

An Extraordinary Legacy

*The fascinating history of Bowling's Farm and its surroundings,
interesting people, charming stories,
an abandoned inheritance
...plus how not to frame a picture!*

Peter Lansley

1st February 2023

The Four Horseshoes, Sherfield on Loddon

*Many thanks to: The Gaiger Family, Donald Rickwood, Michael Davison-Blake and Ian Deepprose
for information, photographs and other important historical materials*

A History in Five Parts

Introduction

A Country Residence, c1770 - 1845

An Independent Farm, 1882– 1928

A Tied Cottage, 1928 - 1982

A Private Home, 1985 – present

The Setting

This presentation will be available after this evening – details later

Heritage Buildings on Sherfield Green

Six Grade II Listed and 45 'notable' homes on or close to Sherfield Green:

(Of those homes seen from Cricket Green 75% are listed or notable*)

Each has a story to tell

Three Listed homes are highly visible
from Sherfield Green:

Winton Cottage, C16, C17

Four Winds & Wayback, C17

Court Farm House, c1800



* Notable - Term used in Conservation reviews

An Historic Corner



Winton Cottage:
C16/C17,
Grade II Listed



The Plantation:
1947, rural social
housing,
exemplary design.



King's Barn:
Reconstructed barn
consistent with original
C16/C17



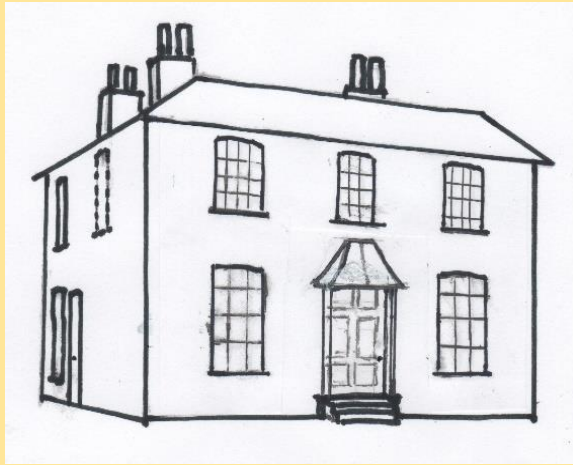
Court Farm House:
c1800
Grade II Listed



Goddard's Lane: mostly before 1850, some
much older, a few modern.

Greenway: steeped in history and mystery.

In one sweep, homes from all ages.....



Bowling's
Farm House
c1800



Bowling's Farm House 1903



Court Farm House 2018

A rare example in the village
of 'polite' architecture

1985 New Owners: Peter & Irene Lansley



From a tied estate house
to a private house.

A 'do-er upper'.

An enchanting family home,
resonating with the happy
lives of previous families.

In a delightful community.

1985: A Proud Moment for Sherfield

Winner- Hampshire's Best Kept Village

Roy Lancaster, Finals Judge

"Large recreation area in which the temptation to create a shaven effect has been mercifully resisted."

"There are plenty of play facilities for children but enough of the wild nature of the former common has been retained and managed to encourage full use of a child's imagination."

"I was very impressed by the general standards attained on all fronts and by the strong evidence of community participation."



“Strong evidence of community participation”



Cricket Green

Early 1970s

A Parish Council-led community project

Many Consultations

Community buy-in

Great Success



Loddon Sports Pavilion

1980s, Ditto

Roy Lancaster's comments - an important reminder of the need sensitive balance between 'rough and smooth'.

Sunday Exercise

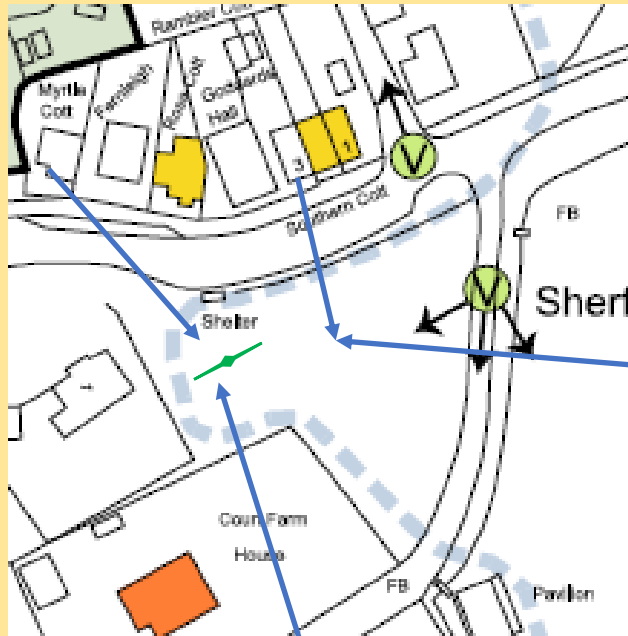


*Donald Rickwood's
Grandfather,
William Rickwood,
with a young bull*

Audrey Chapman, Bert Bowman, Percy Sims,
John Dodd and many others recalled this part of
the Green with great warmth and affection.

On Sundays.....

A Place of Memories: Daily Routines in the 1930s



Important Viewpoint



Open Area of Landscape Importance

From Conservation Area Map 2000

Domestic life

"Before the war, there were always geese, horses and cattle on the Common."



*Geese
& cows, horses...*

“Where did those Feet in Ancient Times, walk upon Sherfield’s Pleasant Green?”

