

PARISH SURVEY OF CHECKENDON

1987

By M.KIFT P.PREECE M.FALLOWFIELD

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

CHECKENDON, OXFORDSHIRE: PARISH SURVEY

M. KIFT

P. PREECE

M. FALLOWFIELD

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Villages: Checkendon & Little Stoke

Civil Parish : Checkendon (original parish)

District : South Oxfordshire

A manor lying in the Chiltern Hundreds in the Hundred of Langtree. O.S.6"

As far as is known in the mediaeval period Checkendon & Little Stoke were one manor within the Hundred of Langtree, although Little Stoke is now part of the parish of South Stoke. The nearby manor of Wyfold, which belonged to Thame Abbey, also held some lands in Checkendon.

For clarity of use with documents, it was decided to include Little Stoke in the survey as if it was still part of the present parish of Checkendon. The parish boundaries have moved quite a few times over the years.

Physical Setting

Geology The bedrock of the area is chalk, the present Thames Valley being cut through this chalk with a layer of gravel & loam along the course of the river. On the high ground a layer of gravel with pockets of clay represents an earlier stage of the river valley.

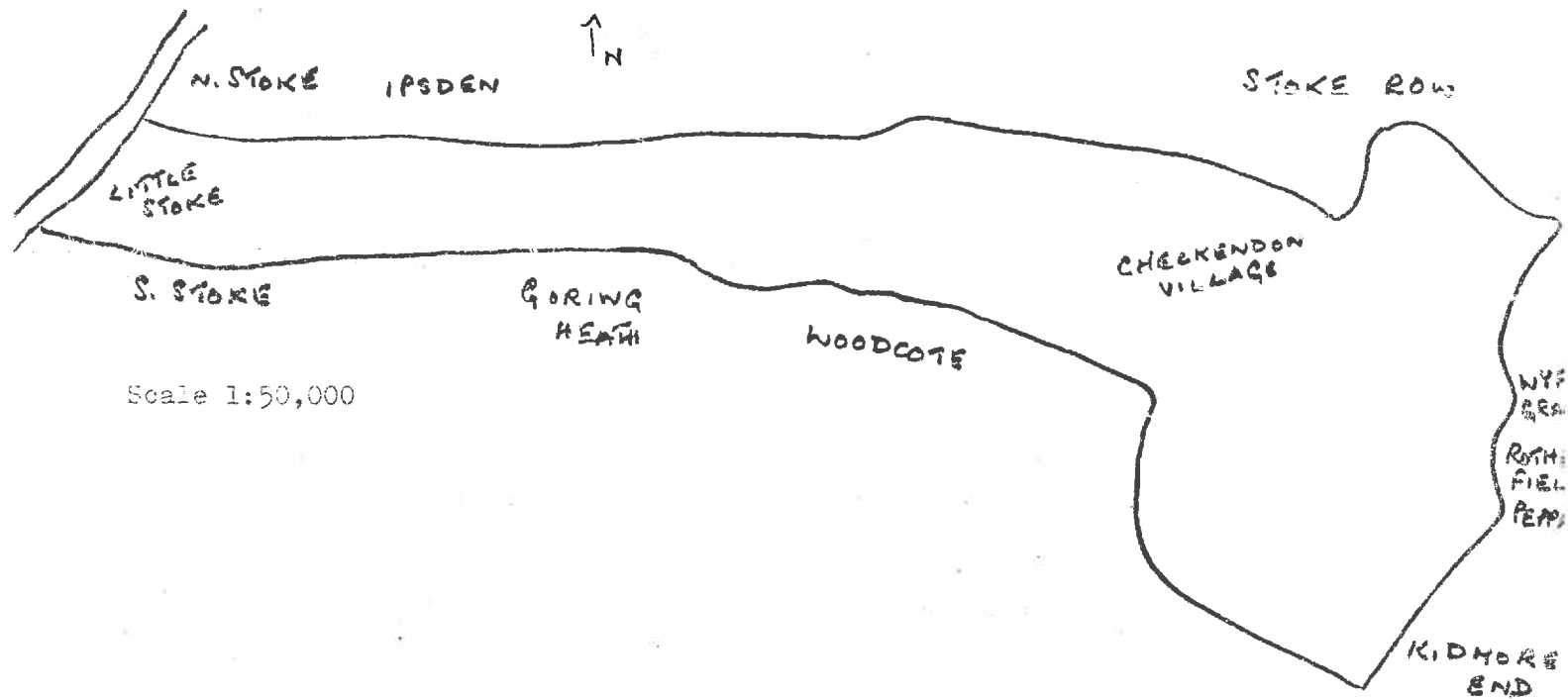
Water Supply Little Stoke being beside the Thames had no problem over its water supply. On the high land round Checkendon village it is probable that many places were dependant on ponds as a source of water. The village green, outside the church, now covers a once existing pond and in the vicinity of this, are found Lovegroves, Wheelers and Court ponds, all belonging to farms of the same name. In the lifetime of Miss Hope (an old resident of the village) yokes were used to carry buckets of water from the ponds. Later, she recalls, water was collected from house roofs and filtered through earthen ware. She did not know what filtering agent was used, though probably it was sand and charcoal as at Mapledurham. After being filtered it was stored in brick lined tanks underground; the water was obtained by a bucket dropped into the tank from a 'tank pole' which was used to lever up the bucket. The old rectory was the only place she could remember that had a well & this was very

deep. Overall it appears that on the high ground water was a problem.

### Relief

The main village lies on the brow of the Chiltern Hills above the Thames Valley. The western boundary, at Little Stoke is only short and is formed by the Thames. The parish is long and narrow until it reaches the hills; there it widens to form the shape of a hammer head with its handle stretching back to the river. There is a small area of water meadow around Little Stoke. The dip slope of the Chilterns, as it rises, has wide open downland type fields; where the parish broadens in the hinterland, are many woods interspersed with assorted fields. The parishes of Ipsden & North Stoke lie on the northern boundary; in the east the parish abutts on to Stoke Row, Rotherfield Peppard & Kidmore End and to the south lie Goring Heath, Woodcote And South Stoke.

### Old Parish of Checkendon



The two highest points in the parish are around 190 metres & lie south of Checkendon village & in the top northern corner near Neals Farm

### Archaeological Setting

There is very little evidence of earliest occupation - a few hand axes have been found near Wyfold. An Iron age plateau fort is in a wood called Castle Grove; it is very large 250 metres by 1640 metres, with very marked banks and ditches. For further reference see record cards in Woodstock Museum.

The Devils Churchyard was also probably an Iron Age enclosure. Its name stems from a tradition that an attempt was made to build the village church on this site, but each night the previous days work was demolished (the work of the devil). An interesting link is a reference to 'Oldbury' in 1312 & again in 1391 both in the Boarstall Cartulary. Oldbury seems to be located around the area of the Devils Churchyard according to these documents. When the wood covering these earthworks was felled in the late 1970s, the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group mounted an exploratory Dig under the guidance of the Oxford Unit. Apart from an aurochs tooth and a small metal amulet very little was found.

One first century Roman coin represents this period of history in the parish; this again was found at Wyfold

Although Little Stoke now consists of Manor Farm & its cottages & Little Stoke House And two ferry cottages it was much larger in mediaeval times. In the Hundred Rolls of 1279 there was an approximate population of . When the Southern Gas Board were excavating for a new gas pipeline traces of the early village came to light in the fields between these two complexes. These consist of partially ploughed out earthworks. A complete absence of stone footings seemed to indicate an all timber tradition of building had continued up to the time of desertion. Pottery scatters consisted mainly of Circ: 12th-13th century sherds<sup>1</sup>. In our own field walking of this site, which is now pasture, we saw faint signs of a hollow way & possible house platforms. Between these earthworks & the water meadows there was a sharp 3 foot drop indicating a possible build up of land to raise the inhabited area above flood level. O.S. 68 SW 6025852

Near Checkendon Court (once a farm), Court Plat field contains mounds and bumps under the grass, indicating some possible form of human habitation. OS SE663836

#### Documentary History

The place name is derived from Caecca - possibly a Celtic name and den or dene (1086) meaning a wooded valley.

The first reference to Checkendon comes in the Domesday Book

1) Land of Alfred nephew of Wigot. Alfred nephew of Wigot holds (Little) Stoke from the King. 3 hides. Land for 4 ploughs. Now in lordship. 1 plough; 2 slaves. 6

villagers with 2 small holders have 2 ploughs. A mill 20s; woodland  $1\frac{1}{2}$  furlongs long and as many wide. The value was £4; now £3. Wulfred held it freely.

2) He also holds Checkendon 6 hides. Land for 7 ploughs. Now in lordship 1 plough 4 slaves. 8 villagers with 3 small holders have 2 ploughs. Meadow 6 acres; woodland 1 furlong long & 1 wide. The value was £4; now £3 Wulfred held it freely.

It is probable that Wigots nephew Alfred Little Stoke & Checkendon because his uncle had allowed the Conquerer to cross his army of foot soldiers over the Thames at Wallingford (the cavalry crossed at Goring). At that time Wigot was Thane of Wallingford & an ardent supporter of William.

Wulred was a Saxon who held both Checkendon & Little Stoke before the Norman Conquest, so there must have been Saxon settlements in both these places.

In 1189 the Marmions appear to have become tenants in chief of the manor.<sup>2</sup> This family also held Boarstall & were champions of the Dukes of Normandy. Little Stoke was called Stoke Marmion after them for several centuries. Although various Marmions appear to have retained the manor, in 1331 John Marmion leased his capital messuage at Stoke Marmion to Gilbert de la Stane. (Stonor).<sup>3</sup>

Around 1406 John Rede a lawyer married the Marmion heiress Cecilia, she had already been married to Thomas Sakevyle and on the death of John was to marry yet a third time. After her marriage to John Rede Checkendon appears to have been divided again & again between the Marmions and Redes. For example in 1438 half of the manor of Checkendon & Little Stoke was transferred from Richard Marmion to Edmund Rede.<sup>4</sup>

In 1520 Ralph Pollington of Wallingford also had part of the manor.<sup>5</sup> The Stonors having held the Little Stoke area until approximately 1640<sup>6</sup>, a Mr Ikildesly (spelt several ways!) seems to have taken over from them in 1669.<sup>7</sup> At the same time a proportion of Checkendon was held from 1606<sup>8</sup> by the Lybbe family. In 1689 mention is made of an Anthony Lybbe having a moiety of Checkendon manor.<sup>9</sup>

#### References

- 1) Oxford Archaeological unit
- 2) H.e. Salter (ed) Boarstall cartulary. O.H.S.
- 3) D/EH T64 B.R.O.
- 4) Marmion papers I/1/13 O.R.O
- 5) D/EH T64 B.R.O
- 6) A.S. DB Oxon c9 O.R.O
- 7) Ibid
- 8) P.L. I/8 O.R.O

By 1746 Little Stoke had passed to William Blackall,<sup>1</sup> the Blackall family seem to have moved to Braziers at some point in the middle of the 18th century and they were followed by the Massingberds. Lord Macclesfield probably took the estate over in settlement of debts and then exchanged the land through an act of Parliament to a Thomas Reade; so Thomas Reade then had Little Stoke. The estate was held by them into the 19th century as in 1855 a Mrs Reade is listed, as owning it, in a Poor Rate.<sup>2</sup> Sometime after this Little Stoke 'capital mansion' degenerated into an ordinary farm which was in the last stages of decay after the end of World War I. It was then bought by Major Ducker, whose family still have it today

Returning to the Lybbes, Checkendon was held by them certainly till 1744<sup>3</sup> when the two sisters, Mary Wilder & Anne Lybbe inherited & conveyed a moiety of the manor to John Breedon.<sup>4</sup>

From this time onwards the situation was much as the modern one with farms and houses changing hands.

#### References

- 1) M.M. papers O.R.O
- 2) Misc:Winkw: I/1 O.R.O
- 3) MS.BD Oxon C<sup>o</sup>wards
- 4) Icid

#### Historical Parish Economy & Field System

The Domesday Survey records 4 ploughs in Little Stoke & 7 ploughs in Checkendon. Checkendon on the hill always had a high proportion of free men in mediaeval times. In an extent of the manor in 1292<sup>1</sup> thirteen free tenants are listed with only eight customary tenants and eleven cottagers paying rent. It is possible that the cottagers were woodmen who seem, in this area, to have often worked for themselves.

The topography shows smallish fields scattered amongst woodland, the fields having been assarted in early times. As the fields were cleared, it seems, a strip of woodland was left between them - these were known locally as 'shaws', and many still exist in the landscape. In Wyfold this is emphasised by the free tenants, having so many crofts and so many coppices; meaning, we believe, small assarted

with shaws. An example is :- 'Alicia de Marler holds 3 crofts, 1 cottag and 1 coppice for 5s4d'<sup>2</sup>

The Checkendon Open fields, on the dip slope of the Chilterns, were divided into strips or furlongs and no doubt the customary tenants had their holdings there.

Closer to the river Little Stoke had many customary tenants and they had their holdings amongst the furlongs of the Little Stoke open fields. Here there was only one free tenant<sup>3</sup> who gave half a mark instead of services. In the Hundred Rolls of 1279 there were 10 families living in Little Stoke. It is difficult to establish at what period the village shrank/moved but it seems likely that it happened in the fourteenth century. One indication is that in 1445 there is a reference to 'le Towne Medowe next to the water'.<sup>4</sup>

The open fields were still divided into strips at the time of the T.A 1841. by this time they were collectively farmed mainly by a Mr Dodd, a tenant farmer who lived at Braziers. In the upper part of Checkendon the land was divided amongst the farms and enclosed as it always seems to have been from the 16th century onwards.

#### Other Occupations

An iron foundry was certainly in existence in 1851<sup>5</sup> in Checkendon village, run by Fletcher Hope and his son who was the moulder. There were also two blacksmiths at the same time at a separate establishment probably mainly farriers.

Brick and tile works, these were probably present in 1851<sup>6</sup> as a Stephen Swain gave his occupation as bricklayer. These works were situated on the edge of Busgrove wood (SE 685833) Apparently it was disused by 1913.<sup>7</sup>

The Woodlands have always provided work in the area and they have varied in size and nature according to the demand for their products. In the early mediaeval period they were at their smallest, this was followed by a period of growth after the diminution of population in the late 14th century. At this time they consisted mainly of coppice with standards. This situation continued with the woods increasing until the 19th century when there was a slight drop for a while. This was followed by an increase due to the furniture trade at High Wycombe when the nature of the woods changed to high beech.<sup>8</sup>

References

- 1) C 133/62/5 P.R.O
- 2) Hundred Rolls Oxon 'Wyfaude'
- 3) Ibid Stoke Newmyon
- 4) H.E.Salter (ed) Boarstall Cartulary O.H.S.
- 5) Census Enumerators "returns Oxford local history library
- 6) Ibid
- 7) C.S.Bond Oxfordshire Museum
- 8) P.Preece Oxford Local History dissertation Oxford Local History Library

Modern Parish Economy

Checkendon and Little Stoke are a mainly agricultural district divided into large farms growing cereals on the dip slope with mixed farming on the hills. The woodlands are still important and the woods have expanded once again with conifer plantations for wood pulp for paper. Little Stoke has shrunk with virtually no new building but Checkendon has expanded with commuters moving in.



8

FIELDS

Of the 77 fields recorded, all of which are listed in the tithe award, 15 are mentioned in documents between 1230 and 1664 and three of these have been traced back to the thirteenth century.

Pinnocks Field O.S 6in 68 SU 68 SE 670-8 805

The oldest field name appears to be Pinnocks. In ~~ix~~ the cartulary of Thame Abbey, a charter dated 1230 states that Pinnokes Feld belonged to the Abbot and convent pertaining to the Grange of Wifalde (Wyfold)<sup>1</sup>. Again it is recorded in 1614 in a survey of lands as Penokes Feild<sup>2</sup>. Margaret Gelling lists it as Pennockes Feild in 1618<sup>3</sup>. On the Tithe Award map of 1841 the area has been divided into Pinnocks Hither feild 32 acres of arable and Pinnocks Further field 33 acres of arable. In 1985 the division between these two fields was still visible, despite the removal of the hedge, as a slight lynchet. A pond marked on the ordnance survey map as Sheepwash Pond, was noted at the edge of Pinnocks Further field. There may be some relevance in that there was an agreement about the right of common for beasts (sheep?) in the Thame cartulary<sup>4</sup>. This ancient farmland is bounded on the north west and south east by ancient woodland so must have been assarted in antiquity. The south west and north east are bounded by ancient tracks which are now roads.

Horsalls OS 6in SU 68 SE 673827

This field is mentioned in thirteenth century writings - in 1278 Nicholas de Hursole holds land in Checkendon<sup>5</sup>. There is reference to a field called Horsehole in 1419 & 1439<sup>6</sup> and a 'feild called Horshole' in connection with Edmund Rede & his leasing it to others<sup>7</sup>. By 1739 the area had been divided into Great & Little Hosells and of 11 and 6 'arcors' respectively.<sup>8</sup> It is highly probable that the area was much reduced and the rest had become woodland as about this time there are references to Horsale wood in the Poor Rate. In the Tithe Award of 1841 Upper Horsalls is 5 acres & Lower Horsalls 11 acres, both arable. It is bounded by the remains of a shaw between it and the old Ipes Wood on the west and part of the old Checkendon common on the south east. An old lane borders the north.

I H.E. Salter ed Thame Cartulary O.R.S 1947/8

<sup>2</sup>Pearman O.Arch.Soc: 1898

- 3 M.Gelling The place names of Oxfordshire part I  
 4 Thame Cart:ibid  
 5 Rotuli Hundredorum 1812-18 Vol II  
 6 H.E.Salter The Boarstall Cart:O.H.S 1930  
 7 et. seq  
 8 M.M.II -8 Ox Rec Office

Scotts Fighle O.S.6in SU 68 S.E.662839

This, the third of these thirteenth century fields takes its name from Henry Scot who had a virgate of land in Ipsden in 1279<sup>1</sup>. In a charter of 1435 Thomas Scotte of Ipsden is mentioned as receiving land from Richard Marmion.<sup>2&3</sup> Again in the court rolls of Ipsden 1657 '.... a house Scotts, hath no common (rights).<sup>4</sup> The Tithe Award lists a piece of land Scots, arable,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres which is attached to Scotts farm

- I Rot: Hund: Ibid  
 2 H.E.Salter The Boarstall Cart: O.H.S  
 3 Revd Cooke B.B.O.Arch Journal Vol 32 No I 1928 p 59  
 4 M.S.Rolls Oxon a I Bodleian

In the thirteenth hundreds three fields are named in old documents,

North Dean O.S 6in SU 68 Sw 642840

This is first mentioned in 1354 when Geoffrey Marmion leases it to John atte Grove<sup>1</sup>; again it appears as Northdene in a grant of a messuage and land.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that it is in an area of ancient cultivation as nearby are some strip lynchets. In 1739 this land belonged to Bottom Farm and consisted of 4 acres<sup>3</sup>. The tithe award shows North Dean as still having 4 acres of arable land. When <sup>field walked in 1881</sup> this area, which is now part of a very large field, had some traces of ridge and furrow. These have now been ploughed out and cannot be seen from the ground.

Leasingdown O.S 6in SU 68 SW 642840

This was part of the open fields on the manor of Little Stoke and lay south of the Lickfield Way. It is obviously a very ancient area and the track through it is still known as the Leasingdown Way leading through the common fields of Little Stoke and Checkendon from the river to the hills. It first appears in an indenture of

Leasingdown cont:

1386 between William Harlyngrugge and William Grace in connection with 'land and pasture near Lesydon<sup>4</sup>. A' terrier of Checkendon refers to Leason Down in 1635<sup>5</sup>, while early in the eighteenth century it is called Leasondowne Way or Hill in a Little Stoke Particular.<sup>6</sup> It was land belonging to Bottom Farm in 1739 and was then spelt Leasingdon.<sup>7</sup> By the beginning of the eighteen hundreds the spelling had changed yet again to Leason Down<sup>8</sup>. There is no mention of Leasing Down in the Tithe Award but in 1986 a local farmers wife referred to it by that name and it seems to be known locally as such. Nowadays it is just part of an enormous arable field. Whitehill or Whitehall O.S.6in SU 68 SE 668836

While not strictly a field, it certainly was an early area of cultivation and now is a built up part of Checkendon village and known by the latter name. The land behind the houses is still divided into the equivalent of strips and used as paddocks for ponies. An enfeoffment of 1389 between Elena Marchaunt and John Wythinsone mentions 'Wytehull'<sup>9</sup>. In the Tithe Award Whitehill pightle is shown to be 3 rods in area but by that time there were several houses on the site. Whitehall lane is a very old track with ancient hedges bordering it still in some places.

#### References

- 1 A.H.Cooke ed B.B.O Arch Journal Vol 32 No I
- 2 H.E.Salter ed Boarstall cart: O.H.S.
- 3 M.M.papers II/8 O.R.O
- 4 D/EH T64 B.R.O
- 5 Oxon 13 40 Terriers Bod:
- 6 M.M.II O.R.O
- 7 M.M.II/8 ibid
- 8 D/EH T13 B.R.O.
- 9 Marmion II i/1&2 O.R.O

Checkendon Fields Cont:Edmunds Ground O.S 6" SU 68 SE 666832

We have only one new field name in the 15th century, that of Edmunds Ground. In the same area as Whitehill or Whitehall, already mentioned, this field lies on the north side of the lane of the same name. The field is now built over but again the land behind the houses is still divided as for strips and used for paddocks for ponies. The first reference is in 1493-4 when Samuel Edmund is mentioned in the will of Thomas Cheyne. In 1666 Thomas Emans is listed in a rental of Checkendon Manor. Then the Whitehill furlongs were itemised - Berrefeld, Herne forlong, Wowforlong, Long forlong, Lokforlong and Heggforlong. The northern edge of this field forms part of the parish boundary. In 1841 Edmunds Ground was an arable area of 19 acres

1) Marmion I/i 1-2 O.R.0

2) M.S D.D Oxon C9 O.R.0

A survey of Checkendon taken in 1564<sup>1</sup> brings to light more fields to add to the growing list of names.

Fyrze Felde (O.S.6" SU 68 SE 655835) was then 6 acres & by the time of the T.A. was known as Furze Close of 18 acres, divided into two parts with a stretch of Park Wood between them. One area was then grass, the other arable and it belonged to Hammonds farm. It is clear that the extra acreage of agricultural land gained by 1841 was taken from Park Wood.

Another area of Cultivation belonging to Hammonds farm and mentioned in the survey was Wymble Feild of 16 acres. (O.S.6" SU 68 SE 653833) In 1841 Wymble Field was 17 acres of arable. It is still known locally by the same name. An ancient pond of the same name can be found in the corner of this land at the commencement of the driveway to Hammonds farm.

Stockings (SU 68 SE 666823) was known as le Stockinge Feilde in 1564 and was 12 acres in extent. In 1744 the field had become a wood of the same name<sup>2</sup>. By 1841 Stockings had once more become a field and was 18 acres of arable. As the word Stockings denotes land cleared of trees this area must once have been assarted, become woodland again by 1744 only to be felled and enlarged by the time of the

1) S.P.12/34 P.R.0

2) MS DD Oxon C9 O.R.0

T.A. In 1985 this land was part wood, part arable.

The fourth field mentioned in the 1564 survey was Le Waterfelde. It was 30 acres in extent and may have obtained its name from the very clayey nature of the land, which must have been waterlogged at times. By 1841 it was listed as 16 acres of underwood. It was in this area that a brick kiln flourished until early in this century, now the whole area is woodland. (SE 667825)

On the outskirts of the village lies the fifth field noted in the survey, that of Furtner Eastfield 10 acres and Hither Eastfield 12 acres. Probably originally one of the open fields of the village, by 1650-60 'Eastfeildes' belonged to Edward Simons<sup>1</sup> in a Particular of Checkendon Manor. Again 'Estfield' is mentioned in an indenture of 1744 and by 1841 the names Upper and Lower Eastfield are found being 11 and 19 acres respectively. At the present (1986) the area is being cultivated as one large field. (SE 666828)

Another identifiable field in the survey is le Hayverne O.S 6" SU 68 SE 657832. There are two parts mentioned in the survey, one is an arable field of 20 acres that ties in very well with the T.A. field called Great Haybourne of 22a 2r 3p and another of 14 acres under another tenant which is called Little Haybourne in the T.A. and consists of 13a 2r. These two fields are still separated by a fence (the hedge has been grubbed) and are grassland with sheep.

The last recognisable field in this survey is 'Hollowe Croft' SW 647838 which was an arable field of 16 acres in the valley near Bottom Farm. This can be identified with Upper Holly Croft of 3a 3r 39p and Lower Holly Croft of 13a 0r 25p T.A. 18 together making the 16 original acres of Hollowe Crofte. Today these fields are still present, bounded on one side by a very ancient hedge which includes Buckthorn and masses of Spindlewood. Nearby is Hammonds Wood. It is easy to see why in 1564 this land was called Hollowe Crofte as it lies in the bed of the valley against the old track leading from Bottom farm & Checkendon village towards the Thames.

Bodys Park SE 673807 This is named after a family called Body first mentioned in 1342 when Robert Boty had 3 separate strips of  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre each in the open fields.<sup>2</sup> There are two early wills of 1582 & 1584<sup>3</sup> of John Bodie &, probably,

his son William Boddy, who were both husbandmen in a small way. The family fortunes improved as in the Hearth Tax returns of 'Wybold' (Wyfold) of 1665, Robert Body had 3 hearths which is more than the average. On the T.A. this field has 30 acres. The name may have referred to the lane that runs alongside being called Park Lane. The field is now deep ploughed arable.

Picked Close SW 640842 This appears in an indenture in 1663<sup>5</sup> & again from the same source in 1679 '....all ye close of arable lands called & known by the name of Picked Close at ye east end of a certain lane called Horsewell lane'. When hedge dating this lane we came up with an average of 7 species. By 1739 the field was known as '..Picked Piece by lane end.'<sup>6</sup> & belonged to Bottom Farm. Yet again the name was altered by 1841 becoming Peaked Ground & by this time much larger, being 10 acres of arable. It is still arable in 1985

#### References

- 1) MS DD Oxon C/9- O.R.O
- 2) Boarstall cart:
- 3) Oxfordshire Inventories M.A.Havindon
- 4) Oxfordshire Hearth Tax returns O.R.S
- 5) Allnutt I/12 O.R.O
- 6) M.M.II/8 O.R.O

Arriving at the eighteenth century a great ~~many~~ more fieldnames appear, sometimes, as before, including information. They are discovered in the Massingberd Mundy papers.

The following fields are all listed in an account of land belonging to Bottom Farm in 1739:- Braziers Great Ground, Upper & Lower Court Ground, Great Close, Pescottes (Pease Croft in 1841), Worsleys Ground & Pound Fighle. Of these the last two are the most interesting.

Worsleys Ground SW 635840 - was 8 acres of arable land in 1841. The present O.S. maps still mark Cuseley barn & as is mentioned in the buildings there was once a farm there. A Checkendon Terrier dated 1865<sup>2</sup> states that Woosley Ground had an elm on the eastern side & 22 on the south. A field walk over the area in 1985

showed the elms had gone and the faint remains of ridge and furrow noted in 1978 had been ploughed out.

Pound Pightle SW 640837 Also known as Pound Close & not to be confused with Pound Field which lies on the opposite side of the road. In 1841 Pound Pightle was 2 acres in size while Pound Field was 27 acres & formed part of the Common fields of Checkendon. In the corner of Pound Pightle the village pound was clearly marked on the Moses Dodd Map of 1848<sup>3</sup>. Today all that is left is a small area of dense scrub where the pound stood.

In the 1805 terrier three fields are recorded as having certain trees on their edges. We field walked each to see if any still remained:-

Barley Close SE 659828 'Barley Close has 3 small oaks on the south & 1 small oak and three elms on the east. Our search was rewarded for we found 2 large oaks & the stump of the third on the south but no elms on the eastern border. This field is bounded by an ancient hedge on the south with an average of 10 species including spindle; beside the hedge is a very old lane.

