

Map of Oving Parish



Oving

It was a quiet village:
 Nobody came that way.
 Only the planes droned ceaselessly
 By night and by day.
 We were just twenty houses
 The Vicarage and the farm.
 More than a mile to the bus stop,
 Solitude reigned like a charm.
 By the stile and the bridge at the rithe
 We walked through the fields of corn,
 And the golden flags made a triumph
 Of the footpath so well worn.
 At five on a midsummer morning
 Throughout the pasture field gate
 Frank Jacobs has gone for the horses
 To groom and water and bate.
 Queenie, Madam and Nobby
 They followed him-their old friend;
 The sun climbed slowly higher
 At the dawn chorus end.
 At six, the men in the carts

Went forth to make the hay
 With scythes, and rakes and pitchforks
 To work through the heat of the day.
 I stood to gaze in my garden
 And the south-west breeze brought to me
 The heavenly scent of clover
 Cut hay and the tang of the sea.
 Now the world has changed, and we with it.
 We can think and plan with the rest
 And when other villages muster
 Oving will stand with the best.
 New houses, new faces, new friends,
 Came the W.I. and the hall
 Our primrose lane has been widened
 At the rushing traffic's call.
 Then here's to the present and future
 We march now to a rousing tune,
 But I shall always remember
 That scented morning in June



R. M. Hussey (Mrs) formerly Miss Gribble, Thatchet, Oving

A short history of
Oving Parish



Written and published by The Oving History Group

A short history of Oving Parish

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School group c1920

Introduction

The decision to attempt a history of Oving came about after the success of the Parish Map which was completed in 2007 as part of the West Sussex Millennium Project. So many wonderful stories and old photos had been collected that it was felt they deserved a wider application. So the most heartfelt thanks go to all those contributors who have been the chief source of material for this book – their memories are invaluable.

But it has not been possible to include everything. There may be many faults to find in the finished work, but one is glaringly obvious – it is too short! Had the compilers included all the material collected, it would have made an enormous volume, too expensive and too heavy. So we apologise if certain details are missing. There is still a wealth of material if anyone feels inspired to continue where we left off, to produce a more definitive history.

Writing the history of Oving parish has raised more questions than answers. After all, we might sum up the beginning of our endeavours with thoughts such as ‘it is an insignificant Parish, not marked by any major historic event, where life is without major upheaval so writing its history should not be difficult’. This proved not totally true, and we have all greatly enjoyed the research necessary and putting it all together. It proves that every place has its own special significance, its own particular tale to tell. All the chapters were compiled by individual members of The History Group using the reminiscences collected from local people. This has led to some repetition but we believe it adds to the story told in each chapter.

Throughout the tale of our island race, kings and potentates come and go but it is ordinary people who carry on the continuity of real life, often without any memorial to their endeavours. We hope all who read this history will enjoy it as an introduction to a little piece of England.

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The archive collected as a result of the project is deposited at West Sussex Record Office.

Chapter I A Brief History

Oving parish, consisting of Oving & Merston villages together with the hamlets of Drayton, Colworth, Shopwyke and Maudlin, is in the county of West Sussex. Nestling on the coastal plain, it is situated three miles east of the Roman city of Chichester.

The land is light and fertile and Oving Parish has been predominantly farmland since early times and indeed still is today.

Lack of large development sites in the parish has meant that only small scale archaeological excavations have taken place but with some positive results showing that the area has been occupied since the Bronze Age.

History BC **Bronze Age 3000-500 BC**

There is evidence of middle to late bronze age activity in Drayton; Manor Farm Merston, where a late Bronze age ditch was found; and Shopwyke where finds showed features from the late Bronze age, although we do know after the discovery of Boxgrove Man (May 1994) that 500,000 years ago humans were living or passing through the area just a few miles from the parish on hunting trips.

Iron Age 800-100 BC

Archaeological excavations found a late Iron Age farmstead at Copse Farm Oving, and pottery dated 50 BC to 43 AD. There is also evidence of an Iron Age roundhouse at Shopwyke.

History AD **Roman Occupation 55 BC-410 AD**

The Romans arrived in 55 BC and, in this area, occupied a narrow coastal belt eight to nine miles deep including the Downs and a small part of the Weald. Life under the Romans settled down to an ordered manner. The area was prosperous, grew many crops and traded with the continent for over 400 years. In addition to Stane Street between Chichester and London, the Romans are also believed to have built an east-west coastal road through Oving towards Pevensey.

In AD 400-410 nearly all regular Roman legions and coastal garrisons were withdrawn. After the Romans left, taking with them many literate Britons, there were no surviving accounts of life in Britain until the 8th century.

The early middle ages and the Norman period

During the collapse of the Roman influence in Britain, the first recorded landing of the Saxons took place in East Sussex somewhere between 460-480AD. The addition of 'ing' to place-names indicates a Saxon influence. The first surviving mention of Oving was in 956AD, when a charter by King Eadwy granted lands in Oving and its neighbourhood to Brithelm, Bishop of Selsey. Oving (Vuinges') was not named in the original charter, but in a later endorsement. The manor of Merston was held by Gort (probably earl Gurth) during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66). The exact date when the estates of Colworth and Woodhorn became ecclesiastical property is unknown, but was probably around 900AD.

**So is it roving in Oving,
moving to Oving,
or loving in Oving?**

Anon

The manor of Oving is not found in the Domesday Book probably because the manor was included in the larger one at Aldingbourne. The manor constituted a 'prebend' (a portion of the revenue of the cathedral) of the Cathedral after the See moved to Chichester. It was the usual practice of the church to lease its lands, and in 1120, Karlo became Lord of the Manor of Oving and its prebendary. Shopwyke was an ancient manor, never being church property. By 1135, it was given by Henry I to Richard Hareng at a rent of 100 shillings per annum. Land in Drayton was also granted at the same time to William Conan.

In the 13th century, the present parish church was built, although there is evidence of an earlier building.

Sources

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Vol 4

The Early Modern period 1500-1700AD

In the early modern period, the village was growing. The present Oving Manor House is early 16th century, as are several houses in the parish. In 1558, Elizabeth I decreed that parish churches should keep registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, and the register for Oving starts in 1561. During the Commonwealth period, there was a short break in the manor being held as a prebend, and it was held by John and Richard Downes from 1642. In 1660, it was handed back to the Church.

The 18th-20th centuries

By the 17th century other large houses and farm buildings had been built in the parish. Shopwyke Hall and Grange, and Drayton Manor House all date from the early 18th century. The manor of Oving and the estates of Colworth and Woodhorn remained prebendary properties until 1857, when they passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

In 1895 most of the ecclesiastical parish of Portfield, which had been formed in 1871, was taken into the civil parish of the city. For civil administrative purposes, under the West Sussex Review Order of 1933, the civil parish of Merston was added to Oving.

We used to have two services outside the church along the wall outside along the road, and that was twice a year we used to do that, and at Christmas we used to go and have a singsong in the church.

Audrey Moulding



Oving church,
painting by David Coxon

Chapter 2 St Andrews Church

The Church was built in the Early English style around 1220. From the outside it must have looked very much as it does now. The inside has been greatly altered twice. The first time was in 1840 at the expense of Miss Woods of Shopwyke who also rebuilt Shopwyke House, now Westbourne House School.

In 1881 a second restoration took place when traces of a Norman church were found and stones from this period have been used – those with zigzag markings can be seen in the north transept.

The Woods connection continues with the stained glass window showing Faith, Hope and Charity, which was given by Rev H G Woods in memory of his uncle, G H Woods, who died in 1879.

Just outside the altar rails are stones dating from 1677. They cover the vaults of the Elson family who lived in the Manor House from 1669 to 1730. Another interesting stone is in memory of Thomas Carr, vicar of the parish for 40 years who died in 1633 and his wife who died 26 years later. This was during the turbulent times of the Commonwealth.

There are some 'unofficial' carvings made by local lads out of sight of the clergy and these can be seen on the east pillar of the south transept – John Eagle 1609; John Peachley 1648; Thomas Bishop 1644. One of them, Allan Carr 1644 should have known better being the son of the Vicar!

The Church has four bells, only one of which is still used. All are inscribed and dated by their founders – one by Thomas Giles 1613; two by Brian Eldridge 1627 and 1655 and the fourth by Clement Tosler 1702.

The first Sunday after we moved in, our family went to church and we were asked to move as we were in someone else's pew.

Sue Rose



Unofficial
carvings



Stained Glass window depicting Faith Hope and Charity

During the 1550s, a time of religious turmoil, the Protestant government under Edward VI ordered the removal of stone altars as 'Papist'. In 1881, during some restoration of the church, an ancient altar was found in St. Andrews under the tower arch. For nearly 90 years it was hidden under the communion table, but in 1969 was moved to the north transept and is used for communion services on Wednesdays.

From early times until 1857, the manor of Oving constituted a prebend attached to Chichester Cathedral but is now owned, along with most of the land around the village, by the Church Commissioners. Two fields are described in the 1838 tithe map as 'bellrope fields'. The rent was presumably used for the purchase of new bell ropes.

The parish registers date from 1561. The churchyard was closed in 1874 and a new cemetery was opened two years earlier on the opposite side of the road.

Flood lighting has been used to display the Church at Christmastide and other events for many years. Recently it was renewed to celebrate the third millennium, funded by local subscription and a Millennium Commission grant.

Some of Oving's older residents remember how busy Sundays were if you were a chorister. Thursday night was choir practice, and of course the choir had to attend any special services such as weddings. Fred Shopland was a choir member and remembers that on occasions they had to ring the bells and pump the organ. Choristers were paid 3d (three old pennies) a week and with extras could make 5/- (five old shillings) every three months. Fred could get an extra shilling by meeting Mr. Baker, the blind organ tuner, off the bus at Shopwyke on Ash Wednesday and guiding him across the fields. There was no road from Shopwyke to Oving then.

Percy Belcher tells how the vicar would ride round on his bike calling at all the houses to visit his 'flock' once a month.

There were Nativity plays at Christmas and Mrs. Whittaker who lived at the Manor often produced other concerts throughout the year.

On 2nd June 1953 a television set was hired so that the villagers could go into the church to watch the Queen's coronation.

There is still a choir at St Andrew's but no youngsters belong to it. Only morning services are held now but during the week a mother and toddler group meet, there is a library facility and nativity plays and concerts are being revived.



Nativity Play in the church 1950s

Sources

Guide to St Andrew's Church, Oving

Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present

Early picture of Almshouses



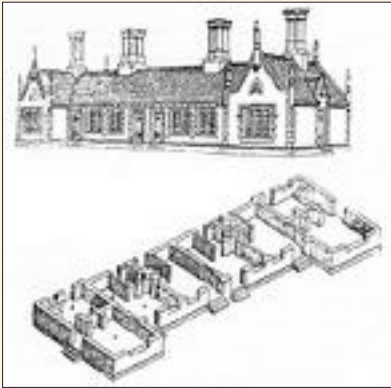
Chapter 3 Miss Katherine Woods and the Oving Almshouses

Katherine Woods, the only surviving daughter of Edmund Woods, is referred to as 'Katherine'. During our research she was sometimes referred to as 'Katherina' which was also her mother's name. However, for the sake of consistency, throughout this book she is referred to as Katherine.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries many landowners began to feel a responsibility toward their poorer tenants. One result of this was the building of cottages with improved facilities as can be seen around the Goodwood Estate, Petworth and Cowdray Park. In Oving too there was such a benefactor – Katherine Woods was the only surviving daughter, therefore the heiress of Edmund Woods, a wealthy landowner and very successful farmer of an especially prolific kind of grain (see Chapter 6). He acquired the lease of Shopwyke Manor in 1811 and with that purchase came a great deal of land in the neighbourhood including Oving village.

