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WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

In the 19th century the parish covered an area of 2,295 acres, but in 1932 a detached portion of Chesterton in which lay Weston Park farm was added to it, increasing its area to 2,483 acres. The parish measures some four miles from north to south, and two miles from east to west at the widest point. Akeman Street forms the northern boundary and Gallows Brook most of the western boundary. Two other streams rising near Akeman Street bound the parish on the east. (fn. 1)

The northern third of the parish lies on the Cornbrash, and the Forest Marble is exposed in the valley of the Gallows Brook in the north-west, but most of the parish lies in the area of the Oxford Clay; (fn. 2) its soil is clay and stonebrash. The ground slopes slightly from north to south, being about 275 feet above sea-level in the north and 200 feet in the south, with a slight rise called Sandhill or Sainthill to the south of the village. It is a well-watered area; besides the streams on the boundaries others run south through the parish. No woodland is recorded in Domesday, but there was some in the 18th century, and Great Spinney and Middleleys Spinney are noted in 1848. (fn. 3) In 1955 there were several woods, the largest being Weston Wood (48 a.) and Mead Copse.

Two main roads cross the parish: the main road from Oxford to Brackley, a busy highway from medieval times, and the road from Oxford to Bicester. The minor road to Bletchingdon was mentioned in 1766 when it was being repaired. (fn. 4)

It is possible that the original settlement at Weston was named 'West tun', as it lay on the west side of an ancient trackway and in the extreme west of the parish. (fn. 5) It still lies on one side only of the OxfordBrackley road. Throughout its recorded history it appears to have been a fair-sized village. There were 37 taxable houses listed for the hearth tax of 1665: besides the big manor-house, the village had 13 substantial farm-houses with 4 or 3 hearths apiece. (fn. 6) For the greater part of the 18th century there were 50 or so houses, including 8 farm-houses. (fn. 7) By 1811 there were 82 dwellings in the village, and by 1851 25 more had been built. Owing to the considerable fall in population there were only 67 inhabited houses in 1901, but the number had increased to 97 by 1951. (fn. 8) Much new building took place between 1951 and 1955. (fn. 9) Many of the new concrete council houses are near the church; others have been built near the Roman Akeman Street, where there were already a few houses which had been built during the First World War. Here too is a large building

occupied by the Danish Bacon Company. During the Second World War, the airfield (285 a.), built in 1915 by Canadians and by German prisoners of war, was a satellite of the Bomber Command station at Upper Heyford. Since 1946—except for a short period—it has been used as a dropping zone for the R.A.F. Parachute Training School. (fn. 10)

Despite these changes the appearance of the old village has altered little since the mid-19th century. (fn. 11) Many of the cottages, built of stone from local quarries, are still thatched, although slate roofs are gradually replacing the thatch. Some like Manor Cottage, once the dower house of the manor, (fn. 12) and the 'general store' (dated 1617) are of 17th-century origin. A few houses and cottages lie scattered along the Brackley road from the 'Chequers' (fn. 13) at the south end of the village as far as the entrance to the manorhouse, but the main village street branches off the main road and runs on into Church Lane. The church and Vicarage lie to the north of the road and farther north and west is the water-mill, probably on the site of one of the two medieval mills. (fn. 14) Windmill Clump to the north of the village perhaps marks the position of a third mill, mentioned as late as 1808. (fn. 15) Beyond the turn to Church Lane is the 'Ben Jonson's Head', mentioned by name in 1784, (fn. 16) but possibly in existence as early as 1735 at least, when two Weston victuallers were licensed. (fn. 17) A second but shorter village street called North Lane branches off the main road beyond the public house. Here are the 19th-century nonconformist chapel and the school. (fn. 18) Between these two streets probably lay the ancient village green which gave the place its name of Weston-on-the-Green. As late as the end of the 19th century there was a small triangular green on which the stocks stood near the 'Ben Jonson's Head'.

Apart from the manor-house, one of the best houses in the village is the Vicarage. It is a handsome stone building, roofed with blue slate and containing seventeen rooms. Dunkin described it in 1823 as a 'neat and commodious mansion' which had been occupied for many years by the vicar James Yalden (d. 1822). (fn. 19) It had replaced a 'mean' house, which in 1635 and 1685 was described as having only three bays of building. (fn. 20) The house was enlarged in 1823 by the architect S. H. Benham of Oxford at a cost of some £300. (fn. 21)

There was a medieval manor-house which was probably of some size, as it was the seat of Oseney Abbey's bailiff for the bailiwick of Weston. (fn. 22) Two sides of its 13th-century rectangular moat were existing, and a third side could be traced, before they were largely filled in in 1908. (fn. 23) The present house, however, was probably mainly built in the mid-16th century by Lord Williams of Thame or his widow. (fn. 24) The main survival of the earlier building is the great hall (19x42 ft.), very probably the court room of the manor. Its walls date from the early 16th century. An entry into the hall from the corridor between the great hall and the buttery and kitchen quarters is called the Monk's Hole or Hall, but as it now stands it appears to be of a later period and probably dates from about 1851, when the Hon. the Revd. F. A. Bertie was rebuilding and making extensive alterations to the house.

On the outside of the south wall is a staircase turret, bearing the arms of the Bertie family, (fn. 25) and leading up to a minstrels' gallery, perhaps adapted from the solar of the older hall. Inside, the hall has oak linen-fold panelling and above a carved frieze of foliage and mermaids, and a head probably representing that of St. John the Baptist on a charger. A legend 'Time Deum et recede a malo. Principium sapiencie timor est Dei' runs round the frieze, with the name of Richard Rydge, the last Abbot of Notley (Bucks.), between the two sentences. Peregrine Bertie (1741–90) moved this panelling from Notley in about 1780 and put it up in the hall at Weston; (fn. 26) the open timber roof now in the hall also came from Notley, but was first used to roof a barn in Chesterton and was not placed in the hall of

Weston Manor until between 1840 and 1850. The plaster corbel angels supporting the roof were probably a part of F. A. Bertie's restoration.

