

Estcourt Park Estate Accounts, 1819-1827

The accounts for this Cotswold estate were carefully kept during these years, especially the earlier ones. The expenditure was entered under three headings, the farm, the estate, and the house, stables and place. The receipts were entered under the headings, the farm and the estate.

Income over this period varied from £5,000 to £7,500 per annum and approximately threequarters came from rents for farms, land and cottages. From the names and payments given, about thirty tenants and four groups of cottagers were paying rents which varied in amount from over £600 p.a. paid by Thomas Tanner and William Holliday down to Martha Pritchard paying 10s. p.a. for a room and one of the Shipton Cottagers paying 5d. p.a. for waste land. Rich and poor alike paid their rent twice a year on Lady Day and Michaelmas Day usually in arrears, sometimes considerably in arrears and this was not a favour granted only to the wealthier and more important tenants as these entries show:- February 1823 William Morse paid £74 15s. the balance of half a year's rent due Michaelmas 1821: 1821 William Pinkney paid £6 6s for three year's house rent.

From the entries for rents it is not easy to know what was the price per acre for land on the Cotswolds during these years. The chart below shows that the price remained steady throughout the period although it varied according to the fertility of the particular piece.

	James Prior	Waste land	Prime Gardens in Parish of Newton	Land in the Tynning
1819	£7.10s for 5 acres	Hannah Hayward & Simon Stevens paid 2d per lug	½ acre £1 p.a.	¾ acre 15s p.a.
1821	"	"	"	"
1823	"	"	"	"
1826	"	"	"	"

Occasional entries show that the Estcourts, besides allowing their tenants time to pay their rents, helped in other ways: in 1821 James Taylor paid £2 2s. 3d ½ a year's interest at 7% on money loaned him for draining his land. In 1825 a deduction of 10s. was made to each of 17 cottagers as their houses were in good repair.

The majority of entries do not indicate exactly what is covered by the rent but the cottagers usually have two entries, so much for their house and so much for the land, for example, in 1821, Robert Box one year's house rent £2, one year's land rent 9s. and in 1826 his house

rent was the same but his land rent was 6s. and there is no explanation. From some entries the use of the land is made clear - Daniel Bicknell paid 26s. 6d. for a garden, William Clark paid 42s. for a withy bed and Francis Weaver paid 20s. 6d. for a vineyard.

As would be expected there is little change in the names of those paying the rents. Among the larger tenants, those paying £200 or more p.a., the same names appear throughout this period. Looking at the names listed in the four groups of cottagers, one group has the same names throughout and for the other three groups seventy five per cent of the names appear throughout.

Timber and Coppice is the heading for the other major source of income from the estate and this varies from £59 18s. 5½d. in 1825 to £1,268 19s. 5½d. in the following year, the average for this period being £416. In the ordinary years the brushwood was made up into faggots and sold, some wood was sold as poles of varying sizes, some was made into particular items such as plough beams and sheep cages and there are separate entries for the sale of the bark. The names of many of the purchasers were the same as those paying the rents; Thomas Miles paid 5s. for two plough beams and there is a Thomas Miles paying 13s. each half year for land and among the purchasers of faggots. The exceptionally high income in 1826 is explained by the sale of timber valued at £793 in July and just over £100 in December. Higher entries for the sale of bark in the same two months, July £268 and December £31 also help towards the high income, and suggests that some of the timber was stripped on the estate. The timber sold was oak, ash, elm and a small amount of fir, chestnut and beech; and the bark was oak, larch and ash.

Other income from the estate was Fines and Quit Rents and sundry items entered under Casuals. The total estate income gave Estcourt most of his profit as the other source of income, the farm, involved expenditure which took about fifty per cent of the receipts and often more. This part of his income was entered under the headings, corn, hay and other dead stock, cows, sheep, pigs and casuals. The most notable feature is the drop in income from cows and the sudden appearance of income from corn starting in 1824 which indicates that he was changing his type of farming. Throughout the period a certain amount of each item was sold to the house, hay was supplied to the stables and kennels; and from time to time ox teams and men were used by the estate and the house for both of which income was entered in the farm account. The other main outlet for the farm produce was the markets at Tetbury and Malmesbury. The chart on page 68 gives some idea of the prices during the years 1819-1827 but time for a more detailed examination of the accounts and for a comparison with prices generally is necessary before any comments of value can be made.

