

WHITCHURCH HILL VILLAGE SURVEY

Cynthia A. Graham Kerr

Village	Whitchurch Hill
District	South Oxfordshire
Hundred	Langtree
Civil Parish	Goring Heath
Ecclesiastical Parish	Whitchurch
OS.	1:10 560 SU67NW

PHYSICAL SETTING

Geology

The village lies in a gentle dip of Plateau Gravel at the southern tip of the Chilterns. Outlying fields to the east contain outcrops of Upper Chalk, two tongues of which intrude at the northern end at Giddy Bridge and Copyhold, at just about the position of the village well (see Water). The topsoil is of fertile loam with frequent outcrops of flints (some very large) from the pebbly gravels beneath, and chalk in the outlying fields.

Physical

Situated at about 400 ft. on top of the Chilterns scarp, the village is protected by rising ground and the surrounding woods and belts of tree, broken by open farmland. There are no rivers or streams, most of the land rises and dips in the surrounding fields quite sharply, so it is well-drained and good farming land.

Water Supply

Having no river nearer than the Thames, a good 1½ mile away down a 1:10 hill, water was a severe problem until mains water was laid in 1904. Even then many houses were not connected and washing water came from the six ponds, still in use at the turn of the century, all of which are extant except Giddy Bridge (so called as it used to span two adjacent ponds and it shook.) The others are: Butlers' Farm With goldfish and lillies!), Tynepit (for carts), Martins (for smithy\), two at the slabs (for laundry) and the well pond behind the well. (The pond is now dry).

The mains were not laid to Hill Bottom until 1908-9, but there was a Reservoir and Pump House (S) with a large notice of rules (see article on notices)

At the back of the Pump House one can still lift a large iron cover, 36" long, and see down 15 ft. into the reservoir. This was built in 1886 by Squire Gardiner, the key was kept by Mr. Lewenden, the postman, at April Cottage. Villagers, carrying buckets on yokes, were charged 1d per gallon and they were allowed 2 gallons, for drinking only, per day. Mr. Fidler (who now has the Pump House as a

shed) still has a plan of the reservoir). Many of the older villagers remember and used this arrangement.

Most cottages had catchment tanks and Sid Turner (89) says his is still under the garden.

The Tilehurst Water C. bought a field, The Gravels, to bore, but did not follow this up. The only other supply was the Village Well, presented by Squire Gardiner in 1853. This was over 300 t. deep and took a strong man 7 minutes to raise a bucketful and its temperature was 50°F. In times of drought, a watercart, driven by George Goff, had to go down the hill to The Thames, to supplement the water supply.

By 1914 two wells at Cleeve supplied 8,000 gals. per hour, from the chalk, driven by pump to Woodcote, at 600 ft. thence to Whitchurch Hill.

The Tyne-pit was set out in 1810 (Enclosures) and is conserved. The carts were driven through it to wet their wooden wheels.

ARCHAEOLOGY

1) When digging a cess pit on Cross Trees (Hill Bottom 1963, SU 643 793) – previously The Firs and originally The Pheasant public house – a small sherd of gritty pot with grooved decoration was found, together with burnt stones and charcoal in a pit exposed by the digging. Record at Reading Museum. SOAG also has a newspaper cutting of it (July 1963).

2) Bozedown Camp. A vast Iron Age Enclosure (25 acres) c 1500BC, to the south of the village, consisting of ditch and bank, much eroded and constantly ploughed-out on the SE side. An excavation at SU 644 783, in 1952 by Peter Wood, produced a shale bracelet fragment. The cattle are now eroding the fine bank and ditch to the NW, in the belt of trees called The Wilderness.

3) A bronze Vespasian coin was found in the garden of No.2 New Buildings (Victorian cottages) in Oct. 1922.

4) In Bakers' Shaw, to the NE at SU 651 796 is a rectangular enclosure discovered by SOAG in 1971.

5) Cannon balls have been found at Firhill (S of the village) and to the north outside the village at Coldharbour (recorded).

6) A large Medieval cooking-pot was excavated in July 1971 by SOAG, in the oil pipeline trench at SU 637 785.

