

CHIPPENHAM

CHIPPENHAM, in 2011 the fourth most populous town in Wiltshire,¹ stands 8 km. west of Calne and 18 km. north-east of Bath (Som.) The early settlement, described in 853 as a royal residence (*villa regia*),² lay in a meander of the (Bristol) Avon, encircled by the river on all but its southern side. The medieval town occupied this area, with a church, adjacent market place, and a principal street leading north-west to the river,³ which had been bridged before 1227,⁴ and beyond which a suburb had developed.⁵ Outside the town its large ancient parish (5,098 a. in 1847) extended some 12 km north-west and south-east, and included part of the former Chippenham or Pewsham forest. The town prospered by virtue of its position on a major thoroughfare between London and Bristol, as an administrative and marketing centre, and later from cloth manufacture and railway engineering. Chippenham grew modestly during the 19th century, encouraged by its early railway connection with London, Bath and Bristol, achieved in 1841; but much more rapidly after the M4 motorway was opened nearby in 1971.

CHIPPENHAM PARISH

BOUNDARIES AND PARISH ORIGINS

The parish of Chippenham, as it existed until boundaries were redrawn in 1884 and later, bordered 11 other ancient parishes.⁶ For two of these, Kington St Michael and Hardenhuish, charters of purportedly Anglo-Saxon date survive describing their boundaries, which appear to correspond (so far as they march with Chippenham) to those still prevailing into the 19th century.⁷ A portion of the eastern parish boundary, between Derry Hill and Horselepride Gate (by Sandy Lane), was defined c.1618 when the park and liberty of Bowood (in Calne) was established.⁸ From Horselepride Gate to Nash Hill Farm the southern parish boundary follows the division between Chippenham and Melksham forests as perambulated in 1300.⁹

¹ After Swindon, Salisbury and Trowbridge: *Census* 2021. This account was begun in 2017 and revised in 2024.

² D. Whitelock (ed.), *Eng. Hist. Doc.* I, 2nd ed., 189.

³ Useful, though hypothetical, plans of the early settlement are in J. Haslam, *Anglo-Saxon Towns of Southern England* (1984), 134–5.

⁴ below, this section: communications.

⁵ K.H. Rogers (ed.), *Lacock Abbey Charters* (WRS. 34), 89, which imply that buildings existed in the area as far as Foghamshire (*Fokena*).

⁶ These were (clockwise from north) Kington St Michael, Hardenhuish, Langley Burrell, Bremhill, Calne, Bromham (its tithing of Chittoe), Lacock, Corsham, Biddestone St Nicholas, Biddestone St Peter, and Yatton Keynell: derived from Youngs, *Admin Units*, I, and MS ‘Index maps for enclosure and tithe maps’, in WSHC.

⁷ A.R. Wilson and J.H. Tucker, ‘The Langley charter and its boundaries’, *WAM*, 77 (1983), 67–70; G.B. Grundy, ‘Saxon land charters of Wiltshire, I’, *Archaeol. Jnl.* 76 (1919), 170–1. A charter of Bremhill appears not to describe the boundary with Chippenham: Grundy, ‘Saxon land charters, I’, 238–40.

⁸ *VCH Wilts*, XVII, 116, 117.

⁹ *WAM*, 4 (1858), 206; *VCH Wilts*, IV, 408, 446.

North-east of Chippenham town a stretch of the river Avon defines the parish boundary with Langley Burrell, and further south the same river divides Chippenham and Lacock. A length of the boundary with Corsham follows a minor tributary of the Avon, the Pudding brook, which flows into the river south of Rowden. Elsewhere the parish is defined by field boundaries, and in places is very irregular. The definition of Chippenham and its neighbouring parishes is complicated by two further factors: much of the area which became urbanized during the 19th century remained in Hardenhuish or Langley Burrell until boundaries were periodically redrawn from the 1880s onwards; and Langley Burrell, Hardenhuish and Kington St Michael possessed numerous small detached portions of land surrounded by Chippenham.¹⁰

CHIPPENHAM AND HARDENHUISH PARISHES BEFORE 1884



As mapped for tithe commutation in the 19th century the ancient parish (excluding the borough) contained five tithings.¹¹ Chippenham itself was by far the largest tithing, and included numerous outlying farmsteads and hamlets, of which Monkton, Rowden, Sheldon and perhaps Lowden were the foci of manors. To the west Allington tithing included Lanhill and Fowlswick; and the tithings of Tytherton Lucas, Stanley and Nethermore comprised much of the parish east of the river Avon. The boundaries of these eastern tithings were related to those of the medieval forest of Chippenham or Pewsham. As declared in 1228 the forest was defined on the north by the river Marden, which was also the boundary between the tithings of Tytherton Lucas (outside the forest) and Stanley (within the forest).¹²

¹⁰ MS 'Index maps for enclosure and tithe maps'.

¹¹ WSA, tithe awards.

¹² VCH Wilts, IV, 407, 446.

Nethermore and Pewsham, whose eastern, southern and south-western boundaries corresponded to those of Chippenham forest in 1300, also lay within the forest.¹³ Nethermore, which answered at eyres as a vill within the forest before 1270, incorporated purprestured land of Stanley abbey, and was regarded as a tithing;¹⁴ Pewsham, presumably because it was largely uninhabited woodland or wood-pasture, was extra-parochial.¹⁵ Pewsham lay between Nethermore and Chippenham, thus detaching Nethermore from the rest of the parish. Except where otherwise described, in this volume the parish of Chippenham is to be understood to refer to the ancient parish comprising these five tithings, together with Pewsham.