The main block of the 16th-century house is rectangular: with its two small projections at the back it encloses a courtyard (45 X 30 ft.). The stables and outbuildings lie to the right of the house across a paved stable-yard, through which may once have been the main approach. The size of the house before the 19th-century alterations may be gauged from its 20 hearths returned for the hearth tax of 1665. (fn. 27) It was among the county's larger mansions, although not in the same class as Lord Anglesey's house with its 30 hearths at nearby Bletchington. (fn. 28) An etching of about 1823 shows it as it was before its original 16th-century frontage was replaced by a Gothic-revival façade in the 1820's. The front of the main building has a gable at either end and the central porch is flanked by bay windows, extending the whole height of the building, which was of two stories with attics. An unpretentious low wall or paling separates the house from an open field, and farm outhouses lie on both sides. (fn. 29)

The principal other points of interest in the present building are the William and Mary panelling in the drawing-room; the bow window of this room, which extends to the top of the first floor; the Tudor fireplace in the entrance hall; and the adornments of the central courtyard. This last has a central well surrounded by a low wall bearing the arms of the Bertie family, and against its west wall two doors from the Jacobean chapel of Exeter College. They bear the arms of George Hakewill, a Fellow and Rector of the college, at whose cost the chapel had been built; and were probably acquired by the Berties when Exeter chapel was rebuilt in 1856. (fn. 30)

The gardens have an avenue of deciduous trees, called the Monks' Walk, but undoubtedly planted by the Berties. The last of the elm trees, planted in 1672 and 1682 and noted in the parish register by Edward Norreys himself, (fn. 31) was struck by lightning in 1952 and removed. The house has been used as an hotel since 1949.

The parish has played a small part in national affairs. In the Civil War royalist troops were quartered in the village in 1643 and 1644 (fn. 32) and parliamentary troops under Colonel Fleetwood were stationed there before the siege of Oxford in 1646. (fn. 33) The manor-house was the home for over two centuries of the Bertie family. (fn. 34) John Warde, 'the father of foxhunting', established kennels at Weston in 1778. (fn. 35)

Manor.

At the time of the Conquest WESTON was one of the possessions of the Saxon lord Wigod of Wallingford. On Wigod's death shortly afterwards many of his lands including Weston passed to Robert d'Oilly, the first Norman castellan of Oxford, who is said to have married Wigod's daughter. Robert held Weston rated at 10 hides in 1086 (fn. 36) and on his death in 1094 (fn. 37) it passed to his brother and successor Nigel. (fn. 38) Nigel lived until about 1115 (fn. 39) and was succeeded by his son Robert (II) d'Oilly, who married Edith, daughter of Forne, to whom he gave Weston as part of her dower. (fn. 40) It is likely that Robert's gift about 1130 to his new foundation of Oseney Abbey of the church of Weston (fn. 41) was accompanied or followed by a grant of lands in the manor; Henry (II) d'Oilly confirmed to the abbey 6 virgates which were the gift of his grandmother Edith and his father Henry (I). (fn. 42) In 1137 Edith, with Robert's consent, gave 35 acres of land in Weston to the new foundation of Otley Abbey in Oddington, later removed to Thame. (fn. 43) Robert died in 1142, (fn. 44) and was succeeded by his son Henry (I), who confirmed his mother's gift to Thame (fn. 45) and confirmed or augmented her gift to Oseney. Edith presumably held Weston until her death between 1151 and 1154. (fn. 46) Her son Henry (I) died in 1163 and was succeeded by his son Henry (II), a minor who came of age about 1175. (fn. 47) In 1213

Henry granted Weston in marriage with his daughter Maud to Maurice de Gaunt, who undertook to discharge a debt of 1,200 marks owed by Henry to the king. Maud had died without issue by 1220 when Henry sought to recover the manor from Maurice. The king's court eventually decided that, since Maurice had been given twelve years in which to pay Henry's debt by annual instalments, he should hold Weston until 1225, when Henry should recover possession. (fn. 48) Oseney Abbey had meanwhile increased its estate in Weston by a number of small gifts from tenants of the manor. (fn. 49) In 1227 Henry d'Oilly sold to Oseney the whole manor with the exception of the manor-house, the mill, and certain demesne lands for 300 marks, which the abbey paid to a creditor of Henry, David the Jew of Oxford. (fn. 50) Soon afterwards, probably in 1228, Henry gave the remainder of the manor to Oseney Abbey. (fn. 51)

Henry d'Oilly died in 1232, (fn. 52) and the overlordship of Weston passed to his nephew Thomas de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, and followed the same descent as the overlordship of Bucknell. (fn. 53) In practice the overlordship soon lapsed, and the Abbot of Oseney virtually held the manor in chief. (fn. 54) About 1260, however, the manor was claimed against the abbot by Roger Damory of Bucknell. At the time of the Domesday survey Robert (I) d'Oilly's tenant at Weston had been Gilbert, (fn. 55) probably the ancestor of the Damory family, who also held of Robert at Bucknell, Bletchington, and Fulwell. Gilbert's descendants (fn. 56) may have held lands at Weston as tenants under the D'Oillys, but although Robert Damory (d. 1236) witnessed grants of land in the manor about 1220, (fn. 57) it does not appear that either he or his son Roger held lands there themselves: they were certainly not among the numerous tenants of the manor who granted their lands to Oseney between 1230 and 1270. (fn. 58) Roger nevertheless brought his suit, but in 1260 at Beckley, before Richard of Cornwall, he agreed to quitclaim the manor to the abbot for 300 marks. (fn. 59) From 1260 until the Dissolution (fn. 60) Oseney Abbey remained in undisputed possession of the whole manor with the exception of the 35 acres given to Thame in 1137 and quitclaimed to that abbey by Roger Damory in 1257. (fn. 61)

