

Grant by King Badgar to Wulfheard of land at Cheselborne,

Dorset in 965 A.D.

(Note: words between asterisks are translated from Anglo-Saxon)

In the name of Him who is enthroned on high, to whom every knee bows, in heaven, on the earth and in hell. I BADGAR obtaining through heavenly aid the monarchy of all the island of Britain, do grant forever to a certain faithful man whom some call by the name of Wulfheard a certain piece of land, i.e., three rods in a place called in the vulgar tongue "at CEOSOL BURNAN" (at the gravelly stream). Whilst he lives he shall enjoy our bountiful gift with a blithe heart. But at the termination of his life the gift shall fall to whichever heir he has chosen for ever, with fields, pastures, meadows, woods, ways, bridges and weirs. But this gift shall not be without other things. If (any of his heirs) any son of perdition shall try to infringe or break our decree, may he be dragged by demons into eternal damnation, that is into the fiercest part of the foul abyss. May he be hurled under the horrible waters of tartarean Acheron, whose revolting stream is said to seethe with filth and a great whirlpool. Unless he shall have made satisfaction and chosen to amend with worthy repentance.

These are the bounds of the aforesaid land: first to Cyselburman (Cheselborne) to the enclosure, from the enclosure along the stream, to the white spring, from the white spring along the stream to the ford, from the ford to the highway, from the highway to the quickset hedge, thence to the highway, along the highway one furlong.

This charter was written in the year from the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ 965 and in the sixth year of the Indiction.

x I Badgar, King of all England, have unchangeably granted this gift and confirmed (it) with the sign of the Holy Cross.

x I Dunstan, Archbishop of the metropolitan Church, have taken care to strengthen this bountiful gift with the sign of the Cross of Christ.

x I Athelwold, Bishop, have confirmed it.

x I Alfwold, Bishop, have ordered (it) to be written.

x I Byrhtelm, Bishop, have assented.

x I O-ulf, Bishop, have agreed.

x Aelfere Dux.

x Wulfstan Minister.

x Aelfeah Dux.

x Byrhtulf Minister.

x Aethelstan Dux.

x Leofa Minister.

x Athelmund Dux.

x Leofsige Minister.

x Ordgar Dux.

x Aelfhelm Minister.

x Aelfine Minister.

x Byrhtic Minister.

x Athelward Minister.

x Wulfstan Minister.

x Hiltun Minister.

Endorsement: x This is the charter of the three rods at Ceosol Burnan (Cheselborne) which King Badgar has granted to Wulfheard in perpetuity.

The Cheselborne Charter

Come into my gig, for a ride round Dorset,
With your shoes well shone and your hairtight curled,
In your prettiest gown and your smartest corset,
To the loveliest places in the whole wide world.

To Hilton, Milton, Cheselbourne and Dewlish,
Sturminster Newton and Hazelbury Bryan;
Melcombe, Delcombe, Puddletown and Huish;
Chantmarle, Chetnole and the Old Cerne Giant.

Tell me that you love me as we ride through Folly:
Tell me that you'll marry me at Fortune's Well:
Or I'll never set you down again, my dearest Polly,
Till we drive into the sea down at Airsh Mell.



Carriers Cottage
(the far cottage no longer exists)



No. 54

CHAPTER ONE

"ORIGINS AND RECORDS"

Once upon a time, on the high downs of the County of Dorset the Giants of Dorset made sport and amused themselves by throwing large boulders across our valley. They stood upon Nettlecombe Tout and some of their stones landed on a place we know as Henning (or Hanging) Hill. One of the Giants, in vexation at always losing, is said to have fretted and died. The Giants have long gone, but the "Giants Grave" still remains, and legend has it that when the cocks crow in Cheselbourne, the stones upon it move.

After the Giants, the nomadic tribes of ancient Britain moved across the Downs. They were probably the "DURTORIGES" or "MORINI" people. Recent aerial photographs show the areas of their encampments, the boundaries marked by ditches dug deep to keep out marauders. Changes in growth of vegetation show where their campfires, animal pounds, etc. were sited.

Experts tell us that the high chalk downs were extensively farmed as early as the Bronze Age. It would have been easier than clearing the densely wooded valleys,

but today's farmers will wonder what sort of results they obtained without modern fertilizers and how they irrigated their crops.

The Roman legions must have passed regularly close by the village. There is a Roman villa only a few fields away at nearby Dewlish and a roadway linking up with the Maiden Castle trackway must have passed close-by entering Dorchester ("DURNOVARIA") via Druce and Waterson. "Street", the word commonly held to be associated with the Romans, still occurs today as "Streetway Lane", once a wide road to accommodate the droves of sheep passing to local markets.

Evidence of cross-dykes, settlements and cultivation remains are plentiful around the boundaries of the parish. Occupational debris consisting of flue and roof tiles have been found in a stream bed and when some of the sixteen Round Barrows were opened in 1850 by Mr Charles Hall and Mr C. Warne, fragments of urns, containing bones of animals and birds and also Roman coins were found.