Another important factor to consider in commenting on prices of stock is its quality and only occasionally is this indicated:- in 1825 a casualty cow fetched £5, in 1827 £2 for a cow died which after calving, in 1823 23s. 4d. for four sheep that died, in 1827 small ewes 27s. each.

	1819	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827
Barley			34s to 35s 6d a qtr			43s a qtr
Wheat			5s 9d to 7s 3d a bushel			5s to 8s 3d a bushel
Pork pig		6s to 6s 6d a score				9s to 9s 6d a score
Store pig	25s					
Pigs	30s 6d to 41s				28s	
Cows	£9 to £16	1822 £10				
Bull Calf	19s	10s				
Oxen	£9 to £18		£14			£31
Lambs		14s		11s - 27s		
Ewes		1822 14s - 21s				34s - 37s
Sheep price	per lb 6d	5d				5d & 6d

The total farm income varied from £265 in 1823 to £837 in 1819 but against this must be set an expenditure which varied between £334 in 1827 and £522 in 1825. The highest single item of expenditure each year is on wages although as a proportion of the total farm expenditure this declines during the years under review, perhaps a reflection of the change in type of farming. For the few who worked on the farm all the year the daily rate was higher during the summer months, presumably because the longer hours of daylight meant a longer working day. Except for Ann Garrett in 1824 the women were employed only in the summer months and had a higher rate when haymaking. The number of casual employees does fall from 31 in 1819 to 22 in 1827, again probably a reflection in the different farming. Wage rises usually start from Lady Day and the customary increase seems to have been a penny a day but there is no indication of the age of the young workers.

	1819			1824			1827		
	Winter	Summer	Haytime	Winter	Summer	Haytime	Winter	Summer	Haytime
W. Fowles	1s 6d	1s 8d							
J. Wilcox	2s 9d	2s 9d							
D. Bicknell	1s 9d	2s 1d		1s 9d	2s		2s	2s	
R. Wilcox	7d	8d							
W. Clements				1s 2d	1s 4d		1s 4d	1s 4d	
J. Richards				1s 2d	1s 6d		1s 7d	1s 9d	
D. Bicknell junr.				5d	6d		8d	9d	
Ann Garrett				7d	9d				
T. Bicknell							6d	7d	
Women		8d	10d		7d	9d		8d	9d

Some entries just give the days worked and daily rate but frequently there are details of the work done:- D. Bicknell is referred to as shepherd, J. Richards as oxman, in turn D. Bicknell, junr. and T. Bicknell as oxboy, the majority of the casual payments to women are for haymaking, E. Reeves is paid for sheep-shearing and later in the year for thatching ricks, E. Barrett and W. Clements are paid for hewing turnips, and in 1819 Elizabeth Bicknell is paid for two weeks, at 3s a week for the unpleasant job of shovelling dung. From time to time there are special payments such as:- W. Ackland & Son paid for making and repairing hurdles in 1819; T. Shipton, carpenter and G. Hopkins, his assistant, paid for building a new barn in 1824; and Henry Young was paid for planting potatoes by contract in 1827.

The change in type of farming is no obvious in the expenditure accounts until they are examined in detail, as purchases of livestock and seed are entered under the one heading, stock. Entries are sometimes detailed to the extent of describing the item by kind and weight but on other occasions only a total is entered. This makes any comparison of prices difficult but the chart on page 70 gives some idea of the price of various items during this period.

Expenditure for the estate varies from just under £600 to over £2,000 and is entered under the following headings, Taxes, Repairs and Improvements; Permanent Charges, Timber and Coppice, Casuals, Interest and Principles, and Bills left over from previous years. The exceptionally high expenditure in the years 1823 and 1824, is partly accounted for by the high amounts entered in the Casual column and partly by the fact that expenditure under Interest and Principles varies from £20 p.a.

	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827
Swede and turnip seed	9s	30lbs - 15s	10lbs - 8s		Norfolk turnip 44lbs - 29s 4d	33s 6d
Clover seed			2yrs supply £6 2s 9d		£4 12s	
Wheat		£5 10s			8s and 9s a bushel	
Vetches		10 bushels £3 10s				11s
Rye grass		7s 6d				
Ewes young		18s each		30s each		
Barley seed				46s a qtr		25s a sack

to £562 p.a in the years 1819-1824 and nothing for the following three years. The cost of suppers for the tenants, the meetings of the manor court, stationary and dealing with stray animals are the usual charges entered in the Casuals column but expenses are increased in the years 1822/3/4 by allowances made to tenants on account of the decrease in the value of agricultural produce and this entry for May 1823, "Mr Aitken the balance after deducting the rent, for the growing crops, corn, hay, live and dead stock taken into account and valuation on his relinquishing the possession of the farm £498 12s. 4d." The expenditure under the heading Interest and Principles is payments to various people of capital sums or the interest thereon, possibly bequests and interest accumulated while the matter was going through probate. This would account for the complete absence of entries in the later years after matters had been settled.

