

THE LORD COBHAM SURVEY OF UPTON ST. LEONARDS 1589

by John V. Ruffell

"The View of the Manr of Upton St. Leonards Taken the 21 Day of April in Anno Reigne Elizabeth 31st By Edward Mill Esq Srveyor to the Right Honrble Lord Cobham Lord of the same with the assistance of the tennants there according to his Honors warrant in that behalfe Directed"

The terrier prepared by Lord Cobham's surveyor, Edward Mill, formerly in Upton St. Leonards parish chest, is now in the keeping of the Gloucestershire County Record Office (1). Although originally prepared in 1589, it was copied on to foolscap paper in 1718; thumb-marks and the odd pencil note testify to its usefulness for reference purposes in later times. More recently it has been handsomely bound and the cover bears the lettering "The Manor of Upton St. Leonards 1589". The contents are as follows:

- Pps. 1 & 2 "The Table of the Second Survey"
(The list of landholders with the number of the page on which the description of their holdings begins)(2)
- P.2. "The View" as set down above as the opening paragraph of this paper and "The Circute" a description of the parish boundaries.
- Pps. 4 - 6 The tenants listed under two headings, "Libri Tenantes" and "Customary tenents".
- Pps. 7-119 The survey itself with a description of the dwellings and land held (3).
- P.126 A summary of the total acreage and a statement that the book was copied in 1718.
- P.127 A list of some of the names of the Elizabethan tenants and the present (1718) holders of the same land where known.
- Pps.128 &
129 blank
- Pps.130 -
135 "Terrier of Glebe lands and charities" (4)

At least one page is missing: on page 112 we have details of the holding of John White and on page 113 that of William Wyman, but in the index there appear, between these two names those of Thomas Seames and Thos. Woodcock De Barton Street.

Lord Cobham was the instigator of the plot to place Arabella Stuart on the throne instead of James I - "to kill the king and his cubs". Sir Walter Raleigh was implicated, and after a trial by Sir Edward Coke, "conducted with a ferocity perhaps unequalled in English courts of law until the time of Jeffreys and the 'Bloody Assize'" (5) he was condemned to death and imprisoned in the Tower. The Manor of Upton passed to Walter Paye and William Beale.

In the terrier there are forty-eight tenants named, including Thomas Seames and Thos. Woodcock, ten of whom were freeholders, thirty-five customary tenants and three not specified. Four people had holdings but no house, leaving forty-four householders if we include Seames and Woodcock. There are nine extra houses, belonging to various tenants, bringing the total to fifty-three. According to Sir Robert Atkyns (6) writing in 1712, there were in his time 110 houses in Upton and about 450 inhabitants "whereof 40 are freeholders". It is unlikely that the number of houses had more than doubled in 120 years, so that "the Manor" referred to in the title did not include all, but only one of the Upton manors, although the holdings described were scattered throughout the Parish, from "Prinknash pale" to "Sudmeade" (7) and included land now in the Barton area of Gloucester. As Atkyns wrote "... it is probable that the large Parish contains divers Mannors, which may help to explain the Intricacy ..."

Most tenants are listed as having "A Dwelling House" but there are variations, for example:

- "a faire mansion House freestone".
- "a Reasonable Dwelling House".
- "A fair Dwellinghouse well repaired".
- "a convenient Dwelling being built crossways"
- "a faire house newly and faire Built".
- "A Dwelling house Orderley built of Late".
- "A Dwelling house & watter mill in one end thereof a worke house & a shoppe".

Other property did not come up to these standards:-

- "And Old House in Decay".
- "he (Henry Whyteing) holdeth by Lease from ye Queen an Old Decayed house"
- "A Decayed Messuage"
- "A Little Cottage built on the waste adjoining the N.E. Corner of Mr. Bardnards Farm Ground" (8)

There follows a list of the outbuildings, the orchards and closes, and finally a careful description of the strips in the common fields. Finally the total area of pasture and arable land held by the tenant.