Edmund Woods died in 1833 and over the next fifteen years until her death in 1848 his daughter set about transforming the village.

There were already Almshouses in Oving probably standing on a site that is now Gribble Lane. Oving manor was surrounded by many small plots with shared ownership, and in order to improve and consolidate her land she agreed to build, in exchange for land on their previous site, six new well designed cottages for the aged poor of the parish. Like the school, the Almshouses would be administered by the Woods family. Later she had cottages along the High Street built as living accommodation for rural workers.



*Elevation
and plan of the
Oving Almshouses*

Miss Woods employed a local architect, John Elliott (he had designed the Chichester Corn Exchange) who designed the Almshouses opposite the Church as a row of cottages with living room, scullery and two bedrooms at a total cost of about £650. The building material for both Almshouses and the cottages in the High Street was the traditional flint and brick with decorative features to present a pleasing 'old cottage' appearance although the toilets (privies) were of course out at the back, down the garden. But gardens were an important feature, so that the tenants could grow vegetables.

Katherine Woods also provided money for the school and the thorough restoration of the church (see relevant chapters). In 1845 Kelly's Directory could describe Oving as 'raised from a neglected situation to become a delightful and beautiful village'. The subsequent upkeep for all these undertakings was motivated by altruistic considerations; perhaps there was some wish to 'keep up with' (albeit on a more modest scale) the likes of the Dukes of Richmond or the Leconfields.

On her death in 1848 her lands passed to her relative, the Reverend G H Woods. On the 3rd of September 1891 Ellen Drewitt (from a local farming family) bequeathed £2,500 to the Vicar of Oving. The income from this was to be divided between the occupants of Woods Almshouses to be used to pay a small pension to the tenants. In 1900 this was four shillings per week.

In 1899 the Reverend Woods made a 'Deed of Gift' of the Almshouses to the Vicar and Churchwardens of the parish of Oving. The Reverend John Burden was the vicar at the time and John Drewitt and John Mannings were Church Wardens who together with two representatives elected from the parish became the first trustees of the Charity. They were to maintain and manage the Almshouses according to a set of rules and regulations and a charity, under the management of subsequent vicars, would administer the funds. The Almshouses were to be used for the aged or infirm inhabitants of the parish who would otherwise be compelled to end their days in the Union Workhouse. Lutman Broadbridge who was formerly in the service of the Rev Woods was specifically allowed to continue living in one of the Almshouses, despite being able bodied at the time!

In 1900 the occupants were Mrs Norris, Mr & Mrs G Ellis, Mrs Clare, Mrs Alexander, Mr & Mrs Ben Henley and Mr Broadbridge.

The Almshouses had no services with only earth closets and a well in the garden. A small rent of 6d (six old pence) per week could be charged by the trustees for insurance and repairs. In 1934, electricity was supplied for lighting but it was 1949 before mains water was connected for outside taps.

In 1960 the first ideas for improvements were discussed – changing the six Almshouses into three or four. Money would be raised by selling land to the north of the Almshouses possibly to Mr Sampson who owned a market garden. In 1963 planning permission for improvements was obtained and Chiverton builders carried out the changes to make six cottages into four. The new Almshouses were opened by the Archdeacon on 14th July 1965. During these changes, residents moved to 25 High Street.

In 1978, the trustees agreed to the name change from Almshouses to Church Cottages, but they are still referred to as the Almshouses. In 1980, they were finally connected to mains drainage and in 1982 were re-roofed. In 1997 mains gas was made available which caused some anxiety among the residents!

The Almshouses are still administered by the trustees using the same criteria of aged or infirm of the parish and if there is no-one from the parish applying, then preference is given to people who would have carers/relatives in the village. Recent modernisations have included rear extensions to make it possible to have a one bed ground floor or two bed upstairs with sitting and dining downstairs. Secondary glazing has been added to help with heating costs. Disabled access has been looked at but has not proved necessary at present.

The Almshouses and the cottages in the High Street remain today, highly popular dwellings. Thanks to Katherine Woods they give Oving a distinctive appearance.

Excerpt from the will of Edmund Woods

I give and bequeath to my servant Charlotte Cooper the annual payment of £25 for her attention to myself and my daughter during service.

Excerpt from the will of Miss Katherine Woods

And whereas I am building or about to build Almshouses in the said parish of Oving for eight poor persons now I bequeath the sum of two thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds..... each of such almsfolk.....shall be chosen from such as are of the established church and of good character for honesty, industry and sobriety and shall (if married) have brought up their children (if any) in the most religious and industrious habits and with little if any aid from the parish.

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School group 1920s

Chapter 4 Oving School

Before 1800, the provision of formal education for those without financial means was patchy and fairly disorganised. However, the 19th century is a key period in the history of education. The struggle between supporters of secular or religious education, together with the struggle between the Church of England and non-conformists is well documented. The result was that by 1900 most education was state-subsidised, free and compulsory up to the age of 14.

The experience of schooling in Oving was no exception: the 2nd Report of the Commissioners for the Education of the Poor, 5th July 1819, records that by the will of Stephen Challen, 40 shillings were being paid per annum to pay a schoolmaster to teach five very young children of the parish to read, who were then sent afterwards to the National School in Chichester. However, education papers in the diocesan records at West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) record that by 1838 there was only a Sunday School in Oving 'superintended by a Minister'. The village school was founded in 1839 by Miss Woods, who was also responsible for the Almshouses and cottages. There are deeds of the site surviving at WSRO. Little is known about the running of the school for the first forty years but by 1855 the diocesan records show that there was a private school for boys and girls and two Dame's Schools in the parish. The 'private' school would refer to the parish school set up by Miss Woods and the Dame's schools were probably small schools run by local women (or men) to cater for the infants of the area. There was probably some input from the Vicar and it is likely that the school was run upon the principles of the education of the poor. Although it was based on the learning system of Doctor Andrew Bell, where all pupils sat in one large room and learning was by rote, it seems that at this time the boys and girls were taught separately.

Excerpt from
Katherine Woods will

Whereas I am now building or about to build a school in the said parish of Oving for the benefit of poor children. Now I bequeath the sum of three thousand one hundred and six pounds.....the children shall be taught spelling, reading and such various works as are useful in their class of life. Only a certain portion of writing and arithmetic in a few instances by way of reward for good conduct.



The school c1900

After 1870 'Forster's' Education Act stipulated that where voluntary educational provision was deemed insufficient, school boards could be elected. Oving school was considered sufficient and continued to be run by voluntary contributions, particularly from Reverend Woods, a relative of Miss Woods. However, a consequence of the act was that the government insisted that an infant school be set up and in 1872 Portfield Infant School was established, as this part of the parish (on the outskirts of Chichester) was becoming an increasingly populous working class area. Portfield church and a new ecclesiastical district had been established in 1871, but the area did not become part of the civil parish of Chichester and remained part of Oving parish until 1895.

Miss Levett, the infants' school teacher had a rather big bottom and when she rode her bicycle we used to stand behind her and laugh.
Kit Manouch

In 1879, the Reverend G H Woods died and responsibility for the school passed to the parish, although it continued to be financed by voluntary contributions, supplemented by fees of 1d (one old penny) per child. Log books, in which the head teacher records a daily record of events, survive from this date at WSRO. In 1883 the head teacher, E G Ball, was reporting average attendances of over 60 and was struggling to cope. In June of that year the inspector noted in the log book that 'The school is crowded and the room used for the infants is so far removed from the main school that the mistress cannot supervise. The result is that the infants are very backward and the older children in bad order...'. However, things were made a bit easier when the school was enlarged and two years later the inspector wrote 'The addition to the school-room is a great improvement as are the alterations to the yards. There has been much sickness during the year [diphtheria]. Considering this, the school has passed a fair examination'.

The Inspectors' Reports, in common with many schools at this time, were not always complimentary: a report of 1910 recorded, rather cryptically, that 'a good spirit of industry prevails in the school and the teachers do their best, but there is a tendency to tell the children too much!' In the 1920s and 30s there were three teachers for about 80-90 children. Mrs Machon remembers a Miss Burchall, the Infant's teacher who must have stayed for a long time. There was also Miss Levett and the Headmaster, Mr Bradford (remembered by some as 'Mr Bradbury'). Alf Keates remembered that Jimmy 'Bradbury', the headteacher's son, attended the school along with the other children. Gordon Spiers recalled 'if you argued or if you got in the wrong he [the Headmaster] used to get his old cane out and that was the end of that, still he was a great man'. 'Young' Miss Edwards was also remembered as the infants' teacher, probably as the successor to Miss Burchall. At this time the head lived in Boxlands, at the end of Church Lane, and one of the other teachers occupied the schoolhouse. When the school was first set up it had been usual practice to employ a husband and wife or father and daughter so they could live together on site.

The lady teacher in Oving school was a dear old lady called Miss Burchall and Miss Burchall used to warm her backside by the old fire by lifting up her skirt I always remember that. Alf Keates

We were taught our three Rs and manners and the girls were taught sewing.
Lilian Machon

Mrs Machon remembers that *'as one entered, Infants were to the right; the left hand room was divided with a dark blanket to make two different standards. The 'nit' nurse came every week, the dentist every year'*. Mr Bradford was a music lover and started a choir which competed against other schools. They won several certificates and prizes, coming first no less than six times between 1924 and 1931. Alf Keates provided a photograph of the school choir with the cup they won in 1931.

Fred Shopland started school in 1939 and his earliest memory is of all the children going to the Manor House to collect their gas masks *'we all came out with our little boxes round our neck and took them to school every day'*. He also recalls that there were many different teachers coming and going during the war years, which did not make for ease of learning. He also recalls that when planes started to bomb the nearby Tangmere airfield the school moved to the little chapel at Colworth. There were far too many children to fit in to the chapel so they overflowed into the adjoining cart sheds!



School choir with cup 1931

On 15th July 1945, rather surprisingly as the war had only just ended, the school log book records that 20 children visited London on a school trip. They had a tour of many of the sites, including an inspection of the bomb damage and bomb crater in St Paul's Cathedral!

Mary Keates provided the 1940s photograph (see page 13) of the caretaker Mrs Ruff with Mrs Edwards the infants' teacher and Miss Lea the senior teacher. She remembers cycling from Woodhorn to school and being met by Mrs Ruff with a lump of bread pudding for her to eat!

By the 1950s the school was achieving some measure of success. Dorothy Spearman's children went to the village school and, eventually, all three went to university. Eileen Shopland (nee Belcher) remembers an occasion in the 1950s when all the children each planted a fir tree at the bottom of the cemetery. Some of these trees still survive as part of the boundary between the cemetery and the houses in Highfield Lane.

Mrs Edwards, Miss Lea
and Mrs Ruff
late 1940s



When the air raid was on the older boys (and I was one and John Shepherd) we used to go up on the roof, climb a little ladder and on to the roof of the school to hear the siren and we used to blow a whistle and all the children would come out and orderly too with their master, and walk up to that shelter.

Gordon Spiers

Every morning before the register was called Mr Bradbury or Miss Levett, depending which side of the curtain you were, would look at your hands and your wrists and see if they were washed. I suppose if your hands were clean everything was alright.

