

VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Kiddington with Asterleigh parish

Landownership

In the mid 11th century Kiddington was divided between two manors separated probably by the river Glyme,¹ and known later as Over Kiddington and Asterleigh manor (in the west and south), and Nether Kiddington manor (in the north-east). Though still named separately into the 19th century, by the early 13th they generally descended together, passing to a series of mostly resident lords including the Saussays and Williamscoats (13th to 15th centuries), the Babingtons (1450s–c.1609), the Brownes (1609–c.1840), and the Gaskells (1855–1953). The principal manor house for most or all of that time stood by the Glyme on the site of the present-day Kiddington Hall (on Nether Kiddington manor), which was substantially rebuilt c.1840–2. The combined estate remained intact until 2010, when the house was sold with c.466 a. and the rest to a separate owner. The parish's only other substantial estates were the rector's glebe (c.80 a. in 1851), c.35 a. attached to the neighbouring manor of Glympton, and a few small medieval freeholds, of which a couple survived into the early 19th century when they were absorbed into the main estate.²

The Manors of Nether and Over Kiddington and Asterleigh

Offa, king of Mercia, reportedly gave all or part of Kiddington to Worcester priory c.780, along with nearby Heythrop. Both were said to have been lost during the Danish invasions,³ and by 1066 both Heythrop and what became Over Kiddington were held by one Godric, passing at the Conquest to the Breton tenant-in-chief Hascolf (or Hascoit) Musard. The Over Kiddington manor, which probably already included Asterleigh, was then reckoned at 5 hides, and was tenanted by Musard's fellow Breton Maino Brito. The smaller manor of Nether Kiddington (1 hide and 2½ yardlands) was held by the Norman tenant-in-chief Roger de Lacy of the fee of William FitzOsbern (d. 1071), and was tenanted by Ralph de Saceit or de Saussay, named from Le Saussay in Normandy;⁴ that may, however, have comprised only a part of the later medieval manor, which was reckoned at five carucates by the 1220s.⁵

¹ Above, landscape etc. (boundaries; settlement).

² OHC, 234/A; *ibid.* DV/X/55; below.

³ T. Hearne (ed.), *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis* (1783), I, 280; *VCH Oxon.* XI, 133. For Asterleigh church's later association with Heythrop, below, relig. hist.

⁴ DB, ff. 160–1; Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, I, 246, 293, 336, 404.

⁵ *Book of Fees*, I, 318; below, econ. hist. (Middle Ages).

The two manors lay in different hundreds by the 13th century and probably by the 11th, Nether Kiddington (north-east of the Glyme) in Wootton hundred, and Over Kiddington and Asterleigh in Chadlington hundred.⁶

Ralph de Saussay's successors included another Ralph, involved in royal service at Woodstock in the 1160s, and William, involved in a Begbroke land dispute in 1188.⁷ By the 1210s the family had also acquired Over Kiddington and Asterleigh manor, which was then held by Sir Ralph de Saussay, while his relative Lettice de Saussay held Nether Kiddington. Both were still living in 1242,⁸ but by 1255 Ralph's widow Joan (d. by 1272) held Over Kiddington and Asterleigh in dower, while Nether Kiddington had passed to Thomas de Williamscoth (of Williamscoth in Wardington), whose father Richard (d. by 1232) had married Sibyl de Saussay.⁹ Thomas presumably acquired Over Kiddington and Asterleigh on Joan's death, and by 1279 had been succeeded in both manors by Richard de Williamscoth (d. 1291), a future sheriff of Oxfordshire.¹⁰ The hundred rolls give no hint of any other interests, although members of the Canville or Caunville family had some apparently temporary rights in Over Kiddington and Asterleigh manor during the 1270s–80s and still in 1302–3.¹¹

Overlordships derived from the Domesday tenancies continued into the later Middle Ages. Over Kiddington and Asterleigh (reckoned at a knight's fee) were still held of the Musard fee in the 1240s, and from the 1270s of the de la Mares, while Nether Kiddington comprised two separate ½ knight's fees, one held of the Lacys' Weobley or Ludlow baronies, and the other of the barony of Richard's Castle (Shropshire).¹² A Mortimer overlordship derived from the latter barony was noted throughout the 14th century, but by 1498 Nether Kiddington was held of the Crown, and Over Kiddington of the earldom of Warwick for service of 5s. 9d. a year.¹³

Actual possession of the combined manors descended through the Williamscoth male line until the 15th century, Richard being succeeded by Henry (d. by 1316), another Richard (sheriff in 1354, d. by 1357), and Thomas (d. 1371), followed briefly by Thomas's widow

⁶ *Book of Fees*, II, 821, 827; above, landscape etc. (boundaries).