Upper & Lower Deers SE 663827 In 1805 this divided field had 2 small oaks on the eastern side, The oaks were still present in 1984 but the area was no longer split. There was a kink on the western boundary, this showed up on the T.A. map. It seemed possible that there had been a shaw here which had been grubbed. A shaw was present on the southern side,

#### References

- 1) M.M.II/8 C.R.O
- 2) MS OX: Dios: Papers C2202 No 12
- 3) C.R.O

#### The Common Fields of Little Stoke & Checkendon

These were situated on the dip slope of the Chilterns between the present B 4009 road & the final rise of the hills. From the Tithe Award map it seems that the Little Stoke fields were divided from the Checkendon fields by the Icknield Way.

Usually in mediaeval times there were at least 3 open fields attached to a village. Although we know that there must have been such fields at Checkendon and Little Stoke, it is difficult to find their names. The references

that we have in the mediaeval period are as follows:-

1289 21 acres &  $1\frac{1}{2}$  perches of arable land in Checkendon & Little Stoke fields, including one piece near to 'the Smale Portway & Totingway'. These acres were obviously scattered about the fields & H.E.Salter says the strips are described in detail in the original.<sup>1</sup>

1296 A grant of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land in Checkendon Field,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  of them next to the 'Mill path' & 2 acres next to 'le hechyng de Ippesden'<sup>2</sup>

Circa 1296 A rood of arable land lying over against 'Levesdone' (Leasendown)<sup>3</sup>

1313 An acre lying east of the 'churchæ Weye' and another lying next to the 'Smale Portweyé' in Little Stoke.<sup>4</sup>

1354  $-2\frac{1}{2}$  acres in Robert Marmions field (Little Stoke) 1 acre in 'Stintland' 1 acre in 'Blakelond' & one acre extending in the 'conyggers'.<sup>5</sup> It is not known where the former areas lie, but it is believed that the rabbit warren was where the strip lynchets are below Itchen Wood -SW 645837. Right of warren had been granted to the Marmions.

As can be seen from the above information the only open that can be positively identified is the Middle Field in Little Stoke

In the terrier for 1635<sup>6</sup> the Checkendon fields listed are:-

- 1) The first common field near the pound ( SW 645835)
- 2) The next common field south side
- 3) Checkendon field above Ickleton Way (Ickniel Way) to the north

The Little Stoke fields

- 1) 'betwixt Little Stoke & the Ickleton Way on the south side
- 2) 'Middle furlong beginning at the east'

The Little Stoke fields have no proper names in the terrier although the acres are defined.

1739 In a survey of Bottom Farm<sup>7</sup> three Checkendon field names are mentioned.

- 1) Pound field of 20 acres
- 2) Lower field of 16 acres
- 3) Hungar Hill field of 5 acres (this is probably situate to the west of the lynchets.

Also in the early 18th century Checkendon 'middle field' is mentioned.<sup>8</sup>



Little Stoke fields in 1777 were:-

- 1) North Field 62 acres 2 rods 31 perches
- 2) Middle Field 63 " 0 " 5 "
- 3) South Field 67 " 1 " 23 "
- 4) Field on the Hill 25 acres 2 rods 5 perches<sup>9</sup>

As Little Stoke at a late date had 4 Open fields, although one is considerably smaller than the other three are we to assume that Checkendon had the same?

By 1841 the common fields extended to Braziers & were still divided into strips (see T.A. map), these were owned by 5 people. In the Little Stoke field west all strips were farmed by Mrs Mary Read partly as the landowner but mostly as a tenant. Beyond this & including Checkendon open fields all the land was farmed by Mr Francis Dodd who was a tenant farmer.

The strips according to the T.A. map appear to be small rarely as much as an acre.

At the present time (1987) these fields are all huge arable areas.

#### References

- 1) H.E. Salter (ed) Boarstall Cart: O.H.S. p 23
- 2) Ibid p37
- 3) Ibid p 23
- 4) D/EH T64 B.R.O
- 5) Ibid
- 6) Oxon 13 40 terriers Bod:
- 7) M.M.III 9 O.R.O
- 8) Ibid
- 9) D/EB T 13 B.R.O.

#### Meadows

There was only a small area of meadow & pasture for the two communities, although the woods were used for pasture to supplement. This was down by the Thames & extended to the present B 4009 road. This may have been the "Toting" or "Tudingway" which seems to fulfill the requirements of a cattle road for the movement of cattle.<sup>1</sup> The mediaeval references are as follows:-

1272 Two marks were paid for an acre of meadow called 'Puddull' having the Thames on the west. At that time, before drainage, these fields would have been very wet hence the name. Mrs Ducker referred to the draining & improvement of this field of recent years.<sup>2</sup>

1272 An acre in Stoke (Little) lying between the fishpond of Robert le Justice (of neighbouring South Stoke) & the paddock of Walter Ernold. The fish pond is still visible.<sup>3</sup>

1331 John Marmion had 20 acres of meadow & 5 acres of pasture.<sup>4</sup>

1445 A meadow in Little Stoke called "le Towne Medowe near to the river. This has already been mentioned as a possible site for the lost village. It is still a meadow.<sup>5</sup>

Because the meadowland was inadequate for the parish, there was an agreement with the adjoining parish of Ipsden about the rights of common in the meadows of Ipsden.<sup>6</sup> In 1480 various men of Checkendon were entitled to a share in the meadows of Mapledurnam - this was in the 'Broad Mead'.<sup>7</sup> For example :-

'William Sparow of Chakinden had II lockys (loads) of hey for XVIIId'

'John Delys of Chakinden an akere of mede near Holborrow'

There may well have been a similar arrangement with the adjoining parish of South Stoke

It is a fair assumption that because of the existing system of ditches in the meadow by the river they would have been artificially flooded (if not naturally) to provide the 'first bite'.<sup>8</sup>

We have mentioned the pasture that existed probably between the meadows and the open fields. There would of course be grazing on the fallow of the open fields. The woodland pasture also has been mentioned but as well as this there would have been grazing on Hook End Common, Checkendon Common, and 'White Head' Heath.<sup>9</sup>

#### References

- 1) W.G. Hoskins Fieldwork in Local History Faber 1969 p143
- 2) Boarstall Cart: p 20
- 3) Ibid p21
- 4) D/EH T64 B.R.O.

- 5) Boarstall Cart:p 39
- 6) Ibid p116
- 7) A.H.Cooke Early History of Mapledurham O.U.P 1925 p187
- 8) Eric Kerridge The Farmers of Old England Allen & Unwin 1973 p 23
- 9) Davis map of Oxfordshire 1797

### Hedges

Many hedges have disappeared, some recently, a considerable number remain. These have a great variety of species. One factor that has to be taken into consideration is that some of the shaws, which formed field boundaries have been removed & modern hedges substituted. These latter may only have 2 species although the field boundary is very old, hedge R is an example of this (SE 658827)

The average number of species present in the hedges was 7.9 overall. If one deducts hawthorn & blackthorn, as planted species, that makes it roughly 6 which could mean that the majority of hedges were late mediaeval in origin; though possibly some were earlier. An example of this is the hedge forming the parish boundary between Checkendon & Ipsden which in some sections of the count had as many as 14 species; there are some unusual shrubs in this hedge such as crab apple, whitebeam, wayfaring tree & aspen poplar. Spindle is common in many hedges in the parish and this is considered to denote an old hedge.

The standard trees present in the hedges are mainly oak & ash with some beech

In the area of the common fields very few hedges are found but in the upper Chiltern region, where the freemen lived & the assarted fields were small & enclosed early, the oldest hedges are found.

Parish Survey- the Boundaries of Checkendon

Over a period of time, with the aid of the Tithe Award map and Ordnance Survey maps and of course, our feet, we have traced as far as possible the boundaries of Checkendon. The boundaries have altered several times over the years so the first task was to establish the original route. This was done with the aid of the Tithe Award map, a map published by the genealogical society showing the general outline of the old parishes of Oxfordshire and the oldest Ordnance Survey maps we could find. Parish surveys involve a great deal of poring over maps and the ability to read them is essential.

At some points on the earlier O.S. maps there are boundary markers present. On the Checkendon parish boundary there are posts marked in Busgrove Wood but of these no trace could be found, but an oak tree on the edge of Wheelers Copse is still to be found and is obviously at the very least 100 years old. Apart from these two, no other markers are on the maps we have consulted.

However as can be seen from the map the boundaries were often marked by banks; all of these were to be found in connection with woods. They may have extended into arable land in the past but <sup>if so</sup> have long ago been ploughed out. The banks are usually from 1 metre to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres high and over the centuries have spread, ~~and~~ are often up to 4 metres wide and have a ditch alongside which is now very shallow. In places where agriculture has impinged on the banks they are sometimes vestigial. One point we have noted about the banks is that they are often accompanied by a footpath as, for example, the stretch from Shrub Wood through to Wyfold Wood. This is contrary to what Maurice Beresford states <sup>1</sup>; However his area did not include the Oxfordshire Chilterns. The banks are sometimes double with ditches on the inside and a path or track between and our theory is that in these cases each parish dug its own ~~bank and ditch~~ and a no-mans-land was left ~~x~~ between which was a right of way possibly used as the footpath in 'beating the bounds'. An example of the double bank with a track between is found at Corkers Lane. Hoskins refers to tracks along the 'double ditched boundaries of pre-Conquest estates' <sup>2</sup> (mostly <sup>l</sup> in Devon), which causes one to wonder about the age of those we have found.

Three hedges have been found surviving on the boundary. One marked on the southern boundary between Checkendon and South Stoke and very near some strip lynchets had a hedge count of 6 species with Spindle and Wayfaring tree present. Another on the northern edge between Ipsden and Checkendon had an average count of ten with many unusual shrubs. This was particularly interesting as there is a grant of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land in 1296 in the Checkendon common fields next to 'le Hechyng de Ippesden'<sup>3</sup> and this is certainly the hedge at which we were looking. Mary Kift in the <sup>SOAG</sup> ~~last~~ <sup>1985</sup> Bulletin wrote about the monument at the end of this hedge. The other stretch of hedge containing 10 species was found as an extension of the bank and ditch running along<sup>4</sup> the edge of a piece of woodland called Ipsden Wood.

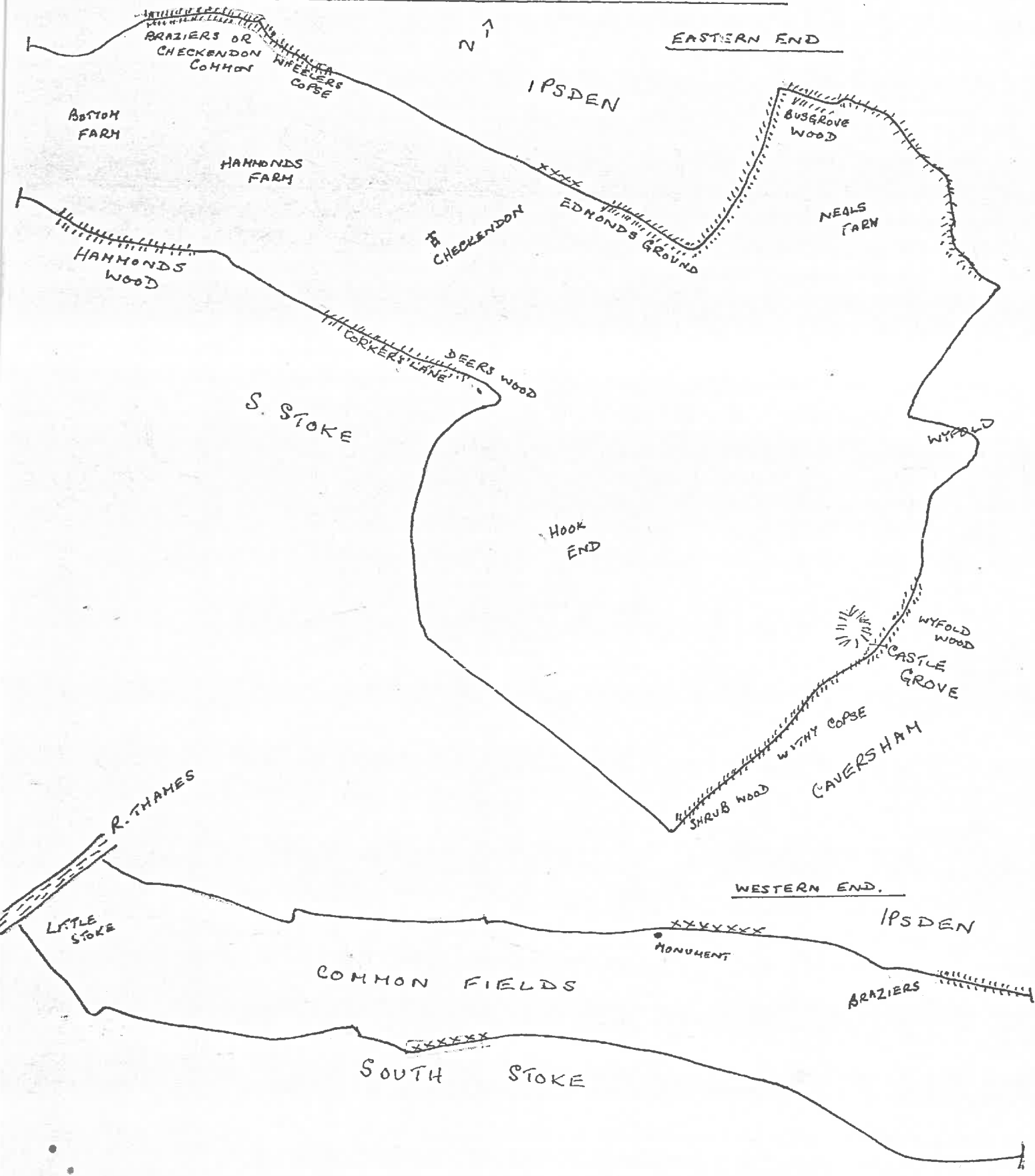
We have done a great many hedge counts and although there is controversy ~~an~~ about these, our feeling is that stock proof shrubs would have been planted eg hawthorn and blackthorn, but no farmer would have planted such shrubs as spindle, Wayfaring tree, wild rose etc, so we feel fairly certain that hedges containing such plants as these are old. James Bond agrees with this hypothesis.

The age of the banks and ditches is an insoluble problem but we feel some could be Saxon. As Alfred <sup>Thane of Wallingford</sup> nephew of Wigod held Checkendon and Little Stoke<sup>4</sup> (which was part of the old parish of Checkendon) at the time of Domesday the probability is that it had been a Saxon estate for a long time before. The Saxons used banks and ditches to delineate their<sup>5</sup> holdings, therefore the boundary banks and ditches, that we see now surviving in the woods, are possibly Saxon.

#### References

- 1) Maurice Beresford History on the Ground 1957 p 30
- 2) W.G. Hoskins Fieldwork in Local History paper back 1969 p 148
- 3) Salter (ed) Boarstall Cartulary O.H.S. 1930 p 37 no: 116
- 4) Domesday Book General Editor John Morris 1978 p42/45

THE OLD PARISH BOUNDARIES OF CHECKENDON



SCALE 2 1/2 ins to mile

'BANKS |||||  
HEDGES xxxxx

The House

History - 1383 -origin of the name; John Hawman and his wife Margary were granted lands in Checkendon

1388 In a Final concord there is mention of a messuage belonging to John Hawman and his wife Margary and son Nicholas

1417-19 A messuage called Hawmannys is mentioned<sup>1</sup>

1434 A messuage called Hawmannes is referred to in a charter<sup>2</sup>

1659 Hammonds was held by Gerard Keite<sup>3</sup>

Circa 17<sup>th</sup> century (before 1682) Hammonds was let to John Wheeler & Edward Simons for £30 p.a.<sup>4</sup>

1841 T.A. Hammonds described as a homestead

1851 Herbert Nind was a tenant at the time of the census

1868 In Revd Abbeys perambulation of the parish he states that 'Hammonds held by M. Frampton since 1867

Description of Farmhouse -? late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Roof - tiled

Walls - brick and flint

Chimneys - on N & E sides

Veranda - of tiles supported by rough wooden post overshadowing the ground floor.

Windows - two dormers in roof, three casement windows on first floor & one window each side of front door

1) H.E. Salter Bearstall cartulary O.H.S

2) Marmion papers I/1/13 O.R.O

3) MS DD Oxon c/9 O.R.O

4) Ibid



DIAGRAM OF  
FARMHOUSE

Threshing Barn A.

On north side of farmyard. Date 18th century possibly earlier in parts. In very good condition

Roof - tiled

Walls - flint plinth with English bond brick above. The east end is partly timbered

Porches - two with overhangs of 7'6"

Aisled on both sides with two bays on SE divided from the barn by a wooden partition

Five bays all roughly 12' wide. The uprights are supported on brick plinths.

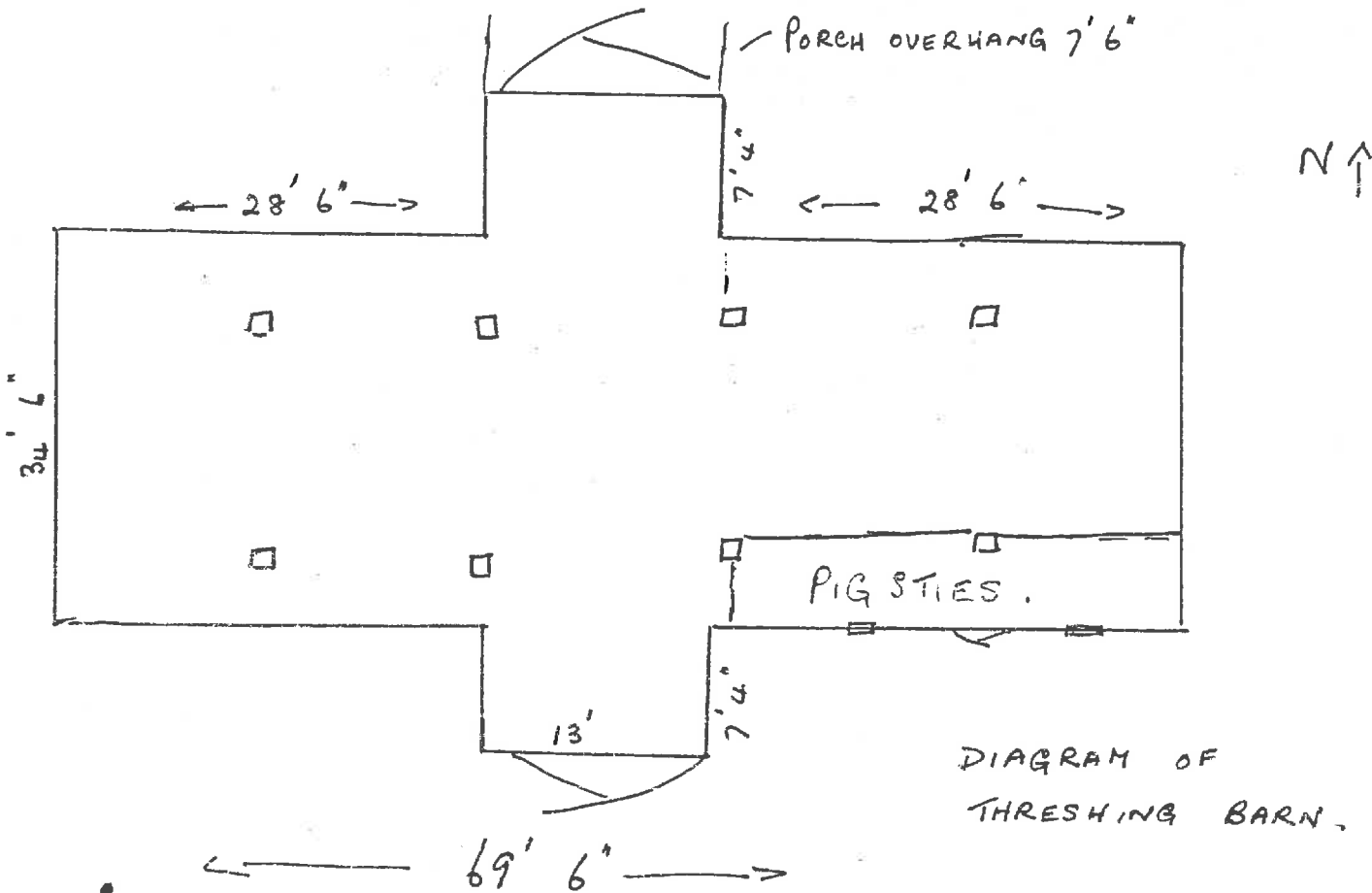
The centre threshing floor is ?concrete and both sides are earthen.

The right hand cross beam has initials and a date as below. Small carpenters marks are present

SCH Hardy  
R 1774 F

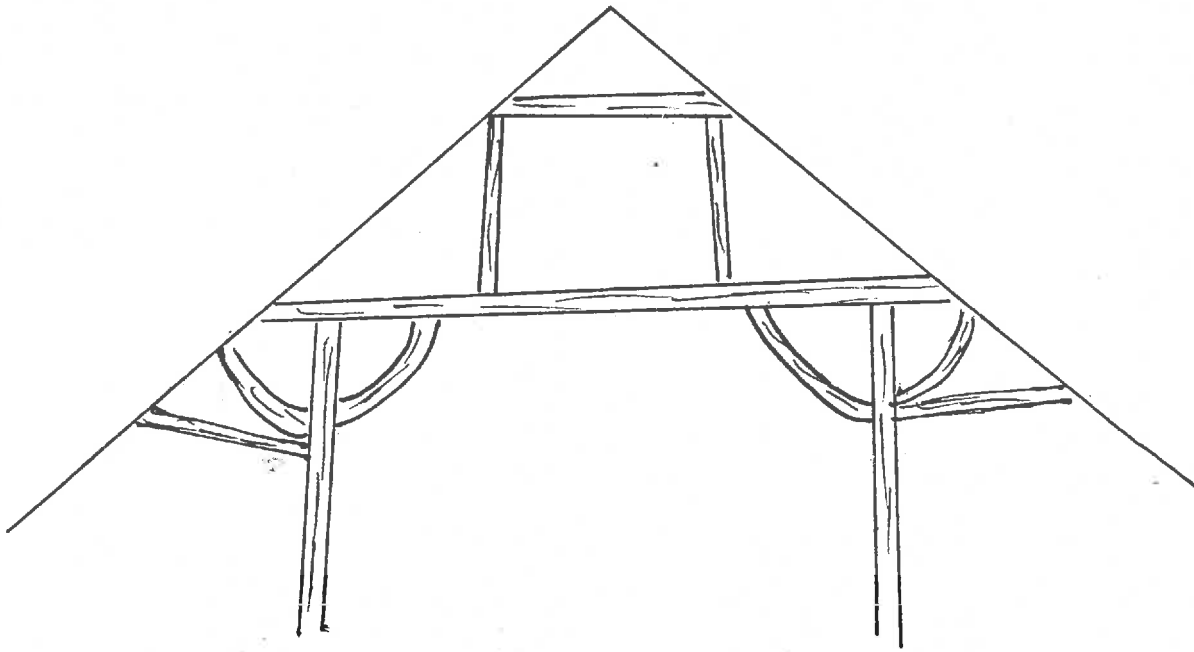
Sir Charles Hardy bought Checkendon Court in 1764 - Richard Frewen farmed it about this time.

The wide cart doors have slots for draught control in doorposts





Roof trusses of Barn A



Hammonds Farm cont:

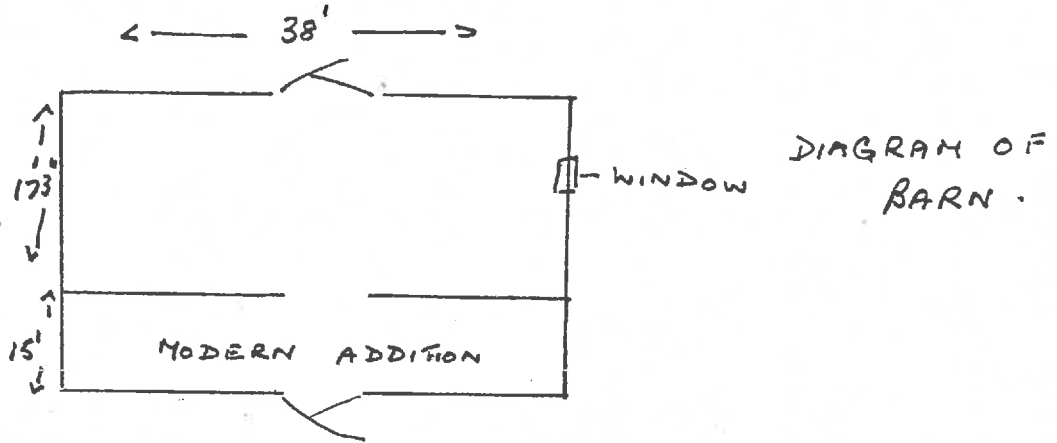
Smaller Barn 6.

Roof -tiled

Walls -flint base with brick above, one small window

Has upper storey used as store room

Modern extension built on front of barn with depth of 15'



Granary C

Roof - tiled

Walls - boarded-wide boards ? modern elm boards

On staddles - length 16' 8" width 16' 6"

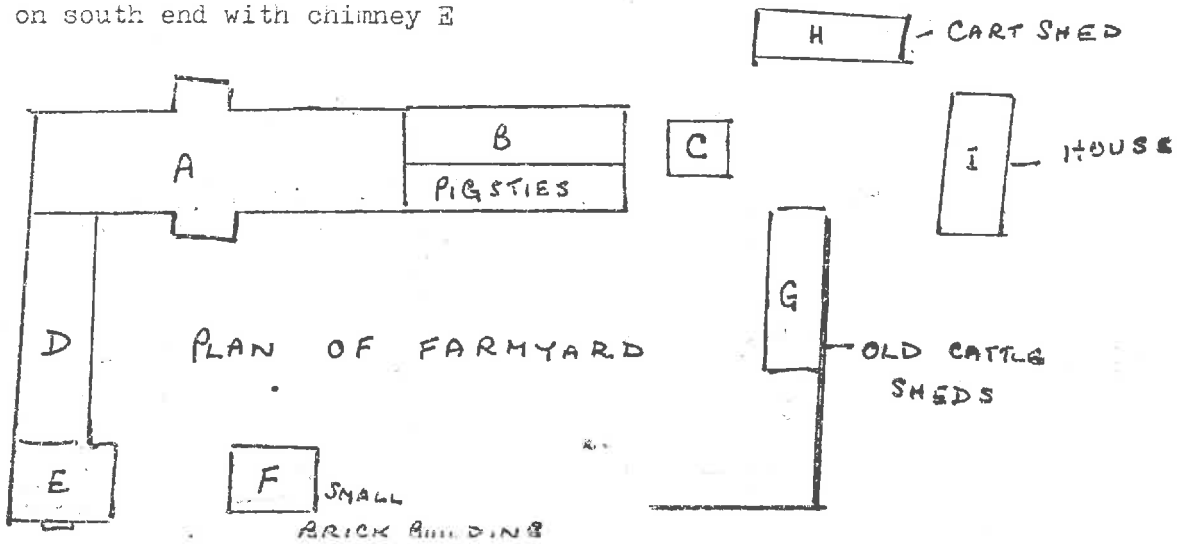
Stables D

A row of Victorian stables on the west of the yard. Seven separate stables in good condition

Roof -tiled

Walls brick

Tack room on south end with chimney E



Two semi detached cottages- probably early 18th c: as ref: to land where new houses stand!

Roofs - tiled

Chimneys- one at each end of building - bread oven on western end

Walls -rough cast but impression that brick and half timber under -flint plinth

Windows - two dormers back and front and each cottage had a 4 paned window either side of front door.

One privy for each house at bottom of garden.

