CHARLTON KINGS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

BULLETIN 25

CHARLTON KINGS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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1. THE PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN SITE AT VINEYARDS FARM

Background

The position of the site, discovered in 1980, is on the west slope of a promontory projecting north-west from the Cotswolds escarpment at c. 750 ft O D (Fig. 1). It lies within the parish of Charlton Kings, whose boundary crosses Wistley Hill on the slope above the site. The outlook is impressive with a view to the north-west across the Severn Vale to the Malverns. Closer at hand it dominates the Lilley Brook valley. A new farmhouse was built in 1979-80 on a small level platform below a steep scarp c. 80 m. high, and it is here, at SO 973186, that the archaeological finds were made. Above the scarp the top of the promontory is level enough to be cultivated. This field is bordered on three sides by steep cliff-like edges, so it has some features of an Iron Age promontory camp. However, as yet, no finds or features have been discovered to positively identify it as a hillfort.

The geology of the escarpment is very disturbed with much slipping and slumping of the rock and clay. Details cannot be gone into here, but one important result may be that in Roman times there may have been a spring on the site, possibly under the beech tree (Fig. 2). This theory is supported by the name of the field just below the steep scarp - Hill Spring Piece, whilst further down the slope, where a spring emerges now, we have the name 'Hill Spring'. Geological movement of the rock-bands has also affected the Roman buildings and other features on the site, a fissure having been created along the bottom of the steep slope.

A good example of the slumping of Middle Lias clay is seen below the old farmhouse. In the irregular banks running across the slope very disturbed lynchets or terracing may be discerned. Were these formed by ploughing or were they for vine-growing? The name Vineyards occurs quite frequently in Gloucestershire, eg., in Winchcombe, at Alstone in Cheltenham and at Over near Gloucester. It is accepted that there were sites where vines were cultivated in the 12th and 13th centuries. The name in this form does not derive directly from Latin but is English in immediate origin. Vine growing has not yet been proved in Roman Britain, though it has been found in northern Gaul, near Trier for example, where an excavation in the Mosel valley has produced evidence of vats etc., indicating wine production.

Excavation

Barbara and I were called in to look at the building operations when the new farmhouse had been constructed. Mr J.G. Norman, the then owner of Vineyards Farm, had realized that the platform ledge on which he was building had archaeological deposits. A column and pottery had been identified as Roman. To begin with we observed, as service trenches were dug across the site, and mounds of soil and debris were moved by JCB. From this came pottery of the 1st to 4th centuries AD. When the main building operations were finished, I began to plan archaeological excavation in selected areas, chiefly where further construction or alterations were to take place. Much help was given by Mr. Norman in moving soil by machine. The investigation of the site continued for four years from the spring of 1980, from which date we worked at the site on summer evenings and at weekends. We were helped by occasional volunteers, and of course the Norman family. In November 1984 we covered up all exposed features such as walls with soil and left the site. Subsequent years have been devoted to the recording of the finds, which are being cared for in Cheltenham Museum, and to publication. Interim reports were published in Glevensis 16 (1982) and 17 (1983), but the full report will appear in the Transactions of

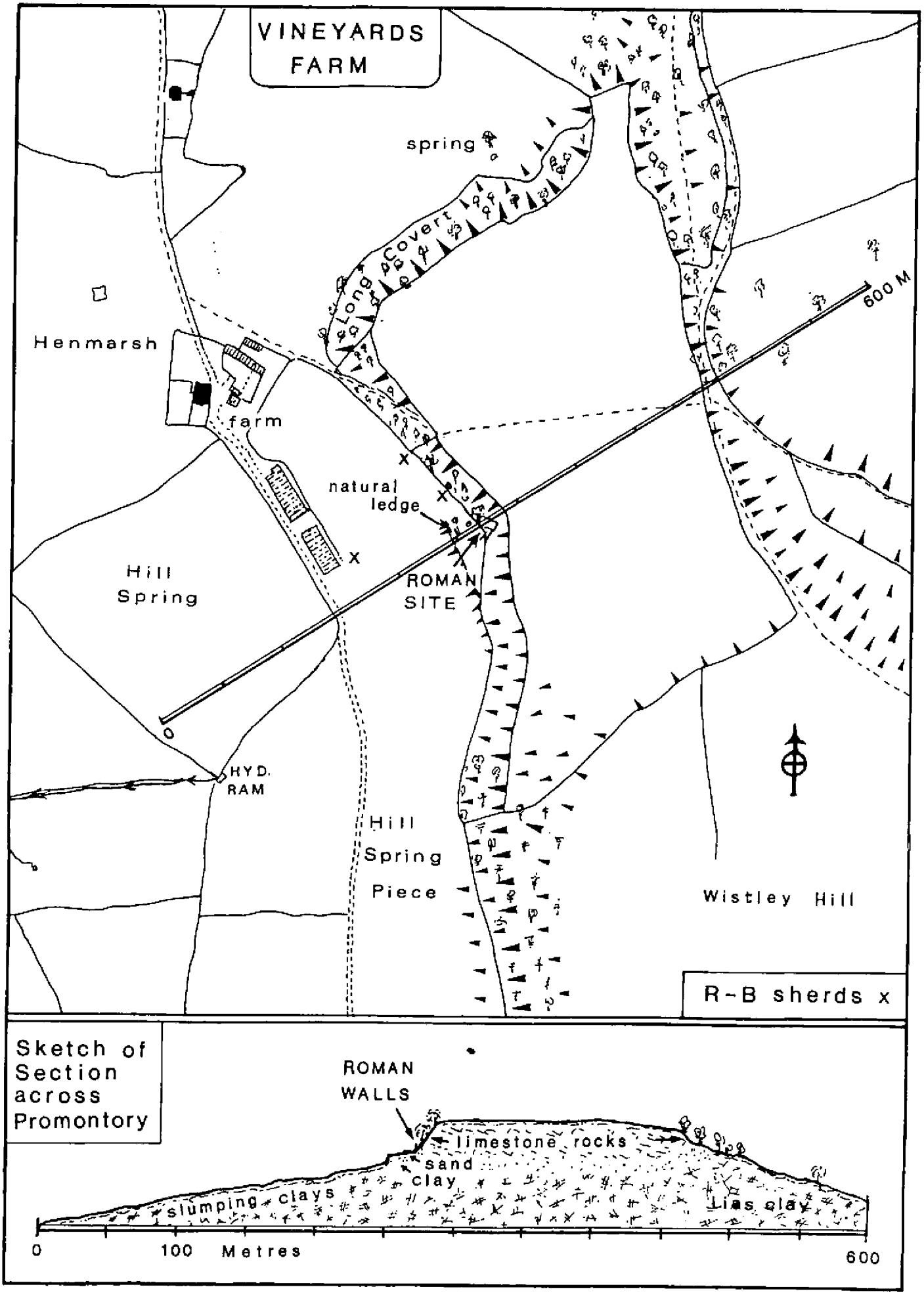


Fig. 1. Location of the Archaeological Site

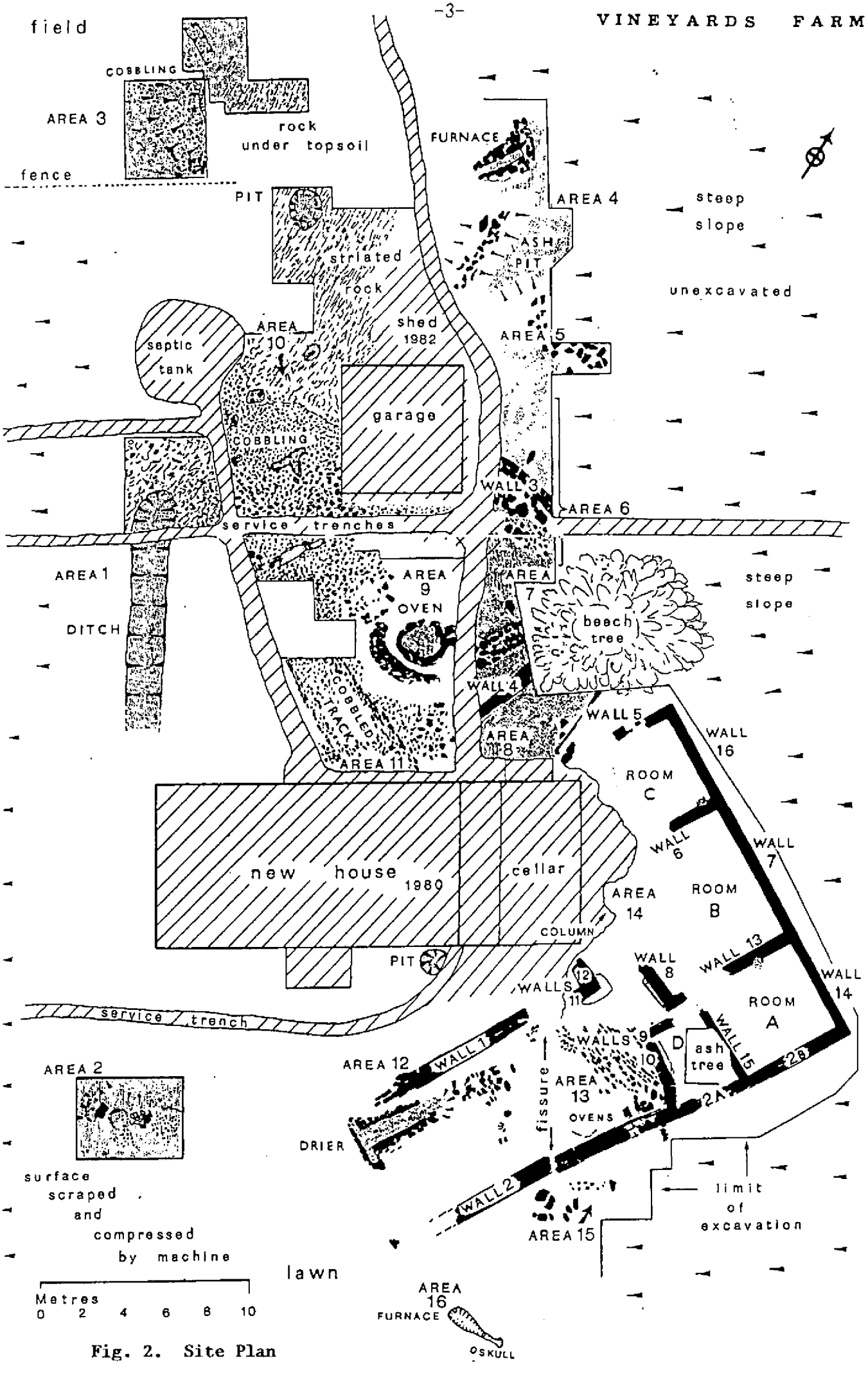


Fig. 2. Site Plan

the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 109 (1991). This will contain all the details of the buildings and other features discovered, with descriptions of objects found in the excavation.

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The earliest find was a small part of a Bronze Age urn. Little can be inferred from a single piece like this; and one has to pass on to the Middle Iron Age for evidence of a positive feature. This was a pit with the sherds of a small bowl in it. With pottery of this type, hand-made with much grit in the fabric, it is difficult to decide whether the pot is Iron Age or Neolithic in date. It is safer to place it in the Iron Age, say about 300 to 200 BC, because after this date there follows further pottery evidence for pre-Roman occupation. This prehistoric pit was just south of the new farmhouse. Fig. 2 also shows a pit found in the north-west part of the site near the gate into the field. It contained sherds of black cooking-pots with a shiny surface of late Iron Age type and no Roman artefacts. We can date this to the first half of the 1st century AD. These finds suggest that there was a small native Dobunnic settlement on the platform ledge before the Romans arrived.

EARLY ROMAN PERIOD

One of the important discoveries at Vineyards Farm was an early Roman ditch (Fig. 2, Area 1) which may have been part of an enclosure or fortlet. Dating evidence came from early Roman pottery and brooches found both in the ditch and other areas of the site; also from a scatter of 'native ware' of late prehistoric to early Roman date. This showed occupation before AD 70 and is probably the nearest we can get, positive proof being almost unobtainable, to continuity from the Iron Age. The Roman presence may have been a small military detachment placed on an Iron Age site before the advance to the west. The northern Dobunni are thought to have been friendly to the Romans (Cassius Dio IX, 19-20) and may have accepted protection against any hostility by the Silures across the Severn. However, apart from a spearhead and a dagger, no objects found have a military connotation, which leaves the above suggestion of a military force on the site somewhat speculative.

ROMANO-BRITISH PERIOD

Buildings

Occupation continued in the hundred years from the mid-2nd century (by which time the ditch had filled with debris and was probably forgotten) to the second half of the third century. At sometime within this period, or possibly a little earlier, the first building in stone was constructed. From finds of abraded box-tiles we know that there existed at least one room with a hypocaust heating system. These tile fragments could have come from a bath-house, which one would expect attached to, or near, a substantial stone building. The evidence for this structure may have been lost under the new farmhouse, or remain unrevealed under the large beech tree. The latter position is where it is surmised from the direction of Walls 3 and 4, with their adjacent tracks, that a possible water supply was available (Fig. 2).

The walls revealed by excavation are from two structures: Building I on the level platform; and Building II set into the steep slope of the scarp. The evidence for Building I comes from the foundation courses of Walls 1 and 2. These walls were plastered and painted on the internal side. The colour on both was chiefly yellow, suggesting a scheme for one large room. No vestiges of the floor remained; nor were there any signs of partition walls. Presumably all this had been robbed, or destroyed by earth movements. The line of Wall 2

was broken and distorted where it crossed the geological fissure at the bottom of the steep slope. Archaeological evidence that Wall 10 (the fallen wall) overlay Wall 2 indicates that Building II was constructed later than Building I.

Building II is the building set into the slope of the steep hillside which had been cut into to form a ledge about 6m wide at the south-east end. The north-west end of the building probably projected forward, possibly with another small room equivalent to Room D, thus producing a rectangular outline for a building measuring approximately 18 by 9 metres. This presupposes a verandah between the two small projecting rooms and makes a symmetrical building of five rooms, the largest of which was Room B, measuring 6.7 by 4.3 metres. All along the front of the building and in the forward part of Rooms A and B were piles of limestone roof tiles, some complete, and some retaining square-sectioned nails preserved in the fixing holes. They were made from 'Stonesfield Slate' which occurs on the summit of the escarpment to the south-east and across the Chelt on the south end of the Cleeve massif above Whittington.

Room A had the highest surviving wall, just over 2 m in the south-east corner. All four walls had evidence of coloured plaster. Wall 2B (Fig. 2) had been replastered and painted at least four times, suggesting some years of occupancy. Many colours were used; for details of the plastering see the specialist report in TBGAS 109 (forthcoming). The most interesting feature in Room A was the fireplace, 60 cm wide and surviving to 85 cm in height. The backing was made of 15 layers of close-set flat stones framed by upright tiles set into the wall. It curved inwards so that it was set back 30 cm into the wall in the centre. There was evidence of heat on the backing stones and in the hearth below, where the broken slabs of the hearth extended 55cm into the room.

There was also a fireplace in Room C, similar but in poor condition, and there may have been one in Room B. Fireplaces are unusual, and no others have been found in Gloucestershire as yet. They have been found in several villas in Hampshire and two or three occur in Somerset. It is not known if, in the manner in which they were built in Roman houses, their use was purely functional. They may have had a religious connotation being regarded as shrines (as occurs in houses in Pompeii and other sites in the Empire). In the Roman world objects or features may have had no division between ritual and practical use. In more modern times these functions tend to be kept separate. However, having said this, it looks as if the occupants of Building II, having no hypocaust heating, must have relied on the fireplaces for heating. This was probably quite effective as the rooms set into the hillside had protection from the north and east winds.

Room B produced the largest block of plaster with a design of two sets of red linear bands meeting at an angle of about 54°. Between the converging lines the scheme incorporated a row of circular blobs, and in the angle between, a plant motif in green with red flowers(?). The latter is very hazily depicted, but may have represented an iris or lily. The edge of this block of plaster was chamfered on one long edge, as if for an opening in a wall, whilst on the other edge, leading away from the point of convergence, tiny remnants of plaster indicate a turning at right angles in the opposite direction. It is possible that we have a hint of an opening above the centre of Wall 7 (the back wall against the steep slope). Also we may have a clue as to the shape of the roof, which is not known for certain.

Wall 8 (Fig. 2) is probably part of the south-west wall of Room B, this side of the room having slipped down the slope. Stone slabs had been cemented on to the top of Wall 8. This is thought to be a doorway, especially as there was a step on the outside of the wall.

Room C had mostly eroded down the slope, a deep cavity below being full of finds including roof tiles, part of a stone cornice and other building debris. The wall between this room and Room B (Wall 6) had a blocked doorway, the only sign of alteration to the building apart from redecoration of plastered surfaces. This wall had a fireplace near where it butted on to the long back wall. The stone slabs were much shattered by intense heat. It was similar to the fireplace in Room A except there was no frame of tiles to the backing, which had larger rougher stones. It was damaged by later movements of the wall.