⁷ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, II, 682; *Pipe R* 1165 (PRS 8), 68, 71; 1166 (PRS 9), 116; *VCH Oxon.* XII, 6.

⁸ *Rot. Welles*, I, 22–3; II, 5, 20, 36; *Cur. Reg.* IX, 344 (calling her Lettice of Kiddington); *Book of Fees*, I, 447; II, 821, 827, 835, 840. Lettice also held land in Glympton: *VCH Oxon.* XI, 122, 125.

⁹ Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 36–7 (implying Ralph d. c.1253), 46, 50, 82 (calling her Joan de Falkote); Warton, *Kiddington* (1815 edn), 40–2; *VCH Oxon.* X, 215.

¹⁰ *Rot. Hund.* II, 734, 877; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 44; *VCH Oxon.* X, 215–16.

¹¹ TNA, CP 25/1/284/21, no. 90; CP 25/1/188/10, no. 60; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 161, 165, 185. The sole later allusion is in Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 122.

¹² *Book of Fees*, II, 821, 827, 835, 840; *Rot. Hund.* 734, 877; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XIII, pp. 125–6, 166–7; cf. Sanders, *Eng. Baronies*, 75, 95–6; *VCH Oxon.* XI, 133.

¹³ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* V, p. 23; X, p. 537; XVII, p.453; *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, p. 69.

Margaret (d. 1372) and her second husband John Nowers the younger.¹⁴ Her and Thomas's infant son Thomas was married c.1372–3 to Sir John Nowers' daughter Elizabeth, who in 1380 (with her new husband John Tighale) claimed a third of the manors in dower;¹⁵ custody of Kiddington had meanwhile been granted to the king's esquire William Adderbury, while Peter de la Mare presented to Asterleigh church as custodian in 1375.¹⁶ A later Richard Williamscot, probably a younger son of Thomas (d. 1371), was lord by 1398,¹⁷ and was succeeded before 1419 by his son Ralph, who settled the manors on himself and his wife Margaret in 1421, and whose mother Elizabeth held some lands in dower in 1428.¹⁸ He was dead by 1434 when his widow presented to Kiddington and Asterleigh churches with her new husband William Marmion, and in 1438 the couple conveyed both manors to trustees.¹⁹

Ralph and Margaret's heir was their daughter Elizabeth Williamscot, who before 1454 married Robert Babington (d. by 1461), a younger son of the distinguished justice Sir William Babington.²⁰ Their son William (fl. 1462–6)²¹ was succeeded in turn by his sons Richard (d. 1493), Edward (d. 1498, 'a natural fool since birth'), and William,²² who was followed before 1524 by his own son Thomas (d. 1558) and then by Thomas's son Sir William (d. 1577).²³ He sold Williamscot, and served as sheriff in 1574–5.²⁴ William's son and heir Philip Babington (d. 1606) was followed by his own son Henry, who in 1607 sold the manors to Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery and Lord Herbert of Shurland (and later earl of Pembroke). He immediately mortgaged them to Henry and his mother Meriall, and in 1609

¹⁴ TNA, E 179/161/8–10; *ibid.* CP 25/1/189/17, no. 8; CP 25/1/190/21, no. 21; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 165, 177, 185; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 47; *Cal. Inq. p.m. XIII*, pp. 125–6, 166–7; cf. *VCH Oxon.* VI, 270 (Noke); X, 215–16 (Williamscot). Williamscot (but not Kiddington) was held by one John Williamscot in 1346: *Feudal Aids*, IV, 175.

¹⁵ *Cal. Inq. p.m. XIII*, pp. 166–7; *Reg. of Simon Sudbury, Abp of Canterbury, 1375–81*, ed. F. Donald Logan (Cant. & York Soc. 110, 2020), p. 91 (giving a different marriage date). The elder John (d. 1386) was lord of Churchill.

¹⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1370–4, 252, 287; Lincs. Arch. REG/10, f. 363v.

