



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Enstone parish

Landownership

Landownership was long dominated by Winchcombe abbey and its successors as lords of Enstone manor, which in the Middle Ages incorporated large parts of Enstone, Cleveley, Gagingwell, and the formerly separate manor of Radford, as well as woodland and assarts at Ditchley. The Domesday manors of Dean and Chalford (partly in Spelsbury) and of Chalford itself were owned by Oriel College, Oxford, from 1482 until the 19th or 20th centuries, while Broadstone and Lidstone (acquired by Cold Norton priory) and the Enstone rectory estate (appropriated by Winchcombe abbey) later passed respectively to Brasenose College, Oxford, and to Christ Church, Oxford. From 1660 Enstone manor itself was held by the lords of neighbouring Spelsbury, whose seat at Ditchley House or Park (just over the Spelsbury boundary) had an associated farmhouse and outbuildings in Enstone parish. The whole of Enstone manor was thenceforth subsumed within the Ditchley Estate, owned by the earls of Lichfield and by their successors the Dillons until the estates were partly broken up in the 20th century.

Enstone Manor

What became Enstone manor was granted to Winchcombe abbey (Glos.) before the Norman Conquest, apparently by King Coenwulf of Mercia at the monastery's dedication in 811.¹ In 1086 the manor was assessed at 24 hides (including two hides held of the abbey by the lord of Spelsbury, Urso de Abitot),² and presumably it included most of the ancient parish. Exceptions were the separate manor of Chalford, and three hides at Radford held of William FitzOsbern, earl of Hereford, by Anketil de Grey, which were absorbed into the main manor before 1279.³ A 'waste' hide in Chastleton also belonged to the abbey in 1086, but was not mentioned later and presumably passed to Chastleton manor.⁴ By the 12th century a considerable acreage was held by free tenants, some of the holdings being later acquired (or perhaps re-acquired) by Winchcombe abbey. The most substantial included four hides in

¹ *VCH Glos.* II, 66; G. Haigh, *The History of Winchcombe Abbey* (1950), 17–18.

² DB, f. 157; Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, 439.

³ DB, ff. 157v., 161; *Rot. Hund.* II, 739–42 (making no mention of a Radford estate); *Feudal Aids* IV, 165.

⁴ DB, f. 157; *VCH Oxon.* I, 412 n.; above, Chastleton, landownership.

Gagingwell bought from William Taillard in the 1170s,⁵ 2½ hides in Cleveley bought from William Blundel c.1206, and a further hide and ½ yardland in Cleveley acquired from Robert of Cleveley.⁶

At the abbey's dissolution in 1539 Enstone manor (then worth over £56 a year) was taken into Crown hands, and the following year was granted to Sir Thomas Pope (d. 1559).⁷ Pope's widow (styled Lady Paulet from 1560) retained it until her death in 1593,⁸ when she was succeeded in turn by Pope's nephew William Pope (d. 1631) of Wroxton, created earl of Downe in 1628, and by William's grandson Thomas (of Cogges, 1622–60), the 2nd earl.⁹ At his death the manor was settled on his daughter Elizabeth (d. 1719) and her husband Sir Francis Lee (d. 1667), 4th baronet of Quarrendon, who as lord of neighbouring Spelsbury had a seat at Ditchley House¹⁰ and whose family already leased the Enstone part of Ditchley.¹¹

Lee was succeeded by his young son Edward (b. 1663), created earl of Lichfield on his betrothal to Charles II's illegitimate daughter Charlotte in 1674, although the manor was formally held by trustees until 1709.¹² Edward was succeeded in 1716 by his son George (d. 1743), 2nd earl of Lichfield, then by George's son George (d. 1772), the 3rd earl, and by George's uncle Robert, the 4th and last earl. In 1718 the manor was worth over £574 a year,¹³ despite poorly documented land sales which increased the number of free yardlands from 17 in 1540 to c.67½ by the early 18th century.¹⁴ Those included lands in Church Enstone (where the Marshall family owned 497 a. in the 1840s), in Neat Enstone (where James Banting acquired 517 a.), and in Cleveley (which were sold in the 1650s and formed part of John Jolly's 527-a. estate in the 1840s).¹⁵ The manor's 'chief house' and remaining former demesne were leased to the Eyans family (formerly of Charlbury) from 1647 to 1711, and thereafter to the Kinches.¹⁶