Unfortunately the descriptions of the houses give little detail, but it is possible to make certain deductions about their size, and, in a few cases, about their construction.

It can be assumed that the majority of the houses were half-timbered; it was probably during the sixteenth century that stone began to be used in house construction as timber became more scarce and expensive.

In three cases only is the material used in the houses mentioned. Heironimus Barnard had a "faire mansion House freestone", and Thomas Baylie "A faire Dwelling house well repaired & Under Built in much Part thereof with Stone" implying that the sole plates of the timber frame rested on a stone wall. This house also had "a Chimny of stone", an improvement that was appearing in the larger farmhouses, while cottages still had open fires, sometimes with a timber smoke hood. Balchaser Evenishe had a "Reasonable Dwelling House Tiled". It is noteworthy that these descriptions all occur amongst the first half dozen houses listed; it may well be that Edward Hill, who gave a detailed description of the size of the houses, the out-buildings, the closes around them, and the scattered strips in the fields, was primarily interested in rents and mentions only casually the three details of construction cited above. It would be strange if only one house had a tiled roof and one only stone footings, especially as this was a period when houses were being re-built and new houses constructed. Three new buildings are listed - a "cottage lately built", "a faire house newly and faire Built" and "A Dwelling house Orderly built of Late".

It is possible to obtain some idea of the size of the various houses because in most cases we are told how many bays there were, and how many of these were lofted.

No. of Bays	9	7	6	5	4	3	2
No. of dwellings	1	3	6	8	13	8	8

These figures, of course, can provide only a very rough guide for several reasons:

1. In some cases a bay could consist of two cross frames close together making a passage-way and not a room (9).
2. About ten of the buildings are described as having "buttends", some of them "lofted". Thus Elizabeth Nurse had "4 Bay & a buttend lofted being Hall and other necessary Rooms and one buttend unlofted & a wattermill in the one end of the sd. house in tother End a Kitchen & a buttend 2 Romes of the sd. Dwelling house being Lofted ..."
3. The descriptions of the buildings are not always clear, but it is evident that the kitchen was frequently a separate building (10). In six cases the kitchen is definitely described as "distant" or "distint".

William Grauntson had "A Dwelling house cont. 3 bays Lofted with Kitchen Distant cont. 2 Bay & a little Pigstie adjoining".

Thomas Baylie " ... 5 Bay 2 thereof Lofted with a chimney of stone in the midst with a Kitchen Distant & a Court thereunto adjoining".

John Bicke had a house of three bays "with a kitchen & Barne Distinct".

Henry Whyting possessed " ... a Kitchen & Other necessary Romes Distint".

On the other hand Thomas Carter had a "Reasonable Dwelling house ... a hall 3 chambers & kitchen".

It must be remembered that some rooms were used for storing corn, or were used as workshops.

In a few cases we gain a glimpse of the internal arrangement of the bigger houses. The most imposing must have been the dwelling of Hieronimus Barnard which is the only one to be described as a "faire mansion House, Freestone". This comprised a "Hall, Parlor, Buttery, Closett & other convenient Rooms also a Kitchen & Faire Malt house". According to M.W. Barley (11), the word "parlour" came into use in the Midlands for a ground floor room, which was used for entertainment, but always contained a bed. In the buttery were kept the butts or barrels for beer etc.

The dwelling house of Richard Rogers is described as having "4 Romes 2 thereof Lofted being the hall & Chambers". This would seem to be the common pattern for a medieval house. We are not told how many bays there were, but the house might well have consisted of a hall of perhaps two or three bays, with an extra bay at each end, each having one room up and one down. It is true that the four rooms are described as chambers, which M.W. Barley (12) states was "the only word for a bed-room", but in this instance the two upstairs rooms may have been bed-rooms, while the ground floor rooms were a parlour at one end and a service room at the other.