¹⁷ Lincs. Arch. REG/13, f. 315v. In 1380 he was a minor in the custody of Leon. Hakelyt: *ibid.* REG/10, f. 373.

¹⁸ TNA, CP 25/1/191/26, nos. 34 and 44; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 189, 196 (mentioning lands formerly held by Wm Williamscot). Ralph Arches may have had custody in 1414/15: Lincs. Arch. REG/14, f. 402.

¹⁹ Lincs. Arch. REG/17, ff. 62v–63; TNA, CP 25/1/191/27, no. 78.

²⁰ *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, p. 69; TNA, CP 25/1/191/28, no. 48; Lincs Arch. REG/20, ff. 231, 237v., 239v.; *Pardon Rolls of Edw. IV, 1462–7* (List & Index Soc. 364, 2021), p. 55; *ODNB*, s.v. Babington, Sir Wm (c.1370–1454), justice. Warton, *Kiddington* (1815 edn), 45, and *VCH Oxon.* VI, 270 mistakenly say Babington d. 1464.

²¹ *Pardon Rolls of Edw. IV, 1462–7* (List & Index Soc. 364, 2021), p. 55; Lincs. Arch. REG/20, ff. 239v., 243.

²² *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, pp. 30–1, 69; III, pp. 384–5; I.S. Leadam (ed.), *Domesday of Inclosures 1517–18* (1897), I, 371.

²³ TNA, E179/161/194; E 179/161/175; *ibid.* PROB 11/41/228; PROB 11/60/46; OHC, B.I/6; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, burials 1577. Another Wm presented to the church in 1535: Lincs. Arch. REG/27, f. 193v. For lands held in dower by Thos's widow Dame Mgt in 1577, TNA, E179/162/341; for a £5 rent charge allegedly agreed by Sir Wm Babington in 1566 and later given to Exeter College, Oxford, TNA, C 5/302/43; C 10/531/4.

²⁴ *VCH Oxon.* X, 216; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 94.

sold them to Sir Henry Browne of Oxenford and Henley Park (Surrey), a younger son of Anthony Browne (d. 1592), Viscount Montagu. Browne (who like his successors and some of the Babingtons was a Roman Catholic recusant) moved to Kiddington soon after, although the Babingtons' interest in the various mortgages ended only in 1613.²⁵



*Browne family
memorials in the
church's south chapel
(adopted as a family
mortuary chapel from
the 1630s)*

Henry (d. 1639) was followed by his son Peter Browne, a Royalist who died in 1645 of wounds sustained at the battle of Naseby. Peter's widow Margaret managed the estate during the infancy of their son Henry (1639–89), but as a recusant faced Parliamentary fines and sequestrations which led to considerable debts. Manor courts were held in the name of her Knollys relatives (of Grove Place in Hampshire), acting as trustees under her and Peter's marriage settlement, and from 1641 to 1651 the Knollyses also held some lands directly under a ten-year lease from Peter in payment of various debts.²⁶ Henry Browne was made a baronet by Charles II in 1659 and came of age the following year, serving as sheriff in 1687–9; following his death his widow Frances (d. 1719) retained a life interest, which their son Sir Charles Browne (1663–1751), 2nd baronet, apparently bought out in 1694.²⁷ Charles's son George (1694–1754), 3rd and last baronet, was in charge by the 1730s and inherited on his father's death, leaving the manors (in the absence of male heirs) to his daughter Barbara, wife of Sir Edward Mostyn (d. 1755), Bt, of Talacre (Flintshire).²⁸ She later married Edward Gore (d. 1801) of Barrow (Som.), with whom (as Lady Mostyn) she remained at Kiddington until not long before her own death in 1810. Her and Edward Mostyn's second son Charles (1752–1844) inherited under the terms of his grandfather's will, having adopted the surname

²⁵ OHC, par. reg. transcript, burials 1606; *ibid.* B.I/7–33; *Oxon. Visit. 1669–75*, 73–4; *VCH Surrey*, III, 65, 342. For the family's Catholicism, *below*, social hist.; relig. hist.

²⁶ OHC, B.I/41–51; B.IV/1–8; *ibid.* SL161/1/CR/1; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript; TNA, C 5/430/22; *Oxon. Visit. 1669–75*, 73–4; *VCH Hants* III, 434, 436 (Knollyses); *below*, social hist. Mgt (dau. of Hen. Knollys, d.1638) was entitled to half the manor house and the income from Over Kiddington and Asterleigh under the marriage settlement: OHC, B.I/43.