A stone table of a type sometimes found in villas was found in the north corner of Room C (and of the building). These tables have a recessed top like a rectangular tray with thick sides which usually have chip-carved decoration. Parts of these have in the past been wrongly interpreted as the lintels or posts of a doorway. The Vineyards Farm table, which is reconstructed from pieces, is unusual in having no decoration on its edges. It may have had a single stone leg, though being found in the corner, was it supported between the two wall surfaces? Four or five of these tables have been found at Chedworth. They have an obvious practical use, but may also have a ritual significance, their shape having possibly been derived from a type of altar.

Room D was a small room, which was not fully excavated because an ash tree was left growing there to preserve the stability of the slope. The entrance to the room was probably through Wall 9, a small part of the bottom course of which was left and had stone tiles cemented on to form a sill. Wall 10 was a solid outside wall, the foundations of which had slipped off the terrace causing the upper courses to topple over and fall almost intact onto the cobbled area below. The excavation of this area was undertaken before the building above, and produced some vital information, in that, under the fallen wall lay the stone tiles from the roof, and under them an ashy deposit which produced three coins dated AD 330 to 345. Under this again were worn cobbles, which had been laid on a level area of yellow clay on which various outdoor activities had taken place. There was a succession of baking ovens, and a platform of stone blocks, very burnt, which may have been a stand for a water tank.

A verandah or porch is thought to have run from Room D to a similar room extending out on supports from Room C. The slipped blocks of Walls 11 and 12 may have been part of this verandah/porch or part of Room B's west-facing wall The main entrance to the building, with steps up to Wall 8, could have been here. Because of the disturbance from geological earth movements and probable robbing of stonework, this is rather hypothetical! The column was found near here (Fig. 2). This may have been intended for placing on a parapet running along the front of the building. The column (see Charlton Kings Bulletin 7) is of the correct size for this purpose, or for use on a plinth for a porch. However it bears no evidence of use; the stone is askew to the base and tapers; and the base has been shaped like a capital. Possibly also it broke off short in the making. Was it a mason's reject?

Outside Building II, within the area of Building I (then probably in ruins) a drying oven was built. This was a standard T-shaped corndrier as found on many villa or settlement sites. The theory is that, in the 4th century, when the climate is supposed to have become wetter, they were used for drying grain. It has been disputed that such ovens were suitable for grain-drying and it has been suggested that malting took place. Stone slabs, or at Vineyards Farm probably roof tiles, were placed across the flue-channel, with the furnace lit at the open end. A draught would waft the smoke and heat so as to come out at an opening in one of the crossbars of the T. In this way a gentle heat would dry whatever was placed on the slabs. A shelter would be necessary to protect the drier from rain; possibly provided by a roof of thatch or tiles on a timber frame. In the 4th century some parts of the walls of Building I may have remained standing to help provide this shelter.

To the north of the new farmhouse there was a courtyard with a track leading away to the north-west (towards the old farmhouse). Another baking oven was found beside this cobbled area near the bottom of the steep slope, with some of the burnt slabs and part of the circular wall around it remaining in situ. Two furnaces were found, one at the north end of the site, and the other south of the buildings. Both displayed the use of intense heat. Their purpose is not known for certain, but the southern one may have been used for smelting metal ore.

END OF ROMAN PERIOD

If it were possible to date the major earth movement which must have caused Building I to collapse, we would have a date before which Building II could not have been built. Because earth movements are impossible to date, except on a geological timescale, one has to postulate from archaeological evidence. From coins found both on the floor of Room A and, more significantly, under the fallen part of Wall 10, it can be estimated that Building II was occupied until about AD 365. A date for its erection at the start of the 4th century would allow time for a period of occupation during which replastering took place at least three times on some of the walls and the blocking of the doorway between Rooms B and C occurred. During this phase of occupation activities also took place in the area of Building I, now in ruins. Ovens and the corn-drier were set up and used, resulting in the accumulation of deposits full of ash and debris. As all this activity took place over at least a decade or two, added to the time taken to plan and construct Building II on its terrace, one can suggest a date at the beginning of the 4th century for construction. In this period there was a surge in building and rebuilding in the Cotswold area. This means that the geological disturbance which caused the fissure probably happened some time in the 3rd century, perhaps towards its end. It is probable that earth movements occurred at other times either as sudden events or perhaps in the nature of slow slipping or slumping after extreme weather conditions. One such occurrence may have caused Building II to collapse at the end of the 4th century.

Building II was unusual in various ways. Firstly, although other Romano-British buildings have been found which are on levelled foundations, none are known locally which have been set into such a steep slope as at Vineyards Farm. Secondly, although all the rooms had fine plastered and coloured walls, Vineyards buildings had no tesselated floors - not a single tessera was found on the site. Thirdly, there were fireplaces in two rooms, with no sign of hypocaust heating, the floors being of mortar-cement. Fourthly, the building was small by villa standards. For the above and other reasons, such as the lack of a bath-house, the term villa has been avoided.

In the south-east corner of Room A where the walls were set into the hill-slope they survive up to a height of 9 ft. There may have been a verandah along the front of the building with an entrance, possibly with a porch in front of Wall 8. This wall was on a rock foundation which had moved bodily down the slope. Other walls had broken off or had collapsed with the stonework dispersed leaving us to speculate on the original plan of the front of the building with its magnificent view to the north-west.

Abandonment of the site is difficult to pin down chronologically. Two local factors may have influenced this; further geological disturbance, and the lack of a water supply; factors which could be connected, in that a disturbance of the underlying rock-beds could have caused the spring water to emerge further down the slope, leaving the site dry as it is now. Apart from this the occupants may have become fed up with constant rebuilding! and moved off. However, coins of Valens, AD 364-75, found on the courtyard cobbling, suggest some sort of occupation, perhaps within the ruins, towards the end of the 4th

century. Occupation may have continued into the 5th century, the period when many rural sites were deserted because of the breakdown of law and order; with roving bands in the countryside and trade disrupted. There is no evidence at the Vineyards Farm site for further occupation until the recent building of the new farmhouse on what was at that time part of an arable field.

FINDS

The principal finds of objects have been listed, described and illustrated in the full report, which includes an analysis of the wall plaster. The following are the most interesting pieces of stonework; the column; a small piece from another column; parts of two cornices, from either end of Building II; a finial of unusual shape, found below Room B; the stone table; and many shaped pieces and blocks of limestone. There is a description of the numerous stone roof tiles and the different sorts of clay tile are tabulated. This is followed by the metal finds: 27 coins, all late Roman; six brooches and other objects in bronze (copper alloy). All are illustrated, including three pages of iron objects. There was the usual scatter of miscellaneous finds such as a few spindle whorls, several glass vessels and parts of 27 querns or grinding stones.

Amongst the finds was a piece of marble which came from a quarry in the Pyrenees. Pieces of this green-veined marble are rarely imported to Britain. Where they do occur, they have been found on early Roman sites such as Fishbourne and Silchester. The only piece recorded in Gloucestershire was found at Woodchester villa. The Vineyards piece is 95mm long by 35mm wide. It has been identified by Mr G. Boon, editor of the B & G Transactions, as being used as a palette for grinding medicaments for pills, ointments, etc. It is a bit strange to find it at Vineyards Farm, where it turned up in a rubbish deposit near the northern furnace. Perhaps it came from Gaul with the 1st century samian ware found on the site, some of which was found nearby.

The other interesting import was 'Early Lezoux Ware'. This pottery was made at Lezoux in Central Gaul, where in the middle of the 1st century the potters were trying to copy high quality vessels being produced in South Gaul (some of which were found at Vineyards Farm). Early Lezoux ware has a soft friable paste full of mica platelets. It was not until the end of the 1st century that the Lezoux potters managed to compete in quality by producing the hard red ware with a fine glossy surface that we call 'samian'. Only two vessels of Early Lezoux Ware were found on the site. It is, however, rare; with some occurring at other early Roman sites such as Fishbourne; the nearest being at Bagendon, the Iron Age precursor of Cirencester.

SUMMARY

This account is not comprehensive, but I hope I have made prominent the important features of the archaeological site. In the Iron Age Vineyards Farm was probably a pleasant, fairly secure place for a small settlement – perhaps only for an extended family. In the early Roman period I think there was some contact between the natives and the Roman presence fairly soon after the Roman army arrived in the Cirencester area. This would allow for the early samian pottery to find its way to the site before the end of the 1st century, by which time Romanised products would have been traded in normal channels. The idea of an early Roman phase is strengthened if the V-shaped ditch is part of a fortlet or defensive enclosure. The Iron Age to Roman site at Wycomb, Andoversford also had early samian and other pottery, and may have been under the same influences at this time. Wycomb, however, was different in that, both in the Iron Age and Roman period it was a much larger settlement, ending up in the 3rd and 4th centuries as a small town.

The Fireplace in Room A.
One metre scale.

Wall 6 in Room B on left. Room A to the right.

The back wall in the remains of Room C.

Wall 2 showing the dislocation
where the fissure crossed.

Room B; south-east corner.

In these later centuries the inhabitants at Vineyards probably used Wycomb as their local market centre as would people living in the two villas at Whittington and in the farmsteads around. About two and a half miles to the south-west lay Dryhill villa which had a similar position on the slopes of the escarpment to Vineyards Farm with an outlook over the Severn Vale. The building there (excavated in 1849 by W.H. Gomonde and Capt. Bell), although called a 'villa rustica', had some rooms with mosaic floors and had a larger house than that at Vineyards. There are many other Romano-British sites in the locality discovered by observing pottery and other objects on ploughed fields. Two of these sites are near Seven Springs and three others towards Upper Coberley. Whether this cluster of settlements had any special relationship to Vineyards is not known, but there must have been contact. Unfortunately apart from the fact of occupation and an approximate date, not much more can be found out from a scatter of potsherds. Vineyards looked out over its small valley to the lands under the spread of present day Cheltenham. Only two small Romano-British sites have, as yet, been found within this quite large area.

Every settlement in the landscape must have been engaged in agriculture to some extent. Undoubtedly the Vineyards site was a farmstead, but was it something else as well? The finds of many quern stones and the drying oven indicate that produce was brought in from the lands around. Farm buildings may lie undiscovered, perhaps buried under clay and stone rubble at the bottom of the steep slope, a few metres to the north where some potsherds were found. Was Building II lived in by an overseer who organised a large estate below? If a verandah had been added, with possibly a porch with a finial on the roof above, this small building would have presented a striking facade to those below in the valley. The site at Vineyards Farm may have been some sort of minor control centre for trade, taxes or cultural matters for the small settlements around. Unfortunately, archaeology is unlikely to give us a direct answer to such questions and I leave it to others to propose bolder interpretive theories!

BERNARD RAWES

2. VINEYARDS FARM, NOW OLD VINEYARDS FARM (Cheltenham manor)

After early occupation, this site was deserted till about the 12th century when a vineyard was started on this sunny slope. But deterioration in climate and competition from Gascon wines led to a decline in home wine making in the 14th century; it was no longer profitable, whereas c.1380-1420 there was a flourishing export trade in corn shipped out of Gloucester. So the land was turned over to corn, hence traces of ridge and furrow. But the name 'Vineyards' stuck. It is found in Cheltenham court book in 1599, when men were appointed to view the hedge between Milkewell (the open field under Niffnedge or Knife-Edge) and 'le Wyniarde'. (GRO D 855 M 7 f 130).

The 1617 survey of Cheltenham manor shows that Samuel Ridgedalle held a 10 acre close called Wynegards. There is no suggestion of a dwelling on the close. The court book for the mid 17th century is missing - if we had it, it would probably show Samuel's heirs surrendering this close to use of the Pates family.

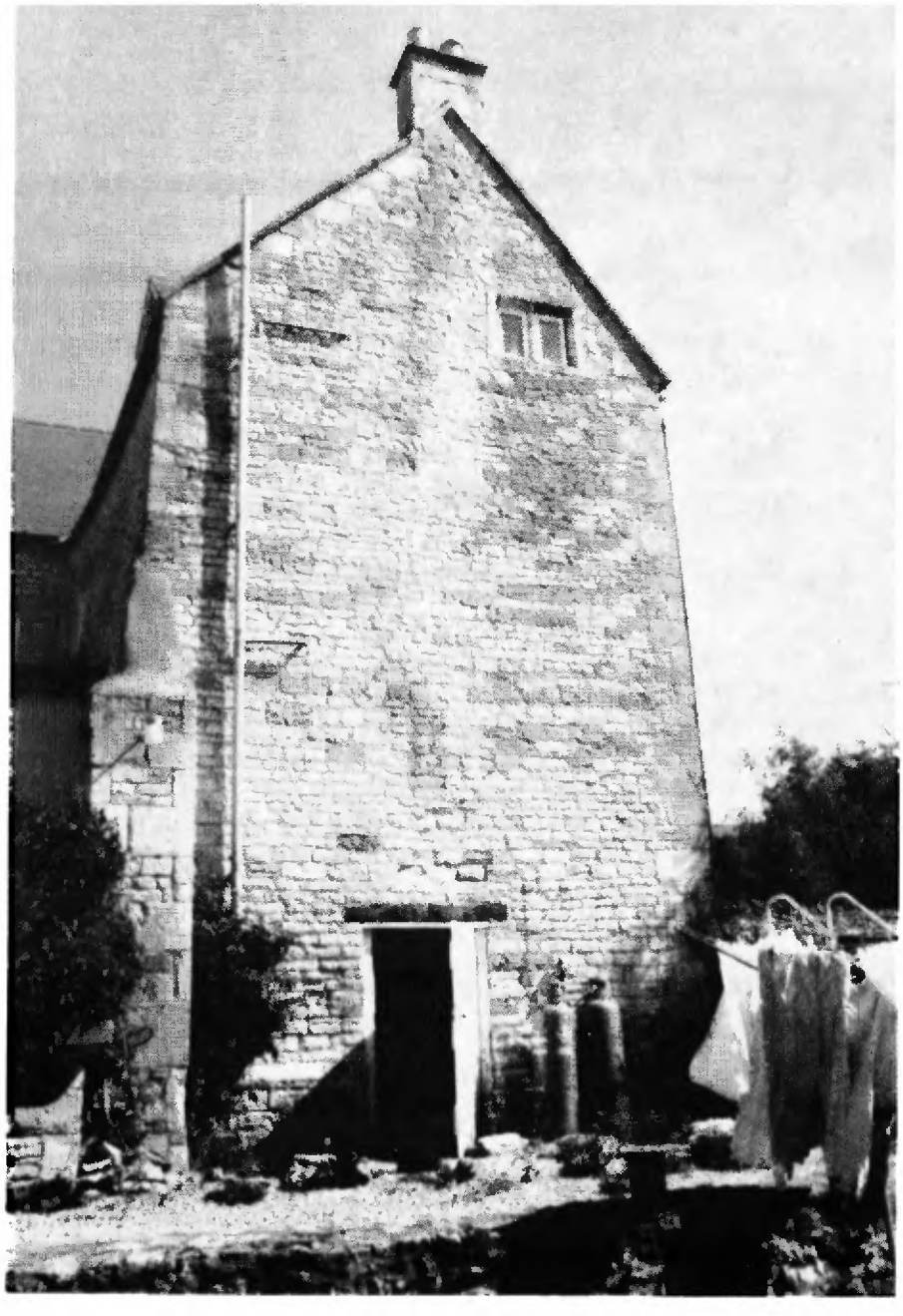
On 27 April 1723, Bedford Pates gentleman surrendered to use of Thomas Bastin a close of pasture called Winegard (GRO D 855 M 14 p 172). Again, there is no hint of any house here, not even a barn. Cows were usually milked in the pasture during the summer months. Most milk was turned into cheese and one might have found a dairy at Vineyards - liquid milk is difficult to carry and the Bastins lived some distance away, in a messuage at Up End alongside the present New Inn or Little Owl. But there is no evidence for a dairy.

In 1738 Thomas Bastin mortgaged his property to raise £300; and with this money he seems to have built a new farm at the Vineyards. Many Charlton tenants were moving out of the village area in the 17-18th centuries because they were gradually increasing their dairy herds and the cows had to be milked twice a day.

Then on 11 April 1746, Thomas Bastin and Elizabeth his wife sold to William Prinn gentleman of Forden House (later Charlton Park) all the land bought from Henry Cleeveley in 1717 and the land bought from Bedford Pates in 1723 "and also all that messuage or dwellinghouse, barn, stable, and curtilege lately erected by the said Thomas Bastin on part of the premises which were of the said Bedford Pates---" (GRO D 855 M 14 p.419; M 15 p.101).

The site is protected from the east wind by rising ground behind but exposed to the west and north. Seen from a distance, the house rides on a shelf of the hillside, with ground falling away steeply on two sides. This explains why the front looks south and why there were originally only two windows (now only one) on the west end of the main building, with three small windows on the east.

The barn now standing may be the one surrendered to Prinn in 1746.



