n,
 villein, 6, 8
 virgate, 6
 Visitation, 85, 86, 87
 Vylett, Master Nicholas, 42
- Waddop, John, 101, 103
 Walker, Frederick John, 46, 48, 48n, 70
 Walker, Hannah, 60
 Walker, John, 70
 Waller of Gregories, 16
 Waller, Dorothy, 16
 Waller, Elizabeth, 98, 108
 Waller, Sergeant Thomas, 13, 16, 24n,
 37, 42, 93, 94, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103,
 106, 107, 108
 Walter de Pridington, 6
 Wardington, 98
 Warr, Richard, 57, 58, 90
 Warre, Elizabeth, 43, 60, 60n
 warren, 5, 10
 Warren, 22, 92, 100, 101, 106
 Warren Farm, 30
 warrener, 105
 Warry, John, 82, 93
 Water Mill, 101
 Water Stratford, 1, 20
- Watling Street, 1
 Watson, G., 49
 Watson, W., 49
 Watts, Elizabeth, 98, 108
 Watts, George, 94, 98, 100, 101, 104,
 105, 106, 108
 Watts, John, 94, 98, 100, 101, 104, 106,
 108
 Watts, Mary, 98, 108
 Watts, Thomas, 62
 Well: see de Well
 Well Close, 95
 Welle: see Adam ate Welle, Gilbert ate
 Welle
 Wemys, Lewis, 56
 Werley, Mr, 46
 Westbury, 9, 26
 Wheatley, Elizabeth, 15
 Wheatley, John, 15
 White, Thomas, 83
 Whytchurche, Thomas, 52
 Wigmore, Abbey of, 12
 Wigmore, Baron of: see Mortimer, Lord
 Edmund
 William I, 4
 windmill, 28
 Winfield, Thomas, 67, 68
 Wodeward, William, 6
 Wood, Cyril William, 70
 Woolaston, 28
 Worcester Journal, 33n
 Wrighton, John, 54
 Wylanston, Roger de, 6
- Yard Land, 106
 Yates, Ann, 98, 108
 Yates, Edmund, 22, 82, 93, 94
 Yates, Edward, 98, 100, 101, 102, 104,
 105, 106, 108
 Yates, Mr, 27
 Yates, William, 39, 82

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