As the centuries passed, various invasions occurred and the people's knowledge of husbandry improved, families settled in our valley, growing crops by the clear stream and setting up small holdings. By Saxon times we had become known as Ceoselburne - "Stony brook".

Few villages in the county possess so many records of their early history, and several monarchs were generous in granting our lands to their favourites. The earliest Charter dated 965 AD in the Dorset Record Office is a grant by King Eadgar, of land, to WULFHEARD. King Etheldred gave the manor of Cheselbourne to his son, Prince AELFSTON and in 942 AD it was passed by King Eadmund to the Abbess of Shaftesbury.

In 987 A.D., some of the tithes went to Cerne Abbey, and 1019, parts of Cheselbourne were given by King Canute to his servant, Edmund, but in Domesday Book it is recorded as belonging to the Abbess of Shaftesbury. Henry III, who always had trouble with his Barons, fought a lawsuit over some of the lands between 1216 - 1272 and in 1509 after the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII the land was granted to Thomas Arundall for a payment of £400. He later forfeited it for treason until Queen "Bloody" Mary restored to the Arundall family, and it eventually passed to the Pitt-Rivers estate. It was broken up and sold by public auction in 1919.

CHAPTER TWO

"BUILDINGS"

A great road centre seems to have built up around Cheselbourne over the centuries. To the north of the village a natural break in the hills, known to us as Dorset Gap, was an important cross roads of the routes across mid-Dorset. One of the most used was the "Holy" road between Milton Abbey and Cerne Abbey.

Today our oldest surviving building is the flint built and once thatched chapel at Lyscombe, a resting place for monks and holy travellers halfway between these two important establishments. Sadly, the buildings are now badly delapidated, but we have evidence of their former importance.

In pre-Reformation times, Lyscombe hamlet was much larger comprising between 13 to 20 houses, but that gradually decreased in number and today only the ruins of the chapel and barn remain. It is supposedly on the site of a Roman villa, and before being attached to our parish in 1882, Lyscombe belonged to Milton Abbey. Later it passed to a John Tregonwell, Lord of the manor of Milton Abbas, who sold the hamlet and Chapel to a yeoman, named

Miller in 1755. At some time the buildings were used as a bakehouse and loghouse.

The Chapel is especially worthy of attention, measuring 40 feet in length and 17 feet wide. The main walls were two feet six inches thick and the windows were of Norman origin. Tradition says the Chapel was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin.

Today Manor Farm is probably the oldest residence in the village. It lies half a mile from the church to the north, the last remaining building on the road to Melcombe Bingham. It was once a Monastery Farm and is reputed to be haunted by a monk.

Northfield Farmhouse is another listed building, a two storey house of cobb dating from the 17th Century. Once thatched, it is situated opposite the village green and narrowly escaped destruction when one of its end rooms was partially destroyed by fire a few decades ago.

The only inn in the village is the "Rivers Arms", its name (and its sign) showing its connection with the Pitt-Rivers family, and not referring to its proximity to the stream. In 1875, its first landlord was a Marwood Upshall, who was also a blacksmith. It is the first house on the right as you approach from Puddletown and there is

also mention of a poorhouse along this road. But, somewhere at the Manor end of the village, there is a rumour of another once existing inn, called the "Primrose Arms". This may be confused with "Primrose Cottage", which once stood behind the school and served as a local ale house until the licensing laws were introduced.

Most of the workers cottages were situated beside the main road and along the church path. Unhappily many of them have now disappeared. A few, however, survive. One, the old forge, then occupied by a Mr F. Riggs, the village blacksmith was sold for £100 in the 1919 auction. A syndicate of speculative buyers, brought the other properties, including Manor and Coward (Cowherd) Farm.

"Champions Close", one of the remaining cottages by the school and approached from across the stream sold for £35. It was later condemned as unfit for habitation but during the Second World War was used by refugees from the Channel Islands and, now restored, is one of the most picturesque cottages in the area.

A Mr Bennett, who was the tenant farmer at Eastfield, brought most of the cottages and also paid £14,000 for Eastfield Farm. Included in this purchase was Bramblecombe Farm, complete with watermill and the sheep dip on Devils Brook, which is said to be a natural trout stream, and also Northfield Farm - comprising 1,000 acres.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE CHURCH"

The flint built parish church occupies a commanding position on the left as one approaches the village from the south. The site looks as if it has been levelled at some time and the structure of the tower gives it an appearance of height. The Church is dedicated to St. Martin, son of a Roman soldier, he is best remembered for sharing his cloak with a beggar. Later he became a monk and a dedicated Christian. He died in 397 A.D. and his shrine is at Tours.

Parts of the Nave and South Aisle date from the 13th Century. The Chancel was added in the 14th Century. The South Porch was added in 1500 AD and above the arch is a sun dial with Roman numerals, inscribed "HC 1631 WM".

The Church has been twice restored, once in 1874 and again in 1924.

Interesting features include a 12th Century stone font and, springing from a corbel in the western wall, a grotesque head wearing a double fools cap. Also worthy of note are the Cheselbourne "Boys", restored to the church

in 1898 and now resting on the corbels in the North Aisle. There are various slab monuments and plaques commemorating former rectors and their families and also a coat of arms of the Keyte family who occupied the Manor farm until 1623.

