

An Extraordinary Legacy

*The fascinating history of Bowling's Farm House and its surroundings,
interesting people, charming stories, an abandoned inheritance
...plus how not to frame a picture!*



Figure 1 Bowling's Farm House, Francis Vingoe, 1903¹

Bowling's Farm House: A History in Seven Parts

by Peter Lansley¹

Introduction

The Age and Size of the Farm

A Country Residence, c1770 – 1845

An Independent Farm, 1882 – 1928

A Tied Cottage, 1928 – 1982

A Private Home, 1985 –

The Setting, 2016 –

Introduction

Sherfield-on-Loddon has a rich and fascinating history as a typical North Hampshire village rooted in agriculture. There are many interesting properties scattered around the parish, some close to Sherfield Green: nine Grade II listed buildings, of which three are clearly visible from the Green - Winton Cottage, C16 & C17; Four Winds & Wayback, C17; and, Court Farm House, c1800, upon which this article focuses. Other listed buildings close to the Green are: Sherrins Mead, C16; The Old Rectory, early C19; The Thatched Cottage, C17 & C18; The White Hart, C18; The Four Horseshoes, C16 & C19; and the Telephone Kiosk, C20!

¹ This account is based on a presentation organised by the Sherfield Village History Group, about Bowling's Farm House (now Court Farm House) to over 60 villagers and visitors, on 1st February 2023, at the Four Horseshoes, Sherfield-on-Loddon; it includes some of the slides which were presented that evening. However, there is much more back ground information. An Appendix contains biographical details of owners, tenants and their families. For more information, please contact peterlansley@managementreality.com. Published: 14.i.2025

Of those homes which can be seen easily from the Cricket Green, 75% are either Listed Buildings or judged to be 'notable' by architects and conservation experts². Each has an interesting story to tell. They make rich ensemble which reflects the development of the village.

From the cricket square, in one visual sweep, can be seen homes from the late Medieval period, through the Georgian and Victorian eras, to the twentieth century heyday of British agriculture. Sherfield Green is in front and the 'original' fields are behind.



Figure 2 Winton Cottage, C16/C17
Grade II Listed



Figure 3 The Plantation, 1947 Rural Social Housing
- exemplary design



Figure 4 King's Barn, 1985. Consistent with
original C16/C17 barn



Figure 5 Court Farm House, 1800
Grade II Listed



Figure 2 Goddard's Lane, houses – most built before 1850, some much older.
Track to Greenway - highlighted - steeped in history and mystery.

Court Farm House

In the early 1800s, Bowling's Farm House, as it was then known, replaced a much older farmhouse, probably constructed in the north Hampshire vernacular. This new house was built by its owner who lived in Reading, for his personal use. The farm leased to others who lived in the village. The Regency style house is a rare example in the village of 'polite'³ architecture.

² Private discussions with architects, and conservations officers, and for example: *Conservation Area Appraisal Sherfield on Loddon* and *Conservation Area Map Sherfield on Loddon*, both Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, 2003

³ Polite design is conceived to make a stylistic statement which goes beyond a building's functional requirements; reflecting national or international architectural fashions, styles, and conventions; and paying no regard to the conventional building practices and materials particular to a locality.

Apart from the construction of the verandah and the brick walls being painted white, both probably c1885, the front and side elevations have hardly changed; extensions and alterations at the rear are well out of view, thus preserving the characteristic Georgian symmetry.

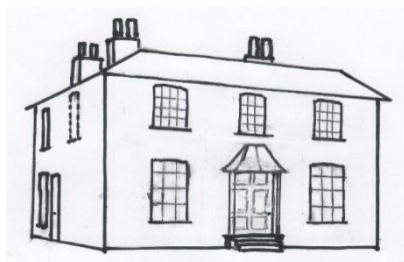


Figure 3 Bowling's Farm House through the ages
c1800



1903



2018

The farm has had many occupants. Some used the house as their country residence and leased the farm. Others lived in the house and worked the farm, either as owners or leaseholders. However, in 1928 Bowling's Farm was sold to Sherfield Court Estate and the house became a 'tied cottage' for the farm bailiffs of the estate. This arrangement continued until 1982 when the estate was broken up, and the house auctioned together with some adjacent land. In 1985 the land holding and house were separated, and the house sold as a private dwelling, to Peter and Irene Lansley, who moved there, with two young children.

A New Home

Despite there being no heating in the house, other than open fires, in November 1985 the family moved into a warm, charming even enchanting home, resonating with the happy lives of the previous families which had lived there, and into what was found to be a delightful community.

Although the house was in good condition, (not as might be implied by the delightful sketch made by Sarah Gaiger who had lived in the house), little work had been carried out on the historic part since a major refurbishment in the 1880s, apart from repairs and maintenance and the installation of electric sockets and lights.⁴ Its status as a tied cottage would have tenants from undertaking any major changes, although there had been several farm-related alterations at the rear.



Figure 4 Court Farm House, Sarah Gaiger, Village Calendar 1980

⁴ In the 1950 a new fireplace was constructed in the present dining room and a new doorway to the Third Bedroom.

Best Kept Village

Nineteen eighty-five was a year when Sherfield could be justifiably proud of its achievements, not least in winning the Hampshire Best Kept Village Competition.

The comments of the celebrated authority and widely respected Roy Lancaster, who as Finals Judge captured the essence of Sherfield Green, the last remaining Common in the Parish; that there was a balance between the ‘rough and smooth’⁵:

“Large recreation area in which the temptation to create a shaven effect has been mercifully resisted.”

“There are plenty of play facilities for children but enough of the wild nature of the former common has been retained and managed to encourage full use of a child’s imagination.”

“I was very impressed by the general standards attained on all fronts and by the strong evidence of community participation.”

There is no doubt that Roy Lancaster considered Sherfield Green to be a well-cared-for legacy, even an extraordinary legacy, for villagers and visitors to enjoy.

The approach to the management of Sherfield Green which so impressed the judges prevailed until 2016, when the temptation to interfere could no longer be resisted by the Parish Council, with distressing consequences for the ‘setting of the jewel’, introduced later.

Impressive examples of community participation mentioned by Roy Lancaster were not hard to find, for example, with the development of the Cricket Field and Pavilion in the 1970s and Loddon Sports Pavilion in the late 1980s. Both involved visionary leadership from inspired parishioners, considerable ‘buy-in’ by the community, and a Parish Council committed to working with that community to facilitate the projects.



Figure 5 In front of Court Farm

View to the Globe House & gravel workings, c1935

Cricket Green, 2022

⁵ Article by Roy Lancaster based on his judging notes for the Hampshire Best Kept Village Competition, 1985, JISC Archives, LAN/8/29, accessed 10/01 2025.

Sunday Exercise

It didn't take long to get know neighbours and others in the village. Many were full of stories about the village and about Court Farm.

Frequently mentioned was the large triangle of Grass between the ditch in front of Court Farm House and the access track to Court Farm, where every Sunday morning during the 1930s and WWII, bulls were exercised by the very smartly dressed Farm Bailiff - Mr Arthur Rickwood.

"On Sundays the bulls were exercised out on the grass in front of Court Farm and part way down the Cast Road to get them used to people, and perhaps a car might come by. They were also exercised daily, right round the field with Lilac Cottage⁶ and Bowling's Cottage. My father always dressed in a jacket, not tweed, but similar, a collar and tie, cap, breeches with brown gaiters and boots so he would have looked dressed up ⁷."

Older parishioners mentioned that before the war there were always cattle and horses on the Green, and that quite a few people nearby kept geese which would graze in front of Court Farm House. This was also a place for drying the washing.

"Midway between Rose Cottage and Court Farm House there were two willow trees with their tops cut out, with a washing line between them. The Matthews from Myrtle Cottage hung out their washing there. I can remember Jonathan Matthews with a straw hat on, cutting the grass with a scythe."⁸



Figure 10 The grass triangle in front of Court Farm House



Figure 11 Donald Rickwood's grandfather, William Rickwood, with a young bull



Figure 12 Dairy Shorthorn Bull

⁶ Now named Little Bowling's.

⁷ Donald Rickwood, Personal Communication, 2020. The Cast Road is now named Goddard's Lane. Possibly the jacket was made from Cheviot cloth.

⁸ Donald Rickwood, Personal Communication, 2021.

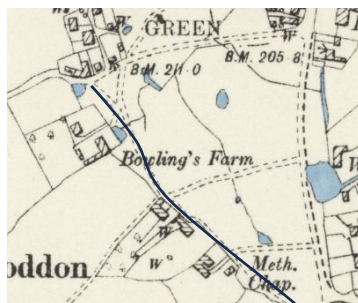
The Pilgrim's Path

One of the most intriguing stories concerns the footpath which entered the triangle of grass from Goddard's Lane to pass partly in the front of Court Farm House before crossing to between the present-day Weeping Willow and the Pavilion on the Cricket Green, then passing in front of what is now the Cricket Pavilion but which had been a pond, to continue to the Methodist Chapel (where Hafod now stands) and on to Church End and St Leonard's Church. This path, shown on original OS maps until the present day, was used for centuries. It was particularly busy on Sundays with families from Greenway, and those living on the Cast Road towards Goddard's Farm, going to and from the Chapel and Leonards Church, sometimes several times – the Pilgrim's Path.

To the disappointment of some, in 2016, the Parish Council placed a post and rail barrier across the triangle of grass including the path and it has refused to unblock the path⁹. No longer can villagers follow the path where for centuries villagers walked to their places of worship or just to get to Church End.



Figure 13 OS 1871



OS 1894



OS 1970

A Jewel

Finally, by way of introduction, there is no doubt that Court Farm House is an attractive house which presents itself well to the Green; compliments are not unusual. Here are two from old timers.

"Your House is a Picture, a rare Jewel"

"It's the Common which makes it so appealing"

Both these comments highlight the importance of the setting of the house: Jewels look best in simple settings, which in this case is the Green. The enjoyment of parishioners and visitors of what they see, is critically dependent on a sympathetic appreciating the heritage characteristics of the Green and maintaining them. Spoiling that setting reduces enjoyment of views of the house.

⁹ Although this was claimed to be a Gypsy Defence, quite clearly it would not be a deterrent to illegal encampments, and more likely would be an encouragement. Rather it was the first step towards creating an all-weather car park. That plan was subsequently dropped when parishioners showed that it contravened the Byelaws for Sherfield Green as well the Scheme of Regulation for Sherfield Green (Commons Act 1899) which governs construction work on the Green.

So, just as the official ‘listing’ of a building places specific responsibilities on its owner, to preserve its integrity and appearance, so it places a duty of care on those responsible for maintaining its setting, such the Parish Council, not to undertake work harmful to the character of the listing and the enjoyment of views of the house.

The Age and Size of the Farm

Whilst the *Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record of Hampshire County Council*¹⁰, gives the date of the house as between 1800 and 1835, and *British Listed Buildings*¹¹ gives early C19, other accounts suggest that it may be much older¹². However, though the precise age of the house has not been established, it seems likely to have been built before 1820, possibly in 1807, replacing an existing farmhouse probably from at least Stuart times, since the barn, from which King’s Barn is derived, has been dated to “*Stuart times (1600s), possibly Tudor (1500s)*”.¹³

Evidence from Maps

Taylor’s rather impressionistic map of 1759 shows a building, most probably the farmhouse, opposite a single property, probably Rose Cottage, quite near where Greenway meets the Cast Road (now Goddard’s Lane). The Milne Map of 1791 and the Greenwood Map of 1826 also show a building in the same position. The OS 1806 Triangulation¹⁴ and the OS 1810 map each show a property at an appropriate location, but the scale is such that it appears as a small square, the typical representation of a dwelling. The 1841 Tithe Map for Sherfield-Upon-Loddon¹⁵, provides more detailed information and larger scale OS maps from 1873 onwards give a clearer representation of the farm and farmhouse, as well as an indication of how the property changed. On the Tithe Map and all the OS maps the plan of the main building is approximately square, with the later maps showing several additions. Curiously, on some maps the farm is called Boyer’s Farm (OS1873, 1875-77). Although no reason can be found for that name, in the 1850s a similar name, Bowyer’s Farm, was used interchangeably with that of Bowling’s Farm by

¹⁰ <https://maps.hants.gov.uk/historicenvironment/>

¹¹ <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101339606-court-farmhouse-sherfield-on-loddon#.Y4JLZhTP3IU>, accessed 15/1/2022

¹² For example, *Sherfield upon Loddon: A Village History*, G. Timmins, c2006. Also, several builders and surveyors have suggested that the house incorporates elements of an earlier building and that it could have been built with simple Georgian proportions any time from the mid-1700s, with some Regency elements added in the early 1800s.

¹³ Brian Gaiger. *Personal communication*, 1989. This dating most probably was made by an experienced estate surveyor acting for the Sherfield Court Estate, but documentary evidence has not been identified.

¹⁴ OS maps from 1873 onwards have been largely sourced from the collection of OS maps of National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/os/>. Earlier maps are from *Old Hampshire Mapped*, www.oldsouthhampshiremapped.org.uk.

¹⁵ Sherfield on Loddon Tithe Apportionment, 21M65/F7/206/1 & Sherfield on Loddon Tithe Map, 21M65/F7/206/2, Hampshire Archives, Hampshire County Council.

the then owner¹⁶. Perhaps it helped to differentiate the owner's activities, of selling timber, from those of the tenant of Bowling's Farm. Possibly the name was mispronounced or poorly written when recorded by the OS surveyor¹⁷. On later maps it is called Bowling's Farm (OS1892, 1897, 1911, 1934; Census 1891, 1911; Auction notices 1882, 1891), and then Court Farm (OS1968). Finally, on OS maps published from the mid-1980s the farmhouse is called Court Farm House (OS mid-1980s).



Figure 14 Isaac Taylor 1759, 1" to 1 mile



Figure 15 Milne 1791, 1" to 1 mile



Figure 16 OS1806 Triangulation: Odiham 2" to 1 mile



Figure 17 OS Old Series c1810, 1" to 1 mile



Figure 18 Greenwood 1826, 1" to 1 mile



Figure 19 OS 1978-1990 1:2500

¹⁶ For example, the name Bowyer's Farm was used in press advertisements, such as: "Bowyer's Farm, Sherfield Green, For Sale by Tender, One Hundred Oaks and 5 Elm Trees....", Reading Mercury, 1 March 1856.

¹⁷ For details of how OS surveyors recorded property names and other details see *Map of a Nation: A biography of the Ordnance Survey*, Barbara Hewitt, Granta Books, 2011



Figure 20 OS 1968 1:2500



Figure 21 OS 1978-1990 1:2500

Earlier evidence about the existence of the farm is provided by: *the Estate Plan for Sherfield Farm 1791*, owned by Lovelace Bigg-Wither¹⁸, which shows adjoining fields owned by Mr Parker; Tax Records, from 1798 onwards¹⁹ which names the owner as Thomas Parker; and the Electoral Register, 1806 which gives the owner as Thomas Parker of Reading²⁰.

However, there is no documentary evidence about when the current house was constructed at Bowling's Farm. It is possible that the present house was built about the same time as a "*newly built Meeting House*" in the piddle between the house and the Cast Road, part of the farm, which was first registered in 1807²¹, arguably with materials from the previous house. In this case the house would have been built by Thomas Parker. However, as Bowling's Farm was bought by David Fenton before 1814, it is possible that he was responsible for the new house but at a later date.

Farms in Sherfield

In the early 1800s, about 75% of the land in Sherfield-on-Loddon was owned by five landowners: Bernard Brocas, Viscount Bolton, Richard Aldworth's Charity, Harriett Brocas (née Hunter) and Edward St John. By 1841 the principal owners owned a similar acreage: Viscount Bolton, the Duke of Wellington, Richard Aldworth's Charity, Henry Lannoy Hunter (who inherited the holdings of Harriett Brocas), and Francis Pigott Stainsby Conant.

The only independent farms, not part of large estates, were: Bowling's Farm, 44 acres (owned by Thomas Parker followed by David Fenton; Blue star in Figure 20);

¹⁸ *Plan of Sherfield Farm, belonging to Lovelace Bigg Withers, by William Moss*, 10M57/P7, Hampshire Archives. Lovelace Bigg-Wither (1741-1813), owner of Manydown House, Wootton St Lawrence, was father of Harris Bigg-Wither (1781-1833) who in 1802 proposed to Jane Austen (1775-1817). She accepted, but by the next morning had changed her mind.

¹⁹ By comparison with taxes paid by other owners for farms with a similar acreage. *Basingstoke Division land tax assessments: Sherfield on Loddon, 1800, 1803-1832*, Q22/1/1/191, Hampshire Archives.

²⁰ Included in the Electoral Register, because he was a land owner in Sherfield, despite living elsewhere.

²¹ Dissenters' Meeting House Certificate, issued on 4th July 1807, for a newly erected meeting house in Sherfield, naming a minister, Andrew Pinnell. *A Hampshire Miscellany III, Dissenters' Meeting House Certificates 1702-1844*, Arthur J Willis, 1965, page 133.

Willet's Farm, 57 acres (owned by John Cole, tenanted by Richard Duckett; Orange); St. Leonards Farm, 31 acres (the Glebe farm and other holdings of the Reverend Eyre; Green); and, after 1826, Breach Farm, 56 acres (John Tubb; Red). All these farms were rather small, although John Tubb leased land from other estates and farmed a much more substantial acreage.