As a reward for his services to Henry VIII, notably as surveyor of monastic lands in Oxfordshire, Sir John Williams of Thame obtained Weston manor in 1540, and in 1546 he purchased certain lands and rents reserved in his original grant. (fn. 62) Sir John, later Lord Williams of Thame, died in 1559 leaving Weston to his second wife Margery Wentworth. (fn. 63) Margery married secondly Sir William Drury (d. 1579) and thirdly James Croft. On her death in about 1588 Weston passed by the terms of Lord Williams's will to Henry, Lord Norreys, husband of Margery, Lord Williams's younger daughter by his first wife. (fn. 64) Lord Norreys, however, allowed James Croft to retain Weston as his tenant. Sir William Norreys, Lord Norreys's eldest son, had died in 1579, and in 1586 his widow Elizabeth married Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln. (fn. 65) The earl claimed Weston manor as part of his wife's jointure, turned Croft out of the manor-house by force and occupied it himself. Lord Norreys brought an armed band from Rycote to his tenant's help, and after some fighting with the earl's servants Croft was reinstated. The earl, however, continued his fight in the Star Chamber court from 1590 to 1597. Judgement was finally given in Lord Norreys's favour. (fn. 66)

On the latter's death in 1601 Weston passed to his grandson Francis Norreys, later created Earl of Berkshire. Francis married Bridget, daughter of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, by whom he had a daughter Elizabeth, who inherited most of his lands on his death in 1624. Weston, however, by virtue of a settlement made in 1619 passed to Francis's illegitimate son Francis Rose, who assumed the name of Norreys after his father's death. (fn. 67) Sir Francis, as he became in 1633, was Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1635 and later M.P. for the county under the Commonwealth. He married Hester, daughter of Sir John Rouse, and was

succeeded by his eldest son Sir Edward Norreys on his death in 1669. (fn. 68) Sir Edward, many times M.P. for either the county or city of Oxford, died in 1713, when Weston was inherited by his eldest daughter Philadelphia and her husband Captain Henry Bertie, a younger son of James, Earl of Abingdon. (fn. 69) In 1734 Captain Bertie was succeeded by his grandson Norreys Bertie, who died unmarried in 1766 and who bequeathed Weston to his greatnephew Peregrine Bertie. Peregrine also left no children, and on his death in 1790 Weston passed to his elder brother Willoughby, Earl of Abingdon, who entailed the manor so that it should only be held by his successors in the earldom if there were no younger brother to hold it. Willoughby was succeeded as Earl of Abingdon in 1799 by his third and eldest surviving son Montague, but Weston under the entail was inherited by his fourth son, the Hon. the Revd. Frederick Arthur Bertie, when the latter came of age. He married Georgina, daughter of Admiral Lord Mark Ker, and was succeeded in 1868 by his son Captain Frederick Arthur Bertie. (fn. 70) Captain Bertie's widow, Rose Emily Bertie, sold the manor by auction in 1918 after the death of her only son in action in Palestine in the previous year. The estate has been split up and manorial rights have lapsed. (fn. 71)

Economic and Social History.

In 1086 there was land for 12 ploughs in Weston-on-the-Green, all under cultivation. On the demesne were 4 ploughs and 5 serfs, while 17 villeins (villani) and 11 bordars had 8 ploughs. There were two mills worth 4s. and the value of the estate had increased £8 to £12 since 1065. (fn. 72) In c. 1228 Oseney Abbey acquired the manor from Henry (II) d'Oilly, the latter's grant including the manor-house, a wood and one of the mills, presumably in the north-west of the parish, since meadowland near it was described as 'towards Kirtlington'. (fn. 73) In the course of the 13th century Oseney gradually accumulated lands from the freeholders of the manor, (fn. 74) and in about 1270 obtained the second mill, a water-mill. (fn. 75) Only one mill, however, was recorded among the abbey's possessions in 1279. The demesne then included 5 carucates of land, a park of 4 acres, and a warren. There were only 5 free tenants, including the Abbot of Thame and 3 socagers, holding a little over 10 virgates in all. Nineteen villeins held a virgate each, paid 5s. a year, and worked and were tallaged at their lord's will. They had to pay fines if their sons left the manor, pay for the right to brew ale and to pasture their swine, and could not sell horses or oxen without licence. Sixteen half-virgaters held by the same services and paid rent at the same rate. Between them they provided 6 labourers all the year round for the abbot, and another 6, who worked every day from Midsummer to Michaelmas except Saturdays. At Christmas they paid their lord half a quarter of oats, and another half-quarter if they did not harrow, and at Candlemas they paid 3d. for being excused carrying services outside the shire. Ten cottars held between them about 5½ virgates. One of them, the miller, paid £1 4s. 3d., and the others paid up to 8s. 3d. a year. Three of them worked at the lord's will, but five of them owed only one autumn boonwork. (fn. 76) The population had evidently increased since 1086, and by 1279 there appear to have been about 64 virgates under cultivation. (fn. 77)