In 1976, the Parish Council purchased the organ from the redundant Church of Holy Trinity, Dorchester and the instrument was dedicated on the 4th April of that year. It is ideally suited to the small yet resonant building.

The belfry once housed five bells. The first and third were made by John Wallis both dated 1618; the fourth by Thomas Rosskelly dated 1754; the second, inscribed with "sancta Maria or pro nobis", was probably cast in the 15th Century in the Salisbury foundry and the fifth has the inscription "ac non vadi via nisi dicas ave Maria" and dates from Medieval times.

Recently the condition of the original timbers in the belfry made the ringing of the bells too dangerous. In fact, the last time they were rung was in 1875, but in 1981, a public appeal was launched by the Church Wardens to raised money.

The sum of £4,000 which included over £700 made by the sale of the fourth bell (weighing 9 cwts.) was raised

and the bells were rehung and rededicated in September 1981, by Bishop Ellison. Although the structure of the tower makes it unsafe to properly ring the bells they can now at least be chimed!

Outside the North Porch is an old tomb known as the Dole table from which payments were made to the poor of the parish. There is also the remains of an ancient preaching cross which predates the church.

The old rectory lies 300 yards to the Northeast of the church. It is a lovely flint building with the stream flowing through the gardens. Built in the 16th Century it was extended in the 18th Century but some of the windows and fireplaces are original.

The living, a gift of the Lord of the Manor, was first held in 1295 by Michael de Wodeford during the reign of Edward I, but in the 1920's the parish was united with Hilton, Ansty and Melcombe and the present vicar lives at Ansty.

The new burial ground next to the Church was a gift to the parish in 1887 by General Pitt-Rivers.

"HISTORIC LINKS AND CHARITIES"

After the Middle Ages history seems to have passed Cheselbourne by. In 1348 we learn that the village was almost wiped out by the Black Death. Cheselbourne had at that time a population of nearly one thousand and the disease reached them from the port of Melcombe Regis. A plague pit was discovered several years ago when the graves were being levelled in the churchyard. The victims shared a communal grave as few survived to dig individual resting places for their loved ones, and one wonders if perhaps the village remained deserted for a few decades until survivors returned to their homes and the land was considered safe from the ravages of the deadly disease.

During the Civil War years of 1641 - 1645, the area is reported as being staunchly for Parliament, but there is no record of any first class engagements, although nearby Bingham's Melcombe, was the Headquarters of the Parliamentary forces in Dorset. (Corfe Castle was the Royalist headquarters).

After a battle at Hambledon Hill in 1645, Cromwell's forces were on the look out for a Ronald Arnold of

Cheselbourne "a desperate agent, still at large and also a Rawleigh Radford, a more devilish malignant of Dewlish".

A committee sitting in Dorchester on 11th November 1647 awarded to "John Strude of Cheselbourne, a soldier maimed in Parliament's service - 20 shillings" and there is also record of Joseph Hall of Cheselbourne, refusing to pay a tithe to Cromwell's newly appointed Church Minister in 1648. Hutchinsons' list of Rectors shows that a William Hall was installed as the incumbent in 1653, so perhaps some sort of conspiracy was afoot!

Later the village was generous in giving aid to help the misfortunes of others. In 1666, a collection of £1 7s 6d was made for the people of London, impoverished in the Great Fire. During the following two years they also assisted people in Weymouth and as far afield as Poole in Montgomeryshire, Newport in Shropshire, East Deane in Sussex, Bishops Clift in Devon, and Wickham in Hampshire. These places all suffered disasterous fires at a time before fire insurance.

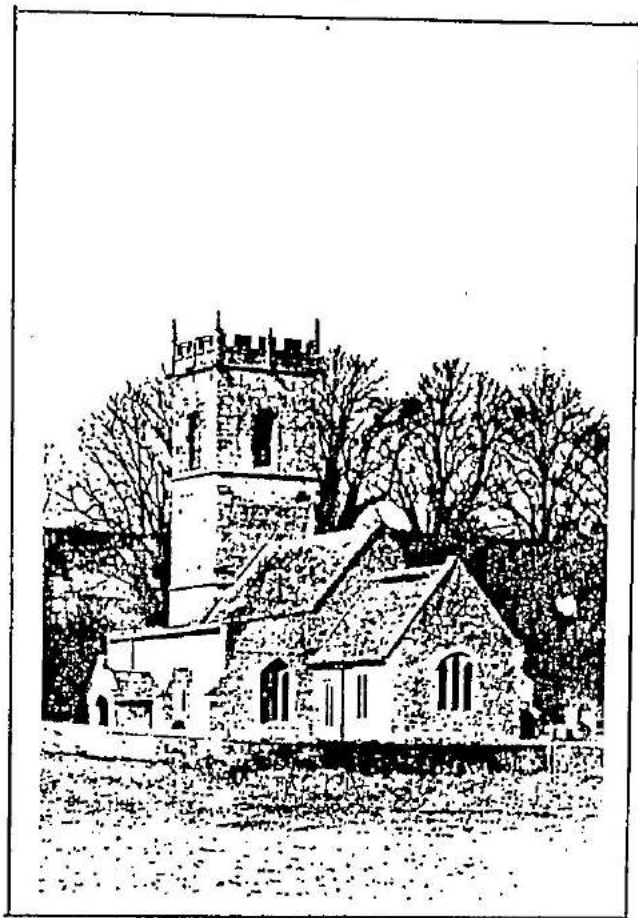
In 1670 they sent £1 4s 3d for the "Redemption of Captives in Turkey" in 1680 they sent £1 15s 0d to help "Christian Captives in Algiers", and in 1685 and 1688 money sent to relieve French Protestants.