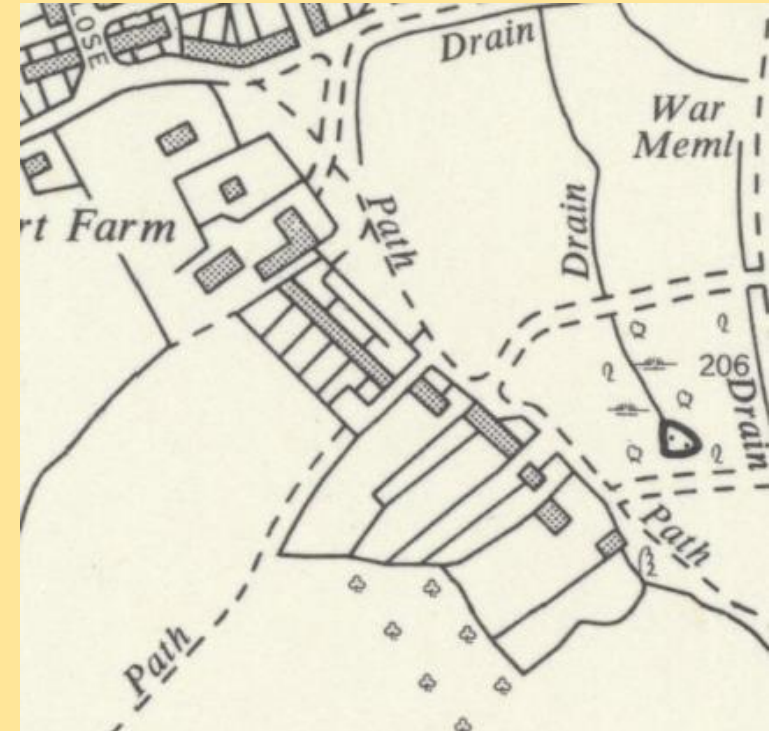
The Pilgrims’ Path



OS 1871



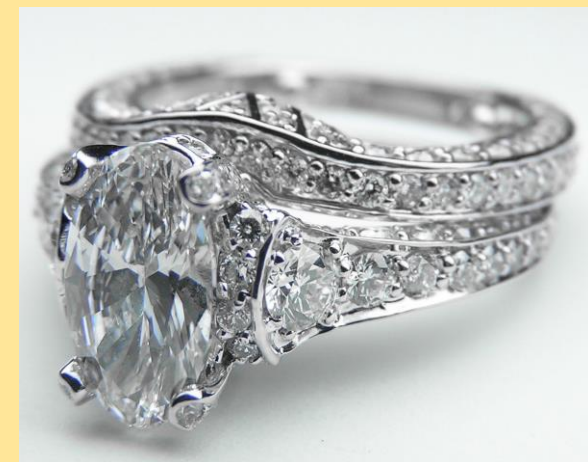
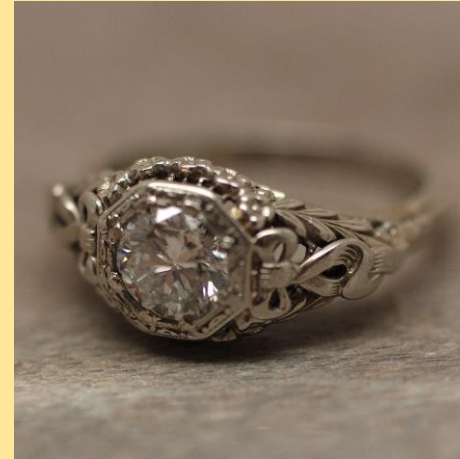
OS 1894



OS 1970

The Pilgrims’ Path – old, established, well-used for over two centuries, not least to walk to the Methodist Chapel, Parish Church and beyond

*“Your House is a Picture, a rare Jewel”
“It’s the Common which makes it so appealing”*