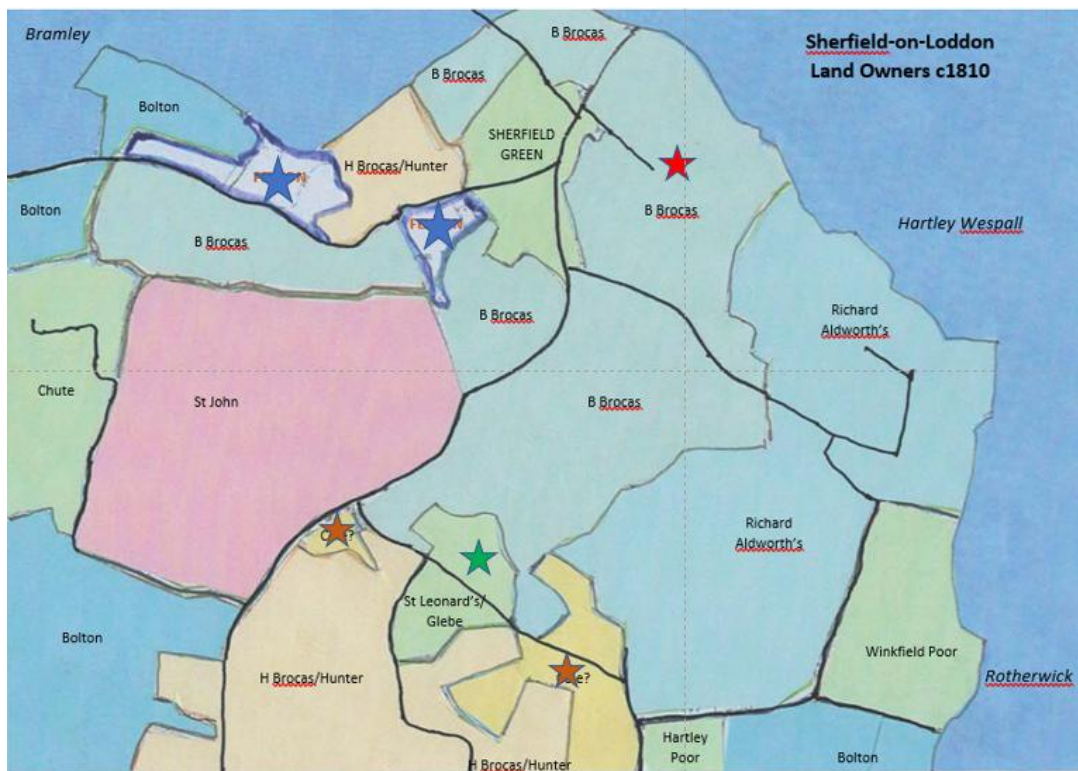


Figure 22
Sherfield Land
Owners c1810

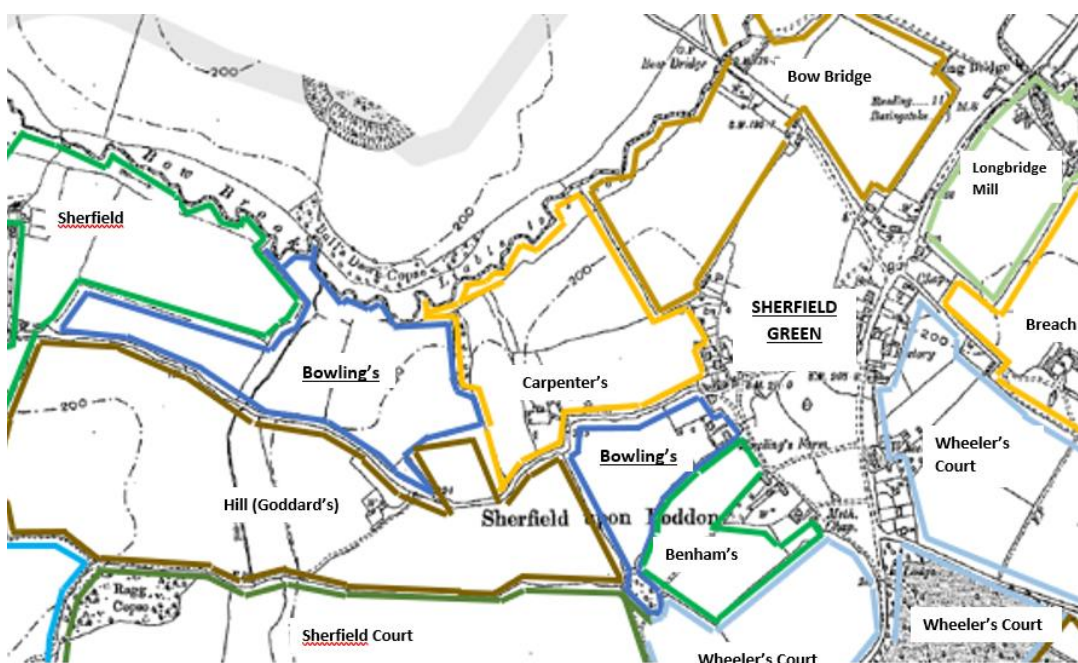


Figure 23
Farms near
Sherfield Green
c1810

Tithe Map and Apportionments

The 1841 Tithe Map shows each of the farm's holdings. The Tithe Apportionments gives a description of each holding including acreage and tithes due. The Tithe Map shows the farmhouse along with barns and stables to the south (where King's Barn is now located and just behind), and a building in the paddock to the north to which was attached a chapel (opposite what is now called Rose Cottage). These holdings hardly changed over the next 100 years, apart from some land being acquired by the War Office for Bramley Camp.



Figure 24 Tithe Map: The farmhouse (75) and other farm buildings

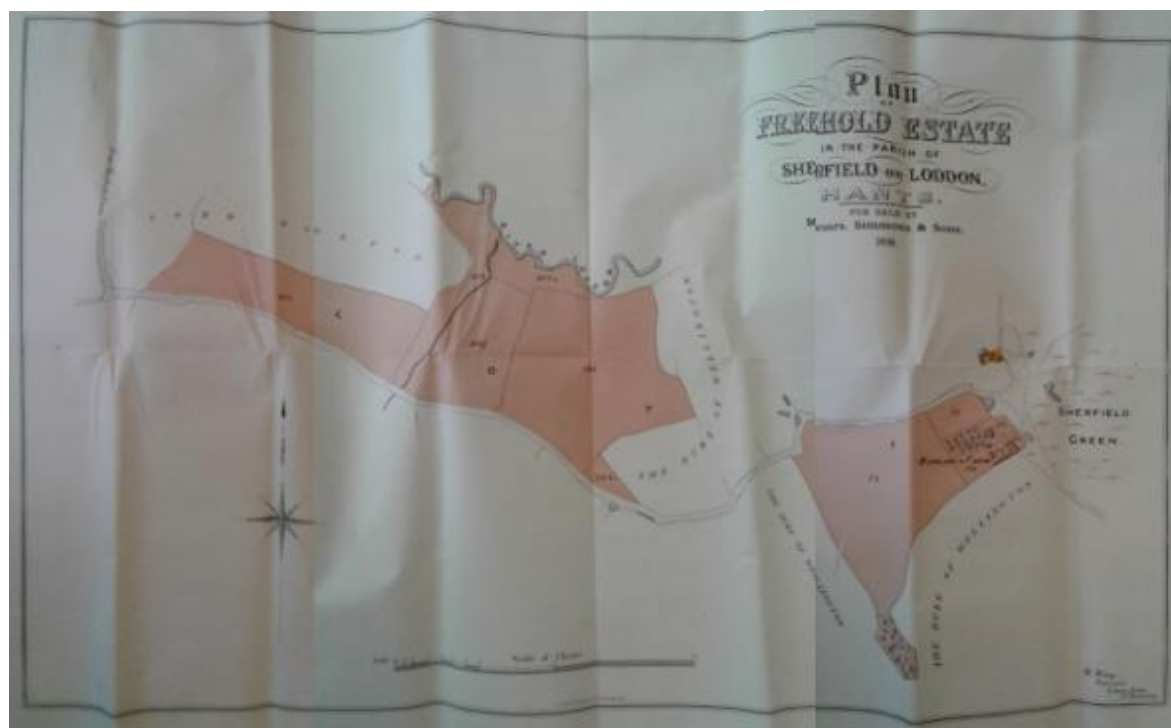


Figure 25 Estate Plan 1891, almost identical to Tithe Map 1841

Table 1: Tithe Apportionments 1841

Holding	1841 Tithe Name (Present close equivalent)		Area			Tithe Tax		
			Acres	Roods	Poles	£	s	d
71	The Six Acres and Picked Close (<i>Fields behind Court Farm and stretching down to Katy's Copse</i>)	Arable	9		1 28	3	15	1
72	Piddle by Chapel (<i>Orchard Lea</i>)	Arable			3 39		9	3
74	Piddle (<i>3 Court Farm</i>)	Arable			2 8		5	7
75	House and Garden				1 18		2	11
76	Yard behind Stable (<i>Front of King's Barn</i>)							8
77	Barn and Yard (<i>King's Barn and Garden</i>)						1	4
78	Piddle (<i>1 & 2 Court Farm</i>)	Arable			1 30		4	4
174	Part of Six Acres (<i>now Katy's Copse</i>)	Wood			3 4		1	1
<i>All of 201-204 are south of Bow Brook and north of Goddard's Lane, between Goddard's Farm House and the then Sherfield Farm House.</i>								
201	Bottom Close and the Hill	Arable	12		3 37	5	3	6
202	Five Acres	Arable	5		0 5	2	3	8
203	Part of Meadow	Meadow	2		3 37	1		7
203a	Part of Meadow	Meadow	1		2 12		13	11
204	Mitchell's Upper and Lower Piddles	Arable	8		0 26	3	6	
201a	Part of Bottom Close	Arable			2 2		4	4
Total			44	0	4	£17	12s	3d

Note: Holding 73, "Chapel and Yard" (5 roods) was not assigned to the farm. It was a religious building for use by the community, so no tithes were levied. However, it was part of the farm owner's holding.

The farm comprised two separate blocks of fields. This could suggest that it was put together in two stages, perhaps with each block being derived from older farms such as Benham's, Carpenter's, Hill (later named Goddard's) and Sherfield Farms. Alternatively, at some stage it may have been larger but had transferred some fields to other owners retaining just the two blocks of fields. However, given that the barn, which was demolished to make way for King's Barn, had been dated to either Tudor or Stuart times²², the ownership of those fields and an earlier farmhouse may date from the sixteenth or seventeenth century²³.

Probably for most of its existence the occupiers pursued mixed farming, which was typical from the late 1700s through to the 1950s. It was well disposed for dairying, with meadows along Bow Brook and the Sherfield Green for grazing cattle, and had several fields suitable for arable crops.

²² *Brian Gaiger*, Personal Communication. This was the date given to the timbers of the Barn, and the form of construction, provided by experts in dating old buildings, before the barn was reconstructed as a modern home in 1985 on the same footprint and using timbers from the original barn.

²³ There were some small changes in the size of the farm indicated in tax records for the 1790s through to the early 1800s.

A Country Residence, c1770 – 1845

The World at Large

The late 1700s through to the early 1800s saw many political threats and much social uncertainty: for example, the Declaration of Independence of the US (1776), the French Revolution (1790s), the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), the devastation of livelihoods for agricultural workers as a consequence of cheap agricultural imports, leading to the Corn Laws (1815, repealed 1846), and the consequence of mechanisation culminating in unrest exemplified by the Tolpuddle Martyrs (1834).



Figure 26 1770s - mid1800s: Political Threats and Uncertainty

At the same time there were major challenges to the established church, the Church of England, resulting in many Acts of Parliament which aimed to accommodate those who chose to follow different religious paths. The *Catholic Relief Acts 1778, 1791, 1829* gave Catholics freedom of worship, and allowed them to purchase land, join the army, hold public office, vote, and sit in Parliament. *The Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts 1828* removed barriers against dissenters. *The Jewish Relief Act 1858* allowed Jews to hold public office, vote, and sit in Parliament. *The Oaths Act 1888* allowed those with no religion to "solemnly affirm" rather than "swear by God". *The Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880*, in which Lord Justice Baron Piggott (1813-1875) of Sherfield Hill House played an unfortunate yet leading role, allowed the saying of rights other than Anglican over the grave in a Parish churchyard.

In Sherfield, evidence of these challenges can be found in the construction of several chapels: a Meeting House for dissenters at Bowling's Farm in 1806; Breach Lane Chapel for Independents and Baptists in 1831; later the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Sherfield Green in 1866; and the Plymouth/Christian Brethren Meeting Room²⁴ on the Cast Road (Goddard's Lane) in 1875.

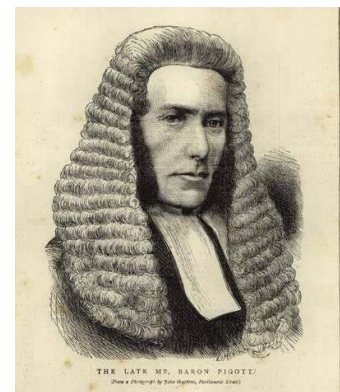


Figure 28 Lord Justice Mr Baron Piggott (1813-1875)

²⁴ Now a private residence, Sherfield Hall.

However, despite this upheaval, it was a good period for farming, although not for farm workers. Farmers were benefitting from a better understanding of crop growing; for example, the use of fertilizers, and improved livestock husbandry through selective breeding. Farming was becoming more productive through mechanization (for example, seed drills, reapers, winnowers, elevators, dairying equipment), soaring population growth was increasing demand, and improved transportation was creating national markets.

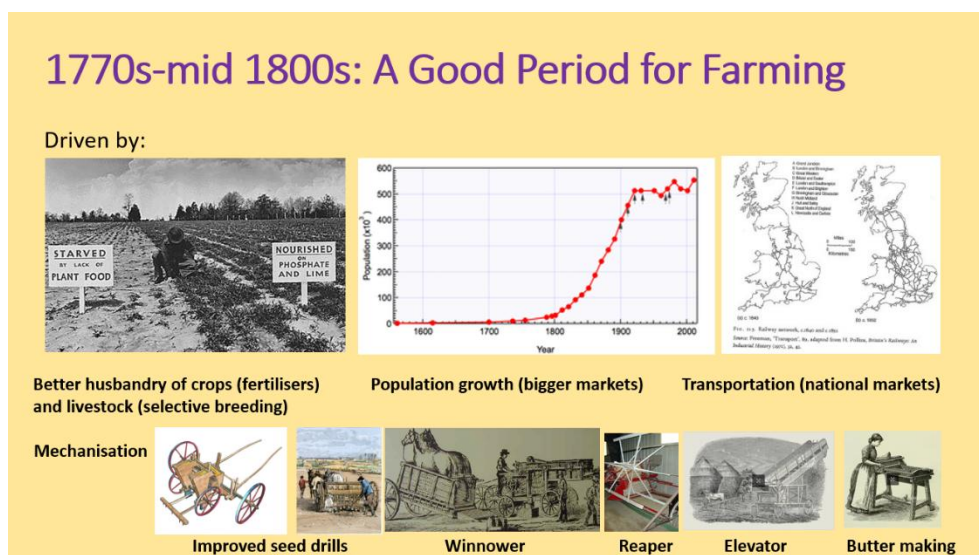


Figure 27 1770s - mid-1880s: Farming

For Thomas Parker, the owner of Bowling's Farm at the end of the 18th century and subsequently David Fenton who also owned other farms (in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire), the commercial buoyancy of farming may or may not have been vitally important, since they leased the farm but kept the house for their own use, probably visiting just occasionally, from their principal residences in Reading.

Before 1791

Records discovered about the farm so far go back to 1791. Earlier documentary evidence has not been found although there is some speculation. For example, the dating of the barn at Court Farm to Tudor or Stuart times, related by Brian Gaiger, is credible. This suggests that there would have been a farmhouse of a similar era, almost certainly standing on what became the site of Bowling's Farm House²⁵. That earlier building could have been from the sixteenth century, or even before.

The C16 barn would have been one of the oldest farm buildings in the village. For comparison: the barn at Breach Farm is dated C15 with early C19 additions; that at Lance Levy Farm, C18 and C19; and Longbridge Mill C17 (reconstructed in the early 1990s after considerable damage following an arson attack). Given its age, it is surprising that in 1983 the developers of King's Barn were able to dismantle the

²⁵ There is some evidence that the foundations for the present sitting room and breakfast room predate those of the dining room.

barn. However, it was not a Listed Building and although the Sherfield Conservation Area had been designated in 1981, which should have provided protection, at that time the application of conservation area rules was haphazard, as indeed they still are. Widespread listing of properties in the village took place in 1984, a year after the Barn had been pulled down.

Thomas Parker (Owner: before 1791 – 1814?)

The earliest reference is on a plan of Sherfield Farm, dated 1791²⁶. Tax records available for Sherfield from 1798²⁷ show Thomas Parker paying an amount of tax consistent with him owning the whole of Bowling's Farm²⁸. The Electoral Register for 1806 for Sherfield states that Thomas Parker lived in Reading.²⁹

The tax records also show that from 1798 (probably earlier) to 1808 the farm was occupied (that is leased) by John Wise. From 1809 to 1822, it was occupied by James Carpenter of Carpenter's Farm.³⁰

David Fenton (Owner: 1814?-1831)

By 1814 there was a new owner, David Fenton, of Reading, a very well-off retired Linen Factor from Old Jewry, City of London. His name first appears in the Land Tax Assessments in 1814³¹, although he may have become owner a few years earlier.