West End Wall - Linda Hall's photograph.

Barn

The Charlton Park estate was broken up after Sir William Russell's bankruptcy in 1874. Vineyards passed to the ownership of Mr and Mrs H.O. Lord of Lilleybrook.

About that time, a store room or back kitchen was added to the house. The wall does not look like Sir William Russell's building (compare Old Dole and Old Coxhorne), but it seems to have been there by 1886 (25" OS).

Then after the 1st War, the Lilleybrook estate in its turn was up for sale. The first sale particulars c.1919 (GRO D 4858/2/3) describes The Vineyards as a "Typical Old Fashioned Stone-built Cotswold Farm House" with 326 acres. It had drawing room, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, back kitchen, and dairy downstairs, and 4 bedrooms and attics upstairs. Outbuildings included the stone and stone-tiled barn and granary, and a stonebuilt stable for 4 with loft over and forge adjoining, so at Vineyards the farmer had been in the habit of attending to his own shoeing and repairs to ironwork, rather than trailing down to the village. It seems that the farm did not sell, for it was offered again on 23 June 1921 and withdrawn at £11,250. Then the tenant was given notice to quit on 29 September 1921 and the farm was offered again but this time with only 101 acres, the rest being divided into 20 lots "sites for Country Residences, Bungalows, Poultry and Fruit Farms and Small Holdings" (GRO D 4858/2/5). Development right up the Cirencester Road was planned. Fortunately it never took place.

About 1939, Vineyards was added to Northfield and Ryeworth farms as a Gloucestershire Dairy farm.

Tenants

The name "I.Beale 1751" cut into a stone in the present dining-room (obviously not in its original place) suggests that Prinn's first tenant here may have been a member of the Beale family who had been Grevill tenants of the Ashley manor court house at East End (see Bulletin 13). For a generation the Beales

had moved out of Charlton; "Robert Beale of Stooke" (probably Stoke Orchard) was brought back here to be buried on 8 March 1712/13. It would not be surprising to find them coming back permanently and I. (?John) taking a lease of Vineyards. There are other initials on this stone, apparently J.Wil--- 17---" which cannot be read with certainty.

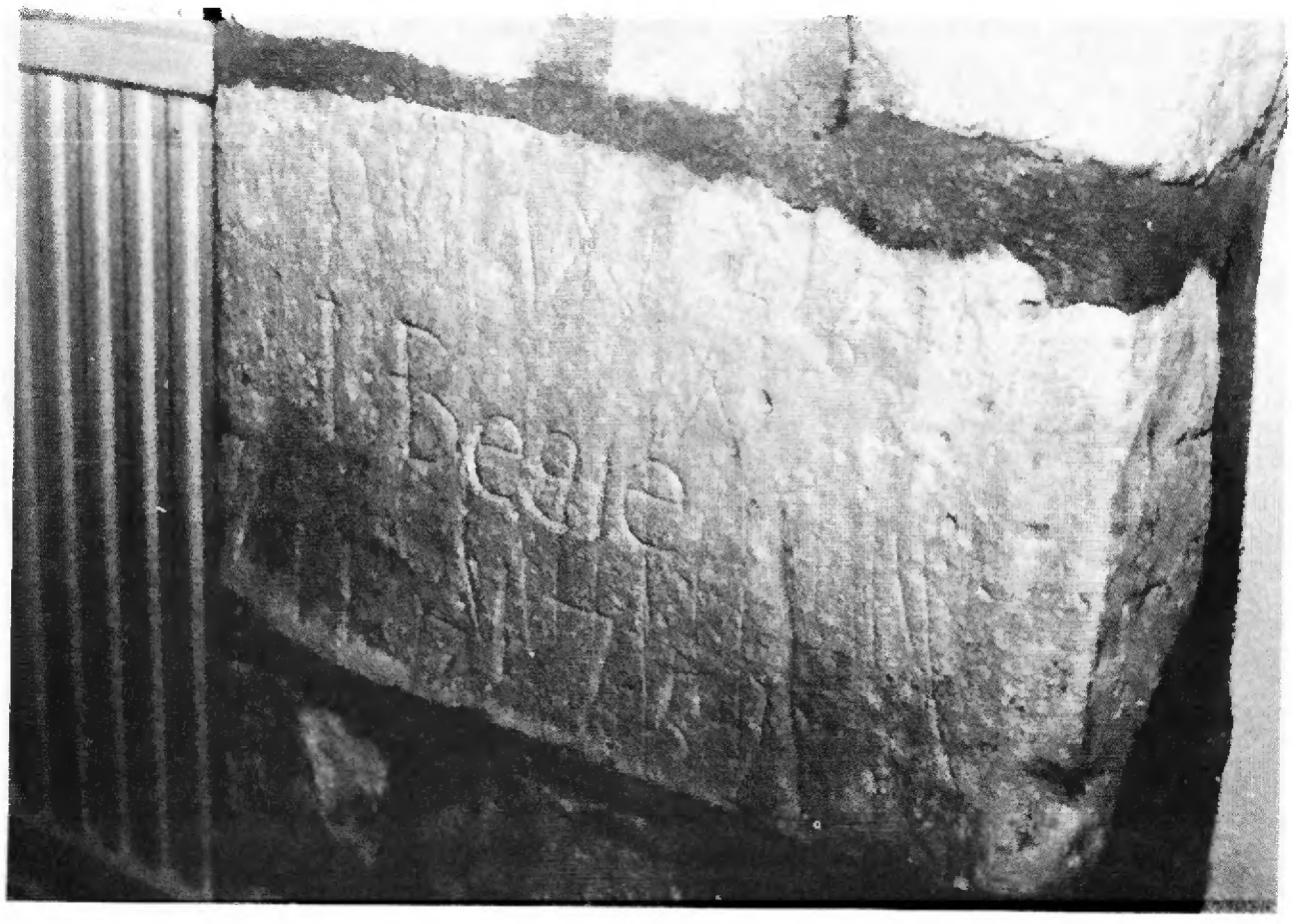
The next tenant known is William Finch, there by 1795. He died in 1822 when his will dated 1 February 1816 was proved by his eldest son Thomas. By the date of the first register of electors in 1832-3, Samuel Herbert was claiming a vote as occupier of the farm; to be followed by Thomas Ballinger, tenant when a new survey of the estate was undertaken in 1843. After that, Census returns and Directories give us Richard Burrows (1851,1856,1863), George Chandler (1871), John Ellison (1876,1879), Edmund Taylor farm bailiff (1881). Thomas James "farmer, cattle and horse breeder" (1885, 1897, 1906), William Beldam (1923), Thomas Rea (1930), - Cresswell (c 1944).

In 1851 the farm employed a resident dairymaid; and in 1871 and 1881 a resident shepherd.

Vineyards Cottages

The 1851 census suggests that there may have been a single cottage on the farm, probably on the same site as the present cottages because this adjoins a spring. There was certainly no cottage there in 1861 or 1871 but by 1881 the present stone-built pair had been erected, probably by Sir William Russell.

M. Paget



OLD VINEYARDS, TIMBERCOMBE LANE, CHARLTON KINGS, GLOS.

SO 971187

SITE Old Vineyards is prominently sited on a hillside south of Charlton Kings. The house is set above the 650' contour on a west-facing slope, with magnificent views across Gloucester and as far as the Malvern hills. The house itself faces south.

MATERIALS It is built of coursed limestone rubble with large quoins. Larger stones are used in the front wall than elsewhere. The roof is slate.

EXTERNAL FEATURES The front has $2\frac{1}{2}$ storeys, with modern dormers lighting the attics. The facade is symmetrical, with a central single-storey porch of probable C19th date. The front door has chamfered stone jambs and a chamfered wooden lintel. The window above the porch is a two-light casement with a wooden lintel, and is at a higher level than the other first-floor windows. The other windows in the front are all casements with stone segmental arches. The roof has a stone coping at each end and gable-end chimney stacks. The west end wall has a door at a lower ground level which leads directly into the cellar, while a two-light window with a chamfered stone mullion and surround lights the attic. The east end wall has three windows, one above the other, all with chamfered stone frames. The ground-floor window has two lights with a central mullion, the first-floor window has a single light, and the attic window is square, having lost its central mullion. At the east end is a rear wing as tall as the main range and contemporary with it, with a lower and later wing added against its north wall. The taller wing has a three-light window with chamfered stone mullions in the north wall.

PLAN The front door leads into a central lobby; to the right is the kitchen, with a large gable-end stack to accommodate a cooking fireplace. To the left is the parlour, with a cellar below; its location is determined by the slope of the ground. A straight stair leads from the central lobby, but it is not clear if this is an original feature and the recess north of the kitchen stack could have housed a winder stair. The wing behind the kitchen is clearly part of the original build, as it is not separated from the main range by a solid wall but by a thin partition. In fact, this partition has been moved further north, and the wing divided to accommodate a stair against the north wall, cupboards and an entry lobby where a window in the east wall has been turned into a door. A blocked doorway in the west wall is revealed by parts of the lintel which are still visible on both sides of the wall. To the north of the wing is an added dairy with cheeseroom above.

INTERNAL FEATURES The cellar has a two-light window in the north wall with chamfered stone mullion, while on the south side a flight of stone steps led up to a trapdoor (now blocked). The floor has flagstones except for a cobbled area west of the steps; this may have been the site of the barrel racks. The parlour has a rebuilt fireplace in the end wall, and a ceiling beam which is a half-beam with a $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch chamfer on the west side only. The kitchen has a stone floor and the ceiling beam has 2 inch chamfers. There is a timber-framed partition on the west side; the uprights are scribed over the chamfer of the headbeam and nailed in position. There is a doorway at the south end of this partition, and at the north end are two horizontal timbers at the right level to be the lintel of another doorway. This evidence for another doorway together with the half-beam in the parlour suggests that there was a third room between parlour and kitchen, with a partition along the half-beam. This would have given a rather small parlour, but is quite possible. The third room would have been a dairy or buttery, and the second possible doorway could have led to a pantry partitioned out of this room and reached from the kitchen.

The kitchen fireplace has a stone surround which is clearly old but much too small for the size of the stack. It may have been reused from elsewhere in the house, replacing a large open kitchen fireplace. On the first floor, at

the head of the stair, is a two-light window with stone chamfered mullion and frame and square iron stanchions. The opening iron casement has two continuous horizontal iron bars of rectangular section to which the leaded lights would have been fixed. In addition there are two smaller horizontal bars of circular section to which the window catches are fixed. These are plain swivel catches, and there is a nice handle at the bottom of the casement. The window has a seat. The kitchen chamber is separated from the rear wing by a panelled partition which has six small panels at the bottom with tall vertical panels above. The cheese room has two horizontal timbers embedded in the east, west and north walls about three feet from the floor and a foot or so apart. At intervals they have square holes which held supports for the cheese racks. This is very different from the usual method of supporting cheese racks in North Avon, where free-standing supports are the norm. It would be interesting to know which method prevails in this area.

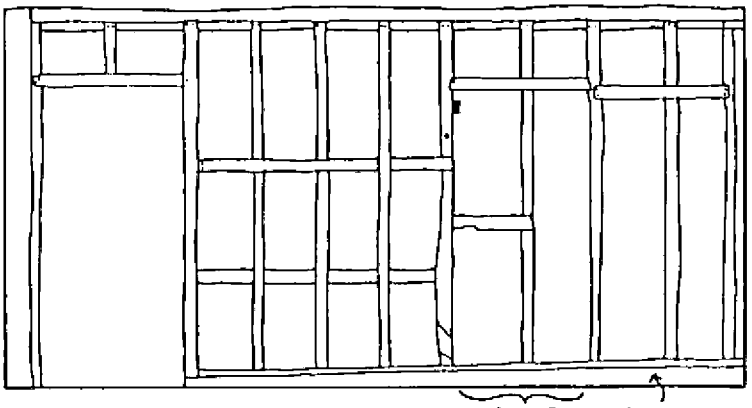
ROOF There are three trusses in the main range and one in the wing. Two are closed with studs and horizontal planks, and all the timbers visible above the inserted ceiling are whitewashed. The ceiling is at the level of the collar and obscures the type of joint, but it appears that the collars are tenoned. There are two pairs of tenoned purlins, chamfered top and bottom with runout stops; this chamfering is common in C18th roofs. There is a modern ridge, but it is not clear if this replaces an earlier ridgepiece.

DATE AND DEVELOPMENT The house appears to belong mainly to the C18th, and documentary evidence suggests that it was newly built around 1738. It seems likely that it had stone mullioned windows at the front to match those surviving elsewhere in the house. In layout it had a central service room plan, with a dairy or buttery between the kitchen and parlour. It may have had a central stair, as now, and/or a winder next to the kitchen stack. The evidence is not clear either way. The whitewash on the roof timbers implies that the attics, which would have been open to the roof, were used as cheese rooms. Later, either in the late C18th or in the C19th, a larger dairy was added behind the rear wing with a large cheeseroom above. This suggests that cheese-making was one of the main occupations at this farm. It is not clear what was the function of the original north wing. There is a blocked slit window in the north wall, which suggests that it was necessary to keep it cool. If it were not for the large cellar under the parlour, this would be a likely place for an above-ground cellar. Perhaps they had both. Cellars were used for other things besides storing beer and cider; in North Avon many were used for salting sides of bacon in stone troughs, and had salting stones for the preparation of the pig. In the C19th the porch was added, and the reveals of the front doorway were cut back to enlarge the central lobby. It seems likely that the front wall was refaced or rebuilt at this time to provide the arched windows, and using larger stones than had been used in the original build. A modern dining room along the west side of the wings incorporates a stone carved with the date 1751 and I.Beale. It is too rough to be regarded as a datestone recording the date of building, and is more likely to be graffiti added to an existing building. Its original location is not known.

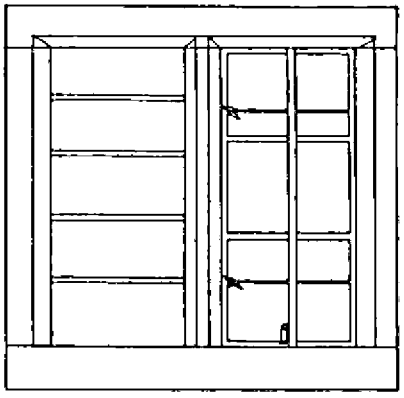
Linda Hall January 1991

OLD VINEYARDS, TIMBERCOMBE LANE, CHARLTON KINGS, GLOS.

(SO 971187)



PARTITION WALL IN KITCHEN
(drawn at twice main scale)