7) Odd coins and clay pipes have been found near the Thatched Cottage and others and a hook for removing from hooves hangs by the door of Church Cottage (See artefacts, Fig. 1)

DOCUMENTARY

The hundred of this part of South Oxon. Takes its name, Langtree, from Lang Tree = Tall tree.

The old Parish Boundary used to coincide with the Ecclesiastical one (Whitchurch) but it has now become Goring Heath civil parish and it runs along Hill Bottom. It was marked here and there by Yew Tree Ground by Rag Cottage. The original yew had several stems and was 19½ ft. round at 1½ ft. from the ground. It was 800-1000 years old. There is a pair in the drive of Boundary House, through which the boundary lies.

In Domesday, the hamlet came under lands held by Milo Crispin (one of William I's followers whose name was given to one of the oldest cottages).

"The same holds Witecerce (Whitchurch). There are 10 hides (There is) land for 15 ploughs. Now in demesne (there are) 3 ploughs and 5 serfs and 20 villeins, with 7 bordars have 12 ploughs. There (is)

a mill rending (de) 20s + 12 acres of meadow 15 li now (it is worth) 20 li. Lewric and Alwin held it freely in King Edward's time."

The village grew from a few farmworkers' cottages scattered about what was called "The Wasteland known as Whitchurch Common" and the road, terminating at Hatch Gate, became tracks across the Common. Some still exist as paths and bridleways, but the road up to Woodcote is oinlky about 100 years old.

In 1605 the Manor of Whitchurch was sold to the Whistlers, but it is not possible to ascertain if this included lands up the Hill.

The Rectorial Estate.

At some time after Milo Crispin's' tenure he was granted the whole parish as a manor – the rectory had been endowed with 1 hide of land, the vicarage ½ hide. At the Enclosure these pieces were grouped, and the Glebe increased to 278 acres from 135. Just before 1880 all but three closes were sold to W. Fanning Esq. who built Bozedown House thereon.

Enclosure.

The Enclosure map of 1810 shows the land S of the Hatchgate and common enclosed. By now the main landowners were Squire Sam Gardiner, the Rev. Hugh Moises, Chas Butler, Thos. Clark, Joseph Palmer, Percy Lybb Powys, R Pigou, J Simson Bt. And others. At the turn of the century there were about 78 houses, mostly estate workers, and the Common was being rapidly divided into smallholdings which have gradually become the holdings of today.]

ROUTE PATTERN.

Originally, Cobblers' Lane wound up the Hill with a track (still extant) on one side, called Stoney Brack, and, forking at the present Pillar-box, truncated abruptly at the Hatch gate on Whitchurch Common, which remained as such up to 1800. The present Bridle road, and paths across the village, show on John Mans map of 1804, also Bryants, 1824, but the road across The Gravels has vanished and the one leading to the farm, variously called Clarks', Bèche or Beech, over the years, is now a track, Newman's Lane led to Newman's laundry. The right-hand fork extended NE to Hill Bottom with a few cottages on the easterly side.

The left-hand fork led past the three (originally four) thatched cottages – Roque shows 2 parallel lanes her in 1761. The lane, now the drive to Bozedown House, ended at the old Hatchgate pub.

T Jeffreys in 1769 shows the lane continuing down through the Skeppets (a wood) to Bozedown Farm at Whitchurch. In recent years since Bozedown House was built this has become disused and reverted to fields and the oath from the thatched cottage to the Stats(?) has gone.

Another lane, about half way between this and Hill Bottom, known as Hods' Lane (?Odda) goes away east from the village to end abruptly at a field by Bozedown Camp.

In 1800 a lane, now gone, crossed the fields from the top of the Hill to link with a road passing Clarkes' Farm at the Gamekeeper's cottage by Kessells' Copse – these are now tracks.