Also in 1691, no fewer than eleven appeals from the Court of Chancery asking for help for people with particular troubles were answered - an excellent record for such a small parish.

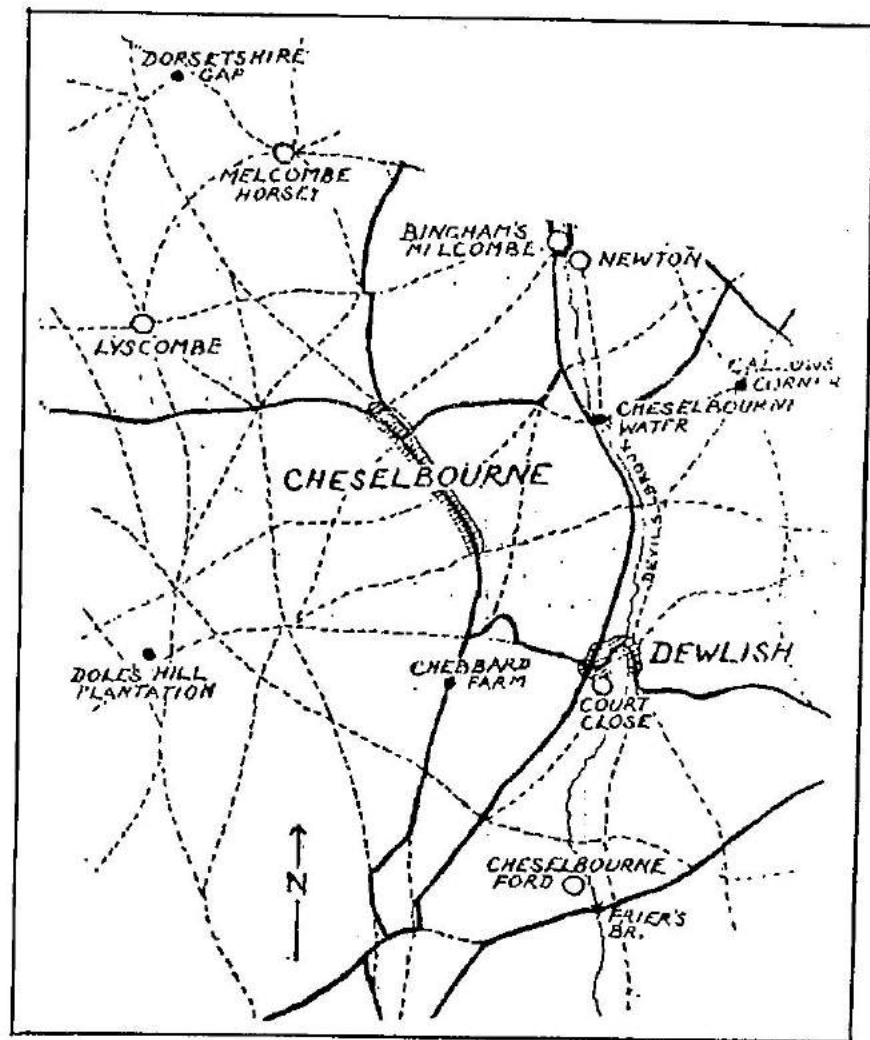
Churchwardens accounts are continuous from 1754 and show them to be father and the mother of the parish. The churchwardens had to collect the churchrate for the upkeep of the Church and its services, and for the payment of the Sexton and Parish Clerk.

An extract from the parish records of April 12th 1762 for the rate made for the Relief of the poor of the parish shows a total of £1 12s 0d, with sums levied ranging from a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 10/-. This rate was resented by those who did not attend church but was compulsory until 1868.