On Earl Robert's death in 1776 the manor passed to the 2nd earl's daughter Charlotte and her husband Henry Dillon (d.1787), an Irish peer and 11th Viscount Dillon. He was succeeded in the male line by Charles (d. 1813), the 12th viscount, who changed his

⁵ D. Royce (ed.), *Landboc sive Registrum Monasterii ... de Winchelcumba* (1892–1903), I, 186–93, and see II, 186–7; *Oxon. Fines*, 36.

⁶ *Landboc*, I, 175–6, 183–4.

⁷ *L&P Hen VIII*, XV, p. 403; *ODNB*, s.v. Pope, Sir Thos.

⁸ TNA, C 142/205, no. 191; Bodl. MS North Add. c 7; *ODNB*, s.v. Paulet, Sir Hugh.

⁹ *Complete Peerage*, IV, 449–50; OHC, E36/3/1/E/1.

¹⁰ *Complete Peerage*, IV, 450 and n.; OHC, E36/3/1/CR/1; E36/3/1/E/2 (will extract); below, Spelsbury, landownership.

¹¹ Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 190 (1609). Separate manor cts for Enstone continued: below, local govt.

¹² *Complete Peerage*, VII, 644–5; OHC, E36/3/1/CR/2.

¹³ *Complete Peerage*, VII, 646–7; OHC, E36/3/1/E/2.

¹⁴ TNA, SC 2/175/1; OHC, E36/3/1/E/2; below (other estates).

¹⁵ OHC, QSD/L/112; *ibid.* B/IIb/2–5 and B/IIc/2–12; *ibid.* tithe award and map.

¹⁶ OHC, E36/3/6/D1–17; *Oxon. Visit. 1669–75*, 43; below (manor house).

name to Dillon-Lee, Henry (d. 1832), and Charles (d.1865), followed by Charles's brothers Theobald (d. 1879) and Arthur (d. 1892), the 15th and 16th viscounts. In 1873 the Dillon estate comprised 5,444 a., of which Enstone made up some 1,896 acres.¹⁷ Arthur's son Harold (d. 1932) sold outlying parts in 1920, including Lidstone farm (346 a.), Slade and Quarrypiece farm (319 a.), and Gagingwell farm (224 a.),¹⁸ and in 1933 his nephew and successor Arthur Lee-Dillon, 18th viscount, sold the reduced Ditchley and Enstone estate to Ronald Tree MP.¹⁹ It is unclear whether that sale included manorial rights, and by 1945 the parish council was unable to identify the lord of Enstone manor.²⁰ Tree sold the estate in 1949 to Seymour Egerton, 7th earl of Wilton, who immediately sold Litchfield farm (369 a.) and Cleveley Manor farm (334 a.),²¹ the rest being bought by Sir David Wills of the Wills tobacco family in 1953. That included 527 a. in Enstone, mainly comprising Home farm and part of Lodge farm.²² Wills (d. 1999) gave Ditchley Park and its parkland to the Ditchley Foundation (established in 1958), and the rest of the estate (including the Enstone land) to the H.D.H. Wills Charitable Foundation (established 1965), both of which retained ownership in 2023.²³

Manor House

Enstone's medieval manor house stood immediately south-east of the church, the two separated by a vicarage house whose site was probably carved from the manorial *curia* when the vicarage was established in 1309.²⁴ The manor site was presumably used as a farm complex and occasional residence for the abbot and monks, and was in the hands of a demesne lessee by the end of the Middle Ages.²⁵ In 1718 it was a 'very good house' built by 'the earl of Downe', with two large barns, stables, a washhouse, a brewhouse, and other outbuildings.²⁶ It was demolished when the vicarage house was enlarged and re-sited c.1832,²⁷ with a new farmstead (Quarrypiece Farm) erected on the Gagingwell road.²⁸

¹⁷ *Return of Owners of Land: Oxon.* (1873); and for Enstone acreage (1840s), OHC, tithe award and map.