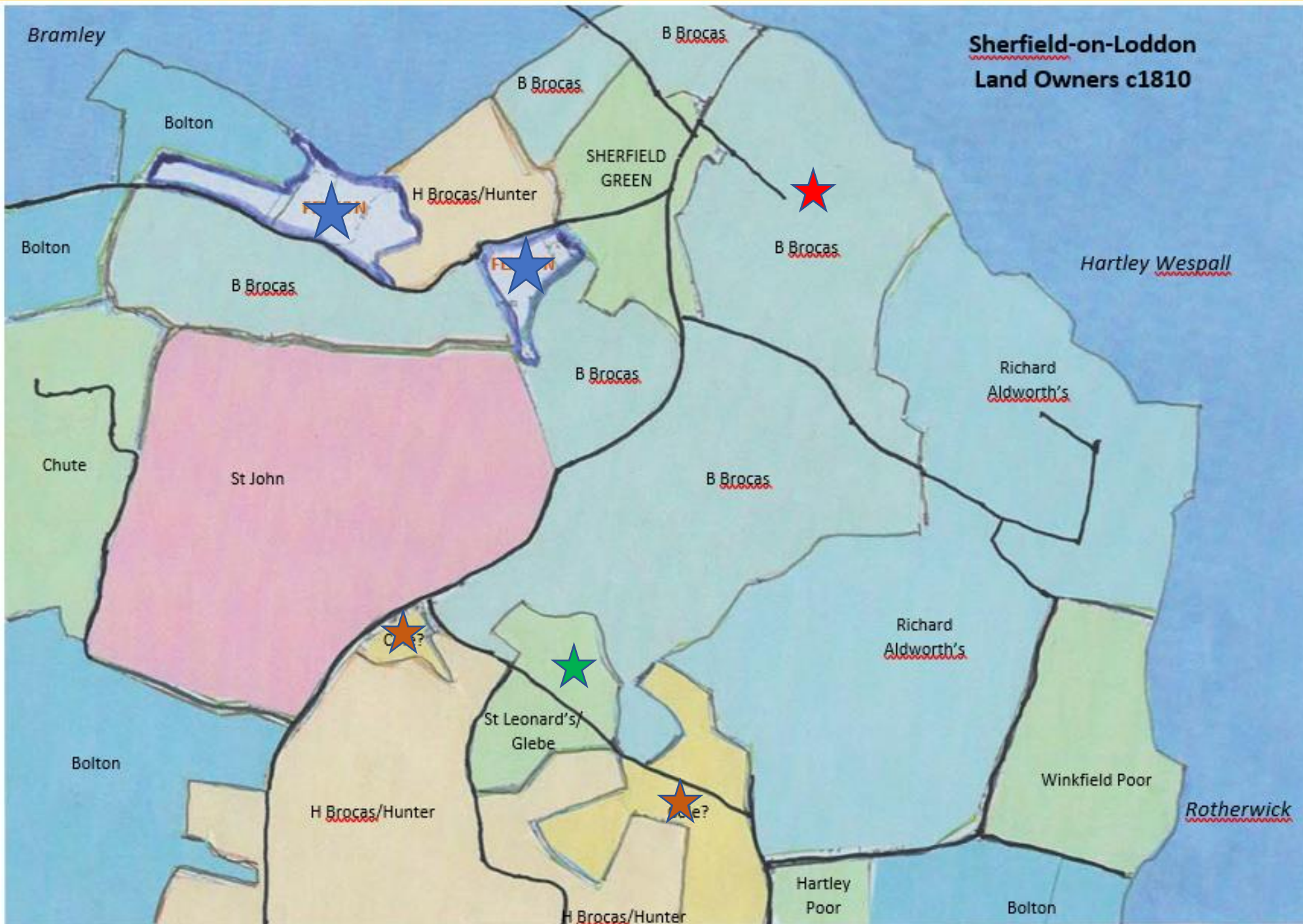


Jewels gain most from the Simplest of Settings

Act 1

1770s - 1845

A Country Residence



Sherfield-on-Loddon Land Owners c1810

**c1810 Five Land
Owners, 75% of the
Land**

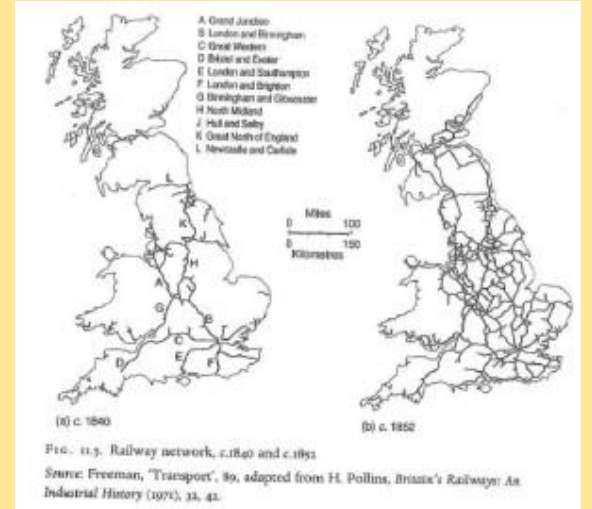
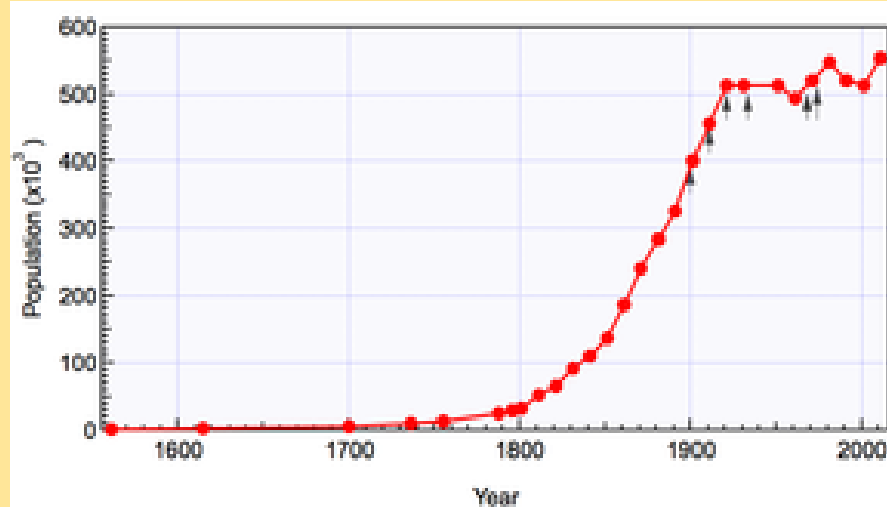
Bernard Brocas
Viscount Bolton
Richard Aldworth's Charity
Harriett Brocas
Edward St John

*Only Independent farms
were:*

Bowling's ★
St Leonards/Glebe ★
Willet's ★
Later, Breach ★

1770s-mid 1800s: A Good Period for Farming

Driven by:

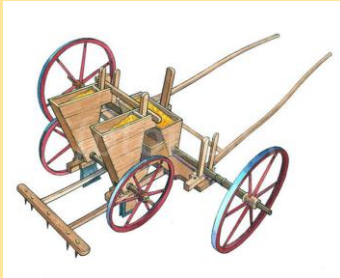


Better husbandry of crops (fertilisers)
and livestock (selective breeding)

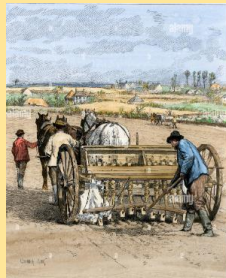
Population growth (bigger markets)

Transportation (national markets)

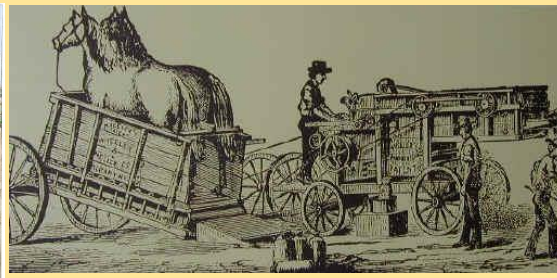
Mechanisation



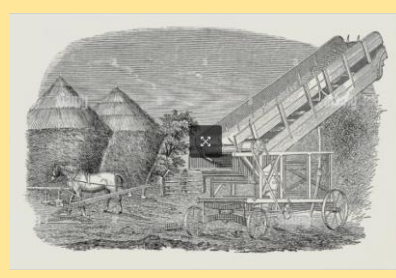
Improved seed drills



Winnowers



Reaper



Elevator



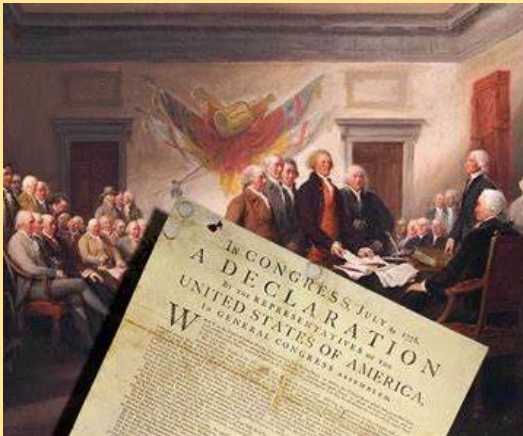
Butter making

1770s-mid 1800s: Political Threats and Uncertainty



1815 Corn Laws (*1846 repealed*)

1834 Tolpuddle Martyrs



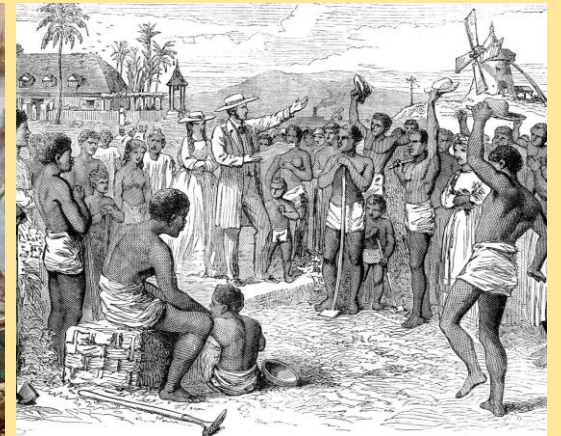
1776 US Declaration of Independence



1790s French Revolution



1803-1815 Napoleonic Wars



1838 Slavery Abolished

Late 1700s - mid 1800s:

Challenges to the Established Church

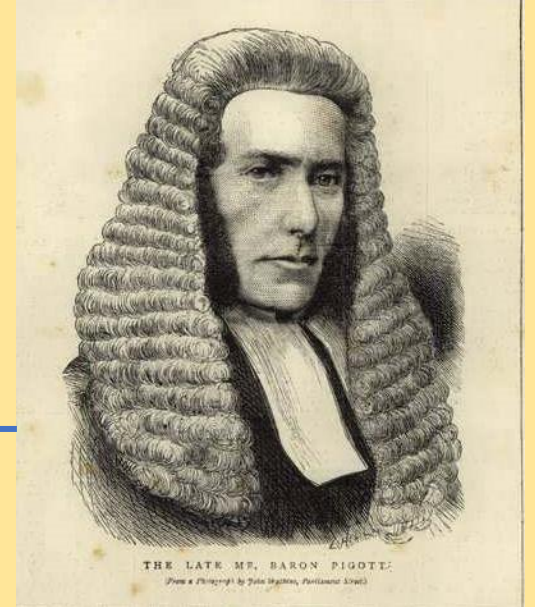
Catholic Relief Acts 1778, 1791, 1829 Catholics allowed to purchase land and join the army; Freedom of worship; Could hold public office, vote, sit in Parliament.

Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts 1828: barriers against dissenters removed.

Jewish Relief Act 1858: Jews could hold public office, vote, sit in Parliament.

Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880: allowed the saying of rights other than Anglican over the grave in a Parish churchyard ←

Oaths Act 1888: those with no religion could "solemnly affirm" rather than "swear by God".