Close to the centre of its parish, the municipal and Parliamentary borough of Chippenham, as mapped in 1784, 1820 and 1831, comprised no more than the historic urban core, constrained by the Avon on north and west, and extending to Wood Lane on the south and the beginning of the Causeway on the east.¹⁶ The Parliamentary borough was extended in 1832 to include the whole of the ancient parishes of Chippenham, Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell, and the extra-parochial Pewsham.¹⁷ The jurisdiction of the improvement commissioners set up under an act of 1834 was rather larger than that of the old municipal borough, since it incorporated the Causeway to the east, Foghamshire and New Road approximately as far as the (later) railway viaduct to the west, and part of Westmead.¹⁸ That of the local board established in 1867 encompassed a much larger area, including most of Chippenham tithing east of the town, the New Road area beyond the bridge and the St Paul's district of Langley Burrell.¹⁹

Although Allington may have had a chapel of ease until the 17th century,²⁰ and Tytherton Lucas retains a medieval chapel,²¹ the parish was an ungainly territory for religious provision, especially once informal settlements such as Derry Hill, Studley and Sandy Lane became established at its margins in the 17th century, and suburban housing encroached on Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell in the 19th. The religious boundaries were the first, therefore, to be realigned. An ecclesiastical district (from 1861 parish) of Derry Hill was created in 1841, taking in Pewsham and part of Chippenham.²² Then in 1855 St Paul's district church was established to serve the burgeoning railway and industrial suburb, which took into its parish portions of Chippenham, Hardenhuish, Langley Burrell and Kington St Michael.²³ In 1965 an ecclesiastical parish of Chippenham St Paul with Langley Burrell was

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *VCH Wilts*, III, 270, 271; *VCH Wilts*, IV, 408; *Collectanea*, (WRS. 12), 93; below, Outer Chippenham (east), landownership.

¹⁵ Youngs, *Admin Units*, I, 546.

¹⁶ WSA, X6/14; G19/1/49PC; G19/133/1.

¹⁷ WSA, G19/133/1; Youngs, *Admin Units*, I, 770.

¹⁸ WSA, 1769/66; 137/126/3.

¹⁹ WSA, 137/126/3; G19/700/1.

²⁰ Aubrey, *Topog. Colln.* ed. Jackson, 72–3.

²¹ Orbach and Pevsner, *Wilts.*, 742; below, religious hist.

²² *VCH Wilts*, XVII, 107.

²³ Youngs, *Admin Units*, I, 534.

created, and in 1969 another new parish, Chippenham St Peter, took in parts of Hardenhuish and the two Chippenham parishes.²⁴

The civil boundaries of the parishes into which Victorian Chippenham had spread were overhauled in 1884 and 1889. At the former date Nethermore tithing was subsumed within Pewsham,²⁵ which, in common with other extra-parochial places, had become a civil parish in 1858.²⁶ Also in 1884, under legislation of 1882,²⁷ detached parcels of Langley Burrell and Chippenham lying geographically in each other's parishes were exchanged; some of these were inhabited, and in total 50 houses were transferred from Chippenham to Langley Burrell and 31 from Langley Burrell to Chippenham.²⁸ A more radical change occurred in 1889 after local government was reorganized. The municipal borough was enlarged to become coterminous with the urban sanitary district, which it replaced; and two new civil parishes were created: Langley Burrell Within and Chippenham (representing those parts of the old parishes now falling within the municipal borough).²⁹ In 1894 equivalent Langley Burrell Without and Chippenham Without civil parishes were formed from the rural portions of the parishes outside the borough.³⁰

Because Chippenham continued to expand its suburbs it became expedient to enlarge the area of the municipal borough, so that in 1914 the populous parts of Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell Without to the north and north-east were taken into the borough and transferred to Langley Burrell Within parish.³¹ At the same time the Frogwell, Lowden and Rowden areas of Chippenham Without west of the town were taken into the borough and into Chippenham Within parish. Three more changes occurred in 1934. Pewsham was enlarged to take in an adjacent area of Chippenham Without, the two 'Within' parishes were combined to create Chippenham civil parish, its boundaries coterminous with the borough, and what remained of Hardenhuish parish was absorbed into Langley Burrell Without. A further expansion took place in 1952 to bring within the borough most of the former Hardenhuish parish, the ongoing housing development along Hungerdown Lane to the west, and ribbon development along London Road to the east.³² Then in 1984 Pewsham parish was abolished, its newly-suburbanised area to the south and south-east of Chippenham transferring to Chippenham parish, and the rural remainder entering Calne Without. The Chippenham boundary was extended to the north and west in order to acknowledge further housing and major road development; and Tytherton Lucas was transferred to Bremhill parish, and Stanley to Bremhill and Calne Without.³³ Housing development at Cepen Park as far as the Chippenham western by-pass during the 1990s and later resulted in a controversial

²⁴ *Ibid.*; below, religious hist.

²⁵ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 344.

²⁶ Extra-Parochial Places Act, 20 Vict, c. 19.

²⁷ Divided Parishes Act, 45 & 46 Vict, c. 58.

²⁸ *Census Report 1891*, II (C. 6948), 497.

²⁹ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 344, 351.