The Enclosure of Whitchurch Common Act 1810, shows exactly how the new roads were set out, thus laying the foundations for the village as we see it now. Here is an example:

“One other Public Road leading from Whitchurch Gate in an Eastward direction along the East Side of Whitchurch Common adjoining the old Inclosures in the Parish of Whitchurch to the entrance of a lane called Copyhold Lane”. (From Whitchurch Common Enclosures 1810). Likewise, the two other sides of the triangle are laid out, and various side roads. The main roads were 35 ft. wide and others 20-25 ft. and a footpath of 6ft is still in use. A few “ancient lanes|” such as Hods’ Lane, were also mentioned.

PLAN ELEMENTS.

As already observed, the Enclosure award pulled the village together in a neat triangle, its roads are not named (except a few new estate roads) and the buildings are, by and large, contained inside the triangle. Although some infilling has spoilt the village in the eyes of those who knew it before, the Triangle-rule has kept it contained, and the new houses unobtruding (sic.). The fields belong mainly to the farms on the fringes. There is one small shop, housed in the old Chapel – no doctors, school or policeman.

The housing gradually spread NE, joining up with Hill Bottom (at the top) – the church was dumped by the paddock for convenience in 1883, to save the villagers going down the Hill to Whitchurch, and so it is not in the village centre. Squire Gardiner, who built it, also built a number of houses for his workers, as did Squire Palmer (who built 26) in the 1900s, so the hamlet grew into a small village.

There is now electricity, some drainage recently and some gas but not everywhere. A local bus is supplemented by a good neighbour scheme and a willingness to proffer lifts.

The Paddock or village green might be considered the last bit of common which used to be criss-crossed with tracks, some remaining as bridleways and paths (See Routes) In the 1830s the Hatchgate area was “Coombe End”.

There are now many modern houses dating from Victorian times, fortunately very varies, so avoiding the “estate” look, apart from about 3 estates mercifully “hidden” in the interior.

Under “Buildings” some of the older and more interesting houses have been picked out and described, with few illustrations drawn from life and exemplified.

VILLAGE ECONOMY AND FIELD SYSTEM.

Whitchurch Hill is about 8 miles from Reading and nearly 2 miles from Pangbourne, and today a large number of the inhabitants commute to the towns, but at the turn of the century the population was almost entirely farm workers, estate workers either at Bozodown or Coombe Park.

Occupations

Besides farm workers and commuters, the Castrol Research Laboratories employ a large staff, some of whom are drawn from the village. The Forge has just recently been taken over as a workshop for the garage in Pangbourne. Older inhabitants remember several more pubs (the Pheasant, the Hatchgate and the Romping Cat!).

The old Hatchgate disappeared completely and the Butlers moved to the new one, by the Smithy, in 1900 (Simmonds'). It then became their house together with the Smithy, but Arthur Butler has recently retired and married, and the garage took over.

Of the Laundries, the largest was just outside the village to the west, and is still called the Laundry, although now a private house. It was run by Mrs. Newman in 1860. Her niece, Miss Whitfield, died in 1975 aged 99. The old "ironing room" contained an immensely long fixed "table" down one side (now removed). Another, very small, laundry, now houses a car. Another was a part of the "grocers" (now Green Gables" and it is thought The Slabs was so called as it had slabs of stone along a drying verandah at the back. One of these 4 cottages became Police House some years back – it has a benchmark on the front wall.

When the Cherry Orchard flourished (now, alas, Orchard Coombe) the whole village turned out to pick; also, the children used to collect acorns for the pigs.

The Reservoir

As mentioned in Water Supply, this was kept under lock and key and provided an extra job for Mr. Lavender, the postman. Next to the old Laundry was the Gamekeeper's cottage- one of the estate job, as was Harry Smith's as coachman (He, too, died at 99). His son worked at Sellwoods' shop. The Hines family have been builders here for 2 generations. Old Mr. Hines (in his 80s) worked for Higgs and took over when 27; they did much of the village buildings. Another old inhabitant mends bellows – and types!

FIELD SYSTEM.

Before Enclosure, the whole area was "Common or Wastelands", with smallholdings here and there.

The two main farms (Copyhold and Butlers') are mixed, with pigs, cattle, some sheep and chickens, barley, wheat and, widely grown, cattle food, roots and hay.