Lord Justice Mr Baron Pigott (1813-1875)
of Sherfield Hill House

Even in Sherfield!

1806 Bowling's Farm Meeting House – Dissenters

1831 Breach Lane Chapel – Independents, Baptists

c1866 Primitive Methodist Chapel (Sherfield Green)

1875 Plymouth Brethren/Christian Brethren Meeting Room (Goddard's Lane)

Earliest Documentary Evidence of Bowling's

Maps: 1759 Taylor, 1791 Milne, 1818 Greenwood



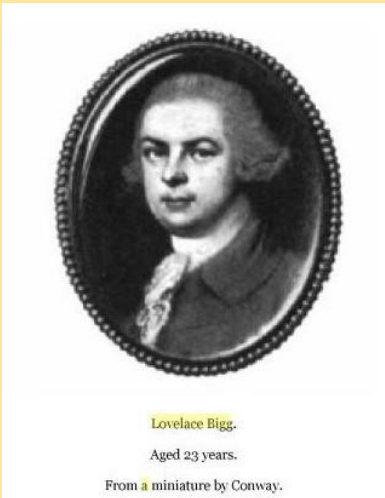
Farm buildings dated 1600s – Stuart, possibly 1500s - Tudor

Bowling's - 1791 Owner: Thomas Parker

Estate Plan for Sherfield Farm 1791 owned by **Lovelace Bigg-Wither**, shows Bowling's owner as Mr Parker.

Tax Records, 1798 onwards (Thomas Parker)

Electoral Register, 1806 (Thomas Parker of Reading)



Lovelace Bigg-Wither



Manydown House, 1833



Harris Bigg-Wither

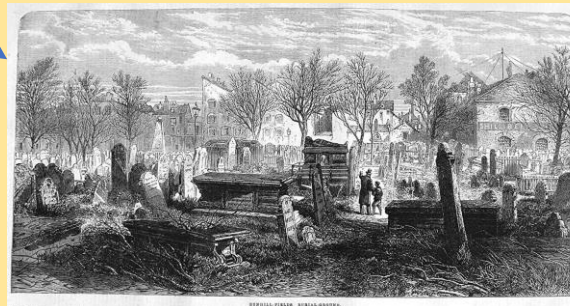
1814 New Owner: David Fenton (1750-1831)

Retired Scottish Linen Factor from Old Jewry, London,
living in Castle Street, Reading in early 1800s



Strong dissenter: New Broad Street Meeting House, London &
Broad Street Meeting House, Reading

Very well-off



Broad Street
Meeting House,
Reading →

← Bunhill Fields
Burial Ground



A Cottage, No Embellishments

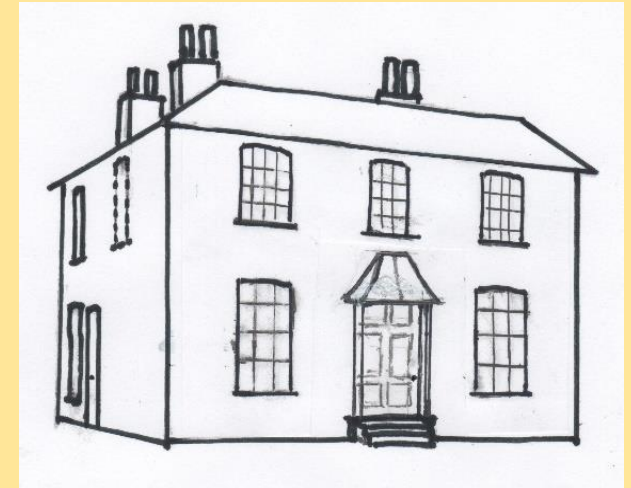
Parker or Fenton built the present house, a country residence, on the site of the previous house:

Contemporary Late Georgian elevations

*L shaped plan: Kitchen, Sitting, Dining Room & Hall.
Three bedrooms & Landing above*

Small porch typical of early 1800s - a Regency touch

Simple interior – cottage style



A Meeting House for dissenters (1806)

No 1 Orchard Lea is now on the site

Was this when house was built?

A Rural Retreat

For use of Parker and then Fenton, and their families

Within easy reach of Reading by horse and trap, Stage Coach and Mail Coach

Four hunts nearby, excellent shooting, fishing and communing with nature

The owners leased the farm

Tenants lived in the village:

- 1809 John Wise

1823-1824 Thomas May

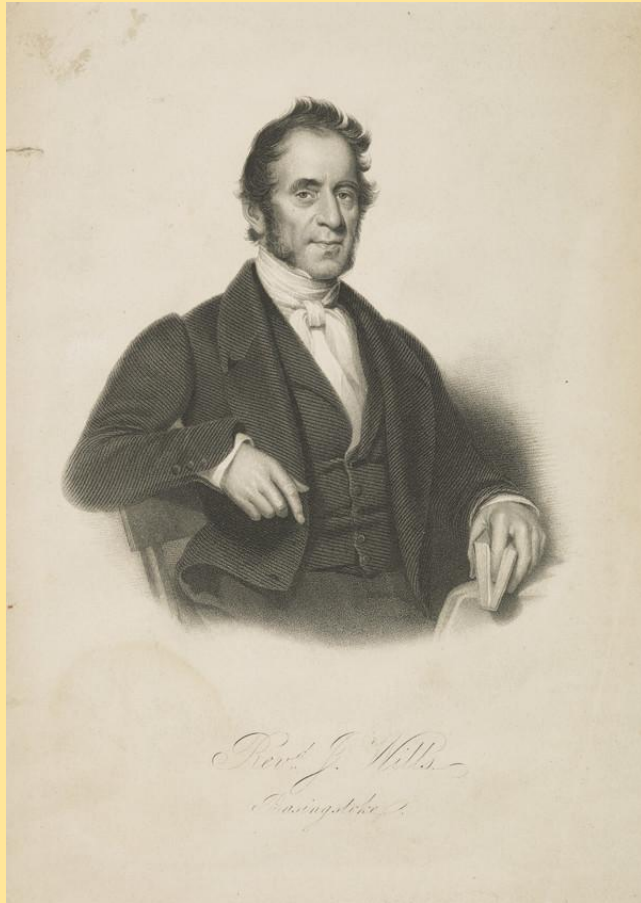
1831 John Hubbard

1809-1822 *James Carpenter*

1825-1830 Joseph Kersley



A Frequent Visitor



Rev. J. Wills, Artist - John Cochrane
Scottish National Portrait Gallery

Reverend James Wills (1784-1846)

Married David Fenton's daughter, Janett in 1822

First ministry c1822 at London Street Independent Church, Basingstoke.

Remained there until his death in 1846.

A significant figure in establishing other groups of dissenters in the area.