One front door had slate roofed wooden porch.

In the 1851 census these cottages were occupied by farm labourers and in 1868 the Revd Abbey noted that one was occupied by a gamekeeper.

Brandy Pythles(sic) SE671830

Late 18th or early 19th century

Roof - tiled

Walls - brick

Chimney - one large central one with original pots

Windows - One window on either side up and down, casement with 6 panes in each. at back two small windows downstairs -a lean-to extension has been removed

Two front doors- one blocked.

Two small barns behind garden - difficult to date. Brick plinths - sides built up with concrete blocks & above close boarded. Roofs - corrugated iron.

In 1851 Brandy pightle is given as occupied by three labourers & later in 1868 two people were in residence. According to an old local resident it was used by one man as a small holding in the 1930s and he ran a small abattoir there!

The name comes from the small field in which it is situate.

Heath End House SE 670824

Built probably at beginning of 19th century - appears in 1851 census and also in 1868 as belonging to Adam Duff landowner.

Roof -tiled

Walls -flint and brick -very ornate

Windows -many casement

I) M.M.III O.R.O

Heath End House cont:

Lodge- of same period in flint and brick with ornate brick patterns.

Stables -ornate flint and brick with some half timbering. Hay loft and pump in yard. Now mostly used as dwelling.

In 1851 a woodman occupied the lodge and in 1868 a game keeper was there, a gardener lived in part of the stable block.

Little Stoke House SW 603854

Roof -low pitched slate roof

Walls -white stucco

Windows -sash with green slatted shutters -above porch an arched window

Front door -central with a heavy porch

Impression - early Victorian -appears in 1851 census.

~~Terry cottages opposite above~~

~~Roof - tiled~~

~~Walls brick decorated with a dental course (Thames Conservancy?)~~

~~Chimneys -end with a broad oven at south end~~

~~Probably very early 19th century~~

Braziers farm or house SE 636845

History 1640 Thos Goswell of Braziers <sup>I</sup> he was a farmer

1763 -an inventory of Miss Anne Blackall showing that the house was luxuriously furnished at that time<sup>2</sup>

1787 -described as a capital messuage<sup>2</sup>

1841 -T.A. belonged to a Miss Grenfell -house garden and park of 26 acres

1868 Braziers House belonged to F.J.Keats

17th cent: farmhouse on west side with Gothic windows and slate roof added at time of conversion into home for gentry; inside gutted and altered.

East end and facade Strawberry Hill Gothic. Far west end -later probably Victorian addition in same Gothic style

In garden presumed badger pit 6' high and 6' across -brick built with two low

1) Inventory O.R.O.

2) M.M.I O.R.O

3) D/EB T13 B.R.O.

Braziers cont:

entrances. Brick supports fanning out presumably to hold wooden platform for spectators.

1986 Now a private adult education centre

Braziers Granary

Possibly 17th century

Roof - tiled

Walls - wooden framed with brick infill

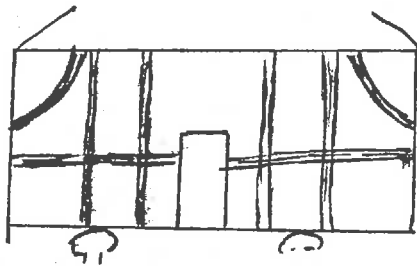


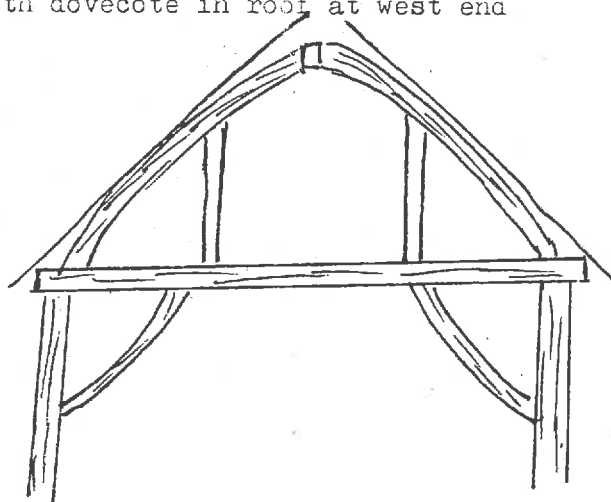
DIAGRAM FRONT OF GRANARY

Braziers Barn

Roof - tiled

Walls - Brick plinth with closeboarding

Has hayloft with dove-cote in roof at west end



ROOF TRUSS.

Date

Probably 17th century

### Braziers history

1635 Glebe Survey -Braziers where Hastings lives ( D/EB T13 Berkshire Record Office

1646 Thomas Goswrell was farming from Braziers

1665 William Blackwell in the Hearth Tax is recorded as having three hearths so he must have been a yeoman farmer.

Massingberd Mundy papers at the Oxford Record office

1749 Poor Rate -Henry Bayley for Braziers farme 76 acres (probably tenant farmer)

1763 mention of Wm Blackall Esq of Braziers

1770 Lease between Anne Blackall (possible daughter of William ' Blackwell' and John Frederick Loofs of a messuage called Brasiers (sic) with brewhouse ,stable garden etc -MM 1/2

1773 Inventory attached to will of Ann Blackall describing contents of Braziers House

1793 reference to Massingberds of Braziers (Misc Green Va O.R.O) But strangely in 1783 the capital messuage and lands were sold to William Cunliffe Shaw of Preston in Middlx due to Massingberd debts - or was it mortgaged to him ?

18th century -no date there is a 'statement of my lands belonging to Braziers including Braziers great close of 175 acres

1843 in Checkendon churchyard there is a monument to Isaac George Mouldy of Braziers - he was probably renting it -he was described as being Admiral of the Red,

1841 According to the Tithe Award Braziers belonged to Miss Grenfell having a house and garden and park of 26 acres

1843 a Wells is described as being of 'Brasiers House'

1847 At a court for Ipsden held at Checkendon at the Four Horseshoes Richard Benwell of Braziers.

Nowadays Braziers is a college

These no longer exist but are interesting as they were very unusual at the time. They were first documented in the census enumerators returns of 1861 when they were occupied by woodmen. As they were on the edge of woodland they were probably erected from the products of the woods to house the men who worked in them. Miss Hope an old Checkendon resident said that they were closeboarded. In 1868 Revd. Abbey on his perambulation round the village noted that Henry Sherwood lived in one and Widow Alloway in the other. Still shown on the O.S map of 1915 but had disappeared by 1952 edition. The only sign of them now is some old fruit trees.

Rose Cottage SE 677826

Roof - tiled

Walls - Brick with some diapering

Much altered and added to, originally 2 cottages. Front late 18th or early 19th cent. Original chimney near road. Stands at right angles to road.

Broad Oak Cottage SE 673836

Roof - tiled

Walls - Flint base with diapered brickwork above

Two end chimneys

Windows - two double casement windows one on either side of door. Two single casements on right of door. Two dormers in roof

Alterations taking place

An old flint and brick wall at left and front of house. Impression probably late 18th century and a small farmhouse.

A modern addition to right of door.

Holly Shaw Cottage SE 667816

Named after small piece of woodland  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away.

Date - late 18th-early 19th century

Roof - tiled

Walls - Brick plinth of English bond - in front diapered brick, at back and side partial flint wall with newer brick above. At back later addition gable

Impression - east end probably the oldest part

Walls Diapered brickwork ? early 19th century. End chimneys built in.

Roof tiled

Windows -all windows 2 light & 4 paned

Well -in garden

Pond opposite at meeting of tracks with a very large chestnut tree near pond

This cottage is in the centre of what was Whitewood Heath until the 19th cent:

In the 1851 census enumerators returns this house was occupied by a family of woodmen who presumably worked in the Valentine & Lackmore woods. The heath is called Whitend Heath at that time

Ivy Cottage O.S.671814

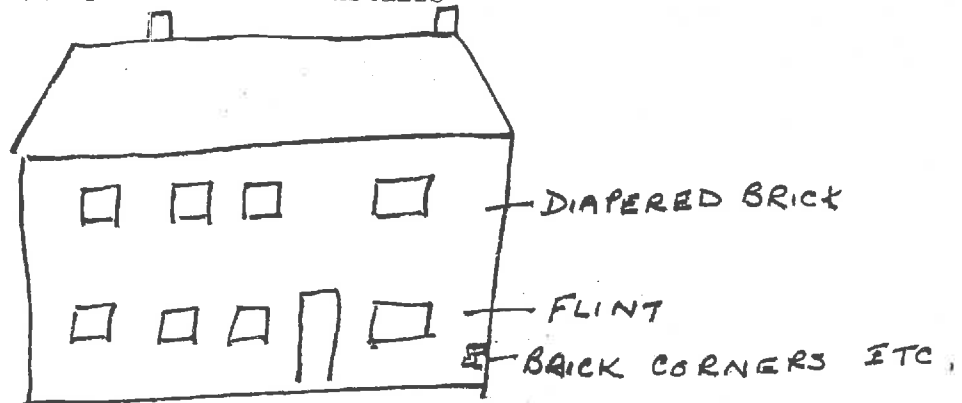
Probably late 18th or early 19th century.

Much altered- was three cottages

Roof - tiled roof

Walls-diapered brick and flint

Windows - all replaced, 4 upstairs and downstairs



The Lodge Cottage O.S.6" SU 68 SE 6648299

Roof -tiled but probably a replacement for thatch

Possibly 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Walls-timber box frame with brick infill, south end shows remains of cruck which is rendered over.

Chimney -double stack built on outside of wall at north end.

Windows -one on south side of front door a three light casement. On north of door two casement (2 light). One small dormer two light window in roof.

Modern extension at back with modern half timbering.



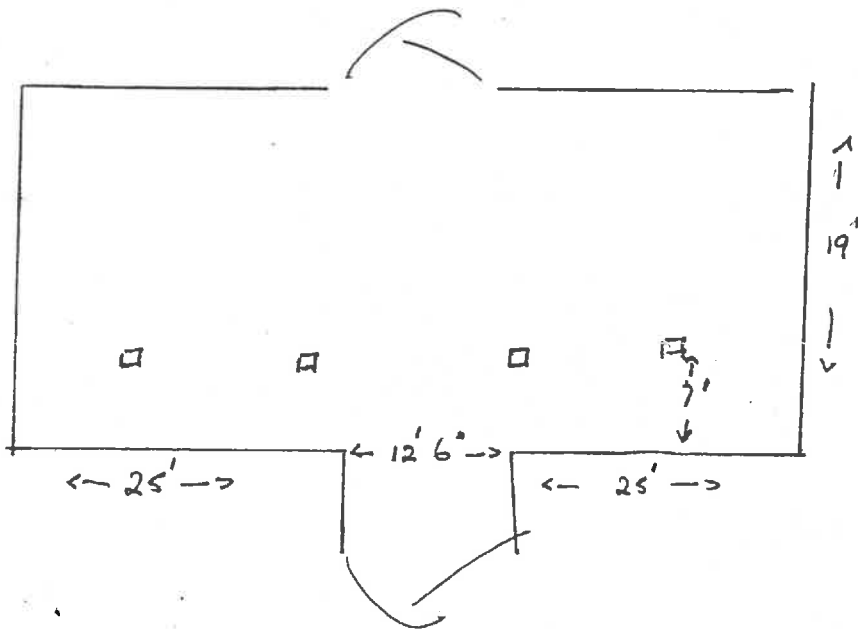
Barn being converted into dwelling, when seen largely stripped

Roof -stripped but originally tiled

Walls -brick and flint base closeboarded walls removed. Cill beam all the way round.

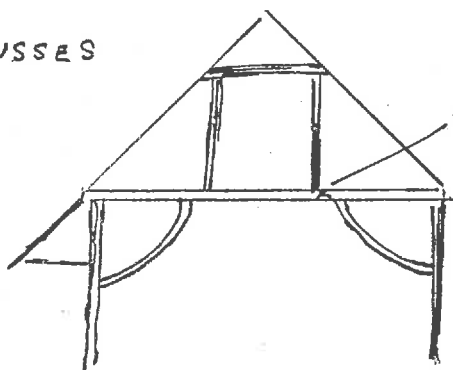
Five bays -aisled at front and a porch at the front. Drainage channels in floor so cattle must have been kept there at some time

Some carpenters marks present on trusses

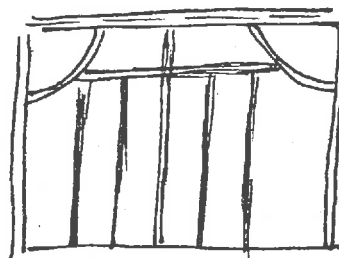


FLOOR PLAN OF BARN

TRUSSES



CARPENTERS MARKS.



TIMBERS NEAR PORCH

Uprights of trusses stand on wood blocks on brick plinths

No early history found. In 1851 a Peter Barnett was farming this and was a bailiff and had 2 farm labourers resident. In 1868 a Mr Newman farmed it. According to Miss Hope her grandfather was a tenant here (Miss Hope is in 80s.

History

The first documentary evidence of this farm starts in the 18th century, before that, it seems probable that 'Woolsey' or Ouseley Barn as it is now called was its predecessor.

1739 There is reference to lands belonging to Bottom Farm.<sup>1</sup>

1749 In the Poor rates of Checkendon for this year Griffith Ward had to pay 3s4d<sup>2</sup>

1779 The lease between Charles B. Massingberd & Mary Page of Checkendon and her son Benjamin of a messuage tenement and farmhouse called Bottom Farm<sup>3</sup>

Circa 1835 Bottom Farm was let for £100

1851 In the census returns Francis Dodd was farming Bottom Farm

1868 When the Revd Abbey did his perambulation he said that Mr Collett had succeeded Mr Dodd.

Description unable to gain access but from outside :- A late Georgian or early Victorian House in beautiful order and very large. Probably rebuilt by the Dodds who were very wealthy farmers in the 19th century.

Roof- tiled

Walls - brick

BARNs ALL MODERN.

Windows - all sash with dormers in the roof.

Checkendon Court 665831

Not a great deal of information available about this dwelling .

In 18th century had a series of owners and probably went through a period of 'gentrification', when a bowling green existed and the land behind was planted with 'exotic' trees with walks and was termed a park.

In the 19th century appears to have been a farm as:-

1841 T.A. has homestead marked with a John Hewitt as the farmer

1851 the census enumerators returns have J.Hewitt farming 160 acres with 11 labourers

1868 It was farmed by Hubert Mind the brother of the vicar of Woodcote.

Present building has been much altered and is owned by a millionaire.

1) MM II O.R.O

2) MM II '9

3) MM I/4

4) Ibid

Little Stoke Manor farm SW 601851

History

Once the site of the original manor of Little Stoke or Stoke Marmion which was held by the Marmions of Boarstall.

1279 Hundred Rolls of Oxon list Joan Marmion as having the manor of Little Stoke 1292 mentioned in an Extent<sup>1</sup>.

1331 Reference to the 'capital messuage' of Little Stoke<sup>2</sup>

In the early 15th century Edmund Rede was in possession through marriage to Katerine Marmion<sup>3</sup>

1520 Ralph Pollington of Wallingford was granted the manor of Little Stoke<sup>4</sup>

1635 Terrier of Checkendon mentions Ralph Pollington as having lands in Checkendon fields<sup>5</sup>

1659 Stran kildesley had the manor<sup>6</sup>

Early 18th century -it was described as a large farmhouse with a pigeon house, orchard, garden, stables and malthouse.<sup>7</sup>

1788 In an act of exchange between Thomas Reade and the Earl of Macolesfield after the bankruptcy of Charles Burrell Messuage ,a capital messuage or mansion house was stated to be part of Little Stoke manor.

1800 Little Stoke described as a capital manor.<sup>8</sup>

1841 T.A the manor is listed as owned by Mary Read.

1851 In the census returns a tenant farmer, William Dodd was living there . He leased a great deal of land and farmed on a large scale.

1986 Mrs Ducker the widow of the previous owner said that when her husband took over the farm after the first world war it was very run down and ruinous.

1)C133/62 P.R.O

2)D/EH T64 B.R.O.

3)H.E.Salter Boarstall Cart:O.H.S

4)D/EH T64 B.R.O

5) D/EH T13 . "

6) M.S.DD Oxon 89 O.R.O

7)D/EH T13 B.R.O

8) R.M papers

Manor House

Now very altered -mostly Victorian and later .Roof -tiled,Walls brick ,windows east

AREA AT BACK WHICH IS PROBABLY OLDER

Little Stoke Manor-Stable Cottage

According to Mrs Ducker this was the brewhouse. In an 18th century description of the manor a brewhouse with a malthouse adjoining is mentioned. As the present building as obviously divided in two the probability is that it was this structure. The value was then £6 (B.R.O. D/EB T13)

Roof tiled

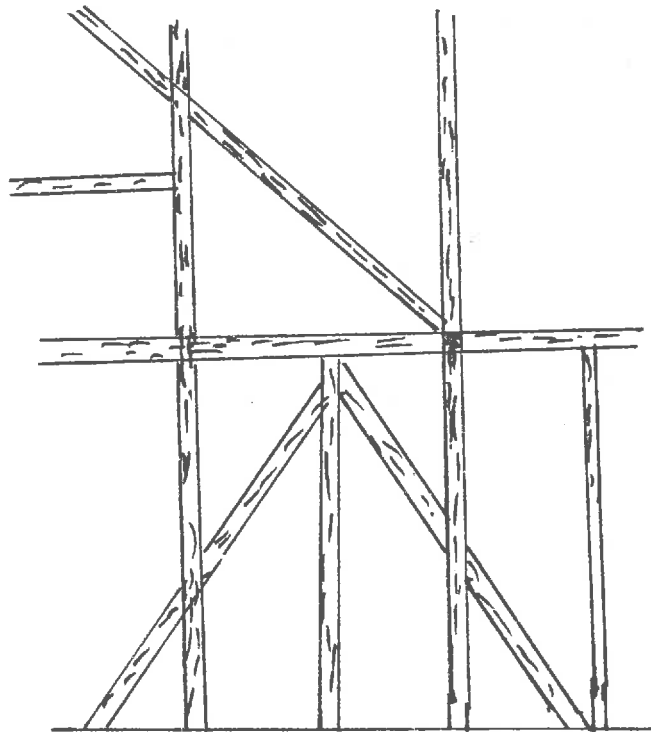
Walls - brick and flint

Windows - mostly replaced - two small ?original windows on first floor

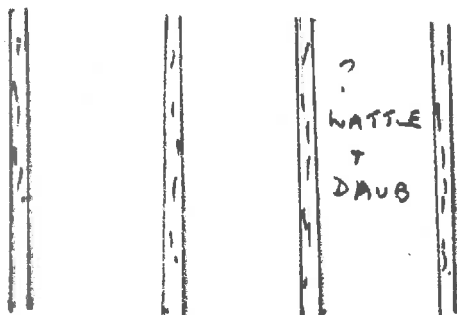
Fireplaces -downstairs on north side a very large one has been removed apparently. A smaller one on south side that had been put in at a later date with stack passing through upstairs room away from wall.

Staircase -probably put in later as unlikely to have been an upper floor. Goes up ~~ix~~ the centre of building.

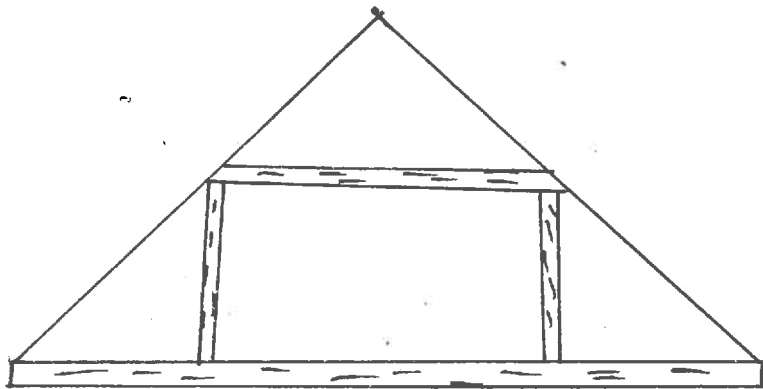
Interior walls - On south side staircase half timbered with brick infill.



Upstairs wall timbered with ? wattle and daub infill

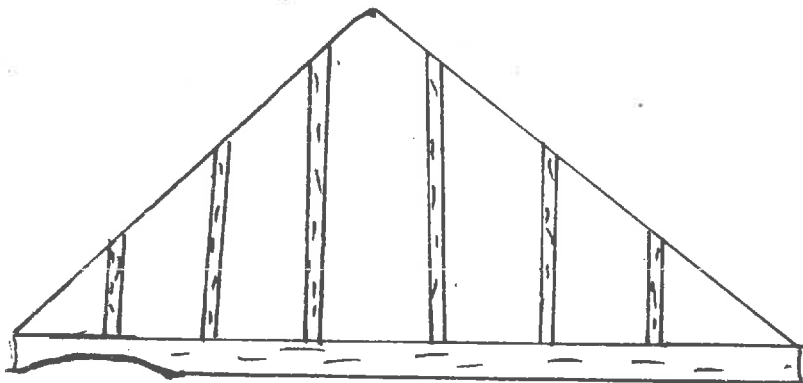


Roof Trusses (2)



CENTRAL TRUSS.

CUT AWAY  
FOR DOORWAY



Little Stoke Manor- Barn I (east)

Three bays - floor concrete throughout but probably done in recent times- windows probably inserted, also recently, as used as workshp. Slots in surviving doorway for draught control during threshing and winnowing- other doorway blocked. General impression possibly 16th-17th century.

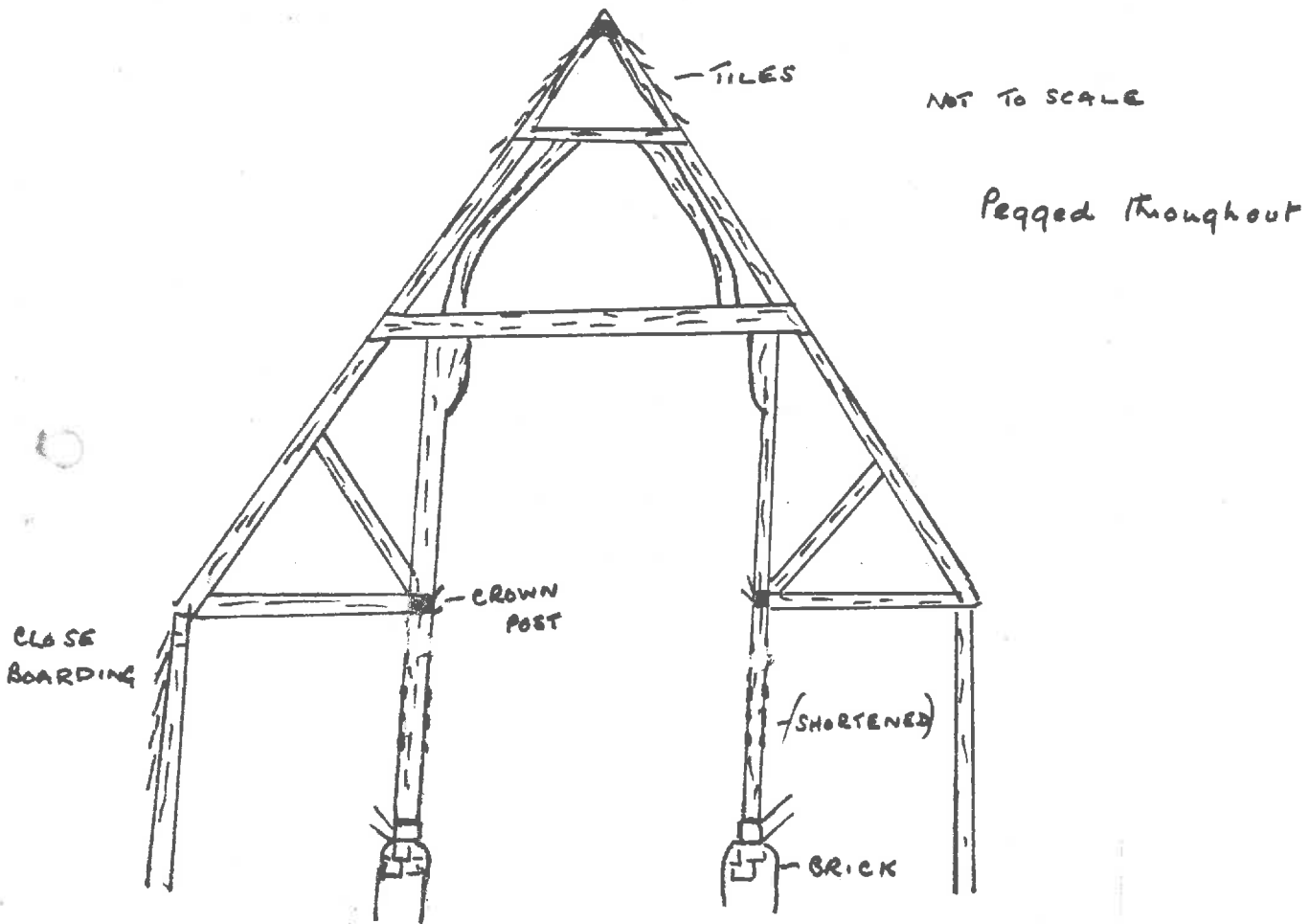
Barn II (north)

Roof - tiled - hipped

Walls - closeboarded obviously renewed in part recently with elm boards. Base brick with a cill beam.