There is quite a lot of woodland, largely beech and some conifers. In 1810 Squire Gardiner and others held many small parcels of land, as did the church, such as "Parsonage Land", "Glebe Land" (now arable, belonging to local farmers). Where Bee Tithe has recently infilled the allotments there stood also a wooden building (flanked by toilets and a seat in front) called the Summer House, and on Whit Sunday, the Burghfield brass band played hymns therein. The Allotments were let by Squire Gardiner at 1d. a pole with an extra 1/- for a pigsty. The Paddock, intended as an extension to the cemetery, is now the village green.

Notes on Field Names.

Pinnocks, probably part of the old open fields, is a name occurring in 1220, and Bozedown was recorded in a terrier of 1635 – variously written Bozedeane, Bozedon, and now Bozedown. Another large field is Blackmore straddling Townend Road (a rutty lane). "Picked Ground" explains itself with the flinty soils. The stones were put in heaps and measured with a piece of string(!) and finally used for road making. The older people remember small children performing this job.

There are variously Little Hitch, Great Hitch, the Hitch. In Oxfordshire dialect "Hitching" is to sow a good patch of fallow ground with a catch crop. The Linches is no doubt a derivation of Lynchets, there are terraces on the hillside.

Some had their owners' name such as Clarks. Pightle, Goddards Ground, Perrys Croft, Bakers Lyes Hods Pightle (end of Hods Lane) and Great Hods, next to it.

Others are descriptive – several “Home Grounds”, The Gravels, Great Ground, Stable Ground, Long Ground Binditch (the camp) - all mentioned in the John Man’s’ map of 1804, and as mentioned, numerous glebes and parsonage lands belonging to the church.

BUILDINGS

The Old Thatched Houses of the Village.

The original hamlet consisted of a handful of cottages around the Hatchgate – which seems to have been an actual gate. As an item from the Poor Law book in 1689, mentioned by Canon Slatter, reads “Lay’d out for the mead gate which is not allow’d of by the Parish – 4/=”.

Several of these cottages no longer exist but their sites have been traced, as follows.

Starting at the Hatch gate itself, the first site is the Smithy. The original cottage stood in its garden, the Smith said that he often found bricks and footings there. North eastwards is the North Lodge for Bozedown House. There used too be a small thatched cottage here inhabited by two gypsies and their father. When he died hey decamped and it was so filthy the owner (Sq. Palmer) burnt it down. The drive to Bozedown House used to be the lane ending at the old Hatch Gate pub and the smithy close by, lived in by the Butler family until 1900, when they moved to the new one. The site has been found and fieldwalked when in plough and numerous finds, such as tiles, bricks, pottery, pipe stems, stoneware, ironmongery and floor tile, were found and recorded in 1975 by the writer. The sole record of this house is in two old oil paintings by P Vingoe (?) with a date, 1901, still in Arthur Butler’s possession (the son of the old smith); one is very dry from being in the Bar. The drawing is made from these (See Fig. R). Although the houses are tiled (roof tiles were found) , it is quite possible, judging from the pitch of the roof and the presence of half timbering, that they were originally thatched. The general plan is very likely that of the Thatched Cottage opposite. This cottage (dealt with later) has lost two quite substantial buildings which stood in front in the field . There is a slight rise where the larger (a barn?) may have been but nothing is left of it or the other building, now, and no traces on the ground.

Returning up the lane and turning right, one comes to Prices’ Cottage; although this stands, the original has vanished into the present cottage and all that remains visible is one chimney and the author’s faint memory of an old cottage before the builder “improved” it.

Across the green are three more old thatched cottages, and a fourth, marked on the 1800 enclosure map, was burnt and rebuilt as Church Cottage adjoining Round the Bend, which still has old parts and timbers. Church Cottage is built with local Nettlebed bricks. Another, Grey Court Cottage, stands on the small triangle of land south of the green.