Doubtless contributed to the activities at the Meeting House at Bowling's Farm



London Street United Reform Church c2022
Enlarged in 1854, new Front with pillars 1860

1831 New Owners: the Winkworths

1831 Death of David Fenton

Farm bequeathed to granddaughters:

*Jane Forrest (1812-1882) and
Charlotte Ellen Winkworth (1814-1835)*

William Winkworth (1779-1857)

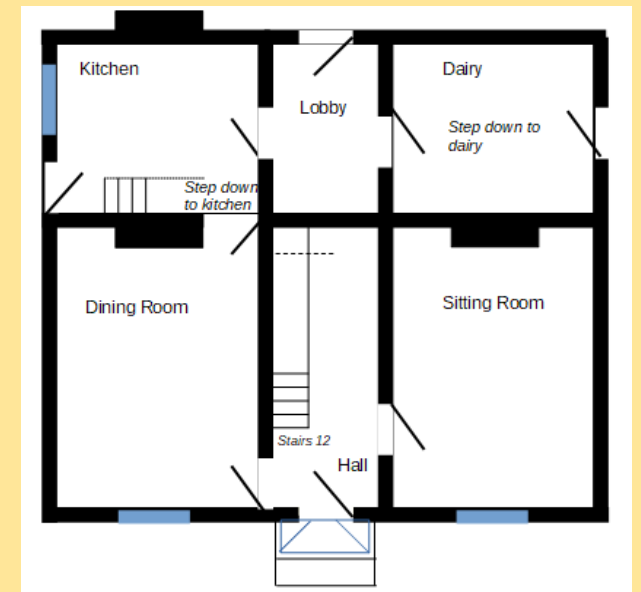
*their father, looked after their inheritance: took over
the farm, whilst retaining their home in Reading*

House extended in 1830s to create square plan

Addition of dairy, lobby and fourth bedroom above.



Ground Floor c1810



1832

Final Years of Farmer Winkworth

c1845 William Winkworth stopped farming, due to:

Ill-health

Illness of brother-in-law, Reverend James Wills and his death in 1846

Winkworth's sister-in-law, Janett Wills (née Fenton) who then moved away

Both farm and house were leased together until 1882

c1845-1852 Charles Cane (1820-1899) of Burghfield: *young tenant, then moved to Kingsclere to a larger farm*

1852-1875 Ambrose Painter (1801-1876) a gardener of Caversham: *widower, remarried 1851, new wife, a landowner in Sonning Eye*

1875-c1880 Charles Ernest Bullock (1845-?), of Henley-on-Thames: *probably nephew of Mrs Mary Painter (née Bullock); no documentary trace of family after 1878*

**By 1882, when Jane Fenton died, the farm had been very neglected
and Agriculture was in free fall**

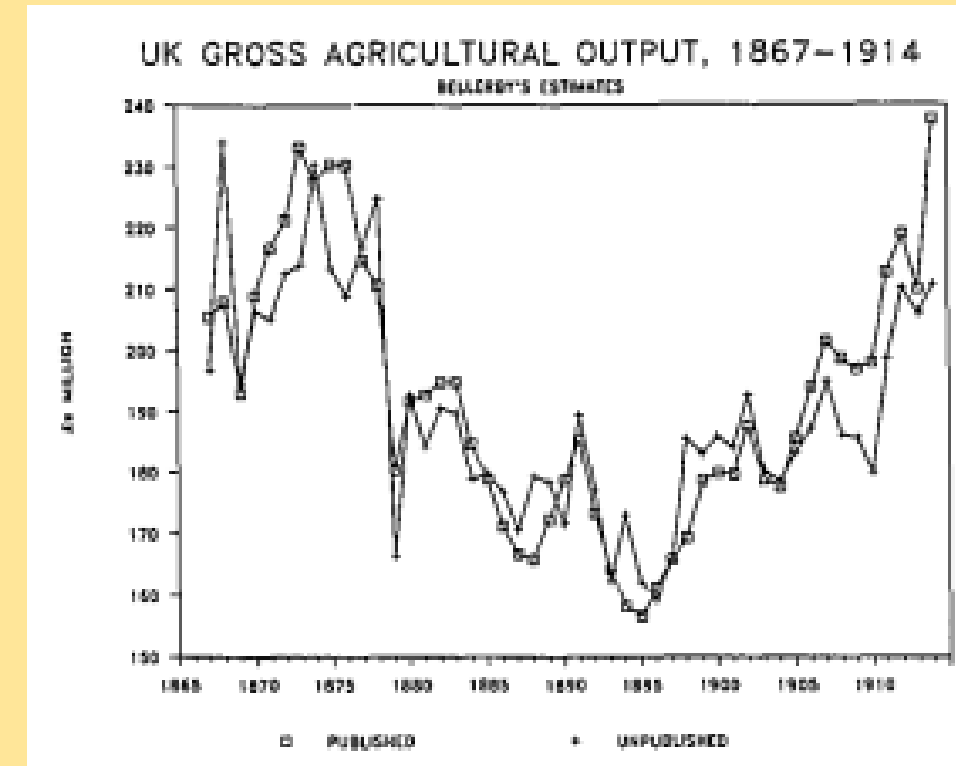
Late 1800s to 1920s: Years of Depression

*1873-1896 the **Great Depression** of British Agriculture*

Did not recover until after WWII

No protection for farming - cheap imported food essential for urban working class at time of industrial depression!

***Milk and Market gardening** survived well because unable to transport products long distances*



Mid 1800s to 1920s:

Health and Social Change = longer healthier lives



1843 Vaccination
Jenner



1867 Antiseptics
Lister



1871 Pasteurisation

More Wars



1853-56 Crimean War

1899-1902 Second Boer War

1922-23 Irish Civil War

1857-59 Indian Mutiny

1914-18 WW1

Act 2

1882 to 1927

An Independent Farm

1883 New Owner: William Adams (1816-1890)

A retired builder

House was in very poor condition – the ultimate ‘do-er upper’

Filled in window

Conservatory

Removed side door and
internal back staircase

Internal: hoop fireplace
inserts; two stone/slate
fire surrounds; new
doors and architraves;
built in cupboards



White painted brickwork

Verandah

Larger panes
6 over 6 (from 12 over 12)

Victorian door case

Rear extension – boiler
room for dairy

Also owned Sherrin's Mead and built Woodley Cottages, in Greenway

New Owners:

1893 Gilbert (1862-1941) & Julia Palmer (1853-1939)

Married 1893

He was the farmer but she had the money and owned the farm

45 acres, mixed farming

No significant changes, except...

- The privy!

- Bowling's Cottage

- 1917 Six acres behind the Camp Wire

1928 Retired & Sold up

Reputation:

- The smock

- Pocket money

- The Pharaoh

- Lord Toad and Lady Frog

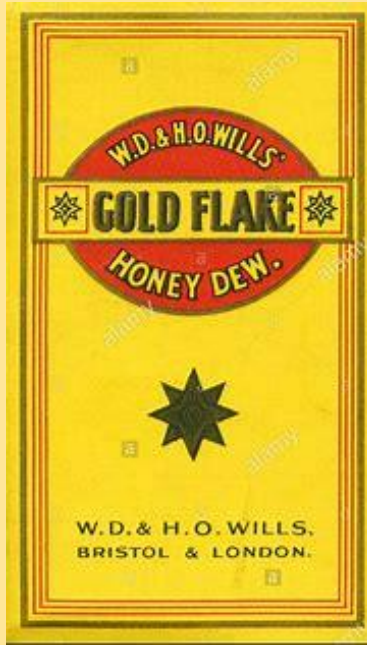


Act 3

1928 to 1982

A Tied Cottage

New Owner 1928: Major Maitland Cecil Melville Wills, MC, JP (1891-1966)



1928: Bought Sherfield Court Estate from Lady Dorothy Wellesley (owner from 1922)
then added Bowling's Farm.