Five bays and aisled both sides with two identical porches. Doors clear ground by 2'6" - possibly to provide draught when doors closed during winter threshing. Slots in doorposts as in barn I

Two lateral trusses



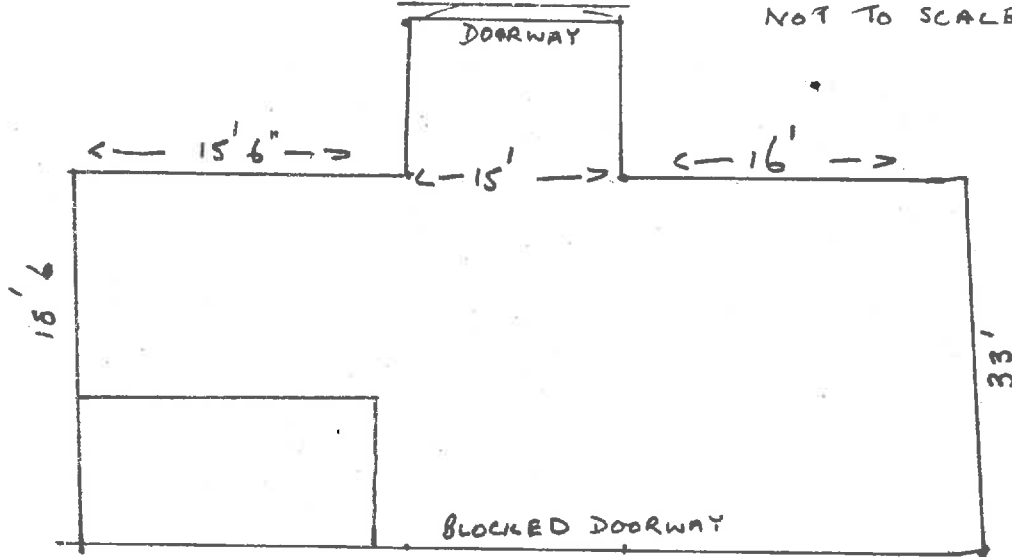
Little Stoke Manor - East barn

Roof - tile with catslide back

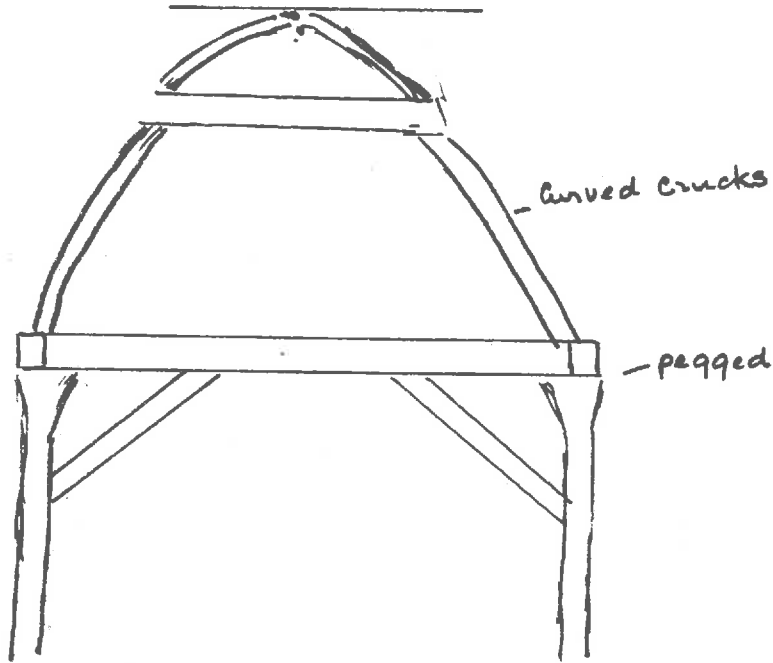
walls - base of brick and flint, otherwise closeboarded

Floor plan

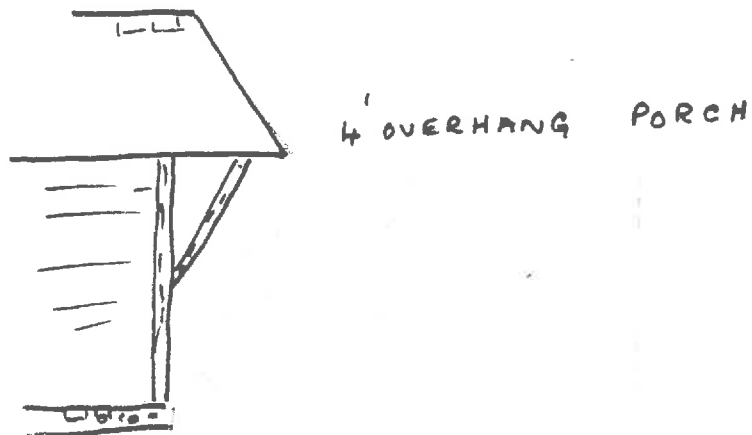
NOT TO SCALE



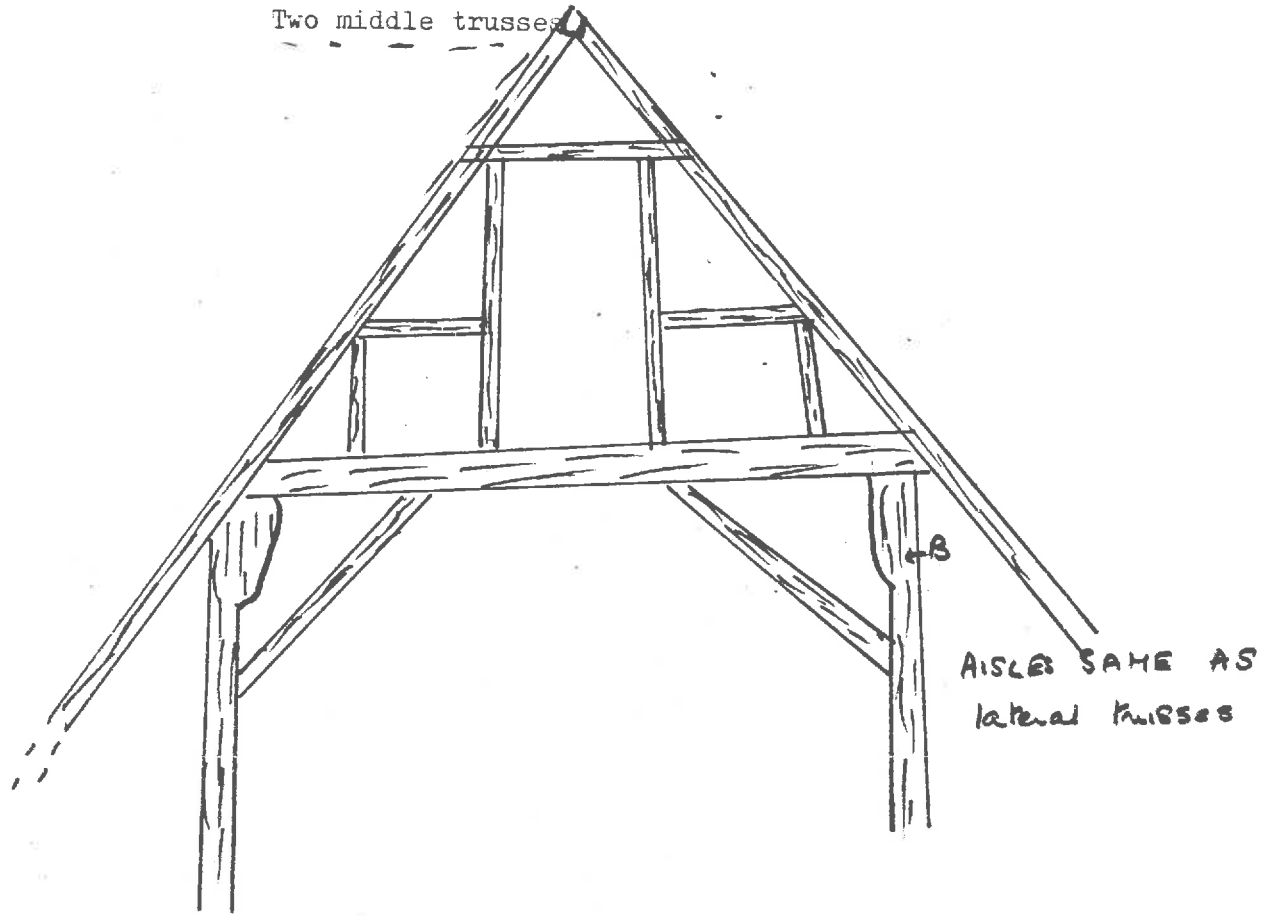
Two Roof Trusses



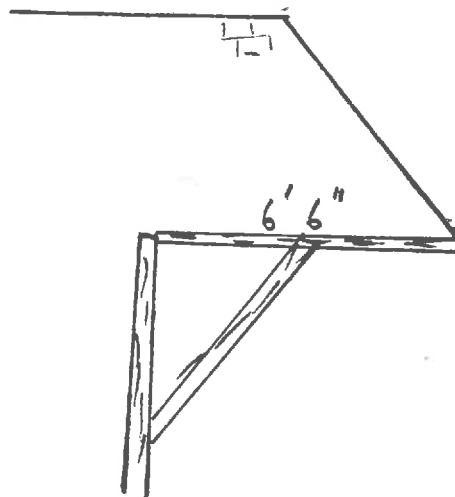
Floor - concrete throughout



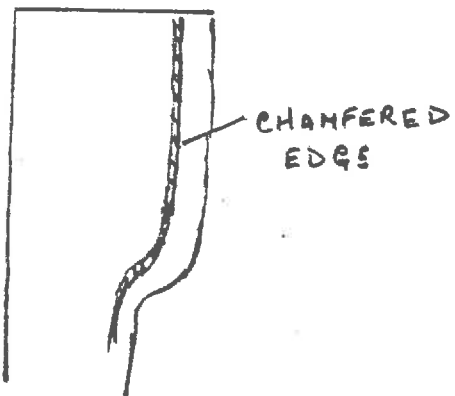
Barn II (north)



PORCHES - IDENTICAL



DETAIL OF B.

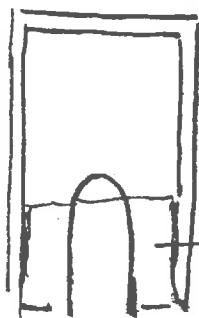
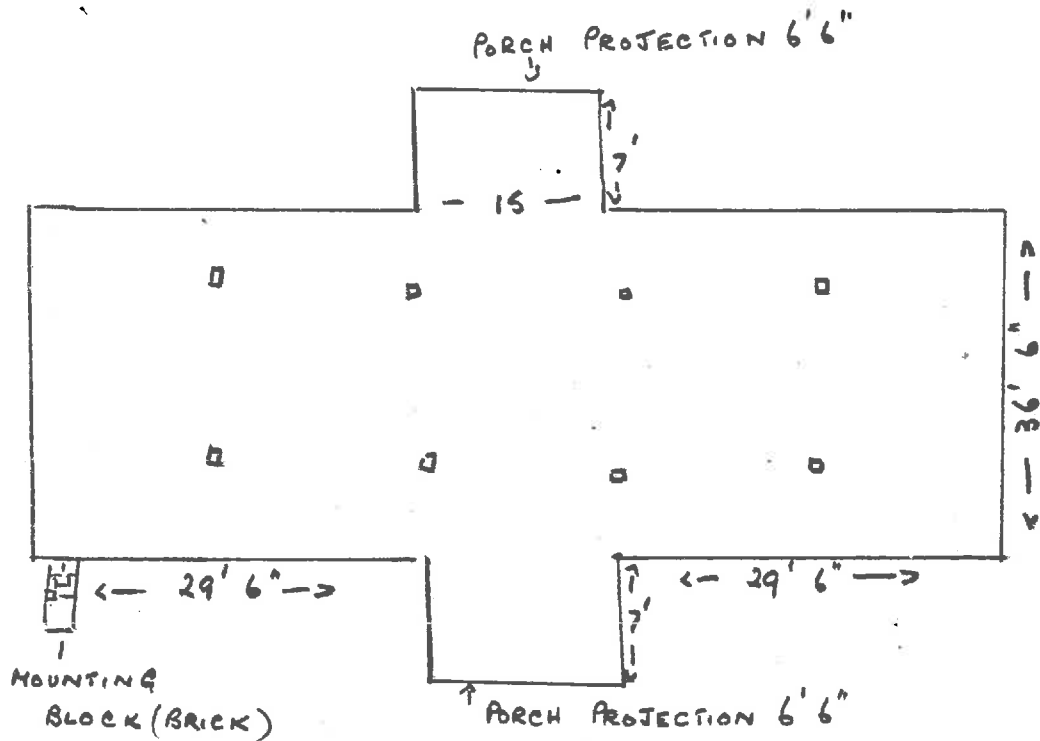




Barn II (north) cont:

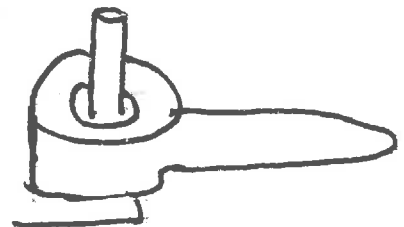
Floor Plan

Floor concrete throughout



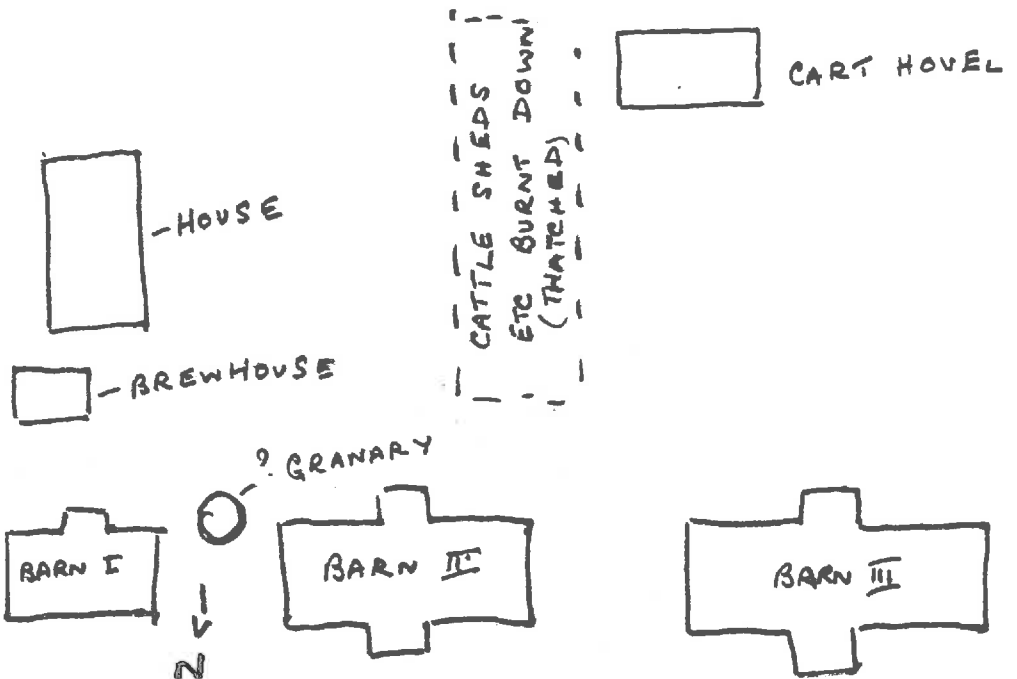
Cat trap at side of door

sliding panel.



HINGE OF DOOR

PLAN OF FARMYARD



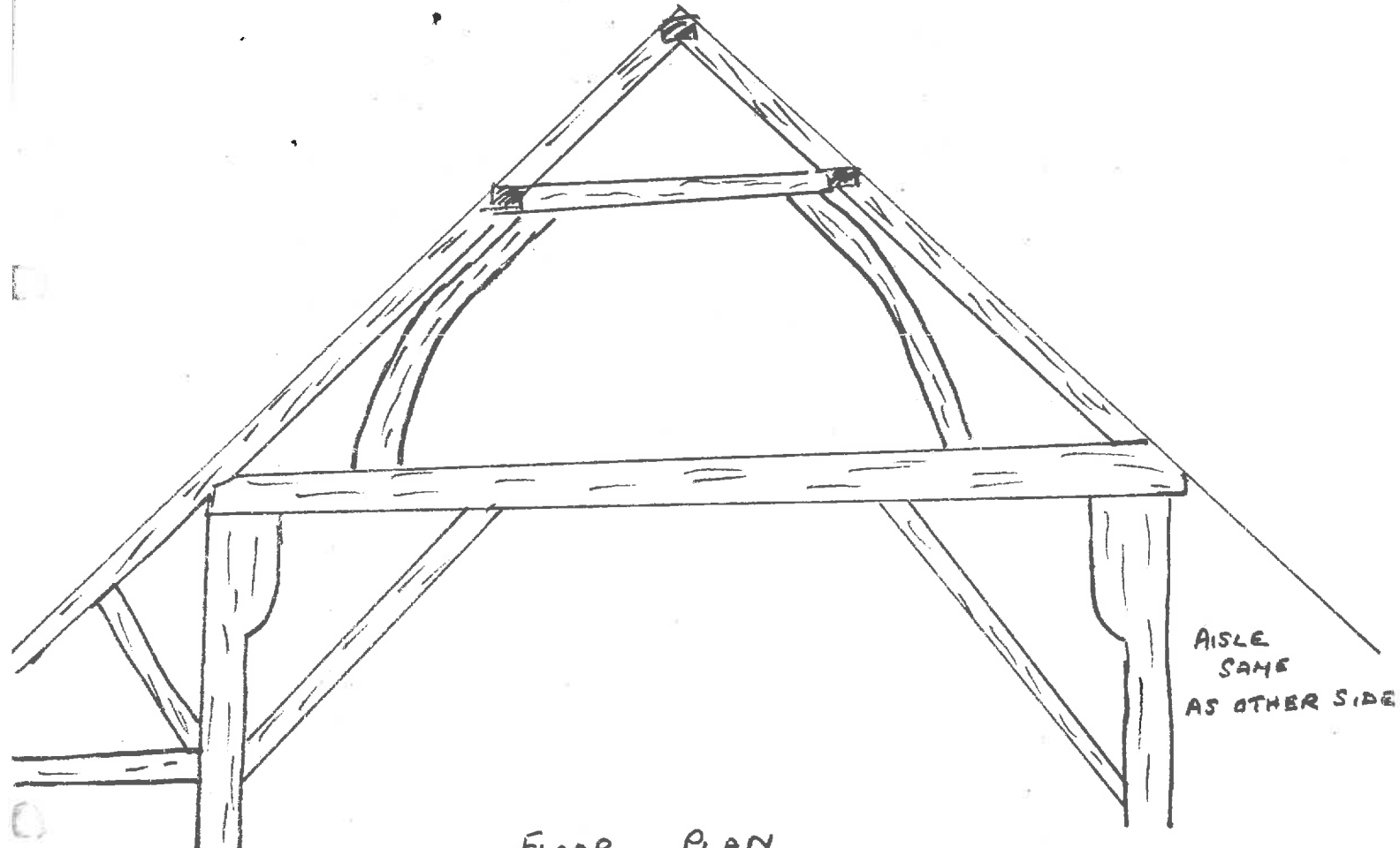
Barn III (north)

Roof - tiled - gabled

Walls - closeboarded on flint and brick plinth with cill beams.

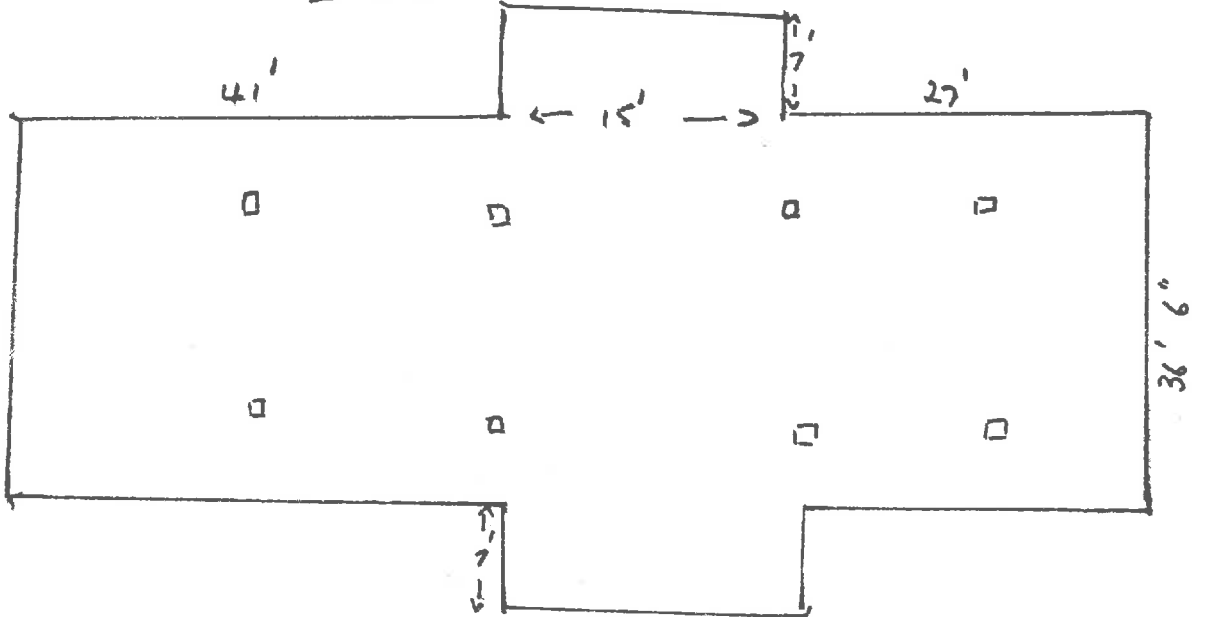
Five bays - aisled both sides - new doors and door posts - similar cat trap by door

Four trusses - all the same



AISLE  
SAME  
AS OTHER SIDE

FLOOR PLAN



PORCH PROJECTION 6' 6"

Little Stoke Manor cont:

Barn III cont:

Floor -concrete -impression that barns II and III were probably constructed at the same period probably 18th century and by the same man. Unusual having upper crucks as well as side timbers.

The cart hovel

This had been much altered but had two beams with a date on each -1837 & 1888 -one wall probably original of brick and flint construction. Many walls around the area with various dates inset -some had been moved from elsewhere

MA  
1753

EA : MH  
1760

STONE FROM  
GARDEN

EVI

BRICK-TENNIS COURT  
WALL.

Flint on beam in cart  
hovel entrance

Lazebos

Two probably victorian replicas and one partly rebuilt original in flint & brick with 'strawberry hill' type windows - we were told that this had a cellar under floor and was thought to have been used as a icehouse or store.



A round ? granary on staddle stones with walls and roof of corrugated iron

Scots Farm SE 666840

History

1254 Hundred Rolls, Ipsden . Henry Scot had 1 virgate of land possibly where the farm stands today. At that time Scots farm would have been in Ipsden

1435 Thos: Scotte of Ipsden is mentioned in a charter.<sup>1</sup>

1657 ' House called Scotts hath noe comon to our knowlidge'<sup>2</sup>This atatement appears in an Ipsden court roll and shows that the house dates from this time if not earlier.

1) ~~H. B. Carter (ed) ~~Antiquary~~ ~~Antiquary~~ ~~Antiquary~~ Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archaeological Journal Vol 32 No 2 1928~~

2) M.S. Rolls Oxon a I roll 40 Bod:

Farm House

Farmhouse has been considerably altered. Difficult to date but part with cruck possibly dates from 15th century ,the rest might be fundamentally 16th century.

When alterations done ,various floor levels were found.Starting from top :-

- 1) Victorian tile floor
- 2) Brick floor
- 3) What appeared to be an earth floor
- 4) Brick floor

Unfortunately they did not go any further down.

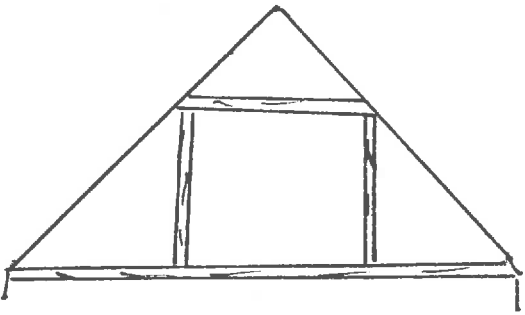
Interior of house

Sitting room has a probable stub of a cruck with another beam resting on it.

Cill beams visible in rooms visited and ceilings heavily beamed

Photograph of house seen showing it wooden framed with brick infill

Roof trusses on west side



SCOTS FARM HOUSE

Roof

Tiled with different levels

Walls

Partly rendered -on angle of L & brick on other side. On south face a timber is visible behind brick faci g leading to think that has been refaced.

Chimneys

One very large one built out from the west end with English bond brickwork with square insets of flint-probable bread oven at side

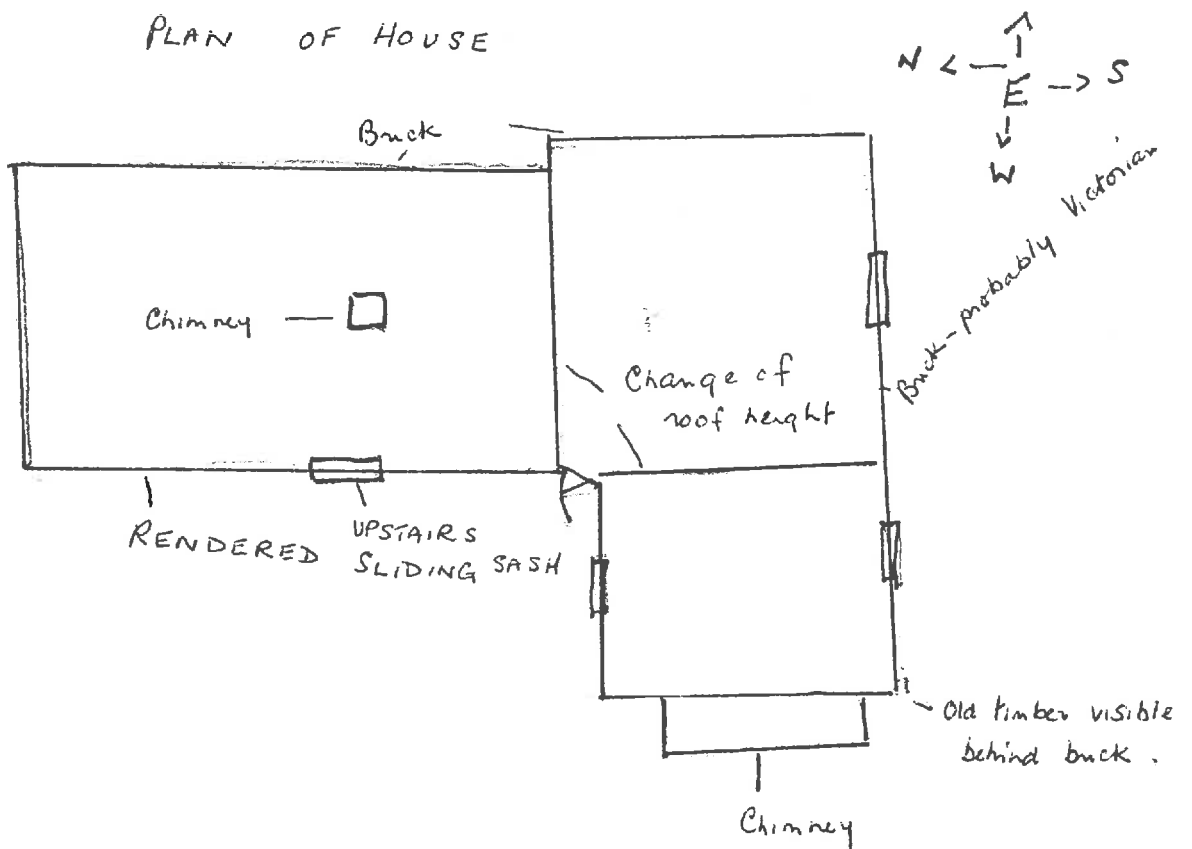
One central one in long arm of L

Windows

Mostly replaced but one sliding sash with four lights in each part

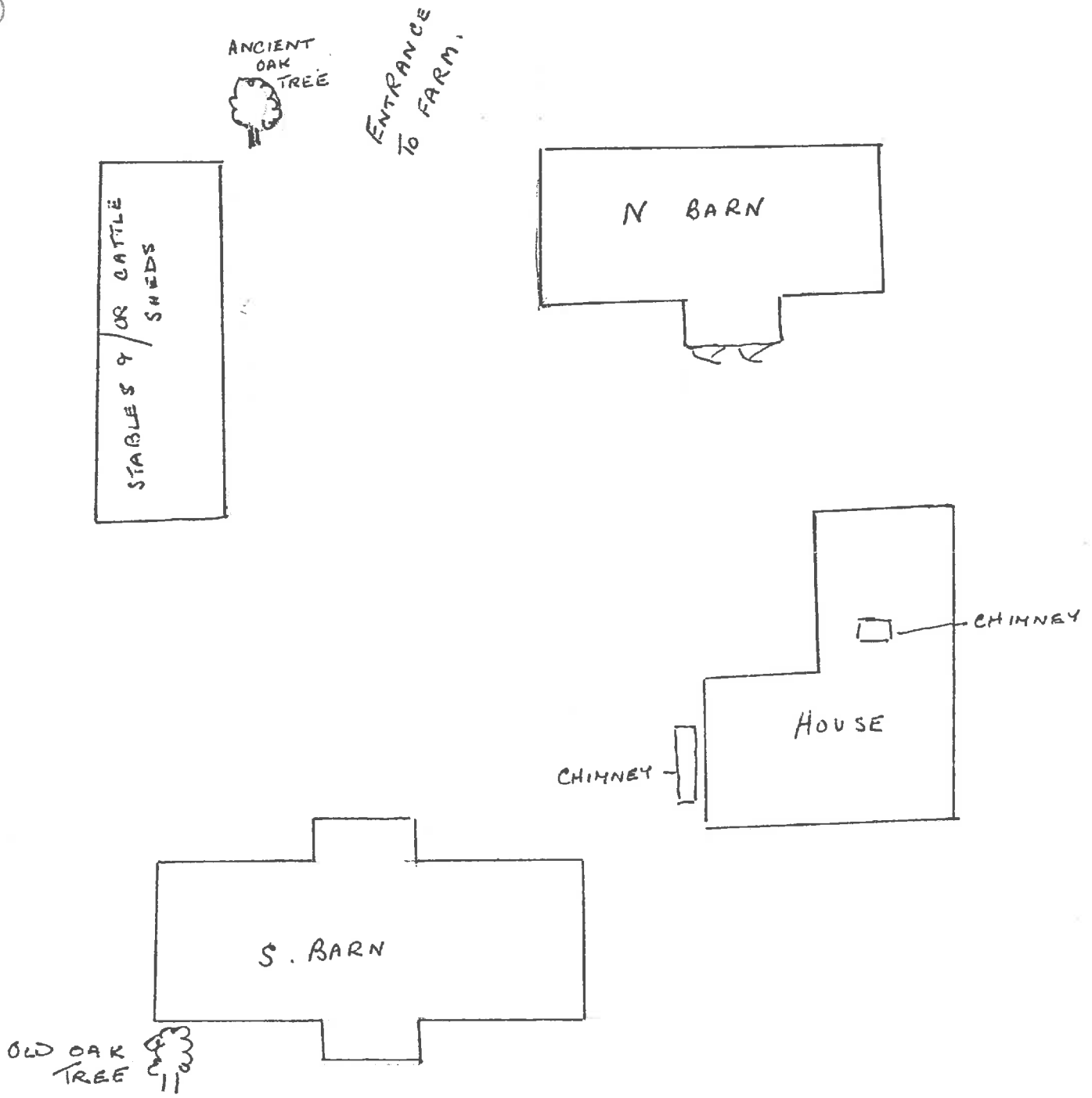
At north end downstairs used as garage & very small window upstairs that looks as if used as loft. Side wall of garage has some ? wattle & daub.