Down the village past the shop is another thatched house, now called “Farthings”, standing sideways to the road, much altered. Next door was the Romping or Rampant Cat, which was thatched and pulled down in living memory being replaced by Palmers’ Colts, a winged block of four built by Squire Palmer. The only relic of The Cat is a spigot found under the floor of No.1. (See Artifacts, Figs. 2 & 2a).

Turning left at the site of Giddy Bridge, Hill Bottom goes straight to Coombe Crossroads, making the base of the triangle and the local Parish Boundary.

Here The Sun, thatched and tiled, was burnt down in 1910 (now rebuilt and the only pub). The old stable, with a nice forged latch and hinges still stand behind. Next is Cherry Tree Cottage, also burnt recently and rebuilt (See “Buildings”) and behind is an unchanged, unnamed little thatched cottage with 1733 on a brick – the only dating in the village.

Across the road past the bridle path is Covert Cottage, in a covert and this was a Parish Cottage – now much altered; and finally, a smallholding and thatched cottage, now replaced by Mr. Hines' house. Just after this is Coombe Crossroads and turning left towards the Church, the Tynepit pond was the only thing besides the fields on that side until the 1960s.

Public Buildings.

1) The Church of St. John the Baptist.

It was not until Canon Slatter took over the Parish from the Rev. E Moore in 18880 that it was considered necessary to have a church and cemetery up the Hill, being in the Parish of Whitchurch. Squire Gardiner offered 2 acres and £200 towards a schoolroom and £1000 if it were a church. This was quickly taken up, helped by the Rector and Parish and the total cost was £1891. The Bishop of Oxford, John Fielder Mackarness, DD consecrated it on All Saints Eve 1883.

With brick walls internally, and flint and stone dressing outside it is 80' x 18'. Built by Wheelers of Reading; architect f. Bacon, of High Clere, it has lancet windows and chancel and nave in one and an apsidal E end. Canon Slatter'; daughter gave the organ and played it for many years. This was erected by J Walker and Sons, London.

In later years Mr. C.H. Palmer of Bozedown donated choirstalls and seating.

The Lychgate he built in gratitude for the return of his 2 sons from the war; the Palmer family added to the porch in his memory (and the other bell therein which hangs over the doorway).

A great feature was the enormous Cypress trees forming a cross in the Churchyard but most of these blew down in a tremendous gale a few years back. The laurels were planted by Mr. Barrett.

2) St Johns' Room.

Finished in 1889 on ground donated by John Foster ESQ. of Coombe Park, and built at his expense, the Rooms were designed for church and social gatherings and were made a gift to the Parish in 1935 by Mr. L Foster. The corner here is known as Kents' Corner.

3) The Shop.

This building started as a Methodist Chapel, the became a working men's' club, evacuee reception an FAP; then bought by Mr. Whitehead; it became the village shop. It is of plain whitewashed brick with a rounded window in front over the door, and now the only shop. It shows on an OS map of 1886.

4) The Sun, Beer house and pub.

Originally thatch and tile, with one Bar. Charlie May was landlord when it was built in 1910 (it is said he set it on fire for the insurance!). Rebuilt and Pearson put in (May was gaoled) in 1911. At the back is the original coach house, and stable adjoining, with the original stable door and handmade hinges and manger. A John Gill has been public

There was a hut by the road for "Ladies" and a walnut tree was removed to make a car park.an for 6 years. He had a lemonade bottle with marble marked "Tunbridge of Basingstoke".

There was a hut by the road for “Ladies” and a walnut tree was removed to make a car park. A summerhouse in which to sit and drink was also burnt down. It used to belong to Sundrip of Goring. In 1941, John Chalcroft, of Breakspear’s Brewery (of 1779), Henley, bought the freehold. A new Publican has just taken over.

SOME PRIVATE HOUSES.

A) Milo Crispin.

A long low building, the top story in the roof space, and one external chimney. It has had additions each side and, in the end room to the south, all the roof timbers are exposed, and a joint is visible (Fig. A.1) The oldest part, the kitchen, has a fine chamfered beam and a joint b(Fig. A.1) in a ceiling timber. This house is in a bad state but, I believe, is to be rethatched. The walls are brick and timber and the windows mostly leaded. It used to be two cottages.