¹⁸ OHC, E36/1/10/P/1; *Oxford Chron. and Reading Gaz.* 4 June 1920.

¹⁹ *Banbury Advertiser*, 19 Oct. 1933.

²⁰ OHC, PC97/A2/1, Jan. and Dec. 1945, Lord Dillon stating that he was not lord.

²¹ *Banbury Guardian*, 22 Sept., 24 Nov. 1949.

²² *Sale Cat., Ditchley Estate...* (1953); copy in OHC; *Banbury Advertiser*, 22 July 1953.

²³ Info. (2023) from Mike Montagu, Ditchley Foundation.

²⁴ OHC, E36/3/1/E/1 (dated 1634); E36/3/7/M/1; *ibid.* tithe award and map, nos. 265–6; below, relig. hist.

²⁵ Below, econ. hist.

²⁶ OHC, E36/3/1/E/2, p. 35.

²⁷ Jordan, *History of Enstone*, 154.

²⁸ Davis, *Oxon. Map* (1797); OS Map 1", sheet 45 (1833 edn); OHC, tithe award and map. Quarrypiece Farm was itself demolished c.2000.

Ditchley Park in Spelsbury, the combined Spelsbury and Enstone manor house from 1660, is described below.²⁹

The Manors of Chalford and of Dean and Chalford

In 1066 three hides in Chalford were held freely by Alric and Alnod, while a larger eight-hide estate in Chalford and Dean (the latter in Spelsbury parish) was held freely by Bundi. The fact that Dean and Chalford were in separate parishes and had their own field systems suggests that the link between them was relatively recent. By 1086 both manors were held in chief by Henry de Ferrers, who had acquired three hides of the Dean and Chalford estate from Edwin the sheriff;³⁰ the family subinfeudated both estates, however, which in 1086 were held by a certain Robert (possibly Henry Ferrers' son), and in the early 13th century (as intermediate lords) by the Mauduits, succeeded by the Suttons.³¹ The actual holder by 1279 was Richard of Duckmanton (alias Richard of Dean), who held Dean manor and Chalford hamlet from Robert de Sutton of the heirs of William de Sutton. Chalford hamlet and another $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{6}$ of a knight's fee in Chalford were held from Richard by Philip Fettiplace,³² and in 1282 (apparently) by John son of Peter de Littlington,³³ though the holding was later reabsorbed. Edmund of Dean (probably Richard's son) was lord by 1313, and in 1344 his son John settled the estate on Sir William de Shareshull (d. 1370), chief baron of the Exchequer.³⁴

In 1369 the Shareshull family conveyed Dean and Chalford to Sir John de Lewknor (d. c.1381), lord of Heythrop.³⁵ John's son Robert granted the Chalford land to his mother Elizabeth for life, but in 1412 she transferred the manors of Nether and Over Chalford (so called from 1397) back to Robert, who sold the whole Dean and Chalford estate to John Wilcotes (d. 1422), lord of Great Tew, and MP for Oxfordshire on several occasions. His widow Elizabeth and her husband Sir Richard Walkstead gained possession in 1444 after a long dispute over Wilcotes' will, and were followed in 1448 by Wilcotes' son Thomas (d. 1473). Feoffees acting on his behalf subsequently granted Dean manor and land in Chalford to Oriel College, Oxford, which was in possession by 1482.³⁶

²⁹ Below, Spelsbury, landownership.