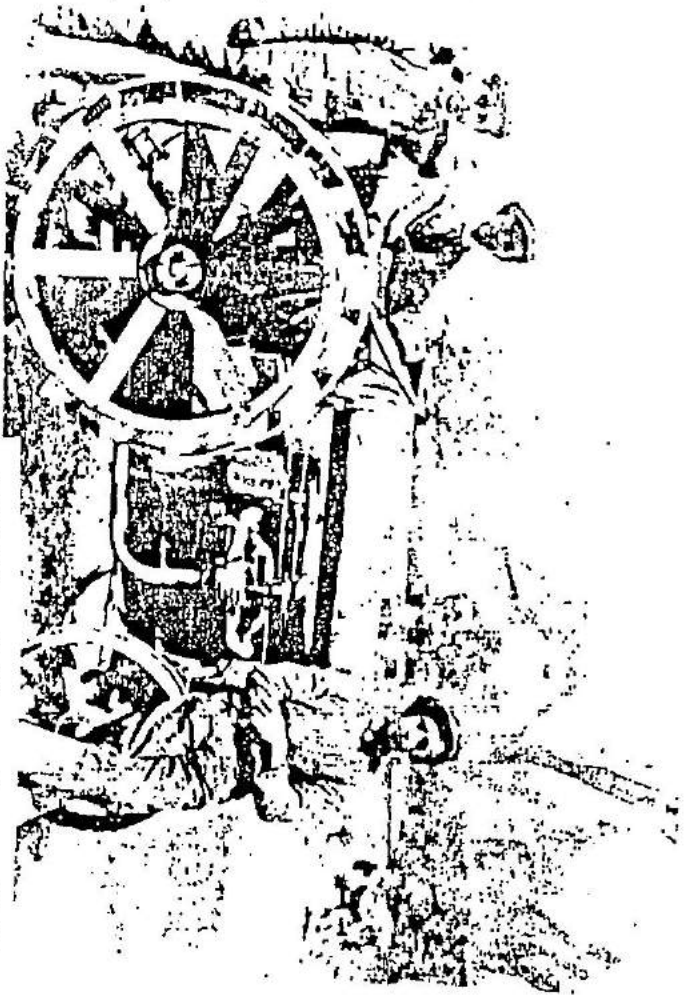
Overseers of the poor were responsible for the homes of the needy, arranged their care in sickness and helplessness and bought their firewood. They paid for the burial of the dead and paid for beer, bread and cheese for the 'wakers'.