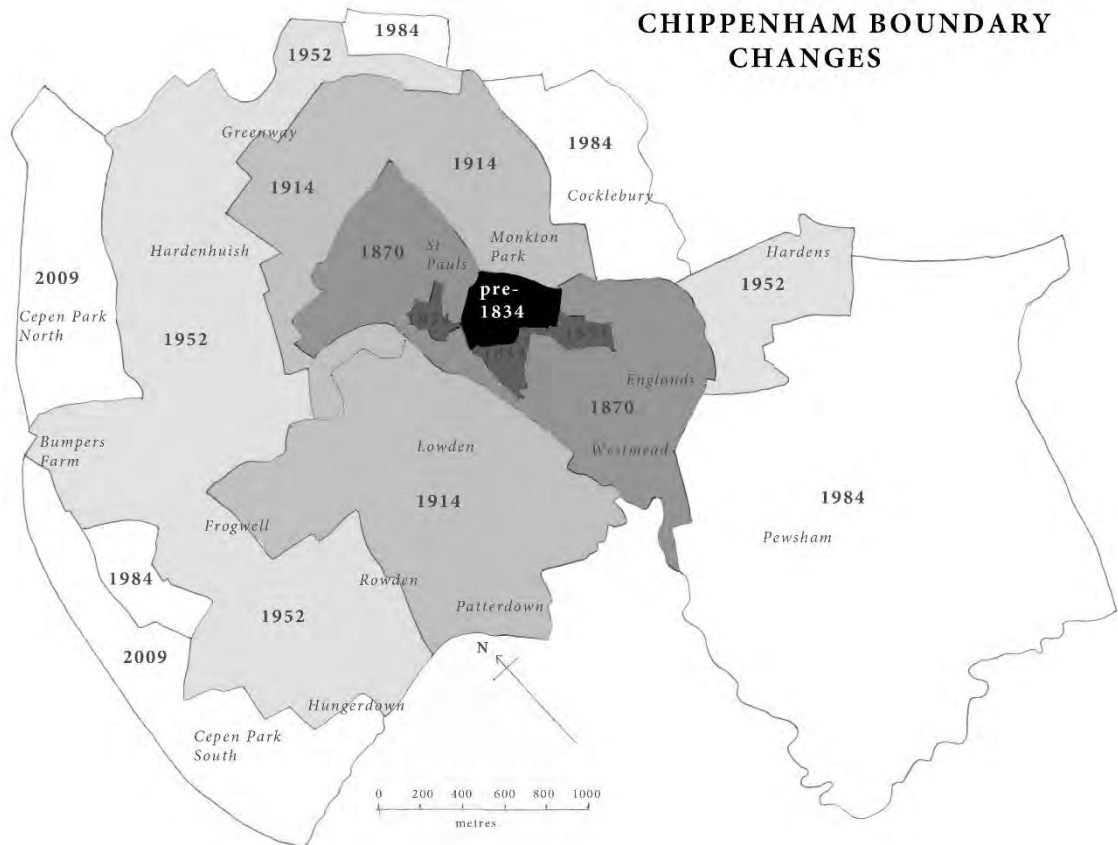
³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* (this para.)

³² Youngs, *Admin Units*, I, 534.

³³ Statutory Instruments, 1984, no. 387, N. Wilts. (Parishes) Order.

decision to transfer the newly-populated area from Chippenham Without to Chippenham.³⁴ In 2009 the by-pass road became the boundary between the two parishes, so that Chippenham Without parish was restricted to the Allington and Sheldon areas of the ancient parish.³⁵



LANDSCAPE

The river Avon (Bristol Avon), which flows in a meandering course from north to south, bisects the ancient parish at its narrowest part into two roughly equal halves.³⁶ West of the river valley Cornbrash outcrops, a rubbly limestone mixed with clay, but in places around Allington, Lanhill and towards Hardenhuish, it is overlain by outliers of Kellaways Clay. From the built-up area of Chippenham, at around 60–70 m, the land rises undramatically westward to around 115–30 m in places, such as Lanhill, along the western parish boundary. Along the river valley a sandstone outcrops, the Kellaways Sand Member, but is overlain in places by superficial alluvial and gravel deposits. East of the river the predominant Oxford Clay gives the parish a flat terrain, effectively the Avon's wide floodplain, which lies rarely above 60 m and falls to 40 m where the Avon leaves the parish below Naish Hill. Along the

³⁴ *Wilts. Times*, 22 Sept. 2006.

³⁵ Statutory Instruments, 2009, no. 531, County of Wilts. (Electoral Changes) Order.

³⁶ This para: Geol. Surv. Map 1", solid and drift, sheets 265 (1965); 266 (1964); <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 10 Dec. 2017).

eastern fringe, however, the Coral Rag and associated calcareous limestones have formed a notable and somewhat irregular high ridge, rising to 175 m in Nethermore Wood above Naish hill.

The western portion of the parish is drained by three streams flowing eastward to the Avon.³⁷ From north to south these are the Hardenhuish brook, which rises near Lanhill; the Ladyfield brook, which rises west of Vincients Wood and flows past Rowden; and the Pudding brook, which flows from Biddestone and defines the southern parish boundary. An earlier name for the Hardenhuish brook was *Fokene*, which is enshrined in the surviving street-name Foghamshire, close to where it enters the river.³⁸ Three Avon tributaries drain the eastern portion of Chippenham also. The Cat brook (or Cade Burna) flows from Bremhill Wick to the Avon near Tytherton Lucas; the river Marden enters the parish from Calne at Stanley and falls into the Avon east of Cocklebury Farm; the Cocklemore brook drains much of Pewsham and Nethermore tithings.