B) Middle Thatch.

Originally a single thatched cottage, now completely spoilt with modern additions, the tall chimney down, the old range removed and plaster covering the timbers. The writer made a water colour in 1969 showing its original state, when Old Harry lived there.

C) Pightle Croft.

This also has suffered additions but less obvious. The right wing is new but in keeping, with nice flintwork on the side. Well thatched and leaded windows, but the only original timbers when it was one-up one-down are in the sitting room.

These 3 cottages, in an irregular row, together with The Thatched Cottage and the next one, are probably the oldest in the village. None has any date on them.

D) Grey Court Cottage.

One of the best preserved with what is probably the original staircase in situ; in the sitting room and going round and up through a square hole in the ceiling (both using large timbers). General design similar to Middle Thatch, originally, one dormer, one chimney – originally at the end – additions well matched.

Interesting side elevation showing old “bargeboard” running down and construction of slats to bear thatch.

E) The Thatched Cottage.

The timber, with braces, show this was a “semi” one-up one-down pair, then a third was added in flint (NE side) and a penthouse dairy on the end. At the SW end is a shed, timber and brick and sloping tile roof, adjoining the building. Again, no early records can be traced. The walls are wattle and daub, with brick nagging and with the flint addition, all under one long thatched roof, a big central chimney and open fire. There are Roman numerals on several timbers, probably reused and slots outside showing where the frame was heaved up into place. The windows are mainly leaded with old latches, handmade. The original privy (with peephole) is now used for tools and many small artifacts have been found in the garden. Old maps show two more buildings, possibly one was a barn, making a triangular complex. These have entirely disappeared without trace and no early records are extant.

F) Farthings.

Another much altered house placed end on to the road, with 2 dormers and, oddly, no upstairs windows in front. Timbers show inside the house, but the porch and hall on the left are recent. Some flintwork is visible on the left side behind the front door post.

G) Cherry Tree Cottage.

Rebuilt, with tiled roof after the disastrous fire on Dec. 3rd, 1977, this long low cottage (burnt down in ½ hour) was also two at one time. The drawing, taken from the owner's photograph, shows it as it was, with its thatch and a door so low one had to stoop to enter. The original chimneys remain. It has been most carefully rebuilt, using the shell and remaining outer timbers as much as possible. Some late C18 – C19 brown coarse pot was found for infilling in a wall.

H) The Wallis's Cottage.

Hidden behind Cherry Tree, with no name, this is the opposite to (I) Rose Cottage – it seems hardly to have changed since it was built. Here we have the only clue to dating in the village – a brick in the back wall with "H 1733 B" on it in old lettering. The back is all flint with one tiny window – no upper story. Other bricks in front and round the door have various markings (see H Fig.1). The extra "wing" on the right, in wood, contains the old oven. There is a wooden "wainscoting" inside the house.

I) Rose Cottage.

An example of an old house hiding behind a modern façade, looking square, plain and whitewashed, with a side door and one-up one-down in front. Upon closer inspection a blocked front door (now "next door") and altered windows downstairs are visible. The side elevation shows old bricks, a flint wall, a large outside chimney and the old roofline sweeping down low at the back as in other thatched houses here; inside are beams and the owner said it had a brick floor lying on the earth. She has 2 clay pipe bowls and two coins found in the garden.

J) Cross Trees.

So called because of the crossing trees at its gate, this was formerly "The Pheasant" inn and owned Box Cottage and land up to Little Langtree with a stable to the east. It is of red brick and a local said it has a double front wall. There is a cellar (being a pub) and slate roof.

K) Box Cottage.

This tiny cottage used to be two, for the staff of The Pheasant, it has belonged to Miss Garnet since 1947 when it was altered inside. The cottage has 3 beams running the length of it and the joists were rough fir poles, with the bark on – local work. The roof was raised and the floor lowered and there is an old fireplace and bread oven plastered over. It is of flint and brick with a low flint and brick walled garden.

L) Covert Cottage.