The rents received by Oseney Abbey in the year 1279–80 amounted to £13 18s. 10d. (fn. 78) In 1291 the manor brought in an estimated income of £16 6s. 10½d., while the produce and stock were worth another £5. (fn. 79) Like other Oseney manors Weston and its dependent estates at Chesterton and Ardley sent considerable quantities of produce to the abbey—wheat and oats, cattle, pigs and poultry, cheese, butter and eggs, and notably in 1279–80 314 fleeces, 223 sheepskins and 47 lambskins. At Michaelmas 1280 the stock remaining in the bailiwick of Weston, of which the manor was the administrative centre with a canon in residence as bailiff, amounted to 25 horses, 86 cattle, 422 sheep, and 64 pigs. (fn. 80)

Weston was a two-field village in the 13th century: in a number of grants of land to Oseney the acres were equally divided between the two fields, the South Field and the East Field, the latter called in one grant 'the field towards Chesterton'. (fn. 81) There is no indication whether a fixed amount of meadow went with every virgate of arable, but meadow or mowing ground in the headlands of the arable are frequently mentioned, (fn. 82) and there were certain lotmeadows. (fn. 83) Three crofts were included in Henry d'Oilly's grant in 1228, and others are mentioned later, some of them inclosures of arable. (fn. 84) The taxation assessments of the early 14th century show that Weston was among the more prosperous villages in Ploughley hundred: 36 inhabitants were assessed in 1316 and 37 in 1327, (fn. 85) and from 1334 onwards the village's assessment was fixed at £3 10s. (fn. 86)

At the end of the 15th century the demesne lands were let, but by 1509 they had been taken back into the abbey's hands 'pro husbondria ibidem manutenenda'. The former farmer of the demesne, John Cocks, still held two pastures, 'Roundehill' and 'Churchwestmorelese', for £13 6s. 8d. a year, and had held Sevenacre, a pasture close which had been an arable furlong in the 13th century. (fn. 87) It is possible that at Weston Oseney Abbey had resumed control of its demesnes as a check on the activities of an inclosing grazier. In 1521 the demesnes were still in the abbey's hands; and so were the two pastures, where the abbey's own sheep and cattle now grazed. (fn. 88) Before 1535, however, the demesnes were again farmed, first to a single tenant and later to a number of tenants. The abbey's gross income from the estate in 1535 was £55 8s. 11d.—£18 15s. 7d. from the rents of customary tenants and £36 13s. 4d. from the farm of the manor, rectory, vicarage, and tithes. (fn. 89)

The progress of inclosure at Weston is not documented. Since the Norreys and Bertie lords of the manor owned very nearly the whole parish (fn. 90) the decision to inclose must have depended on them. There is no inclosure act, and both open fields and commons appear to have been inclosed about the middle of the 18th century, certainly before 1773. (fn. 91) In 1774 the Bertie estate was charged with the payment of annuities to three people 'in lieu of lifehold estates of land in the Common Field granted on inclosing the commons and wastes of Weston'. (fn. 92) In 1783 the two surviving annuitants were both about 60 years of age. (fn. 93) The number of common fields before inclosure is not known, but a deed of 1803 records that South Field Mead had been inclosed in three parts, 48 acres in all, and there were six inclosures, 107 acres in all, in what was 'formerly the Common South Field'. 'Southill fields' are mentioned as formerly part of the common fields, and Green Close (28 a.) had been part of Weston Green before inclosure. (fn. 94)

In 1773 the Bertie estate at Weston was producing £1,941 a year in rents. There were 11 leaseholders, 9 of them paying over £40 a year, 17 cottagers, and 17 tenants of small plots and cottages for one, two, or three lives. (fn. 95) There were nine 'farms and grazing land', and two of the leaseholders held the mill and the stone-pits. (fn. 96) The total area of the estate was estimated at 2,371 acres in 1783, when there were still nine farms—one called a dairy farm and one a grazing farm—held, however, by seven farmers. The smallest farm was 92 acres, the largest 343 acres, and all the rest were around 200 acres. There were 18 cottagers, and 26 tenants for life, with 3 houses and 21 cottages. (fn. 97) There were still nine farms in 1848, some of them with increased area, since the lord of the manor had only 69 acres in hand compared with 602 in 1783. (fn. 98) In 1918 there were eight farms—including Weston Park, then in Chesterton parish, and the mill, which had 66 acres attached to it, on the Bertie estate; and another farm on the Valentia estate purchased in 1803. (fn. 99) In 1848 there were 1,215 acres of arable to 1,089 acres of meadow and pasture, (fn. 100) but by 1867 two-thirds of the parish was said to be arable, (fn. 101) a proportion which held good in the 20th century. (fn. 102)

In 1801 the population of Weston was 350; by 1851 this had risen to a peak figure of 517. A high proportion of the inhabitants was employed in agriculture during this period, 74 families out of 90 in 1821, and 86 out of 102 in 1831, when there were 99 farm labourers. (fn. 103) Many of these were employed outside the parish: in 1867 there were about 40 working on farms in Bletchington, Oddington, and Chesterton but living in Weston. (fn. 104) Lack of cottages in neighbouring parishes appears to have been the main reason. One serious consequence earlier in the 19th century had been the liability of Weston parish to relieve sick, poor, and aged labourers whose work had been outside. Sums raised by poor rates had risen from £112 in 1776 to about £635 in 1813. (fn. 105) Although the cottages of Weston were overcrowded in 1867 they were reported to be 'good and commodious', with good gardens, while all had allotments. Many cottages had outhouses, and all had privies; rents ranged from 3d. to 1s. 3d. a week. (fn. 106)