The Cornbrash gives rise to a lime-rich soil suitable for arable cultivation, whereas the heavier and more poorly drained clayland soils of the eastern parts of the parish have been better for pasture and wood pasture, with mixed woodland clothing the slopes of the Corallian ridge.³⁹ The clayland was heavily wooded in the late Saxon and early medieval periods.⁴⁰

COMMUNICATIONS

Bridges

The topography of the Saxon and medieval town implies an ancient river crossing in the vicinity of the later bridge. A bridge over the Avon at Chippenham existed in 1227,⁴¹ and was broken and ruinous in 1375–6, when a pontage grant permitted customs money to be diverted to pay for its repair.⁴² This or a subsequent rebuilding formed the structure of ribbed arches, typical of the 15th century, which carried a roadway *c.* 12 ft wide,⁴³ and which was described in 1578 as a great stone bridge of 15 arches.⁴⁴ Already by 1554 the town maintained its bridge at great cost,⁴⁵ and from that year to 1578 repairs to half of it were funded by revenue from the town lands.⁴⁶ It was then so weak that it was not safe for packhorses, and vehicles forded the river near Cocklebury.⁴⁷ Major repairs costing £79 were carried out in 1615 following the collapse of two arches and piers; and again in 1684, when over £60 was

³⁷ Maps used in this para: OS Map 6", Wilts. XX (1886 edn.); OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 156 (1999 edn.).

³⁸ *PN Wilts.* (EPNS), 90.

³⁹ <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> (accessed 10 Dec. 2017); OS Map 1:25,000, sheet 156 (1999 edn.).

⁴⁰ *VCH Wilts.* IV, 407.

⁴¹ *Cal. Chart.* I, 39; Roger de Ponte occupied land in Chippenham in the early 13th century: *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 84 (no. 325).

⁴² *Cal. Close, 1374–1377*, 184–5.

⁴³ E. Jervoise, *Ancient Bridges of the South of England* (1930), 116.

⁴⁴ *Recs. Chippenham*, 296.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 264, 269.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 296–7.

⁴⁷ G.A.H. White, *Chippenham in Bygone Days* (1924), 25.

spent, probably after damage by ice.⁴⁸ The corporation agreed in 1758 to widen the further part of the bridge, and in 1788 to reverse an earlier alteration; but following a meeting in 1796 the whole bridge was widened and a balustrade added.⁴⁹ The Chippenham turnpike trust was permitted to erect tollgates on the bridge in 1805, and after 1834 the bridge was lit by gas.⁵⁰ Further widening took place in 1879–80,⁵¹ so that when inspected c.1930 the carriageway was 41 ft. wide and of 22 arches.⁵² A pedestrian bridge was built alongside in 1959.⁵³ This and the road bridge were both demolished to make way for a new concrete bridge of three spans, as part of an improvement scheme which included flood prevention measures; it was opened in May 1966 and served as the only road bridge across the Avon in Chippenham until 1988.⁵⁴ A portion of the balustrade was retained.

A second bridge, decayed and repaired in 1653, may have been the wooden bridge referred to in highway surveyors' accounts in 1669.⁵⁵ It is perhaps to be identified with Back Avon bridge, which crossed the river from the end of River street.⁵⁶ The cause of many drownings, the vestry in 1788 determined to widen and strengthen it.⁵⁷ After floods swept away part of the bridge in 1881 and its iron replacement in 1882 it was rebuilt again in 1889, washed away in 1927 and, despite prolonged discussion and campaigning, was not replaced.⁵⁸

Roads

Before the Reformation wealthier parishioners often left bequests to maintain Chippenham bridge and causeway. John Hollwey (d.1492) left 6s. 8d. to the bridge and 20s. to the causeway.⁵⁹ John Fawken (d.1534) left 10s. to the bridge and another 10s. to repair the causeway between Chippenham and *Reddehill*.⁶⁰ The clothman Nicholas Affenwell (d.1537), who leased a tucking mill at Stanley, left a bequest of 3s. 4d. to the causeway.⁶¹

The 1554 borough charter refers to the corporation's responsibility to maintain not only a bridge, but also a causeway.⁶² Repairs to this, the south-eastern approach to the town, were also funded from the proceeds of the town lands, and stone was brought to pitch it in 1598, 1603 and later.⁶³ Its earlier maintenance may have been assisted by travellers' doles to a

⁴⁸ *Recs. Chippenham*, 40–4, 70.

⁴⁹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 86, 102, 105–8.

⁵⁰ *Recs. Chippenham*, 120, 159–60, 179.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 255.

⁵² Jervoise, *Ancient Bridges*, 116.

⁵³ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 45.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 45–6; WSA, F1/25/6/1, report 1967, 4–5. For 1988 bridge, below, this section.

⁵⁵ *Wilts. QS Order Book 1642–1654* (WRS. 67), 306 (no. 917); *Bayntun Commonplace Book* (WRS. 43), 26.

⁵⁶ OS Map 25", *Wilts. XX.14* (1886 edn.).

⁵⁷ R.F. Hunnisett (ed.), *Wilts. Coroners' Bills* (WRS. 36), 99 (no. 1569).

⁵⁸ *Bath Chronicle*, 17 Feb. 1881, p. 5; *Wilts. Times*, 16 Mar. 1889, p. 5; *Devizes & Wilts. Gaz.* 5 Sept. 1889, p. 8; *Wilts. Times*, 24 Sept. 1927, p. 7; *Ibid*, 18 Mar. 1939, p. 2.

⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 11/9/260.

⁶⁰ TNA, PROB 11/25/199.

⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/27/240.