²⁷ OHC, B.I/55–87; B.VI/1; *ibid.* QSD/E/I, pp. 99–102, 105–6; *ibid.* par.reg. transcript; *Oxon. Visit. 1669–75*, 73–4.

²⁸ *Secker's Visit.* 88; OHC, E36/1/9/L/1, no. 4; *ibid.* B.I/100–3; TNA, PROB 11/809/394.

Browne Mostyn, and having run the estate since Gore's death.²⁹ His own son Charles Mostyn predeceased him,³⁰ and c.1839–40 (when aged nearly 90) Browne Mostyn sold the estate to Mortimer Ricardo, acting apparently with his grandson George Charles Mostyn, created Lord Vaux in 1838.³¹

Ricardo, a younger son of the political economist David Ricardo, served as sheriff in 1846–7 and rebuilt Kiddington Hall, but sold up in 1855 following his wife's death.³² The purchaser was Henry Lomax Gaskell (d. 1889), son of a Wigan (Lancs.) solicitor, who moved to Kiddington with his wife Alice (d. 1873) and undertook much building work in the village, serving as sheriff 1858–9.³³ He was succeeded by his son Capt. Henry Brooks Gaskell (d. 1907) and grandson Henry Melville Gaskell (d. 1954),³⁴ who the year before his death sold the house and estate to the chartered accountant Sir Laurence Robson (d. 1982) and his wife Inga-Stina (d. 1999), later Baroness Robson of Kiddington. Their son Maurice inherited in 1982, and in 2009–10 sold the 2,050-a. estate in parcels, the house and c.466 a. to the journalist, producer and campaigner Jemima (Khan) Goldsmith, and the rest (c.1,600 a.) to the businessman and philanthropist Sir Alec Reed, the owners in 2024.³⁵

Manor House (Kiddington Hall)

The two manors may have each retained their own manor house into the 14th century, when both had attached demesne farms and were still occasionally held separately. Lettice and Joan de Saussay were resident on Nether and Over Kiddington manors respectively during the 13th century,³⁶ and Henry de Williamscot (who dated a document at Kiddington in 1307) was taxed in both places in 1306, making a life grant of Over Kiddington to his son and prospective daughter-in-law the following year.³⁷ A likely location for the Over Kiddington manor house is near the church in Asterleigh,³⁸ but if so it may have gone by 1372 when a

²⁹ TNA, PROB 11/809/394; PROB 11/2005/148; OHC, par. reg. transcript; *ibid.* B.I/105–117; *ibid.* QSD/E/I, pp.230–4; *Bath Chron. and Weekly Gaz.* 2 Apr. 1801; Leics., Leicester and Rutland RO, DG39/1467; DG39/1537; DG39/1586; DG39/1621; DG39/1655; DG39/1723; DG39/1805. Chas had earlier declined to sell the reversion to Gore: *ibid.* DG39/1383 and 1387.

³⁰ TNA, PROB 11/1642/303 (proved 1821)

³¹ *Worcs. Chron.* 18 Sept. 1839 (calling it Lord Vaux's estate); *Complete Peerage*, XII.2, 227, 229.

³² Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 172–3; *Wilb. Dioc. Bks*, 210; *Oxf. Jnl*, 21 July 1855; below (manor ho.).

³³ *Wilb. Dioc. Bks*, 210; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 175; OHC, par. reg. transcript; above, landscape etc. (built character). For the family, J. Dimpleby, *A Profound Secret: May Gaskell, Her Daughter Amy, and Edward Burne-Jones* (2005 edn); below, social hist.

³⁴ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1895–1939 edns); *The Times*, 23 Dec. 1907, 22 Oct. 1954.

³⁵ Dimpleby, *Secret*, 253, 254n.; *Country Life*, 9 Sept. 2009, pp. 112–113; *Daily Mail*, 7 Sept. 2009; *Wootton, Glympton and Kiddington Parish Profile* [PDF c.2024], p. 22 (accessed online May 2024); below, social hist.

³⁶ *Cur. Reg.* IX, 344 (Lettice 'of Kiddington'); Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, p. 46; 'Oxon Eyre, 1261', II, no. 135.

³⁷ Royce (ed.), *Landboc*, II, pp. 205–6; TNA, E 179/161/10; *ibid.* CP 25/1/188/13, no. 62.