In the 18th century, building-stone, paving- and flooring-stone were quarried in the stone-pits; the Peat Pits, on the western boundary stream, north of the village, were then worth between £40 and £80 a year; and marl was dug for use on the land. (fn. 107) In the early 19th century there were fifteen families engaged in trade or handicrafts: (fn. 108) of the latter lace-making was the most important and there were 22 women and girls employed in it in 1851. (fn. 109) At that date there were also 4 railway navvies, probably employed on the construction of the Bletchley-Oxford line, 3 bricklayers, a 'stoneman', 2 tailors, a shoemaker and a cordwainer, a carpenter, a wagoner, a toll-collector, and the miller, who was also the baker. (fn. 110) The number of agricultural labourers declined later in the century when the population dropped steadily from 517 in 1851 to 263 in 1901 and many young men left the village. (fn. 111) In 1903 the village had a blacksmith, a carrier, and a wheelwright, and one shopkeeper. (fn. 112) There were still a wheelwright and a blacksmith in 1939, when there were two shops, a cafe, a coal merchant, and a drainage contractor. (fn. 113) The population has increased rapidly from 256 in 1921 to 353 in 1931 and 522 in 1951. (fn. 114)

Church.

There was probably an 11th-century church at Weston. Wigod of Wallingford was followed as lord by Robert d'Oilly, who in 1074 granted two-thirds of his demesne tithes there to his foundation of the church of St. George in Oxford castle. (fn. 115) St. George's church passed in 1149 with all its possessions to Oseney Abbey. Weston church was part of Robert d'Oilly the younger's foundation grant to Oseney Abbey in about 1130, (fn. 116) a gift which was soon afterwards several times confirmed. (fn. 117) By at least the early 13th century the abbey had appropriated Weston; (fn. 118) it retained it until its dissolution in 1539. In 1540 the rectory and advowson were granted with the manor to Sir John Williams of Thame, (fn. 119) and followed the manor's descent until its sale in 1918. Since then William Parlour Esq. of Darlington has been patron. An exception to the normal rule of presentation by the lord of the manor occurred in 1601 when the queen presented. (fn. 120)

The value of the rectory rose from £8 in 1254 (fn. 121) to £9 6s. 8d. in 1291. (fn. 122) No later valuation has been found, as in 1535 it was valued with the vicarage and manor. (fn. 123)

When the vicarage was formed Oseney took almost all the glebe. Two early 13th-century vicars, John and Henry, who possessed some land and a rent of 6s., granted them to Oseney, in return for which the latter was to have his obit said in the abbey. (fn. 124) The land once belonging to the church evidently became amalgamated with the manor land, and no separate record has been found of it. Before the Reformation Oseney seems to have collected all the tithes; afterwards the lay rector was entitled only to the great tithes, which

were commuted in 1848. Peregrine Bertie received a rent-charge of £270 for tithes on 2,226 acres, and Lord Valentia £34 for the tithes on 236 acres belonging to him. (fn. 125)

No medieval valuation of the vicarage has been found, showing that in 1291 it must have been worth less than 5 marks.

A vicarage was ordained during the episcopate of Hugh de Welles (1209–35) on the same conditions as Oseney's other vicarages, (fn. 126) an arrangement confirmed in 1284 by Bishop Sutton. (fn. 127) The vicar was to receive 2 marks a year for his vestment and a certain share of mortuaries and oblations. Otherwise his support was to fall on the abbey: the canons were to provide him with food from their grange in Weston, and he was privileged to eat with the canons when any were present in the parish. They were to provide him with a clerk and a boy, and a horse when he needed to travel on church business; they were to meet all expenses of the church.

This ordination implied a close connexion between the vicar and the abbey, and may have proved unsatisfactory. After 1451 institutions to the vicarage cease, and in the 16th century the church was served by a curate who received a fixed stipend of £5 6s. 8d., (fn. 128) while Oseney kept the endowment of the vicarage. (fn. 129) At an episcopal visitation of this period, the most important complaint was that no distributions were made to the poor, (fn. 130) the abbey's responsibility, while nothing was said against the curate. One mid-16th-century curate, frequently mentioned in local wills, (fn. 131) remained in the parish for 30 years. (fn. 132)

By the 17th century the ordination of the vicarage had been changed. In addition to about an acre of land, the vicar was to have the small tithes and a pension of 6s. 8d. from the Rector of Bletchington. (fn. 133) In the mid-18th century the vicarage was valued at £34, (fn. 134) and in 1808 at £125, a sum derived almost entirely from the small tithes, (fn. 135) which were commuted in 1848 for £232. (fn. 136)

The history of the church seems to have been uneventful: few records of it survive and even the names of some of the vicars have not been found. By the 18th century the vicars were usually non-resident, perhaps partly because the Vicarage house (fn. 137) was considered inadequate. In 1738 John Bertie, a member of the Bertie family of Rycote, was a Student of Christ Church, where he lived, and he served the church himself. He held two services on Sundays, and said that about 50 people took the sacrament given four times a year. (fn. 138) His successors were pluralists: James Hakewill, for example, vicar for over fifty years (c. 1746–98), had a curate at Weston while he himself held two other Oxfordshire churches, 'by which means' his income was 'more comfortable' to him. (fn. 139)

After 1823 when the Vicarage was enlarged the vicars began to live in the parish. (fn. 140) Attendance at church increased during the century, the number of communicants having risen considerably by 1834. (fn. 141) In the middle of the century, in spite of the growth of dissent, congregations were good, numbering about 150, but many, it was said, attended both church and chapel. (fn. 142)