⁶² *Recs. Chippenham*, 269–70.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 296–7, 192; Jackson, 'Chippenham', in *WAM*, 12 (1870), 285.

hermitage which stood opposite the Packhorse inn until the 17th century.⁶⁴ Between 1639 and 1645 the causeway was repaired, safeguarded (from vehicular use) with great stones, and extended by 438 yds.,⁶⁵ and in 1685, when it was again out of repair, it was said to be 10 ft. broad and extended for two miles towards Calne.⁶⁶ The corporation levied a rate to repair it in 1698, and from 1744 paid a contractor 15 gns annually to maintain it from Chippenham to the top of Derry Hill.⁶⁷ It was still the corporation's responsibility in 1835 to maintain it as a pitched footpath of about 2½ miles,⁶⁸ and it did not pass until 1895 to the county council.⁶⁹

By c.1370, and probably long before, the principal overland route between Bristol and London passed through Chippenham.⁷⁰ To protect travellers from ambush, presumably on this road, a trench had been ordered to be made in a part of Chippenham forest in 1231.⁷¹ In 1392 William Bekeswell, a Bristol burgess, left money for repairing *Chippenameslane* and a way near Calne, and in 1476 a Bristol goldsmith, Robert Hynde, gave 6s. 8d. for repairing the king's highway between Chippenham and Calne, towards London.⁷² East of the town the road followed the causeway to the top of Derry Hill where, in 1653, it skirted Bowood park towards Studley.⁷³ New Road, the present A4 road which takes an easier course through Derry Woods, was made between 1801 and 1808.⁷⁴ West of Chippenham bridge the road's ancient course is marked by Foghamshire, described as a street before 1283,⁷⁵ and then by Marshfield road, described in 1651 as a hollow way called Bristol way, to Landsend and beyond.⁷⁶ This route, via Marshfield, was the highway to Bristol in a list of 1588,⁷⁷ rather than the alternative via Bath preferred by later wheeled traffic.

Other ways leading from Chippenham to nearby towns and villages are referred to in medieval sources: to Sutton Benger in 1257;⁷⁸ to Lacock in 1293;⁷⁹ to Cocklebury c.1320 and in 1347;⁸⁰ and to Devizes through Pewsham forest in 1381.⁸¹ A *Batheweye* near Fowlswick existed in the 13th century, but may not have served Chippenham town.⁸² Roads referred to

⁶⁴ Jackson, 'Chippenham', 285; Daniell, *Chippenham*, 97; Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 49. John Glover, a Chippenham hermit, is recorded in 1418: TNA, CP 40/629.

⁶⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, 208–9, 213.

⁶⁶ *Recs. Chippenham*, 318–19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 79, 82.

⁶⁸ *Royal Comm. of Inquiry into Municipal Corporations*, 1st rept., pt. II (H.C. Papers 1835, 116), p. 1248.

⁶⁹ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 50.

⁷⁰ www.goughmap.org (accessed 15 Oct. 2017).

⁷¹ *Cal. Close, 1227–31*, 537; on the function of trenches, O. Rackham, *Hist. of the Countryside* (1986), 268–70.

⁷² T.P. Wadley, *Notes or Abstracts of the Wills . . . [in] the Great Orphan Book . . . Bristol* (1886), 34, 158.

⁷³ *WAM*, 41 (1921), 419.

⁷⁴ *Printed Maps of Wilts.* (WRS. 52), 23, 33; OS Drawings 61 (surv. 1808).

⁷⁵ *Hungerford Cart.*, I, 89 (no. 351), date inferred from *Lacock Abbey Charters* (WRS. 34), 89 (nos. 359, 360).

⁷⁶ *WSA*, 118/53; *Wilts. QS Order Book 1642–1654* (WRS. 67), 286; *Recs. Chippenham*, 64; J. Ogilby, *Britannia*, vol. 1, pl. 11.

⁷⁷ W Smith, *Particular Description of England, 1588* (1879 edn.), 70.

⁷⁸ *Reg. Malm.* (Rolls Series), II, 202.

⁷⁹ *Hungerford Cart.*, I, 84 (no. 327).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 82 (no. 318); *Tropenell Cart.* I, 304.

⁸¹ *Cal. Pat.*, 1381–5, 47.

⁸² *Reg. Malm.* (Rolls Series), II, 288.

as leading out of the parish towards Pickwick (in Corsham) in 1623 and Corsham in 1605, 1624 and 1639, presumably served travellers heading for Bath; in 1624 the highway from Chippenham to Bath ran by Salters Cross (Hungerdown) and Corsham.⁸³ In 1675 an unenclosed road from Chippenham to Bath via Pickwick was mapped as part of a main route between London and Wells (Som.).⁸⁴

Two features of Chippenham's pre-turnpike road pattern, although falling largely outside the parish, demand notice. Maud Heath's causeway, established in 1474 by a private benefactor and administered by a trust, maintained an all-weather route across the Avon flood-plain from Bremhill to Chippenham Clift, with a river crossing and long raised causeway at Kellaways.⁸⁵ As such it offered travellers one of three alternatives to the main road between Chippenham bridge and Calne. A second was a route via Stanley and Studley, described in 1675 as the 'plow road' to Chippenham.⁸⁶ A third, employed apparently when the bridge was out of repair, involved diverting through Monkton and Cocklebury to a ford near Harden's farm, and rejoining the main road near Gate farm.⁸⁷ The second feature was an agreement made in 1651 between Chippenham, Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell parishes to partition responsibility for repairing and maintaining stretches of the principal roads leading north and west out of the town, towards Bristol, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett.⁸⁸ The impetus for this unusual arrangement is unclear, but may have been intended to resolve disputes arising from small detached parcels of land falling within each other's parishes.