Despite the name of the farm not being given, David Fenton appears on the 1831 UK Land Tax Redemption record as being attributed with an amount of tax which, when compared with taxes paid by other farms, was commensurate with the acreage of the whole of Bowling's Farm. Also, the extent of the farm, of 45 acres, is confirmed by the will of David Fenton dated 28th November 1828.

When Fenton acquired the farm, it was occupied James Carpenter (1770-1826) of Carpenter's Farm. This continued until 1822. In 1823 and 1824 it was occupied by Thomas May (1760-1826?); from 1825 to 1830 by James Kersley (1738-1830?) (a retired Cordwainer?); and, in 1831 by John Hubbard, the year of Fenton's death.

²⁶ *Plan of Sherfield Farm, belonging to Lovelace Bigg Wither, by William Moss*, 10M57/P7, Hampshire Archives.

²⁷ *Basingstoke Division land tax assessments: Sherfield on Loddon, 1800, 1803-1832*, Q22/1/1/191, Hampshire Archives.

²⁸ By comparison with taxes paid by other owners for farms with a similar acreage.

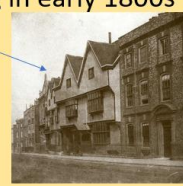
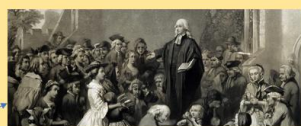
²⁹ He was included in the Electoral Register, because he was a land owner in Sherfield, despite living elsewhere.

³⁰ These records also show that Parker had a further property in Sherfield. This was occupied by John Wise and tax was assessed at 8s a year. From 1806, probably earlier, through to at least 1831, this house was owned by John Wise. In 1831 it was occupied by Js Elliott.

³¹ The proprietorship given in Land Tax Assessments changed to Fenton in 1814 but the property may have been purchased several years earlier. *Basingstoke Division land tax assessments, Sherfield-on-Lodden, 1800, 1803-1832*, Q22/1/1/91, Hampshire Archives.

1814 New Owner: David Fenton (1750-1831)

Retired Scottish Linen Factor from Old Jewry, London,
living in Castle Street, Reading in early 1800s



Strong dissenter: New Broad Street Meeting House, London &
Broad Street Meeting House, Reading

Very well-off



Broad Street
Meeting House,
Reading →

← Bunhill Fields
Burial Ground



Figure 29 The world of David Fenton



We do not know why Fenton bought Bowling's Farm, although it provided a country residence within less than two hours carriage ride from his home in Reading, where he spent the last years of his working life and his retirement, living near to his daughter, Margaret Mary, her husband, William Winkworth, and their children. Later, it would have been convenient for Basingstoke where another daughter, Janett, lived with her husband, James Wills (1784-1846), a former Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery³², and by 1832 a minister at the London Street Independent Church (later Congregational Church)³³, and their children. They married in 1822, and were living in Basingstoke by 1823³⁴.

Figure 30 A rural retreat

³² Enlisted in 1812 aged 28.

³³ Reverend James Wills of the London Road Independent church is mentioned in *'Liturgical and Congregational': The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion Church in Basingstoke c1755 to c1969*. www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/sites/explore/files/explore_assets/2018/06/09/countess_of_huntingdon_explore_asset.pdf. There is also a reference to an undated engraving of Rev. J. Wills, active 1838-1845, Methodist Minister, Basingstoke, by James Cochrane at the Scottish Portrait Gallery www.nationalgalleries.org/es/art-and-artists/41501/rev-j-wills-active-1838-1845-methodist-minister-basingstoke?search=J.%20Cochrane. However, he is not mentioned in commentaries about Wesleyans or Primitive Methodists in Basingstoke during his time in the town, although he worked closely with other denominations.

³⁴ Given that all their eight children were born in Basingstoke, between 1823 and 1839, it is likely that James Wills had left the army and had become a minister before he married. He may have trained at the Gosport Academy (a James Wills completed his studies there in 1821) and it is probable that he commenced his ministry in Basingstoke. James Wills is referred to as a dissenting minister in Fenton's will of 1830. Lucinda Morton-Phillips, on Geneanet, claims that he was a dissenting minister from 1820.



Figure 31 The Reverend James Wills



Figure 32 London Street United Reform Church c2022.
Enlarged in 1854, new front with pillars 1860

Winkworth (Owner: 1831-1882, Occupier 1831-c1845)

David Fenton died in 1831, and bequeathed Bowling's Farm to two granddaughters, Jane Forrest Winkworth and Charlotte Ellen Winkworth, daughters of William Winkworth and Margaret Mary Winkworth (née Fenton), in trust, until they came of age³⁵. The farm was owned by the Winkworths until 1882, when Jane Forrest died, her sister Charlotte Ellen having predeceased her in 1879. The farm was then auctioned, in September 1882.

When Fenton's granddaughters inherited the farm, the tenancy of John Hubbard ceased, and William Winkworth then managed the farm until the early 1840s³⁶.

Before 1831 the farm, but not the house, was leased annually³⁷ to individuals who lived in the village. However, from the mid-1840s, after thirteen years when Winkworth directly managed the farm, both the farm and the farmhouse were then leased together. By this time, William Winkworth would have been in his late 60s, and possibly in ill-health³⁸, and his sister-in-law's family had moved away from Basingstoke following the death of James Wills, reducing any need to visit the house for family reasons.

In the mid-1830s advertisements in Reading newspapers indicate that William Winkworth, a former army officer, had fully embraced agriculture by setting up a business in Reading selling corn, wheat and seed. Probably this did not prevail for long, as by the mid-1840s, he was advertising houses and land for sale, sometimes building materials, and through to the early 1850s, oak trees.³⁹ However, he also had an administrative role with some turnpike trusts.

³⁵ *The will of David Fenton*, Proved 24th August 1831, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Ancestry, online

³⁶ The 1841 Tithe Map states that 'Winkworth' was both the owner and occupier.

³⁷ According to the will of David Fenton.

³⁸ The 1851 Census shows a nurse living at his house in Reading.

³⁹ By 1835, advertisements in the Reading press name William Winkworth as the person to contact with enquiries. In the 1830s these invoked agricultural products, such as malt, corn and wheat; in the mid-1840s, properties and land for

It is probable that the Winkworth's did not use the house regularly, but moved between the family's main residence in Reading to Sherfield, perhaps largely to organise work on the farm. In the 1830s and 1840s, their principal address was in Queens Road, Reading, where William and Jane were returned in the 1841 and 1851 censuses. The Winkworth name does not appear in any census of Sherfield.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the name Winkworth's Farm was well established and prevailed until the early 1880s, on maps for example, although so does the curious name - Boyer's Farm.

Changes to the Design of the House

The plan of the house built in the early 1800s was L shaped, as shown on the 1841 Tithe map⁴¹. However, an 'infill' was added shortly after 1831. At ground floor level there was an entrance lobby and a dairy; above which was a fourth bedroom. Thus, the plan of the farmhouse, shown on the 1841 Tithe Map, is approximately square.

The infill was of inferior quality, suffered from settlement and there was no evidence of the brickwork having been tied into the rest of the building confirming that it was added after the main house⁴². The infill existed until the early 1950s when it was replaced by a single story 'model dairy'.

It may have been at the time that the Winkworths were occupying the farm that the Victorian verandah was also constructed, replacing the typical Regency porch, although more probably this was added later.

sale, as well as a large quantity of pebbles; also, at that time were notices: "*All persons having any Demands on the Trustees of the Reading and Basingstoke Road or the Trustees of the Shillingford and Reading Road are requested to send the same on or before... to Mr William Winkworth, Queen's Road, Reading*". However, in the 1851 and 1856 there were invitations to tender for large numbers of oak trees (75 and 100), lying at Bowyer's Farm (aka Bowling's Farm).

⁴⁰ Various searches relating to the village do not reveal any records relating to the Winkworths, suggesting that they were not overly active in the village, save for two records. The first is a deed, dated 1829, relating to some cottages in which, amongst several others, a William Winkworth is named. The second is the tax record for 1832 which gives Winkworth as the owner and occupier of a farm previously owned by David Fenton.

⁴¹ Whereas for all other properties the 1841 Tithe Apportionments gives the full name and status of the owners and occupiers (for example, John Tubb, or Wm. Wiggett Chute Esq.) the owner of the farm is given just as *Winkworth* and the occupier as *Himself*, suggesting that the compilers of the Tithe map knew little about the Winkworths or that there was some ambiguity about which Winkworth owned the farm. There is no such ambiguity in the details accompanying the auction in 1852 of estates belonging to Henry Lannoy Hunter (Sherfield Hill, Moulshay and Carpenter's Farms and other holdings). William Winkworth Esq is shown as the owner of the relevant land adjoining those farms.

⁴² Donald Rickwood, Personal communication.



Figure 34 Plan of house when built, early 1800s

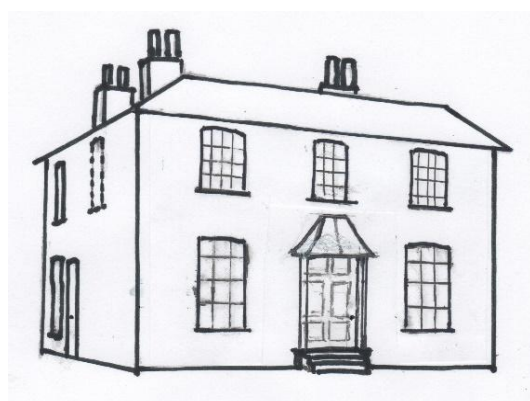


Figure 35 Probable Front & Rear Elevations and Ground & First Floor Plans c1841

Where did the farm tenants live?

The tax records for Sherfield suggest that whilst the farm had “occupants”, that is tenants, they did not live there. For example, John Wise who occupied the farm from 1800 to 1808, lived in a property in Sherfield which initially was owned by Thomas Parker but which by 1806 was owned by John Wise. Between 1809 and 1822 the farm was occupied by James Carpenter, who lived at Carpenter’s Farm. Between 1825 and 1830, James Kersley occupied the farm but lived in part of what is now the Old Rectory. Indeed, David Fenton’s will, dated 1828, which sets out the terms by which James Kersley could continue as occupant, does not mention a house, residence or tenement attached to the farm, just a barn, stable, meeting house and 45 acres. So, probably the house was either unoccupied or just occasionally occupied by Fenton. However, as there is no separate tax record for the house, presumably it was covered by the tax levied on the farm for which the occupier was liable.

Tax records show that between 1806 and 1815 a house owned by David Chase, was occupied by Kersley who had occupied the farm between 1825 and 1830. It had a taxable value of 18s/year. Records for 1816 to 1824 show Kersley owning and occupying that house. (In the case of houses, the term occupier can be taken to mean the resident.) Subsequently from 1826 to 1828 Kersley lived in a property with a taxable value of 10s/year. Possibly this was the same property but which had been sub-divided in 1825. From 1829 to at least 1832 the house was owned by John Hubbard but Kersley remained as occupier.

In 1826 Kersley also owned a second house which he let to James (or Joseph) Faulkner, although by 1827 this property was owned by a Mrs Slater and by 1829 it was owned by Richard Wyeth. However, it was occupied by Faulkner until 1831, when the occupier became Charlotte Kimber.

In the Hampshire Archives there is reference to a deed (lease and release, apparently as a mortgage) in 1829 “*relating to some cottages...*”, between i. William Hodges, ii. James Kersley and Susan, his wife, iii. William Winkworth, iv. John Hubbard, and v. John Welldale Knollys. In 1832 there was a conveyance of the equity of redemption of the property by John Hubbard to Edward Vines. This may be a consequence of the Winkworths inheriting the farm, as Hubbard was no longer the tenant which he had become in 1831.

Further, in 1838 there was a conveyance of the mortgage term by J W Knollys to Edward Vines. This property appears to have been Tithe numbers 106 and 107 which eventually became the Rectory, opposite today’s Village Shop. A conveyance in 1873 mentions property occupied by Edward Vines belonging to John

Bramston Stane Esq, formerly described as three cottages, one formerly occupied by Henry Clancy, carpenter, one by George Norman, shopkeeper, and one by James Kersley.

The Meeting House

The Meeting House at Bowling's Farm, shown on the Tithe Map as a chapel, is an unusual feature for a farm. Most probably this is the "*newly built meeting house*" for which a Dissenters' Meeting House Certificate dated 4th July 1807⁴³, had been issued by the Diocese of Winchester. No further certificates were issued for Sherfield until 1828, after the plan for the auction of the estates of Bernard Brocas of Wokefield Park and Beaurepaire in 1826⁴⁴ had been compiled. This plan showed the Meeting House, which although not named would have been a building which served some public purpose. Also, no relevant certificates were issued before 1807 except in 1798 for Daniel David's home as a place of worship for Wesleyans⁴⁵.

It is not known why the Meeting House was constructed, although at the time there appears to have been no Meeting House or Chapel for dissenters in the village. Parker may have built the Meeting House of his own volition or members of the community may have approached him. Indeed, little is known about Thomas Parker apart from that he resided in Reading, an acknowledged hotbed of dissenters.

Until the certificate for the Meeting House came to light it had been assumed that it was the next owner, David Fenton, who had built the Meeting House, as he was a strong and dedicated dissenter. Maybe the presence of the Meeting House on the farm was one of his reasons for buying the farm.

The Wellington Estate

Finally, perusal of papers in the Wellington Estate Archives show that whilst in 1838 the Wellington Estate purchased Sherfield Court and its farm, as well as

⁴³ i) *A Hampshire Miscellany III, Dissenters' Meeting House Certificates 1702-1844*, Arthur J Willis, 1965, page 133.

ii) The Certificate, 16th July, 1807.

⁴⁴ *This shows a building in the same position as the 'Chapel' on the 1841 Tithe Map. Since agricultural buildings not owned by Brocas are not shown, at the very least it can be assumed that this building had some established public purpose. Sherfield (-on-Loddon): sale particulars of 'Wheelers Court Farm', 127 acres, 'St. Thomas Well's Farm', 212 acres, 'Hill Farm', 83 acres, 'Benham's Farm', part of Wheelers Court, 40 acres, 'Bowbridge Farm', 41 acres, 'Breach', 47 acres, dwelling house, water corn mill, messuages and cottages, 1826, [10M57/SP615](#), Hampshire Archives. The auction details of estates belonging to Bernard Brocas included Wheeler's Court, St Thomas's Well, Hill (subsequently named Goddard's), Bow Bridge, Benham's and Breach Farms, Longbridge Mill, land called Kendal's and several houses and cottages). These identified David Fenton Esq as the owner of the fields occupied by Bowling's Farm beyond Carpenter's Farm.*

⁴⁵ *Basingstoke: Church Street Methodist Circuit, from John Wesley's visits till its formation in 1872 and its first purpose-built chapel in 1875*, David M. Young, 2016.

Goddard's Farm, from William Lyde Wiggett Chute Esq (who had purchased much of this property from Bernard Brocas in 1826), none of the property which comprised Bowling's Farm was ever part of the Wellington Estate.

When was there a house at Bowling's Farm?

The most probable scenario is that the house was built between the mid-1700s and early 1800s, by either Parker or Fenton or an earlier owner for their own use. Without Regency elements such as the porch over the front door and steps, which could have been added after the house had been built, the house would have had a simple appearance typical of many houses built from the early/mid 1700s onwards and subsequently modified. The Georgian proportions of the windows in the sitting room, dining room, third bedroom and the blind window (1:1.6), and the front elevation, are features which prevailed during the whole Georgian period.

Despite its Georgian proportions, inside it was more like a cottage, not a grand residence; maybe deserving some but not extensive. Indeed, there is no evidence of the interior being in lavish Regency style, although this may have been totally lost as a result of renovations in the 1880s and later. The interior elements which have survived are very simple timber fireplaces of plain wooden timbers, possibly some doors, although there is a hint of plank, ledge and brace doors. Ceilings were replastered, either in the 1880s or immediately after WWII. No trace could be found of decorative plaster mouldings, if there had been any.

Going forward from 1841

Charles Cane (Tenant: c1845-1852)

In the 1851 Census, William Winkworth and his daughter Jane Winkworth were living in Reading and the farm was occupied by Charles Cane, aged 31 (a farmer with 42 acres, employing two labourers). It is probable that he had moved to the farm by 1845, when he married, and certainly he was resident by 1849 because he is listed in the *Post Office Directory* (the predecessor to *Kelly's Directory*) for 1849. The 1861 Census shows that he had moved to Kingsclere where he was a farmer with 106 acres. Given the date and place of birth of his last child, he may have moved to Kingsclere in 1852.

Ambrose Painter (Tenant: 1852-1875)

The 1861 census gives the occupiers as Ambrose (Philip) Painter, aged 60, Mary (wife) 59, Ambrose jnr, 27, and a servant. The entry in the 1871 Census, for what is named as Winkworth's Farm, gives Ambrose (Philip) Painter, aged 70, (farmer,

40 acres, employing one man and one boy), Mary (wife), 68, and a servant. Ambrose Painter is recorded as farming in Sherfield in the 1855 *Post Office Directory* and in the 1865 *Harrod Directory*. So, it seems reasonable to assert that he was at the farm from about 1852 until the mid-1870s.