PLAN OF HOUSE



SCOTS FARM

Diagram of farm arrangement



North Barn

Size - Length 39ft 6 inches

Breadth 17 ft

Porch Width 12 ft

Depth 9 ft

Doorway on north 12 ft 6 inches wide with no porch

Scots farm cont:

Walls (N barn)

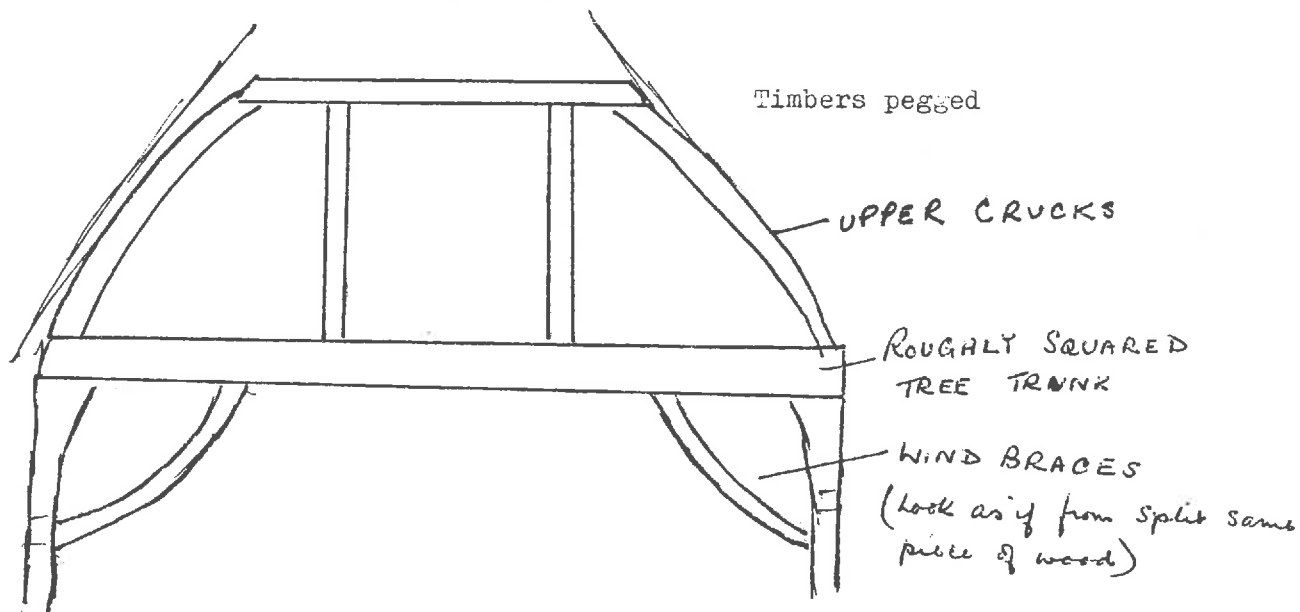
Cills approx 2 ft 6ins high of a mixture of flints & brickwork. Corners & topping of brick - some herringbone brickwork mixed with flint on south side. Above cills walls weather boarded on original wooden framework - timbers shape of tree & obviously shaped with an adze.

Reef

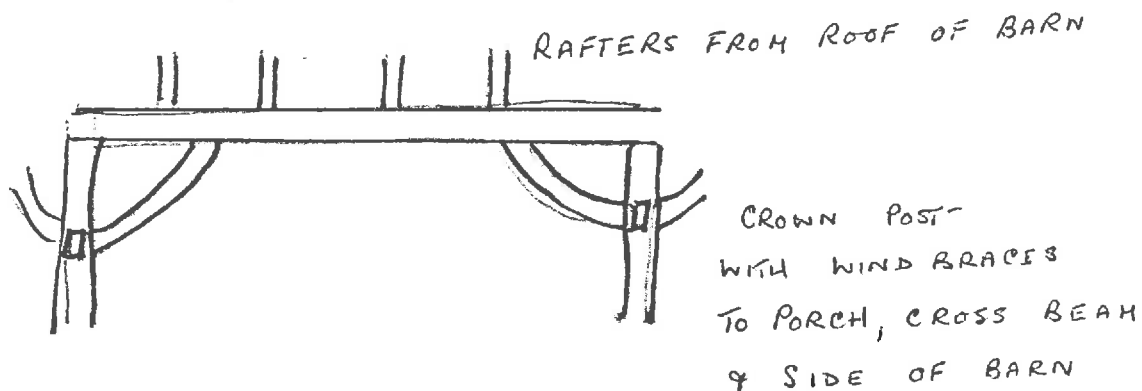
Covered in corrugated iron now - possibly thatched in past. Prolonged on south side into catslides which have later timbering & therefore are probably later additions - *hipped*

Roof timbers

Queen strut collar & tie rafter with windbraces as in diagram. Carpenters marks present - on north side *A* others *X* and *V*

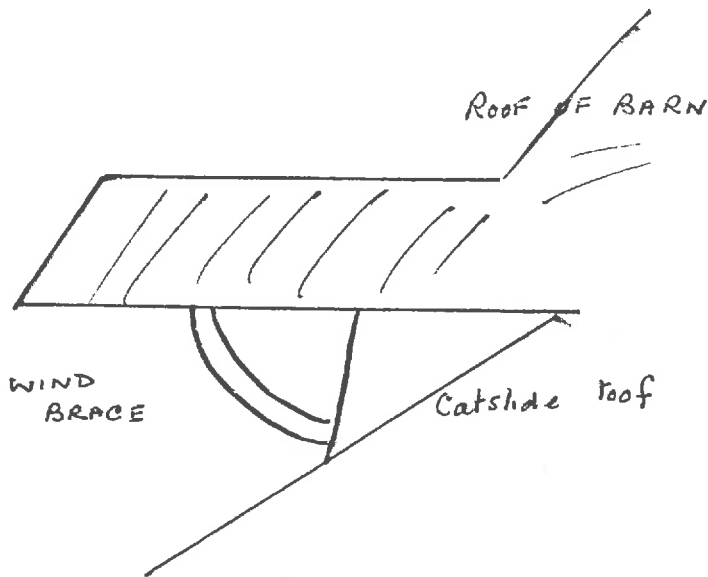


Porch supports-at entrance to barn



Scots farm cont:

External view porch :-

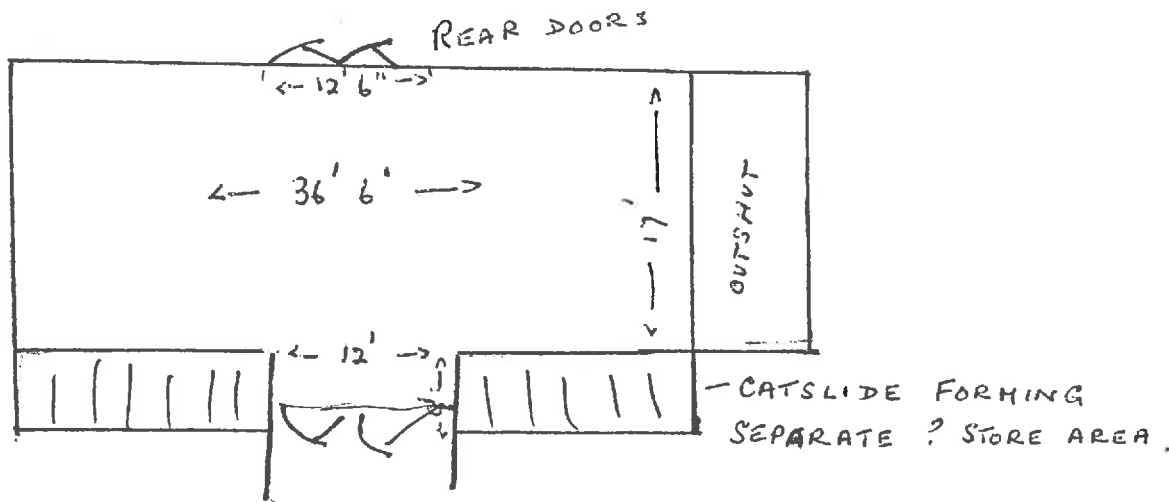


Slots present in doorposts for draught regulators when threshing

Floor

So deep in litter unable to ascertain whether hard threshing floor present -impression either been taken up or not present. Outshut on east side -an obvious later addition.

Plan of barn



SOUTH BARN

Size - Length 44 ft

Breadth 21 ft

Porches width 12 ft

depth 9 ft 6 ins

Walls

Ease cill approx: 2 ft 6 ins high of flint with some brick amixture &



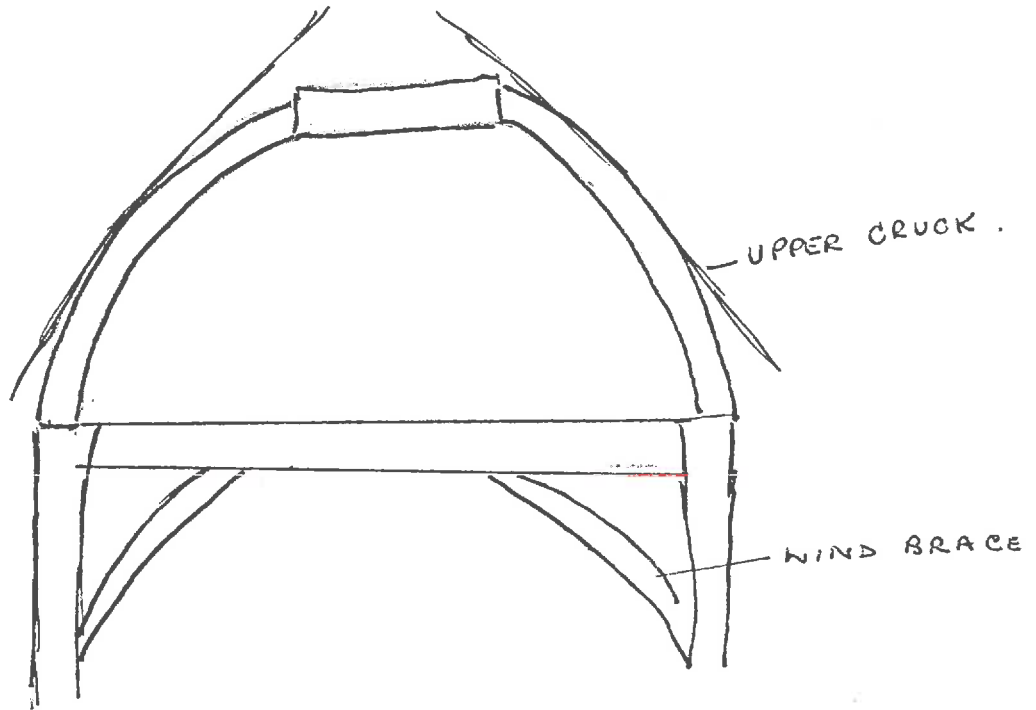
Scots farm cont:

brick corners & topping -above this weatherboarding. The timber frame under the weather boarding appears to be sawn wood (? might have been replaced)

Roof

Tiled & extended to catslides on south side- ripped

Roof timbers



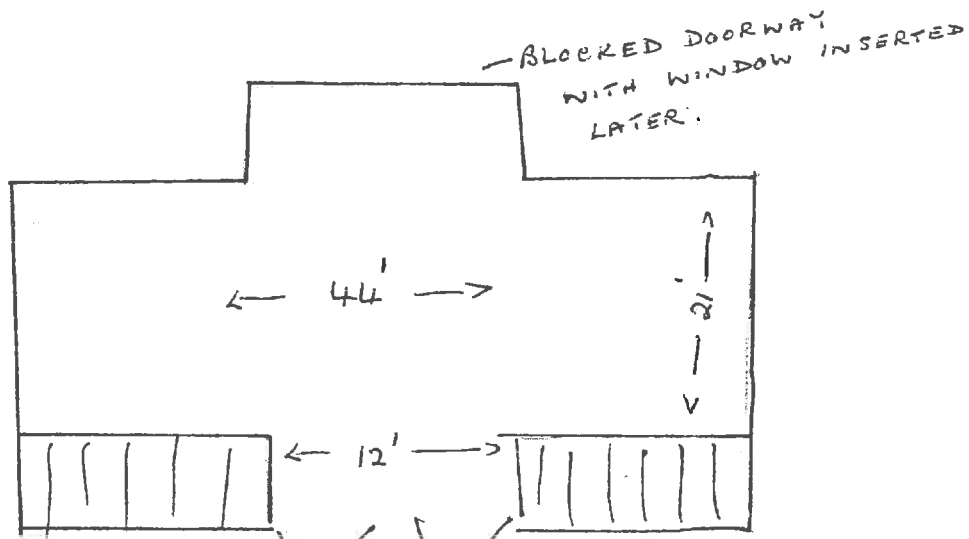
No carpenters marks visible -timbers pegged & as other barn beams roughly shaped tree trunks. An upper base cruck truss. Interesting the reverse curvature of the wind braces.

Two porches

Northern doorway blocked at a recent period, window added later

Catslides on south side -later addition with walls of ? victorian brick with admixture of vitreous bricks.

Plan of barn



Scots farm cont:

In porch on south side-slots for draught regulators in door pillars.

Floor

Hard floor throughout -concrete

Both barns have hand made bricks used though fabric has been patched with modern bricks. A mixture of bonds were found-both English & flemish being present.

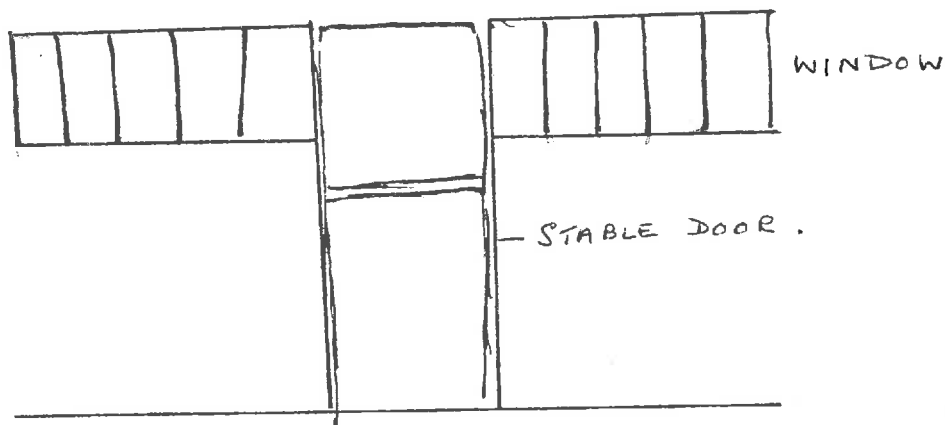
The impression is that the south barn was possibly the older but very difficult to be certain.

Stable block or cattle shed ??

Size \_ Length overall 70 ft

Depth 18 ft

Southern end - flint & brick with central stable door & two long flanking windows, 24 ft long.

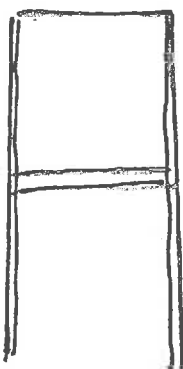
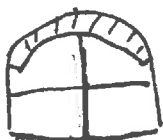


Roof -pitched & tiled throughout

Middle building -24 ft X 18 ft

Walls - flint & brick

Stable door with two small windows with curved tops.



Scots farm cont:

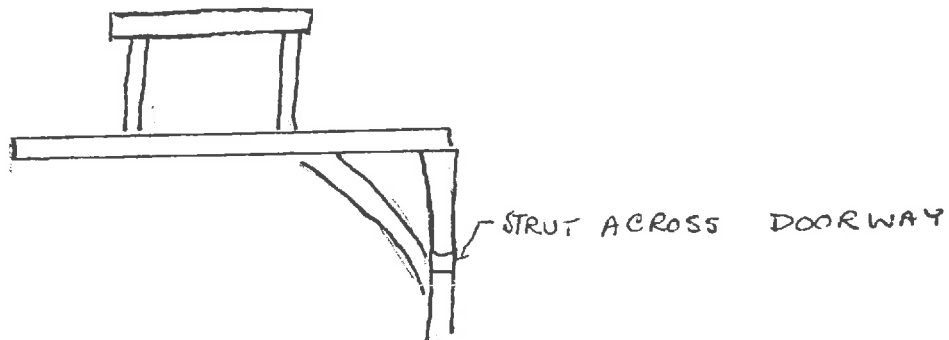
North section of out buildings

Back of building continuous with rest of flint & brick also end of block. Front of weather boarding with a wide (approx 8 ft) entrance

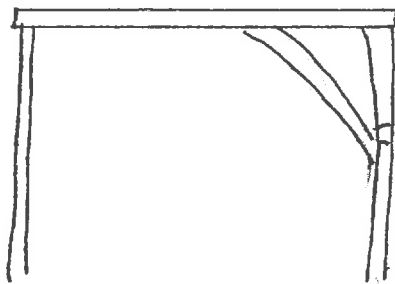
Roof timbers ? original appear to be half of barn timbers.

Brick floor with a gulley & possible remains of mangers at back

ROOF TIMBERS



FRONT VIEW - DOORWAY



All barns & out buildings are used for animal feed storage & for young beasts & are in very good order.

The blacksmith seems to have always been at the present site of an agricultural engineers in the village and the present sheds have been much altered. The earliest reference found to a blacksmith is in 1678 when a 'John Banister of Checkendon blacksmith' is one of the parties in an indenture!

In the 19th century Miss Hopè's grandfather besides having the tenancy of Lower farm and his wife running a shop, also had a foundry which was probably on the south of Foundry cottage. In 1851 Fletcher Hopè is listed as an iron founder and his son as a moulder

Beechwood Farm SE 675821

History - mentioned as a wood in mediaeval times. Name comes from the de la Beche family

1746 reference in deeds to Horshill and Beechwood farms<sup>1</sup>

1788 - Farms of Horshill & Beechwood sold to William Swinton by the Massingberds<sup>2</sup>

1836 John Cotrell paying Poor Rate for Beechwood farm<sup>3</sup>

1841 T.A. house and garden let to Ed. Holloway by Richard Body. No longer a farmhouse just a labourers dwelling.

1845 Kellys directory lists John Roberts a faggot dealer and carrier in occupation

1851 Census Sarah Eggleton and a woodman also a farm labourer living in one part

Joseph Bond living in the other, he also was a labourer.

1868 In the Revd Abbeys perambulation of Checkendon he writes 'Continue east

through underwood to an old farm - Beechwood. Inhabitants Will: Strong and in Bakehouse (a one roomed novel) Turner his wife and child'.

1985 The old farmhouse gone and two late Victorian semi detached cottages made into one house. Behind a small wooden barn with a tiled roof and wooden stabling with a tiled roof - all 20th century.

Now apart from a paddock completely surrounded by woodland.

1) MM papers I O.R.O

2) D/EB T13 B.R.O

3) Misc Winkworth I/1 O.R.O

THE CHESTNUTS

The Chestnuts according to ? architect renovating it & who had seen the deeds, was probably built around 1650 & there had been a reference earlier to a dwelling & land on the site called 'Houndscroft'. There is a reference to a Houndscroft which may be apposite in the Boarstall cartulary (p 62) where in 1330 Thomas le Dyere of Wodecote & Matilda his wife grant to John Marmion 2s rent from a croft in Wodecote called Hundecroft in Stoke Abbot lying next to the high road x from Wallingford to Reading & extending west to Wodecote heath.

According to J.H. Baker ~~him~~ in 'Ipsden Country' it was one of the oldest inns in the district - though what authority he has for saying this is unknown.

Pub which was called the Chestnuts closed in 1916 according to Miss Hope & then the building became a shop. It is now being renovated & turned into a private dwelling.

The Roof

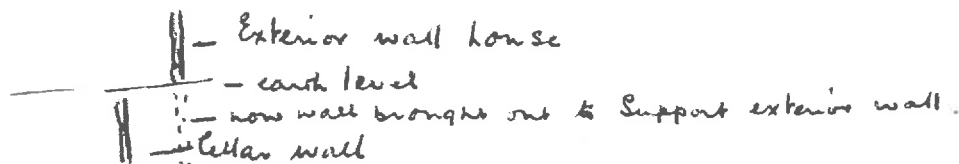
Tiled with catslide at the back

Chimneys

Brick built with modern pots. Only the eastern one has any original brick work.

Walls

Western side rendered & dropping down to a cellar with part base of flints.  $\phi$  This part is probably Victorian according to informant & was probably added when it was a pub. When builder investigated the cellar it was found that there was no support for walls - originally as below:-



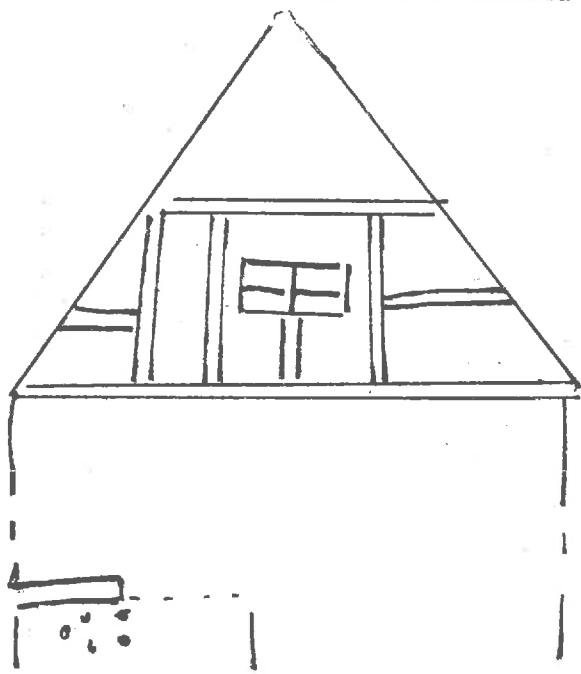
Main part - half timbered with modern/ victorian infilling in front & at side. on either side of eastern chimney some surviving wattle & daub - probably surviving original infilling. Pattern of woodwork as in photograph. The front door was originally central to main part - however a quite old door is now in eastern side. Impression is that this part was possibly a small lobby entrance

farmhouse.

Eastern side - a lower extension with a brick lower part & the upper timbered with a small window-probably a loft.

The fireplace on east freestanding, large with a probable bread oven.

Inside many alterations-much of the rafters & timbering renewed but a few original beams.



Extension - Eastern Side

REMAINS CILL BEAM

PART OF FLINT PLATFORM

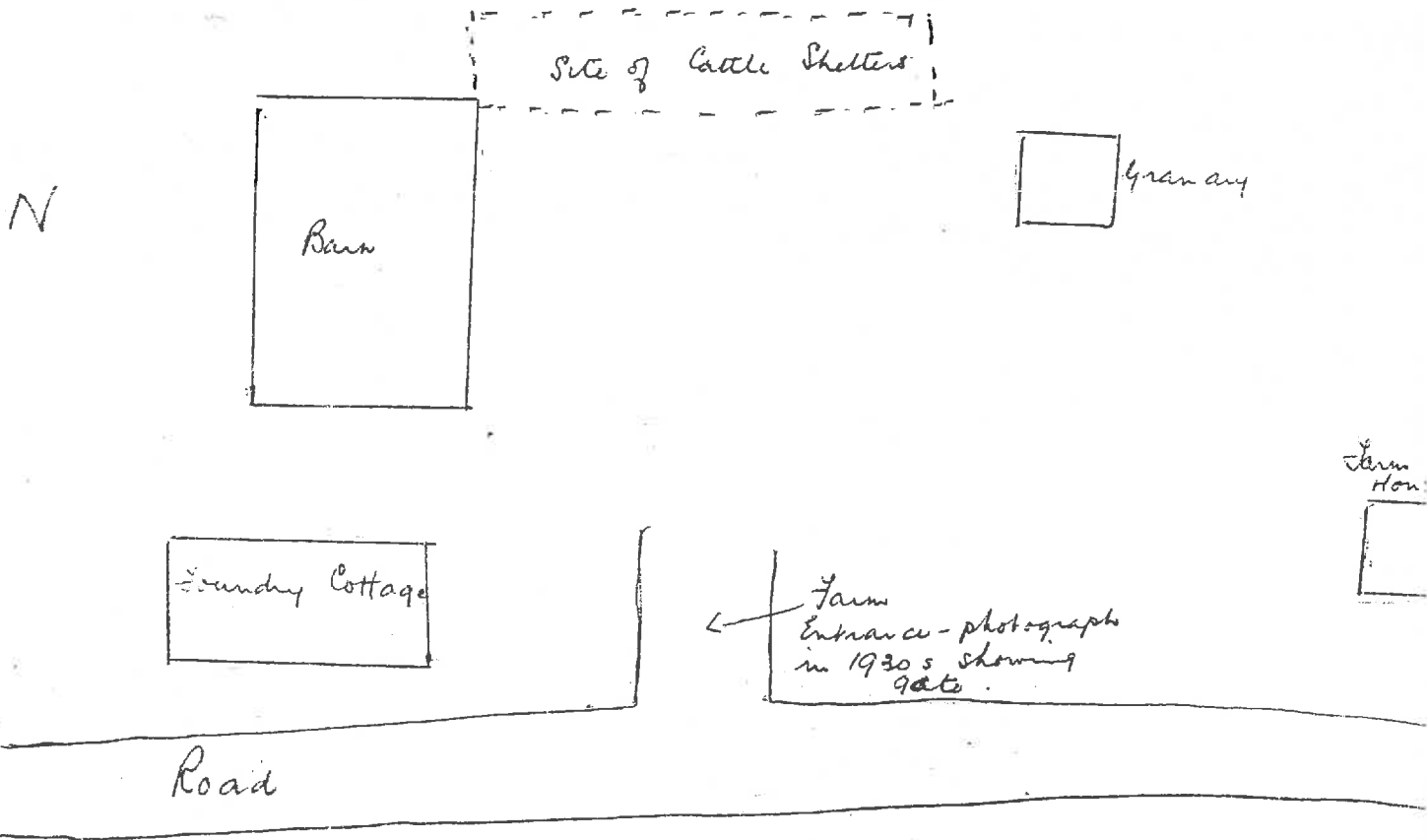
Since writing this further information has been found:- MISC REF III/i/1

1887 A brewery called Pittmans of Goring was being sold & in the description of the licensed premises was the Chestnuts:-A freehold beerhouse known as the Chestnuts built of brick & tile & containing a shop, tap room, living room, parlour, scullery, washhouse, cellar & 4 bedrooms. The out buildings comprise a timber & thatched stable, woodhouse, small barn, three pigsties & a large timber & tiled cart shed, 5 acres of arable & pasture land. Let to Mr Edwin Pratley at £20 p.a.