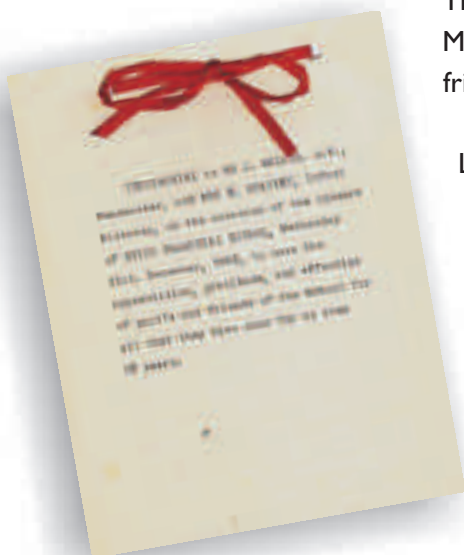
Lilian Machon

Christina Funnel (nee Dansie) attended the school in the period shortly before its closure. She remembers that Mrs Stanley taught the infants in one room and Mr Walker taught the older children in another. She recalls that there was no internal door between the two classrooms so the infants had to go out of the front door to get to Mr Walker's class for assembly. She remembers a flood when the taps wouldn't turn off and also, 'Mrs Stanley introduced us to twiglets and olives'. Rather an innovation for the time! But the inspector must have approved of her methods as his 1955 report described her efforts in glowing terms, 'the infants' class is in the hands of an experienced qualified teacher who shows a clear understanding of young children and of their ways of learning. The room is bright and attractive and there is much purposeful apparatus to help the children in their work and in the pursuit of familiar and new interests'. Mrs Stanley left at the end of 1955 but returned after a year to continue the good work.

Mr Walker was the last headmaster and was in post when, along with many rural schools, the Oving School closed. When he first arrived in September 1948, the Walker family lived in the schoolhouse. In 1949 his daughter Rosemary was born prematurely after her mother fell down the steps. Rosemary remembers that the family moved to a house in Chichester in 1954 but she remembers living in Oving and, in particular, Mrs Ruff, who lived in the Almshouses. Every Christmas she gave the Walker children two shilling pieces 'all shiny and new' and on their birthdays she gave them threepenny pieces wrapped in cardboard! She also remembers that her father kept chickens in an allotment and her older brother, Terry, remembers that he was not allowed to help feed the chickens if he didn't tie his shoelaces properly!

When the school closed on 21st December 1966 everyone gathered in the Junior Room for a short service and to hear speeches by Mr H L Drewitt, the Rev D A Johnson and the Headmaster. Letters of thanks were received from the Bishop of Chichester and from Oving PCC, and presentations were made

to the staff, including the caretaker and canteen assistant, Mrs Fox. The Testimonial reads 'to Mr J Walker BA, Headmaster; and Mrs E Stanley, Infant Mistress,to mark the appreciation, gratitude, and affection of pupils and friends of the School for all that they have done for us over 18 years'.



Testimonial from pupils etc

Little is known about the small schoolroom next to the church at Merston. However, the diocesan archives for 1855 record that there was a National school attended by an average of five boys and six girls, taught by schoolmistress Martha Peskitt. The children paid 1d (one old penny) per week and the rest of the costs needed to pay the mistress were met by subscriptions and by the Rector. It is not clear for how long the building was used as a school but, from the 1880s, the Kelly's Sussex Directories record that Merston children 'attend school in South Mundham'. The building now remains generally empty and unused. There is a story that it is haunted by the ghosts of airmen who were stationed at the local airfield during WWII and who never returned to base. It is said that they used to pray in the church next door.

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- Will extract, The National Archives (TNA) Ref PROB 11/1827
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Headmaster Mr Walker and the School group c1955



Chapter 5 Oving Manor House



Manor House

Oving Manor House was previously known as the Prebendal House comprising the house, the stables, the tithe barn and Thatchets cottage (now the Gribble Inn).

The Manor House has huddled next to the church in the centre of the village for more than 400 years. Thought to have been built during the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) or possibly earlier the house has seen many alterations since then. A Parliamentary survey made in 1649 describes it as 'a fair brick building containing a hall, two parlours, kitchen, larder, two butteries with cellars, and twelve chambers.'

Originally the house was thought to consist of a hall about 36 ft. long with a porch on the east front and another large chamber north of the hall about 28 ft. long. During the 18th or 19th centuries, this room was divided in two and the northern half was made into a coach house with wide entrances in the north and east walls. During the Elizabethan period a staircase was inserted in the northern part of the hall. Two further wings were added at a later date. The walls are 16th century brick and the front parts have fairly tall cemented plinths projecting six inches, possibly indicating earlier work. At the time of Katherine Woods' general improvements to the village (c1850) the gardens of the Manor House were extended and landscaped.

Since early times the Manor of Oving was owned by the Cathedral Church of Chichester and given to the Precentor (a clergyman holding office in the cathedral) as part of his stipend. He frequently in his turn leased out the Manor House and lands. We know the names of some of these lessees and Lords of the Manor.

1120	Karlo became Lord of the Manor.
1225	Hugh de Talmaco.
1649	J Ashburton Esq.
1649 - 1660	During the time of the Commonwealth it came into the hands of John and Richard Downes.
1669 - 1730	Back in church hands the lessees were the Elsons.
1730 - 1781	Rev Daniel Walter who then gave it to his son of the same name.
1811 - 1833	Lease bought by Edmund Woods.
1833 - 1848	Inherited by his daughter Katherine Woods. (See Chapter 3)
1848	Reverend G H Woods, relative of Katherine Woods.

Some of the lessees deserve a closer look. The Elsons were a wealthy Sussex family with two MPs and one Mayor of Chichester in their ranks. William Elson, MP for Chichester (1695-1713), whilst attending Queen Anne's coronation in 1702, promised 'to provide wine for the Lady Mayoress to drink her majesty's

health with such ladies as shall come to her house'. He also gave each member of the corporation who attended the Mayor on thanksgiving day in 1704 (for the battle of Blenheim) a bottle of wine. No mention of gifts to the ordinary citizen!

I remember in 1939 all the school children going to the Manor House to collect their gasmask. We all went over there and they had big baby ones - Micky Mouse shapes and all that. Fred Shopland

His father, also William Elson, was not so charitable. In April 1642 he was appointed Treasurer for Charitable Uses for the following year. He obviously did not carry out his duties as required however as there were many grievances against him. William Wady, keeper of Horsham Gaol, was owed money for the maintenance of the house of correction and keeping of the prisoners. Elson ignored the summons to pay Wady and eventually even Wady's widow. In 1645 he was bound over to appear in the next court sessions to answer for his contempt and refusing to pay any accounts. The Elsons lost their lease simply due to their failure to renew in time.

Colonel Gem was living at the Manor in 1890. He was a great party giver, in fact he and his guests helped to put out the fire at Percy Lunn's smithy, wearing their dinner jackets.



*Thatched Cottage,
now the Gribble*

In the late 1930s Commander Dennison of the Royal Navy was interested in village life. Alf Keates remembers as a young boy that the commander would take the scouts to Portsmouth to see the naval ships and HMS Victory. On one occasion they were taken on board the Royal Yacht by invitation of the monarch.

Peter Hague thinks that the Manor House was requisitioned during WWII. In 1946 the Manor House, together with the tithe barn and Thatched cottage, was sold by the church at auction and for the first time in its long history came into private ownership. The house and barn cost £2000!

The tithe barn was bought by Mrs Molly Hamilton whose husband was an antique dealer. The Hamiltons converted half the barn and later when Mr Hamilton died it was sold and converted into the three dwellings that we see today. Quite a step from use as a piggery by Peter Hague's father prior to 1946!

The Whittaker family lived in the Manor House from the 1950s for about 40 years. Mrs Whittaker was a talented and artistic lady and produced plays, shows and nativities with the children and took a great part in village life.

Today this impressive old manor house is surrounded by a lovely walled garden and is very much a family home. Internally the house has been changed drastically over the years to suit the needs of the various lessees and today amply meets the needs of a modern family whilst retaining great character and some original work.

Sources

Victoria County History of Sussex
Vol. 4

History of Oving Parish,
attributed to Diane Caplan nee
Weatherall, compiled as part of
a teacher training qualification
at Bognor Regis College c1959
Memories and documents
supplied by Oving residents
past and present



Shopwyke Hall

Chapter 6 Shopwyke

The manor of Shopwyke was an estate belonging to the City of Chichester until Henry I (1100 -1135) gave it to Reynold Hareng. The manor changed hands many times over the next 600 years. In 1670 the estate, apart from the manorial rights, was bought by Stephen Challen whose grandson later sold it to Edmund Woods.



*Memorial to Edmund Woods
in Chichester Cathedral*

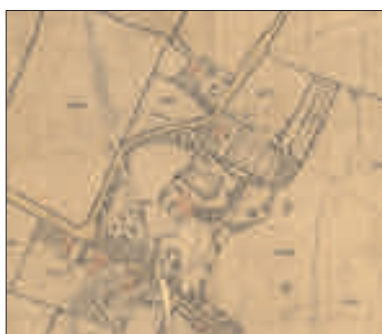
In 1811 Edmund Woods acquired the lease of the manor of Shopwyke, which included Oving and the surrounding farmland, when he purchased Shopwyke House the principal residence. Woods was a successful farmer who had purchased property at Chidham in the late 18th century. His subsequent wealth and reputation were based on the cultivation, reproduction and marketing of a peculiarly prolific grain seed known as 'Chidham Wheat'. Over the first three decades of the 19th century he established himself amongst the Sussex gentry, purchasing the 277 acres of the Shopwyke estate, becoming a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. His death in 1833 merited a monument in the Cathedral, commissioned by his only surviving daughter, Katherine, who inherited the estate. Over the next 15 years, until her death in 1848, Katherine completely transformed the appearance of the village of Oving and the estate. Kelly's Directory of 1845 recorded 'Oving has been raised from a neglected situation to become a delightful and beautiful village by the munificence of this lady'.

In 1835 Miss Woods made arrangements to divert the highroad away from its original route near Shopwyke House to enable the planting of more extensive pleasure grounds all round the house. In 1839/40, her attention was directed towards the village of Oving where six Almshouses and a School were built. Restoration and re-fitting of the church was also carried out. In 1841 the existing house was demolished and a new Shopwyke House was erected in a

style 'satisfactory to current taste'. Lodges and entrances to the house were provided and the grounds were increased to twice their size and a footpath was removed to allow the landscaping of the estate with orchards and winding pathways, lawns and parkland with protective boundary copses. The footpath was a convenient shortcut to Tangmere Road, and a public meeting of the parish protested and insisted on a new footpath beyond the estate.

Shopwyke Manor Farm

The first occupant of the farm that can be traced was James Squire the elder who died in 1646. He left the property to his son James Squire II who died in 1664. In his will he requested that his son, James III should keep on the 'lease of Shopwyke Farm where I now do live', sharing the running of the farm with his kinsman John Bridger until he came of age. The 1664 inventory made on the death of James Squire II is very long and detailed, mentioning eight rooms in the house itself as well as two cellars, a washhouse, milk-house and brew-house. We do not know what happened to James Squire III, he may have died before coming of age or sold out his interest in the farm. Certainly by 1695 John Bridger was the sole tenant.