³⁰ DB, f. 157v.

³¹ Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 38–49.

³² *Rot. Hund.* II, 741–2.

³³ Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 30–1.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 50–1; *ODNB*, s.v. Sir Wm Shareshull. For medieval manor cts, below, local govt.

³⁵ Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 54–6, 100.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 56–68; *Hist. Parl.*, s.v. Rob. de Lewknor and Jn Wilcotes; *Cal. Pat.* 1476–85, 306–7.

The college leased its estate to tenants, almost all of whom lived elsewhere, and only separated Dean from Chalford in 1747.³⁷ The Chalford part comprised 844 a. in 1843, of which 220 a. (New Chalford or Chalford Oaks farm) was sold to Albert Brassey of Heythrop in 1874.³⁸ The rest (Old Chalford farm) was sold to the tenant Henry Busby in 1921,³⁹ and later became part of the Midlands engineering millionaire Harry Ellard's Broadstone Estate.⁴⁰

Manor House

Medieval lords apparently maintained a residence in Chalford, where John son of Peter de Littlington had a manor house or *curia* in 1282.⁴¹ Elizabeth Lewknor's right to timber for house repairs was confirmed in 1381, and John Wilcotes may have been living in Chalford in 1415.⁴² The house perhaps stood next to the chapel in Nether Chalford, but if so it had apparently been abandoned by the end of the 15th century.⁴³

Other Estates

Rectory Estate and Tithes

The rectory estate and tithes, appropriated by Winchcombe abbey in 1309, were worth £18 13s. 4d. a year in 1535, and in 1542 were granted to the dean and chapter of Christ Church, Oxford.⁴⁴ Christ Church leased the estate for periods of three lives until 1756, and thereafter for 21-year terms for £18 13s. 4d. a year, paid partly in wheat and malt. Tenants included John Child the younger of Enstone in 1605, John Bushell (d. 1644) of Enstone from 1628, a non-resident London clothworker in 1641, and (from the 1660s) George Cole of Enstone, whose family retained possession until 1732. It was then let to the Middlesex-based Wood family, who retained it until Christ Church sold the estate to Albert Brassey of Heythrop for £4,000 in 1873.⁴⁵ In 1732 the glebe comprised a house in Church Enstone (with 4 a. of grounds), 4 a. of meadow and 26 a. of pasture, a yardland in Neat Enstone, and ½ yardland in Cleveley. Glebe and tithes were then worth £371 a year to the lessee after payment of

³⁷ Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 70–84; Oriel College Archive, DEL2.

³⁸ OHC, tithe award and map; Oriel College Archive, DEL2. For the Brassey estate, below (other estates).

³⁹ Oriel College Arch., estates bursar's report (1991).

⁴⁰ Below (other estates).

⁴¹ Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 87.

⁴² Ibid. 17, 100–1; Jordan, *History of Enstone*, 16.

⁴³ Above, landscape etc.; below, econ hist. (medieval agric.); relig. hist.

⁴⁴ *Valor. Eccl.* II, 456; *L&P Hen. VIII*, XVII, 491; XXI (2), 334.

⁴⁵ Ch. Ch. Arch., Enstone leases; TNA, PROB 11/192/134 (Jn Bushell).

£40 to Christ Church and of £16 to the vicar and deacon,⁴⁶ and by 1790 gross income was reportedly £631.⁴⁷ At enclosure in 1843 some 53 a. was allotted close to the rectory house, while the tithes were commuted for a rent charge of £1,244 14s. 11d. a year in 1845.⁴⁸

The parsonage house, just west of the church, stood presumably on the site of the medieval rectory house. A large surviving stone-built barn incorporates a datestone of 1382 proclaiming its building by Abbott Walter Winferton at the petition of the Enstone bailiff Robert Mason, and measures c.72 ft by 26 ft internally, its cruck roof capping six bays of c.12 ft each. The broadside is pierced by a cartway with a substantial but probably rebuilt south porch. Although there seems no reason to doubt the authenticity of the datestone it has been re-set, and the barn shows many signs of rebuilding, its style better fitting the late 15th century. A bungalow added onto it in the 1950s was awaiting demolition in 2023.⁴⁹



The inside of the rectorial barn at Church Enstone in 2022, with the reset 1382 datestone below.