Although there is no great variation in the total annual expenditure under the heading Permanent Charges, it is interesting to note the items entered in this section, - 12 weeks allowance to Robert and Mary Crook, 12s; Hester Shipton, $\frac{1}{4}$ year's annuity, £5; Rev. Mr Davies for preaching 4 sermons in Tethury Church agreeable to the will of the late Sir Thomas Estcourt, £2; Insurance on Shipton Mill, 18s; payments under the will of Mrs Anne Estcourt, to Rector and churchwardens for apprenticing boys, £10; and in lieu of 6 quarters of coal for heating schoolhouse at Newton, £2 2s. Most years' expenses of this kind amounted to about £200.

There is no income from the House, Stables and Place but expenditure in this section averaged £531 during these years and covered House and

Servants, New Work and Repairs, Cellars and Fruit, Stables and Kennels, Place, Gardens, and Rents and Taxes. The Place cost most during these years except in 1820 when the cost of repairs exceeded it. For the first five years £40 to £50 was spent annually on the garden and included W. Morris' wages, seeds, trees, shrubs, payments for killing rats, and expenses incurred in taking garden produce for sale at Tatbury Market. In the later years only the payment of the various rates is entered in the Gardens column, payments for killing vermin are found in the expenses of the Stables and Kennels and payments for trees, shrubs and seeds are entered against the Place.

Entries under the heading House and servants are a rather miscellaneous collection. In 1821, the only year in which the cost of this section is over £100, is an entry of £90, the years wage for Marshall the bailiff. Is he the same person who receives £110 p.a. in the Estate account permanent charges section and whose name is Thomas Marshall? In the years 1821/2/3 John Richards is regularly paid for working in the house and in later years a man of the same name receives wages in the farm account as oxman. It seems that special people were brought in for particular jobs, for example in 1821 W. Fowler, J. Shipton, E. Barrett, senr., J. Richards and J. Harding were all paid part of a day's wages for beating a carpet: Mrs. Shipton received three days wages for putting up bed curtains. There are occasional references to housemaids; Sept. 1821, expenses for going to the Plough Inn for two maidservants, 1s 6d.; July 1826, advance to Elizabeth, the housemaid, £3 10s. Entries in this column also give an idea about various household expenses; January 1822, Thomas Shipton and his assistant George Hopkins, received £2 19s 4d for making dressing tables and in April £1 10s 2d for altering them; the following year they received £2 4s 8d for making a chest of drawers; William Bunting is paid for sweeping the kitchen chimney; November 1823 postage on a foreign letter is 2s 6d.; each year the ringers and singers of Newton receive 5s. and the annual insurance for Estcourt House is £12 10s.

Rents and Taxes are an outlay in each of the three sections of expenditure, as the chart on page 72 shows; but not all such payments were entered in the column with this heading. The rates include a poor rate levied three or four times a year; highway rate and church rate levied annually, and in 1821 a Shire Hall rate is mentioned. A chart shows the Poor Rate and for 1819 Estcourt paid £45 5s. as follows:- Farm £29 5s., Estate £7 11s 6d. House, Stables and Place £8 2s 6d plus 26s on the Garden entered separately. Other rates were not such a drain on his income. In 1821 on the Place he paid Poor rate £3 11s. 10½d., Church rate at 3½d. in the £, 3s. 10½d.; Highway rate at 4½d in the £, 9s. 4½d and Shire Hall rate 4s. 8½d. Payments for the Garden in 1826 show a similar pattern, poor rate £1, highway rate 3s. and church rate 2s.

In addition to these rates he paid 4s. a year in market tolls and there are many entries of turnpike levies appearing under almost every heading in the accounts, and various national taxes paid twice a year through Messrs. Emerson & Chapman. for instance in 1819 for 64 windows, £19 17s 9d; 5 male servants and bailiff, £13 5s; hair powder duty, £1 3s. 6d; armorial bearing, £1 4s.