Farm buildings at back of 'Foundry Cottage' and 'Langtree  
Cottage- called Court Farm in 19th century O.S.SU68 SE 665830

As the only surviving buildings, a barn and granary were part of a farm complex which included ? cattle shelters on east which have been demolished thus completing the farmyard which would have been mostly behind 'Foundry Cottage. The feeling is that the latter was originally the farmhouse. A later house (late Georgian or early Victorian) became the farmhouse & the farm buildings have ceased to be used for that purpose since the war(?).

Plan of farm



Foundry cottage is largely 16th century and the barn timbers appear to be probably of that period therefore although no documentary evidence is as yet available the probability is that the farm dates from that time.

Granary

Tiled roof and roof truss of sawn timber and generally much repaired

Walls- close boarded in good condition

Resting on staddle stones

'Court Farm' BARN.

Roof - now corrugated iron but probably originally thatched.-half hipped

Walls - close boarded in good condition except at north side. Brick plinths & sill beams

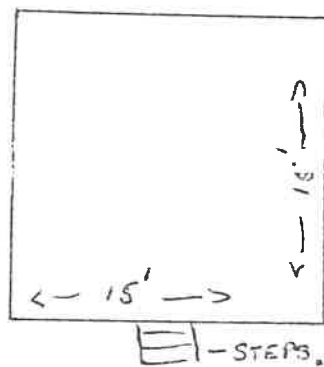
Floor - concrete centre, earth both sides -therefore although no porch this was probably a threshing barn.

Doorway -although no original doorposts in use as new ones put on top of old - possible to see trace of slots for draught regulators.

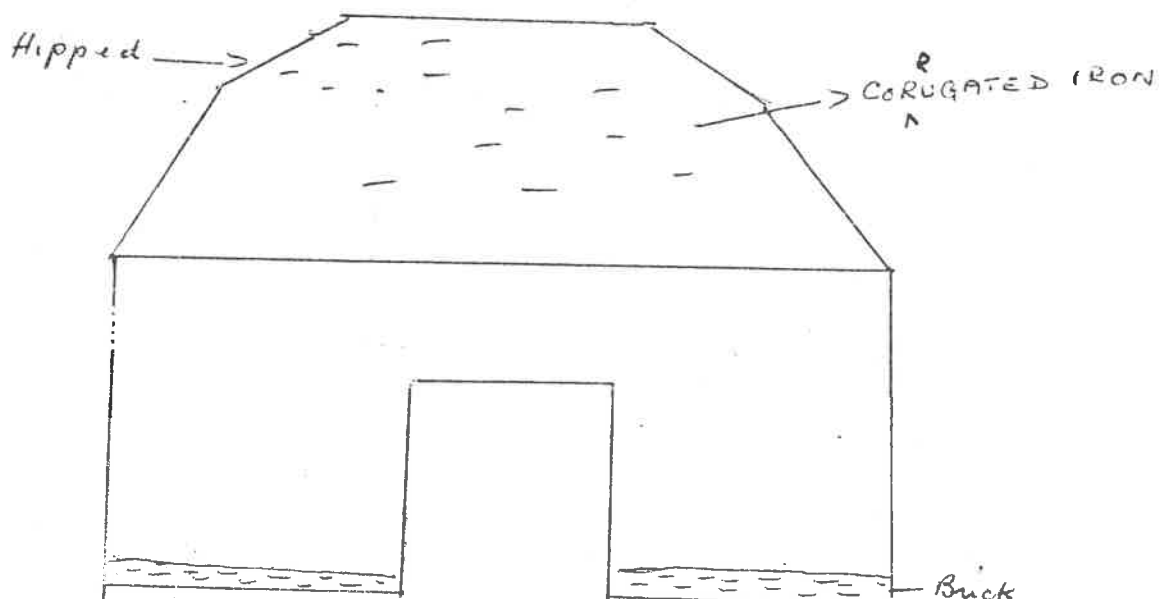
Trusses -obviously old -adzed-and pillars flaring out towards top

Rafters ,purlins etc original adze shaped timbers except for repair work on lower part of north side.

Plan of Granary



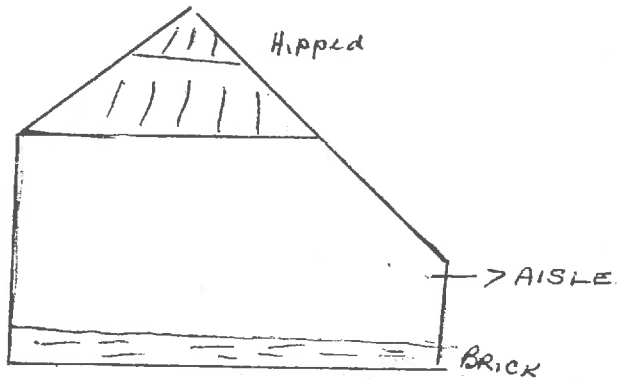
Barn



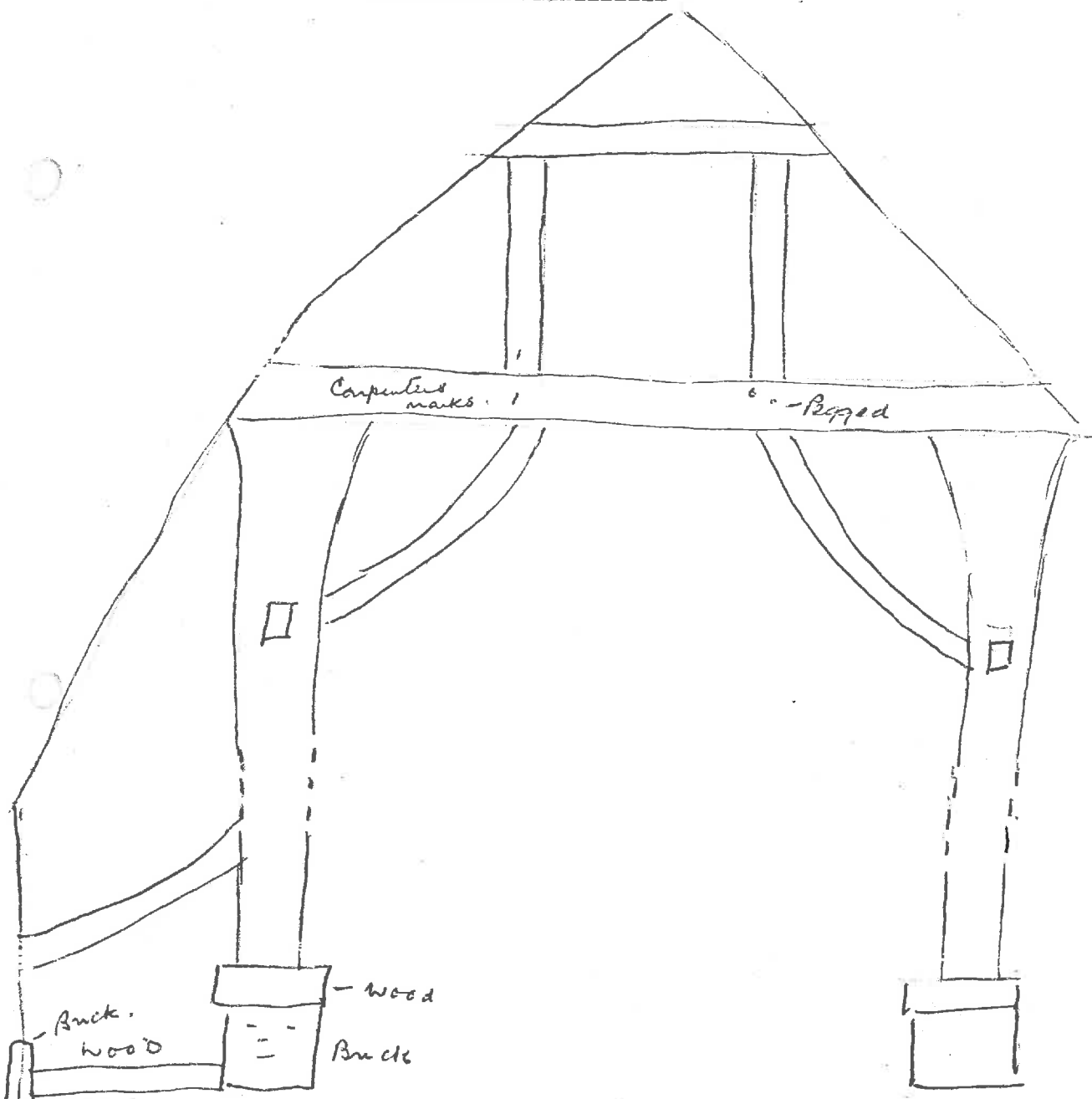
Support pillars of trusses rest on substantial rectangular piece of wood on



Side of barn

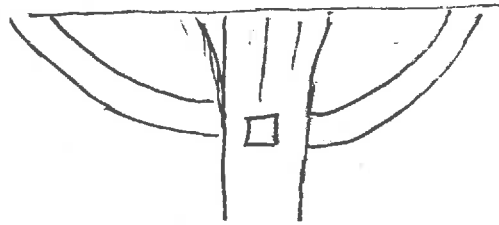


Roof trusses (two)

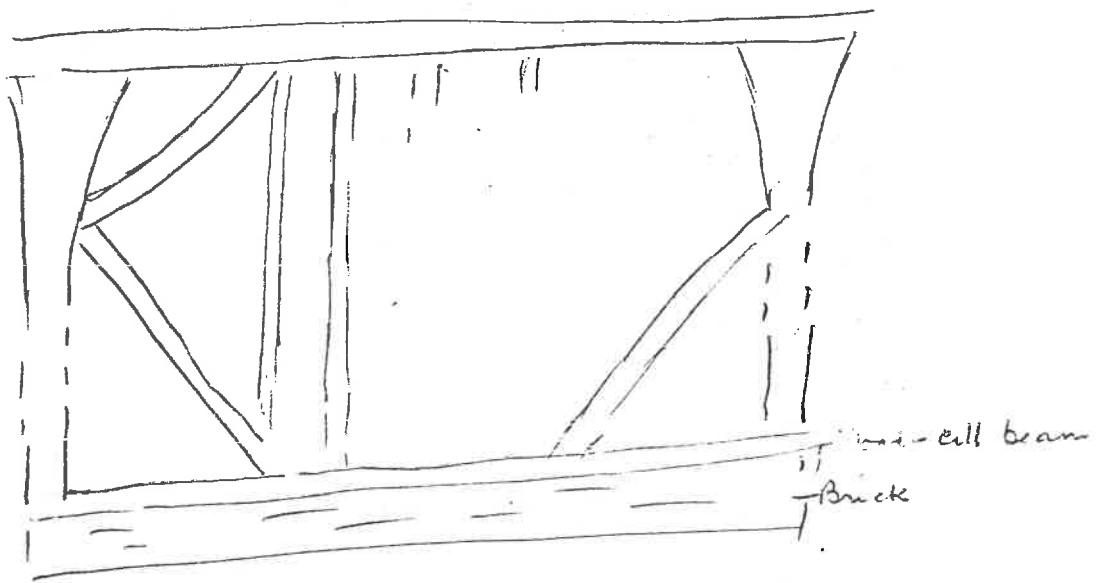


Barr

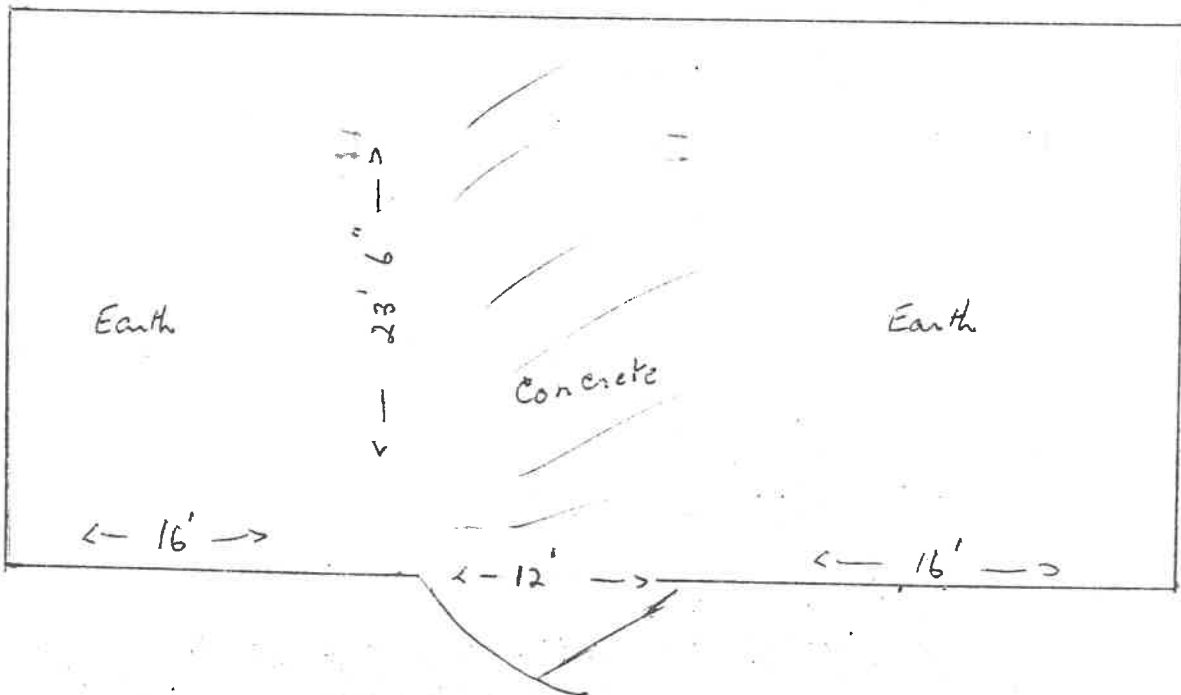
° de View



End



Floor Plan



Cottage next to forge (Corbishley)

Originally two cottages - north one probably forge cottage

Oldest one - possibly 15-16th century

? Blacksmiths cottage

Roof - tiled - end chimney S end

Walls - half timbered with modern brick infill - buried brick plinth with cill beam. Cruck at north end. Generally much repaired.

Windows - 1 dormer at front and back and side window in gable at north end.

Dormers later feature. Downstairs - two casement windows front and back each side of central doors. (Frnt door blocked). 2 light windows with four panes each.

Southern end - not so old

Roof - tiled with hipped roof at south end - two end chimney stacks

Walls - completely refronted with knapped flint and brick <sup>hand made</sup> surrounds to windows and corners and <sup>shoed</sup> reinforcement halfway between door and window on southern end - iron tie in same area. High brick plinth

At rear timbered with brick infill with one patch that could be wattle and daub covered with cement. Possible buried plinth with short length cill beam

Doors central doors

Windows - one each side of doors in front - one three light

doors and windows surrounded by cement frame with scraped initials

IS      ES      IC      ML      SC

Two later dormer windows upstairs

Old Post Office.

Believed at one time to have been Court farm house

? early Victorian

Roof - tiled

Walls - brick red with vitrious headers

Door-central

Windows -downstairs one each side door -three light casements with three panes  
each, curved wooden infill above

Upstairs - same apart from blocked window above front door

New porch and extension.

Nuthatch Cottage O.S.SU 68 SE 668836

Much altered

Central chimney stack - modern one on east modern extension

Roof - tiled though some indications that was probably originally thatched. Half  
hipped on west & was probably same on east before extension.

Windows - one window each side of door - casement 2 light with 4 panes in each  
One dormer on south side and two on north - window in gable on west

Front Door - central on south side

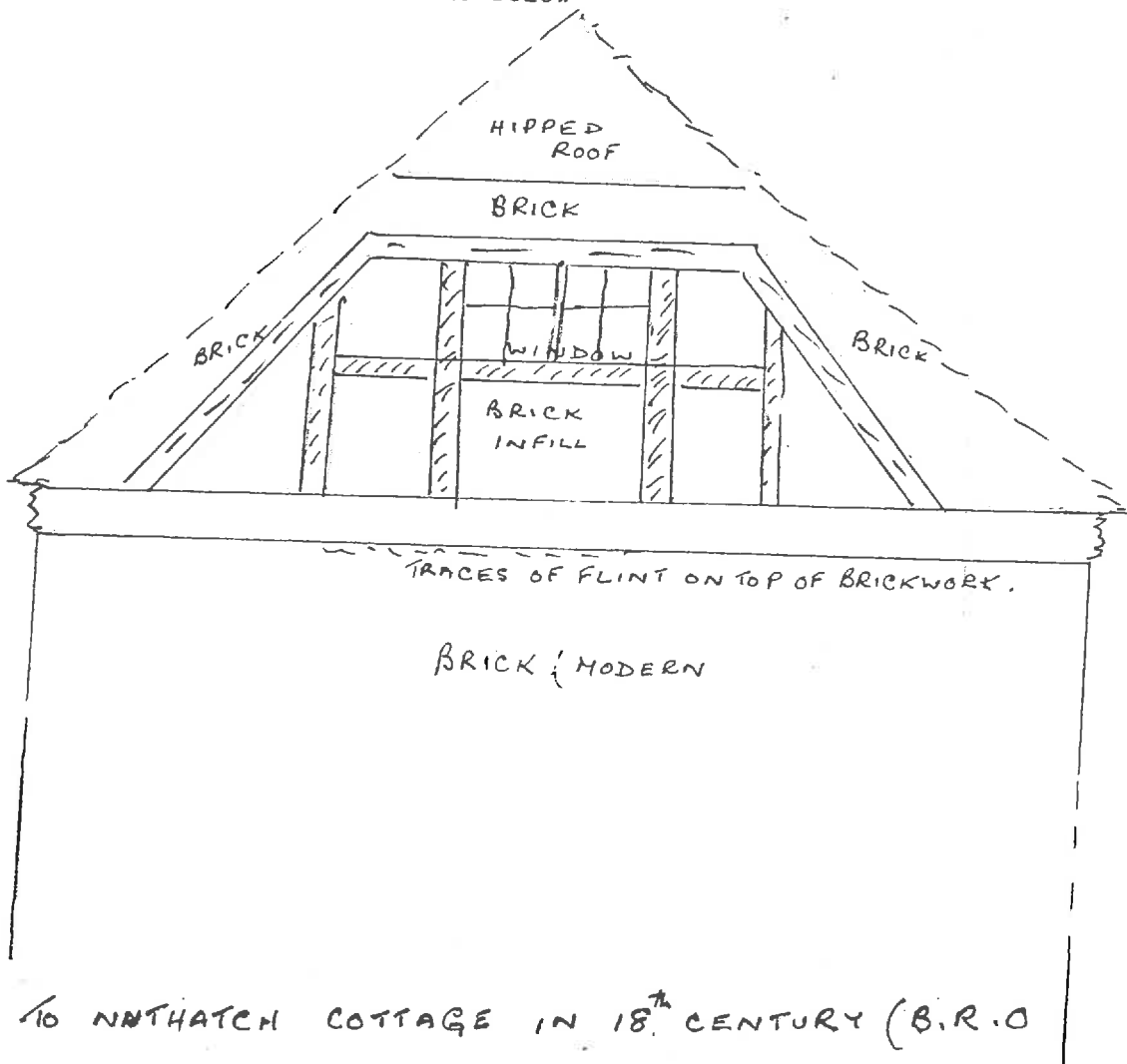
Position - cottage end on to road

Plinth - flint and brick

Walls - on front (south) English bond brick with vitrious brick diapering.

back wall mostly modern brickwork

side wall on west side as below



REF TO NUTHATCH COTTAGE IN 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (B.R.O)

Neals Farm -house

Impression -Victorian possibly early as Georgian characteristics

Lobby entrance type with central chimney and one side one as in photograph

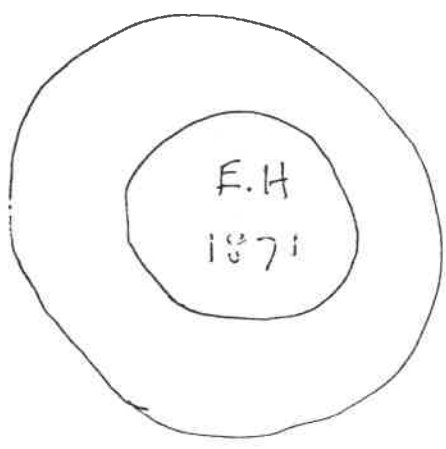
Roof - slate

Walls - flint and brick patterned

Front door central with fanlight over door

Windows - sash one each side of door downstairs -each has large central sash with small one each side -upstairs one each side and one central sash each sash has four panes.

Above door and above string course -as below



CEMENT OR ? STONE

HISTORY OF FARM

Named after a family called 'NEEL' from Boarstall 1250 onwards<sup>1</sup>

1600-7 Neals farm mentioned in a survey<sup>2</sup>

1635 Inventory and will of the husbandman Thomas Goswell of Neals farm.

Circa 1700 Neales farm was owned by Harriet Massingberd<sup>3</sup>

1749 In an extract from the Poor rates Richard Sherwood was paying for Neals farm & in a lease from the same source it describes the farm messuage, arable land and pasture called Neales farm.<sup>4</sup>

1790 Neales and its woods were mortgaged for £1500<sup>5</sup>

1841 T.A. Homestead listed

1851 Henry Saunders was farming 300 acres from Neals employing 11 labourers with 3 living in.

1) Boarstall cartulary and Marmion papers

2) Survey Margaret Gelling 'Placenames of Oxon.'

3) Misc Berks XV/3 O.R.O

Neals Farm

Barn II

? eighteenth century or earlier

Position north east of house

Roof - One side tiled & other asbestos sheeting

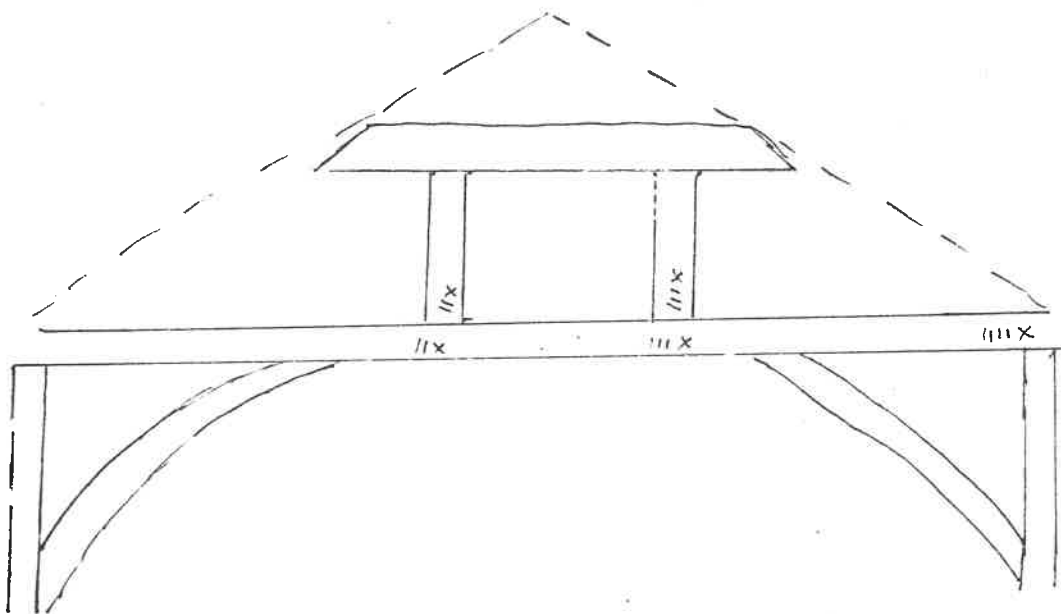
Walls Close boarded with brick And flint base -wall members rising from beams :  
resting on plinth. Base 3feet high on west  
2 feet high on east

Floor - concrete threshing floor with earth either side

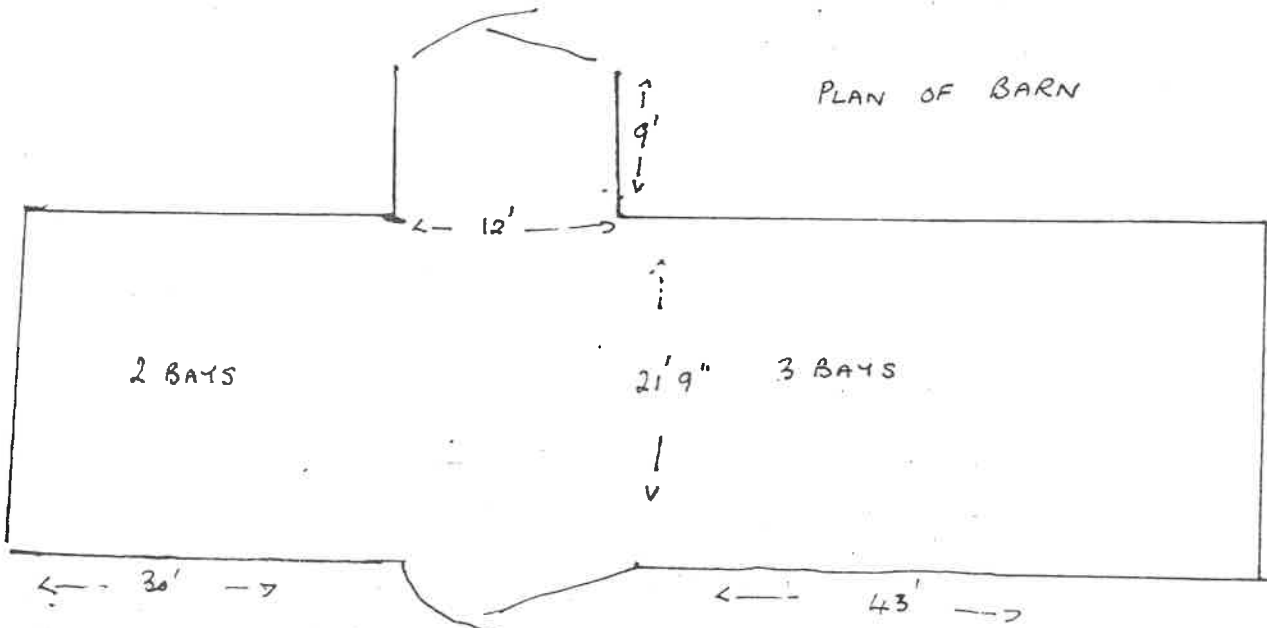
Roof trusses have carpenters marks - 2 trusses One side & three other -5 bays

Condition - good

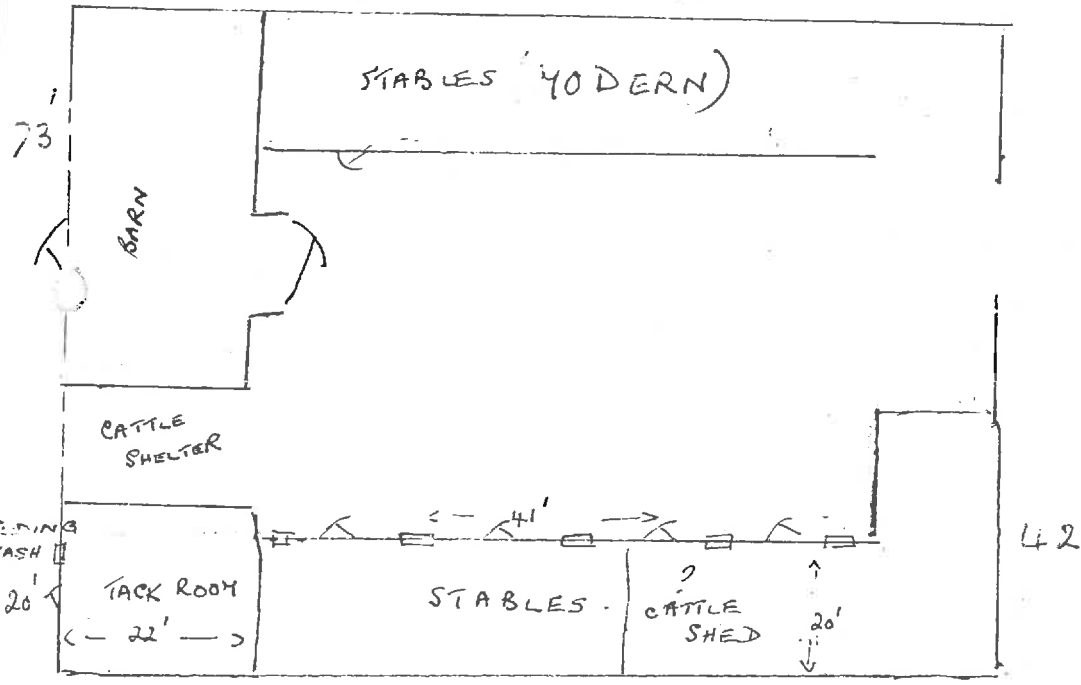
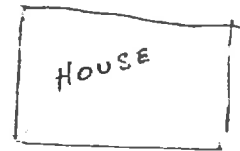
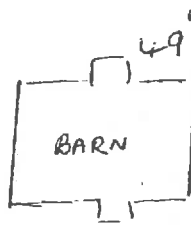
Roof Truss - PEGGED



PLAN OF BARN



Plan of Farmyard





Neals farm

Barn I

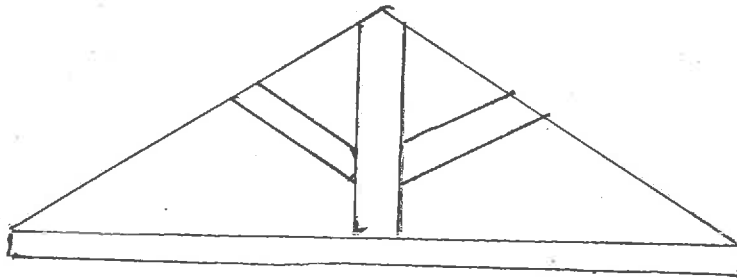
Probably Victorian of same period as house

Roof - slate

Walls - Close boarded in good condition on brick and flint base which is cemented over on inside.