Chippenham in the 18th century was an important junction, the hub of seven roads radiating from the town which came under the control of turnpike trusts.⁸⁹ The earliest, the Chippenham trust of 1727, provoked hostility when it began charging travellers along the roads which it administered,⁹⁰ the London road as far as Studley bridge via Derry Hill, and the Bristol road to Tog Hill (in Doynton, Glos.). The trust abandoned the Bristol road at its turnpike act renewal in 1743, and turnpiked the Bath road as far as Pickwick instead. Responsibility for the Bristol road was assumed by the Sodbury trust in 1751/2, which also turnpiked the road branching from it at the Long Stone near Lanhill towards Castle Combe and Chipping Sodbury (Glos.). The importance and use of this road increased after 1825 because it afforded a direct route to south Wales by steamboat from Aust (Glos.) to Beachley in Tidenham (Glos.).⁹¹ Although east-west traffic between London, Bath and Bristol was undoubtedly the most important, especially after c.1750,⁹² three north-south roads were also turnpiked between 1755 and 1768. The Malmesbury trust turnpiked the route through Stanton St Quinton to Chippenham in 1756, the Holt trust the road to Lacock, Melksham and

⁸³ WSA, A1/110, 1623E, 1624E, 1639E; *Recs. Chippenham*, 2.

⁸⁴ J. Ogilby, *Britannia*, vol. 1, pl. 35.

⁸⁵ K.S. Taylor, *Dry Shod to Chippenham* (2012); see above, Bremhill, introduction; and below, Langley Burrell, introduction. Chippenham Clift refers to the high ground by the Little George road junction.

⁸⁶ J. Ogilby, *Britannia*, vol. 1, pl. 11.

⁸⁷ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 36.

⁸⁸ WSA, 118/53; *Wilts. QS Order Book 1642–1654* (WRS. 67), 285–7; *Recs. Chippenham*, 63–5.

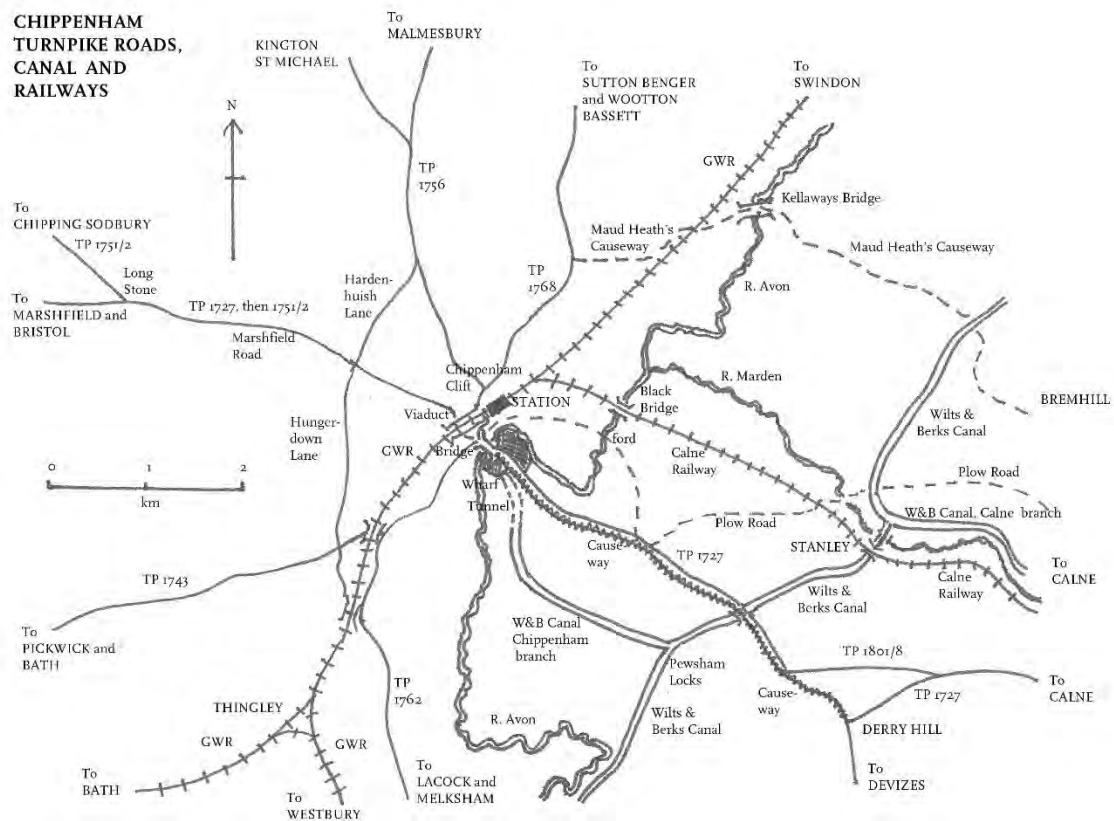
⁸⁹ This para: *VCH Wilts*, IV, 256–71; WSA, 1316/1–2.

⁹⁰ D. Gerhold, *Bristol's Stage Coaches* (2012), 42–3.

⁹¹ *VCH Glos*, X, 55.

⁹² Gerhold, *Bristol's Stage Coaches*, 43–6.

Bradford on Avon in 1762, and the Chippenham trust the road to a junction of roads at Draycot Cerne in 1768. In 1773 there were tollgates at the St Mary Street–Causeway junction and at Chippenham Clift; a gate at Allington Bar was then no longer in use.⁹³ In 1805 the Chippenham trust was permitted to erect gates and a tollhouse at the northern and western approaches to Chippenham bridge,⁹⁴ and these were in use until c.1834, when new gates and tollhouses were built at the junction of the Bath and Lacock roads, at Lowden, Hungerdown Lane and on the London road at the Stanley turning.⁹⁵ The Chippenham trust's roads were disturnpiked in 1870 and all the others serving the parish had been disturnpiked by 1877.