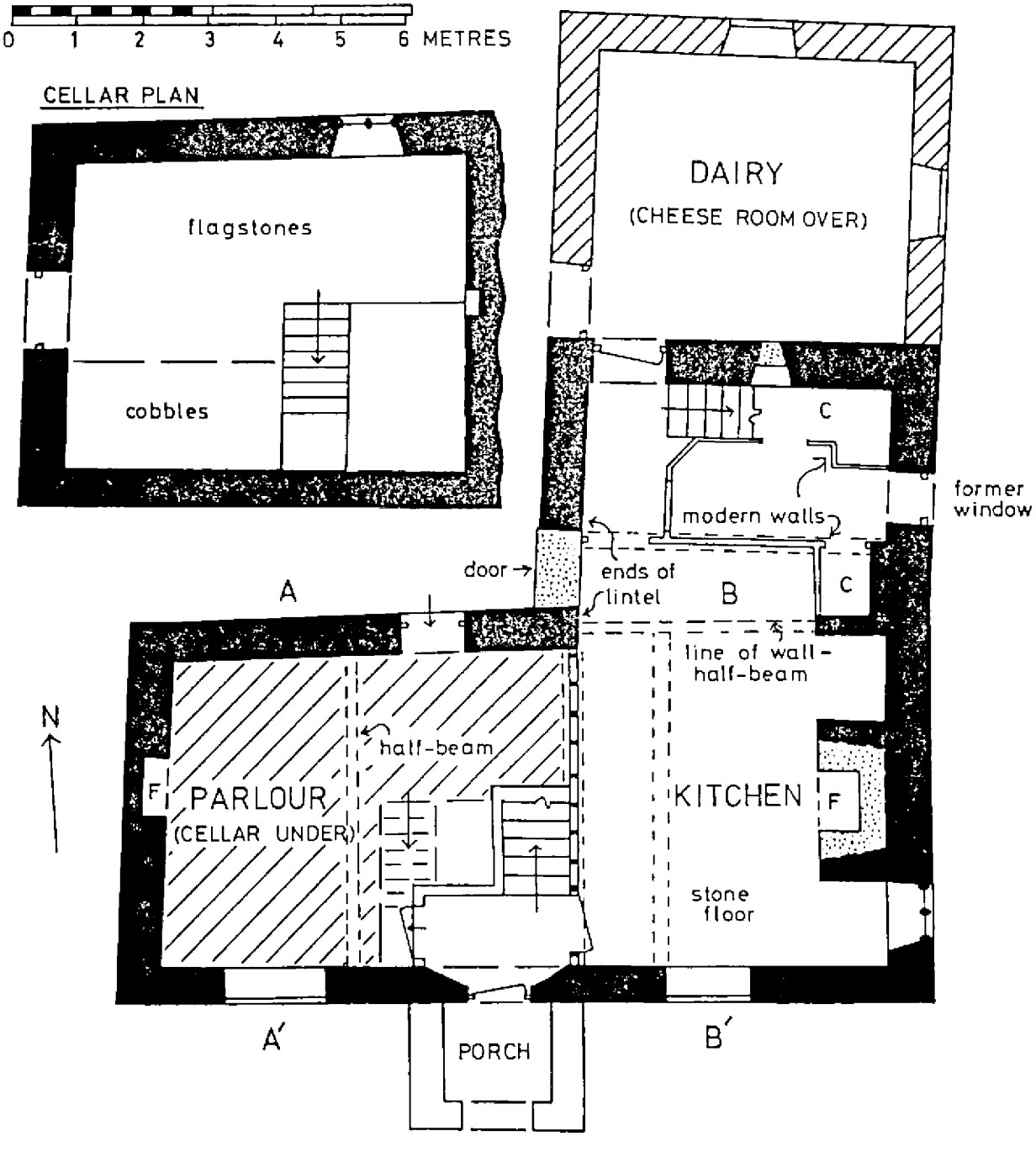


LANDING WINDOW

0 1 2 3 4 FEET
0 10 50 100 CMS

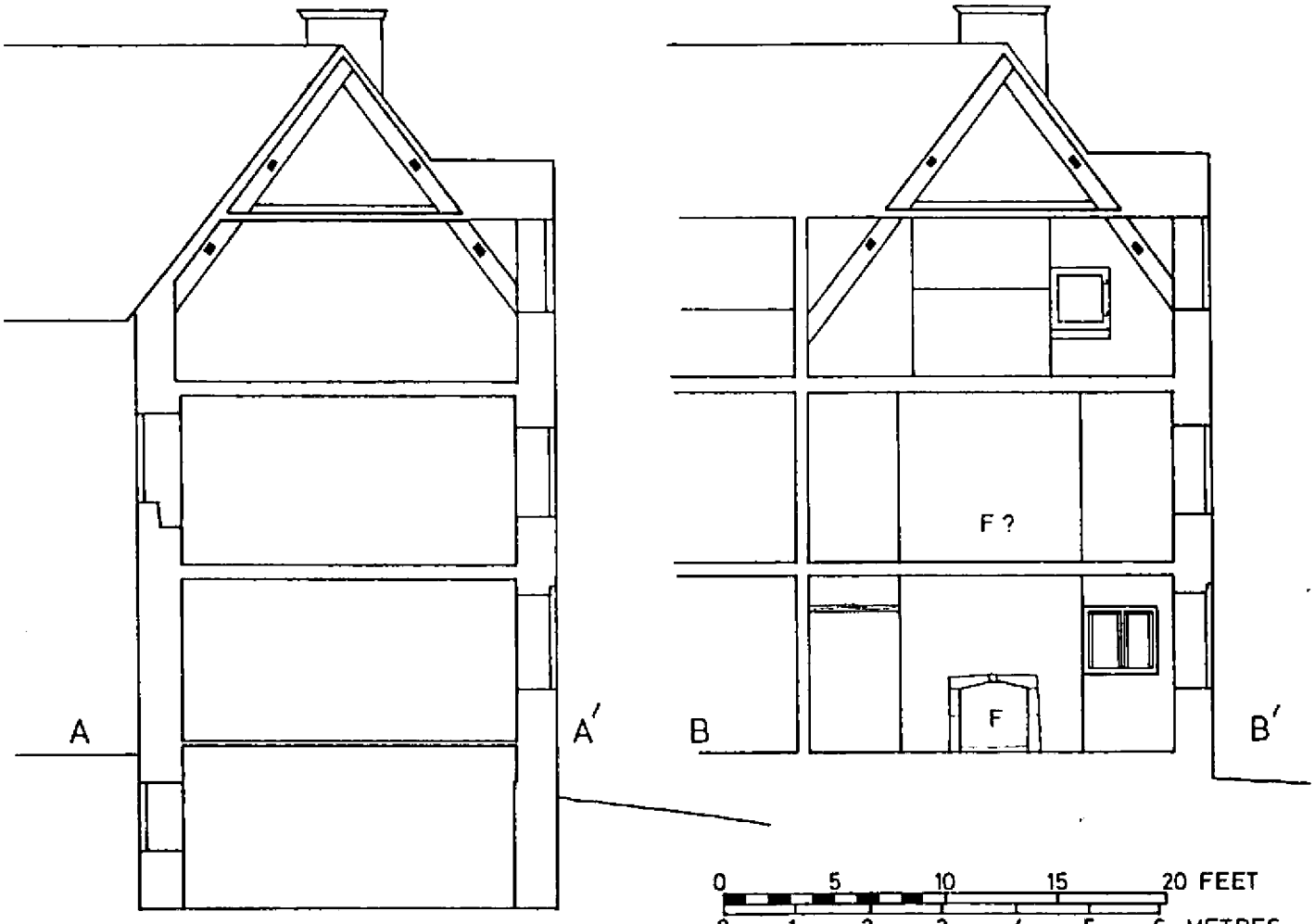
0 5 10 15 20 FEET
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 METRES

CELLAR PLAN

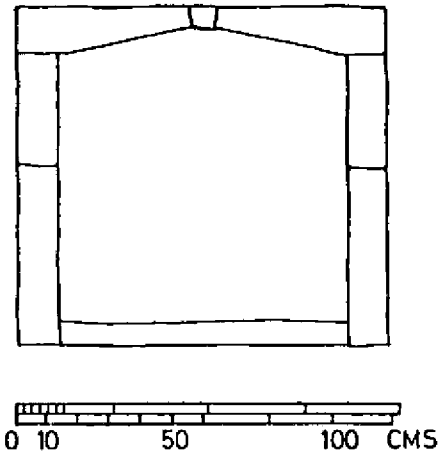


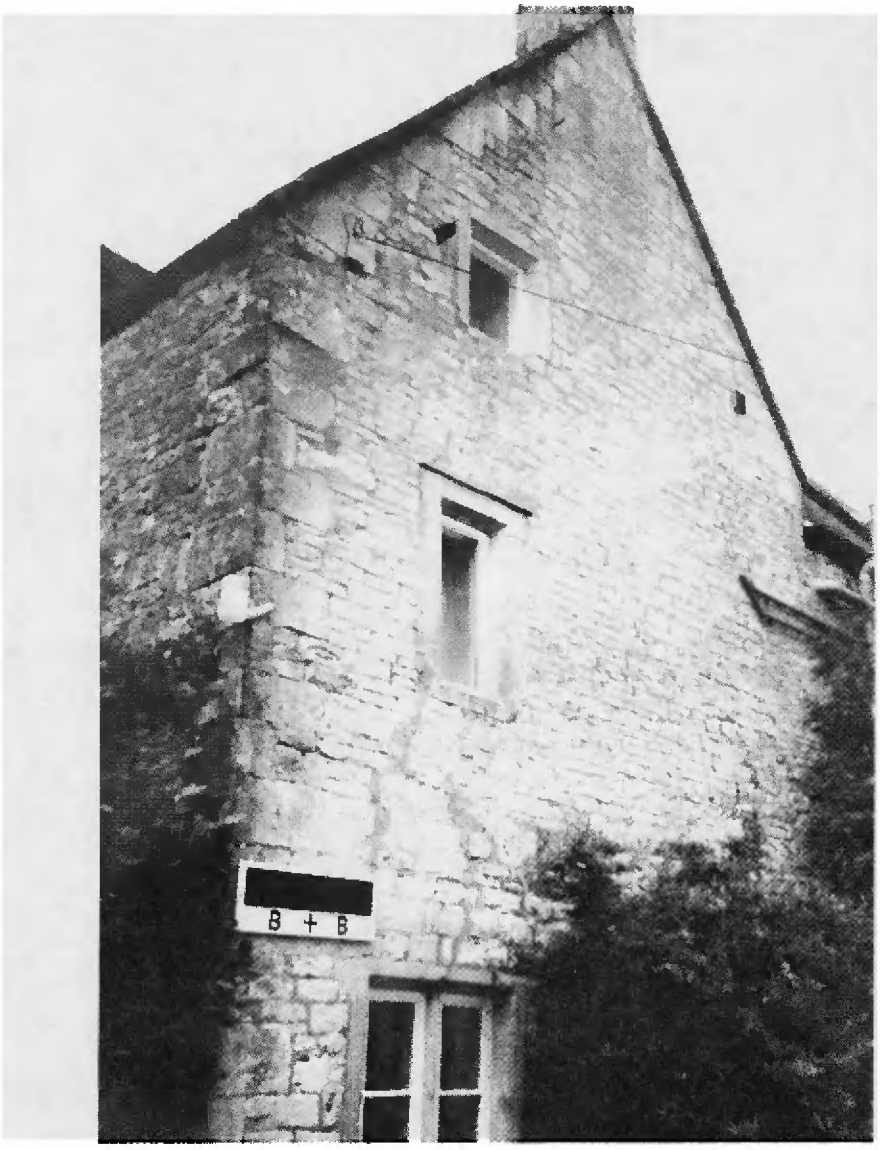
OLD VINEYARDS, CHARLTON KINGS, GLOS.

(SO 971187)



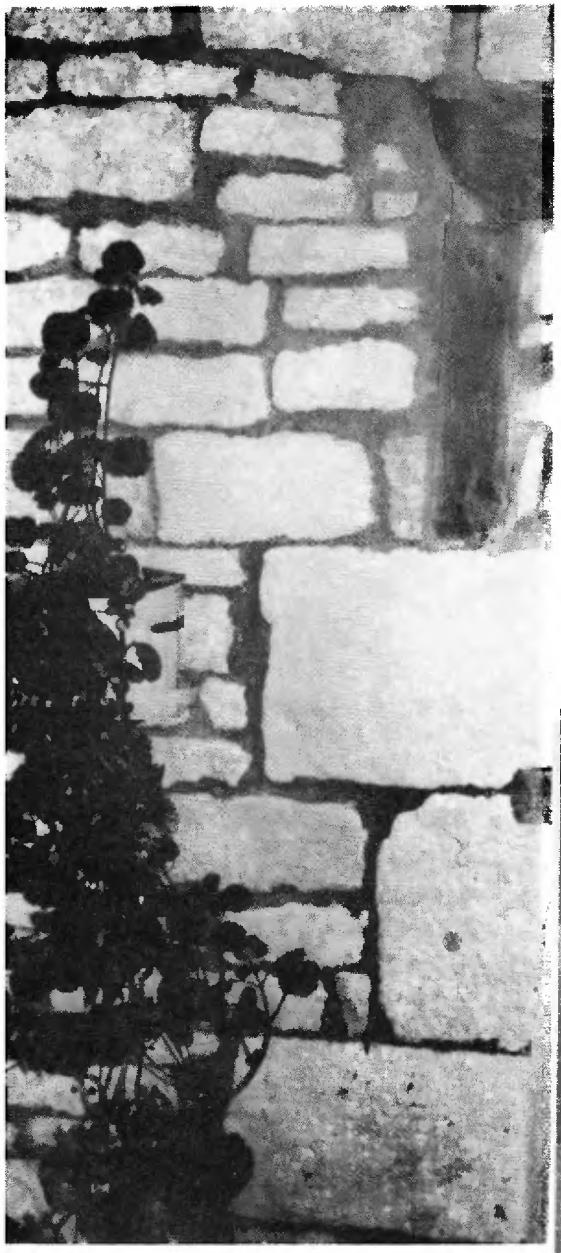
KITCHEN FIREPLACE





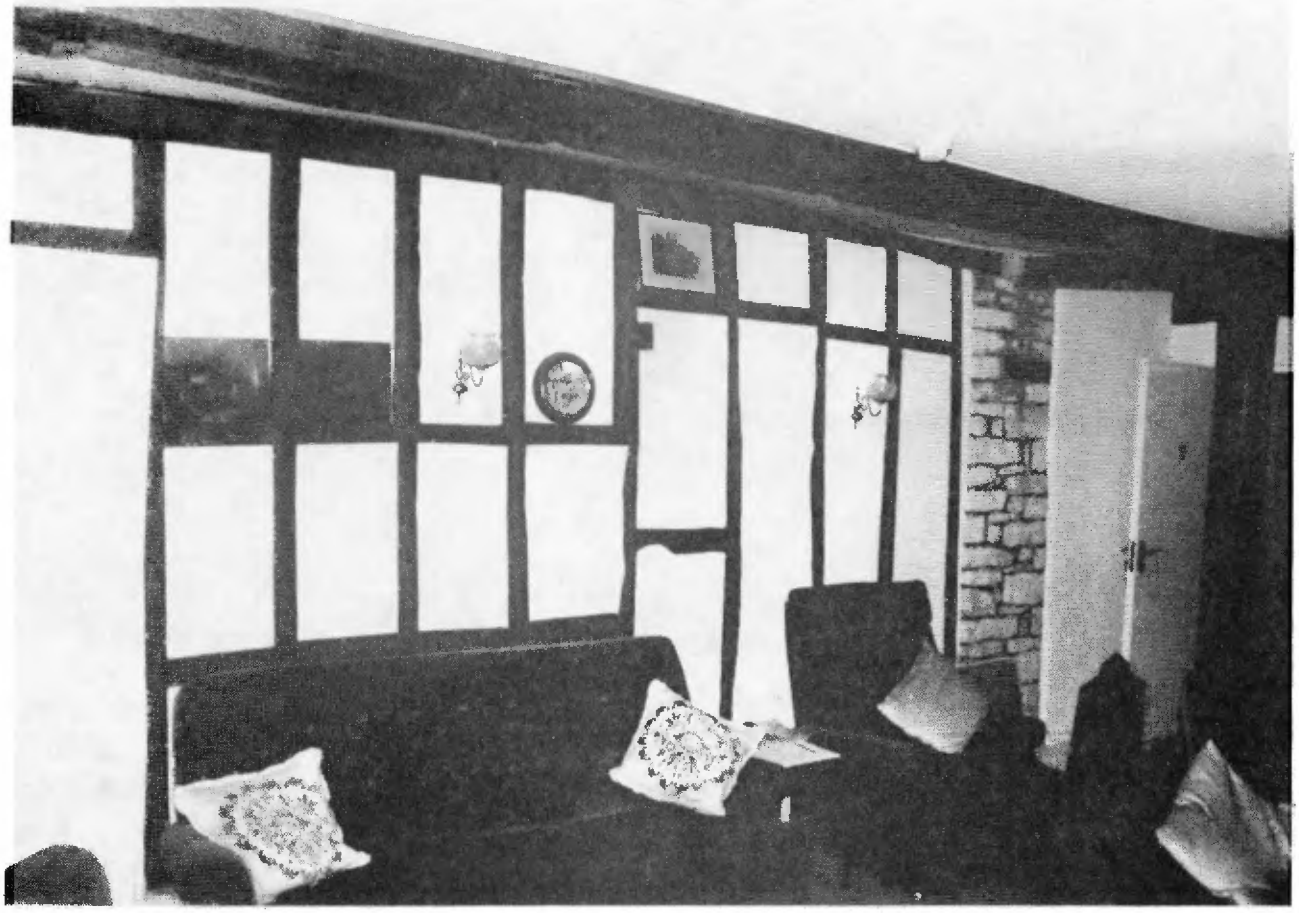
East end wall

blocked window in cellar

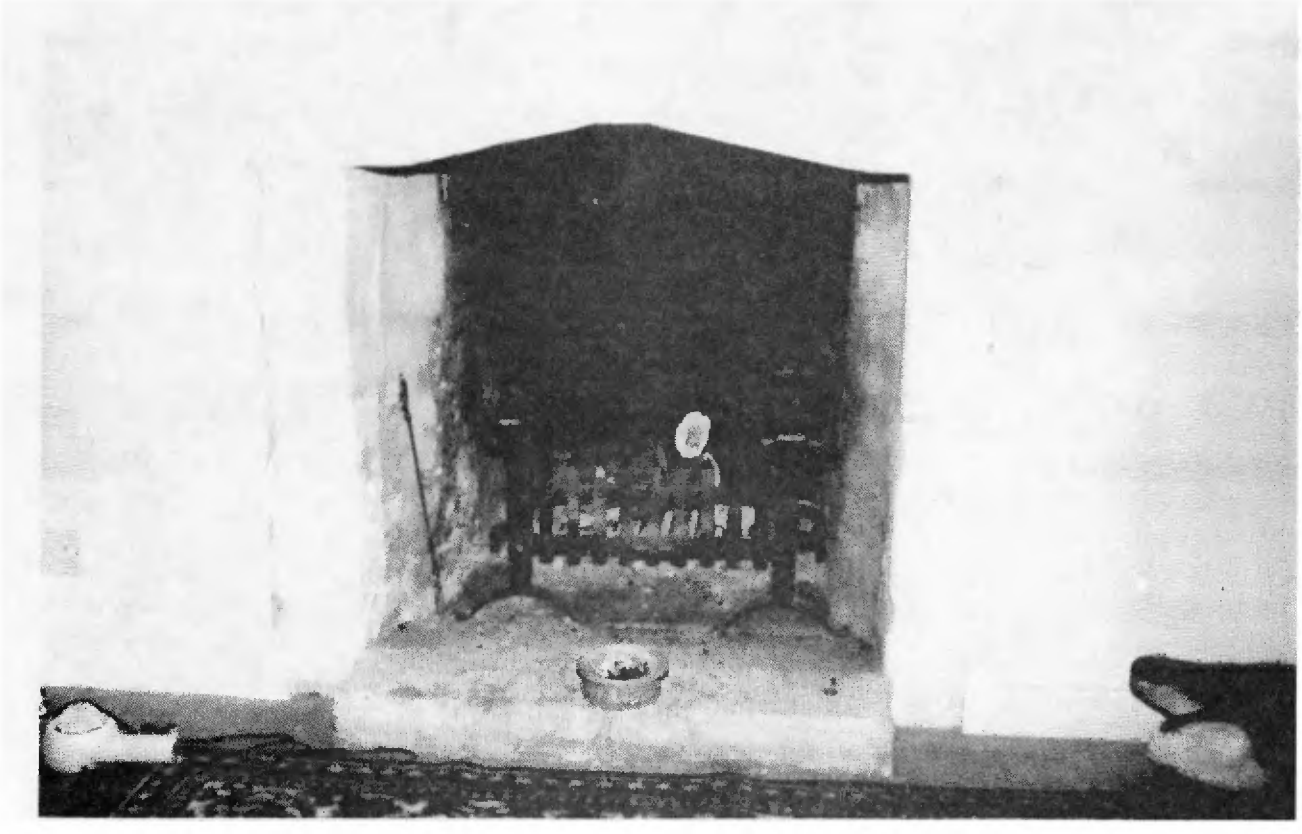


End of lintel and large quoins, suggesting blocked doorway to rear wing. Seen from dining room (L.H.)