OS1873 does not show many changes to the four-sided farmyard. The farm track formed the north-west edge. The barn which faced Sherfield Green formed the north-east side. To this was adjoined a series of pens along the south-east side. Separated from these buildings, on the south-west side was another farm building. By 1873 a small building in the western corner of the yard had been added, which in the 1930s was used as a shed.

Charles Ernest Bullock (Tenant: 1875-c1880)

The suggested identity of the next occupant is speculative. Within the list of farmers in Sherfield given in the 1875 *Post Office Directory* and the 1878 *White's History*, there is only one farmer on the Green who, when compared with earlier directories and censuses, cannot be identified with a particular farm: Charles Ernest Bullock.

Charles Ernest Bullock was probably a nephew of Mary Painter (nee Bullock). His stay was quite brief. The 1881 Census shows the farmhouse as unoccupied.

It is likely that by the mid-1870s, when Ambrose Painter died, the estate had not been well managed. William Winkworth had died some years earlier and probably Jane Winkworth was not able to manage her estate effectively. A consequence was that the farm was neglected for some years until Jane's death in 1882. When the farm was subsequently auctioned there was no tenant.

An Independent Farm, 1882 – 1928

The World at Large

The second half of the 1800s saw a massive decline in the fortunes of British Agriculture and only a weak recovery through to the beginning of WWI. Agriculture played a diminishing role in the rapidly industrialising British economy, and could not compete with significantly cheaper produce from abroad, facilitated by cheap land, largescale production, and refrigeration. The country needed cheap food to feed the urban poor. Market gardening and milk production (but not cheese making) were buoyant on account of their perishable nature, especially in the Thames Valley and Hampshire.

However, quality of life did improve with the development of new drugs and medical treatments. On the other hand, it was a period of almost continual conflict on the international stage and within the British Empire.

Late 1800s to 1920s: Years of Depression

1873-1896 the **Great Depression** of British Agriculture

Did not recover until after WWII

No protection for farming - cheap imported food essential for urban working class at time of industrial depression!

Milk and Market gardening survived well because unable to transport products long distances

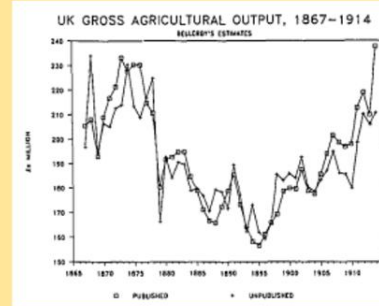


Figure 36 Economic Depression

Mid 1800s to 1920s:

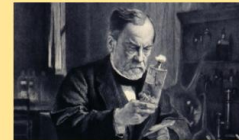
Health and Social Change = longer healthier lives



1843 Vaccination
Jenner



1867 Antiseptics
Lister



1871 Pasteurisation

More Wars



1853-56 Crimean War



1899-1902 Second Boer War



1857-59 Indian Mutiny



1914-18 WW1

1922-23 Irish Civil War

Figure 37 Health and Social Change & War

The First Auction

Following the death of Jane Winkworth, on 13th September 1882, Bowling's Farm was auctioned⁴⁶.

The farm was described as having four bedrooms, two sitting rooms, kitchen, dairy and store and about 44 acres (43a 3r 34p), the same area as in the 1841 Tithe Apportionment. It was auctioned in two lots. One lot was the house, yard, barns and the adjacent fields. The other lot comprised the more distant fields on the north side of Goddard's Lane between Carpenter's and Goddard's Farms.

The auction advertisement does not identify the vendor. It mentions that the second lot was in the occupation of Branstone Staine Esq (sic) at the very low rent

⁴⁶ *Sherfield Green: sale particulars of Bowling's Farm, 44 acres, 1882, 10M57/SP619, Hampshire Archives. The sale was advertised in several local newspapers.*

of £37 10s 0d a year. John Bramston Stane was the owner of Buckfield Lodge. This further suggests that there was a period of a few years when the farm was not being actively managed by the occupant of the farmhouse, if indeed there was an occupant.

The auction document mentions four bedrooms. Two were in the front and one above the kitchen. The location of the fourth bedroom, was above the dairy, part of the “infill”. No mention is made of sanitation arrangements! The terms of the auction included *“Title shall commence with a conveyance on sale to the vendor’s testator on the date 12th May 1883”, and “A settlement affecting an undivided share of the property now offered for sale, in the year 1859, executed by a married lady who was entitled to such share in reversion expected on the decease of the tenant for life thereof”*. The name of the lady is not known. The farm was bought by William Adams for £2,241⁴⁷.

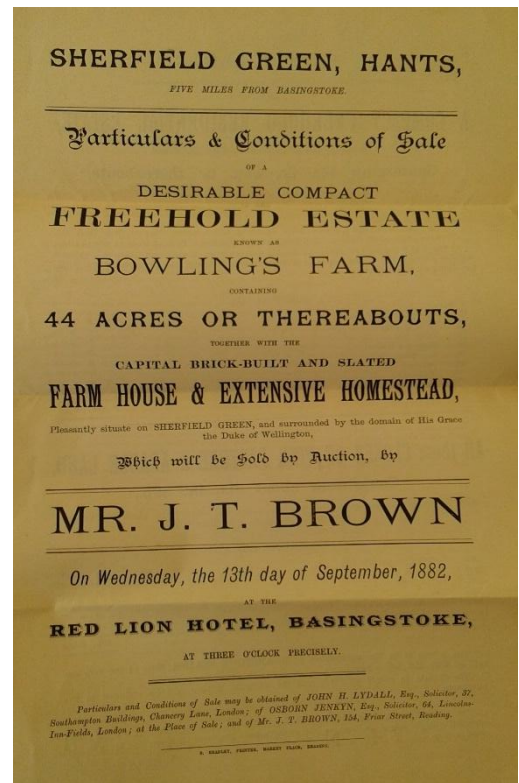


Figure 38 Auction details 1882

William Adams (Owner: 1883-1890)

The 1881 Census for Burghfield, describes William Adams as a retired builder from Basingstoke. He died in Basingstoke in January 1890. So, by the time of the 1891 census his widow, Sarah Ann Adams, was in charge.

1883 New Owner: William Adams (1816-1890)

A retired builder


House was in very poor condition – the ultimate ‘do-er upper’

Filled in window

Conservatory

Removed side door and internal back staircase

Internal: hoop fireplace inserts; two stone/slate fire surrounds; new doors and architraves; built in cupboards



White painted brickwork

Verandah

Larger panes 6 over 6 (from 12 over 12)

Victorian door case

Rear extension – boiler room for dairy

Also owned Sherrin's Mead and built Woodley Cottages, in Greenway

Figure 39 William Adams: main changes to the house

⁴⁷ Reading Mercury, 16 September 1882, pg5

Probably the house had been seriously neglected during the last years of Winkworth's ownership, so renovation would have been required: an ideal 'fixer-upper' for a retired builder. As well as adding the conservatory to the farmhouse it is highly probable that it was Adams who undertook various modernisations, such as: removing a staircase in the kitchen which led to the third and fourth bedrooms; filling in the south-facing external doorway to the kitchen; making an opening from the quarter landings on the front stairs to the rear of the house and as a consequence modifying the staircase; updating some of the fireplaces; and, adding the conservatory, along with introducing the small window in the present sitting room and the doorway to the conservatory (which has since been filled in). He may have been the first to paint the external brickwork. Possibly he added new doors and architraves, and probably added the verandah.

The main internal features of the present house date from this time. It is possible that previously the interior of the house was not what is considered Georgian at all but was more like a country cottage: for example, simple boarded, ledged and braced doors with thumb latches, no architraves or mouldings, whitewashed walls, and crude timber mantels and fireplaces, rather like that which remains in the breakfast room.

William Adams also bought *Sherrins Mead* in Greenway and built a pair of semi-detached cottages in its garden (now *Woodley Cottage*).

The Second Auction

On 6th July 1891 the farm was auctioned again along with three cottages in Sherfield (in Greenway) and 17 cottages in Basingstoke, "*on the instructions of the trustees acting under the will of the late Mr W. Adams*"⁴⁸. The farmhouse was described as having two reception and four bedrooms with convenient offices, a small conservatory and 43 acres 3 roods 34 poles, almost the same as the Tithe Map of 1841. It did not mention the dairy, which presumably had become the offices, nor any sanitation arrangements.

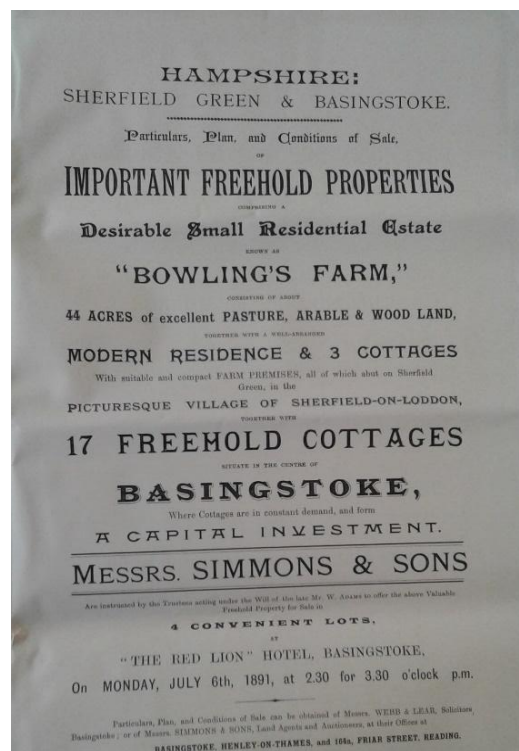


Figure 40 Auction details 1891

⁴⁸ *Sherfield Green: sale particulars of Bowling's Farm etc??, 44 acres, 1891, 10M57/??, Hampshire Archives. The sale was advertised in several local newspapers.*

The farm was sold as one lot: “a modern residence”, reflecting alterations made by Mr Adams. An “old brick and timber built and tiled cottage” (Sherrins Mead) which “was attached to another cottage but now forms a single property”, and a pair of semi-detached cottages built in what previously had been the garden of Sherrins Mead (Woodley Cottages, now a single property), were sold as another lot. The properties in Basingstoke were sold in two further lots.



Figure 41 Part of Auction details, plan of house

The auction particulars include an estate map. This shows the conservatory and an extension at the rear of the house attached to the back wall of the kitchen but placed more centrally than shown on OS1897. Unless this was a poor representation, the extension was replaced within a few years of the sale with a structure which was still standing in 1985. Also, in the southern-most corner of the plot is an outbuilding which in the auction particulars is larger than that on OS maps.

Gilbert and Julia Palmer (Owners: c1891-c1928)

Bowling's farm was purchased by Gilbert Palmer's yet-to-become wife, Julia Morgan, although it is not clear whether this purchase was at the auction or slightly later. Julia, who by various accounts was much better off than Gilbert, remained the owner, and when the farm was sold by the Palmers it was in her name, although both were alive.

George and Julia married in Basingstoke in 1893 and remained at the farm until at least 1927, as shown in successive *Kelly's Directories* from 1895.

OS1897 shows some additions to the house; the conservatory, built by William Adams, and a rear extension attached to the kitchen (what is now the breakfast room). Because it had been newly renovated by Adams it is very unlikely that the Palmers needed to carry out any significant work to the house. However, between 1893 and 1900 the Palmers may have rebuilt the rear extension, which initially was used for heating water for the dairy, and later a shelter/porch along the rear of the dairy. It is also likely that they removed the internal doorway to the conservatory and bricked up the opening, turning it into a glasshouse.



Figure 42 OS 1897 1:2500



Figure 436 OS 1911 1:2500

OS1911 shows the outside privy, which still stands, now part of the garden shed. This is also shown on OS1894 (1:10560) although not on OS1897 (1:2500). The privy has two blind Victorian gothic windows which is typical of that period. It would be no surprise if this was the first addition made by the Palmers. By all accounts Julia Palmer was very fussy: traditional forms of sanitation would not have been acceptable.

OS1911 also shows the lean-to shelter along the back of the dairy. Further, some changes had been made to the farmyard: the front of the barn had been extended towards Sherfield Green; there were more animal pens, and what has been identified as a granary was added (a small wooden building on staddle stones), situated in the western-most corner of this complex of farm buildings.

Also, the 1841 Tithe plot 71, *The Six Acres and Picked Close*, had been divided into three, two fields of 6.7 acres and 2.9 acres, and a house and garden of 0.1 acres, Bowling's Cottage in Goddard's Lane (where Bowlings, a newer property, now stands). Presumably, the house was built by the Palmers for farm workers. The OS 1897 map does not show this division or the cottage.

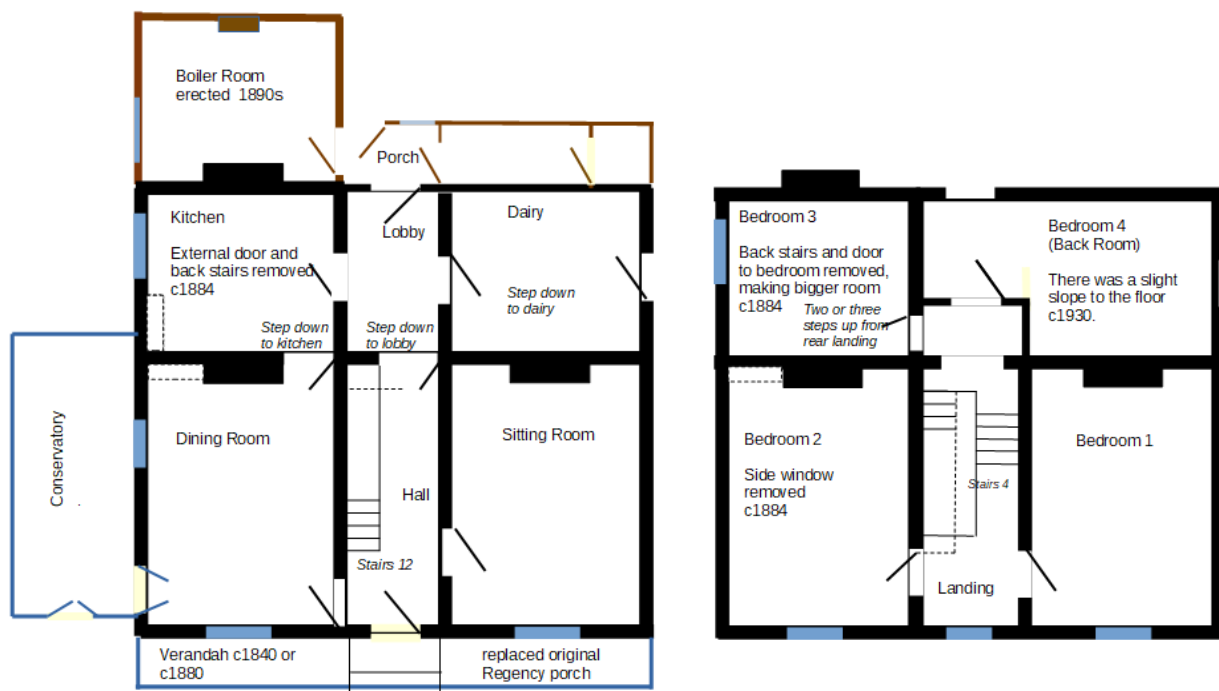


Figure 44 Plan of house c1900

(Showing changes made after it was built, except for entrance to conservatory which by 1900 had been bricked in)

In 1917, part of the farm was requisitioned by the War Office for Bramley Ordnance Depot. Tithe plot 204, originally 8 acres was reduced to 0.1 acres, but parts of Tithe plots 205 and 206, 1.8 acres and 0.1 acres respectively, belonging to Sherfield Farm, which was almost fully enclosed by the Depot, were acquired. The total area of the farm was reduced by just over 6 acres to 37.845 acres. The 1917 Valuation List for Sherfield on Loddon shows a Gross Estimated Rental of £21 0s 0d for the farm and buildings, a reduction from £21s 15s 0d in 1905, probably after land had passed to the War Office⁴⁹.



Figure 45 Gilbert and Julia Palmer, c1910

A Tied Cottage, 1928 – 1982

The World at Large

The fifty-year depression in British agriculture continued into the 1930s, with arable farmers in particular struggling against preferential imports from the Empire. Land was neglected and equipment deteriorated. A number of marketing boards were established, guaranteeing minimum prices, which helped to stabilise the existing position, but there were no great changes. WWII provided a major stimulus – rapid mechanisation, assured markets, subsidies for ploughing grass land, special encouragement of cattle farming because of the food value of milk, and financial assistance for farmers. After World War II, the 1947 Agriculture Act stimulated price guarantees and income support by means of subsidies with encouragement to expand output by intensification and mechanisation. Successive governments pursued cheap food policies.