Thomas Carter's house was similar, having "4 Bay & 2 buttend being all Lofted containing a hall 3 Chambers & Kitchin"; Henry Whyteing's "Faire Dwelling" had "5 Bay all Lofted being a hall & other necessary Romes"; John Bond's (13) had "a hall nether chamber & Backhouse with 2 Romes Over the sd hall & chamber lofted"; Elizabeth Nurse "4 Bay & a buttend lofted being Hall & other necessary Romes & one buttend unlofted". In one case only, that of Anthony Rixe, there was "a hall & 3 or 4 sev.r.all p.titions being lofted".

In a few cases there are indications that trades or crafts were carried on in some houses in addition to farming. Margery Littleler's house had "3 Bay with a mill-house & a watter Mill in the end of the sd house ..." Thomas Woodcock J de le Mill had a dwelling with "4 bay one thereof lofted and in tother Bay thereof a water mill". John Thorne

had "A water Mill & a Dwelling house 4 Bay unlofted". William Barnes also had a "Dwelling house with a watter-mill in the end thereof". Those familiar with the rivers Twyver and Sudbrook, which run through Upton, may be surprised that they were able to drive water-mills. Both are no more than streams and there is no reason to believe that they were any bigger three hundred years ago (14). All three of the millers were also farmers: Margery Littleler had 31 acres, Thomas Woodcock Junior had 8 acres, William Barnes 13 acres and John Thorne had six acres.

Thomas Forte had a house of "3 Bay & a shopp adjoining cont. One Bay" and 13 acres of land. Presumably this was a workshop of some kind, but we are not told which (15).

Not only are we given these brief descriptions of the houses, but the outbuildings and closes are listed as well. These are similar in most cases as the requirements of the land-holders would be the same.

As we might expect, Hieronimus Barnard had not only an imposing house, but "2 Barnes whereof the one is very large Built of Freestone & covered with Tile".

Richard Rogers had "A Dwelling house a Barne in the end thereof w.th 2 buttends cont. 4 Romes 2 thereof lofted being the hall & Chambers with a Little sheep house distance".

Thomas Baylie had a "Barne & Oxhouse & one Wayne house distint with a hey or Backside & a little Paddock adjoining".

Henry Whyteing: "...also 2 Barnes Distinct with a stable in the end of one of Them And an Oxehouse in the end of Tother cont. one Bay & one Pigstie adjoining Also a wayne house distint cont. 1 Bay".

Anthony Rixe, amongst other buildings had "... one Barne & a shipping in the one end thereof".

John Cudd had "a Barne newley Built cont. 4 Bay on the end thereof Being a Beasts house".

Thomas Blisse had "... a stable a wayne house cont. 3 bay & a Pigeon house".

Finally, Margery Milton had a buttend to her house described as "being a stable and a Little Old Cowhouse".

There were also "closes" or "heys" near the farms. Anthony Rixe had "a hey Orchard & Close there adjoining called Furr house close"; Margery Littleler "mill hey Orchard & Garden adjoining"; David Vaughan "a hey orchard cherry hey (16) & little close adjoining called the Croft"; Thomas Woodcock Sen "... a wayne house with a Volt hey, woodhey 3 little orchards & a Grēne adjoining".

Thomas Blisse " ... a Pigeon house with the heys Garden & Orchard".

Humphrey Roberts " ... a volt hey a little Orchard & cherry hey ... Also one sheephouse over the way cont. 5 Bay with a Volt hey & fair Garden adjoining".

With regard to the size of the farms belonging to the householders, there are three groups. The smallest, four in number, had an acre or less: John Window had one rood only, although his dwelling was " ... Orderley built of late 3 Bay, 2 lofted". William Dandie and Mr. Walker each had four "dayworks" (17) each; both lived in little dwelling houses of 2 bays only so that it is possible that they were labourers, a growing class in Elizabethan times.