Large quoins at what was outside corner of rear wing (L.H.)



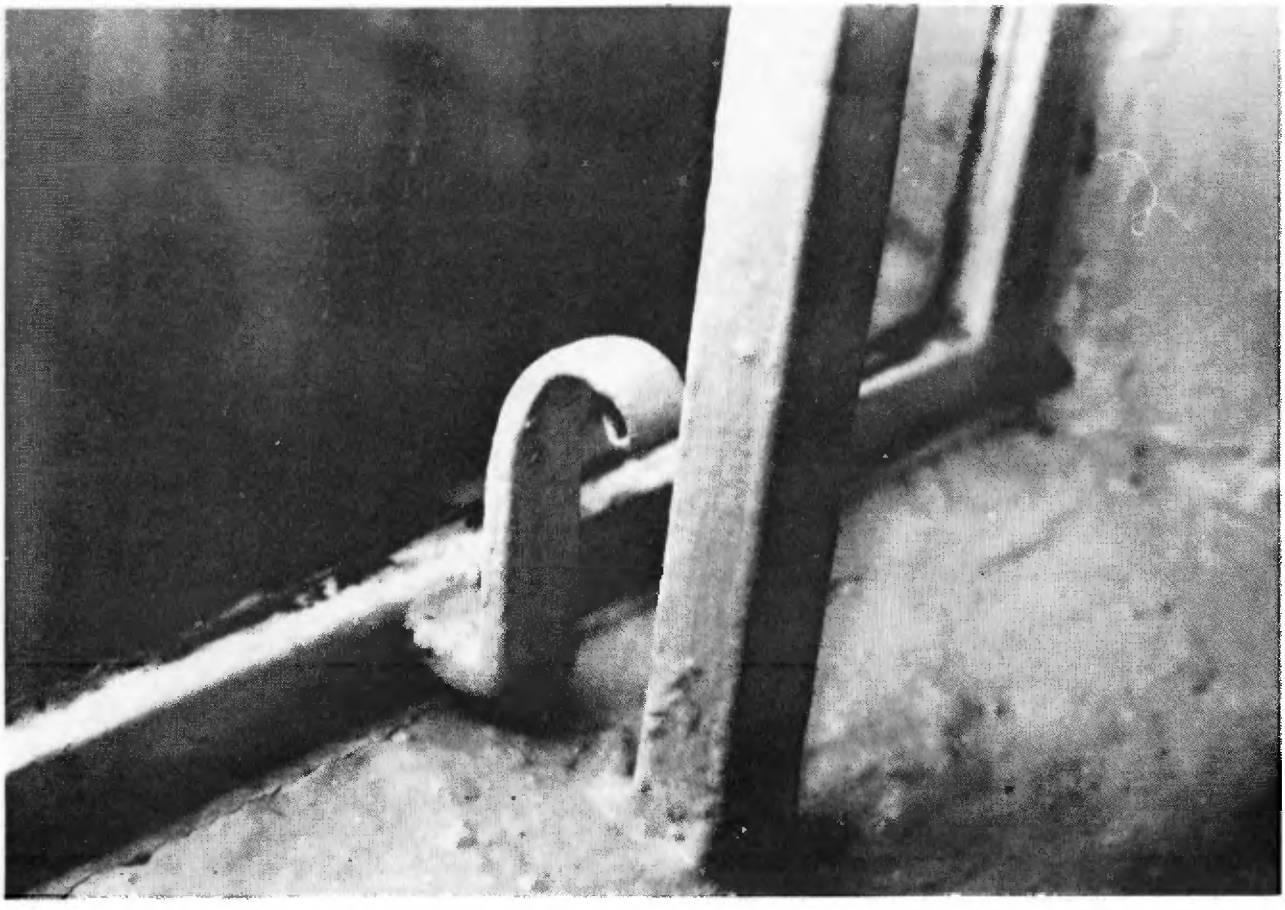
Partition between original kitchen and stairs (L.H.)



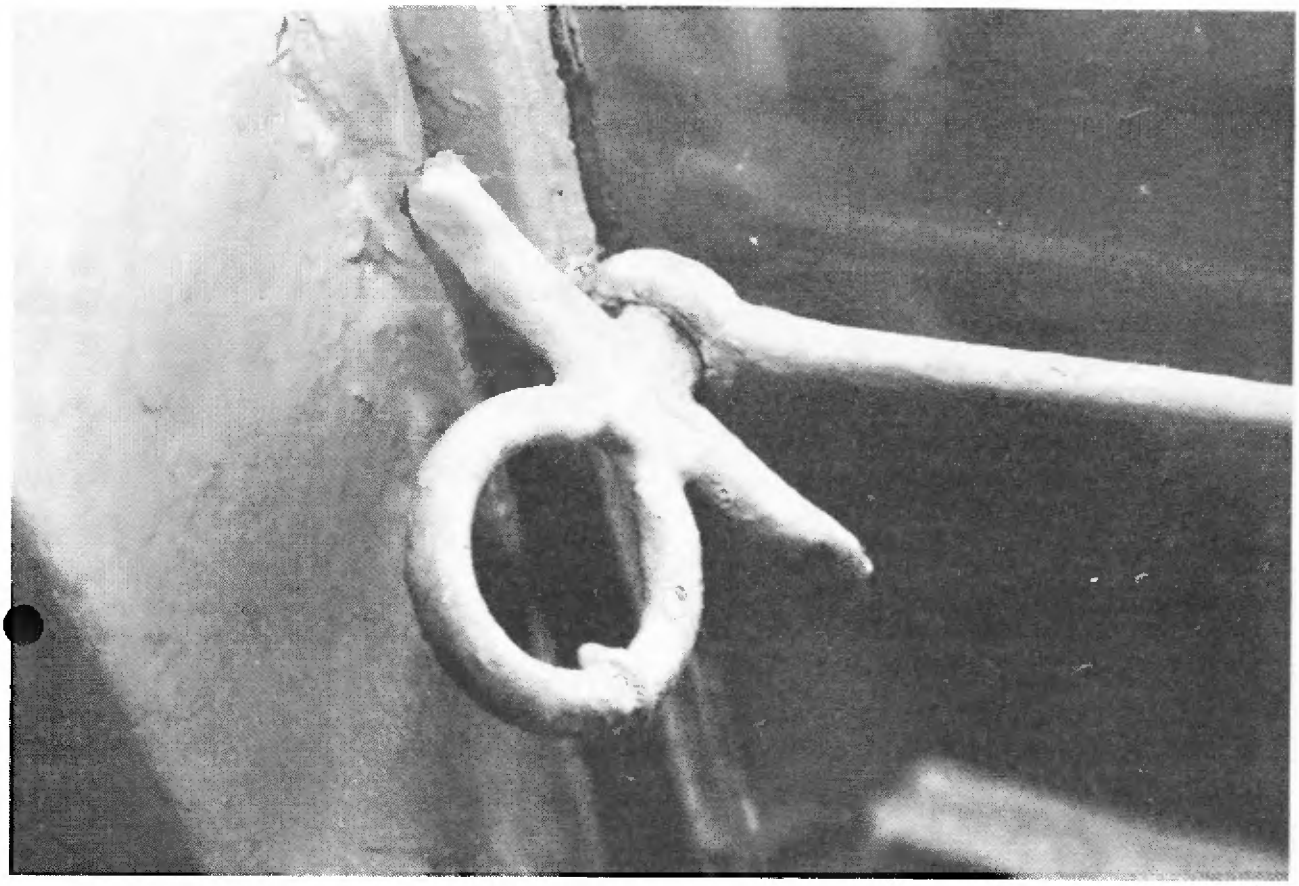
18th century fireplace surround re-used in kitchen - probably came from parlour or chamber (L.H.)

Cheese-room - holes in horizontal timbers to take brackets to support shelves. (L.H.)

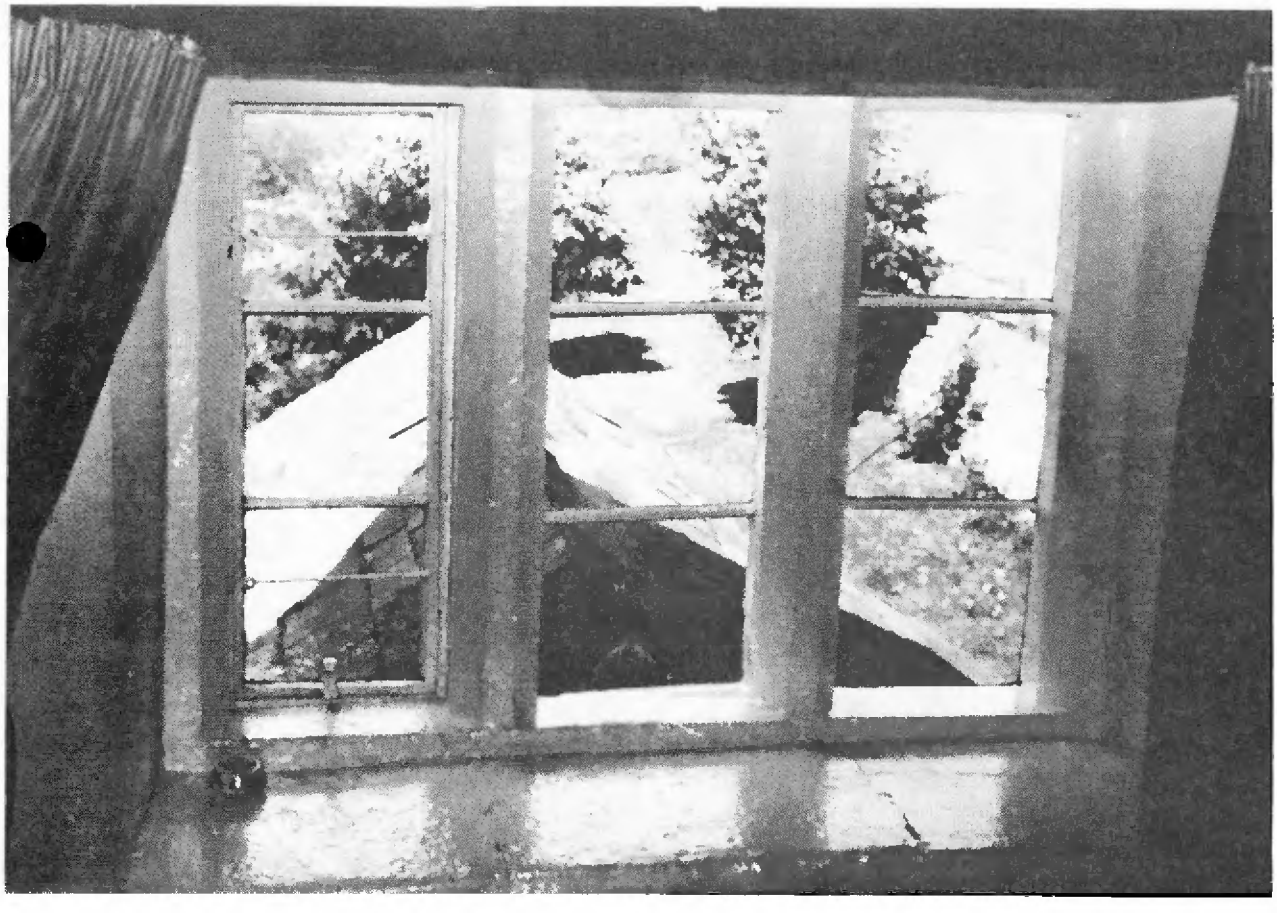
Landing window (L.H.)



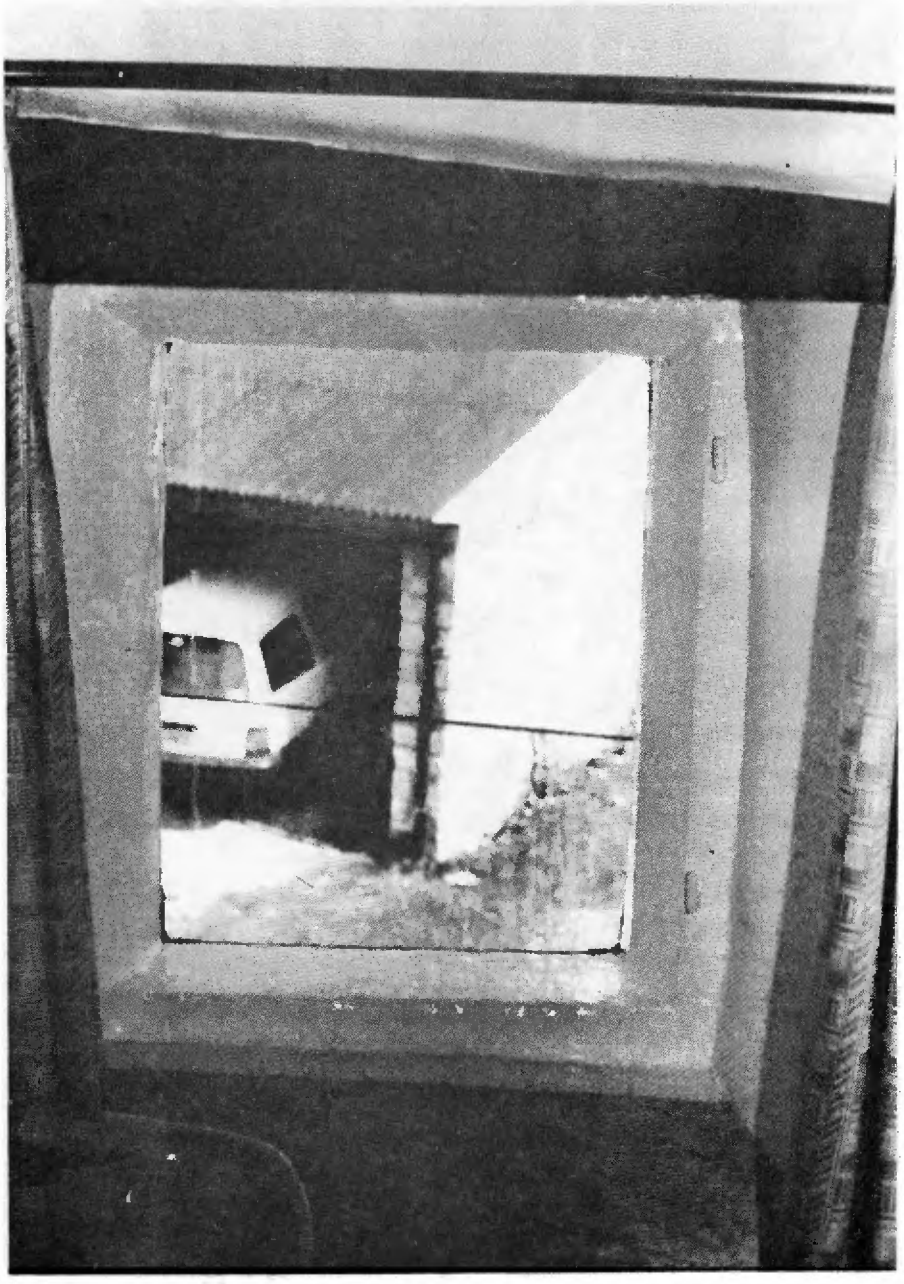
Landing window - handle on iron casement. Note iron stanchion set square - Earlier ones are set diagonally. (L.H.)