Rates and Taxes

	Farm	Estate	House Stables & Place	Total
1819	£36 1 6	£12 0 6	£110 0 0	£158 2 0
1820	£31 10 0	£11 14 9	£93 6 1	£136 10 10
1821	£33 14 6	£14 6 3½	£51 10 6	£99 11 3½
1822	£25 18 6	£15 10 7½	£49 0 11½	£90 10 1
1823	£32 8 9	£17 9 3	£51 8 8½	£101 6 8½
1824	£45 9 7½	£14 18 3½	£47 6 4	£107 14 3
1825	£41 16 10½	£13 12 9	£32 3 11½	£87 13 7
1826	£49 12 6	£17 8 0	£33 3 8½	£100 4 2½
1827	£52 8 4½	£14 11 6½	£32 19 7	£99 19 6

Poor Rate. Amount in the Pound

	1819	1820	1821	1827
January	-	-	-	1s
February	1s *	1s	1s	-
March	-	-	-	-
April	9d	6d	-	9d
May	-	-	9d	-
July	1s *	-	-	1s
August	-	1s	-	-
October	6d	-	-	-
November	-	6d	1s 1½d	3d

* the rate for the House is given as 6d in February and 9d for the woods in July.

These account books provide a wealth of information on the economics of a country estate and indicate the great variety of matters in which the owner took an interest. It is also interesting to look at the names of those receiving wages and other payments, and to follow them through the accounts.

Bicknell is a name which frequently appears. In the early years Daniel, William and Thomas are paying rent with the Shipton Cottagers; Daniel 26s 6d. a year for a garden, William 4s a year for land until 1825 when he is replaced by John, and Thomas 8s a year for land. In 1826 John paid 5s for half a hundred brushwood faggots and so did Ann Bicknell; was she the wife of one of the others? Throughout these years Ann received wages for work on the farm, mostly during haymaking; in 1819 5s 8d, 1824 39s 9d, 1827 34s 1½d. She also received a payment in October 1819 of 11s. for breeding a nest of pheasants and partridge. Perhaps she was Daniel's wife as he received most of his wages as a farm worker. In 1819 he was referred to as oxman and was paid for work with the team generally on the farm but occasionally for the estate, doing such things as hauling timber, and for the house when he haled coal, faggots and even dung from Tetbury for the garden. In 1824 he was referred to as shepherd but other payments made by the Estcourts to him suggest that he could look after all livestock on the farm:- November 1824, to D. Bicknell for 8 pigs, £4 9s; April the same year, to D. Bicknell for 4 gallons milk for lambs 2s 8d and October, to D. Bicknell milk for two calves weaned by him £3. The farm income shows D. Bicknell paying £8 for the rent of two cows each half year and also buying potatoes, in 1824 4s 6d a sack; wheat at 7s a bushel in 1825; four sheep that died in 1822 for 23s 4d and in the same year he paid £2 for a sow. There is also mention in the farm wages of Daniel Bicknell junior as ox boy, (almost certainly his son), Thomas Bicknell who took over as oxboy in the later years, and the Elizabeth Bicknell who did the dung shovelling and during the summer months got the usual women's rate for haymaking.

Another interesting person is Edward Reeves who was employed as a labourer with wages entered in all three sections usually at 1s 2d a day with frequent entries of "7d a day, unable to work on the roads". He was paying £7 a year rent but allowed £1 a year out of his rent. The Estcourts were very considerate to this employee and tenant but there is no indication why he merited these special arrangements. In 1824 an Edward Reeves junior appears in the list of wage earners on the farm and received 1s 4d a day in winter and 1s 6d in summer. He was also paying £2 10s a year rent for a house and 16s for land.

Poole is a name which appears frequently. At the beginning of this period Samuel Poole was paying £2 16s a year land rent and in 1825 Samuel Poole junior was paying the same amount; he had taken over his father's tenancy? Among the tenants of Newton cottages there was Edward Poole paying 36s a year. Samuel Poole was referred to as a mason and received payment for various building work. Samuel Poole junior received payment for work on the farm during haymaking. In 1819 a John Poole was paid for pointing a wall and two years later he was paid for the use of a horse to the Plough Inn.

These brief comments highlight some of the information to be found

in the accounts of a country estate on the life, character and interests of the owner and the lives of those living and working on the estate. There is much scope for speculation about the families who depended on the Estcourts and the parish records would probably clarify many points.

P. Bath

Sources

Glos. R.O., D1571 Account books, 1819-27.