Detail from Oving Tithe Map showing Shopwyke House, Hall and Grange

John Bridger died in 1706 and the property came into the hands of the Spershott family. Charles Spershott died in 1725 and left his property to his wife Mary. She and her son Thomas were occupying the property in 1737 when Thomas Brereton mortgaged it to George Harris of Chichester. After that the history of the property is obscure, by the time of the tithe map in 1838 it was in the occupation of Henry Upton.

In the 1960s Phillimore Publishing, owned by Philip Harris, moved from London to Shopwyke and set up business in the Manor Farm Barn. William Phillimore established the company in 1897 in London and started publishing books on British local and family history. Phillimore advocated the formation of local Record Offices by submitting Bills to Parliament and continued his ideas by publishing parish records. The business continued in Shopwyke until 2006 and is now part of The History Press.

Shopwyke House

The house was rebuilt in 1841 by Katherine Woods and is now a preparatory school. On her death, Miss Woods bequeathed the estate to her relative, the Rev. George Henry Woods who left it at his decease to his nephew the Rev. Henry George Woods, Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College Oxford.

During WWI, the house was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers. In 1939 the house was requisitioned as the Officers' Mess for some 150 RAF personnel from the Commonwealth, France, Holland, Poland and Czechoslovakia. On 16th August 1940 a German fighter plane, a Messerschmitt 110, crashed into an ornamental pond close to the rear of the house causing all the windows to be blown out.

*Painting of
Shopwyke House
displayed in the school*



Westbourne House School

The school was founded in Folkestone on 29th January 1907 and was accommodated in a purpose-built school building called Westbourne House. Geoffrey Shilcock took over as headmaster in 1932 and changed the school from pre-prep to a preparatory school. In 1938, with war looming, a temporary safer home was found at Upcott near Barnstaple where the school moved in 1939 and stayed until 1946. The original building at Folkestone was damaged during the war so in 1946 the school bought Shopwyke House and grounds, which had been requisitioned during the war and now lay empty. After clearing away the Nissen huts from the grounds the school moved there in 1947. In 1955 while Mr Shilcock was headmaster his daughter, Anne, who was a tennis player won the Wimbledon Ladies Doubles with Angela Mortimer.

In 1961 Mr Shilcock retired and the school was due to close. However, Mr and Mrs Sharman bought the school and with the help of Mr Ellis and Miss Blackman the school began to grow. In 1967 it became a charitable trust and in 1989 the Sharmans retired and Mr Rigby took over the running of the school. It became co-educational, doubled in size and undertook an ambitious building programme. Brendan Law became headmaster in 2003 and the school is in a secure position after reaching its centenary.

Shopwyke Nurseries

In 1934 George Martin set up a garden nursery on the site where the nursery is now. He soon built up a large business with extensive greenhouses and an Orangery. The business expanded into landscape gardening for the many large estates including Goodwood, and established a reputation for quality, recognised by the Chelsea Flower show. Sue Rose, who lived in Shopwyke Grange in the 1950s, remembers the wonderful flowers that were grown there. The business passed to Hutchins in 1972, was then sold on in 1992, and again in 2011 to World Plants. Another large Nursery (Lansdowne) was set up by Renoufs in the 1970s growing fruit and vegetables and later flowers.

Prize winning stocks

Shopwyke Hall



Mrs Amelia Idle

I worked for Mrs Nurse at Shopwyke Hall as a domestic for 32 years and had some fun. Lillian Machon

Stephen Challen, who owned Shopwyke Manor, bought a thatched house from William Brockhurst, a farmer, on the site of what is now Shopwyke Hall. He built what was called the 'Great House' between 1720 and his death in 1727. The manor estates included Portfield, which still formed a medieval strip-field system until it was enclosed in the 19th century. His daughter's family lived in the house and his eldest grandson occupied the house after his marriage but he became impoverished as the estates were allowed to decline.

In 1871 Amelia Idle came to live at the Hall. Mrs Idle, originally from Bosham and who spent many years in Paris, was a companion of Lord Yarmouth, the 4th Marquess of Hertford. Mrs Idle received a large annuity from Lord Yarmouth and in 1861 returned to Bosham from Paris and then in 1871 moved to Shopwyke Hall. Every Thursday the Bosham carrier brought her relatives to Shopwyke from where they returned with many presents and good wine. The curved wall opposite the entrance to the Hall is believed to have been constructed so that the carriage could turn around easily.

Mrs Idle died in 1879 and is buried in Portfield Church which she helped to fund when it was built in 1871. The Church is now deconsecrated and is owned by the Museum of Mechanical Music and Doll Collection. Unfortunately this is no longer open to the public. During WWII the Hall was used as a residence for RAF Officers.

Shopwyke Grange



Shopwyke Grange

Shopwyke Grange was once considered one of the most beautiful houses in the county. It is a mixed development – the front of the house is Queen Anne (1702-1714) and was a coach house, the rear of the house is Georgian (1714-1820). Sue Rose, who lived here in the 1950s, describes the many variations in floor and ceiling levels that this combination of building led to. There were extensive gardens including a large orchard and a field next to the garden was purchased by Sue's father to prevent any further encroachment of the gravel pits. The tithe map (see page 18) shows the garden, as it would have been in 1838.

A bus service from Chichester to Brighton stopped outside the Grange and there is still a bus stop near here today with a local service to Chichester and Worthing.

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Notes from Philip Harris

Chapter 7 Drayton Station and local activities



Drayton Station

There was no road to Drayton, only a footpath and it was just a dirt footpath, you had to find your way across there and through the bullock muck and the sheep muck, you could just about get across there, but that was the only way we could get out if we wanted to get to the 31 bus at Drayton Crossing. Alf Keates



King Edward VII travelling from Drayton station to Goodwood 1910

I remember that cold cold winter when it snowed on Boxing day walking from Shopwyke when they started to clear the road up to the Drayton crossing where overnight the 31 bus had become stuck...the snow was sort of head height for us smallies. Sue Rose

Land to the value of £10 in Drayton was given by Henry I to William Conan in 1166 and passed through many families until in 1560 it was divided into Drayton Westcourt owned by Thomas Bishopp and Drayton Eastcourt owned by John Caryll. In 1909 Charles John Drewitt and family were living at Drayton Manor and Harold Drewitt and family were living at Colworth Manor, from where the Drewitts controlled much of the farmland of the parish.

In 1844 the Brighton & South Coast Railway was built between Chichester and Worthing. Drayton was one of the original stations on the line which was intended to serve the local agricultural community and the Goodwood racecourse. It was not unusual to see carriages drawn up along Drayton Lane ready to take people to the racecourse. This was a favourite course of King Edward VII and later George V. Race traffic declined after 1881 when Singleton was opened on the Midhurst line, but passenger services continued until 1930. The train provided a route to Bognor via Barnham and families used it for a treat of a day out at the seaside. Percy Belcher also remembers that cattle were brought in and out via Drayton and then driven down through Colworth to the meadows. The freight business continued at Drayton and it became a depot for West Sussex County Council to store highway maintenance materials and vehicles although everything is moved by road now.

Although a road existed up to Shopwyke and on to Chichester and Goodwood there was no road to Oving. Only a footpath existed, about one mile long, over several fields and stiles. Gordon Spiers remembers making the journey to school everyday from their cottage at Drayton, just south of the railway line. Only after Tangmere airfield was expanded was a road built between Drayton and Oving in 1957.

The railway line had another crossing at Woodgate near Woodhorn Farm and this was a manned crossing. Fred Shopland remembers an incident when the gates were opened by mistake to let sheep cross over and a train was coming. Someone ran down the line and managed to stop the train in time!

Drayton Manor house is dated around 1700 and is now a company headquarters. The Drayton farm has disappeared under the waters of a gravel pit to the north of the railway line and more pits have been excavated to the south of the line. A small business park has been developed in the grounds of the Manor House including the popular 'Thursdays' nightclub, which was started in 1978 by Barry Sampson and Roger Penfold. It was initially called Martines, then Brooks and in 1986 it became Thursdays.

Sources

Victoria County History of Sussex Vol 4
Station photograph, (WSRO, Bill Gage)
King Edward VII photograph, Colin Sharman



Merston House

Chapter 8 Merston and Colworth

Merston

Merston lies on the coastal plain south and east of Chichester and is drained by several small streams such as Pagham Rife, and lies only about three metres above sea level. Merston means 'marsh farmstead' and many disputes about land ownership occurred because of the changing streams. In 1588 a dispute between Drayton and Merston was resolved by planting a large hedge at the boundary, roughly where Silver Lakes homes are now.

Merston was absorbed into Oving parish in 1933 for civil administration purposes. St. Giles's church stands near the centre of the parish, with the houses running north along the road to Chichester. Ecclesiastically the church is part of Mundham Parish.



The Old Rectory, Merston

The Old Rectory, a short distance north from the church, is a 15th century timber framed house that had a one-storey hall facing east, a two-storied south solar wing projecting to east and west beyond the hall, and a small two-storied north buttery wing. Alterations were carried out in the 18th century and the roof was part tiled and part thatched.

Merston manor is mentioned in 1086 but its early history is obscure. In about 1240 it was held by Roger Martel and passed through many families, some of whom held a 'knight's fee'. In 1544 the Marquess of Dorset conveyed the manor of Merston to Henry VIII. The manor remained with the crown until 1560, when it was granted to John Caryll. It continued in the hands of the Carylls of West Harting until 1771 when it was sold to Thomas Longcroft and then to Richard Godman. The Godmans were absentee landlords, and appointed bailiffs to look after their estate. John Peskett was one such bailiff who lived in the Manor House. The manor then descended in the family of Godman until about 1920 when it was bought by William Langmead. The Manor (or Merston House as it is now called) continued in the Langmead

family through Leslie Langmead and then to the present owner James Langmead. The Langmeads developed the land into arable for growing lettuces and other salad crops, and they became the major supplier of pre-packed salads to local supermarkets.



Old school house at Merston



St Giles Church

The Church of St. Giles dates from the 13th century and consists of a chancel and nave with no structural division between them, a north aisle of the nave overlapping the chancel and a south porch. It is built of rubble with ashlar dressings, much being covered with modern roughcast. There is one bell dated 1809, and the communion plate consists of a silver cup of 1798 and a silver flagon given in 1800 by Richard Merrick of Runcton House 'in consideration of being permitted to erect a pew in the chancel'. The Victorian annexe building at the entrance to the church was once used as a school. The 1851 Post Office Directory lists a Miss Martha Peskett, National Infant School, living in Merston with her father, John Peskett, who was farm bailiff at the Manor. By the 1880s the children of Merston attended school at Mundham. The church had six and a half acres of 'glebe land' in 1909, which was let for £20. A glebe is an area of land belonging to a benefice and assigned to support the priest. These were transferred to the Diocesan Board of Finance in 1978.



Merston Pond

There is a 'Church Acre' charity, of unknown origin, administered by the rector and churchwardens. The church was combined with North Mundham and Hunston parishes, but in 2009 the roof was declared unsafe and no further services could be held there. However the school annexe is used for small exhibitions on a temporary basis.

During WWII, Tangmere became a major operating airfield for the RAF and plans were drawn up to establish 'Dummy' airfields to entice the Luftwaffe to drop bombs away from the main airfields. Merston was one of the sites

selected in 1939 but in 1940 was upgraded to a full satellite airfield with domestic buildings and hangars.