The house itself had 11 hearths in 1665, and in 1732 was described as a 'large mansion house' with a coach house and stables.⁵⁰ Lawns, terraced pleasure grounds, and a canal, all mentioned in the late 18th century, were most likely created by John Bushell or one of the Coles, perhaps inspired by Thomas Bushell's nearby waterworks established in the 1630s.⁵¹ Under the absentee Wood family the house was ill-maintained, however, and part was demolished c.1774, followed in 1790 by its replacement by a small farmhouse which incorporated parts of the former mansion, including a 16th- or 17th-century Tudor-arched

⁴⁶ Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, f. 88; cf. *ibid.* ff. 93–93v., giving slightly different acreages in 1777. The lessee unsuccessfully claimed a yardland of glebe in Chalford in the early 17th century: Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 78–9.

⁴⁷ Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, f. 98.

⁴⁸ OHC, Church and Neat Enstone enclo. awards; *ibid.* tithe award and map.

⁴⁹ R.B. Wood-Jones, 'The Rectorial Barn at Church Enstone', *Oxoniensia* 21 (1956), 43–7, incl. plates; HER, PRN 2582; NHLE, no. 1368063; Brooks, *Pevsner N&W*, 309; local information.

⁵⁰ *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 168; Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, f. 88.

⁵¹ Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, f. 97; for the waterworks (the 'Enstone Marvels'), below, social hist.

stone fireplace.⁵² The canal was filled in, and by the 1850s garden features including steps and gravel walks had disappeared.⁵³

Broadstone and Lidstone (Cold Norton Priory and Brasenose College Estates)

By the early 13th century Broadstone hamlet was held from Winchcombe abbey by the Despenser family of Great Rollright and Ewelme,⁵⁴ and in 1279 (when it comprised 8½ yardlands) by Thomas de la Mare from the heirs of Reginald de la Mare.⁵⁵ A hide in neighbouring Lidstone was held by 1235 by the lords of Heythrop manor, who by 1261 had a further 1½ yardlands and 8 a. there.⁵⁶ Cold Norton priory made piecemeal acquisitions in both places from the late 12th century, obtaining most of Broadstone by 1346, and of Lidstone after 1381.⁵⁷

The priory was dissolved in 1507, and in 1513 its lands were granted to Brasenose College, Oxford.⁵⁸ In 1814 the college bought an additional 153 a. (including 40 a. in Lidstone) from the Revd Nicholas Marshall,⁵⁹ and in 1843 owned 682 a. including the 313-a. Lidstone farm and the 213-a. Broadstone Hill farm.⁶⁰ The college leased most of its estate to the lords of Heythrop (who from the early 18th century were the earls of Shrewsbury), and in 1872 sold it to the then lord Albert Brassey (d. 1918), whose father had purchased the Heythrop estate for him two years earlier.⁶¹ Brassey sold Lidstone farm to the Ditchley estate, but in 1910 retained Broadstone as part of a holding of almost 1,500 a. in the parish, including Enstone Manor farm (453 a.) and Leys farm (285 a.).⁶² His estate was broken up in 1923, much of it being later briefly reunited by Harry Ellard.⁶³

⁵² Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, ff. 93, 97; NHLE, no. 1200410 (Rectory Farmhouse).

⁵³ Jordan, *History of Enstone*, 153.

⁵⁴ E. Amt (ed.), *The Latin Cartulary of Godstow Abbey* (2014), p. 365.

⁵⁵ *Rot. Hund.* II, 739. Adam Despenser took 3s. rent as overlord: *ibid.* 728.