³⁸ Above, landscape etc. (settlement).

survey mentioned a 'capital messuage' only in Nether Kiddington, and any residual structures were probably long abandoned by the time that Asterleigh's church was decommissioned in 1466.³⁹ Nether Kiddington's medieval manor house presumably occupied the site of the present-day Kiddington Hall (so called by 1717),⁴⁰ adjoining Kiddington's medieval church on a rise immediately above the river. The Williamscots had residences elsewhere (including in Charlbury), but may have stayed at Kiddington occasionally,⁴¹ and from the 15th century the Babingtons and their successors all made Kiddington their principal seat.⁴² Henry Browne reportedly rebuilt the house 'on the foundations of the old one' in 1673,⁴³ and it was again rebuilt (or substantially remodelled) for Mortimer Ricardo c.1840–2.⁴⁴

In 1636 the house included a great parlour hung with family portraits,⁴⁵ and in 1662 it was taxed on 21 hearths.⁴⁶ In 1717 (following the reported 1673 rebuilding) there was an additional little parlour with a room beyond it, and reference to first-floor rooms with closets and with garrets above suggests a two-storeyed building with attics, which had large cellars beneath.⁴⁷ Alterations to an 'old-fashioned dining room' on the house's west side were made c.1750, when 'some beautiful armorial shields in painted glass' were removed, and further repairs were made in 1803 after Lady Mostyn moved 'to a place less damp' than Kiddington, leaving her son Charles in charge.⁴⁸ In 1816 and again in the 1820s the house was advertised to be let fully furnished, along with its 'excellent' garden and pleasure ground, a coach house for three carriages, and stabling for up to 20 horses.⁴⁹ In 1823 it was 'large' and 'very old', but except on the north had been 'so very much modernized that little remains of the ancient building ... except the extreme thickness of the walls'.⁵⁰

The present Italianate house, on a quadrangular plan, is two-storeyed with attics, and is largely the work of Sir Charles Barry, whom Ricardo commissioned to remodel the building

³⁹ TNA, E 149/34, no. 8 (still mentioning a demesne fm at Asterleigh); *Cal. Pat.* 1364–7, 435–6 (assault on lord's men and servants at Asterleigh in 1367); below, relig. hist.

⁴⁰ OHC, QSD/E/I, p. 99.

⁴¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1364–7, 435–6. The existing Williamscot House is later: *VCH Oxon.* X, 216–17.

⁴² e.g. *Pardon Rolls of Edw. IV. 1462–7*, ed. H. Kleineke (L&I Soc. 364, 2021), p. 55; TNA, PROB 11/41/228; PROB 11/60/46; *Cal. Pat.* 1558–60, 228; 1566–9, p. 116; OHC, B.I/7, B.I/11, BI/28, B.I/48 etc.; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript.

⁴³ Warton, *Kiddington* (1783 edn), 34–5.

⁴⁴ Below.

⁴⁵ OHC, B.I/48, also mentioning servants' chambers and hangings of arras and tapestry.

⁴⁶ TNA, E179/255/4 pt 1, f. 69. The dowager Lady (Mgt) Browne occupied a two-hearth house in Over Kiddington.

⁴⁷ OHC, QSD/E/I, p. 105 (also mentioning a shuffleboard room).

⁴⁸ Warton, *Kiddington* (1783 edn), 34–5; Leics., Leicester and Rutland RO, DG39/1537; DG39/1586.

⁴⁹ *Oxf. Jnl.* 14 Sept. 1816, 9 Aug. 1823; *Northampton Mercury*, 7 Feb. 1824.

⁵⁰ Bodl. Dep. d 145, ff. 7–8.

in 1840.⁵¹ The main work was probably completed by 1842,⁵² leaving no obvious trace of the earlier house, although some walling may have been incorporated.⁵³ The east entrance front is of five bays, the two end bays set slightly forward and framed by rusticated quoins, and the central three fronted by a single-storeyed balustraded entrance portico with paired Tuscan half-columns. The south and west fronts are in similar style, the whole topped by a bracketed cornice and a prominent balustrade decorated with urns. A contemporary plan



Kiddington Hall from the south-west, showing the main quadrangular house, the added orangery (left), and the quadrangular stable block with its clock tower.