The airfield was not fully operational until spring 1941 and opened with six Blister Hangars and some fighter protection pens. A squadron of Spitfires was based there and they carried out 'Rhubarbs', low level strike operations against targets in occupied Europe. Winter rains turned the airfield into mud and for three months it was unserviceable, so in 1943 two Sommerfeld Track runways were laid, the main SW/NE extending to 4776ft. The airfield reopened in 1943 with 80 officers and 1200 other ranks. Various units were based at Merston including American, Canadian, New Zealand and Free French and they were involved in many operations including Dieppe in 1942; the invasion of North Africa in October 1942; Noball sites (V1 launch pads); and the D-day landings. By late June 1944 the last squadron had left Merston as the need for satellite airfields receded. The Sommerfeld Tracking was removed and the local farmer was allowed to use the field for limited grazing (Kives Farm). Very little is left to remind us of its career except for pieces of the concrete perimeter track and a few domestic buildings.



Cottages at Merston

Merston has not changed in size significantly since the tithe map of 1838. In 1841 the population was 104 and in 1901 was 121. However, many of the barns have been converted into homes and the area is dominated by the salad growing business nearby.



Canal Bridge at Merston

Canals

The idea of linking the centre of Chichester to the sea, using a canal, was first suggested in 1585 but was only built in 1820 as part of the London to Portsmouth Canal. The route took the canal through Colworth and south of Merston as part of the Ford to Hunston section. The canal opened in 1823 and was expected to carry 55,000 tons per year but only achieved 3654 tons in 1824. Traffic to Portsmouth ended in 1838 and by 1850, with competition from the railway, the canal became less commercially viable. The Ford to Hunston section dried up, and the City Corporation took over the Chichester section in 1892. The line of the canal is still visible through Colworth in particular at Bridge Cottages and at Merston where a number of bridges still exist.

Colworth



*The Mission Room/Chapel
at Colworth*

We had a little chapel at Colworth to go to every Sunday. We had to go to the chapel twice a day. 11 o'clock in the morning and 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Percy Belcher

Colworth is one of the prebendal manors of Oving (as is Woodhorn) and was granted by King Ethelred II in 988 to Leofstan, with leave to bequeath it to whom he would. It was at some time conveyed to the See of Chichester and remained in the hands of their prebendaries, except during the Commonwealth, until it was taken over by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. A chapel at Colworth is mentioned in 1510 and was given to Theophilus Adams in 1583 with a piece of meadow called 'Saint Georges Meade'. However, it is difficult to find any direct link to the Chapel or Mission Room still standing and remembered by many former residents of Colworth including Beryl and Tony Gibbons who still live at Hollycroft Farm, Colworth.

According to the West Sussex Gazette, 6th September 1883 a building formerly used as a store house was given up by Mr Drewitt as a 'Mission Room' and fitted up in as 'Ecclesiastical a manner as circumstances would permit'. In the previous year Drewitt had permitted services to be conducted in the kitchen of a small farmhouse – Farm Cottage, Colworth. The Gazette goes on to explain that despite the population of 100 living further than two miles from their Parish Church or other place of worship, the Ecclesiastical Commissions who owned the great tithes and property in the Parish, had declined to do anything for the spiritual welfare of their tenants of Colworth. Kelly's Directory of 1845 shows Colworth as having 128 inhabitants. However, it appears that services at the Mission Room could only be held during those months in the year when there was no service in the evening at the Parish Church.

Kit Manouch recalls that in the 1930s, Sunday Schools were sometimes run by Sister Whiting from the Church Army, and at other times by two cassocked students from the Theological College in Chichester. Around 20 children would wait at the entrance of the Mission Room on Sunday afternoons for the students to alight from the bus outside the Nelson Arms pub and unlock the building. The entrance was at the western end, now bricked up (see photograph). The walls inside were plain and unadorned but there was a harmonium. The children sat on forms and on most occasions the building was fairly full. Attendance was rewarded by stamps, which were saved to earn edible gifts.

When it ceased to be used for religious purposes is not clear. Fred Shopland tells us that it was used as a temporary school for Oving children during WWII when Tangmere was being bombed. He remembered there only being room for 20 or so children in the Chapel itself whilst the other children had to make do with sitting on carts in the nearby cart sheds for their lessons. Another source tells us that in the early 1960s the building was used as a changing-room for footballers playing on Colworth United's pitch to the north of the Mission Room. Here again, Fred Shopland remembers playing for the Colworth Football Team in the 1950s. The team was organized by someone who had been torpedoed at Gibraltar in the war and as a result of ill health couldn't work full time. The Colworth team was in the Bognor and District League and

played on a 'pitch' close to the Chapel. On match days the cows were cleared off the field and Percy Belcher, who in 1932 moved into No. 1 Bridge Cottage, Colworth, remembers using Mr. Drewitt's tractor and heavy roller to get the pitch ready for play. Any visiting team changed in the cart and the only chance of a shower after the match was in the horse trough!

Today, the Mission Room sits within the boundary of Farm Cottage, Colworth and has been sensitively renovated so as to preserve the ecclesiastical appearance from the outside.

There was one scary moment however, that as a child we ventured inside the house now called Glen Croft. It had been empty and derelict for some time, but when we went inside just for a dare, we were surprised to see the table set up for supper! We never went inside the house again!

Chris Mitchell (nee Gibbons)

Colworth and its surroundings have long been an important agricultural area and in the early 1900s were taken over by Mr Drewitt who lived at Colworth Manor. The Drewitts farmed over 1000 acres stretching up to Tangmere and over to Merston. The farming was mixed and included 700 cattle, 1000 sheep and 150 acres of potatoes. Mr Drewitt had over 40 people working for him in the 1930s and many lived in local tied cottages. Leslie Drewitt kept and showed horses. They had a son who lived in the Grange and then moved into the Manor House. Three generations of Drewitts farmed at Colworth but John Drewitt worked in London as a solicitor and was not interested in farming. The land itself is owned by the Church Commissioners. Ten or so years ago Mr Baird from Climping took over the farm and it was broken up. A Dutchman named Tukker now farms the land.

Alf Keates and Percy Belcher both worked on Drewitt's Farm. From 1935, Alf worked at Grove Farm as a carter and recalls that there were possibly four teams of four horses, some kept at Colworth whilst the others were at Grove Farm across the main Chichester to Bognor Road, the A259 as it is now.

Jack Hayter lifting plough at Colworth, 1960s



Percy Belcher remembers that all their cattle came up from Devon by train arriving at Drayton. From there they were driven down Drayton Lane, down the main road and then down through Colworth and into the meadows. The nearest cattle market was at Barnham. Percy recalls driving cattle to Barnham through Colworth, to Oving then around the back of the village down through the Limmer pond on the road that goes the other side of the aerodrome and then on to Barnham. At Christmas Mr Drewitt gave each family working for him a 10lb piece of beef.

Tony Gibbons is probably the oldest resident in Colworth having been born there in 1926. He and his two brothers lived with their parents in Holycroft Farm, which has been home for Tony and his wife Beryl for 60 years. Although they farmed on a much smaller scale than their neighbours, the Drewitts, Tony and Beryl worked hard seven days a week and at one time had 1,000 poultry, 160 pigs and bred cattle. The lane at the side of the Gibbons Farm used to go through to the rife and there was also another lane 'Green Lane' further up towards the main road that also led to the rife. Mains water arrived in 1953

before which time the Gibbons drew water from the Drewitt's bore hole. Electricity arrived in 1938.



Harvest 1968

Tony Gibbons recalls the introduction of 'mechanisation' on to Drewitt's land and seeing for the first time an eight-furrow plough being drawn across the fields from side to side by a steam engine. At that time the fields were much smaller than today. A gamekeeper with spaniels managed the shoot and the Gibbons remembered how the shots used to frighten the horses. During the war, the Drewitts became the first farm in West Sussex to own a combine harvester.

Children from Colworth went to school in North Bersted, not Oving. North Bersted was a large school of 350 pupils and since there was a bus service along the Bognor road this was easier than getting to Oving. In the 1960s, Chris, the daughter of Tony and Beryl Gibbons remembers walking out to the main road with her brother to catch a bus to school. At the time there were only three children in Colworth but they had a great time with plenty to do.



*Nelson Arms,
painting by Peter Dix*

For many years and in the days before the Gribble, Colworth had its own pub – a place where the many local farm workers could relax with their families. The Nelson Arms was situated on the site now occupied by the Mercedes Benz Garage on the main road. The pub was run by Mr Harold Dix and his wife. Alf Keates recalls from the 1930s that the rooms were quite small suggesting the building may have been built as a private dwelling – 'the public bar was like a sitting room'. There was also a jug and bottle, a saloon bar with a piano, and a room where the women would sit with their children. Mrs. Dix also sold sweets in a small shop on a Sunday. Saturday nights were lively occasions when Perch Coles, played the accordion and his brother Walter the mouth organ. The pub also had its own darts team. Alf and his wife were presented with a painting of the pub on the occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary. Alf

jokes that this was a reward for spending much of his wage packet in the Nelson Arms! The painting was by the landlord's son, Peter Dix. After WWII the pub was transferred to a brother of the landlord. However, the popularity of the pub waned possibly as a result of fewer workers on the land and it was sold off and demolished. A 'Little Chef' cafe took its place and after a period of dereliction, that too was demolished and replaced by the Mercedes Benz garage in 2001.



Nelson Arms regulars

Just as you go out of Colworth towards Bognor, they dropped bombs because there used to be a wireless station there and they used to try and bomb that sometimes.

Fred Shopland

During WWII, many of the farm workers stayed on the land in reserve occupations and some went into the Home Guard. However, despite running his own farm, Tony Gibbons, much to his surprise, was called up as a Bevin Boy! He successfully appealed but had to report regularly to an office in Chichester to prove that he was still working on the land. Throughout the war a certain proportion of their produce had to be given over to the war effort and was sold at market at Bognor and Barnham.



Fred Shopland suggests that the presence of a wireless station on the lane between the Gibbons' farm and the main road probably explains bombing raids in the area. Tony Gibbons also remembers a plane coming down in a field to the south of his land. He later found what he thinks was the centre gun tower from a Lancaster Bomber in a field. This dome shaped object was used on the farm for several years for forcing rhubarb! The Gibbons later donated it to the Museum at Tangmere. Beryl Gibbons also recalls that Canadian and Australian troops were based close to their farm – she remembers them in foxholes along the lane to the main road. Although some of their eggs 'disappeared' overnight, she was happy to trade some of their eggs for tins of steamed pudding and other luxuries. According to Fred Shopland, around two or three weeks before D-Day, the lanes in the area were full of tanks each side of the road.



Harvesting in Oving Parish

Leslie Drewitt from Farm Cottages at Colworth was a Patrol Leader with the Goodwood Patrol, one of Churchill's Auxiliary Units. There were a total of 23 Sussex Units and the Goodwood Unit had seven members, all locals, who would, in the event of invasion, act as a resistance unit. Their secret hideout was to the west of Eartham.

There has been very little building development in Colworth apart from modernisations and extensions, and the conversion of the barns adjacent to the Chapel between 1995 and 1998. Two dwellings and two small offices emerged from the barns and stables. The major changes that have taken place in Colworth are to be seen in the surrounding fields where there has been an increase towards continual growth of salad crops and more recently soft fruits, in particular, strawberries.



Lettuce picking at Colworth

Grove Farm, on the south side of the A259 still retains links with agriculture and several offices are now located on this site relating to the growing and transportation of fruit and vegetables grown locally.