This is shown on John Man's map of 1804 as a Parish Cottage, the covert in which it stands has not changed. It was completely gutted inside about 31 years ago, and the outside banked up with yellow shutters and whitewash. Before the Popes (present owners) the Raydens lived there 50 years, and his gardener Tom Raney in a wooden cottage built for him, next door and still in existence.

M) Mr Hines House.

Originally there was a thatched cottage and smallholding (Ivy Cottage, as the present one used to be called). It had a cart shed on the right and a dew pond for the horse, just inside on the left. It was called Deadfields when Squire Gardiner held it in 1810. When rebuilt (in red brick) by Squire Gardiner, he housed his gardener, Mr. Crutchfield, the Mr. Hines Snr. The house used to have white palings, repainted every 2 years. Mr. Hines has a photo of his and Mr. Wallis's fathers painting a house.

N) The Slabs.

This peculiar name applies to a terraced brick cottage (? Sam Gardiner's) near the top of The Hill with 2 ponds opposite. It was suggested the name came from the great slabs of stone at the back (see "Occupations") for the laundry-drying – the ponds supplied the water. The 1st cottage, with its old inhabitant, is much as it was originally, with Victorian edging tiles in the garden. The two central ones are one, the end one has the middle one's garden, being at that end! It also has a bench-mark low in the front wall and was the Police House. There were privies at the back.

O) Bridle Cottage.

This neat row of paired Victorian cottages is built in red brick with bluey brick ornamentations, matching the slate roofs. They were built by Sam Gardiner and he rented them at 1/6d a week. Sid Turner (now 89) still lives in his and bought it for £160. They now sell for over £30,000. Each has a neat porch and long garden.

P) Boundary House.

A large brick Victorian family house, not of interest but there are flint walls at the base of outhouses - remains of the farm once there. Owner thinks house may be built over old cellar – there is a door in the corner. The Parish Boundary goes through the two old Yews in the drive and there are humps and bumps in the garden.

Q) Bozdown House.

A pleasant Victorian-Jacobean style Stately Home of the Palmer family of Huntley and Palmers biscuits.

In a terrier of 1635, the field was called Bozden. It was bought in 1870 by W. Fanning, Esq., who built Bozdown House in 1876. A few years later it was sold to Russell Kemp and it burnt down on New Year's Eve 1905 – except part of the service wing and stables which show the "Tudor" blue-brick patterns of the first house. The clock fell down at 3 am. The present house was built when C.H. Palmer of Huntley & Palmers bought it and they moved in in 1907. It is a vast and pleasant Victorian-Jacobean house, designed by Paul Waterhouse, in red brick faced with stone. It remained with the

Palmers until 1951 when it was bought by ICI as research laboratories and sold again to Castrol in 1976.

Water had to be pumped from Bozedom Farm (Whitchurch) into a huge tank in the clocktower and a weight showed when it was getting empty.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

At the moment the Council are keeping the housing “within the triangle” and it cannot be too strongly emphasized that any relaxation of this Rule would ruin the ruralness of the village, as immediate infilling would take place (there have already been some scandals about this) and the surrounding fields would be eaten up. This applies especially to the Hatchgate and with its green, old houses and the church.

Also, several years back, the drainage got out of hand with the new housing filling up Hill Bottom and further building (apart from small extensions on existing property) would ruin what must be remembered in an Area of Outstanding Beauty.

References

Maps (old)

Rocque 1761	Enclosures 1810	Old Deed 1869
T Jeffreys 1769	Bryant 1824	6” OS 1886
R Davis 1793-4	Oxford Reprint 1830	Cannon Slatter 1895
Enclosure 1800	Shane 1846	OS 1/2500 1876
John Man 1804	Frewins Property 1852	Revised OS 1910

Books and Papers

Parish Archives c/o Rev. Hughes	Whitchurch on Thames	J Baker
Sir C. Rose’s Estates 1912	Village on the Thames	R.J. Godlee
Place names in Gellings	Over the Hatchgate	WI Whitchurch Hill
HM Record Office Oxford	Whitchurch	Cannon Slatter

Together with oral contributions from many of the inhabitants.