<https://strada.uk.com/refurbishment/completed-project-kiddington-estate/>

shows rooms arranged around a large open staircase and a small adjoining courtyard, with services in the north range: the arrangement largely survives, although the entrance has been moved from the portico's southern bay to the centre, and some rooms have been reconfigured.⁵⁴ Barry also designed the adjoining quadrangular stable block (which includes an ogee-capped clock tower over a round-headed gabled entrance), and probably the Italianate entrance lodge and rusticated gate piers at the main driveway's east end, added after 1851.⁵⁵ A former orangery at the house's north-west corner, originally with a glass roof supported on cast-iron columns, was added for H.L. Gaskell c.1859, to designs by William Roe.⁵⁶ In the mid 20th-century the house became badly run-down and lacked heating or

⁵¹ A. Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry* (1867), p. 356. For other descriptions, Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 379–80; NHLE, nos. 1053091 (ho.); 1198546 (stables); 1198603 (lodge); 1053095 (gatepiers); *Country Life*, 9 Sept. 2009; JPPC, 'Historic Impact Assessment' (Dec. 2010): copy in WODC online planning docs, 10/1813/P/FP; www.ribapix.com (photos and architects' plans). (Online sources accessed May 2024.)

⁵² OHC, par. reg. transcript; below.

⁵³ Ibid. QS1842/1/A9/2, plan of 1841, implying that the previous ho. had a similar footprint; Norfolk RO, MEA14/23, showing varying wall thicknesses; *Gardner's Dir. Oxon.* (1852), 678 ('restored and modernised').

⁵⁴ Norfolk RO, MEA14/23 (predating addition of stable block); cf. JPPC, 'Hist. Impact Assessment', modern plans.

⁵⁵ Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 380; JPPC, 'Hist. Impact Assessm'. pp. 25–30, 34–5; designs at www.ribapix.com and <https://riba.sirsidynix.net.uk> (accessed May 2024); OHC, 234/M.

⁵⁶ Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 379–80; JPPC, 'Hist. Impact Assessm'. p. 21; RIBA Libr., PA94/1 (noting Roe's drawings); J. Dimbleby, *A Profound Secret* (2005), 63.

electricity,⁵⁷ but was modernized by the Robsons, who adapted the stable block as a conference centre and staff accommodation, inserting large new windows.⁵⁸ Two courtyard fountains and a pool in front of the orangery were added by Jemima Goldsmith c.2011.⁵⁹

The house was said in 1815 to have had a walled park by the 17th century,⁶⁰ and the area immediately west of the river Glyme probably once included a rabbit warren.⁶¹ The park in its later form was created in the 18th century by Lancelot ('Capability') Brown (d. 1783), who worked there briefly at the start of his career c.1740, and then again 'after he acquired celebrity', presumably for Lady Mostyn or her father.⁶² Brown's biggest contribution (before 1767) was his damming of the Glyme to form a long serpentine lake in front of the house, with a wooded island in the middle; in 1813 it was claimed that that was the first lake he ever created,⁶³ although it perhaps more likely reflected his later Kiddington work. Some of his tree planting possibly survives, and a ha-ha running south-east from the house to the lake may be of similar date, along with a domed brick ice house on the lake's south side next to a woodland plantation known later as 'the Wilderness'.⁶⁴ The main access to the house seems to have been along the line of the present driveway by 1767, running past a farmstead and other buildings removed in the 19th century. An approach from the south (crossing the river north of Park Farm) was suppressed c.1842 at Ricardo's behest, although a footpath on a similar alignment still crosses the river just north of the house.⁶⁵

The gardens around the house were redesigned from 1843, when the landscape gardener J.C. Loudon produced a series of plans shortly before his death. Formal terraced gardens immediately west and south of the house and a rose garden to its south-east were accompanied by winding woodland walks and by a new walled kitchen garden north of the church, for which Loudon also produced plans.⁶⁶ A wooden octagonal boathouse with a pyramidal roof, on the lake's north bank, is of similar date,⁶⁷ while further east the bridge

⁵⁷ Dimbleby, *Secret*, 253, 256, 286, 419.

⁵⁸ Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 380; JPCC, 'Hist. Impact Assessm'. pp. 29–30; *Country Life*, 9 Sept. 2009.

⁵⁹ WODC online planning docs, 11/1388/P/FP.

⁶⁰ Warton, *Kiddington* (1815 edn), 51; cf. OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 41, no. 12 (mentioning 'parkewall' (?) in 1634).