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- Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present

Army officers at Oving vicarage
September 1914



Chapter 9 Oving at War

At the time of the First World War (1914-18), Oving was a very tiny village so fortunately not many names appear on the memorials to those who gave their lives in their country's service. A small plaque in the church, placed near the choir stalls, recalls the names of Percy Amey, James Brockhurst, John Cooper, Samuel Ferret and William Hoare, all of whom attended Oving school and were also choristers in the church. A larger monument was installed to the memory of Captain Walter Crick, only son of the then vicar of Oving. He was in the Dorset regiment and was killed in action in Palestine on 9th April 1918 aged 21 years.

In the cemetery are the graves of 2nd lieutenant Victor Craigie and Norman England both killed 7th April 1918. They were in the RAF and appear to have been involved in a flying accident. Private Cooper of the Northants Regiment, mentioned above, is also one of the nine names on the memorial cross in front of the church and is buried in the cemetery. He died 5th June 1918. Most of these casualties occurred near the end of that war although five of the names on the cross were naval personnel who went down with their ships. They are commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Leading Stoker Matthews, however, is buried in Freetown, Sierra Leone after his ship HMS Britannia was torpedoed off West Africa on 9th October 1918. Cecil Cross, whose parents had a poultry farm at Oving, lost his life when the minesweeper Ascot on which he was a stoker was torpedoed off the Farne Islands on the 10th November 1918, just one day before the war ended.



But World War II (1939-45) was different. (See also Chapter 8). The close proximity of Oving to Tangmere Airfield meant that the village saw aspects of the war at first hand. Older villagers remember, as children, leaping up and down on the banks above the fields cheering 'our' planes taking off or coming

I remember going to the Manor House to collect our gas masks. We all came out with our little boxes around our necks chucking them off then taking them into school every day. Fred Shopland



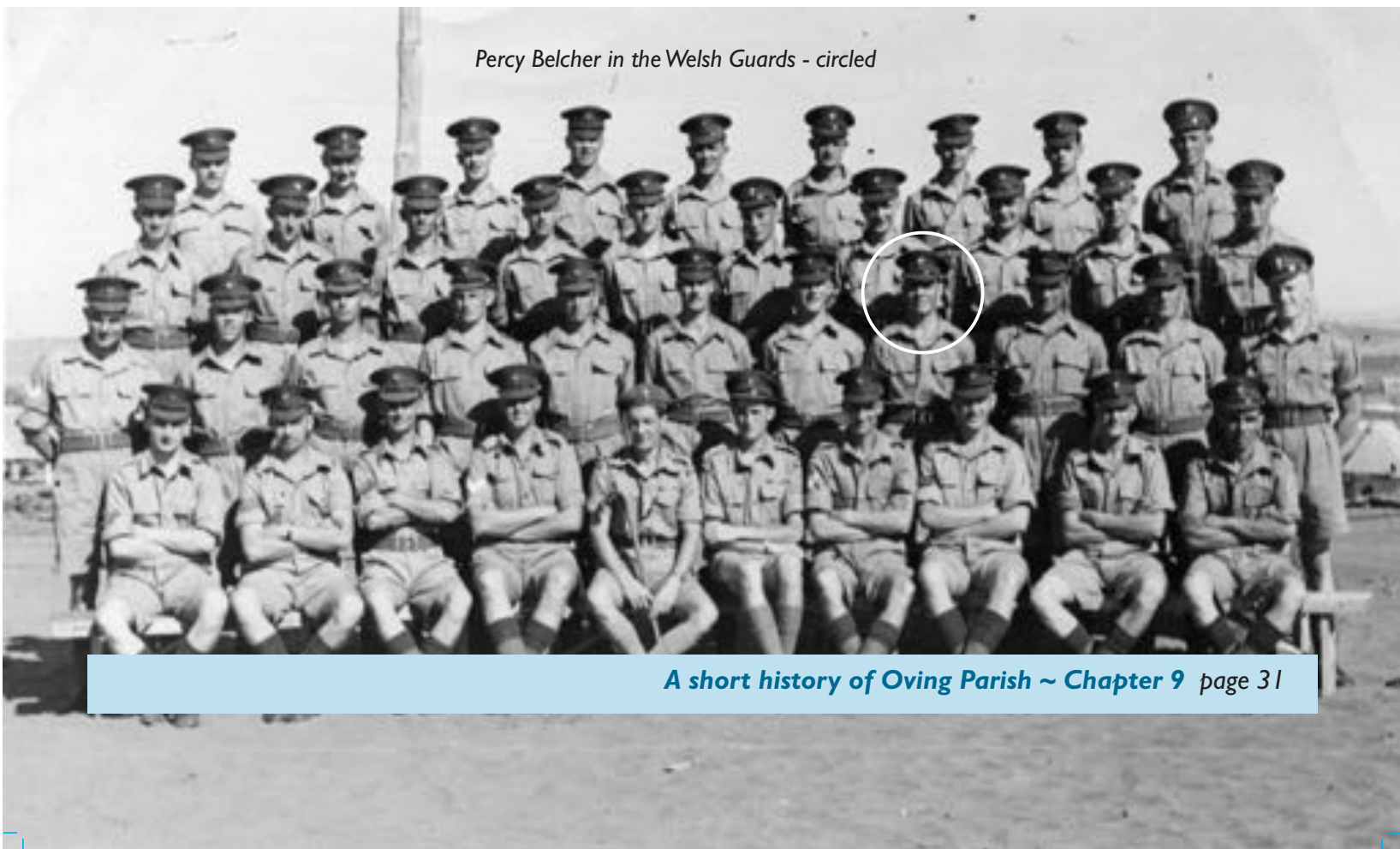
Percy Belcher recruiting with the Welsh Guards

The greatest thing we ever saw was on D Day when all the gliders were being towed over, the sky was a mass of planes. We all stood outside and gave a cheer on that day. Gordon Spiers

in and booing the enemy ones that approached. This was greatly exciting without any thought that they might be hit. There were many bombing raids and some planes crashed. Our contributors remember a pilot hanging by his parachute in a tree near Shopwyke after a German bombing raid during the night. But Gerry Edney's grandfather, Jesse Bone was most sadly killed by our own side. A plane leaving Tangmere Airfield could not get enough height when Jesse along with two others were lifting mangel worzels in a field opposite what is now the Gribble. Like many others in Oving he worked for Mr Pitts. The Spitfire fell and hit Mr Bone killing him outright. The horse bolted in terror dragging its cart but was not killed as some accounts state. This unhappy event was witnessed by several onlookers in the autumn of 1942.

Children might have found it all thrilling but when bombing raids on Tangmere became more frequent the school was moved to Colworth. Here the small chapel could only hold twenty, so many of the ninety pupils were taught in barns or cart sheds. Some older youths did fire-watching duties from the school roof. Many of the young men were exempt from call-up because they were in reserve occupations but wanting to 'do their bit', some did manage to join up. A group of them were on HMS Hood at Portsmouth. Sam Squires was on a Dutch boat and helped in the Dunkirk evacuation. Alf Keates joined the Royal Sussex Regiment. Stan Keates joined the Army Ordnance Corps driving lorries with supplies to the front. Percy Belcher tells the story of how he tried to join the Navy as his father was in the navy but they wouldn't take him so then he tried to get in the airforce but they wouldn't take him because he had already registered for farm work, which was a protected occupation. Walking through Chichester he looked in the office of the Recruiting Sergeant who asked him what he was looking for and when Percy told him the story, the

Percy Belcher in the Welsh Guards - circled





Stan Keates in the garden
of 2 The High Street



Alf Keates in The High Street

Recruiting Sergeant told him he would make a good guardsman and within a fortnight he had his medical and within a month he was in the Guards! We now include some wartime reminiscences from these two sons of Oving.


At first both were in the Home Guard based at Crockerhill but managed to join the army despite being in a reserve occupation. Their lives were now to change, with memories that never faded. Indeed Alf wrote an account entitled *With the King's Shilling to Italy*, in which he recounted his experiences. He trained with the Royal Sussex Regiment. Then later with the Duke of Cornwall's, he saw service in North Africa. He then crossed the sea to Italy, pushing up towards Rome, where he was captured near Frosinone. It was winter and at one point crossing into Austria, the POWs were forced to walk barefoot in the snow to prevent them escaping.

Alf ended up at Offlag 8F in Czechoslovakia where he was batman to an officer. At this camp they dug tunnels to attempt escapes. Alf's memoirs recall, *'the officers did all the escaping, but the boys had to do all the digging!'* The camp was fairly relaxed, guards could be bribed from Red Cross parcels to get radio parts. Some escapes were successful, others not so – ten officers were shot after one recapture. Moved to another camp and sent to work in a factory, the prisoners began to get hints of the allies' advance. Eventually the guards ran away and so the prisoners walked out – to freedom. They lived on raw beetroot for about two weeks, which took its toll on Alf's digestive system! But at last they reached American lines and safety, food, bed and baths.

In spite of some grim incidents, a guard beat Alf with a rifle butt on one occasion, Alf declared that *'I loved the time I served'* – ten years and 283 days. All for the King's shilling in Brighton when he joined up.

Percy's experiences with the Welsh Guards were different. He took part in the D-Day landings and the push to Arnheim. At the small town of Hechtel in Belgium, 700 of the guards fought against 7000 German paratroopers. Heavy losses were sustained on both sides but at last the town was liberated. After the war, a restaurant was built called Welsh Guards Corner to honour their stand. Every year a reunion is held with dwindling numbers of course. On the 55th anniversary those Guards attending the reunion were presented with an engraved paperweight. Percy admits that few of those who fought are left now and people forget *'but the town still remembers'*. In 1945 he was sent to Israel *'to sort out the Jews and Arabs fighting between themselves'*. He was demobbed in 1946 and still holds in memory those of his comrades who never returned.

The air raid shelter for the village was opposite the church. When the sirens went everyone grabbed blankets, some food perhaps and made for safety. On one occasion some Regimental Fusiliers billeted in the village hall came tearing out as the siren sounded and went straight into the ditch. Onlookers still recall it as being a most hilarious sight. American and French Canadians were also in



Oving at various times in 1941 and 1942, and Allied troops were billeted at Shopwyke. As D-Day approached it was obvious that something was afoot. The sky over Oving was a mass of gliders and tanks rumbled through almost blocking the road. But secrecy was supposed to prevail. When the bus from Chichester to Aldingbourne came through Oving, curtains were drawn to prevent any sight of the airfield.

The war changed Oving as indeed it did many places. The MoD had requisitioned the road and the Tangmere Hotel in order to lengthen the runways. After the war the old roads were no longer in use and the promise of restoring the pub was never kept. Plans were drawn up for modern housing begun in 1949 and in 1951 the new road to Aldingbourne was made.

Womens' lives had been affected too. In the cemetery is the grave of Private Gladys Riggs of the Auxiliary Territorial Service. She died 1st March 1944 aged 23. Those who stayed at home often went out to work like Lilian Machon who was in the stores at St Richard's Hospital while her husband was away with the Eighth Army. And of course there were the landgirls like Dot Spearman (then Dot Barnett) who came from London to farms in Sussex and to Oving in 1946 to marry George.

Remembrances of the war years remain vivid. It seems to have been a watershed between old and the new. It brought challenges and changes. Oving played only a small part in the scheme of things but it was never the same tiny village again.