Brought some staff with him from his well-established innovative farm near Bristol :
Arthur Rickwood – Farm Bailiff, Orlando Charles Lloyd – Handyman

Sherfield Court 1838-1918

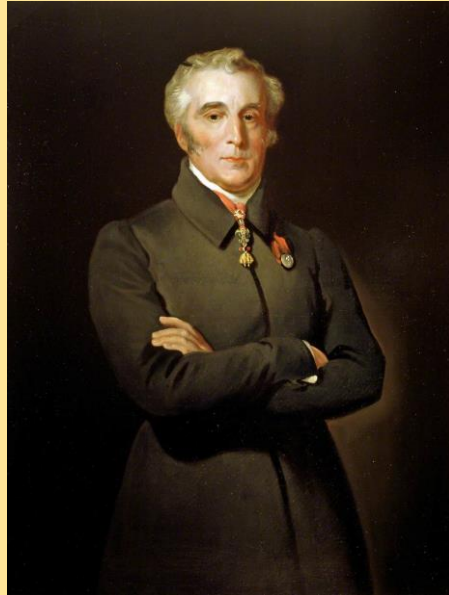
Wellington Estate



Arthur Wellesley

Warrior

1st Duke of Wellington



Prime Minister

Sherfield Court
Estate – *part of
the gift from a
grateful nation*

From a Farm

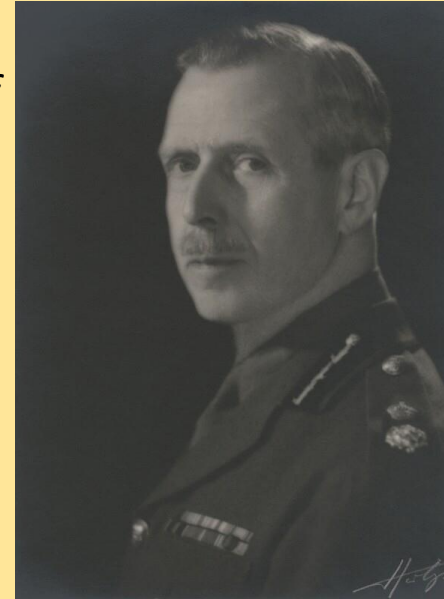
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To a
Literary
Salon

->

1918-1928

G&D Wellesley's Estate



Gerald Wellesley

Soldier, Diplomat & Architect

7th Duke of Wellington (1943)



Dorothy Wellesley

Poet

Guests of Gerald & Dorothy

H G Wells

Marie Stopes

The Bloomsbury Set

Vita Sackville-West



The Bailiff and Bowling's Farm House

Bailiff: Arthur Rickwood

Wife: Catherine

Sons: Donald and Alistair

Role of Bailiff:

Managing farming on Sherfield Court Estate

*Liaising with tenants of farms: Carpenter's (Maynard),
Goddard's (Lee?).....*

*Breeding pedigree Dairy Shorthorns for the major shows and
top quality bulls for breeding - sold at Dairy Shorthorn sales.*

Arthur



Donald and Alistair



*Donald with Maurice
Syckelmoore*



The Bailiff's Wife

Catherine, Sparsholt College trained, ran the Dairy, providing produce for Sherfield Court:

- *each day - fresh milk, butter and eggs*
- *when appropriate – chickens and grapes....*



Butter Pads

Donald and Alistair helped churn the butter each morning, before school



Illustrations only – not Bowling's Farm

Electricity comes to Sherfield

Privy commandeered and extended

Used c1928 – 1947 or even later

First house in Sherfield to have
electric light and power

An Elsan replaced the privy!



No major alterations to house

But plenty of building work on the estate,
including:

Lilac Cottage (now Little Bowlings) and another for
game keeper in German Road



Engine Shed

Batteries in Privy

The engine shed, now garden shed, in 2022

V for Victory dates from 1941

WWII

Major-General Wills, Staff Office, Ministry of War
Sherfield Court requisitioned by Ministry of Supply,
as a shipping office

Wills family decamped to Sunningdale

Estate ticked over, run by its Manager, Colonel Scorer

Wills never returned

Aged 56, Wills retired to write more
detective novels

1945 Estate Sold



Inspector Boscobel



1945 New Owner: Louis Dreyfus (1877-1967)

Max and Louis Dreyfus, New York

Music publishers:

T B Harms, Francis Day & Hunter

Chappell and Co

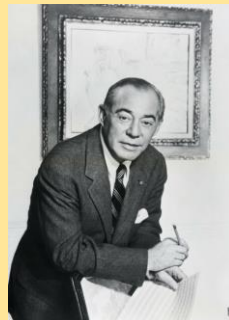
Louis ran the London base



Jerome Kern



George Gershwin



Richard Rogers



Cole Porter



Irving Berlin

Irving Berlin

Frequent visitor

Last visit was when working on:

Annie Get Your Gun – *“There’s no business like showbusiness”,
“Anything you can do”*

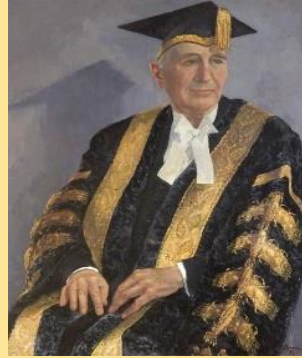
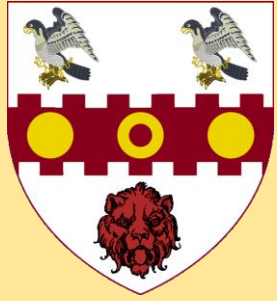
Easter Parade - *“Stepping out with my baby”*

But, why visit Court Farm?





1948 New Owner: Sir Roger Mellor Makins (Lord Sherfield) (1904-1996)



Bought Sherfield Court Estate (for £40,000) added other local estates and farms, such as Beaurepaire.

British Ambassador to the US, 1953-56
Many very senior appointments:
Diplomatic, Business and Science &
Technology Policy.
Investment Banker, Chair of AEA.....
Chancellor of the University of Reading.

"So I still have staff there!"

"Meet you at the Ambassador"

"....his hat was in the clouds....."

"Would sit on a bale and"

"What do you think?"

"He would jump on any spare tractor....."

"On the way to a NATO meeting....."

1963 New Owner: Christopher Makins (1942-2006)

Lord Sherfield transferred a large part of the estate (306 acres) to Christopher (aged 21) - Goddard's, Carpenter's, Bowling's etc

The Family

Alice Brooks Makins (née Davis) took a special interest in the dairy herd especially the Guernseys.