The Parish Church of St Martin's



Map of Roadways and trackways
through Cheselbourne



1919 Edward Riggs, George Kellaway and Ernest Bridle
with a Fordson tractor



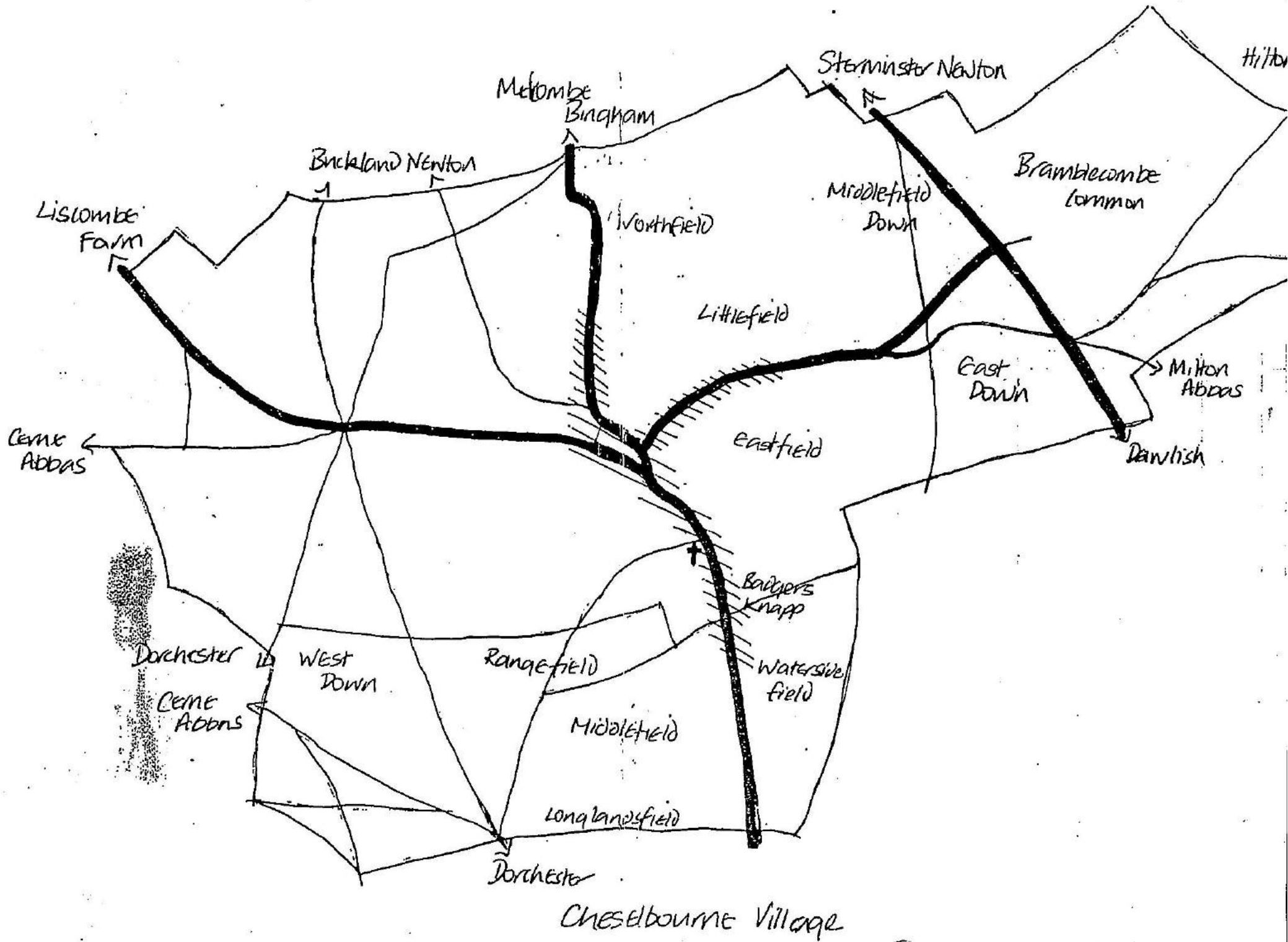
The School



The Rectory



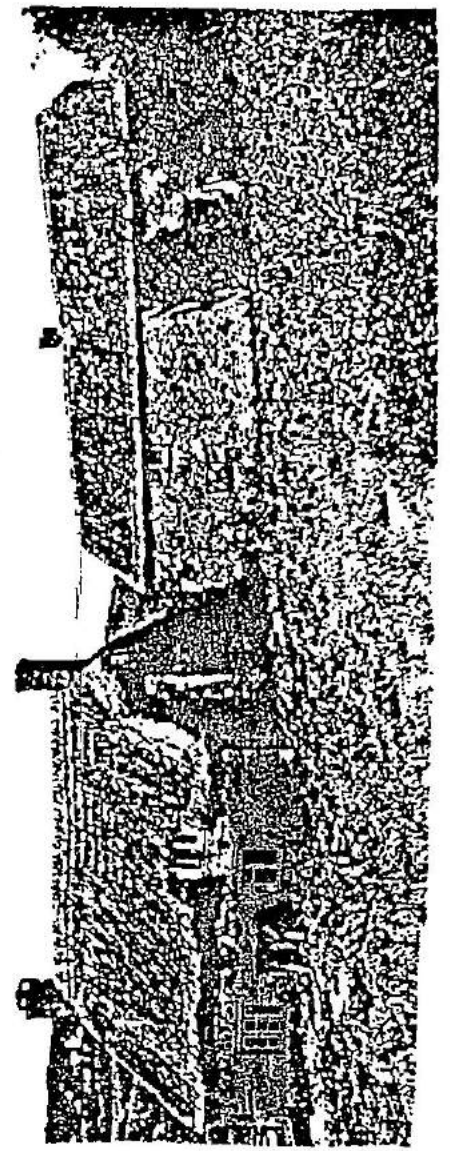
Rose Cottage





CHESELBOURNE AND DEWLISH HOME GUARD
FRANK TERRY OF CHEBBARD IN CHARGE

- Back Row : Gordon Grey, Lewis Barter,
Jack Bullen, Mr Birch
Middle : Henry Barter, Reginald Kellaway,
Edwin House, John Birch,
Mr Hart, Lloyd Cutler,
Walter Ross, Fred Bullen, Not
Known, Mr Rose
Front : Henry Kellaway, Gordon Diment,
Mr Barrett, Mr Turpin and
Fred Whelan



Lyscombe Chapel and Cottage

A typical entry of 1753, concerns an Edward White who must have fallen on hard times :-

"Quarterly house rent for Edward White	2s	6d
beer " " "		8d
pair of breeches " " "	1s	10d
For a yard and half of linery for a waistcoat		
for Edward White	1s	10d
For 'ell' for flanning " " "	1s	3d
thread and buttons " " "		3 ¹ / ₂ d
pair of stockings " " "		8 ¹ / ₂ d
making of shirt " " "		4d
For keeping Edward White for a month	5s	0d

They also paid 1/- for cleaning the wash pool, 1/6 for sweeping the poor house chimney and £1 for 'lime' for the poor house. They "found" the waymenders in beer. They mended the common bridge, they paid the masons bill for fixing Mrs Mays "Chambley" and also paid her window tax.

In 1781 we learn that 'bleading' cost 6d but ENOCKELATION (against smallpox) cost 10/6. Truly the social services of their day!

CHAPTER FIVE

"LEGENDS"

To balance the lack of historic facts, we have many legends and myths. Udal in his Dorset Folklore, mentioned a custom of village maidens, dressed all in white, walking the fields on Palm Sunday for the purpose of "Treading the Wheat".

A white owl flying over a house was supposed to herald a birth and legend has it that smugglers followed the line of holly bushes that marked the "Smuggler's Way" along the hedgerows. In 1848 a "Robin Roberts of Cheselbourne was fined £200" for being involved in smuggling.

But the legend that still awes school children today is the tale of Ann Riggs, the local village witch. Many misfortunes were attributed to her powers. One farmer blamed her for the death of nine of his horses which she is supposed to have ridden to exhaustion during successive night rides.

Several times she was refused access to fields to gather sticks for firewood and the farmer concerned blamed

her for the subsequent death of his cows.

Traditionally the local witch coven met in the holy road above Withybeds to the North West of the parish, towards Melcombe Bingham. These Withybeds are still very boggy. Once a coachman and his horses taking the double bend at speed is reputed to have disappeared without trace into a watery grave one dark and stormy night.