⁴⁹ *Sherfield on Loddon valuation list, 1905, with supplements, 1906-28, 60M72/DDR36, Hampshire Archives*

In 1971, the UK began its two-year transition to European Community membership; a jackpot for those growing supported commodities such as wheat and barley. Products outside the support mechanisms such as pigs continued to experience cyclical booms and declines. The philosophy was for EU producers to earn income from a carefully rigged market. By the 1980s, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was in disarray, largely because the application of technology was inexorably increasing yields and surpluses. Milk quotas were introduced in 1984 and farmers given a 'licence to produce'; a tradable asset such that some farmers sold or leased their quota to others accelerating the trend towards fewer, larger herds. Later, support for production support was separated from that for environmental protection and enhancement schemes. Efforts to limit overproduction included arable land having to be 'set-aside'. It was not a comfortable business environment for many farmers, and because agriculture accounted for less than 2% of employment, politically it was not perceived as important and there was no interest in issues of food security.

Aside from agriculture, the period was one of tremendous upheaval followed by relative calm. The financial crash of the 1930s, the rise of fascism, WWII, the Korean war, The Suez crisis; the founding of the United Nations, Nato, the Warsaw Pact, the European Economic Community and the NHS; spy scandals, a new monarch, independence for several Commonwealth countries; the UK joining the ECC. There was growing affluence, better living conditions, the dawn of the permissive society, increasing secularisation, the growth of mass media, the demise of the 'Establishment', counter culture and protest, increased immigration, and the rise of music and fashion.

The Farm is Sold

Major Maitland Cecil Melville Wills (Owner: 1928-1945)

In late 1928 the farm was sold by Julia Palmer to Major Maitland Cecil Melville Wills, a member of the Wills tobacco family and, in due course, writer of 26 detective stories, who in that year had become the owner of Sherfield Court and its estates and possibly other local estates. He, his family, staff and stock, moved to Sherfield from an estate near Bristol. By this date, Bowling's Farm was 37.845 acres, including the plot occupied by Bowling's Cottage in Goddard's Lane.

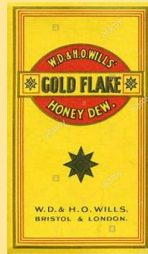
Amongst the staff from his previous estate were Arthur Rickwood, employed as Farm Bailiff who with his wife Catherine, moved into Bowling's Farm House, and Orlando Charles Lloyd, a plumber/handyman, who with his wife and son moved to Bowling's Cottage.

By all accounts, Major Wills was an enthusiastic and forward-looking farmer, adopting recent advances in stock breeding and crop production. He undertook extensive building projects on the estate, for example: installing a borehole at Sherfield Court to serve the whole estate, building Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowlings) c1935, and an identical property in Dixon Road which became the game-keeper's cottage (since demolished). At some stage an electricity generator was installed to provide power to the dairy, farm buildings and the farmhouse. For

this, the outside brick-built privy was commandeered and extended with a wooden structure to form the 'engine shed'. This still stands and is now used as a garden shed. The wooden extension accommodated the generator; the batteries were kept in the former privy.

New Owner 1928:

Major Maitland Cecil Melville Wills, MC, JP (1891-1966)



1928: Bought Sherfield Court Estate from Lady Dorothy Wellesley (owner from 1922)
then added **Bowling's Farm**.

Brought some staff with him from his well-established innovative farm near Bristol :
Arthur Rickwood – Farm Bailiff, Orlando Charles Lloyd – Handyman

Figure 46 Major Wills: the new owner

The farmhouse was the first house in the village to have electricity (12v, DC) and the generator was in use at least until 1946, when mains electricity was connected. The replacement toilet arrangement was an Elsan chemical toilet, closed to the elements in a cubicle at the northern end of the lean-to porch which adjoined the dairy. The only bath in the house was in what became the kitchen, along with several stoves and the like.

Electricity comes to Sherfield

Privy commandeered and extended

Used c1928 – 1947 or even later

First house in Sherfield to have electric light and power

An Elsan replaced the privy!



No major alterations to house

But plenty of building work on the estate, including:

Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowlings) and another for game keeper in German Road



Engine Shed Batteries in Privy

The engine shed, now garden shed, in 2022

V for Victory dates from 1941

Figure 47 The engine shed, 2022

Sherfield Court

Sherfield Court which became the home of the Wills family can be traced to 1167. Previous owners include: Edward St John, W L W Chute of the Vyne and Wellington Estates, from which Gerald Wellesley purchased the property in 1918. In the 1830s, when owned by Chute, it was tenanted by Richard Tubb. When acquired by Wellington Estates in 1838 through to c1896 it was tenanted initially by John Butler and subsequently by his son, George Butler. From then until c1920 the tenant was William Cox⁵⁰.

Till then Sherfield Court had operated purely as a farm house but Wellesley made major changes, turning it into a sophisticated country house.

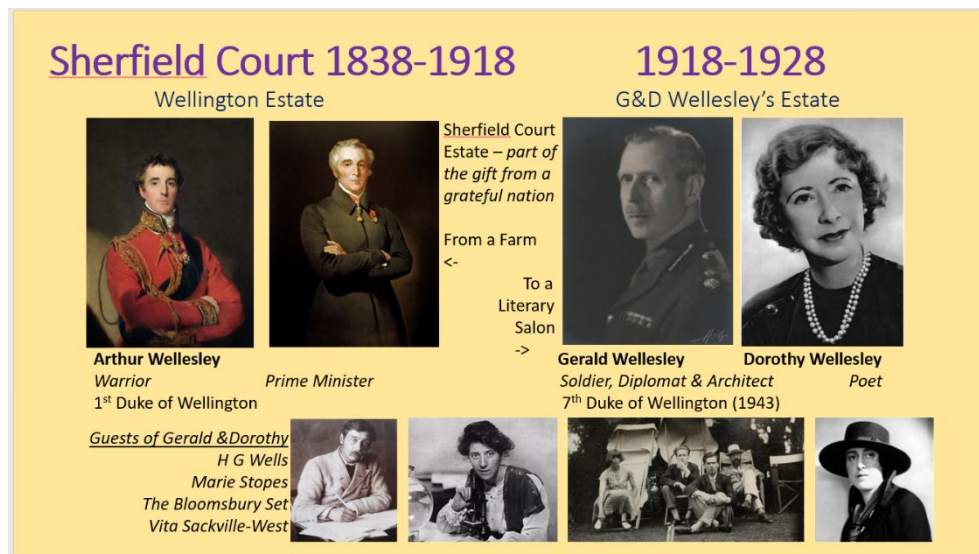


Figure 48 The Wellesleys

In 1928, on becoming the seventh Duke of Wellington, Gerald Wellesley moved to Stratfield Saye House leaving Lady Wellesley, from whom he was estranged because of her affair with Vita Sackville-West, at Sherfield Court. The property was then sold. The conveyance was between i. Lady Dorothy Violet Wellesley, ii. Westminster Bank Limited and Edward William Hornby Birley, and, iii. Maitland Cecil Melville Wills.

Wills and his family lived at Sherfield Court until the outbreak of WWII when the house was requisitioned for use as a shipping office. They moved to Sunningdale, although the Estate continued to function, largely under the management of Colonel Scorer. The family never returned.

⁵⁰ Serendipity? His grandson, Peter Pratt, of Brook Farm in Timsbury, is a close friend of the Lansley family.

WWII

Major-General Wills, Staff Office, Ministry of War
Sherfield Court requisitioned by Ministry of Supply,
 as a shipping office

Wills family decamped to Sunningdale
 Estate ticked over, run by its Manager, Colonel Scorer
 Wills never returned

Aged 56, Wills retired to write more
 detective novels

1945 Estate Sold



Inspector Boscobel



Figure 49 WWII and the Wills family

Arthur Rickwood (Manager/Bailiff: 9th December 1929-1947)

Arthur Rickwood and his wife Catherine, moved to Sherfield and took up residence in Bowling's Farm House where their two sons, Donald and Alistair, were born and brought up.

The Bailiff and Bowling's Farm House

Bailiff: Arthur Rickwood

Wife: Catherine

Sons: Donald and Alistair

Role of Bailiff:

Managing farming on Sherfield Court Estate

*Liaising with tenants of farms: Carpenter's (Maynard),
 Goddard's (Lee?).....*

*Breeding pedigree Dairy Shorthorns for the major shows and
 top quality bulls for breeding - sold at Dairy Shorthorn sales.*

Arthur



Donald and Alistair



Donald with Maurice
 Syckelmoore



Figure 50 The Rickwood family

Arthur Rickwood, had a wide-ranging brief. According to Donald Rickwood “the purpose of what became known as Court Farm was to provide milk, butter, eggs and cockerels for the household and staff of Sherfield Court, and to breed pedigree Dairy Shorthorns to show at the major shows and bulls for sale. Cows were milked by hand. The dairy bottled its own milk, made butter and other products. Although the farm was principally involved with dairying, there were many chickens, in runs immediately outside the back door and in the adjacent paddock. The conservatory had become a glasshouse, where grapes were grown for Sherfield Court. Each day milk, butter, eggs and, when appropriate, chickens and grapes were taken to Sher-

field Court.” The Rickwood children churned butter from the morning milking before setting off for school!

The Bailiff's Wife

Catherine, Sparsholt College trained, ran the Dairy, providing produce for Sherfield Court:

- each day - fresh milk, butter and eggs
- when appropriate – chickens and grapes....




Butter Pads





Donald and Alistair helped churn the butter each morning, before school

Illustrations only – not Bowling's Farm

Figure 51 Catherine Rickwood

“Arthur Rickwood was well known in the Dairy Shorthorn world for turning out top quality bulls for breeding. The bulls were exercised on a Sunday on the grass in front of Court Farm and part way down the Cast Road (now Goddard's Lane) to get them used to people and perhaps a car might come by. They were exercised daily right round the field with Lilac Cottage and Bowlings Cottage.”

“Mr Rickwood always dressed in a jacket (not Tweed but similar), a collar and tie, cap, breeches with brown gaiters and boots so he would have looked dressed up. When he was working, he wore a brown lightweight coat over his clothes and if Major Wills turned up to take him off the farm, which he did often, as he took a great interest in the breeding of the herd, so off came his coat and away they went in a chauffeur driven car. The war put a stop to the big shows but there were still sales and shows and breeders wanting top bulls and cows.”

Other reminiscences come from Audrey Chapman (née Dodd) (1928-2002) who recalled Sundays when the bull from the farm would be exercised on a long pole on the Green outside the farmhouse.

Another reminiscence, from Gilbert Sydney (Bert) Bowman (1920-2002), who claimed to have been born in the farmhouse, is of the front garden being fenced with corrugated iron and cows entering by the bottom gate and assembling there, then going round to the back of the house to be milked before finally wandering back down the farm track to the Green where they grazed. When this was the case is a mystery. The corrugated iron fence which was along the farm track was removed in 1933.

During the war years some villagers had vegetable gardens in the front and the back gardens of the house, hardly a place for cows. (For extensive wartime memories, see separate document.)

Orlando C (Chas) Lloyd (Bowling's Cottage: c1928 - after 1939)

Orlando Lloyd, the former Batman of Major Wills, and his wife Sarah, lived at Bowling's Cottage. The 1911 Census for Bedminster near Bristol recorded Orlando Lloyd as a plumber working for a large estate, presumably that of Major Wills. In 1939 he was described as a domestic servant/handyman living in Sherfield. His son Bill, became village postmaster sometime in the 1970s or 1980s.

The Estate is Sold

Louis Dreyfus (Owner: 1945-1948)

In December 1945 Sherfield Court and its estate, including Bowling's Farm, was sold to Louis Dreyfus, a music publisher from New York. His ownership was brief.⁵¹ However, interesting visitors came to Sherfield Court, especially from *show business*. Both Donald and Alastair Rickwood recalled being asked to show a new-born calf to Dreyfus and his guest - Irving Berlin, a frequent visitor⁵².



Figure 52 Louis Dreyfus

It took some time for Dreyfus to decide whether to keep the farm and how to run it, by which time, 1947, the Rickwoods had left and moved to Leicestershire (although later they returned to the village) and the O'nions family had moved into the farmhouse.

⁵¹ Donald Rickwood recalled that "Nothing much happened to the farm apart from the then bailiff, Ted Onions, getting one of the new grey Fergusson tractors just on the market, to replace the 1930 Fordson tractor."

⁵² Last visit was when working on: Annie Get Your Gun – "There's no business like showbusiness", "Anything you can do" and Easter Parade - "Stepping out with my baby"

Edward O'nions (Manager: 1947-1958)

Ted O'nions, had been employed as cowman by Major Wills from about 1928 (he too may have come from the Bristol estate). In 1935, about the time he married the daughter of the publican at the Four Horseshoes, he moved into the newly built Lilac Cottage (now named Little Bowlings) having previously lodged in Wild-moor.

The Estate is Sold Again

Sir Roger Mellor Makins, later Lord Sherfield (Owner: 1948-1963)

In August 1948 the estate was bought by Sir Roger Mellor Makins, later Baron Sherfield⁵³. He became a significant land-owner, subsequently acquiring Beaurepaire and several other estates. By this date, Bowling's Farm was 38 acres, unchanged from when the Palmers sold the farm to Major Wills. It was identified separately in the conveyance to Sir Roger Makins.

1948 New Owner: Sir Roger Mellor Makins (Lord Sherfield) (1904-1996)



Bought Sherfield Court Estate (for £40,000) added other local estates and farms, such as Beaurepaire.

Some stories:
"So I still have staff there!"
"Meet you at the Ambassador"
"...his hat was in the clouds....."
"Would sit on a bale and"
"What do you think?"
"He would jump on any spare tractor....."
"On the way to a NATO meeting....."

British Ambassador to the US, 1953-56
Many very senior appointments:
Diplomatic, Business and Science &
Technology Policy.
Investment Banker, Chair of AEA.....
Chancellor of the University of Reading.

Painting: Lord Sherfield, Chancellor, University of Reading, by Robin Darwin (1910-1974)

Figure 53 Sir Roger Mellor Makins

The farmhouse was occupied by the O'nions family until 1958, when Edward O'nions retired because of ill-health, because 'Farmer's Lung' (*hypersensitivity pneumonitis*). By then, Bowling's Farm House became known as Sherfield Court Farm House. Later, it became known as Court Farm. Then, in 1984, when the house was separated from the land, the farmhouse became known as Court Farm House. However, to this day, the name Sherfield Court Farm still appears on some utility bills.

During the early 1950s a new single storey dairy with bathroom and outside WC were built to replace the existing dairy, toilet arrangements and room above. The

⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Makins,_1st_Baron_Sherfield

present utility area is in what was the new bathroom, which then was also the passageway between the back door and the rest of the house. Probably it was at this time that the house was connected to the main sewer which would have been built during the construction of The Plantation in 1947. The sewer runs from The Plantation to near The Globe House, with the 'drop' from Court Farm House being close to the Cricket Pavilion. Because the new facilities were only of a single storey, the entrance from the stairs to the landing which served the third and fourth bedrooms was blocked up, and so too was the opening between the downstairs hallway and the lobby serving the kitchen (now breakfast room). So, the only way from the front of the house to the rear was through the then dining room into the then kitchen.

It was at this time that the winding staircase to the third bedroom was built necessitating changes to the main staircase. It is probable that it was at this time that the present dining room was modernised with the existing brick and tile fireplace being installed.

Christopher James Makins (Owner: 1963-1982)

In 1963, part of Lord Sherfield's estate, 306 acres in total, was transferred, by a Deed of Gift, to his son, Christopher James Makins⁵⁴, when he turned 21. Christopher entered the UK diplomatic service, but on his marriage in 1975 he moved to the USA where he remained until his death in 2006. Later, Lord Sherfield also transferred other parts of his estate, including Beaurepaire, to his other son, Dwight William Makins, an investment manager. However, Lord Sherfield appears to have retained some parts of the estate, including Wildmoor Farm. The transfers would have helped to avoid future inheritance tax. The organisation and management of the estate were unaffected.

The conveyance to Christopher Makins, which included Sherfield Court, does not distinguish between Sherfield Court Farm, Goddard's Farm, Carpenter's Farm, Bowling's Farm and some land to the East of the A33 at Church End. By then they had been joined together as one large farm. All of the property conveyed to Major Wills, when he bought Bowling's Farm from the Palmers, was included in the transfer, except Bowling's Cottage and its garden which had been sold.

⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Makins,_2nd_Baron_Sherfield

1963 New Owner: Christopher Makins (1942-2006)

Lord Sherfield transferred a large part of the estate (306 acres) to Christopher (aged 21) - Goddard's, Carpenter's, Bowling's etc

The Family

Alice Brooks Makins (née Davis) took a special interest in the dairy herd especially the Guernseys.

Herd Pedigree Name:
Kalorama!



Alice Brooks Makins, 1909

Mary, b1935
Cynthia, b1935
Virginia, b1939
Christopher James, b1942
Patricia, b1946
Dwight William, b1951

Figure 54 The Makins family

Christopher Makins (1942-2006)



Brought up in Sherfield & Washington
Educated Winchester & Oxford
Diplomat and Foreign Policy Expert
Spent much of career in Washington
Significant expert on US-Europe relations



British Ambassador's home in Washington

"A tall man with a slim physique, gracious manners, and a booming voice

...one of the brightest and most knowledgeable officials on defence, arms control, and other security issues."



"A man of tremendous stature and intellect"

Washington Post 2006

Figure 55 Christopher Makins

Brian Gaiger (Manager: 1958-1982)

In 1958 Brian Gaiger was appointed as Estate Manager. He, his wife Kathleen, and their first two children, moved into the farmhouse.