The second group, the majority of the tenants, had holdings of 10 acres or more, six of them over 50 acres. Hieronimus Barnard of the "faire mansion" was the largest landholder with 79 acres, but there is a rough correlation only between the size of the farm and the number of bays in the farm-house. The other five had houses with 5, 6, 4, 5, and 9 bays. As overall the largest group of houses was that with four bays, it seems that, as might be expected, the bigger land holders had houses above the average size. On the other hand eight people with houses of more than four bays has less than fifty acres of land, but one only with less than twenty acres.

The third group was composed of those who seem to have been engaged in some trade and might have been expected to hold less land. Four were millers, but of these Margery Littler had 31 acres, the others 8, 13 and 6. Thomas Forte who had a "shopp", probably a workshop, had 13 acres. The most intriguing is Mary Milton, who is described as a "Fishmager"; she had only 3 roods of land.

It is evident that at the end of the sixteenth century, the manor at Upton had largely preserved its traditional character, with the tenants holding most of their land in strips in some twenty common fields (18). The houses, on the other hand, seem to have been in a stage of transition. Many were still of the medieval pattern, with a hall and chambers and a sparate external kitchen. One or two were "ruinous" or "decayed" and probably about to be replaced. A few were "lately built" or "newly and faire built". In three cases stone is mentioned: Hieronimus Barnard's "faire mansion House freestone", Balchaser Evenishe's house was tiled and Thomas Baylie's was "well Repaired & Under Built in much part thereof with stone with a chimney of stone in the midst". As materials used in the construction of the other houses is not mentioned, we may assume that the majority were timber framed with thatched roofs, at least eight or nine of which still survive.

Footnotes & References

1. P 347 MI 1
2. As this is a copy of an older document which almost certainly had a different pagination, these page numbers differ from the originals. It is possible of course that the entire index was a useful addition by the clerk who made the copy.
3. The first six pages are unnumbered and the seventh is page 1.
4. This is almost certainly a 1718 addition to the original as it states in one place "In Bondend, Wid. Erenice, one House & Orchard since the Restauration".
5. Godfrey Davis, The Early Stuarts (1937)
6. Sir Robert Atkyns, The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire (1712).
7. Sudmeadow "within the Parish of Hempstead" was inclosed in 1814: 54 Geo III.
8. It is interesting to note that there is still a small group of cottages in the middle of Upton common at Sneedham's Green, but none of these date back to 1589, and this common is not the "waste" referred to here. There are still Barnards living in Upton.
9. A "bay" may be defined as the space between the principal rafters holding the building together across its span. See Richard Harris, Discovering Timber Framed Buildings (1978) p.5.
10. Ibid.
11. The House and The Home (1963 & 1971).
12. Ibid.
13. Of the family which probably gave its name to the part of Upton St. Leonards still called Bondend.
14. There are still three mills, all within one mile, on the Twyver in Upton. One is partly half-timbered and may be one of those described above.
15. In John Smith's Men & Armour for Gloucestershire, 1608, there is listed a Richard ffort Taylor. As Richard was about twenty years old, he may well have been the son of Thomas, who may also have been a tailor.
16. Cherry heys or orchards are frequently mentioned, but there are none in Upton today, although there are still old cider and perry orchards.
17. I. Norden in The Surveiors Dialogue (1610), p.138, explains "You must know, that there goe 160 perches to one acre, 80 perches to halfe an acre, 40 perches to one roode, which is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre, ten daies worke to a roode, foure perches to a daies worke, 18 foote and a halfe to a perche".

measurement "was rarely used outside Kent and Essex ... but it ceased to be used after about 1615". Lord Cobham lived in Kent and it would seem that his surveyor, Edward Mill, naturally used this measurement when he came to make his survey of the manor at Upton.

8. At the time of the Inclosure in 1897 there were still fourteen open fields. Some of those listed in the Cobham terrier, such as Tredworth and Ryecroft, were enclosed earlier and absorbed into the city of Gloucester.