Sources National Inventory of War Memorials
The Oving War Memorial
With the King's Shilling to Italy, Alf Keates
Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present

*A party
in the Village Hall*



Chapter 10 Social Life and the Village Hall

Years ago it was quite good, everyone mucked in and we used to have a lovely village day and it was nice, we held pram races from the hall, all those sorts of things went very well. Gordon Spiers

A few years before the outbreak of WWI (around 1912) Mr Drewitt who farmed most of the land around Oving generously gave a corner of one of his fields for the erection of a village hall. It was very small, just a shed really, but was replaced after the war with an ex-WWI hut. From this restricted space the villagers of Oving ran many sports and social activities – football, cricket, stoolball, darts. Alf Keates trained a very successful ladies’ darts team. People held birthday, wedding and Christmas parties as well as Harvest Homes.

The Womens’ Institute (WI), one of the earliest to be formed in England just after WW I, held their meetings in the hut, put on plays, concerts and flower shows and entertained visitors such as the Chelsea Pensioners. Dot Spearman remembers one of those venerable gentlemen trying to pinch her bottom! The members embroidered a banner, now sadly lost. Rose Gribble was a leading light in the WI for many years after WWII and Dot was secretary.

Unfortunately no written records can be found for those years, nor the exact date when Oving WI closed.

During WWII much of the activity had to be suspended. The Hall was used for storage. But once the war was over the hall’s use as a centre for the village got going again. As the village grew through the 1950s and 1960s it was decided to start a Social Club and a flat-roof extension was added. Any money raised was ploughed back into the club; for example the floor was polished to make it suitable for dances and bands were hired from all over the area. Events like Tramp Suppers were very popular. Everyone dressed up and the ladies provided suitable food (to eat with one’s fingers). There was judging of the best tramp. Pram races in November were also arranged. The Club became very popular and in the end had 300 members, many of whom of course did not live in Oving.



*Mother and baby clinic
outside the village hall 1950s*



Above clockwise-
 Pram Race, Chelsea
 pensioners visit,
 Tug of war at the village
 fete, The Youth Club

When I was 14 I used to cycle all the way from Chichester because there was a boy I liked in the youth club.
 Sue Millard

We always thought the best tramps were Mr Alf Jupp and his mate Mr Bob Longlands from Chichester. They were the best two tramps I think we ever had in the Oving Club and they used to compete every year and I think they won it a great many times. Alf Keates

For several years, summer and Christmas fetes took place in the hall. The bar was at one end with seating and a partition could close it off from the rest of the hall. There had been a pub in Oving (the Tangmere Hotel) but it was requisitioned and then demolished by the MoD at the beginning of WWII in order to extend the runway on Tangmere Airfield. The MoD's promise to replace the pub never came to fruition so for some years the Oving club provided a place to get a drink in the village as an alternative to the Nelson Arms at Colworth. Then in the early 1980s, Rose Gribble's cottage, 'Thatchet' was purchased by Peter Hague and turned into the village pub, the Gribble, whose well known brewery began with beers brewed by Charlie Cooper, followed on his demise by brewster, Sue Duffin, and then by Charlie's son, Rob.

As the village continued to grow, the old hall became cramped and in need of repair. In the late 1990s a group of people got together to raise money for a new modern hall. Once again the generosity of a farmer – Peter Hague – provided the land right opposite the old hall. The old site was sold off and two bungalows built on the site.

One day a large group of villagers got together to plant the boundary hedge. To fundraising activities was added a number of small grants and Lottery donations, so the new hall was opened on 2nd June 2002, the year of the Queen's Jubilee and fittingly named Jubilee Hall. The architects were Richard Atkinson and it was built by E A Chiverton. The hall is well used by various clubs and for parties and social events.

Sources Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present

*The old Colworth
football team
1940s with Percy Belcher senior
who was the first aider, circled*



Chapter 11 The Recreation Ground and the Football Team

Football in Oving started from a team which first played at Colworth after WWII. According to Fred Shopland this football team was originally started up by a chap who had been torpedoed at Gibraltar, suffered with consumption and couldn't work full-time. The team was in the Bognor and District league and Fred who played in the early 1950s remembers having to turn the cows off the field before play started and the visiting team changing in a cart. The only post match facilities were a wash in the horse trough, which apparently might sometimes mean you could find yourself pitching up for a date on the Saturday evening still covered in mud!

Percy Belcher remembers Mr Drewitt letting him use the tractor and heavy roller for both the pitch at Colworth and then Mill House when football moved there in 1971. The new pitch also had to be cleared of cattle before a match and the Mill House pitch had molehills to be flattened. During this period the players were mostly local lads and with enthusiasm to join the team there was always a full team with a real local spirit and support.

In 1977 Mr Drewitt gave the current field between Highfield Lane and St Andrew's Close as a recreation ground and those who played at that time recall having stone collecting duties, as in the early days of conversion from field to pitch there were still many stones in the ground. Gashed knees were a common injury for both sides. The clubhouse was the result of working together to put the concrete base down and moving a former school building from Bosham to sit on the new base. The standard of football improved and Oving entered the Sussex League playing on Saturdays. It was at this time still a local team with local arrangements for looking after the pitch, rolling it and line painting.

In 1981 the Oving team started a winning streak working its way up the divisions in the West Sussex League until in 1986 they won the Sussex Junior Cup. They won again, gaining promotion to the Unijet Sussex County League for the 1997-98 season.



A successful Oving football team with their cup 1995-96

Oving continued to achieve success in the Unijet Sussex County League with regular reports in the local paper with headlines like 'In-form Oving romp to 6-1 win over Forest' and 'Oving continue unbeaten start'. They narrowly missed promotion to Division 2 after their first season and finished third in a closely contested Division 3. Despite its success in the 1995-1998 seasons, rules and regulations governing how the clubhouse was run meant that it had to close down and without a clubhouse the club was no longer viable.

As the team worked its way up the leagues they attracted more players who wanted to play for this successful team and it lost some of its local flavour and support.

Meanwhile the Oving Youth Squad, the Young Vikings, were achieving their own success in 1997 with a Cup Final place and promotion in their first season. On the 27th April, Oving Youth met and defeated Charles United (a team based at Portfield) in the Peter Merritt Invitation Shield.

Football lives on for the youngsters of the village with some playing for the Barnham Trojans and with the start up in June 2011 of a Saturday morning Football Club playing on the Woodhorn Football pitch. Wouldn't it be lovely to see the triumphs of the past being revived for Oving Parish football enthusiasts?

Sources

Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present
Cuttings from the Chichester Observer provided by Chris Wood

Saturday morning football club on the Woodhorn pitch 2011





Threshing machine, 1930s
inset-Farm workers having lunch
Madam Green Farm



Chapter 12 Oving Parish at Work

It cannot be denied that there have been great changes in all aspects of our lives over the last 50 years. Farming is not exempt from such changes. Once Oving and the surrounding district was almost entirely a farming community and most of its menfolk were in some form of associated work.

In the old days there was a definite hierarchy in villages. Many people looked up to the Squire although in Oving no special family appears to have occupied this position. It would have been rich landowners like Edmund Woods at Shopwyke Manor and wealthy farmers such as the Drewitts or Pitts (*'You gave way to Farmer Pitts, he didn't give way to you'*) who might claim respect from those lower down the scale.



The 1838 tithe map shows a watermill and ponds (nos 287) and a windmill at 492

The vicar held a prominent position, as did long serving teachers like Mr Bradford and Miss Burchall. The doctor might be held in some awe, but in the days when his visits had to be paid for he was not always welcome. Mrs Hayter declined his services in spite of having four children ill at the same time!

There is evidence in Chichester museum that suggests Oving might have had a blacksmith many years ago even as far back as Roman times. In more recent times there was a wheelwright and certainly a gamekeeper, Mr Jenkins, who lived in Sandpit Cottages and organised hare coursing and pheasant shoots. The village boys would help as beaters getting 2/6d (about 20p) and a pint of lemonade with bread and cheese as their reward. Youngsters could make some pocket money catching moles for 4d (four old pence) per mole; helping to break in horses for the plough or cart; picking potatoes; or tying fleeces at sheep shearing.

Farming work often followed family connections. Fathers or uncles would get work for boys when they left school at 14 years old on the farms where they

Pigs at Madam Green Farm, 1930s



Doris Croucher with sheep

Alf Keates aged 15 with Trupper and Diamond, 1930s



themselves worked. Roy Jacobs' father Bill was pigman at Madam Green Farm in the 1900s (then farmed by the Boniface family), but was killed when a boar attacked him. Roy's uncle Frank was the Drewitt's carter and Roy helped him in the school holidays but had no intention of going into farm work himself. On leaving school at 14 he worked in Adcocks garage, then after National Service at Palmers garage in Westhampnett. Later he became maintenance man and chauffeur at Sampson's, where he worked for more than 30 years.

Lilian Machon's grandfather who was a shepherd at Drewitt's Farm saved enough to buy a bungalow at Colworth. Her father often helped at lambing time, as he also worked at Drewitt's on his return from WWII (having won a military medal). For 52 years he drove first tractors then the new combine harvesters. But other members of this family left their farming roots - Lilian's uncle, Owen Chiverton, began the building business which still carries his name and uncle Fred became a builder too. So after the middle of the 20th century, different opportunities for work were opening up.

Alf Keates began as a carter's boy in 1935, aged 14, on Drewitt's farm, which was a thousand acres in area. Mr Drewitt lived at Colworth Manor and in 1930 he had 46 people working for him. The labourers living in the 'tied' cottages along Oving High Street earned 36 shillings per week out of which came six shillings for cottage rent. At Christmas, each household would get a 10lb piece of beef. Alf's immediate boss was the carter, 'Dasher' Pearce, who 'used to like his beer'. There were four teams of horses and all the farm work was carried out by horse and cart. When he was 15, Alf had to drive to Goodwood with two horses and a cart to collect some gates and posts. He had never been outside of Oving before but he found his way there and back again. Carters were important on the farms; other names remembered are Arthur Jefferies and Jack Squires.

Hereford cattle at High Ground on Hague's farm (Madam Green) in the 1940s



Betty Keates (on left) and Lilian Hayter (later Murphy, then Machon), working in the market garden



Women mushroom pickers working in the sheds at Sampson's



Percy Belcher records that *'all our cattle used to come up from Devon by rail. They were unloaded at Drayton then driven across the fields to the meadows or to Limmer Pond and on to Barnham market'*. There was no road between Oving and Drayton in those days. Gordon Spiers says it was a mile across the fields with four or five stiles to negotiate. Percy also served as a carter under Bill Riggs.

There were few 'services' in Oving. The pub called the Tangmere Hotel (requisitioned by the MoD) was kept first by Leonard Lees then Jim Norgate but much more popular was the Nelson Arms at Colworth (where the Mercedes garage now stands) kept by Harold Dix. His son, Peter painted a picture of the pub as a golden wedding present for Alf Keates and his wife. On Sundays, Mrs Dix sold sweets *'a penny would buy a bar of chocolate in those days'*. There was a shop cum Post Office in Oving High Street where older villagers remember Mr and Mrs Clark allowed you to run a bill during the week that had to be paid off at the weekend. The shop/Post Office closed in 1985.

Up to WWII, work for women was restricted because wives were expected to stay at home to look after house, husband and children. But before marriage, girls often went into service. Lil Hayter's mother did work for a few hours a week for the Elwoods at the 'Sycamores' now called Oving Lodge. Lil herself went to Hotham House in Bognor as third housemaid to Mr and Mrs Fletcher. She worked from 6.30am to 10.00pm cycling there and back. Even during her married life she managed to work for 32 years for Mrs Nurse at Shopwyke Hall and *'had some fun'*.