Even with some recent improvements, in the late 1950s the house had only basic facilities: no heating system except open fires, an outside WC, a primitive bathroom (in the passageway from the backdoor), an ancient cooking range in the kitchen (now the breakfast room), a basic sink and cooker in the building attached to the kitchen (originally built to house a water boiler for the dairy). This boiler room, which eventually became the kitchen, had a floor of bricks laid on earth, so was continually damp. The half-brick walls were also very damp and running with condensation. Sixty years ago, such conditions were not unusual and found in many houses, in both towns and rural areas.

Court Farm House – Home of the Farm Manager

1947 – 1958 Ted Onions – Farm Manager

1958 – 1982 Brian Gaiger – Farm Manager

Much building work on Estate

At Court Farm House – main changes

Late 1940s – Mains electricity installed

Early 1950s - The 'fill-in' of dairy with bedroom above built by Winkworth, replaced by a single storey 'modern' dairy, bathroom (in back hall) and outside WC.

Early 1960s – Bedroom and bathroom built above the dairy

Early 1970s – Kitchen properly fitted out
- a modern kitchen!!



Figure 56 The home of the farm manager

The Gaiger Family

*The Gaiger family c1970
very well known,
need no introduction*



*Back: Kathleen, Eleanor, Brian
Front: Mary, Frances, Richard, Sarah, Stephen*

Brian Gaiger – Farm Manager

Independent Borough Councillor

Mayor 1985/6

Parish Councillor
& Chair of Parish Council

**Proposed and led major
schemes for Borough and Village**

A Councillor with a lovely human touch

*Considerate, Consultative, Communicative,
Community-focussed, Collegial,
Courteous especially towards Contrarians,
Confident & Charming.*

*With a very special connection to the Rev
James! But which one?*

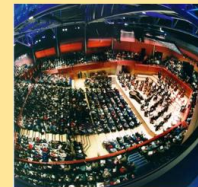


Figure 57 Brian Gaiger and family

From the late 1950s onwards, improvements were made to the walls and floor, which to a large degree kept the damp at bay, and c1970 there was a transformation - a fully-functioning, modern fitted kitchen, made from Hygena units.

In the early 1960s, a first-floor bedroom and bathroom were added above the dairy, which had become an office, and an opening was made from the half-landing to provide access, to these new rooms, restoring the opening made by Mr Adams in the 1880s. The existing bathroom became a utility area. At about this time, an electric hot water storage system was installed. Later, an opening was created to provide access from the front hall to the rear hall. This provided a route from the front hall to the back of the house without needing to pass through the current sitting room. A small serving hatch replaced the doorway from the breakfast room to the sitting room. At that time, the breakfast room was remodelled with

pine panelling up to a shallow shelf set at dado height. The panelling was required largely to hide damp patches on the south-facing wall where an external door opening had been filled in many years earlier.

In the early 1900s, to overcome penetrating damp caused by rain from the south-west, the external south-west facing wall of the present breakfast room had been hung with tiles or slates. In the early 1960s these were removed by the estate builder! The damp returned, prompting the need for remedial treatments, which were largely unsuccessful. Finally, what had become a rather dilapidated conservatory was blown down c1958.



Figure 58 OS1968, 1:2500

Compared with the OS 1911 Map, the OS 1968 Map shows some major changes to the farmyard. Whilst the farm track, barn and pens to the south-east side remained, the latter having been extended with more animal pens, the buildings on the south-west side, animal pens, the granary and the shed in the western corner had been replaced by a substantial modern barn.

Close to the house were two corrugated iron sheds mentioned earlier, which dated at least from the time of the Rickwoods, and which later provided stabling for Kitty, the Gaiger family pony. In what is now Orchard Lea were two large arched corrugated iron buildings, Nissen Huts, dating from the 1930s, which for some time housed chickens and capons for Christmas. Layers were kept in the barn and at some time there were pigs. However, the main farming activity for the Sherfield Estate was dairying.

Although by the mid-1950s the dairy herd and milking parlour were at Goddard's Farm, Court Farm housed the bull and some calves and, since large lorries could not access Goddard's Farm, it was the collection point for milk churns.

Farming

After buying Sherfield Court Farm provided, Makins acquired the Beaurepaire estate and several more farms; Taylors, Four Lanes, and Wildmoor, for example. Bringing these together provided plenty of opportunity for rationalisation and economies of scale, and for bringing land used for other purposes during WWII back into production.

Whilst mixed farming continued to prevail across the ever-expanding estate, the breeding of pedigree bulls for sale at Court Farm had petered out during the time of Dreyfus. Nevertheless, maintaining a pedigree dairy herd was a priority, but of Guernseys, rather than Dairy Shorthorns, and in due course Freisians and Freisian crosses. During the period, dairying activities moved from Court Farm to Goddard's Farm and subsequently to Wildmoor Farm.

By the early 1970s the nature of farming was changing apace, especially given the UK's entry into the EEC. Like many farms, the viability of Sherfield Court Farm and the livelihoods of its workers was seriously threatened. So, a major step towards achieving the efficiency gains necessary to keep its head above the water, was to establish an agricultural contracting business. Across its many farms, the estate owned a significant amount of modern farming equipment, some of which stood idle for much of the year, such as combine harvesters, which could be used by other farms, which did not have their own up to date machinery, or operators. Evidently this was a successful development which kept the wolf from the door, although by the early 1980s, for whatever other reasons, the decision was made to break up and sell off the Sherfield Court Estate. This was the end of Sherfield Court Farm, the only remaining farm operating from the Sherfield Green.

Major Developments and Then!

Post war: mid 40s – mid 60s

Acquiring farms and combining them quite easy. Rationalization boosted productivity.

The Heyday of British Agriculture

But, by early 1970s these days were over

Impact of Britain's entry to EU in 1973

Very significant challenge to farm incomes

*New avenues - **Contracting** offered better use expensive equipment*

By early 1980s completely new business models

Doubtful future for large estates run by landed gentry

1982 Sherfield Court Estate sold

April 1973

FARM CONTRACT SERVICE

Operator: Donald Rickwood, Farm: Brian Gaiger,
Lilac Cottage, Court Farm,
Sherfield on Loddon, Sherfield on Loddon,
Tel. Turgis Green 552. Tel. Turgis Green 223.

Service available and Hire Rates

Operator only, using farmer's own machinery or workshop	£1.30 per hour
Maintenance and repair work, using Court Farm workshop, gas and arc welding, etc	£1.50 per hour
Tractor (M-F 188) and driver	£1.80 per hour
Ploughing, 4 x 12" furrows (Bamford Kverneland)	£3.00 per acre
Combine drilling (M-F 29 drill)	£1.60 per acre
Muck-spreading (M-F 188 and Rotospreader 200 with M-F 35X and loader)	£2.80 per hour
Ditto, plus extra man, tractor and spreader	£5.00 per hour
Potato planting, Howard Botanplanter with Ferti-	

Figure 59 Agricultural contracting

The Estate Divided and Sold

In 1982, much of the estate was sold by auction. This included: Sherfield Court, its gardens and grounds; Goddard's Farm, the ownership of which had been transferred to Christopher Makins in 1963; Wildmoor Farm and Dairy Unit; the land now occupied by Taylor's Farm housing estate; and, various cottages and farm-houses. Lord Sherfield's dairy herd, of 180 pedigree Friesian and Friesian x Canadian-Holstein cattle, and some dairy plant at Wildmoor Farm, were also sold, but at a separate livestock, auction, for £81,000.

Some of the estate was excluded from the auction. By this time, the Gaiger family had life rights over Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowling's), and land to the north west bordering Goddard's Lane up to the footpath to the west, excluding where Bowling's now stands, all of which had been part of Bowling's Farm. The Gaigers later bought this property, which they renamed Little Bowling's Farm. The house, Little Bowling's, was subsequently sold c2004 together with some land to the rear, which in 2020 was sold for housing development which became Little Paddock. Also excluded from the auction was the paddock to the north of Court Farm House, which was developed by Mansers of Sherfield on Loddon, to become Orchard Lea.

Lot 2 of the estate auction, Goddard's Farm, included all the land to the north of Goddard's Lane which had belonged to Bowling's Farm, along with that previously belonging to Carpenter's Farm, Sherfield Court Farm and Goddard's Farm and some houses, in total 182.5 acres. It did not include land to the east of the A33 which had been transferred to Christopher Makins. This lot was bought by the Gosdens.

Brian and Kathleen Gaiger (Owners: 1982-1985)

Lot 9 comprised Court Farm House, farm buildings and yard (1.53 acres) and adjoining fields, those behind Court Farm, originally part of Bowling's Farm (6.54 acres), and fields behind The Plantation, originally part of Benham's/Sherfield Court Farm but not Bowling's Farm (5.27 acres), both of which lead down to what is now called Katy's Copse (0.74 acres), which was also included, (14.08 acres in total). This Lot was purchased by Brian and Kathleen Gaiger. The auction documents refer the Court Farm and Court Farmhouse as one and the same entity.

In 1983 the yard where 1, 2 and 3 Court Farm now stand and the access drive, were sold to John Peter Pearson and Kathleen Pearson, trading as Thor Developments. However, a strip of "retained" land between 2 and 3 was subject to particular conditions, although subsequently it was sold to the owners of 2 Court Farm. In 1984 the barn and part of the yard, where King's Barn now stands, were sold to Alan Brian Evans and Richard Thorpe, trading as Loddon Builders.

OS 1978-1990 shows the result of these developments which were completed in 1984 and early 1985 as well as later alterations to Court Farm House. Whilst King's Barn has the same footprint as the old barn, it is not a barn conversion. Rather, the barn was pulled down and some of its timbers were incorporated into the new structure. The modern barn which had stood in the farmyard was moved to Little Bowling's Farm.

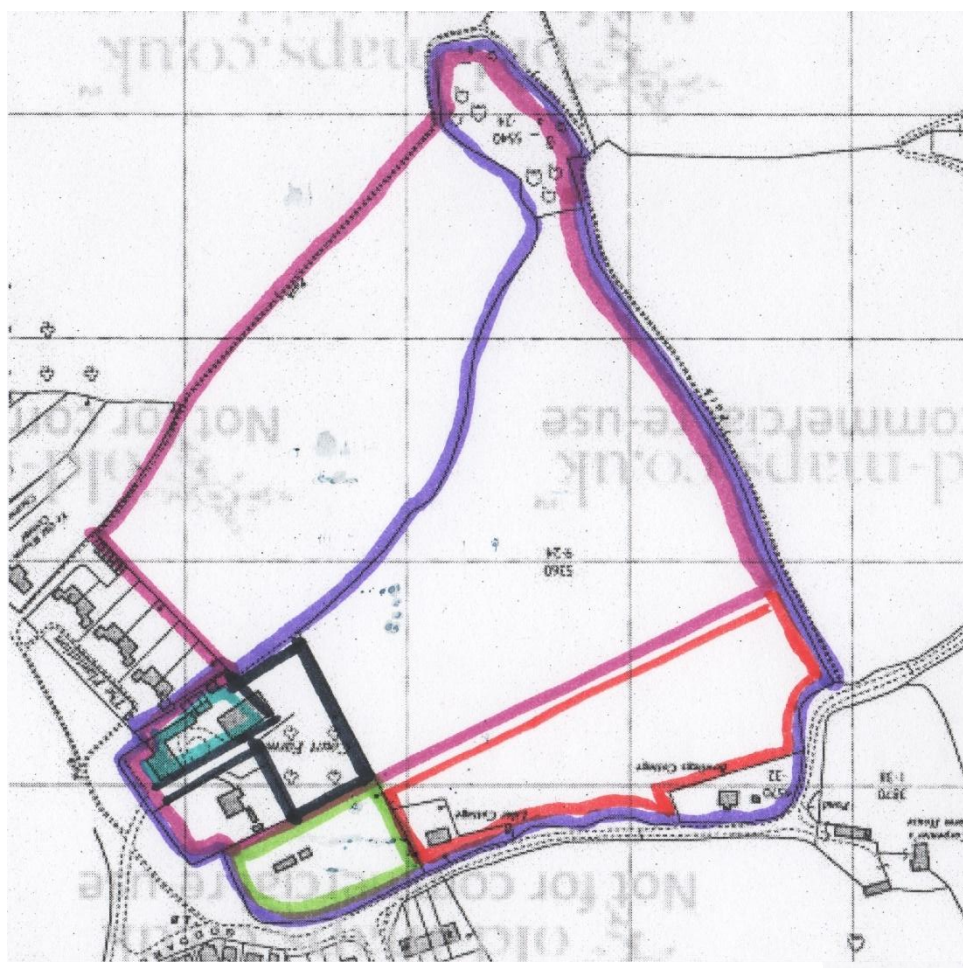


Figure 61 Auction Lot 9 with subsequent division and related holdings, 1982



Figure 60 OS1978-1990, 1:2500

- Boundaries
- 1841 Bowling's Farm (part)
- 1982 Lot 9: Auction
- 1982 Manser Builders
- 1982 Gaiger
- 1983 Thor Developments
- 1984 Loddon Builders

A Private Home, 1985 -

Lansley family (Owners: 1985 – present)

In November 1985 the farmhouse and garden were purchased by Peter and Irene Lansley.

Major renovation projects ensued. In 1986 various repairs were undertaken including: damp proofing and wood treatment, replacement of floors in the dining room and breakfast rooms, repointing some brickwork, repairs and addition of flashings, and some roof repairs⁵⁵. Off-peak storage heaters and panel radiators were installed, there being no gas in the village at this time although it arrived in the village a year later!



Figure 62 The house in 1985



1985 New Owners: Peter & Irene Lansley



Village Calendar 1980

Major Modernisation Project –
from Tied Farm House to Private Home

Heating

Insulation

Repairs & redecoration – extensive & endless

Building work – governed by listed building status
Listed October 1984

Significant interest and encouragement from:

Villagers

Borough Council

Repairs Officer

Chief Conservation Officer

Parish Councillors

Figure 63 Court Farm House in 1985

⁵⁵ The rateable value of the property was sufficiently low that it qualified for a Repair Grant from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. The Repair Grants Officer and conservation officers, some of whom were familiar the property, were very supportive of the changes being made, and at no point was the need for listed planning consent for any of the work raised. The rateable value was raised soon afterwards.

In 1987 the dairy, with bedroom and bathroom above, was extended to form a large lounge and hallway on the ground floor with bedroom, study, bathroom and storage areas above. A downstairs cloakroom was also constructed, as was a detached garage. In the same year, the kitchen was refurbished. Its external walls were lined internally with insulation board and new kitchen units, a cooker and dish washer installed. As with the earlier upgrading 15 years earlier, this was a significant transformation. A utility area was created in the central lobby on the ground floor. Other work to enhance comfort and internal appearance was undertaken, but as a matter of course, materials and design details, windows, doors, ironmongery, skirtings and architraves always followed those found in the historic part of the house. In 1985, 1988 and 2012 wood burning/multi fuel stoves were installed in the sitting room, lounge and dining room respectively.

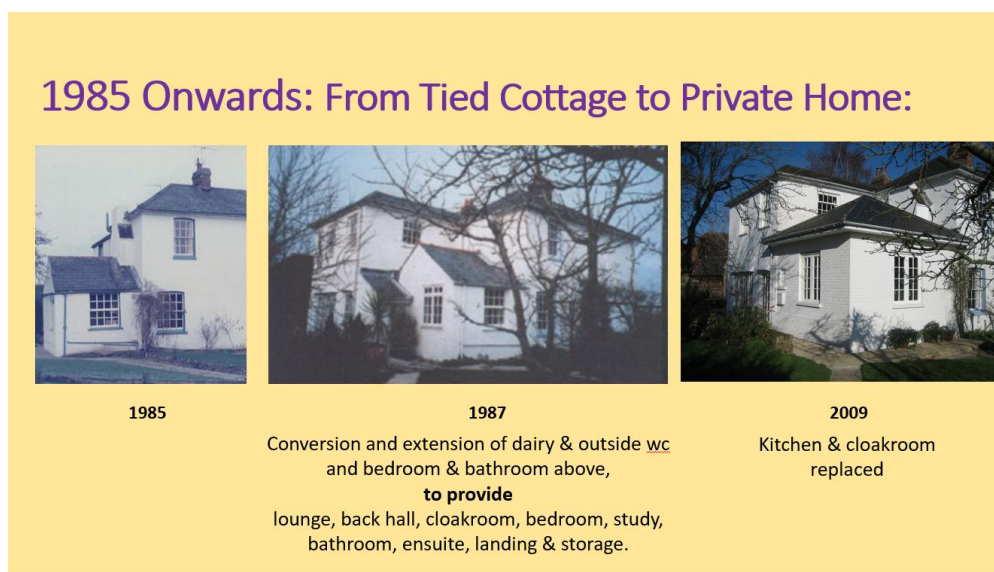


Figure 64 Court Farm House in 1985

In 2009 the existing kitchen and downstairs cloakroom were demolished and replaced by a slightly larger kitchen and new cloakroom, and the southernmost chimney stack rebuilt from just below roof level. In 2012 single glazed windows in the 1987 extension were replaced with double glazing.⁵⁶ In 2015, the verandah was overhauled following the original design and materials. The slab and supports for the structure were restored, decayed ribs substituted, metal covering sheets replaced, and some of the quarry tiles which cover the slab were replaced with originals obtained from reclamation yards⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Neither the replacement of the kitchen nor of the windows were straightforward, largely because of difficulties presented by conservation officers; in the first case arising from uncoordinated and sequentially contradictory advice, and in the second arising from a rejection of what had been agreed when the 1987 extension was constructed, that double glazing could be installed. The helpful pragmatism of conservation officers in the late 1980s no longer prevailed.