⁶¹ Below, econ. hist. (agric. landscape).

⁶² W. Mavor, *A New Description of Blenheim* (9th edn, 1814), 3 (citing Lady Mostyn as his source); J. Penn, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Stoke Park in Bucks.* (1813), 33–4. Cf. D. Stroud, *Capability Brown* (1975), 47–9, 230; T. Hinde, *Capability Brown: the Story of a Master Gardener* (1986), 17–18.

⁶³ Jefferys, *Oxon. Map* (1767); Penn, *Stoke Park*, 33.

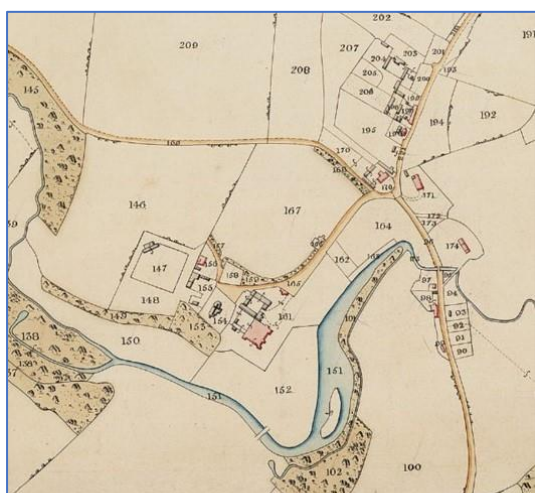
⁶⁴ <https://ogt.org.uk/2020/03/05/cb300-kiddington> (accessed Dec. 2023); NHLE, nos. 1001098 (ho. and gardens); 1053093 (ice ho.); OHC, 234/A and 234/M, no. 102 (Wilderness).

⁶⁵ Jefferys, *Oxon. Map* (1767); OHC, QS1842/1/A9/2 (incl. plan); *ibid.* 234/M; OS Map 1", sheet 45 (1833); 1:25000, sheet 191 (2015 edn).

⁶⁶ J.C. Loudon, *Self-Instruction for Young Gardeners ... with a Memoir of the Author* (1845), pp. xliv–xlv; Loudon drawings at www.ribapix.com (accessed May 2024); OHC, 234/A and /M; OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. XXI.7 (1881 edn). The kitchen garden differed from Loudon's design (RIBA54411).

⁶⁷ NHLE, no. 1283760.

carrying the main public road over the Glyme was rebuilt by Ricardo in 1847.⁶⁸ The park seems to have been extended northwards during the later 19th century, when there was a cascade at the lake's east end and a pump house on its south bank,⁶⁹ while the gardens themselves saw much replanting by Henry Melville Gaskell (d. 1907).⁷⁰ Mid 20th-century changes included a second lake north-west of the house and a detached Dower House built off the main driveway c.1960, replacing the rose garden.⁷¹ Areas of meadow flowers have been added more recently.⁷² Early garden ornaments included a 14th-century font brought from Islip by Sir Henry Browne c.1660, in the mistaken belief that it had been used at Edward the Confessor's baptism.⁷³ A surviving weathered font must have a different provenance, however, since the earlier one was sold by Charles Browne-Mostyn c.1823 and is now in Middleton Stoney church.⁷⁴



Left: Kiddington Hall (in pink) in 1851 (Oxfordshire History Centre, 234M, with north tilted to left), showing Capability Brown's lake, the church immediately north of the house, and the new square kitchen garden just beyond. The map predates addition of the entrance lodge at the end of the driveway to Nether Kiddington village. Right: the surviving dovecot north-west of the house.

Farm buildings mentioned in 1635 (along with inner and outer courtyards, gardens, and orchards) included barns, hay houses, ox houses, carters' stables, and a pigeon house, presumably the circular stone dovecot (or a predecessor) which survives north-west of the house.⁷⁵ By 1851 the farmyard lay north of the church next to the new kitchen garden,

⁶⁸ Above, landscape etc. (communic).
⁶⁹ OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. XXI.7 (1881 and 1899 edns); *ibid.* 6", Oxon. XXI (1884 edn); cf. OHC, 234/A and 234/M.

⁷⁰ Dimpleby, *Secret*, 113–14.
⁷¹ JPPC, 'Hist. Impact Assessment', pp. 18, 47; OS Maps 1:2500, Oxon. XXI.7 (1922 edn); SP 4122 (1974 edn); NHLE, no. 1001098.