Wartime of course was the opening for many women. Dot Spearman, nee Barnett, was a Londoner who volunteered for the Womens' Land Army and came to Sussex in 1942. Her first job was cleaning out cows and in fact she became a relief cowman. Marrying George in 1946 gave her a permanent home in Oving where she was secretary to the WI for many years. Mary Keates moved to Oving from Hunston in 1947 when her father started working for the Pitts. On leaving school aged 14, she went into domestic work for Mr and Mrs Coombes at 'Abelands' but some time later she got a job in Wingards car factory making mirrors. Lil Murphy (as she was then) took work at St Richard's hospital in the stores while her husband was away fighting. She lived in her old home with her parents and little daughter. Both Dot and Lil later found work at Sampsons.

In the early 1950s, changes were taking place in Oving. People moved from the old cottages to the new houses in Highfield Lane and St Andrew's Close. For men, agricultural labour was no longer the only choice and the world of work opened up for women too. After WWII, Stuart (always called Sammy) Sampson came to Oving. He established a market garden behind the house now called 'Rushmans'. Older villagers particularly remember the strawberries. There



A newspaper cutting from 23rd June 1971

The curate complained bitterly of the flies because of the chicken manure but I remember the parties - they were spectacular wonderful parties. Sue Rose



Sources

Memories and documents supplied by Oving residents past and present
Tithe Map (WSRO Ref TD/W93)

was work for pickers, packers and office staff like Dot Spearman who went there in 1958 and stayed 11 years. By then Sampsons was branching out, growing mushrooms on land behind the church. What started out in a small way in a chicken shed grew into a large enterprise bringing people to work in buses laid on for them from as far away as Waterlooville and Havant.

The former vicarage, St Andrew's House, served as offices and flats. Roy Jacobs lived in one of the flats for 15 years. At the height of the farm's success, there were over a hundred workers, most of them picking and packing the crop. As we have seen, ladies from Oving found congenial work there. Fred Shopland cycled in every day from Chichester for years. Sammy was a good employer and great parties are remembered for both children and adults. Sammy was a quiet benefactor to the village; it is said that when the modernisation of the Almshouses ran into financial difficulties, he paid the outstanding amount. In his will he left enough to pay all the workers their proper redundancy.

But it was not always sweetness and light; there were often complaints about the smell because chicken manure used as a fertiliser was stored outside. When the sheds began to deteriorate a rather odorous run off would seep into the lanes. However, villagers could get a pound of mushrooms for 60p and if a client company did not collect their ordered boxes they were sold off the next day for £1 for approximately two kilos. So people were sorry that it all came to an end after Sammy's death in January 1995. A year or so later the site was sold to become the housing known as Oving Place with its green, pond and pleasant layout. The mushroom farm is history and time moves on.

In recent years, farmers have had to diversify and develop new ways of earning a living even in the middle of a rural community. So at both Woodhorn and Madam Green farms, business centres have been set up with such enterprises as financial services; a management consultancy; the Woodhorn group, recycling green waste into perfect compost; and various kinds of specialised training and craft centres.

Within the parish we have a scrap metal yard, Chantry Oak furniture manufacturing and Woodside Organics whose produce even goes to London. Part of the old school is now a clinic for muscular and skeletal conditions. A little further out we find the Mercedes Benz garage; Thursday's nightclub; a mobile home site (although the dwellings are definitely fixed in place); and several industrial units along the Oving road near Shopwyke.

Many people who now live in Oving work out of the village – modern day commuters. But others have found work here - bed and breakfast accommodation; services such as curtain making; beauty therapy; and graphic design among them. The Parish has changed with the times but still retains its ancient boundaries, its quiet calm and the essential atmosphere of an English village.

Chapter 13 Parish Developments

The parish of Oving also includes Colworth, Drayton, Shopwyke and until 1895 Portfield. Merston was added in 1893.

Each of these areas has remained separate and retained much of their original character in housing – the main expansion being carried out in Oving village.

The following lists the significant developments: -

1840s

Katherine Woods arranged for a school, Almshouses and farm workers cottages to be built in Oving. Shopwyke House was also rebuilt and the original Almshouses were demolished.

1945-50

The first phase of new housing in Highfield Lane and St Andrew's Close

1950s

The Mushroom Farm was developed by Sammy Sampson.

Tangmere Airfield expanded and a new road from Oving to Aldingbourne was built. A road between Oving and Drayton was also built.

1970s

New housing added around the Manor House, Church Lane and Briar Close.

1980s

Rose Gribble's cottage converted into the Gribble Pub.

Nelson Arms pub in Colworth closed and Little Chef restaurant built on the site.

1986/87 Further houses added at the far end of Highfield Lane.

1994

Third phase of houses in Highfield Lane

1995/7

Mushroom Farm closed down. Oving Place built by Berkeley Homes.

2001

Little Chef site cleared and the Mercedes Benz Garage built at Colworth.

2002

Jubilee Hall opened in the Queen's Golden Jubilee year.

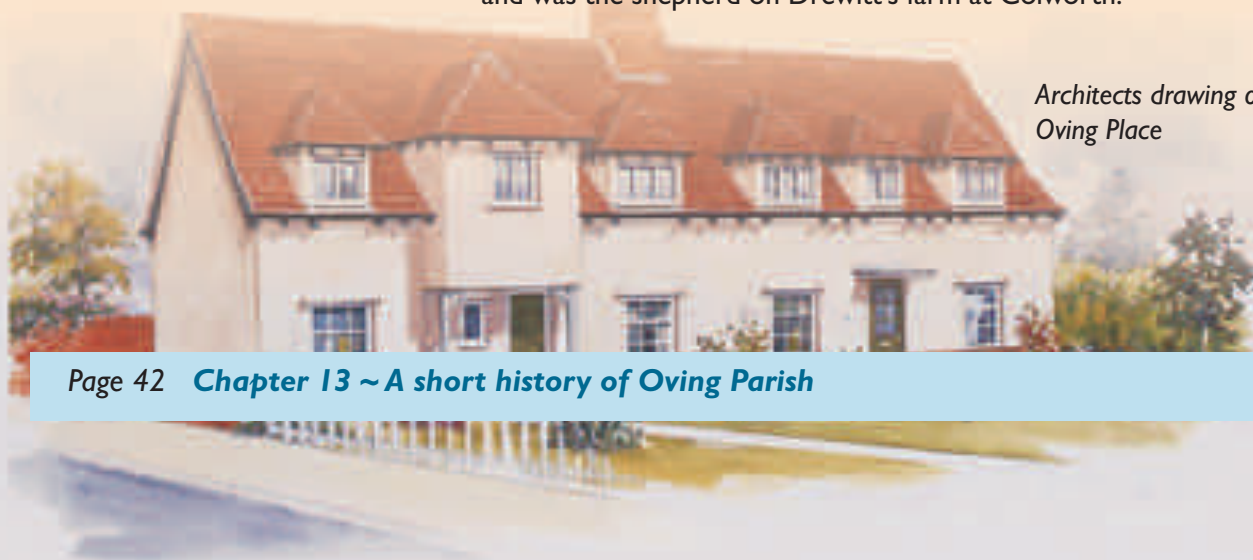
2011

New Housing added in Gribble Lane called Hayter Gardens. Hayter is the maiden name of Lilian Machon whose grandfather lived at Highkettle Corner and was the shepherd on Drewitt's farm at Colworth.

The houses have given me the chance to move back into the village and to be near family and friends and to give my children a childhood like I had in Oving.

Joanne Awang (nee Shaw)
Resident of Hayter Gardens

*Architects drawing of
Oving Place*





Cottages in High Street



Highfield Lane 1960s



Aerial view of new development in Highfield Lane 1987

Hayter Gardens 2011



Plan of Oving Place development 1996/7



The Gribble Inn



Caretakers Dave and Beryl Treagus outside the Jubilee Hall 2009

At Woodhorn railway crossing, you just put your hand out for the train just like a bus stop-it was a request.

Fred Shopland

Dad used to bring home the lambs tails and skin them and Mum used to cook them up and put them in a pie and they were beautiful when it was cold it was all like jelly. Audrey Moulding

Miss Gribble used to keep a bottle of wine in the well. She liked sherry and wine but would not have a drink till after 12.00.

Di Pitts

Miss Gribble, came to visit my mother and said, you will be coming to the WI which of course she duly did!

Sue Rose

I was responsible for the tree planting in Highfield Lane. Some of the trees were given to us and came from Barnham Nurseries so that is why you see alien trees, not exactly indigenous ones, when you come into Oving.

Peter Hague

That was called the Tangmere Hotel that was, it was a lovely old place and we used to go for walks maybe of an evening, a Sunday evening, right up round Colworth the Nelson Arms and have a drink there, then come back round to the Tangmere Hotel and that was our Sunday walk.

Gordon Spiers

More Memories

When Mum and Dad got married in Oving church...they needed another witness and Mrs Ruff was there doing her cleaning and Dad asked her and she came forward in her pinafore and witnessed the ceremony.

Kit Manouch

All the people in Oving in those days remember Mrs Clifford, because she had a little sweet shop and she was about the only person allowed to open on Sundays and we used to go up there in the afternoon for a walk with our Mum and Dad and they always used to take us in there and get a id worth of sweets.

Alf Keates

I remember having rook pie once. Mum done it but not very often because we used to have a lot of pigeon pies, cause there was a lot of pigeons and that round there.

Audrey Moulding

I can remember going in to work one morning and the Germans had been over and a bomber had crashed down near Shopwyke and there was this parachute man hanging in the tree and that was that the time they dropped all these leaflets along the railway. I've still got mine. You should have handed them in and I think the airman is buried in Tangmere.

Lilian Machon

Then later years of course they got the anti-aircraft guns round here and I was standing at the doorway at Colworth and a Dornier came in, in the mist, very low and I took the rifle and the five rounds of ammunition I was allowed and I went and took the rifle and took a shot at the aircraft.

Percy Belcher

Background photo - carter with Diamond, 1930s

And in Conclusion ...

When we began researching this history, it was obvious, from the recollections of those who have lived in the Parish for a long time, what a close knit community it was when everybody knew everybody else. Some regretted the change to a larger village where that appears to be no longer possible. But the community spirit does live on. Let the words of Sue Bradstock-Smith, chairperson of the Parish Council, describe her view (shared by others) of Oving Parish now in 2011.

We have a great band of unsung heroic volunteers working hard to make life good for the whole community. A few of these volunteers are on the Parish Council but many more are not. These volunteers look after their elderly neighbours, they run the Over Sixties club and look after the Almshouses. They make coffee for young mums at the Toddler Groups and take responsibility for the Youth Club. They organise social and fund raising events for us all to enjoy such as Scarecrow day and Bingo nights. They are OCAG (Oving Community Action Group) enthusiasts who look after and improve our recreation ground facilities. They manage the Jubilee Hall, look after the church, support the friends of St Andrews and serve as school governors of our village catchment school. They go litter picking and tidy up the graveyard. They keep us all in touch through their work on the Grapevine, the Oving website and the Oving Parish News which is then delivered by even more volunteers to every home in the Parish.

No doubt there are other like minded villagers quietly helping to make Oving a pleasant place to live, whether old inhabitants or newcomers. This history is largely based on the memories of those who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long time but let a very new villager, a five year old just moved into Hayter Gardens, express all our hopes for the future. When asked what he thought of his new home, the reply was that it was 'perfect'. That may be stretching things a bit but it is hoped that this brief history will show that we have a Parish to be proud of.

Photo on back cover - Ploughing in Oving Parish

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