Chippenham's major road network changed little before c.1960, although the growing importance of the London to Bristol road through Chippenham and Bath (designated A4) was recognized when it was trunked in 1936.⁹⁶ Increasing traffic during the 1960s led to the adoption of an inner relief road scheme in the Ivy Lane and viaduct area in 1965–6, and this was opened in April 1967.⁹⁷ Traffic through the town reduced with the completion of the Wiltshire section of the M4 motorway in 1971, but north-south traffic approaching and leaving the motorway increased along Hungerdown Lane and Hardenhuish Lane which had

⁹³ *Andrews' and Dury's Map 1773* (WRS. 8), pl. 13.

⁹⁴ *Recs. Chippenham*, 120; WSA, 1780/34, 325–41; WSA, 1316/2, meetings 18 June and 6 Aug. 1805.

⁹⁵ R. Haynes and I. Slocombe, *Wilts. Toll Houses* (2004), 21–7.

⁹⁶ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 265.

⁹⁷ WSA, F1/250/6/1, reports 1966, p. 5; 1968, p. 4.

been widened in phases, 1962–6, and upgraded to A-road status.⁹⁸ A town centre relief scheme (Avenue la Flèche), opened in September 1988, included the longest single-span bridge (35m) in Wiltshire.⁹⁹ One effect of this was to enable the partial pedestrianization of the High Street area from c.1995.¹⁰⁰ A western by-pass, West Cepen Way, was constructed 1997–9,¹⁰¹ replacing Hungerdown Lane as the A350, and enlarged to a dual carriageway road 2014–18.¹⁰²

Canal

Proposals in 1734–5 and 1765 to make the Avon navigable between Bath and Chippenham were not implemented.¹⁰³ Prominent Chippenham residents were among the promoters in 1793 of a narrow canal to link Bristol and Abingdon (Berks.), and this became the Wilts. & Berks. canal constructed between 1795 and 1810.¹⁰⁴ The canal ran from the Kennet & Avon at Semington to the Thames at Abingdon, and included a branch to Chippenham which was completed as far as Englands in 1798 and became operational in 1800. The main canal crossed the parish south-east of the town, through Pewsham and Stanley, with three locks at Pewsham, and a road bridge carrying the London road over the canal at Forest Gate. A brickworks was opened nearby. The Chippenham branch left the canal near Pewsham locks and, after a dispute with the borough council,¹⁰⁵ it was extended, 1800–3, from Englands by a tunnel to a wharf built close to the market place. Trade principally in Somerset coal, but also in stone, timber and agricultural produce, was brisk at Chippenham and Pewsham wharves until the 1850s, but by 1875 had declined to such an extent that there were calls to abandon it. Despite leakages and damage resulting from neglect, some traffic on the Chippenham branch continued until 1904; but by 1916, following complaints of nuisances, it had been filled in and part was used as a tip. In 1970–1 the tunnel was closed up and the cutting leading to it filled in, and during the development of the Pewsham housing estate, c.1985–95, its former course defined the edge of the estate along which its perimeter road, Pewsham Way, was constructed. In 2017 restoration work was under way at Pewsham locks and elsewhere as part of a campaign to reopen the main canal.¹⁰⁶

Railways

The precursor of the Great Western Railway determined in 1833 that its railway between London and Bristol would pass through Chippenham, and this was authorized in 1835.¹⁰⁷ The

⁹⁸ WSA, F1/250/6/1, reports 1962–6, 1973, p. 4; OS Map 1:50,000, sheet 173 (1981 edn.).

⁹⁹ Ibid. reports 1988, p. 5; 1989, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, report 1995.

¹⁰¹ WAM, 92 (1999), 136; *Western Daily Press*, 4 Aug. 1999 [better refs needed].

¹⁰² personal observation.

¹⁰³ VCH Wilts, IV, 272; WSA, 109/892.

¹⁰⁴ This para: VCH Wilts, IV, 272–9; LJ Dalby, *Wilts & Berks Canal* (3rd edn, 2000); R. Alder, *Chippenham and the Wilts & Berks Canal* (2011).

¹⁰⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, 111–12.

¹⁰⁶ www.wbct.org.uk/the-trust/our-news (accessed 19 Dec. 2017).

¹⁰⁷ This para: VCH Wilts, IV, 280–4; C.G. Maggs, *The GWR Swindon to Bath Line* (2003), 53–62; R.H. Clark, *Hist. Survey of Selected Great Western Stations*, 3 (1981), 55–8.

broad gauge line (converted to mixed gauge in 1874 and standard gauge in 1892) was built in 1841 across the narrowest portion of Chippenham parish, entering from Langley Burrell and passing north of the town and by Lowden, to leave near Patterdown. A station and associated buildings were constructed in stone to an Italianate-style design by I.K. Brunel c.300m north of Chippenham bridge (substantially rebuilt 1856–8), and the line was carried south-westward, first by a high stone and brick viaduct of nine arches,¹⁰⁸ c.90m long, spanning the valley of the Hardenhuish brook and the Foghamshire area, and then on an embankment for some 3km to Thingley (in Corsham). After 1856–7, when a second line was constructed, from a junction at Thingley towards Westbury, Salisbury and Weymouth (Dorset), Chippenham station was enlarged with additional platforms and a train shed. Further sheds, depots, offices and ancillary buildings were added, and industries were attracted to the vicinity, so that a plan of 1929 shows the station as the centrepiece of a linear industrial complex extending almost 1km along both sides of the railway. Many sidings were removed and buildings demolished during the 1960s, to be replaced by car parks, and the track was realigned for high-speed train working in 1976. The principal station buildings were retained. In 1990, when Chippenham was Wiltshire's third-busiest station, c.1,000 passengers commuted to London daily. A frequent rail service between London and Bristol via Bath, and a less frequent service between Swindon and Westbury via Melksham, called at Chippenham station in 2017, when the forecourt was also the terminus for buses to various north Wiltshire destinations.¹⁰⁹