Herd Pedigree Name:
Kalorama!



Alice Brooks Makins, 1909

Mary, b1935
Cynthia, b1935
Virginia, b1939
Christopher James, b1942
Patricia, b1946
Dwight William, b1951

Christopher Makins (1942-2006)



Brought up in Sherfield & Washington
Educated Winchester & Oxford

Diplomat and Foreign Policy Expert

Spent much of career in Washington

Significant expert on US-Europe relations



British Ambassador's
home in Washington

***“A tall man with a slim physique,
gracious manners, and a booming voice***

*...one of the brightest and most
knowledgeable officials on defence, arms
control, and other security issues.”*



“A man of tremendous stature and intellect”

Washington Post 2006

Court Farm House – Home of the Farm Manager

1947 – 1958 Ted Onions – Farm Manager

1958 – 1982 Brian Gaiger – Farm Manager

Much building work on Estate

At Court Farm House – main changes

Late 1940s – Mains electricity installed

Early 1950s - The 'fill-in' of dairy with bedroom above built by Winkworth, replaced by a single storey 'modern' dairy, bathroom (in back hall) and outside WC.

Early 1960s – Bedroom and bathroom built above the dairy

Early 1970s – Kitchen properly fitted out
- a modern kitchen!!



Major Developments and Then!

Post war: mid 40s – mid 60s

*Acquiring farms and combining them quite easy. Rationalization boosted productivity.
The Heyday of British Agriculture*

But, by early 1970s these days were over

Impact of Britain's entry to EU in 1973

Very significant challenge to farm incomes

*New avenues - **Contracting** offered better use
expensive equipment*

By early 1980s completely new business models

*Doubtful future for large estates run by landed gentry
1982 Sherfield Court Estate sold*

April 1973

<u>FARM CONTRACT SERVICE</u>	
Operator: Donald Rickwood, Lilac Cottage, Sherfield on Loddon, Tel. Turgis Green 532.	Farm: Brian Gaiger, Court Farm, Sherfield on Loddon, Tel. Turgis Green 223.
Service available and Hire Rates	
Operator only, using farmer's own machinery or workshop - - - - -	£1.30 per hour
Maintenance and repair work, using Court Farm workshop, gas and arc welding, etc - -	£1.50 per hour
Tractor (M-F 188) and driver - - - -	£1.80 per hour
Ploughing, 4 x 12" furrows (Bamford Kverneland) - - - - -	£3.00 per acre
Combine drilling (M-F 29 drill) - - - -	£1.60 per acre
Muck-spreading (M-F 188 and Rotospreader 200 with M-F 35X and loader) - - - -	£2.80 per hour
Ditto, plus extra man, tractor and spreader -	£5.00 per hour
Potato planting, Howard Rotaplanter with Ferti-	

The Gaiger Family

*The Gaiger family c1970
very well known,
need no introduction*



Back: Kathleen, Eleanor, Brian

Front: Mary, Frances, Richard, Sarah, Stephen

Brian Gaiger – Farm Manager
Independent Borough Councillor
Mayor 1985/6
Parish Councillor
& Chair of Parish Council

**Proposed and led major
schemes for Borough and Village**

A Councillor with a lovely human touch

*Considerate, Consultative, Communicative,
Community-focussed, Collegial,
Courteous especially towards Contrarians,
Confident & Charming.*

With a very special connection to the Rev
James! But which one?



A very special connection to which Rev James?



Act 4

1982 - present

A Private Home

1982 New Owners: Brian & Kathleen Gaiger

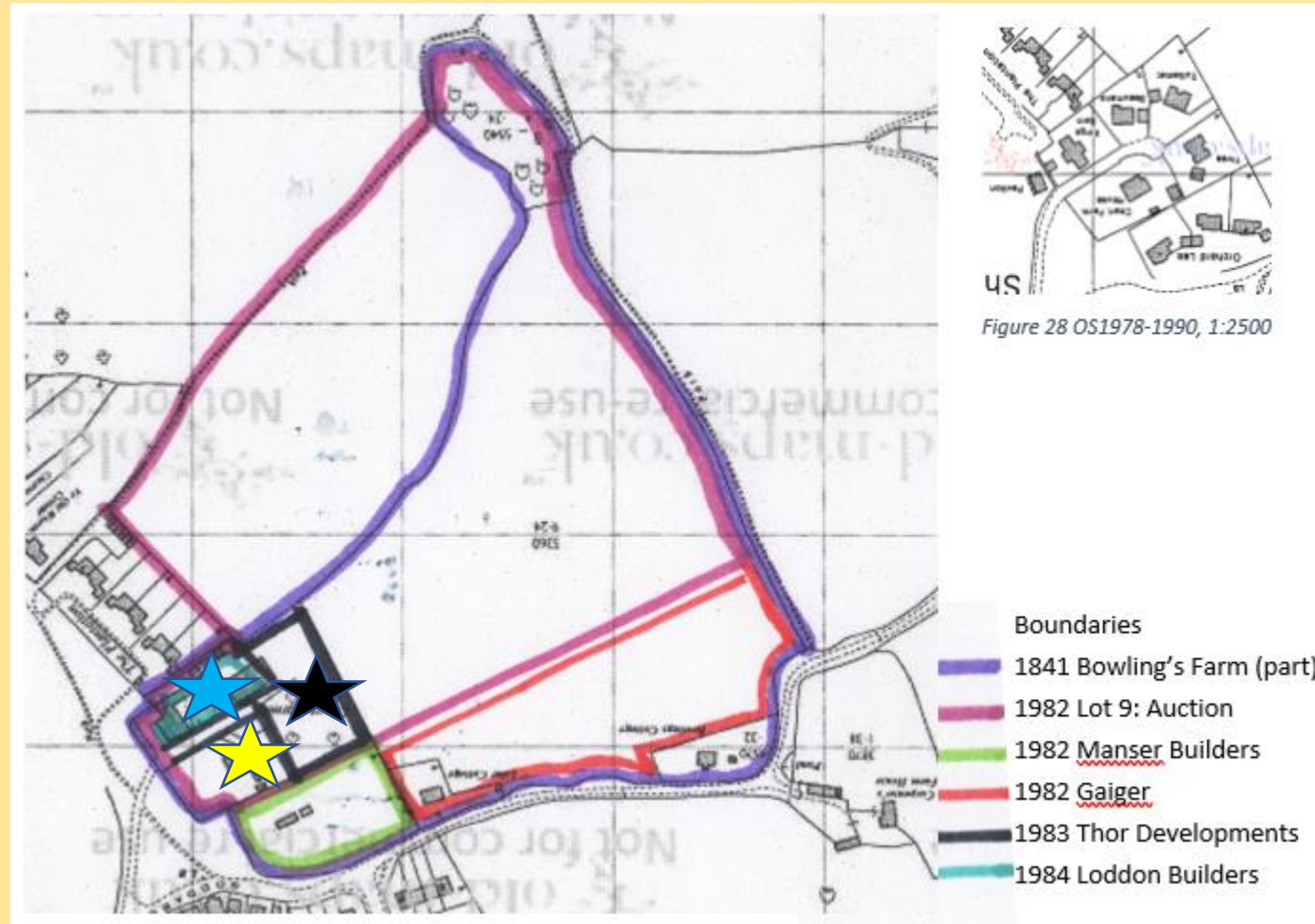
1982 Sherfield Court Estate
– divided and sold