But on this particular night, the witches were surprised by the local witch-hunter general and his henchmen and they were arrested and carted off to the nearest ducking stool the local stream being too shallow.

During the melee that ensued, poor Ann Riggs was killed and was buried just outside the churchyard. However, in the years that followed, the villagers, ridden with guilt, decided to give Ann a proper Christian burial and even extended the walls of the churchyard to include her in the consecrated ground and gave her a proper inscribed gravestone, which survives to this day.

She is supposed to have lived in a shack behind the cottage opposite the church which became known a Carriers Cottage, and until recently served as a village shop and post office. During renovations of the cottage and garden some tunnels were revealed indicating possible storage of

ice blocks or cheeses. A recent occupant of the cottage, during more renovations, discovered a peculiar stone with strange mystical symbols pointing to the connections of Ann Riggs with the Occult. It is also claimed that the cottage is haunted.

Decendants of the Rigg family still inhabit the village. Research into the parish registers reveal Riggs mentioned in records as early as 1644, but whether the family or the headstone really relate to the witch is hard to say.

Another curiosity occurred in 1840 when Charles Dickens published his novel - The Old Curiosity Shop - and makes us wonder if he knew Cheselbourne. One of his characters, the shabby clerk Dick Swiveller, was expecting to inherit £25,000 from an aunt who lived in Cheselbourne, Dorsetshire.

Did Dickens make up the name as sounding suitably rural, did he chose it from a gazetteer because of its remoteness, or did he in fact know Cheselbourne and thought to give it publicity?

CHAPTER SIX

"VICTORIAN CHESELBOURNE"

When the common fields of Cheselbourne were enclosed by the Acts of 1845 less than 15% of the area of the parish was involved, but most of the 'Strip' farming lands, mainly on Northfield were lost.

However, by 1851, Cheselbourne emerges as a stable, self sufficient village of 84 houses supporting a population of over 400. A report from the records of the Royal Agricultural Society of 1854 mentions a Mr James Cain of Cheselbourne as "occupying 700 acres, which supported 700 ewes and 150 pigs. His root crops included 80 acres of swedes to feed the beasts".

The village boasted six farmers, a mason, a timber dealer, a wheelwright, a blacksmith, a shoe maker, a butcher, a miller, two carpenters and two shopkeepers, Samual Riggs was parish clerk and his brother, Levi, who farmed at Waterside, employing 18 men and several boys, was a lay preacher and probably instrumental in the erection of the Chapel in 1866.

Wagons were made locally and the woman helped the

financies by making leather gloves. Later when machines were invented, they changed to hand knitting them.

In 1861 a school was built for 80 children along side the rectory. It was under the control of the rector.

Assistants were paid 18d a week, rising to 3/- and their duties included cleaning the school room. The headmistress had two weeks holiday per year but her assistants only one. The children themselves had no holidays, but were probably allowed time off to help with haymaking and harvest.

Sadly this building was damaged by fire in 1909 and a new school building was opened near the village green.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"20TH CENTURY CHESELBOURNE"

Cheselbourne Womens Institute was formed in 1917 with Mrs Bennet as president, and one of their first tasks was to send a parcel to each of the 14 local men serving abroad. Members were also encouraged to keep rabbits to help food production.

Victory was celebrated with a party in a barn at Waterside Farm when, we are told, it rained. There is a plaque in the church which commemorates the 34 men who served between 1914 and 1918, four of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice.

But life between the two world wars was hard, the families depending on agriculture for a living dwindled to 16 or 17, with a maximum wage of 30/- per week. The population of the village in 1919 was 153, housed in 57 cottages. There was no shop then, and only a carriers horse and van, starting its round from Hazelbury Bryan, calling at Cheselbourne to pick up eggs and chickens to take to Dorchester market. Indeed, it was not uncommon for people to walk to Dorchester and back, a distance of 8 miles each way.

The roads were first tarmaced in 1922 and Houses' Motorised Bus Service started soon after. The daughter of the rector at this time, Rev. Whistler, was first Dorset woman to hold a driving licence and drive on our highways.

But the Social life was better. The old school became a parish hall and dances and whist drives were regularly held, the village even supporting a string band!

Menfolk over 14 could play billiards, table tennis and darts in the reading room for a subscription of 2/- each. There was also a football and cricket team with pitches and a pavilion at Whitlands which was provided by Mr and Mrs Walker who moved in 1936 to the rectory. Even the tennis club played frequently during the summer at the Eastfield courts.

Sometime in 1919, a shop and post office was opened at Carriers Cottage and later there was also a shop on the village green in one of the cottages which has now disappeared. This was kept by Mrs Thorne, often known as Granny Joe. She had only one eye and sold sweets and cigarettes. The young men of the village congregated there during the evenings sittings on her sofa and

drinking stewed tea from an old blue teapot always on the hearth.

Glove knitting continued: a Mrs Downton and a Mrs Harris would sit outside the Rivers Arms knitting in the then traditional Ringwood pattern during the summer.