The church is dedicated to ST. MARY, (fn. 143) although in the 19th century there was a tradition that it had once been dedicated to St. Bartholomew. (fn. 144) The present church is a plain rectangular building dating from the 18th century except for the western tower, which is probably 13th-century and belongs to an earlier medieval church. The tower has a later parapet and has been buttressed at the south-west corner. The original medieval church had three altars, dedicated by the bishop in 1273 to the Virgin, to St. James the Apostle, and to St. Nicholas the Confessor; twenty days' indulgence was granted to all those who gave to these altars. (fn. 145) In 1564 the church, 'being in great decay', was reroofed and the seats

were renewed. (fn. 146) By 1741 it was falling down, and in 1743 and 1744 was rebuilt by Norreys Bertie (fn. 147) whose initials and arms and the date 1743 can be seen on the rainwater heads. The present church has a pedimented south door, built in the classical style with an elaborately carved architrave and frieze on the outside; on the inside, stonework contemporary with the original building still surrounds it. The roundheaded windows, four on the north and three on the south side, of the 18th-century church remain. (fn. 148) In 1810 extensive repairs were made to the roof, and the original heavily ornamented ceiling fell down and was replaced by the present plain one. (fn. 149)

The church was restored in the 1870's by the architect R. P. Spiers for about £500; a plan for building an apse 'to make the building more churchlike' was never executed, and the actual work only included repairs to the tower, the addition of the south porch, reseating, and the addition of Gothic tracery and glass to the windows. (fn. 150) An organ was bought in 1885 (fn. 151) and in 1923 the north and south walls were panelled.

The 12th-century font is circular, with interlacing arcading on a moulded circular base of later date.

Above the altar there is a large 18th-century canvas of the Ten Commandments surrounded by cherubs and symbols of the Crucifixion. (fn. 152) Other decorations include a Russian triptych of the Virgin and two saints, the Assumption of the Virgin copied from an Italian original, and over the vestry arch an 18th-century Royal Arms in raised and painted plaster. The church also contains a medieval iron cross, given by Lady Greville, and a plaster statue of the Virgin given in 1929. (fn. 153) The iron gates at the eastern end of the churchyard were erected in 1951 as a war memorial.

There are a number of monuments to the Norreys family, including those to Sir Francis Norreys (d. 1669); to Sir Edward Norreys (d. 1713), his wife Jane (d. 1722) and their children, to his second son Francis and his wife Jane; and to Norreys Bertie (d. 1766). There are also 19th-century memorials to the Bertie family. In the old church was a monument to Richard Chamberlaine (d. 1624/5), and a brass to Alise Saxeye (d. 1581). (fn. 154)

In 1552 the plate consisted of a silver and gilt chalice. (fn. 155) In 1955 it included a silver chalice and paten cover of 1751, the gift of Mary Norreys. (fn. 156) There were five bells, all 19th-century. Formerly there were three bells, dating from the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. (fn. 157)

The registers date from 1591, with a gap from 1672 to 1695. There is a churchwardens' book covering the years 1767 to 1917.

Nonconformity.

The only early recusant recorded was Joan, the wife of Richard Poure, (fn. 158) who was fined in 1603. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries there were a few Roman Catholics, probably not more than one family, who went to chapel at Tusmore. (fn. 159)

Protestant dissent appeared soon after this, when in 1818 the first house was licensed for worship. (fn. 160) From 1829 the meetings were held in the village shop. (fn. 161) The owner, George White, sold the garden to the Methodists for £20, and in 1838 the present chapel was built by the labour of the members themselves. (fn. 162) By the middle of the century congregations were large—over 100 in 1851. (fn. 163) In 1878 there were said to be 60 professed dissenters, but many people attended both church and chapel. (fn. 164) The chapel had eighteen members in 1955. (fn. 165)

Schools.

In 1808 there was a small school for 12 to 20 children, who were paid for by their parents. (fn. 166) It had apparently closed by 1819, (fn. 167), but in 1833 there was a fee-paying school for about 20 children. (fn. 168) A Church of England school was opened in 1855; (fn. 169) its average attendance was 48 by 1890, (fn. 170) and 42 in 1906. (fn. 171) The school was taken over by the County Council in 1920 and was reorganized as a junior school in 1937. There were 22 children in the school in 1954 compared with 39 in 1937. (fn. 172)

Charities.

Sums of money, amounting to £30, were left to the poor of the parish at unknown dates by William and Francis Drake, William Webb, Thomas Croxton, and Hannah Maunde. (fn. 173) The interest was distributed to the poor in bread in 1759. (fn. 174) The principal, however, was held by Norreys Bertie, who died bankrupt in Ghent in 1766. Peregrine Bertie, his successor as lord of the manor, nevertheless paid £1 10s. a year, which was distributed in meat and bread, until 1772. Only two other payments, in 1781 and 1788, were made before his death in 1790. (fn. 175) Although he left £5 for a sermon on 30 January and for prayers on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, (fn. 176) Peregrine Bertie appears to have allowed the charity for the poor to lapse, and although a yearly payment of £1 laid out on bread was recorded in 1805 (fn. 177) the charity was regarded as lost in 1824. (fn. 178)

Footnotes

1. O.S. Map 6", xxii, xxvii (1885); *ibid.* 2½", 42/51, 52 (1951); Oxon. Review Order (1932): copy in O.R.O.
2. G.S. Map 1", xlv SE.
3. V.C.H. Oxon. i. 414; Davis, Oxon. Map; Bodl. Tithe award map.
4. MS. Top. Oxon. d 266.
5. P.N. Oxon. (E.P.N.S.), i. 243.
6. Hearth Tax Oxon. 197–8.
7. e.g. Oxf. Dioc. d 554, d 557, d 560.
8. Census, 1811, 1851, 1901, 1951.
9. Inf. Ploughley R.D.C.: estimated popn. 1954 was 636.
10. Inf. R.A.F. It is also the H.Q. of the Oxford Gliding Club.
11. See Gardner, *Dir. Oxon.*; cf. Kelly's *Dir. Oxon.* (1939); O.S. Map 25", xxii. 16, xxvii. 4 (1875); cf. *ibid.* 2½", 42/51 (1951).
12. Bodl. G.A. Oxon. b 92* (16); Sale Cat. 1918.
13. Mentioned in 1852: Gardner, *Dir. Oxon.*
14. See below, p. 349.
15. C.P. 43/902/258; O.S. Map 25", xxii. 16.
16. O.R.O. Victlrs' recog.
17. *Ibid.*
18. See below, p. 352.
19. Dunkin, Oxon. ii. 199.
20. Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 141, p. 133; MS. Top. Oxon. c 55, f. 252. It cannot be identified with any house in Hearth Tax Oxon. (1665) as the vicar's name is unknown.