Roof trusses of sawn timber three in number

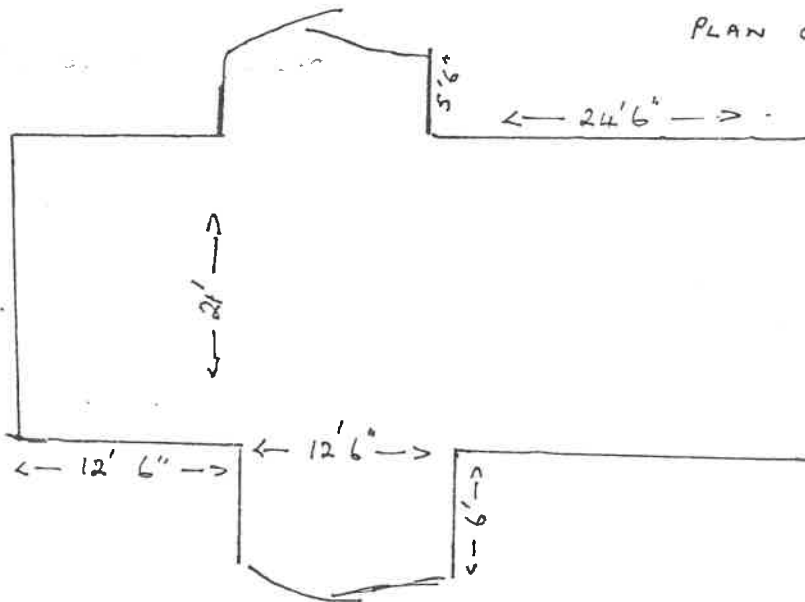
Roof Truss



Situation -next to house on east side

Floor - concrete throughout

PLAN OF BARN

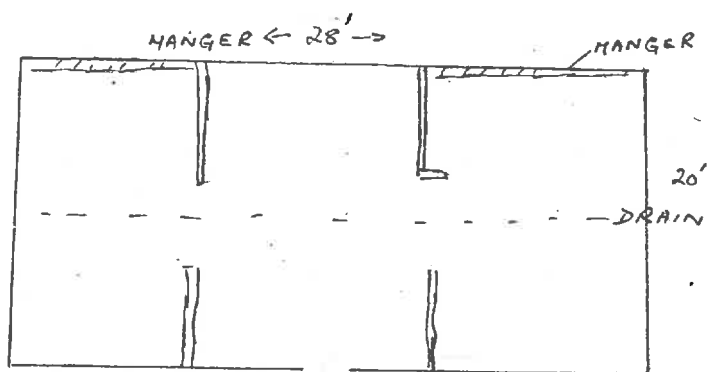


Sawn timbering throughout

Neals Farm

All buildings except barns are brick & flint including walls - impression probably Victorian, mostly used as stabling and store roomsnow .

Flooring brick - in ? cattle sheds engineering brick flooring with a drain and wooden mangers on the wall

Plan of building



67

Ouseley Barn SW 634828

This is interesting not because of the present buildings, which consist of a fairly modern bungalow and modern farm buildings, but because at one time it seems to have been a substantial farm.

1635 In a terrier there is listed 'a tenement called Woosley, the dwelling house containing 3 bays of building with barns of 4 bays - a garden, orchard and backside containing 1 acre.' It seems probable that this was the Glece farm. In the description of the fields and strips there are several references to 'Woosley Way'.

1739 In an account of land belonging to Bottom Farm<sup>1</sup>, it mentions 'land by Worsley'. After this no further mention of Woosley house is found, except in the census of 1851, where two farm labourers are listed as living at 'Woosley'. The name was probably put on the O.S. map as Ouseley due to the local dialect. Strangely the first edition 1" has it as 'Gulleys Barn'.

In 1983 when the field by it had just been ploughed we picked up several pieces of mediaeval roof tile and there was also a scatter of pieces of brick.

Crosshouse SE 655827

This is another mystery. It is firmly marked on the O.S. map and consists nowadays of a pair of good sized semi detached houses dating externally from the ?1920s. In 1739 in the account of land belonging to Bottom Farm 'Cross House Farm' is listed as having 20 acres. By the 1851 census there were only two farm labourers living there.

In the 1739 account, it lists a 2 acre orchard at Crosshouse and an ancient orchard still exists in 1987.

The name probably comes from the lane crossroads nearby.

1) MM II/8 O.R.O

Possibly early 19th century

As its name implies was used for the ferryman up until after the last war

Consists of two cottages

Roof - tiled

Walls -diapered brick with dental course in front.

Chimneys -2 chimney stacks each end. West end (river) variegated brick with 3 pots.

East end -diapered brick with one pot

Windows-3 upstairs with 2 lights each & 3 downstairs as in diagram

Small ? modern extension at rear of smaller cottage



This building was mentioned in the T.A of 1841, the Revd Abbey in his perambulation of Checkendon refers to it as the Three Horse Shoes but this was probably a slip of the pen. The censuses refer to publicans occupying it.

There are three levels of roof and it would be difficult on the whole to judge the age.

The southern end<sup>of</sup> was probably the oldest part.

Roof of southern end -thatch with two courses of tiles just above the gutter.

Walls - timber frames with brick infill painted white. Cruck on the end wall.

Windows -two dormers in roof, one small window onto road with leaded panes & surrounded by beams.

Chimney - modern

Central part

Roof - tiled

Walls - brick white painted

Windows - Two dormers in roof & two casement windows on ~~back~~.

Northern End

Roof-tiled

Walls -white painted brick with brick and flint cill

Windows - one large casement probably modern

Extension

Probably victorian -now used as bar .

Barn

Close boarded walls & tiled foof -now used as ? garage.Holes for pi<sup>9</sup>ons in roof



W Side  
(Back to road)

Woodlands in Checkendon

The upper part of Checkendon is a relatively thickly wooded area and as a result the woods have played a great part in the lives of those living there. The clearing, such as it was, happened at an early date. Roden says it happened in the 200 years following Domesday but it is probable that it happened earlier than this; Castle Grove must have been cleared in the Iron Age as there is a large earthwork of that period in the present wood, Pinnocks field was arable land in the 12th century and the earthworks known as the 'Devils Churchyard' dating from the Iron Age also must have been on cleared land although now in a wood. There are several woods apart from these that were clear in the early mediaeval period<sup>1</sup> and it seems that following the population drop in the 13th and 14th centuries they reverted to woodland. The demand for beech firewood following the expansion of London also meant further land becoming wooded in the 17th and 18th centuries. The next increase in woodland came with the rise of the furniture trade in High Wycombe and the final one with the planting of Conifers for pulping for paper.

A proportion of woods must have been present in antiquity but there are only three named woods before the sixteenth century—these are :-

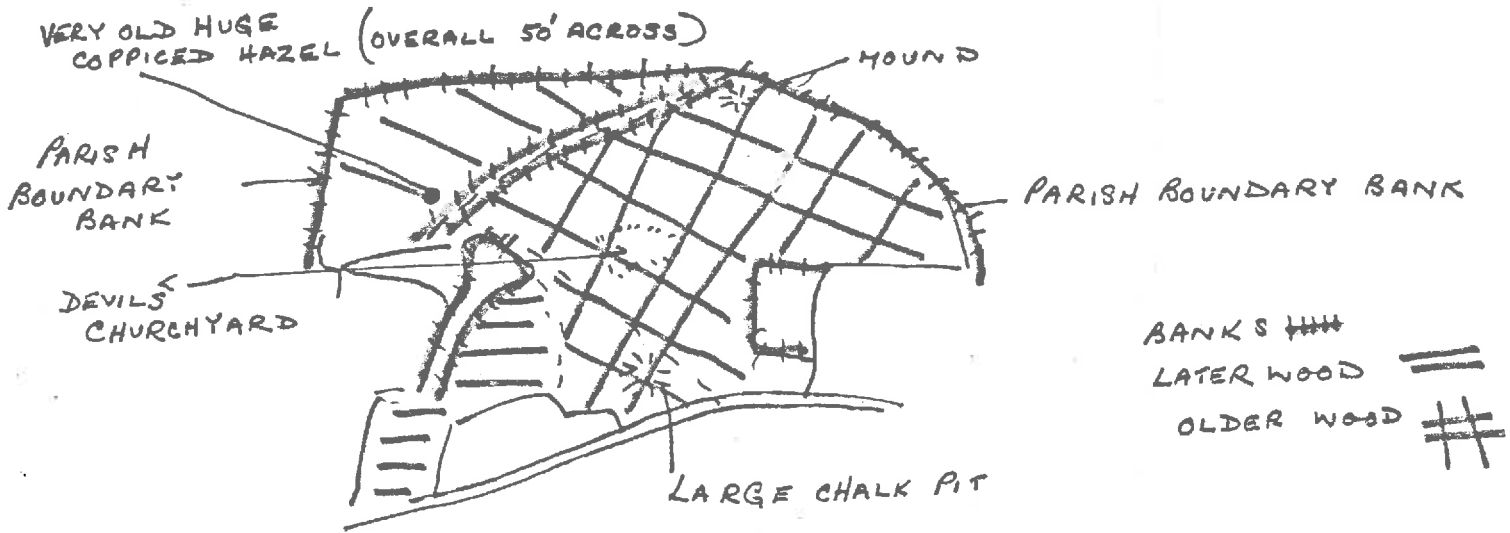
Beechwood O.S 6" SU 68 SE 675823

This takes its name from the de la Beshe family who owned the land in the fourteenth century. The earliest record is found in the Boarstall Cartulary (1219) when Edmund Rede of Boarstall was granted a wood called Becnewode. The wood in 1435 was owned by Richard Marmyon who was lord of the manor of Checkendon, and was then called Becnenwode.<sup>2</sup> The wood is mentioned in the court rolls of Ipsden in 1601, when it was owned by Richard Croswell of Neales;<sup>3</sup> further reference is found several times in the 18th century, including 1793 when it was sold to Wm Sarney of Hymer Hall (Highmoor).<sup>3</sup> This is interesting as Wm Sarney owned or leased quite a number of woods and was obviously cashing in on the demand for firewood and timber for building and ships at this period. He leased Beechwood to John Slaugater in 1795,

*along with Horse-...*

- 1) Dissertation by P. Preece for L.H. Certificate Oxon
- 2) The Boarstall Cartulary H.E. Salter ed O.H.S 1930
- 3) D/EB TI3 B.R.O.

# BRAZIER'S COMMON





Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

who was a timber merchant of Cane End, for 600 years for £1350 a year<sup>1</sup>. At that time Beechwood consisted of 25 acres. The wood was sold by Barney to John Allnutt and in 1804 the lease for Beechwood was only £690 a year, with the proviso that he was to buy all the oak in the wood for £100 and cut it and take it away. The Napoleonic wars were at their height at this time and oak was valuable; from this it seems probable that at the beginning of the 19th century Beechwood was beech coppice with oak standards ~~some~~<sup>most</sup> of which were ready for felling. Beechwood in 1985 was almost pure beech timber that looks as if it has been planted. There are banks delineating the wood and a few sawpits. The wood has been extended recently and there are conifer plantations.

Hammonds Wood O.S. 6" SU 68SE 648836

This is probably the oldest documented wood, it takes its name from John Hawman who was granted land in Checkendon in 1331<sup>2</sup>. A charter in the same cartulary mentions 'Hawmannysgrove' where John Hawman was to have 'common of pasture for all their beasts and pigs (oxen and cows excepted) in the same wood with housbote and heybote' but strangely not firebote. This meant that at least part of the wood at that time had pollards. The wood was granted to William Harlyn, rugge in 1387 and this is interesting as there is a feet of fine of the same period<sup>3</sup> where W.H is granting land and a messuage to Wm Grace who is to perform certain services including 5 cartloads of 'tuche and bowes' to be drawn by 4 horses annually from the woods of W.H. Apart from a general reference to the woods of Checkendon there is no more to be found about Hammonds Wood until a terrier of 1635 when Hamons Wood formed a boundary to one of the strips.<sup>4</sup> 1744 produced a note in an indenture where Hammonds Wood of coppice had an extent of 28 acres 2 rods 38 perches<sup>5</sup>. The fact of it being referred to as a coppice means that it was just that, the firewood trade being still in full swing at this time. An auction catalogue of 1801 describes it as having ~~2~~

1) Misc Green V/11 O.R.O

2) Boarstall Cart: ibid

3) D/EH T64 B.R.O.

4) D/EB T13 B.R.O.

5) M.S. DD Oxon C9 O.R.C.

Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

father in 1332, the family having come from Boarstall. The first reference to Neals wood is to be found in an inventory of Thomas Goswell of Neals farm in 1635 where there is an item '...in the woods timber cut roodes faggotts balins (bavins) stack wood whoopes £7.<sup>1</sup>' One can surmise from this entry that the wood consisted of coppice with standards at this period. In Ipsden court rolls a mention is made of Niles Grove in 1708 also indicating that coppice was present.<sup>2</sup> A reference in 1730 gives the size as 130 acres;<sup>3</sup> by 1749, according to the Poor rate paid for Neals Wood the size was 100 acres. This may be because some of it was pure timber and therefore not liable for the rate,<sup>4</sup> however an interesting account of the woodward of Neals makes it clear that the woods in 1785 were coppiced beech and the product, mainly firewood. The wood at that time was assessed for the poor rate on 78 acres.<sup>5</sup> There are other brief references in the 18th century and then in the 19th in the T.A. it is a beechwood of 76 acres. Nowadays the wood is smaller as part has been taken for Borocourt. It is mainly beech with a conifer plantation. Neals Shaw was probably originally, as its name implies, a 'shaw' on the edge of the fields of Neals farm but has been extended into a wood as it is now, in the late 19th century. There is a parish boundary bank between Checkendon and Stoke Row (or Ipsden as it was) in the North-eastern extension which is 1½ metres high by 4 metres wide. The wood now called Neals Hanging was a tongue<sup>u</sup> of wood extending north from Neals Wood & forming part of the original 150 acres. This has been extended at a time between 1898 and 1918 as maps of these two dates indicate. The old part of Neals is mainly beech at the present time (1986) with the usual system of tracks, indicating that it was originally coppice. A considerable wood bank runs east/west through the wood - roughly 1 metre high and 3½ metres wide. North of Borocourt an old coppice exists mainly hazel and this has a residual bank.

Burtonledge Wood OS 6" SU 68 SE 678816

This is a strange name but Margaret Gelling says it is derived from the

'rough pool to which ledge has been added'.<sup>6</sup> Our feeling is that, as this area is

1) Inventory in Wills Oxon O R O

2) MS Rolls Oxon a I 50

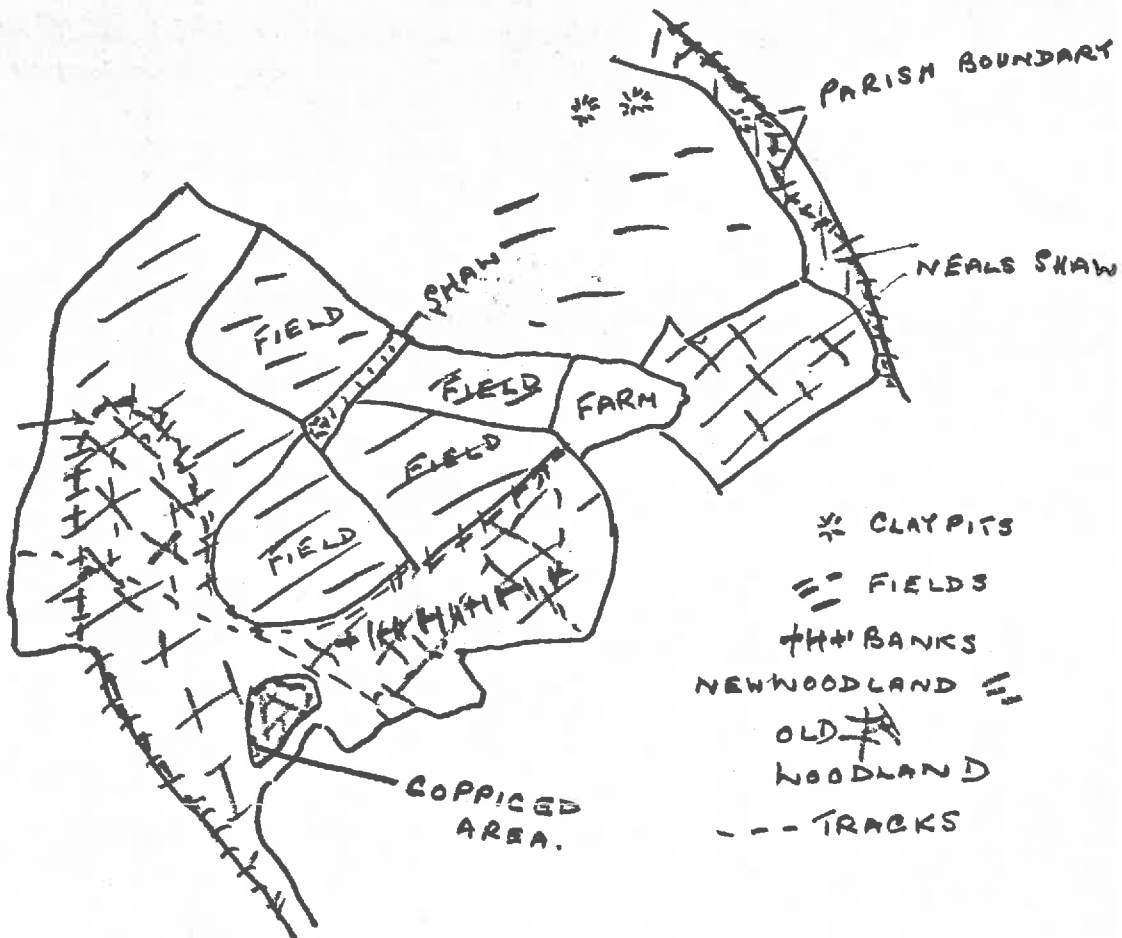
3) MM II/9 O.R.O

4) Ibid

5) MM II 53

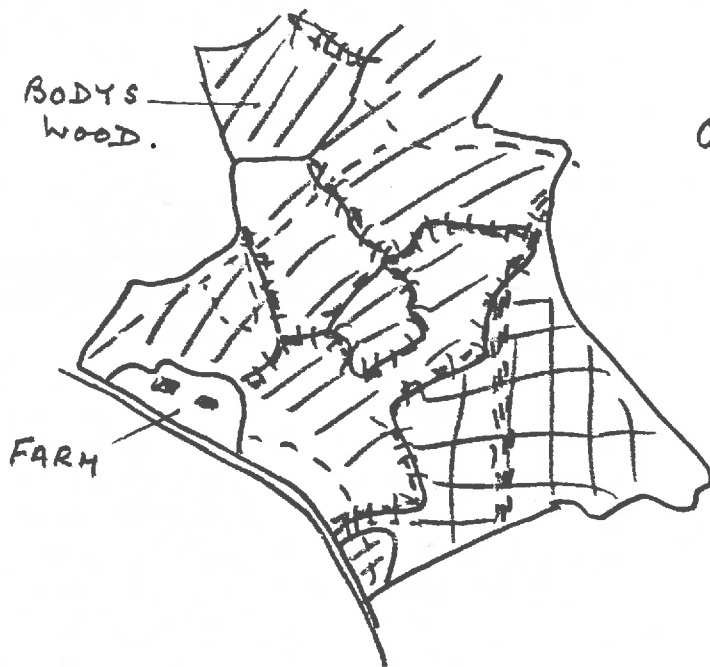


NEALS HANGING



SCALE 6" to mile

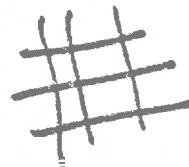
RUMER HEDGE WOOD.