Mrs Upshall, another knitter, is remembered as being able to complete one pair of gloves in an evening. "Grannie" Upshall, once a school teacher, was the wife of Charlie Upshall a well remembered character. He had been born at Hayes Cottage and lived in Cheselbourne all his life. They lived on the corner site of Streetway Lane in the black wooden bungalow with a white veranda which they built themselves before the days of planning permission, and it is now due for demolition. It has been described as looking as if it had been lifted from some Indian hill station and many mothers will have fond memories of Mrs Upshall sitting on the steps chatting to and knowing the names of each child as they passed to school or collected their milk from Northfield Farm.

Strangely there is no memorial to the men (or women) of the village who served their country in World War II. We have a photo of the local Home Guard and there must have been some members of the Womens Land Army in the area. We hear memories of dog-fights in the air, while

the Battle of Britain raged. Farmers, suddenly very much needed to produce food for the home front, toiled in the fields below.

The first pair of council houses were erected opposite West Farm in 1927 followed by four more and another pair opposite the school in 1939. Six pairs were built in Streetway Lane in 1954. Also in Streetway Lane a double storied brick built house (now known as Maryfield) was erected in 1956 as the village police house. Due to centralisation the local bobby was moved to Piddletrenthide in 1959 and now our only routine contact with the constabulary is the rural van which visits the village once a week.

Electricity finally reached the village in 1947 when the first mains was switched on at Mr F. Bullens farm on 22nd October. Mains water was piped through in 1970's, until then the residents relied on a supply pumped from a nearby farm reservoir and the five wells situated through the main thoroughfare.

Another upheaval was the laying of pipelines for the natural gas supply that cross crossed through the valley in 1968/9. Heavy plant digging trenches and carrying huge pipes became a familiar and often dangerous sight in our narrow lanes, but sadly the supply is not available to

us, only the towns of Dorset. Also sadly, there is no main drainage here - most houses rely on their own sewerage systems.

Six old peoples bungalows were built near the church in 1970, and the village hall was built in 1968 on land donated by Lieutenant Colonel and the Honourable Mrs Turner. As well as for social functions, this is also used as an extra classroom and diningroom for the village school.

In 1966 the bus shelter was erected in memory of Mrs Nora Hosford by her husband Dr Hosford of Bramblecombe Farm. She had been a prominent member of the village and a Women's Institute president. Also on the green opposite the bus shelter is a seat commemorating the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1952. We are told a village party was held and it rained!!!

The present day village is a parish of some 2,580 acres lying entirely on chalk rising from 258ft to 495ft above sea level. Situated on three streams - Lyscombe brook, Devils Brook and the Cheselbourne, from which it takes its name - it stretches over a mile winding through the natural curves of the valley and today a different pattern of life has evolved. The same farms still exist, but are now family concerns employing few outsiders. They

are mostly dairy farms, sheep being a rare sight on the downs now, the cows were first introduced in 1919 and at roughly the same time tractors as well.

Most wage earners commute by car to the offices and shops of Puddletown and Dorchester and these also include a high percentage of wives. The electoral roll lists 204 adults, living in 110 houses.

The school with only 32 pupils is part of a three tier system. When nine years old pupils are transported daily by bus to Puddletown and at 13 they go on to Dorchester Comprehensive Schools. Some go on to higher education at Weymouth, Poole and Bournemouth or to Universities and are sadly lost to the village.

Entertainment is supplied by the TV or visits to cinema and bingo at nearby towns. There is a thriving W.I., a gardens club and a flourishing Young Farmers branch. The old peoples club and church activities are usually a joint effort the four parishes - Milton Abbas having joined us in 1976.

There are many modern bungalows and several new residences, often built on old sites and planning permission for new houses is frequently being sought. Several cottages have been modernised. The chapel, no

longer used, is now converted to a residence.

There is now no shop and post office but we have two mobile shops, a mobile library, also a bakery and fish delivery van. Milk is delivered every other day by float - one being unable to buy milk direct from farms since 1960.

Should we ever be deprived of the internal combustion engine, the telephone and TV would our life differ much from that of our ancestors?

Those of us who remember the bad winter of 1961/2, when the village was isolated for many days and it was two months before life returned to normal - know that self-sufficiency is no joke. It could, in the event of a prolonged power failure or world oil shortage become a reality. Would we be as capable of survival as those early inhabitants of Cheselbourne?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of the books consulted in this history include :-

Hutchinson's Dorset, Volume 3

Department of the Environment's Royal Commission on
Historical Monuments (Volume 3)

R. Good's "Old Roads of Dorset"

Udal's "Folk Lore of Dorset"

A.R. Bayley's "The Great Civil War in Dorset"

Roland Grant's "Dorset Villages"

Roger Gutteridge's "Dorset Smuggler's"

ALSO

Each member of Cheselbourne Womens Institute undertook to interview an older member of the parish in an attempt to record the essence of a Cheselbourne fast disappearing.

We realise we have only scratched the surface, but if we have aroused your interest, walk again around the village, look at the old buildings and visit the ancient church.

Perhaps a particular aspect of research will appeal to you, so why not visit the lovely ladies in Dorchester Record Office? They will be only too pleased to show you where to begin!

Good hunting!

January 1984.



The Manor



Champions Close