Lot 9: 14 acres including
Court Farm House and Farm
buildings

Bought by Brian & Kathleen
Gaiger

Subsequently divided and
sold:

- ★ • The Barn
- ★ • The Farm Yard and Orchard
- ★ • Court Farm House



1985 New Owners: Peter & Irene Lansley



Village Calendar 1980

Major Modernisation Project –

from Tied Farm House to Private Home

Heating

Insulation

Repairs & redecoration – extensive & endless

Building work – governed by listed building status

Listed October 1984

Significant interest and encouragement from:

Villagers

Borough Council

Repairs Officer

Chief Conservation Officer

Parish Councillors

1985 Onwards: From Tied Cottage to Private Home:



1985



1987

Conversion and extension of dairy & outside wc
and bedroom & bathroom above,
to provide
lounge, back hall, cloakroom, bedroom, study,
bathroom, ensuite, landing & storage.



2009

Kitchen & cloakroom
replaced

2023: Current Challenges

Historic Conservation of a Grade II Listed Property.....

Quite straightforward although challenging skirmishes with Conservation Officers.

Successful and enjoyable.

A wonderful family home, resonating with the happy lives of ours and earlier families.

However....

Energy Conservation

Preservation of original structure and appearance constrains conservation of energy.

Conservation of the Setting.....

*Delighted to preserve the house, 'a rare jewel', for posterity,
- that is for you, your family, friends and future generations.*

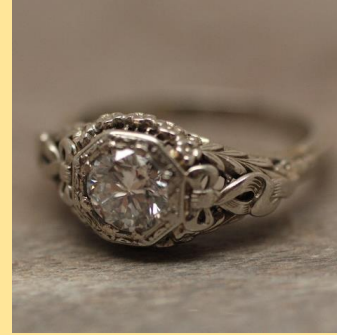
*In particular avoided the temptation to gentrify the house
into something it never was.*

No influence over the conservation of the setting.

Carelessness destroying the value of our guardianship of your heritage.



Act 5 The Setting



*“Your House is a Picture, a rare Jewel”
“It’s the Common which makes it so appealing”*

The Setting = Sherfield Green = Our Heritage



Just as its frame can enhance or destroy the appeal of a painting,
so the setting of a house can support or annihilate its charm.

The visual appeal of Court Farm House from the Village Green depends on maintaining the 'Heritage Setting'.

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 1: Erect Fences

*“What has happened to your quintessential North Hampshire village green?....
...a down-market developer’s pastiche of a town park in Kentucky.”*

(an Anglophile North American revisiting the village in 2019)



← From this

To this →



A centuries-old boundaryless Green is now a Fenced Park,
with alien materials, and with access very much limited.
More harm than 250 years of the Enclosures Acts.

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 2: Divide a Single Open Space into Two



“The Green used to sweep across the road and into the gardens and fields. One very unusual large green is now two smaller ones, divided by a fence and a hedge.”

“Much loved, centuries-old views, its defining feature, have been destroyed at a stroke.”

How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

Step 3: Erect an Ugly Building in a Prime Heritage Area



So,
what do you make of this?

“Is this responsible
guardianship of a heritage
conservation area?”



How to Lose our Heritage in Three Easy Steps

And just to make certain: Eliminate the Flora and Fauna

Overwhelmed by “the temptation to create a shaven effect”

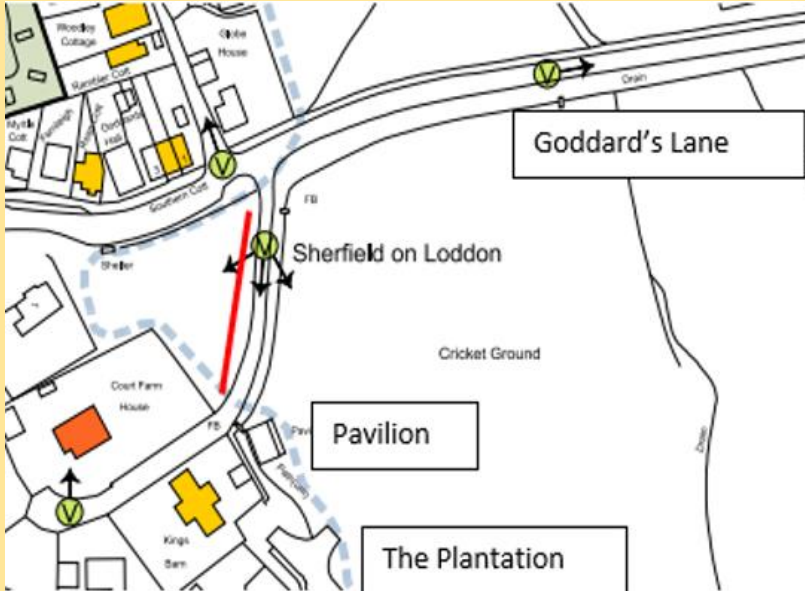


When just one species of plant is practically eradicated, many families of mammals, birds and insects can be decimated.



Prosternon tessellatum
© Arved Lompe
Cryptolestes sparti
© Lech Borowiec
Micrambe ulicis
© Lech Borowiec
Gonioctena olivacea
Exapion ulicis
Andrion regensteiniense

What now for a Place of Warm Memories and Pilgrimage?



"I can no longer let the dog run here. If it goes under the fence then I can't get to it. The dog loved this rougher part of the Green. So did I."

"...no longer used by children, dogs. Wild life pushed out: no activity at all."

"Astonishing suburban approach towards a rural issue and to managing the Village Green."

"The dragon's teeth were an entirely satisfactory defence against Travellers and didn't restrict movement on the Green."

"Not a gypsy defence at all, just an indulgence; and the first step towards establishing a car park in the middle of the Green."

Sherfield residents, late 2010s

"Where did those Feet in Ancient Times, walk upon Sherfield's Pleasant Green?"

"Who on earth cares about that?"



The “Sense of Place” of Sherfield Green

Eroded at a phenomenal pace

*Historic buildings no longer anchored in their all-important heritage setting will become devoid of meaning, and the **extraordinary legacy** of Sherfield Green will be lost*

Without restoring the Common,
Sherfield Green will be so sanitized, sterile and soulless,
as to have nothing to offer
– at best, a meagre town park

*Please speak up for our heritage, otherwise you,
your children and grandchildren will have nothing to cherish,
your memories will mean nothing*

AN ABANDONED INHERITANCE

More Information

An Extraordinary Legacy

The fascinating history of Bowling's Farm and its surroundings.

tinyurl.com/3adf56nn for the presentation slides

With some additional slides which have not been presented this evening

Also available through this link

Donald and Ursula Rickwood's Wartime Reminiscences

Conversations about the Green

A Briefing on the Concrete Store

Feedback and Comments warmly welcomed

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