⁷² <https://ogt.org.uk/2020/03/05/cb300-kiddington>.
⁷³ *Wood's Life*, I, 403 (mistakenly calling him Sir Thos Browne); Warton, *Kiddington* (1815 edn), 20–3 and etching.

⁷⁴ Bodl. Dep. d 145, f. 8 (sale); VCH Oxon. VI, 250; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 410; NHLE, no. 1053092; HE Arch., IOE01/05565/06.
⁷⁵ OHC, B.I/43; NHLE, no. 1198575.

perhaps reflecting 18th-century changes intended to move it further from the house. Estate farming was by then also focused on Park Farm (near Over Kiddington).⁷⁶

Other Estates

In 1279 c.14 free tenants occupied greatly varied holdings of up to two yardlands.⁷⁷ The larger tenants included the Punchards, who during the 13th century were involved in land pleas both against their fellow freeholders the Smiths and de la Mares and against the lord Ralph de Saussay, from whom Fray Punchard sought three yardlands, 20 a. of land, and 40 a. of wood in 1230.⁷⁸ None of the freeholds are traceable long-term, although a two-yardland freehold in Over Kiddington and Asterleigh was sold by the Nernyghts to Richard Franklin, vicar of Hanney (Berks.), in 1425,⁷⁹ and a much smaller holding changed hands in 1507.⁸⁰ The Offields sold 1¼ yardlands and a house and meadow to Sir Henry Browne in 1667–8.⁸¹

The Colgroves, free tenants by the early 13th century,⁸² retained a 51½-a. freehold in 1686, when the lord Sir Henry Browne exchanged it for the same acreage of enclosed land in the north of the parish. It was later sold to Benjamin Marten (d. 1716) of Radford, and apart from 7 a. used to endow an Enstone beef charity was absorbed into the main Kiddington estate c.1806, having briefly passed from the Martens to John Jolly of Enstone.⁸³ A separate 11-a. freehold in Kiddington and Bladon became part of the manor in 1811,⁸⁴ by which time the only other non-manorial land was the rector's glebe (c.80 a.) and 36½ a. attached to Glympton manor in the south-east, including 14½ a. of woodland.⁸⁵ That had probably belonged to Glympton manor from the Middle Ages, when the lost hamlet of Boriens straddled the Glympton–Kiddington boundary in that area.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ OHC, 234/A and /M; *ibid.* QS1842/1/A9/2; below, econ. hist.

⁷⁷ *Rot. Hund.* II, 734, 852 (wrongly listed under Combe).

⁷⁸ *Cur. Reg.* XIV, pp. 114, 349–50; *Oxon. Fines*, pp. 90, 113–15, 118; *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, p. 81; 'Oxon. Eyre, 1261', nos. 157, 658. In 1279 John Punchard's 2 free yardlands were held rent-free for suit of court and scutage.

⁷⁹ TNA, CP 25/1/191/27, no. 20.

⁸⁰ OHC, B.I/4; cf. *ibid.* I/1–3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* B.I/66–8.

⁸² *Ibid.* B.I/1; *Rot. Hund.* II, 852; TNA, E 179/161/8–9; variously spelled Colesgrove, Colegrave, Conesgrave etc.

⁸³ OHC, B.I/75; *ibid.* Burton III/i/1–6; *ibid.* SL35/5/1–6; *ibid.* QSD/L/172; *ibid.* 234/A and 234/M; above, Enstone, social hist. (welfare). Held for 1d. quitrent in 1717 (OHC, QSD/E/I, p. 102). Sales partics in 1801 (Bodl. GA fol. A 266 (37)) list an additional 66-a. freehold, but as it does not appear in Kiddington land taxes it perhaps lay over the boundary.

⁸⁴ Wm Newman's: OHC, QSD/E/I, p. 233; QSD/L/172; *ibid.* E28/11/D/1.

⁸⁵ OHC, 234/A and 234/M; *ibid.* DV/X/55; below, relig. hist. (endowment).

⁸⁶ Above, landscape etc. (settlement); cf. *Rot. Hund.* II, 853, 876; Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 190 (s.v. Askew); VCH Oxon. XI, 122, 126; OHC, M2/4/X/5; *ibid.* QSD/L/173 (s.v. Wheate).