21. Oxf. Dioc. c 435, pp. 414–19.
22. See below, p. 348.
23. V.C.H. Oxon. ii. 330.
24. The following account of the manor-house is based on a survey by Mr. P. S. Spokes; see also Hamilton Carr, *Country Life*, 25 Aug. 1928, 268–74.
25. Bodl. G.A. Oxon. 8° 1262, p. 166; G.A. Oxon. b 180, Ploughley, pp. 8f–8h.
26. Cf. Dunkin, who says Norreys Bertie did this: Oxon. ii. 214–15.
27. Hearth Tax Oxon. 197.
28. *Ibid.* 196.
29. Dunkin, Oxon. ii, facing p. 198.
30. V.C.H. Oxon. iii. 116; Bodl. G.A. Oxon. 4° 692, pp. 56a–d; *ibid.* 691, p. 67; *ibid.* 8° 1262, p. 134; N. & Q. 1944, clxxxvii. 137–9.
31. Par. Reg.
32. Luke, Jnl. 101, 109, 253.
33. Dunkin MS. 438/4, f. 77.
34. D.N.B. under Francis Norreys; Oxf. Dioc. d 557, d 560; Par. Reg.
35. V.C.H. Oxon. ii. 356.
36. *Ibid.* i. 414.
37. Oxon. Chart. no. 102.
38. For the D'Oilly descent see Oseney Cart. refs. cited below; W. D. Bayley, *House of D'Oyly* (1845), is inaccurate.
39. Oseney Cart. iv. 416; cf. Eynsham Cart. i. 411.
40. Thame Cart. 2.
41. Oseney Cart. i. 1.
42. Cal. Chart. R. 1300–26, 420.
43. Thame Cart. 2.
44. Oseney Cart. i, p. xxv.
45. Thame Cart. 3.
46. Oseney Cart. i. 74.
47. Eynsham Cart. i. 78; cf. Pipe R. 1175 (P.R.S. xxii), 12.
48. Cur. Reg. R. viii. 296; ix. 144, 334–6.
49. Oseney Cart. vi. 18–20.
50. *Ibid.* 6–10; Cal. Chart. R. 1226–57, 48; for David see C. Roth, *Jews of Med. Oxf.* (O.H.S. n.s. ix), 46 sqq.
51. Oseney Cart. vi. 2; Cal. Chart. R. 1226–57, 165.
52. Oseney Cart. i, p. xxvi.
53. Bk. of Fees, 831; Feud. Aids, iv. 158; see above, p. 73.

54. Rot. Hund. (Rec. Com.), ii. 830.
55. V.C.H. Oxon. i. 414.
56. See above, p. 58, for details.
57. Oseney Cart. vi. 18.
58. Ibid. 5, 10–18, 21–26.
59. Ibid. 3; Fines Oxon. 186.
60. e.g. Tax. Eccl. (Rec. Com.), 45; Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.), ii. 216.
61. Thame Cart. 22.
62. L. & P. Hen. VIII, xv, p. 169; xxi (1), p. 354; Dunkin MS. 438/1, f. 178.
63. N.J. O'Connor, Godes Peace and the Queenes (1934), 17.
64. Ibid.; Complete Peerage, ix. 645.
65. O'Connor, op. cit. 37, 41; Complete Peerage, vii. 694.
66. O'Connor, op. cit. 81; Acts of P.C. 1589, 194; *ibid.* 1597–8, 506.
67. D.N.B.; P.C.C. 2 Byrde: Earl of Berks.'s will.
68. D.N.B.; C.P. 25(2)/587/Mich. 1649; C.P. 43/267/52; *ibid.* 319/210; Hearth Tax Oxon. 197.
69. D.N.B.; Dunkin, Oxon. ii. 211 sqq.; Complete Peerage, i. 45.
70. Burke, Land. Gent. (1914); O.R.O. Land tax assess.
71. Bodl. G.A. Oxon. b 92* (16): Sale Cat.; Kelly's Dir. Oxon. (1920, 1939).
72. V.C.H. Oxon. i. 414.
73. Oseney Cart. vi. 2, 6.
74. Ibid. 5–25 *passim*.
75. Ibid. 12.
76. Rot. Hund. (Rec. Com.), ii. 830–1.
77. Including 35 a. held by the Abbot of Thame recorded under Oddington: *ibid.* 836; cf. Thame Cart. i. 22.
78. Oseney Cart. vi. 192.
79. Tax. Eccl. (Rec. Com.), 45.
80. Oseney Cart. vi. 192–3.
81. Ibid. 14, 16, 17.
82. Ibid. 14, 17, 21.
83. Ibid. 12 and n.
84. Ibid. 2, 11.
85. E 179/161/8, 9.
86. E 164/7; see below, p. 359.
87. Oseney Cart. vi. 229; cf. *ibid.* 21.
88. Oseney Cart. vi. 258–9.

89. Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.), ii, 216; see below, p. 351; cf. Oseney Cart. vi. 229, 258–9, for receipts in 1510 and 1521.
90. The vicarage glebe was very small: Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 41, f. 142; there was only one freeholder besides the lord of the manor in 1783: MS. Top. Oxon. b 121, f. 157.
91. MS. Top. Oxon. b 121, ff. 137–8. The court rolls (1606–1768) among the Chancery Masters' exhibits at Ashridge (Herts.) may throw light on this point. They have been extracted from C 103/156, their former reference number.
92. MS. Top. Oxon. b 121, f. 141.
93. Ibid. f. 158.
94. Bodl. MS. D.D. Valentia c 13.
95. MS. Top. Oxon. b 121, ff. 137–8.
96. Ibid. ff. 140–1.
97. Ibid. ff. 157–8; cf. *ibid.* b 197–9, a 46–47: accounts of bailiff of Weston.
98. Bodl. Tithe award; cf. O.R.O. Land tax assess.
99. Bodl. G.A. Oxon. b 92* (16): Sale Cat.
100. Bodl. Tithe award.
101. Agric. Rep. 352.
102. Local inf.
103. Census, 1801–51.
104. Agric. Rep. 335, 352.
105. Dunkin, Oxon. ii. 200.
106. Agric. Rep. 352.
107. MS. Top. Oxon. b 121, f. 158.
108. Census, 1821, 1831.
109. H.O. 107/1727.
110. *Ibid.*
111. Local inf.; Census, 1851–1901.
112. Kelly's Dir. Oxon. (1903).
113. *Ibid.* (1939).
114. Census, 1921–51.
115. V.C.H. Oxon. ii. 160; Oxon. Chart. no. 58.
116. V.C.H. Oxon. ii. 90; Oseney Cart. i. 1.
117. e.g. Oseney Cart. i. 3, 4.
118. Lib. Antiq. Welles, 7. For references to medieval presentations see MS. Top. Oxon. d 460.
119. L. & P. Hen. VIII, xv, p. 169.
120. Dunkin MS. 438/2, f. 284b, citing Cant. Reg. Whitgift, f. 67.

121. Lunt, Val. Norw. 313, 508.
122. Tax. Eccl. (Rec. Com.), 31.
123. Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.), ii. 216.
124. Oseney Cart. vi. 18–21.
125. Bodl. Tithe award.
126. Lib. Antiq. Welles, 1–2, 7.
127. Oseney Cart. vi. 126–7.
128. Subsidy 1526, 275; Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.), ii. 223.
129. Valor Eccl. ii. 216.
130. Visit. Dioc. Linc. 1517–31, i. 122.
131. O.A.S. Rep. 1914, 233.
132. MS. Top. Oxon. c 56, f. 215.
133. Ibid. c 55, f. 252.
134. Oxf. Dioc. d 557.
135. Ibid. c 446, ff. 198–9.
136. Bodl. Tithe award.
137. See above, p. 347.
138. Oxf. Dioc. d 554.
139. Ibid. d 557.
140. Ibid. c 435, pp. 414–19; and see above, p. 347. £300 towards the cost was borrowed under Gilbert's Act, 17 Geo. III, c. 53: Oxf. Dioc. c 435, pp. 414–19.
141. Oxf. Dioc. b 39.
142. Ibid. c 332, c 344, d 179.
143. Oseney Cart. vi. 1.
144. Vicar's letter (1882): MS. Top. Oxon. d 90, ff. 126b–127; Gardner, Dir. Oxon.
145. Oseney Cart. vi. 1.
146. Oxf. Dioc. c 22, f. 76; MS. Top. Oxon. c 56, f. 227.
147. Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 111, f. 7; Oxf. Dioc. c 651, ff. 113–16; see above, p. 349.
148. A drawing (1820) by J. Buckler (MS. Top. Oxon. a 69, f. 581) shows the unaltered windows. For a view from SE. see plate opposite.
149. Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 111, ff. 82, 85–86; Par. Reg.
150. MS. Top. Oxon. c 104, ff. 451–60; *ibid.* d 90, f. 128.
151. Par. Reg.
152. Par. Rec. terrier (1934).
153. Par. Reg.

154. For list see Dunkin, Oxon. ii. 200–3; for arms, transcripts of inscriptions, and plans of ledgers in church see Bodl. G.A. Oxon 4° 689, p. 335; *ibid.* 16° 217, p. 251; Bodl. 17031 e 17, pp. 185–96.
155. Chant. Cert. 77–78.
156. Evans, Ch. Plate.
157. Ch. Bells Oxon. iv. 437.
158. Salter, Oxon. Recusants, 16.
159. Oxf. Dioc. d 560, d 575, d 577; *ibid.* c 327, p. 307.
160. *Ibid.* c 644, f. 198. Another house was licensed in 1819: *ibid.* f. 203. Neither of the petitioners could write.
161. *Ibid.* c 645, f. 142.
162. For account of building of church see Weston on the Green, Methodist Church Centenary (1938).
163. H.O. 129/158.
164. Oxf. Dioc. c 332, c 344.
165. Buckingham and Brackley Methodist Circuit Plan, 1955–6.
166. Oxf. Dioc. d 707.
167. Educ. of Poor, 732.
168. Educ. Enq. Abstract, 757.
169. Vol. Sch. Ret.
170. Ret. of Sch.
171. Vol. Sch. Ret.
172. Inf. Oxon. Educ. Cttee.
173. 12th Rep. Com. Char. 315; Char. Don. ii. 990. For Croxton see MS. Top. Oxon. c 55, f. 252.
174. Oxf. Dioc. d 557.
175. 12th Rep. Com. Char. 315; Char. Don. ii. 990.
176. Oxf. Dioc. c 327, p. 74.
177. *Ibid.* p. 363.
178. 12th Rep. Com. Char. 315.