⁵⁶ *Oxon. Fines*, 97, 224; TNA, C 132/25/16; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 165; Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 54 and n., 100.

⁵⁷ Brasenose Arch., Lidstone 1–12; *Oxon. Fines*, 98; *Rot. Hund.* II, 742, listing it under Chalford; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VIII, pp. 470–1; *Cal. inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, III, p. 536; Lobel, *Dean and Chalford*, 100, 150.

⁵⁸ Brasenose Arch., Cold Norton 37–42; VCH Oxon. XXI, s.v. Over Norton.

⁵⁹ Brasenose Arch., B14.1.47 (the rest being in Neat Enstone); OHC, QSD/L/112; *ibid.* Marshall IX/x/1. For the Marshall estate in Lidstone, Brasenose Archive, Lidstone 20, 33.

⁶⁰ OHC, tithe award and map.

⁶¹ Brasenose Arch., Lidstone 19; Oriel College Arch. DLR 5 box; Ch. Ch. Arch., Maps Enstone 1; OHC, tithe award and map; *Brasenose College Quartercentenary Monographs* (OHS 52, 1909), I, monograph VI, pp. 6–8; II.1, Monograph IX, p. 194; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 8 Oct. 1873.

⁶² OHC, E36/1/10/M/10; *ibid.* DV/X/50.

⁶³ *Sale Cat., The Heythrop Estate* (1923): copy in OHC; below (Broadstone Estate).

The Broadstone (Harry Ellard) Estate

The Midlands industrialist Harry Ellard (d. 1983) acquired a substantial estate mainly in the north-west of the parish in the 20th century, his major purchases comprising Old Chalford farm (502 a. in 1939), Broadstone Hill farm (290 a. in 1940), Enstone Manor farm (259 a. in 1941), New Chalford farm (170 a. in 1945), Stone farm (117 a. in 1943), Leys farm (323 a. in 1949), and Chalford Oaks (309 a. in 1954). His estate was broken up in 1985, although the 597-a. 'Old Chalford Estate' remained intact in 2023.⁶⁴

A house built for Ellard at Broadstone Hill is of stone with a three-storey gabled porch and mullioned windows, the rear incorporating low roof dormers overlooking a modern landscaped courtyard incorporating a covered swimming pool.⁶⁵ That replaced the earlier Broadstone Farm or Manor, which had been built 'at very great expense' by George Talbot (d. 1787), earl of Shrewsbury,⁶⁶ but which burned down c.1942 not long after Ellard's purchase. Situated just 700 m. from Heythrop House, it was described in 1869 (when occupied by a bailiff and labourers) as a 'rather neglected' small stone-built mansion house, its outbuildings including a stable and coach house,⁶⁷ and in 1920 it was occupied by Capt. Robert Brassey. Photographs show an irregular frontage incorporating two double-height bays.⁶⁸



⁶⁴ *Sale Cats.*, *Broadstone Estate* (1985) and *Old Chalford Estate* (1990): copies in OHC; *Country Life*, 5 May 2006, 22 Sept. 2016; <https://solihulllife.org/2022/04/14/harry-ellard> (accessed Sept. 2023, incl. PDF). Ellard also bought Compton Verney Ho. (Warws), but never lived there.

⁶⁵ <https://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbswresul1300571> (accessed Jan. 2023); <https://solihulllife.org/2022/04/14/harry-ellard> (PDF).

⁶⁶ Ch. Ch. Arch., MS Estates 72, f. 97v. (memo. by Revd Samuel Nash, 1790).

⁶⁷ Brasenose Archive, Valuation Book No. 3 (B 3c 7). For an 18th-cent. marble medallion embedded in a tree there, NHLE, no. 1300831

⁶⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1920 edn); *Sale Cat.*, *Heythrop Estate* (1923): copy in OHC; Enstone Local History Circle, 'A History of Enstone and Heythrop': copy of handwritten notes in OHC (1955 with later additions).