Landing window - window catch (L.H.)



Window in attic (2nd floor) room of rear wing, looking over cheeseroom roof. (L.H.)



Attic window with hinges for shutter

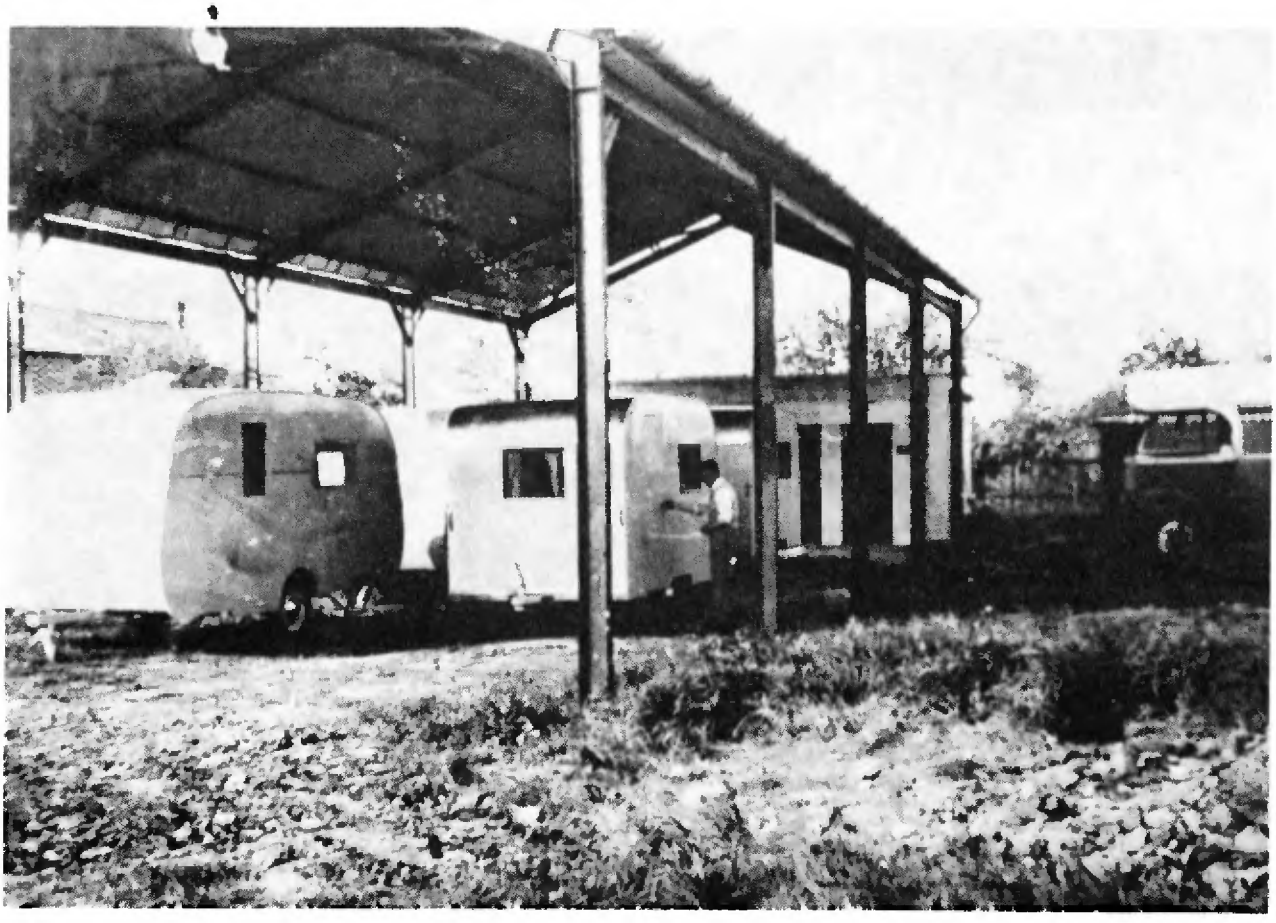
We are very grateful to Mrs Chick for allowing us to survey and photograph Old Vineyards.

3. ADAMS CARAVANS LTD - NEW ERA WORKS, COPT ELM ROAD, CHARLTON KINGS

My father WILLIAM ALBERT ADAMS was born in 1900, the son of ALBERT ADAMS Dairyman, of Croft Avenue, Charlton Kings. The detached house called "Abingdon" is still there as a private house, although the stables and dairy buildings have now gone, and bungalows are built in the garden.

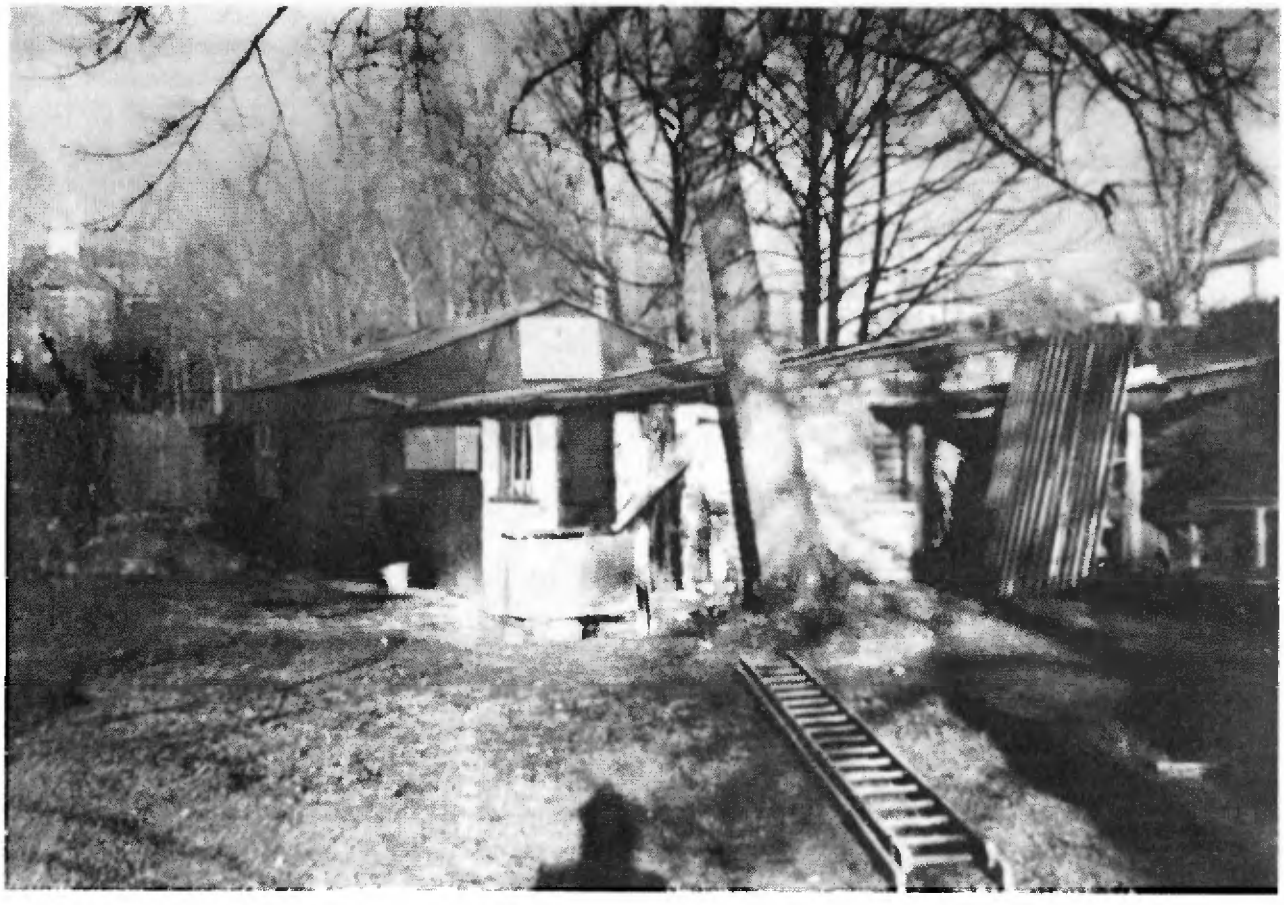
My father married in 1922, and lived in Ryeworth Road for nearly 50 years. He was first employed as a carpenter by Murray Linder who had premises in Leckhampton Road, at the foot of Leckhampton hill. But in the early thirties my father lost some fingers on his left hand, due to an accident with a circular saw, and could no longer do satisfactory work as a carpenter. So he decided to try and start his own business, manufacturing caravans. In about 1934/5 he bought a strip of land in the dip of Copt Elm Road, now Copt Elm Close (I believe there was a dance hall there originally) and started a Caravan business under the name of ADAMS CARAVANS. I well remember the headed notepaper for this new venture had a picture of a new moon ● on it, meaning the start of a new beginning.

In those days all cutlery was supplied with each caravan - I still have a fork with ADAMS CARAVANS engraved on it. My mother would make the curtains etc. The caravans were made in various sizes, 2, 3, and 4 berth; and each one was named after a precious stone, Diamond, Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald.



3 of the men who had worked for him before the war

My Mother, myself and my brother



The business thrived until 1939, the year that war was declared. The young men that he employed were called up for service, so he discontinued the business and sold the property; and he himself went to work for G.A.C. for the duration of the war.

After the war ended in 1945, he re-started a caravan business on a piece of land he had previously bought in the London Road, next door to the garage near Sandhurst Road - I believe this was once a woodyard. This time he called the business COTSWOLD CARAVANS, employing back three of the men that had worked for him before the war. In the late forties he decided to enlarge the business, so bought a plot of land at Kingsditch Lane, this being the designated factory area for Cheltenham. He built up a thriving and expanding business. I well remember customers ringing him up and asking for special features to be incorporated into the caravan they had ordered. He would often build a custom made caravan to order.

This went on until the mid-fifties, when he found he could not compete with the mass-produced caravans being offered at very competitive prices; so eventually he wound up the caravan business in Kingsditch Lane. But he always retained the London Road site, opening a small business called GARDEN REQUISITES, selling greenhouses, garden ornaments, and wrought-iron gates which he himself made. He died in 1976.

In all the years that he made caravans, not once, as children, did my brother Ron Adams and myself ever have a holiday in a caravan!

Mrs. M.P. Prout nee Adams

PARISH OF

LECKHAMPTON,

Otherwise

LACKINGTON,

In the County of Gloucester.

WE do hereby give Notice, to all to whom it may concern, that on *Monday* the *Nineteenth* day of *October* Instant, a *PERAMBULATION* of the whole *CIRCUIT* and *BOUNDARIES* of the said Parish of Leckhampton, otherwise Lackington, in the County of Gloucester will be made by the Inhabitants of the said Parish, in order that all Persons who are, or may be interested in, or affected by, such perambulation, may attend and object thereto, if they have cause respectively;---and we do hereby give further Notice, that such perambulation will be entered upon, and commenced at, the boundary of the Parish of Cheltenham, at or near a certain place called Pilley, where the several Parishes of Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, and Leckhampton unite, at *Eight* of the Clock of the Forenoon of the said day, and be continued from thence to the Westward, and so on around the whole Boundaries and Circuit of the said Parish, until it shall terminate at the place of commencement before-mentioned.---Dated this Ninth day of October, 1835.

WALTER and BILLINGS,

Clerks to the Vestry of the said Parish.

Harper, Printer, ss Office, Cheltenham.

4. BEATING THE BOUNDS - SOME LINKS BETWEEN CHARLTON AND LECKHAMPTON

Articles in past Bulletins have described how the inhabitants of Charlton Kings performed the beating of the bounds during the last century. There is evidence relating to 1831, and the practice probably died out in the 1870s, as the publication of Ordnance Survey maps showing parish boundaries made such picturesque exercises unnecessary (1).

The Charltonians' neighbours in Leckhampton also took this ceremony seriously. Moreover, members of at least one of the Charlton families would appear to have taken a leading part in Leckhampton perambulations. "Sam: Hamlett aged man" and Robert Hamlett, who "dug the crosses" were mentioned in connection with the 1831 Charlton walk. At Leckhampton the Overseers' Accounts for the quarter ending 25 December 1835 (2) show that £1-0s-1d was paid to "Saml and Thomas Hamlett for attending perambulation". Presumably this is the same Samuel Hamlett; as an "aged man" he would have been well versed in the conduct of a perambulation and as a Charltonian he would at least have known the boundaries of his own parish, some of them shared with Leckhampton. This Samuel Hamlett lived at Longleat, Horsefair Street (3).

Leckhampton Churchwardens also made a payment of 19s 3d in March 1831 to William Burrows (4) for perambulating the Parish and of £1 2s 0d in March 1836 to Mr May, evidently the licensee of the Norwood Arms, for expenses relating to the perambulation. These payments illustrate the observation by W.E.Tate in The Parish Chest that expenses incurred during a perambulation, including the cost of refreshments, were chargeable to the rates, though these would not cover music and banners.

The poster reproduced above (5) is of considerable interest. It shows that in October 1835 the perambulation of the Leckhampton parish boundaries commenced "at or near a certain place called Pilley". Readers may care to work out for themselves exactly where this was - probably close to where Pilley Bridge now stands. It will be seen that the poster was printed by Messrs Harper. By chance, the Leckhampton Parish Overseers' Accounts for December 1835 to March 1836 show a bill paid to William Harper "for printing Voters' papers and Notices of perambulation - £1-5s-0d". A bill was also paid to one Thomas Morgan for paint used in the perambulation of the parish - presumably to mark boundary stones and the like, in addition possibly to the digging of crosses mentioned earlier.

Lackington, in a variety of spellings, is a version of the village's name which is found as early as 1287 (Inquisitio Post Mortem of Edmund Mortimer). To judge from some references in the Leckhampton Parish Magazines in the 1930s, this variant survived into the 20th century. (For example Mr Parsons, a former Headmaster of Leckhampton village school, named his house "Leckington" when he retired to live in Kingston-on-Thames).

In later years the Leckhampton authorities may have been less assiduous in observing the practice. On April 13, 1870, the Cheltenham Examiner, under the heading of "Beating the Bounds", reported that "yesterday and today the ceremony of perambulation of the Parish in the Leckhampton district is being performed for the first time during 20 years. Since the last occasion much building has been added to this district, some of the houses being partly in the Parish of Cheltenham and partly in Leckhampton; hence the necessity for defining the boundaries".

More recently still, though many more houses have been added, properly surveyed maps have made such a picturesque practice unnecessary. There are more effective ways of recording and marking the limits of a parish, but people have lost an opportunity of getting together for a jolly outing.

Eric Miller

(1) Bulletin No 16, p.55; No 21, pp 20-22
(2) GRO P198/1 IN 1/30.
(3) Bulletin No 6, p.19.
(4) William Burrows was a member of the Vestry Meeting in 1830-31. It is not known whether the William Burrows who was a tenant of Ham Farm in the 1840s (see A History of Charlton Kings, pp 43, 45) was one and the same.
(5) GRO P198a CW 3/1.

5. A CHARLTON NURSE - NURSE CLIFFORD, NOW MRS SHARPE

Charlton still remembers with gratitude the work of Nurse Clifford who came here on 5 June 1934 and stayed on as District Nurse for more than 25 years.

Nurse Newdick had retired in 1933 and had been followed by two nurses who stayed 6 months and 3 months respectively and then got married. So when Nurse Clifford was interviewed for the post, the first question the Committee asked was, whether she was engaged or likely to be shortly! Well, she wasn't. So she came to Charlton. Her first patient was Mrs Taylor, Freda Hayward's mother. But the new nurse looked so youthful that according to Frank Timms, his grandmother who was expecting refused to accept her as nurse "she was only a school girl!" Most women in 1934 had their babies at home.

During her 25 years and more in Charlton Kings, Nurse says she delivered over 800 babies.

Her strangest experience was being called to gypsies at Chatcombe Pitch. They were encamped on the wide verge in the dip there, with a caravan and a tent. The expectant mother was in the tent, and all the others came peeping through a hole to see what was going on, till Nurse had to threaten to leave!

Presentation after 25 years work.