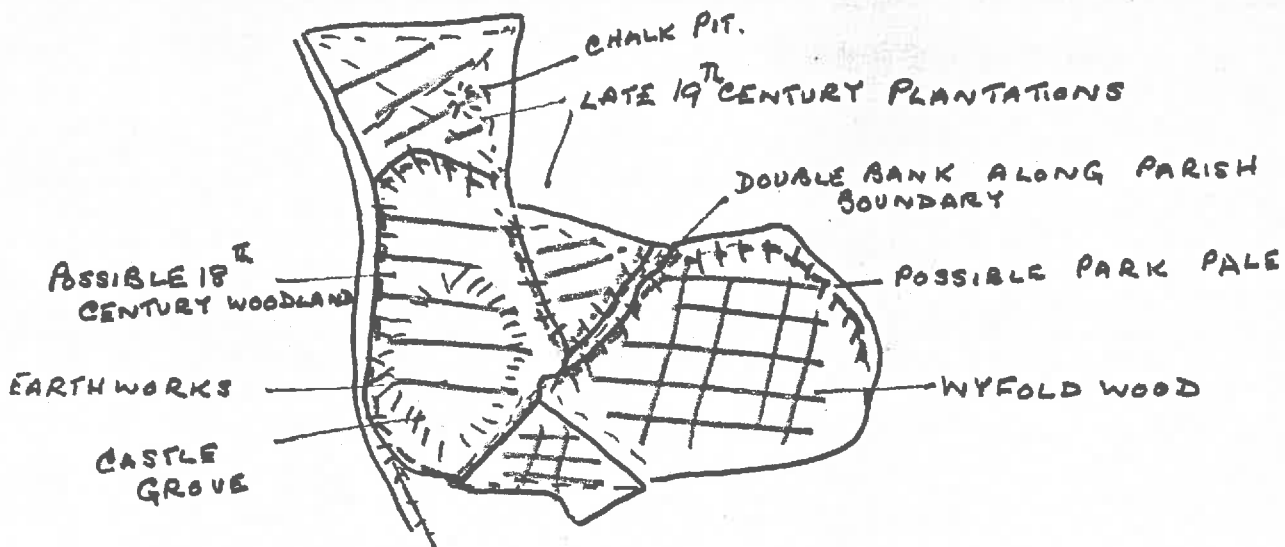


Conjectured new woodland



Probable woodland since 14<sup>th</sup> century





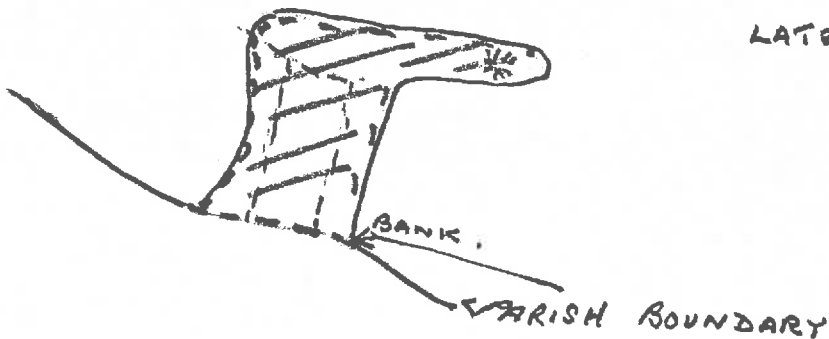
BELLMANS COVERT

BOUNDARY & OTHER  
BANKS + + +  
TRACKS - - -

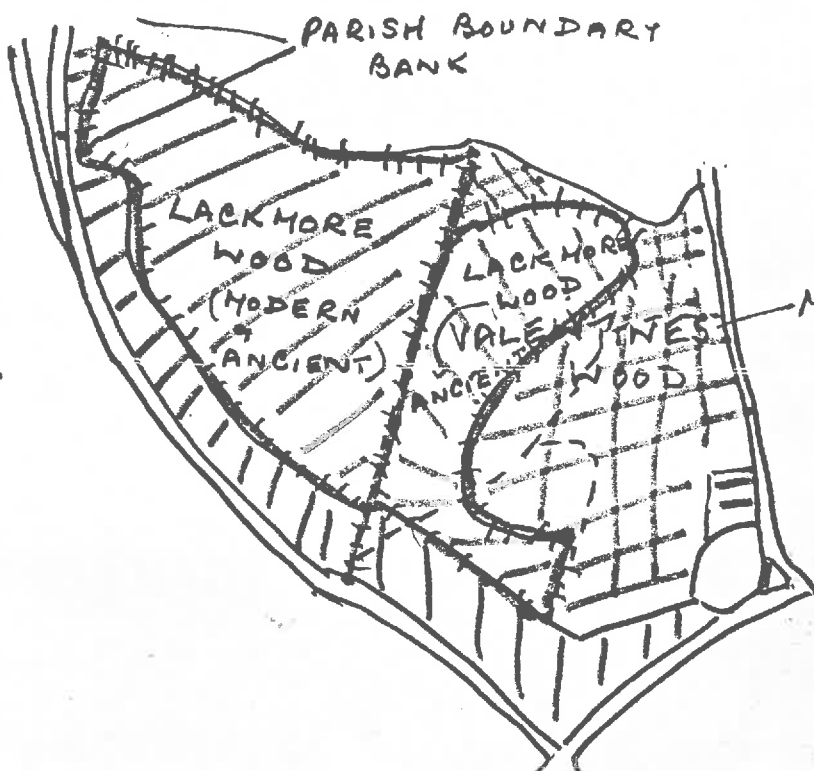
☼ - PITS

OLD WOODLAND #

LATER WOODLAND |||



LACKMORE & VALENTINES WOOD



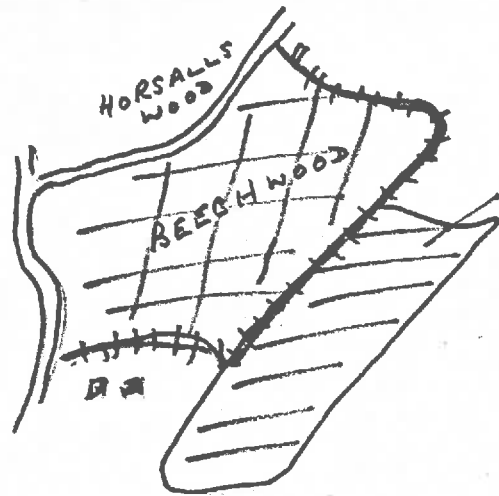
ANCIENT WOODLAND  
==




MODERN  
19th CENT WOODLAND  
#

20th CENT WOODLAND  
|||

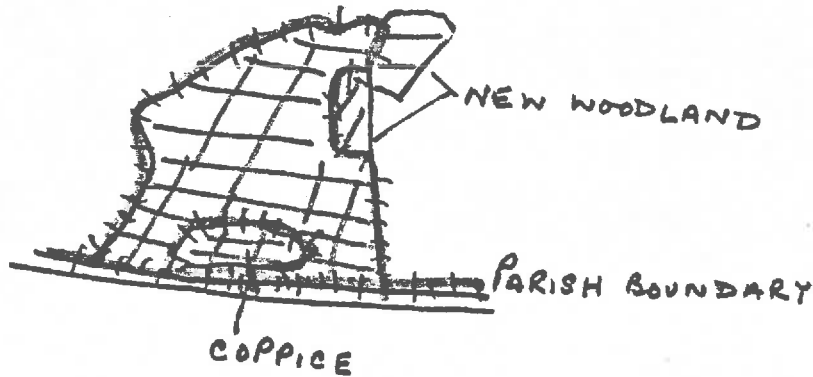
BANKS ———  
TRACKS - - -

BEECHWOOD

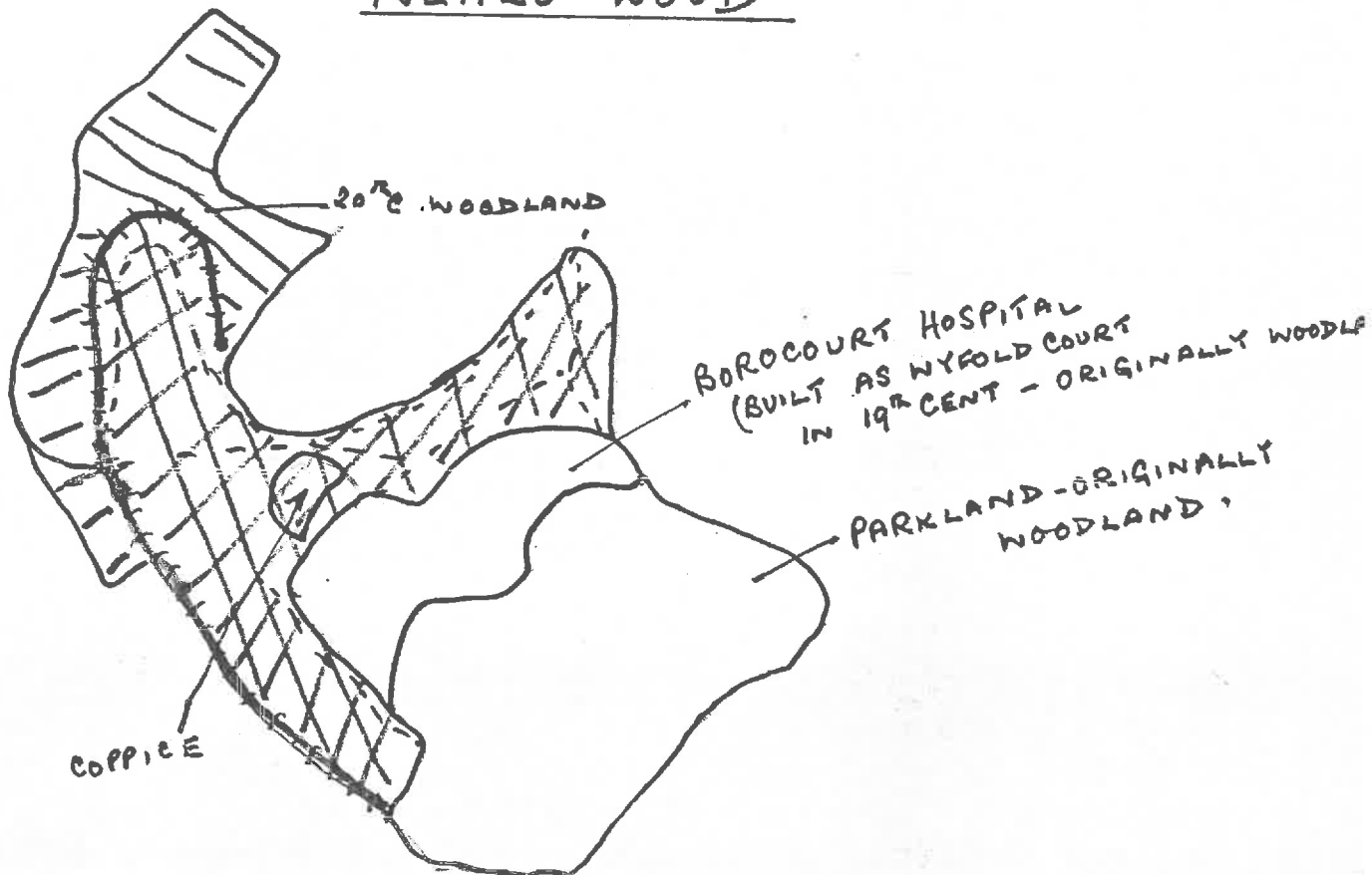


BANKS   
 OLD WOODLAND   
 NEW WOODLAND 

HAMMONDS WOOD



NEALS WOOD



Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

father in 1332, the family having come from Boarstall. The first reference to Neals wood is to be found in an inventory of Thomas Goswell of Neals farm in 1635 where there is an item ' ..in the woods timber cut roodes faggotts balins (bavins) stack wood whoopes £7.<sup>1</sup>' One can surmise from this entry that the wood consisted of coppice with standards at this period. In Ipsden court rolls a mention is made of Niles Grove in 1708 also indicating that coppice was present.<sup>2</sup> A reference in 1730 gives the size as 130 acres;<sup>3</sup> by 1749, according to the Poor rate paid for Neals Wood the size was 100 acres. This may be because some of it was pure timber and therefore not liable for the rate,<sup>4</sup> however an interesting account of the woodward of Neals makes it clear that the woods in 1785 were coppiced beech and the product, mainly firewood. The wood at that time was assessed for the poor rate on 78 acres.<sup>5</sup> There are other brief references in the 18th century and then in the 19th in the T.A. it is a beechwood of 76 acres. Nowadays the wood is smaller as part has been taken for Borocourt. It is mainly beech with a conifer plantation. Neals Shaw was probably originally, as its name implies, a 'shaw' on the edge of the fields of Neals farm but has been extended into a wood as it is now, in the late 19th century. There is a parish boundary bank between Checkendon and Stoke Row (or Ipsden as it was) in the North-eastern extension which is 1½ metres high by 4 metres wide. The wood now called Neals Hanging was a tongue of wood extending north from Neals Wood & forming part of the original 130 acres. This has been extended at a time between 1898 and 1918 as maps of these two dates indicate. The old part of Neals is mainly beech at the present time (1986) with the usual system of tracks, indicating that it was originally coppice. A considerable wood bank runs east/west through the wood - roughly 1 metre high and 3½ metres wide. North of Borocourt an old coppice exists mainly hazel and this has a residual bank.

Rumernedge Wood OS 6" SU 68 SE 678816

This is a strange name but Margaret Gelling says it is derived from the

'rough pool to which nedge has been added'.<sup>6</sup> Our feeling is that, as this area is

1) Inventory in Wills Oxon O R O

2) MS Rolls Oxon a I 50

3) MM II/9 O.R.O

4) Ibid

5) MM II 33

6) Margaret Gelling Place names of Oxfordshire Pt I 1971

Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

is very dry and there are no ponds the probability is that the 'mere' means a boundary mark. In this district mere is a term used frequently to denote a boundary of a strip or holding. As in the Thame cartulary this area is mentioned but not described as a wood, it seems likely that it was cleared before the 13th century. However in the late mediæval period it probably became wooded again although the next reference is not until 1749; then it was assessed for Poor rate on 10 acres.<sup>1</sup> This must mean that it was coppice at that time. In 1801 an auction catalogue<sup>2</sup> states that there was 8 a 2r 29p of 'capital beech and oak woodland with thriving timber.....an asylum for game' - it also mentions 6a 17p of 'underwood plantation'.<sup>2</sup> By 1841 in the T.A. 'Ruemon Hedge' wood of 10 a 32p is described as beech wood presumably tall beech. A map in an auction catalogue of 1868 gives an area of 4 acres which is the equivalent of the modern wood. It is probable that with the slump in farming and the rise in the furniture industry that land was converted in to beech woodland about this time.

The present woods are mainly high beech with some oak, on the east there is an overgrown mixed wood with some plantations of conifer; also present are some rhododendrons which probably gave the cover for the game mentioned above.

Bodys Wood - north of Rumerhedge wood is an extension of woodland; although John Boddie paid a Poor rate for woodland in the 17th century,<sup>3</sup> he only paid one shilling and that included 1 yardland so it was possibly only a shaw or small coppice. In 1730-40 a shaw at 'Bodys' is mentioned of 2 acres.<sup>4</sup> The wood is now mainly beech with a conifer plantation so likely to be of 19th-20th century planting.

Wyfold Wood & Castle Grove O.S. 6" 68 SE 687810

Wyfold belonged to Thame Abbey & in 1250 there is a reference to the woods of Wyfold.<sup>5</sup> The only other mention, prior to the 19th century, to be found is a will of Wm Blackall in 1754<sup>6</sup> when Wyal Hatch Pond Coppice and Round coppice are specified; unfortunately these names have disappeared from the map. Part of Wyfold is in the parish of Checkendon but the majority of this wood is in Rotherfield Peppard but as it forms a block of woodland with Castle Grove, it is included. A map of 1868 shows Wyfold Wood without a later extension which is

Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

mainly conifer and therefore 20th century.

The woods now otherwise are almost pure beech timber trees with some sawpits scattered throughout probably a remnant of the furniture trade, though some may be older. On the north side nearest to Wyfold Grange there are some good sized banks roughly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres high by 3-4 metres wide; as the ditches are on the wood side it is possible they were part of a park pale. There is no record of a park here but there is a road known as Park Lane that might have run along the western border. A system of banks and ditches slightly smaller in size exists between Castle Grove and Wyfold Wood

Castle Grove -has massive iron age earthworks in it and therefore must have been cleared land at an early date, whether it was part of Wyfold park in the mediaeval period is debatable. The present wood appears to be planted, may be in the 19th century and consists of beech with an undergrowth of rhododendrons probably to provide cover for game. Bluebells are present both in Wyfold and Castle Grove where the tree cover allows. A parish boundary <sup>double</sup> bank skirts Castle Grove and passes through Wyfold.

1) MM/I/1 O.R.O

2) Auction Catal: A fol 266 Bod: C

3) MS DD Oxon c9 O.R.O

4) MM II 9 O.R.O

5) H.E. Salter Thame Cart: Oxon Rec: Soc: 1947-8

6) P.J. Bretherton Misc I/1

Apes Wood SU 68 SE 670829

This though only a small wood was first mentioned in a survey of 1564 as a 'wood close of 4 acres called Appeshed'.<sup>I</sup> In 1744 it was called Aspwood and covered an area of 5a 2r 10p.<sup>2</sup> Nowadays it is a young neglected beechwood with an edging of a few coppiced hazels and some wild cherry. An interesting feature is a huge  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres high by 5 metres wide bank against the road on the north with a ditch on the wood side - have we the remains of a park pale here and if so what park?

1) S.P, 12/34 P.R.O.

2) MS DD Oxon C9



Woodlands in Checkendon cont:

Bellmans Covert SU 68 SE 0.S.6" 69 SE 666837

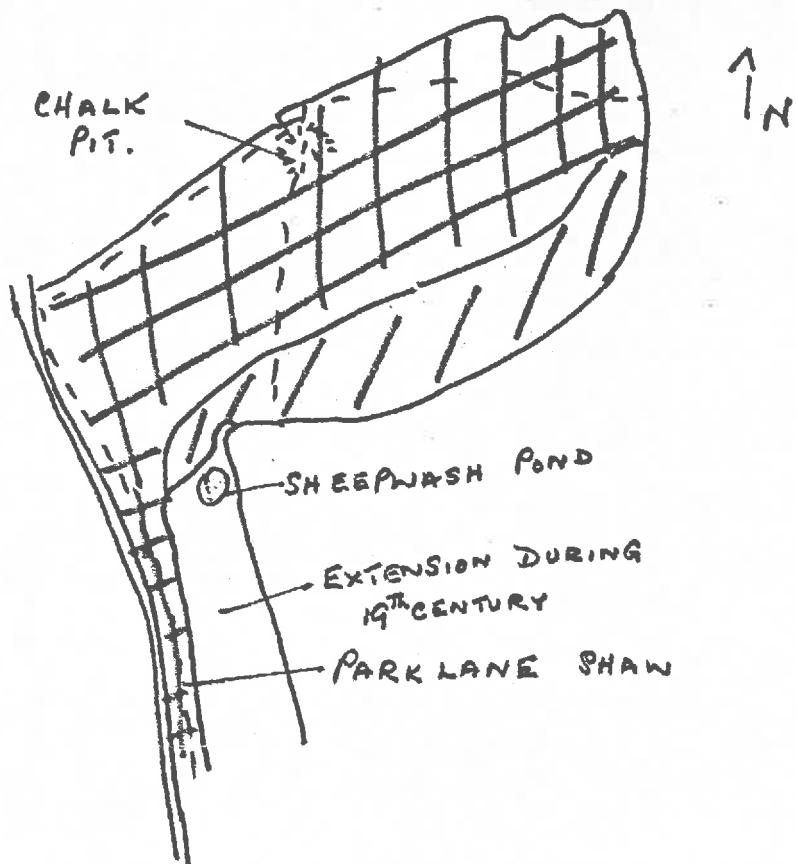
This is interesting because it seems to have been a planted coppice in the 18th century. It has the systematic layout of a planted coppice with straight tracks to remove the bundles of coppice poles. The upper extension was probably when the large chalk pit was dug. The first mention is in 1730-40 when 'Bailmans underwood has 10 acres'<sup>1</sup> In 1769 £14 was to be paid for every acre of underwood in 'Bailmans Shaws'<sup>2</sup>. In 1983 the southern edge of the wood was along the old parish boundary with a bank 1 metre high by 3 metres wide. The wood itself was pure hazel coppice with oak standards. In the 19th century when coppice was no longer in demand it seems likely that it was used for game as the underwood would provide cover, hence the name Bellmans Covert.

Lackmore & Valentines Woods O.S.6" SU 68 SE 663812 & 666809

Where these names originated it seems impossible to tell - certainly Valentine was not used until the T.A and in Davis map the area was Whitewood Heath; on the 1st edition OS map it appeared as Hook End Heath. Certainly Valentine Wood does not appear to be an old wood, no banks are present and there are plantations of conifer and an area of planted beechwood probably 70-80 years old. The Lackmore Wood is first mentioned as Lakmore Coppice in 1679 when it consisted of 59 acres 3 rod 20 perches<sup>3</sup>; so at this time it was a coppice possibly beech. In the account books of Goring Charity 1801 there is an entry for 'Lackmore' of 1500 shraggong bavins sold for £9-7-6d, so by this time the coppice had been at least partially replaced by high timber. In 1833 Lackmore Wood covered 52a 2r 30p<sup>4</sup> and on the T.A. map of 1841 it was a similar size 53a 1r 11p and was called 'Luckmore Wood' obviously the local pronunciation caused confusion. In 1891 in a report by a surveyor on the woods belonging to Goring Heath Charity 'Lackmoor Wood' was described as tall timber - the sort not specified but in the preamble he mentions beech, oak and larch. In that year the surveyor said that some of it was fit to cut but the majority was young and needed thinning.

On the track going through Lackmore Wood there are appreciable banks on either side 3m<sup>4</sup> high and 2-3 m wide. Several sawpits are present in the wood and

NIPPERS GROVE



Woodlands in Checkendon cont;

where the light allows there are bluebells and soft grass; there is a small plantation of conifers, some mixed woodland and the inevitable high beech. Although the modern O.S. map shows Valentine Wood extending up to the aforementioned track earlier maps make it clear that Lackmore Wood extended further south and there is a bank that delineates the southern boundary

- 1) MM II/9 O.R.O
- 2) D/EE T13 B.R.O.
- 3) Allnutt I 6 O.R.O
- 4) et seq III 5

Nippers Grove O.S. 6" SU 68 SE 676-681 808-813

Once again this name is not mentioned in any documents, the first time it appears is in the tithe award of 1841 and it seems possible that this wood was planted in the 18th century. It exists on the Davis map of 1795 in a smaller form than at the present time. On the T.A. it consists of 84a 2r 34p of beech - certainly larger than today though it is possible that Park Lane shaw was included in this total as on a 6" O.S map of 1894 the latter was at least twice as wide as today. The wood is now edged by banks but there are no internal ones. The southern part is conifer underplanted with beech, around 20 years of age. The rest of the wood is high beech with an occasional oak and an undergrowth of rhododendrons. There are a few sawpiss which may date from the 19th century. Park Lane shaw is a narrow shaw of high beech between Park Lane and Pinnocks Field, with a pond known as Sheepwash Pond in it. In the northern part there is a chalk pit.

Horsalls O.S. 6" SU 68 SE 672825

There was a tenant of Checkendon listed in the Hundred Rolls in 1279 called Nicholas de Hursole, so probably the name dates from earlier than this. There is reference to 'land called Horsole'<sup>1</sup> in 1339 with no mention of woodland so it seems that that the woodland must have been cleared much earlier than this. It remained as arable until the 16th century at least as there are references in 1419 & 1456 to 'a field called Horsole'<sup>2</sup> It seems that the land was planted with woodland in the 17th or 18th century as the first mention of a wood at Horsalls

is in 1749 when Mr Blackall was paying Poor Rate, for approximately 15 acres, in 'Horsale' Wood. In 1793 the wood called 'Horshill', extent 26a 2r was sold to William Sarney<sup>4</sup> who leased it to a timber merchant called John Slaughter.<sup>5</sup> The T.A, gives Horsalls as having 27a 0r 32 p. Today the wood is about the same size and consists of high beech with an area of conifers in the southern part.

1) H.E. Salter Boarstall Cartulary

2) Etseq

3) M.M.I/1 O.R.O

4) D/EB T13 B.R.O.

5 Misc Green V/6 O.R.O

Itchen Wood O.S. 6" SU 68 SW 644838

This wood seems to have been a coppice serving Bottom Farm. It lies directly above a set of strip lynchets. The age of this wood is debatable. It is first seen in documents in 1730-40 where Hitchen Wood is described as of 14 acres. Bottom Farm pays for 10 acres of woodland in the Poor Rate of 1749, so either it had shrunk or part of it was high timber and therefore not liable. The T.A lists Hitchen Wood as having 12a 0r 34p; it is probable that local pronunciation dropped the H and therefore it has become 'Itchen' Wood. At the present time it is a mixed wood with some residual coppicing.

Braziers Common O.S. 6" SU 68 SE 654841

Although this has this name on the present O.S. map it is difficult to determine its former name. On one old O S map it is called the Covert, the 1st series but calls it Greenhill, and the title award calls it Checkendon Common. Locally it tends to be called the Devils churchyard after the Iron Age earthworks present in it. On Davis map it has no name and it seems likely that it was a common originally from which the local people could obtain coppice poles and firewood. The area in which the earthworks stand was an old oakwood which has been clear felled and now is replanted. The rest is mainly very large old hazel coppice with oak standards and the usual beech. Bluebells are to be found in profusion, also dogs mercury. Several sawpits are to be seen on either side of the track through the vally. On the hillside below the Devils Churchyard are the remains of lynchets.

Checkendon Woodlands cont:

Alongside the track are banks 1 metre high and 2-3 wide. A mound  $6\frac{1}{2}m$  x 5m is present at east end with bluebells growing over it. There is an area of conifers underplanted with beech north of the track.

1)MMII/9 O.R..0

2)M N I/1 Ibid

Whealers Wood OS 6"SU 68 SE 653836

Probably connected or owned by Richard Wheeler who owned land now called Park Wood in 1564<sup>I</sup>, Wheelers farm lies north of the wood. The wood is present on the Davis map of 1795 but is not named. On the T.A map it was Bottom Shaw of 5a 29p & Common 10a 34p, therefore it seems probable that this was its original name. In 1730 to 40 Bottom Wood and Shaw had 6a.<sup>2</sup> At the present day it is a small wood largely beech with bluebells and some large ash stools.

Knapps Whicelo Shaw O.S. 6" SU 68 SW 634647

This curious name derives from the names of two people. Richard Wicheley owned land in Ipsden in 1342<sup>3</sup>; he got his name from the area which was called Witchele in the Hundreā Rolls of 1254-5. The other part of the name comes from a Henry Knapp who neglected to fence round a certain place of his stretch of wood.<sup>4</sup> This shaw is on the boundary between Ipsden and Checkendon. In 1983 an area of hazel & ash coppice was being cut and the poles used for bean poles, besoms, thatching spars & hurdles.

1)S.P.12/34 P.R.0

2)M.M.II/9

3) H.E.Salter Boarstall Cartulary

4)M.S.fol 33 a I Bod:

Busgrove Wood O.S.6" SU 68 SE 672834

Margaret Gelling mysteriously says this is dialect form of bridge-but over what? the T A map gives this 'burge' but can it be right? One wonders whether the surveyors misheard something like "buch" for beech. Today it is a wood with a very marked boundary bank passing through, the tree cover mainly tall beech.

Checkendon Woodlands cont:Eastfield and Waterfield Shaws and Checkendon Underwood 68 SE 667827

These can be also combined with Stoking Shaw, all forming an area of shaws around some of the old fields of Checkendon. Whether the term Checkendon underwood is correct is open to doubt as in 1801 it was called Eastfield underwood and had an extent of 12 acres 23 perches<sup>I</sup> which would fit in with the present size. They are largely beech woods but some clearance has taken place and an assortment of trees are being planted, including conifers. The chief item of interest is an area where clay has been extracted and there are four large pits.

1) Auction Cat: A fol 266(32) Bod:

The Thames bounding the parish on its western side, provided several other sources of income in spite of there only being a very short river frontage.

Milling

The earliest reference to a mill at Little Stoke comes in Domesday when a mill there was valued at 20s. The amount seems to indicate that it was quite a substantial building, as several others locally are assessed well below this figure. The mill was probably there in Saxon times as a Saxon Wulfred held Little Stoke. It seems likely that the mill was situated on the stream that enters the Thames to the south of Little Stoke Manor Farm. The Revd Abbey of Checkendon mentions a letter written to him by Mr Read of Ipsden in 1894<sup>1</sup>, which states that Little Stoke mill was driven in mediaeval times by a small stream called the Drinkan. This has largely dried up, though some parts still have water and certainly it seems probable that it reaches the river at the above mentioned site. After 1686, the following references occur:-

1220/6 Reading Abbey appears to have held the Mill.<sup>1a</sup>

1279 In a charter the mill is mentioned as being held by Bynesham Abbey - which held the next manor of South Stoke.<sup>2</sup>

In the same year the mill is listed in the Hundred Rolls.

1292 An extent of the manor of Checkendon'..one water mill valued at 1 mark (13s4d) per annum<sup>3</sup>

1331 A charter granting the manor of Little Stoke -'..a water mill with a pool and weir.<sup>4</sup>

1445 This entry appears to be the last reference to the mill<sup>5</sup>. The Abcey of Reading held the mill called Little Stoke mill with the fishery, islands, the weirs and the (mill)pool at a rent of 40s p.a. They agreed that Edmund Rede & his tenants of Checkendon & Little Stoke were to have full access to the water by the mill for sheep washing.

Some time after this date the mill ceased to exist

Fishing

This important source of extra food was obviously exploited to the full by local people.

Fishing cont:

1220-6 In the agreement between the Abbot of Reading & Geoffrey Marmion<sup>6</sup> fishing was to be allowed between Cholsey & Stoke Marmion. Fish traps were permitted & fishing from boats granted.

1279 The Hundred Rolls entry reads '..the lord has fishing in the Thames to the middle of the water 2 quarentens in length(furlongs)

1292 By this date a fisnery is mentioned in an extent of the manor.Its value being 3s.<sup>7</sup>

1759  
1786 In the title deeds of Richard Lybbe there is reference to free fishing on the Thames<sup>8</sup>

1788 Fishing in the river is also mentioned in the Act of transference of Little Stoke manor

1800 The term water fishing is found in the Little Stoke Particular<sup>9</sup>

Osier Growing

Even in the short stretch<sup>of</sup> which was possessed by Little Stoke, there were several small islands or eyots which were used to cultivate osiers

The earliest documentary evidence of these islands is in 1220/6 agreement between the Abbot of Reading & Geoffrey Marmion.They are mentioned again in 1445 (as above) Early in the 18th cntury in a Little Stoke Particular we find '..the little island by the lock'<sup>10</sup>

The previously mentioned documents of 1788 & 1800 also refer to little islands & eyots which would have been used for osier beds. The T.A. of 1841 lists one withy eyot of 34 perches, the Thames conservancy by this time would have much more control over the river with the result that some of the 'eyots' would have disapeared.However it is likely that the local people took advantage of the products of the river from a very early date.

Tracks and roads

Unlike Mapledurham where several hollow ways survived with their documentation, Checkendon's old tracks in their original state are very few. There are many trackways in the woods which served for the carrying of timber, just as they do today; apart from these there are only two...



Track & roads cont:

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One track that must have been important and was probably the 'Churche way',<sup>11</sup> leads with small breaks from the village of Checkendon towards Braziers where it becomes Braziers Lane, crosses the B479 (the Portway) and then becomes the Leasondown Way, passing through the centre of what had been the open fields, and crossing the Icknield way. The latter is barely discernable here, having been deep ploughed. Finally this track crosses the B4009 & becomes the road to Little Stoke & the Thames.

Corker Lane, a track with double banks can be found on the parish boundary O.S SW 664823 (John Corkes is mentioned in the 1564 Survey)

A road worthy of mention is Bottom Lane, which though metalled is a hollow way leading from Checkendon village down to Bottom Farm, beyond which the fields on either side have the remains of lynchets.

References

- 1) REvd Abbe<sup>y</sup> notebook 1B O.R.O
- 1a) Boarstall Cart: p17
- 2) H.E.Salter (ed) Eynsham Cart: No667
- 3) C 133/62/5 P.R.O
- 4) D/EH T64 B.R.O
- 5) Boarstall Cart: p119
- 6) Ibid p17
- 7) C 133/62/5 P.R.O
- 8) P.L I/67-75 O.R.O
- 9) D/EB T13 B.R.O
- 10) Ibid
- 11) AD 1313 D/EH T64 B.R.O.

JUDGES WAY SE 670 834

TRACK THROUGH WOODS - SUPPOSED TO BE ROUTE OF  
JUDGES IN ETRE IN MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

Checkendon resembles surrounding parishes in that it has a river frontage, meadows, open fields on the dip slope and an upland area of woodland with assarts. It differs from Mapledurham, which was our first survey, in that it ceased being one estate very early on. The people were freer from mediaeval times & much improvement & alteration took place, unlike Mapledurham which was restricted as the owners were recusants & therefore heavily fined. In Checkendon the land was divided amongst yeomen farmers or small landowners and although the open fields were still divided at a late date they were farmed by very few people.