⁵⁷ Ash ribs replaced the existing decayed ribs of ash (probably original) and pine (subsequent repairs). Douglas Fir was used for the uprights and horizontals, replacing poor quality pine, probably estate grown. The metal coating was factory painted, but soon afterwards was repainted in-situ.

Since 1985 the garden has changed, although many of its original features remain, including the foundations and path of the conservatory, the magnificent horn-beam on the north-west side of the lawn, the row of Leyland's cypress along the north-west boundary (but much reduced in height) and all of the hedges, fences and gates (although parts of these have had to be replaced, owing to vehicles repeatedly driving into them). Apart from the area between the garage and the vegetable plot, the old paths remain. The well, capped for some time and containing a great deal of discarded oil, has been recommissioned as a source of water for the garden. This is extremely useful when there are water restrictions, as this constitutes a private supply, the use of which is not regulated.

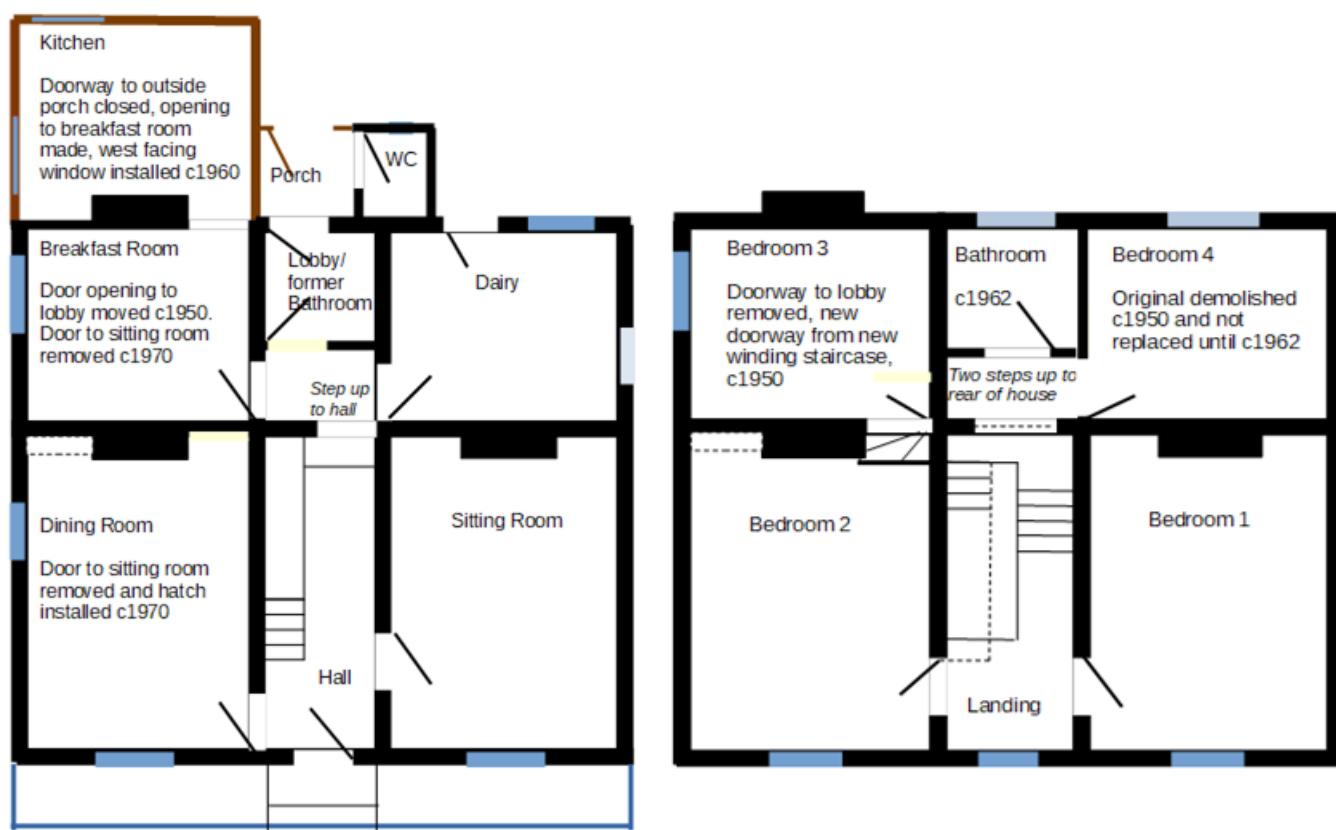


Figure 65 Plan of house, 2085



Figure 66 Aerial view, c1975



Figure 67 Aerial view c1990



Figure 68 Aerial view c2010



Figure 69 The house, 2015

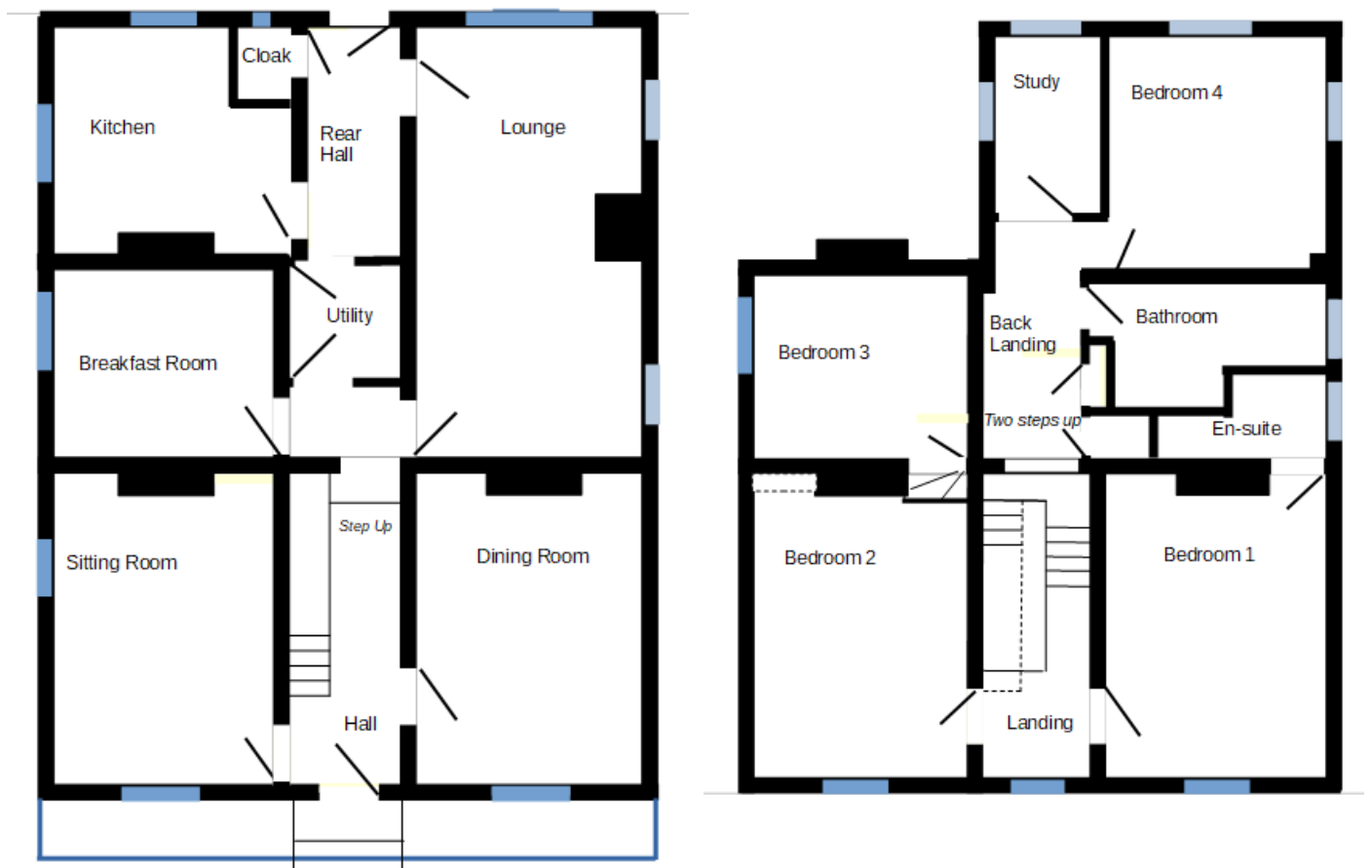


Figure 70 Plan of house, 2015

The Challenges

Caring for a listed building is an expensive pursuit in terms of both cost and time. Of course, there is a trade-off between these. A do-it-yourself approach can reduce major costs and can be very satisfying but demand much time and effort. Following the extensive repairs required when moving to the house, and excepting the building of the extension and replacement of the kitchen, DIY has been the predominant strategy. This has been partly because much of the work has been straightforward, but also because of the disappointment with the quality of workmanship of most of those who have been employed to undertake work on the house. With a few notable exceptions, an understanding of older buildings and their care has been noticeably absent, and in some instances, so too has been appreciation of what constitutes a professional standard of work.

2023: Current Challenges

Historic Conservation of a Grade II Listed Property.....
Quite straightforward although challenging skirmishes with Conservation Officers.
Successful and enjoyable.
A wonderful family home, resonating with the happy lives of ours and earlier families.
However....

Energy Conservation
Preservation of original structure and appearance constrains conservation of energy.

Conservation of the Setting.....
*Delighted to preserve the house, 'a rare jewel', for posterity,
- that is for you, your family, friends and future generations.*
*In particular avoided the temptation to gentrify the house
into something it never was.*
No influence over the conservation of the setting.
Carelessness destroying the value of our guardianship of your heritage.




Figure 71 Challenges

Although finding and engaging highly competent and conservation-aware architects, contractors, and tradespeople will continue to be a major challenge, much of the work required to align the older part of the house with modern standards of comfort has been and will remain amenable to a largely DIY approach. The future challenges of energy conservation can be met by insulating floors and the walls of the ground floor rooms (those of the bedrooms, insulated in 1986, could be upgraded)⁵⁸ and installing secondary glazing. There is ample space to install a ground force heat pump in the garden and radiators in the house, and at the same time to renew the substandard front lawn: not a DIY project. The necessary work on floors and walls would provide a good opportunity to rewire the house: DIY with oversight and testing by a suitably qualified electrician.

⁵⁸ Because there are no historic mouldings or skirting boards, and some forms of wall insulation are much thinner than in 1985, there would be no loss of historic 'significance'.

The Setting, 2016 -

Without doubt the biggest challenge is maintaining the outward appeal of Court Farm House, and other 'listed' and notable buildings, those which can be seen from the Cricket Green, through persuading the Parish Council to restore and preserve their setting - Sherfield Green. Just as the owners have a statutory duty of care enshrined in the status of the property being a 'listed building', owners of nearby properties and those who manage Sherfield Green also have a duty of care. Changes made to nearby properties which might impact the setting of other buildings are largely controlled by planning and conservation legislation, but seemingly this is not the case for what happens on the Green, where with the absence of any obligatory checks or balances, 'anything goes'!

Consequently, taken together, a number of changes to the Green made by the Parish Council in recent years, have significantly eroded the setting of the house. These changes have made it more difficult for those viewing the house from the Cricket Green or Goddards Lane to appreciate its traditional setting, as part of a farmstead, despite some key elements still remaining. King's Barn retains much of the 'sense' of the preceding barn, the farm track remains, (and the houses behind are largely out of view). For many older villagers, these visible and easily construed vestiges of the last working farm on the Green provide an enduring and endearing reminder of the history of the village. It contributes warmly to their 'sense of place'.

Three major changes have contributed to the erosion of the setting. Whereas previously, the cedar-clad Cricket Pavilion was visually associated with a cluster of farm buildings, which morphed into King's Barn and its garage, and which strongly evoke the farm, the use of white paint on the Pavilion's front elevation some nine years ago has since set it apart, (less so when viewed from the track which serves Court Farm). This visual separation has been further aggravated by the erection of a white concrete garage next to the pavilion; destroying any pretence to a heritage view from the Cricket Green. Traditional views of the house across the Common, which emphasised the rural nature of the setting, have also been compromised by the erection of a fence in front of the house, bringing a utilitarian suburban element to the view. The fence owes nothing to local traditions of split oak or chestnut, but more to imported highly processed large-carbon-footprint-convenience; the horizontal bars are very disruptive to the setting. Viewed from further away, there are more alien elements which destroy enjoyment of the heritage of the Common. For example, fences and hedges which stop easy access to the Green and destroy the open views which are fundamental to any Common.

Despite the Neighbourhood Plan, which places a strong emphasis on conservation of the Green, the Parish Council has simply ignored its recommendations, and

is not willing to develop a rapport with owners of properties which border the Green. It simply disregards the many expressions of concern about the erosion of the heritage of the village embodied in the Green. Rather, it rubbishes the extraordinary legacy of Sherfield Green, intent on destroying those features of the former Common which provide reminders of the rich agricultural history of the village and a place where children can freely play.

As housing development creeps closer to the village, swallowing up fields and beloved countryside, soon the only link with origins of the village will be Sherfield Green. But what value will be there be in the suburban town park which the Parish Council is so intent of promoting?

Whilst residents and visitors will still enjoy the Green, they will be denied the essence of the former Common: the open views of one large green space uninterrupted by physical boundaries, which had prevailed for least three centuries; vistas which are essentially those of rural North Hampshire; an opportunity to walk on centuries-old tracks and to wander on the Green as villagers have for centuries; to enjoy the 'rough' as well as the 'smooth'; and, for the inquisitive, to appreciate the development of the village over the centuries and the historical and practical contexts of properties such as Court Farm House.

The figures below give examples of the damage wreaked on the Green: further instances continue to accumulate. Quite simply, in just a few years, the extraordinary legacy for parishioners of Sherfield on Loddon, handed down from generation to generation, has been systematically destroyed. Mother Nature deserves better and so do our children and grandchildren. Not a sterile town park, but a return to the history and heritage of the Common, an inspirational bosom of nature for everyone to enjoy, and impressive setting for Sherfield's significant buildings.

An Extraordinary Legacy has become An Abandoned Inheritance.

The "Sense of Place" of Sherfield Green

Eroded at a phenomenal pace

*Historic buildings no longer anchored in their all-important heritage setting will become devoid of meaning, and the **extraordinary legacy** of Sherfield Green will be lost*

Without restoring the Common,
Sherfield Green will be so sanitized, sterile and soulless,
as to have nothing to offer
— at best, a meagre town park

Figure 72 Goodbye Sherfield Green: Welcome Town Park

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 1: Erect Fences

*“What has happened to your quintessential North Hampshire village green?....
...a down-market developer’s pastiche of a town park in Kentucky.”*

(an Anglophile North American revisiting the village in 2019)



← From this

To this →



A centuries-old boundaryless Green is now a Fenced Park,
with alien materials, and with access very much limited.
More harm than 250 years of the Enclosures Acts.

Figure 73 Fences - the antithesis of a defining feature of Sherfield Green

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 2: Divide a Single Open Space into Two



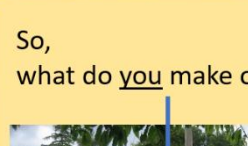
“The Green used to sweep across the road and into the
gardens and fields. One very unusual large green is now
two smaller ones, divided by a fence and a hedge.”

“Much loved, centuries-old views, its defining feature, have been destroyed at a stroke.”

Figure 74 Divide the Green and destroy open views

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 3: Erect an Ugly Building in a Prime Heritage Area



So,
what do you make of this?



“Is this responsible
guardianship of a heritage
conservation area?”

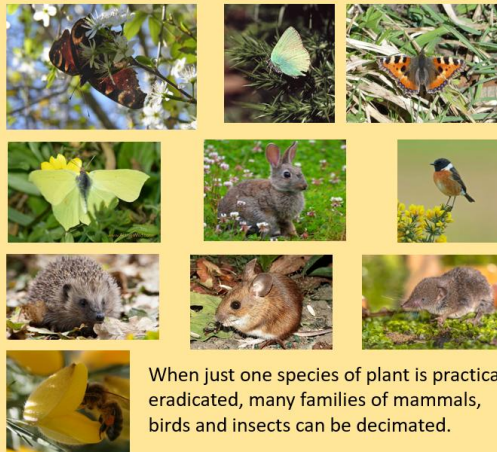


Figure 75 What does this add for posterity?

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

And just to make certain: Eliminate the Flora and Fauna

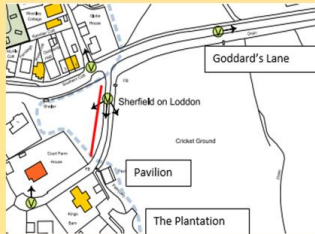
Overwhelmed by “the temptation to create a shaven effect”



When just one species of plant is practically eradicated, many families of mammals, birds and insects can be decimated.

Figure 76 No longer a place for wild life

What now for a Place of Warm Memories and Pilgrimage?



“I can no longer let the dog run here. If it goes under the fence then I can’t get to it. The dog loved this rougher part of the Green. So did I.”