6. MEMORIES OF SPRINGFIELD HOUSE

Early in 1939, my father's work as Registrar bringing him to Gloucestershire, my parents went a-house-hunting in the Cheltenham area. After a long flirtation with a property in Up Hatherley (which turned out to have too many hidden snags) they settled for their second choice - Springfield on the London Road in Charlton Kings; we called it Springfield House after moving in, there were too many other Springfields about and letters were going astray. They bought it at auction for £1,250 - house, gardener's cottage, two garages and outbuildings on a plot of rather more than 5 acres; this included a lot of high-class apple trees in the kitchen garden, an orchard/paddock with older (and much more interesting) fruit trees, a section of the Chelt, with the remains of a floodgate over a weir falling into a pool, and a paddock up by the road, mysteriously known as "Mrs Potter's Field". By today's standards this must seem incredible; Twelve hundred would hardly buy you a detached pigsty, much less a human habitation with land.

My mother bought the house from a family named Firkin, who had moved there about 1936 and lived in it for a year, whereupon Mr. Firkin died, and they put it on the market. It had been standing empty for a year, and was somewhat dilapidated inside, which in part accounted for the price. It entirely accounted for the fact that though we came to Cheltenham at the end of April, we were not able to move in until September, and would not have managed it then had not my mother said that builders or no, we were coming; we arrived on that fatal Sunday when war was declared with Germany. The builders then contrived to finish their work with speed and efficiency - qualities in which they had been notably deficient hitherto - and we were left with the problem of blacking-out a great many large windows and preparing for war.

The house, I now know, was built by one Robert Crump in 1819, on a parcel of land known as Floodgate Piece, and the rest of the land seems to have been acquired piecemeal over the years. The old deeds are complicated, but as far as I can make out, the house and the land behind it as far as the Chelt (then known as the Mill Stream) was Floodgate Piece; the front was part of Castle Field. Another part of Castle Field was sold to one John Timings as the site of Castleton House (now Courtfield). The story current in my youth was that Courtfield had been built over two ancient cottages, whose upper storeys formed its drawing-room, which certainly had what looked like an old floor on two levels. But early plans seem to contradict this theory. Mrs. Potter's field, a paddock by the road, now the site of the Oxford Road Filling Station must, I think, have been bought at some stage from the Potters of East Court, possibly when they sold out in the 1890s.

Some of the previous owners are known - T.T. Tyers in 1845; Mrs Abercrombie and daughter in 1881; C.W. Townsend in 1905 and Col. A.R. Hennell in 1922. We only knew about the Firkins and their predecessors, the Rories, who told us they had lived there for about ten years, so they must have gone there around 1925, although the official records are not clear. We sold the property in 1964 to Nazareth House; eventually, the house was demolished (contrary to agreement) and the present building erected.

As we knew it, the house was a tall stucco building of the Regency style, but showing signs of additions and alterations. It was built on a steep slope, so that although the front door was at ground level, as you went through to the back, you found that though you had gone down five steps, you were at first floor level. Once inside the front door, you found yourself in a little hall, the base of the stairwell, with a large room on either side. To the right, the dining-room, which had a ground level window looking front, and a huge bay of three windows at first floor level (with balcony) looking over the orchard to an exquisite vista of fields and trees climbing Ham Hill. Only one building could be seen, a small farm tucked among trees and belonging to a Miss Jobling. She was somewhat eccentric and kept goats; she deserves a chapter to herself

elsewhere. To the left, the library, which opened on the west, or garden side into a (first floor) conservatory with stairs down into the garden. At the back of the hall, you went down the steps already mentioned to a crosswise passage. To the left this led, by way of a downstairs cloakroom, to what was then my nursery/schoolroom, a delightful apartment whose charms included a french window giving onto a wooden platform and stairs to the garden, and an alcove with a ceiling many feet lower than the rest of the room. Opposite the steps was the pantry, looking down on the backyard and over part of the orchard to the Chelt; to the right, the kitchen (large) with, opening out of it, the scullery and what was clearly intended to be a servants' hall. The scullery also contained the official back door, which was served by a flight of dangerously steep steps - my mother nearly killed herself falling down them once. Any normal person, indeed, would have gone the whole way down and landed in pieces. She managed to stop herself in mid-flight and emerged no more than shaken and slightly bruised. They did not appear to worry the tradesmen of the time at all!

Back to the hall, the staircase led upwards in four flights broken by half landings to two more floors. The first floor contained a large drawing-room over the dining-room, with the same bay of windows affording the same perfect view; and over the library, my parents' bedroom, with a small dressing-room opening out of it, and beyond, their bathroom and a separate lavatory. And, a winding stair leading down to the first half-landing, and a mysterious bathroom, apparently carved out of a secret hollow; it accounted for the low-ceilinged alcove in the nursery and for the odd shape of the downstairs cloakroom. On the other side of this first half-landing, another winding stair led up to a pleasant little bedroom known as the Prophet's Chamber - for obvious reasons. (II Kings 4.10).

Up two more flights to the top floor and you found an enormous bedroom on the the Ham Hill side, complete with balcony on which it was possible to sleep in summer, and to the west, two smaller rooms connecting with each other, a tiny landing and a little back bedroom with another mysterious bathroom cut out of one corner of it. The tiny landing gave onto a flight of steps going down to meet another going up, past airing cupboards to a bedroom. Where the two stairs met, was a domestic space of housemaid's sink and broom cupboards, and a couple of steps down to meet the second half-landing. Downstairs again, a door under the stairs led to yet another flight down to a territory, basement in front, ground floor behind. Here, under the dining-room, was a half-basement billiard room, with a full sized table and all the trimmings of marker boards, cue rack and green shaded lights. On the other side were three rooms which in our time were a box-room, a store-room and a saddle-room respectively. Then steps down, ending unexpectedly in a trap-door to shoot beer barrels into the cellar, and lurking darkly on either side, a game larder and the stoke-hole both large and convoluted; and finally, back doors leading to a big back porch and the yard. Here on your left, was an outside loo, a garage with a glassed extension for washing cars, and opening out of it, a four-roomed gardener's cottage, really an integral part of the house, its living-room being under the nursery. The other garage was on the east side, under the servants' hall, and that whole wing showed clear signs of being a later addition. Could anyone ask for more? Yes indeed - cellars, not just one, but two, one below the other. We never knew the reason for this unusual feature, but had our suspicions. Springfield was aptly named; it stood on a patch of gravel, and there were indeed springs, at least one actually under the house, presumably the original water supply. Perhaps they had to dig deep to get a good foundation. I do not think the slope of the land was the reason for the cellars, the whole house was designed to accommodate them.

For the house was beautifully set in the heart of its land, and so designed as to offer a pleasing view from every window. It lay well back from the road down a drive which swung left into a carriage sweep in front of the house. And from the house, you looked up a belvedere of grass bordered with trees - real

trees, not sterile products of a nursery garden - which made a thicket to screen both Courtfield and the London Road. There were indeed three specimen conifers flanking the drive, but they were by no means sterile; their cones delighted generations of squirrels. The drive branched, and continued steeply down the east side of the house, past a stand of beeches and a thicket of lilac and ended at the back with more beeches. Beyond it, further east, was the orchard, L-shaped and bordered at the foot of the hill by the Chelt, which ambled along under trees and through bushes to form our boundary. Along our bank were patches of a rare though not especially alluring semi-parasitic plant called Toothwort; I wonder if it still survives. If it does not, what has the Trust for Nature Conservation been doing all these years! There was a magnificent walnut tree also, and another up by the house - more joy for the squirrels. A bridge took you over the stream to an overgrown wilderness on the far side, opening out to a pool. This was fed by a weir and that in its turn was bridged by the floodgate after which, presumably, that part of the land was named. This bridge took you back, under two pollard willows, to the kitchen garden and comparative civilisation.

Set on a north-facing slope, no-one would have expected this garden to be so productive. In fact it kept a large household well supplied throughout the war. The walks were bordered with the high-class apple-trees aforementioned - real Cox's Orange Pippin, Ellison's Orange, Laxton Superb, the aristocratic eating apples of the day. A hazel hedge separated this slope from the orchard on the west, and a row of Lombardy poplars grew just inside the boundary hedge on the west, shading that part of the footpath beyond. At the top of the slope, a delightful old brick wall divided the kitchen garden from the garden proper, and supported a most prolific tame blackberry. It also supported the garden; the lower three or four feet on the north side were below ground on the south, and furnished with drain holes at regular intervals in which snails proliferated. The flower garden was laid out in the continental manner of flowers and fruit mixed - formal beds, edged with box, herbaceous borders on each side, and a central oblong with fruit trees round the sides, and in the middle, all manner of soft fruit. Beyond, there was another bed, with more fruit trees and asparagus, and against that end of the wall, cold frames and a vinery. Nearer to the house was a flat lawn intended to be a tennis court and some more box-edged flower beds. That end of the wall supported excellent plum trees and two peaches prone to curly-leaf and earwigs. A flight of shallow Cotswold stone steps led up to the drive level, flanked by a rockery of sorts and some formal rose beds set in paving stones. Not a pretty garden, but a pleasantly functional one, and paradise for a child, with so many secret wild places, trees to climb, fruit in season, and above all, water. No problems about personal space or getting away to do your own thing. Even on wet days there were hiding places in the house, odd cupboards under the stairs and best of all, a loft.

There were snags of course; we had central heating when you could get enough coke for the boiler, but at best it was not very hot. On the other hand, every room had a usable fireplace - some put in by us to replace damaged horrors with the worst sort of encaustic tiles, but some lovely original basket grates slung between hobs - down to a miniature one all of two feet wide including hobs in the top back bedroom. Virtually all the external water pipes ran down the north side of the house, and froze promptly in bad weather. One very bad winter when everything froze, we were reduced to an Elsan and a tap straight off the main located in the stoke hole over a pile of coke. Some Victorian vandal had replaced the Georgian wrought-iron balusters on the two lower flights of stairs with cast iron monstrosities, and perhaps it was the same hand that was responsible not only for the encaustic tiles, but also for the coloured glass in the lower half of the enormous window on the first half-landing, and some depressed aloes in the garden. Coming from Lancashire, where interior woodwork in old houses is usually superb, we were horrified at the shoddy quality of floors and doors, a fault common in Cheltenham houses of that date. The doors, we had to live with, but parquet overlay did a lot for the dining-room and the

drawing-room floors. This was before the days of fitted carpets, which in any case, none of us would have tolerated; the house itself would have rejected them out of hand.

We thought that the original house had probably been a simple square, and that the back wings had been added later, not necessarily at the same time. So, possibly, had the porch section in the front. This consisted of a central block, ending in leads at the second storey, and containing the front door, flanked by two pairs of Doric columns, and a block each side to first storey height each originally forming a verandah finished with another Doric column, before the respective front windows. In our day, the library side had been altered to take the verandah into the room, with large casement windows right across the front, but the dining-room side was as originally planned. An arch and a little gate led from this verandah to the balcony running round the big bay and ending in a square outside the kitchen; a door had led from the other verandah to the conservatory. The front of the house had four flat Ionic columns regularly spaced, but ending abruptly at the respective leads; one might have expected all columns to match. The door was leaded glass and almost certainly an afterthought, as were the two rear wings. The original kitchen could have been our billiard room, and the stoke-hole could well have been a scullery.

On the west side, the windows of the upper storey were exactly symetrical in two rows of three, equipped with outside shutters, except that the rear one on each floor was just closed shutters, no sign of a window behind them, and there were two more on the drawing-room floor on the west side. We never solved that particular mystery.

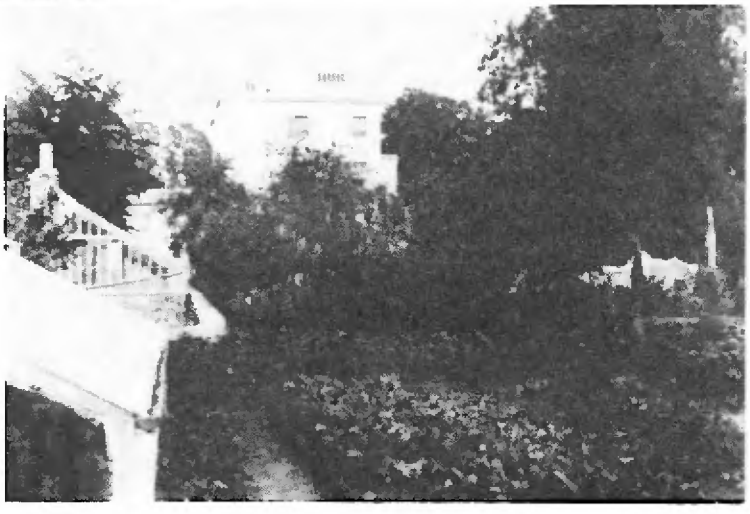
The other mystery was the lack of stables; there were none, and no sign of there ever having been any, yet they must have existed. The garages had not the air of conversions from stables, though the one with the glassed front could have been a coach-house. On moving in, we had to build our own on the top part of the paddock/orchard. There is a rather confused photograph dating from the turn of the century, which seems to indicate that the back yard was then covered in, but it is unusual to have your horses practically in the house. Sadly, we shall probably never know exactly where the equine part of the earlier households lived. A pity because it was quite easy to turn back the clock on the human element. That was one of the house's great charms, the reason probably why it instantly became for us, as it was described by Margaret Rutherford some twenty years later, "one of the real homes of England."

Springfield c.1910
Note alcoves either side of the porch

Springfield in snow - one alcove has been filled in - This view suggests the beautiful grounds.

East side of house c.1910 - dining room balcony with figures.

The kitchen garden and greenhouse



Damaris Hayman

A few more names of occupiers can be added to those already mentioned:-

1851 Richard Crump widower aged 85 with 3 daughters (Census)
1856,1861 Samuel Hennell, retired Colonel from Indian Army aged 60 with wife, 2 unmarried sisters, daughter, nephew, and niece (Directory, Census)
1863,1870 Alexander Abercrombie Esq (Directories)
1871 Wilhelmina Abercrombie widow aged 81, 2 unmarried daughters and 4 school-age grandchildren, born in India (Census)

1881	Wilhelmina Abercrombie widow aged 91, one unmarried daughter, 2 unmarried grand-daughters (Census)
1894	George Brook (Directory)
1919	Colonel A.R. Hennell
1927,1935	James Rorie (Directories)
1939	No entry

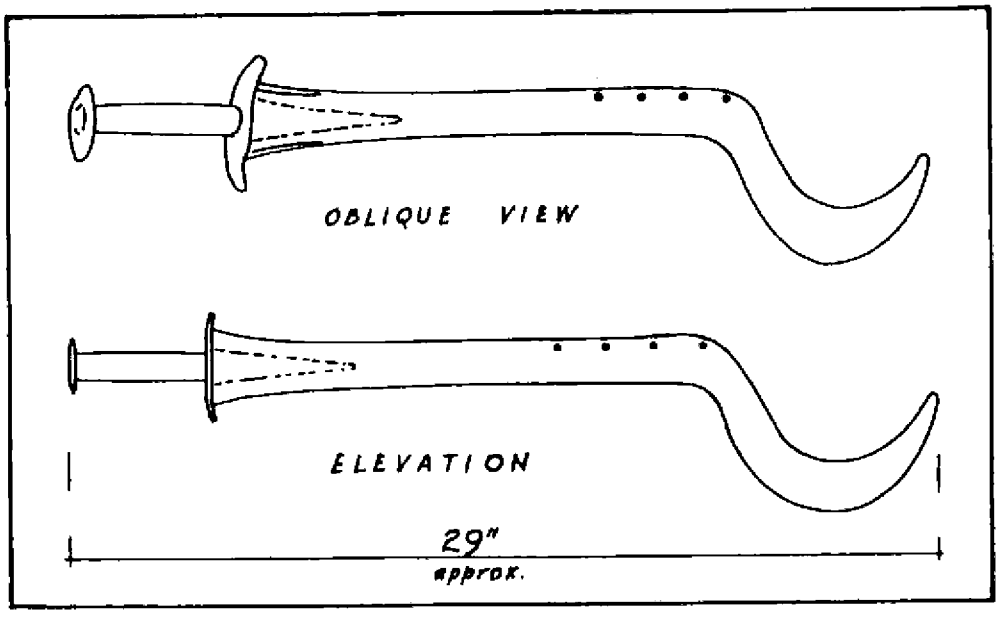
Jane Sale

7. AN UNEXPECTED FIND - A NAYAR TEMPLE SWORD IN CHARLTON KINGS

When Charlton Kings scouts were extending their Scout Hut some years back, they were given a load of rubble from two houses in Cheltenham that had been demolished. Among the rubble was an iron object which at first they took to be some sort of agricultural implement. But neither the Folk Museum at Gloucester nor the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans could imagine a use for it in agriculture and St Fagans suggested we should approach the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London. So I sent photographs and was amazed to receive this reply "The object found in the demolished house is a Nayar temple sword from South India, probably made in the eighteenth century. The Nayars were the main military caste among the Tamil peoples, and these temple swords were not made as fighting weapons but for ceremonial purposes. Thus, although their form is similar to that of much earlier Tamil weapons, they are of much lighter construction. The holes at the back of the blade are for the attachment of 'jingles', small pearls of iron attached by wire loops through the holes, or just iron rings, which rattle when the sword is moved".

The Keeper of the Oriental Collection sent an extract from P.Rawson The Indian Sword (New York 1968) which shows a brass sword exactly like our iron one, and an iron one of slightly different pattern. Both are eighteenth century. The sword grip is solid, the curved blade quite thin, with four holes just before the curve.

M. Paget



Sword drawn by Ken Venus

8. MABEL CATHERINE MALLESON (1858 - 1931) - A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mabel Malleson, who spent her last years at "Detmore", Charlton Kings, devoted most of her adult life to many aspects of public service.

She was born in London in 1858, the eldest of four children (three girls and a boy). Her parents, Frank and Elizabeth Malleson, had both been brought up in Unitarian and Liberal households and were active in both politics and a wide range of educational and welfare causes. Frank worked for a firm of wine merchants in Holborn. When Mabel was born, he and Elizabeth were living a precarious, nomadic existence, because a director of the firm was disputing the legality of Frank's position as partner. But a court ruling was given in his favour, and as a result Mabel grew up in a stable, affluent household, first in St John's Wood and later in Wimbledon.

Mabel and her sisters were educated at home, mostly by their mother who, before her marriage, had taught at Barbara Leigh Smith's progressive elementary school, Portman Hall, off the Edgware Road. Specialist teaching was provided by their own French governess, the German governess of a neighbouring family and a visiting drawing tutor. From the age of seven they were given practical instruction in riding, rowing, swimming, carpentry and gardening by their father, who believed that boys and girls should be brought up alike. In the evenings there were readings from good books, music and amateur dramatics, and from an early age the children were exposed to the conversation of their parents' wide circle of political and reformist friends. As teenagers they were encouraged to go into London alone in order to develop their independence and self-reliance. They accompanied their parents on annual 6-week holidays at Sandgate or Henley and occasionally went on cruises around the English and French coasts in a relative's yacht.

At 20 Mabel went up to the recently opened Newnham College, Cambridge, where she was described as "tall, slim, athletic, retiring in disposition and somewhat shy in manner". She eventually took honours in the History Tripos. She was a contemporary of the noted classicist, Jane Harrison (ex-Cheltenham Ladies' College), with whom she travelled in Greece and Italy after coming down from Cambridge.

When her parents moved from Wimbledon to Dixton Manor, near Winchcombe, in 1882, Mabel stayed in London to make a home for her brother Rodbard until he left school and went up to Oxford in 1885. She then joined her parents at Dixton.

In the early years at Dixton Mabel became involved in several educational enterprises. In 1887 she started evening wood-carving classes for boys in the Gotherington Reading Room, which her parents had started two years earlier. She assembled the boys' work in her own workshop, and the finished articles were sometimes offered for sale at local Church bazaars. In 1889 she returned to London for a time, being appointed Joint Superintendent of the College for Men and Women, which her mother had founded, and sharing with the regular Superintendent the task of getting the new Morley Memorial College launched. When her mother took charge of the County's Technical Education programme for the Winchcombe area in 1891, Mabel did much of the administrative work, arranging classes in the halls, dairies and conservatories of country houses and visiting schools to publicise the classes and drum up recruits.

In 1893 Rodbard, after training on Lord Sudeley's Toddington estate, emigrated to South Africa to become a partner in a 2,000-acre fruit farm, and Mabel went with him to act as housekeeper for the first two years. It was a hard life; besides doing all the cooking, she made butter for sale, packed fruit for export and supervised work on the farm when Rodbard was away. But it was also the happiest period of her life, and only a strong sense of filial duty persuaded her to return to England. She afterwards gave lectures on her experience recommending that, because of its increasingly scientific nature, fruit-farming was "a suitable occupation for educated women".

When she returned from South Africa Mabel knew that she would now be tied to her elderly and, in Frank's case, rather frail parents. But, although she supported them as far as possible and rarely left the Manor for more than a few days at a time, she managed to construct a reasonably independent life for herself.

She restarted her wood-carving classes, and in the 1897/8 season a County Council Inspector reported that the Dixton course included "a greater variety of design than any other class in the county".

Her stay in South Africa had convinced her that most Englishwomen were ill-equipped for life in the Colonies. By combining the facilities at the Manor with those at the adjacent Roberts' Farm, she was able to offer a course for intending emigrants, which comprised "the running of a house, with cooking, laundry and dairy work; the care of poultry, cows, sheep and pigs; and practice in the arts and crafts that were likely to be useful in the remote parts of the Empire". She proved a sound and relaxed teacher, and her pupils (believed to be only a few at a time) enjoyed the experience. She is said to have kept up this work almost to the end of her life.

In 1902 she joined the Cheltenham Branch of the National Union of Women Workers (renamed the National Council of Women in 1918), and served as its President from 1903 to 1909 and again from 1916 to 1918. Also in 1903 she was elected to the Central Executive committee in London and at different times served on the headquarters specialist committees for Education and Emigration. One of the Unon's main objectives was to increase the opportunities for women to serve on public bodies. The first target was the Boards of Guardians and, after women had been elected in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury, Mabel herself was one of the first two women to join the Winchcombe Board.

Also in 1902 she became a Manager of Alderton School (Dixton being in Alderton parish). Her father had been elected to the Managers in 1899 as a ratepayers' representative and was serving as Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. Mabel became a "Foundation Member", nominated by the Rector. When her father died in 1903, she took over his post as Treasurer and remained a Manager until 1925.

After Frank's death in 1903 Mabel took on the added responsibility for managing the household and the estate. One of the jobs she undertook was to rationalise the haphazard annual blackberry-picking on Dixton Hill, specifying times for the activity, weighing the product, paying the pickers and selling the fruit to a jam factory. She also had to support her mother more and more in the running of the Gotherington Nursing Association and the Gotherington Reading Room. When new premises had to be built for the Reading Room in 1904, she was largely responsible for the arrangements.

In 1905 the Gloucestershire County Nursing Association was formed and, perhaps in honour of her mother's pioneering work in rural district nursing, Mabel was asked to become a member of the Executive Committee. She served on it for the rest of her life.

Like her mother, she strongly supported the non-militant campaign for women's suffrage. In 1908 and again in 1912 she spoke on behalf of the suffrage in debates arranged by the Winchcombe Literary and Debating Society.

In the years just before World War I a visitor to Dixton Manor gained the impression that Mabel "seemed to be on every committee in the neighbourhood". But there was one that eluded her. In 1913 she was invited by the Gloucestershire Education Committee to become a Manager of Gotherington School. The existing Managers objected on the grounds that she was a woman and lived outside the parish. Rather than accept her they threatened mass resignation, and Mabel herself withdrew in order to avoid any further unpleasantness.

During the War Mabel's knowledge of agriculture and her proficiency at public speaking led to her appointment to several of the County Council's agriculture committees and to her employment as lecturer and propagandist for wartime farming policy. For the duration she adapted her own courses at Dixton to the training of land girls rather than emigrants to the Colonies.

Immediately after her mother died in 1916 Mabel resigned from the committees of the Gotherington Reading Room and Nursing Association. She pleaded the weight of her county work, but as she remained as Manager of Alderton School there is a suspicion that she was distancing herself from those who had snubbed her over the Gotherington School appointment. She remained at Dixton until 1919, when she moved to "Rathmore" in Winchcombe.

In 1922 she was made a JP for the Winchcombe Division and took particular interest in cases where the welfare of women and children was concerned.

While still at "Rathmore" she made her will, which indicates that Miss Edith Blanche Clarence was already acting as her companion. Mabel was anxious that the first bequest (£200) from her estate should go to Miss Clarence "as she will be left to find a new home". She also expressed indebtedness to her "for all the comfort and happiness of my present very dependent existence", which suggests that she was already in poor health before the two ladies moved to "Detmore" in 1925.

Mabel died on 29 January 1931, aged 72, and was buried in her mother's grave in Alderton churchyard.

Unlike her mother and sisters, Mabel apparently left no written testimony, and there are few independent references to her character. It is clear that she did not share her mother's and youngest sister's popularity in Gotherington. This could have been partly the result of prejudice, for she had a facial tic, which was taken by some as a sign of incipient madness, and her shy manner may well have been mistaken for imperiousness. Yet she is remembered for many acts of kindness: arranging for children arriving in the area with no previous schooling to be coached so as to bring them up to the standard for their age; securing

first jobs and helping to negotiate apprenticeships for school-leavers; and paying for any evening classes she thought might be beneficial for young people. Her Cambridge contemporary and later journalist, Alice Dew-Smith, who wrote the obituary in the Newnham Roll Letter, extolled her industry, common sense, wilingness to listen, modest self-confidence, gift for public speaking and, above all, her wish to help others. There seems no good reason to question this assessment.

Owen Stinchcombe

Sources: "Elizabeth Malleson, 1828 - 1916, Autobiographical Notes and Letters", edited by Hope Malleson and printed for private circulation. 1926.

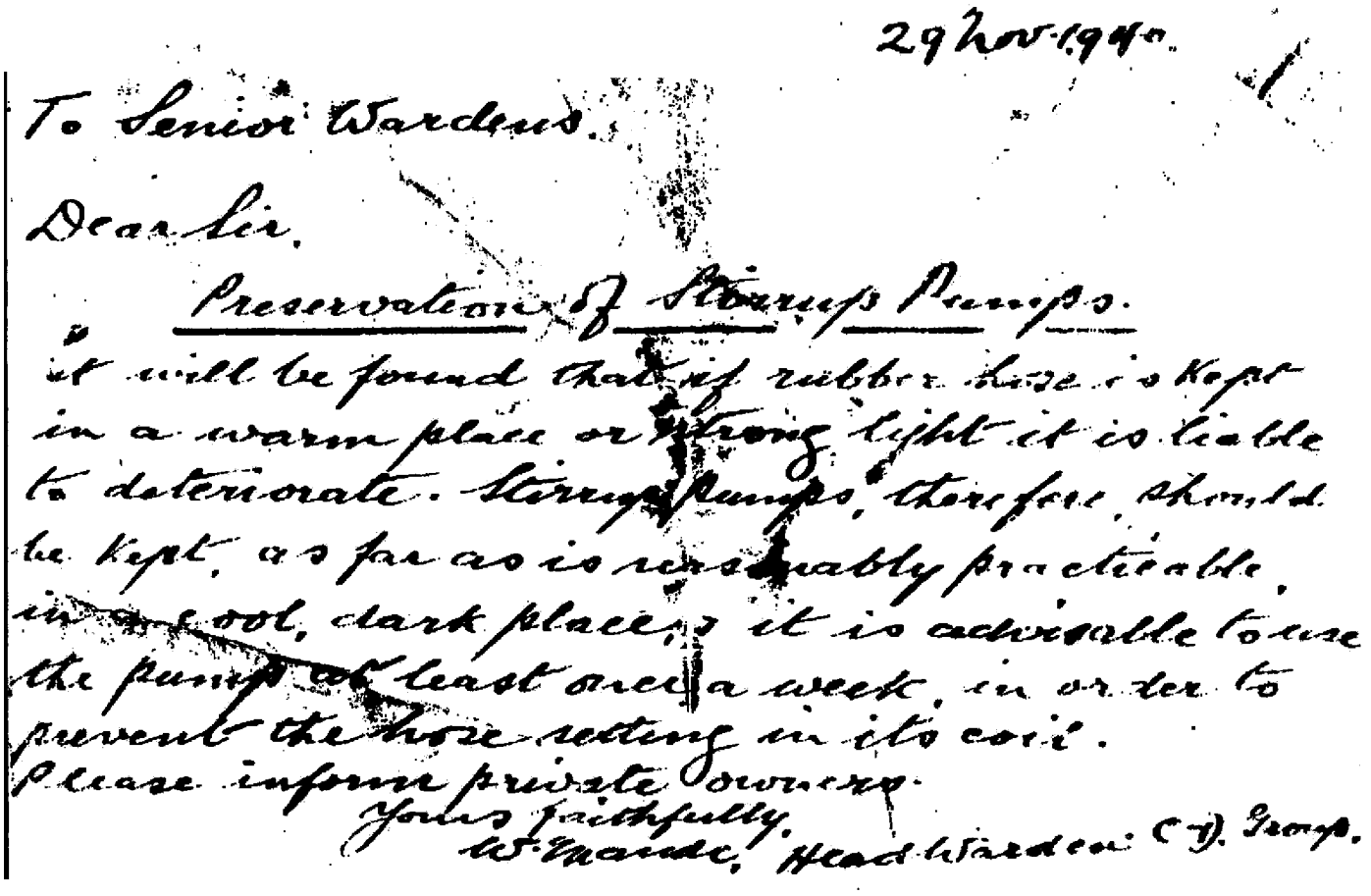
Roll Letter of Newnham College, Cambridge.

Local press.

Records of the Cheltenham Branch of the National Council of Women.

9. A WAR TIME WARNING

This duplicated notice was found under the floor-boards of a Charlton house. It had been sent out from an address in Stanley Road, Battledown.



29 Nov. 1940.

To Senior Wardens.

Dear Sir,

Preservation of Stirrup Pumps.

It will be found that if rubber hose is kept in a warm place or strong light it is liable to deteriorate. Stirrup Pumps, therefore, should be kept as far as is reasonably practicable in cool, dark places; it is advisable to use the pump at least once a week, in order to prevent the hose setting in its coil.

Please inform private owners.

Yours faithfully,

W. Maude, Head Warden C.D. Group.

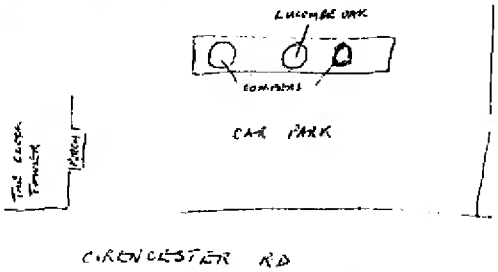
10. SOME CHARLTON TREES - (1) THE LUCOMBE OAK

In the car park at the hotel we all think of as The Lilleybrook there is a specimen of an unusual oak, a cross between Turkey and cork oaks. The pecularity of this tree is that it keeps its leaves all winter - this photograph was taken on 2 February 1990.

Size of leaf

Its leaves were still bright green

The position of the oak is shown in this diagram by Pat Love, who drew my attention to its existence.



This is how the Reader's Digest Field Guide describes the Lucombe oak, Quercus hispanica "The original Lucombe oak was felled by the man after whom it was named, to provide wood for his own coffin; and for many years before his death at the age of 102 he kept the boards beneath his bed. In the 1760s Mr Lucombe - an Exeter nursery-man - discovered that the oak, a cross between Turkey and cork oaks, occurred naturally when the two parent trees grew together. He raised a number of seedlings from the acorns of Turkey oak in his nursery, and noticed one that retained its leaves in the winter like the cork oaks: this he called 'evergreen Turkey oak'. He propagated thousands of trees from it by making grafts onto ordinary Turkey oaks. In 1792, seedlings were raised from the acorns of the

Lucombe oak itself, but being a hybrid they were variable in form --- The Lucombe oak - also known as the Spanish oak - retains the timber qualities of cork oak, being of dense texture with a good close grain. But it is not a commercial timber, and trees are only grown individually, for ornamental purposes".

11. NOTES

(1) Obituary

Since the last Bulletin, we have lost by death two good friends of Charlton Kings Local History Society, though neither were members. Ernie (Son) Fear, whose work for the Scouts will not be forgotten quickly, was generous in lending us his photographs and identifying the people shown on them. Vic Stanton, last Chairman of Charlton Kings Urban District Council, helped to arrange our inaugural meeting in 1978 and in our early days gave us much moral support. Both will be missed in the village.

(2) Chairmanship

The first chairman of this Society was Mike Greet and he had served ever since either as Chairman or Vice-Chairman, and has worked tirelessly for the Bulletin and our exhibitions. Now the pressure of his own research means that he has had to resign from the Committee, to our loss. But since his chosen subject is likely to involve the study of Cheltenham manorial records at the Public Record Office, his researches will probably be of importance to Charlton Kings in the end. We wish him every success - and nothing can be more enjoyable to the historian than research.

(3) Corrections to the History - Spelling of personal names p. 121 and p. 141.

Sir Brook Kay Bt (who lived at Stanley Lodge, now Avalon, Stanley Road and was a Trustee of the Battledown estate 1872-1907) did not hyphenate his name. The Revd R.H.M. (not W) Bouth was also a Trustee from 1912 to 1940.

(4) Corrections to Bulletin 24

Page 25 paragraph (2) line 5, 30 (It seems we can't get poor Thomas right! I can't explain this misprint).
Pages 32 and 36 - Church End Meese. Mr Jack Summers (the boy in the photograph) says that the thatched cottage was demolished after The Grange, in about 1938, not 1930.

(5) Research

We need more active researchers; and this is easier now that Gloucestershire Record Office is open on Saturday mornings, does not close over the lunch hour any day, and is open late on Thursdays. Next year, 1992, the 1891 census will be available on microfilm at Cheltenham Library. So no excuse! Please volunteer!

M.P.