“...no longer used by children, dogs. Wild life pushed out: no activity at all.”

“Astonishing suburban approach towards a rural issue and to managing the Village Green.”

“The dragon’s teeth were an entirely satisfactory defence against Travellers and didn’t restrict movement on the Green.”

“Not a gypsy defence at all, just an indulgence; and the first step towards establishing a car park in the middle of the Green.”

Sherfield residents, late 2010s

“Where did those Feet in Ancient Times, walk upon Sherfield’s Pleasant Green?”
“Who on earth cares about that?”



Figure 77 The path is not needed. Heritage is bunk!

*Please speak up for our heritage, otherwise you,
your children and grandchildren will have nothing to cherish,
your memories will mean nothing*

AN ABANDONED INHERITANCE

Figure 78 Please Speak Up!

Appendix – The Families

Parker (Owner, Bowling's Farm (before 1791 – 1814?))

Apart from Thomas Parker having been resident in Reading, no information available.

Fenton (Owner, Bowling's Farm 1814?-1831)

David Fenton – b1750, Auchterarder, Perth, Scotland, m<1779, m2 1790 Old Jewry, Westminster, d1831 Reading. First Wife: Jane? - b1750, m<1779, d1788 Old Jewry. Children: unnamed - b&d1779 London; Margaret Mary - b1784 London, m1802 Lambeth, d1816 Reading; Jane* b1787 London; Frances b1788 London, d1789 London; Second Wife: Mary Pickman (or Rickman) - bc1766, m1790 Old Jewry, d1828 Reading. Children: Mary - b1791 London, d1792 London; Janett - b1792 London, m1822 Reading; Ellen - b1794 London; David - b1795 London, d1816 Reading; Thomas Maclean - b1796 London, m1817 Bethnal Green, London, d1842 Hastings (Trade: Printer); Peter b1798 London, d1798 London; Peter* - b1800 Reading; Mary* - b1801 Reading; James - b1804 Reading, m1830 Chelmsford, d1875 Lambeth (Trade: Architect, Surveyor, Civil Engineer). * Name not found in will, so presumably either died before 1828 or, if female, married.

From 1776 or earlier, until 1798, David Fenton was a merchant living and operating in Old Jewry, City of London, where he had a Linen-Warehouse. From c1799, he lived in Castle Street, Reading. It is not known whether by then he had retired, aged 49, or continued in business and commuted to London, which would have been perfectly feasible. However, it is possible that he finally retired in the mid-1820s, since reports in the Reading press from 1827 onwards (but not before), indicate that he was actively engaged with many good causes, for example: treasurer of the Reading Dispensary and *Berks Auxiliary for the London Missionary Society*, a board member of the *Reading Literary Society*. He was also involved with petitions to Parliament on: *Burning of Widows in India*; the *Revision of Penal Laws*; and, the *Abolition of Slavery* and the subsequent *Reading Anti-Slavery Society*.

In some directories he is described as a merchant; in some records for the baptism of his children he is described as a Factor (someone who transacts business on behalf of merchants). On two records his occupation is recorded as a Scotch Factor. Trade directories and Tax Redemption records, from 1776 to 1798, indicate that he was a merchant operating from Old Jewry. Cultural directories say that he contributed to the printing of poems largely in the Scottish dialect. This suggests a strong link with Scotland, from where he hailed (perhaps explaining his strong Protestantism), and with Scottish merchants. His will, dated 19th November 1828, reveals that as well as many shares and financial investments, he had extensive land holdings, including a farm of over 390 acres in Wanborough, Wiltshire, some land near High Wycombe, and Bowling's Farm.

Electoral Registers: Wanborough, Wiltshire, 1818 & 1819 David Fenton of Reading; Reading 1820: David Fenton Esq, 50 Castle Street. Pigot's Directory 1830, David Fenton Esq, 50 Castle Street.

Winkworth (Owner, Bowling's Farm 1831-1882)

William Winkworth – b1779 Reading, m1802 Lambeth or Enfield, d1857 Reading. Wife: Margaret Mary Fenton - b1784 London, d1816 Reading. Children: Mary Ann Winkworth - b1803 Reading, d1816 Reading. Jane Forrest Winkworth - b1812 Reading, d1882 Berkshire. Charlotte Ellen Winkworth - b1814 Reading, m1835 Reading, d1879 Christchurch, Hampshire (Married name: Allnutt).

Pigot's Directory 1830, William Winkworth, Gentleman, 11 Sydney Terrace, Reading; 1841 & 1851 Census: William, Jane - Queens Road, Reading; 1861 Census: Jane – Marylebone (visitor); 1881 Census: Jane – Abbey Stone House, Reading (living on rents). The 1851 return gives William's occupation as Captain Adjutant Berkshire Royal Militia (presumably retired); there was one house servant and a nurse. In 1841 and 1851 Charlotte, husband and family were either in same property or next door to William and Jane. In 1861, as a widow, Charlotte was living with a married daughter and her family in Hitchen.

Carpenter (Tenant, Bowling's Farm 1809-1822)

James Carpenter - b1770 Sherfield, m1 1799 Hartley Wespall, m2 1803 Sherfield, m3 1809 Sherfield, d1826 Sherfield. First wife: Hannah Northway - m1799 Hartley Wespall, d1803 Sherfield. Child - James, b&d1803 Sherfield. Hannah died soon after giving birth. She was buried and James was christened on the same day. Shortly afterwards James died. Second wife: Anne Buy (or Bye) - b1785?, m1803 Sherfield, d1806 Sherfield. Children: Anne - b1804 Sherfield; Charles - b1805 Sherfield, d1806 Sherfield. Third wife: Mary Butler - b1770, m1809 Sherfield. Child: William - b1811 Sherfield.

Lived at Carpenter's Farm, tenant of Carpenter's Farm (Home Farm and Further Farm), Owner Mrs Hunter. James Carpenter was also tenant of Bowling's Farm 1809-1822.

Cane (Tenant, Bowling's Farm c1845-1852)

Charles Cane – b1820 Burghfield, Berkshire, brought up in Bramley, m1845 Basingstoke, d1899 Kingsclere. Wife: Mary Joyce - bc1819 Basingstoke, d1902? Basingstoke. Children: Alfred -bc1846; Frances - bc1848; Arthur - bc1851; all born in Sherfield; Eliza - bc1854 Kingsclere. (1851 Census - all except Eliza, plus housemaid and labourer).

The Painter Family (Tenant, Bowling's Farm 1852-1875)

Ambrose Painter- b1801 Bucklebury (Father: David Painter), m1 1822? Bray, m2 1851 Berkshire and Oxfordshire (residence declared as Sonning), d1876 Basingstoke. Possible first wife: Sarah Clack b1800 Bray, m1822 Bray. Children: ?Harriott b1824 Bray; ?Sarah b1826 Bray; Ambrose jnr bc1835 Caversham, d1861 Sherfield; George bc1836 White Waltham, Berkshire. Second? Wife: Mary Bullock - bc1803 Dunsden Green (part of Sonning Eye) (Father: William Bullock), d1875 Basingstoke.

The 1851 Census shows Mary Bullock as unmarried, a landowner, living in Sonning Eye, with a lodger, Jane E Hogarth from Flanders. Mary was probably the second wife, because the 1841 census gives Ambrose as a gardener, living in Reading St Giles, with two sons but with no wife. In 1851 Ambrose was living in Caversham with son George. Both were market gardeners. Ambrose jnr was visiting Reading St Giles and is shown as a labourer. It has not been possible to discover anything else about Mary, except that there were many Bullocks living in and near Sonning. 1861 Census: Ambrose, Mary, Ambrose jnr and a servant; 1871 Census: Ambrose, Mary and a servant, living in the farmhouse.

Bullock (Tenant, Bowling's Farm 1875-c1880)

Charles Ernest Bullock - b1845 Pyrton nr. Henley on Thames, to Robert Bullock - b1796 Henley. The 1851 census shows him as a farmer's son born and living in Pyrton, which is a little way from Henley, with his mother, a widow, who was running a large farm. The 1871 census shows him with his sister and brother-in-law in Pishill, as an annuitant. So maybe he was free to take over the farm when required. Wife: Sophia Louise. Child: Frederick Ernest Bullock - b1876 Sherfield. It has not proved possible to obtain more information about Charles, Sophia Louise, their children or whereabouts in 1881 or later.

Adams (Owner, Bowling's Farm 1882-1890)

William Adams, bc1816 Basingstoke; married date?; d1890 Sherfield (Probate £242). Wife: Sarah Ann ?*, bc1828 East Hanney, Berkshire; d1896 Basingstoke (Probate £8313/3s/6d). Children: Albert J, bc1853; Alice M, bc1856; Agnes M, bc1857; Augustus W, bc1857; Ada J, bc1860; Arabella Sarah*, bc1862; Amelia Ann*, bc1864; and Austin George*, bc1866, a farmer; all children were born in the Basingstoke area. 1891 census - those marked * were resident. The 1891 Parliamentary Electoral Roll for NE Hampshire does not have entries for the residents of the farm. Probably no one was eligible. Also, at the time the Roll was compiled the farmhouse may have been unoccupied.

Palmer (Owner, Bowling's Farm c1891-c1928)

Gilbert Richard Palmer b1862 Beaulieu, m1893 Basingstoke, d1941 Basingstoke (Probate £15781 1s 9d). Wife: Julia Morgan b1853 King's Somborne, d1939 Basingstoke (Probate £9937 12s 8d). No children. The probate records give their address as Charter Lea. They lived with a housekeeper, Olive Morgan bc1886 Chawton, a niece of Julia Palmer (recipient, with brother, of effects of probate of Gilbert).

The house was unoccupied on the Censuses of 1901 and 1911. On both occasions the Palmers were visiting Julia's widowed sister in King's Somborne. The Palmers made an impression on some village folk, as found in the reminiscences of Dorothy Sims on the Parish Council web site.

Wills (Owner, Sherfield Court Estate 1928-1945)

Maitland Cecil Melville Wills MC JP - b1891 Bristol, m1915 Bristol, d1966 Winchester (Probate £59,132). Rank: WWI - Captain Royal Engineers (MC in 1915); WWII - Major General Staff War Office. A renowned cattle breeder ND writer of detective stories and. (His detective series character was Inspector Geoffrey Boscobel. One title is *Midsummer Murder* published in 1956.) Wife: Gladys Aimee Fothergill Hughes - bc1894 Bristol, d1964 Basingstoke (Probate £52,020). Children: Hyacinth - b1916 Leigh Woods, Bristol; Rosemary - b1918 Leigh Woods; Pamela D Melville - b1919 Leigh Woods; Elaine April Melville - b1921 Leigh Woods; Ailsa V Melville - b1923, Leigh Woods; Hermione A - b1926 Bristol; Robin Michael Melville - b1928 Bristol. Phone number of Sherfield Court in 1928: Turgis Green 8.

Rickwood (Tenant, Bowling's Farm House/ Court Farm House 1929-1947)

Arthur Rickwood - b1893 West Stow, Suffolk, m1925 Horncastle, Lincolnshire, d1965 Basingstoke. Wife: Catherine Fraser Petrie - b1901 Stirling, d1983 Basingstoke. Children: Donald A - b1931 Sherfield, m1951 Basingstoke, worked at Court Farm as agricultural engineer and lived at Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowlings) before emigrating to New Zealand; Wife: Ursula M Cork – b1931, Basingstoke; Alastair J - b1933 Sherfield, m1957 Basingstoke, d2020 Sherfield; Wife: Edna Dawn Smith – bc1931, d2019 Sherfield. Both Donald and Alistair were born in the farmhouse. National Identity Card 1939 shows all family living at Sherfield Court Farm and the occupation of Arthur as Farm Bailiff.

Lloyd (Tenant, Bowling's Cottage 1929-after 1939)

Orlando Charles Lloyd, b1887 Bristol, m 1910 Long Ashton, d1974 Basingstoke. Wife: Sarah Bertha Bryant, b1889 Nailsea, Somerset, d1970 Basingstoke. Son: William (Bill) Orlando Lloyd, b1916 Bristol.

Louis Dreyfus (Owner, Sherfield Court Estate 1945-1948)

Louis Dreyfus, b1877 Kuppenheim, Germany; emigrated to USA late 1800s; d1967 Westminster. With brother Max (as music publishers, writers, arrangers) under the company name T V Harms, they formed a partnership with London firm of Francis, Day & Hunter to market their songs in the UK. In 1920 they worked with British publishers, Chappell & Co, and by 1926 had bought them. In 1935 they restructured their business with Louis moving to London and Max remaining in New York. Address given in conveyance of the farm, 50 New Bond Street (HQ of Chappell & Co). Phone number of Sherfield Court in 1948: Turgis Green 208.

O'nions (Tenant, Bowling's Farm House/ Court Farm House 1947-1958)

Edward O'nions - b1907 Oswestry, m1935 Basingstoke, d1989 Basingstoke. Wife: Phyllis Edith Williams - b1910 Basingstoke, d1986 Basingstoke. Child: Margaret A - b1937 Aldershot, m1957 Basingstoke (Mrs Lay), d2007 Basingstoke. National Identity Card 1939 shows family living at Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowlings). Occupation of Edward: Cowman.

Makins (Owners, Sherfield Court Estate 1948-1982)

Roger Mellor Makins, b1904 Paddington, m1934 Tallahassee, Florida, d1996 Basingstoke. Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford 1925-39, 1957-96; called to the Bar, Inner Temple 1927; CMG 1944; Minister at British Embassy, Washington 1945-47; Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office 1947-48, Deputy Under-Secretary of State 1948-52; KCMG 1949, GCMG 1955; British Ambassador to the US, 1953-56; KCB 1953, GCB 1960; Joint Permanent Secretary of the Treasury 1956-59; Chairman, UK Atomic Energy Authority 1960-64; Chairman, Governing Body of Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1962-74; Chairman, Ditchley Foundation 1962-65 (Vice-Chairman 1965-74); created 1964 Baron Sherfield; chairman, Hill Samuel Group 1966-70; President, Parliamentary and Scientific Committee 1969-73; President, BSI 1970-73; Chancellor of Reading University 1970-92; Chairman, Wells Fargo Ltd 1972-84; President, Centre for International Briefing 1972-85; Chairman, House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology 1984-87; FRS 1986. Wife: Alice Brooks Davis, b1909 St Louis, d1985 Basingstoke; daughter of Dwight F Davis, sportsman, and politician (former US Secretary of War), founder of the Davis Cup. Children: Mary, b1935 Marylebone; Cynthia, b1935 Marylebone; Virginia, b1939, Pancras, London; Christopher James (2nd Baron Sherfield), b1942 Southampton, Long Island, m1975, d2006 Georgetown, Washington; Patricia, b1946; Dwight William (3rd Baron Sherfield), b1951.

Christopher Makins was an Anglo-American diplomat, foreign policy expert and author. Wife: Wendy Whitney Cortesi.

Gaiger (Tenant, Court Farm House 1958-1982; Owner, Court Farm House 1982-1985)

Richard Brian L Gaiger - b1928 France, m1956 St Mary's Chislehurst, d2002 Basingstoke. Parish and Borough Councillor – Independent. Mayor of Basingstoke – 1984/85. Wife: Kathleen Joan O'Connor - b1928, London??, d2021 Basingstoke. Children: Stephen B - b1957 Ashford; Eleanor K - b1958 Ashford; Mary K - b1960 Basingstoke; Richard T - b1962 Basingstoke; Frances M - b 1964 Basingstoke; Sarah A - b1965 Basingstoke. All lived at the farmhouse.

Lansley (Owner, Court Farm House 1985 -)

Peter R Lansley - b1946 Southampton; m1970 Bromley. Wife: Irene F Cover - b1947 London. Children: Imogen A H - b1975; Adrian H T - b1977, both Stoke Mandeville. All lived at the farmhouse.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to: The Gaiger Family, Donald Rickwood, Michael Davison-Blake and Ian Deepprose for information, photographs and other important historical materials; also, Sheena Archer, Bert Bowman, Audrey Chapman (née Dodd), Alastair Rickwood, Joseph Stephant and Lord Sherfield (Roger Makins).

Painting of Bowling's Farm House by Francis Vingoe, 1903 and Photograph of Bowling's Farm House c1910

The Painting of the farmhouse and the photograph of Mr Gilbert Richard Palmer and his wife Mrs Julia Palmer (née Morgan) in front of the farmhouse, were given to the present owners of Court Farm House by Mr David Allen of Wallingford, a grand nephew of Julia Palmer, in September 2008. These items had been passed to Mr Allen's aunt, Miss Lilian Morgan, by her sister Miss Olive Morgan, who had lived with the Palmers as housekeeper/companion. They remained in Lilian's possession until her death in August 2008, aged 104. Mr David Allen is son of Cecil E Allen and Ida Winifred Allen (née Morgan). Lilian, Olive and Ida's were sisters. Julia Palmer was their aunt.

Francis Vingoe (1879-1940) was an artist who travelled around the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire where he lived, offering to paint properties for a small fee. He was born Finchley, London, 1879, and died Staplehurst, Kent, 1940. In 1901 he and his wife lived in East Hendred, Berkshire.

ARTUK has six images of his work. Details of other paintings can be found on several web sites with particulars of past art auctions. Typically, they have been valued between £100 and £200.

See also <http://www.vingoe.name/Francis%20Vingoe.htm>