The Calne Railway company opened a broad gauge branch line between Chippenham and Calne in 1863. The line was operated by the Great Western Railway, which converted it to standard gauge in 1874 and purchased the branch in 1892.¹¹⁰ It diverged from the main line at a junction c.500m east of Chippenham station and crossed the Avon by Black Bridge, a timber structure replaced by steel girders in 1920. From the bridge it ran on a straight alignment ESE across Stanley tithing to Stanley Bridge, where a halt was opened in 1905. Its course then took it over the canal west of Stanley abbey and along the Marden valley to Calne. Passenger (including service personnel) and goods traffic (including cattle, pigs and milk) was considerable until the early 1950s, when 300,000 passengers were carried annually, but declined after 1955 and the line closed in 1965. Track was lifted in 1967 and Black Bridge removed in 1971.

Post, Carriers, Buses and Telecommunications

From 1784 mail coaches between London and Bristol called at Chippenham, and by 1833 the mail was one of five stage coaches that traversed this route daily.¹¹¹ In 1792 there was a post office in the White Hart inn,¹¹² but by 1830, and perhaps 1822, it occupied premises in High Street.¹¹³ Ann Elliott, postmistress in 1822, was replaced by Mary Elliott between 1855 and

¹⁰⁸ HER 1267956.

¹⁰⁹ personal observation.

¹¹⁰ This para: C.G. Maggs, *The Calne Branch* (1990), 11–16, 45–9, 105–12.

¹¹¹ D. Gerhold, *Bristol's Stage Coaches* (2012), 86–93, 123–5.

¹¹² *Univ. British Dir.* 2, 592.

¹¹³ *Pigot's Dir. Wilts.* (1822, 1830 edns.).

1859.¹¹⁴ Money orders were handled by 1867 and telegraphs by 1875, and by 1880 pillar boxes had been erected at Causeway and Rowden Hill.¹¹⁵ The post office, previously at 12 High Street, had relocated before 1886 to 50 Market Place, where it remained until 1959, when a new head post office was built on the corner of St Mary Street.¹¹⁶ A sub post office in New Road opened in 1881,¹¹⁷ and by 1889 there were seven pillar boxes at locations in the town, including the railway station, and four postal deliveries daily.¹¹⁸ There was a telephone call office at the main post office in 1903, and a second sub office, in Sheldon Road;¹¹⁹ a further sub office was open in London Road in 1939.¹²⁰ The head post office of 1959 closed in 2012 and business was transferred to a convenience store at 28/29 Market Place, where it remained in 2024; the sorting and delivery office, formerly on Station Hill, occupied premises on Bumpers Farm industrial estate in 2024.¹²¹

A Chippenham carrier, John Rychardson alias Kyngton, was dealing with a London grocer in 1525 and 1527,¹²² and seven others, described as chapmen, had commercial contacts with London grocers and mercers, 1427-72.¹²³ Mr Wiltshire's waggon travelled weekly between Chippenham and London in 1690, and a carrier took three days to make the journey in 1748.¹²⁴ Three waggons plied between London and Bristol in 1792, stopping at Chippenham inns.¹²⁵ Carriers, sometimes styled caravans, were operating between Chippenham and local towns by 1822, including Bath, Calne and Devizes.¹²⁶ By 1842 there were in addition daily carriers to south Wales and to Southampton, and a weekly carrier to Malmesbury.¹²⁷ The number of local carriers increased after 1850 so that in 1895 and 1903 there were 13 carriers journeying weekly or more often (generally including Friday) to Chippenham from nearby towns and villages, mostly from places north and west of the town not accessible by rail.¹²⁸ Several used the Great Western Hotel as their inn. By 1911 their numbers had reduced, so that by 1920 there were five, and by 1927, only one.¹²⁹

A motor bus service in summer between Bath and Chippenham had been inaugurated before 1911,¹³⁰ but it was not until the late 1920s that bus operation proliferated. In 1929 the railway-owned National company ran buses to Trowbridge via Melksham, to Calne, and to

¹¹⁴ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1855, 1859 edns.)

¹¹⁵ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1867, 1875, 1880 edns.)

¹¹⁶ *Chippenham Walkabout* (1977), 8–10, 27; OS Map 1:500, Wilts. XX.14.24 (1886 edn.).

¹¹⁷ *Bath Chronicle*, 30 June 1881, 6.

¹¹⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1889 edn.).

¹¹⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1903 edn.).

¹²⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1939 edn.).

¹²¹ *Wilts. Gazette & Herald*, 22 Nov. 2012; personal observation.

¹²² TNA, CP 40/1046, 1057.

¹²³ TNA, CP 40/664, 748, 776, 788, 841.

¹²⁴ D. Gerhold, *London Carriers and Coaches 1637–1690* (2016), 43; D. Gerhold, *Carriers and Coachmasters* (2005), 192.

¹²⁵ *Univ. British Dir.* 2, 592.

¹²⁶ *Pigot's Dir. Wilts.* (1822 edn.).

¹²⁷ *Pigot's Dir. Wilts.* (1830, 1842 edns.).

¹²⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1895, 1903 edns.).

¹²⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1911, 1920, 1939 edns.).

¹³⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1911 edn.).

Stroud (Glos.) via Malmesbury, while Bristol and Bath tramways companies ran buses to Swindon, Chipping Sodbury (Glos.), Bristol and Bath.¹³¹ Chippenham remained an outpost of the Western National bus company, formed from National in 1929, and the company built a bus station and offices at Timber Street which opened in 1956.¹³² Services were transferred to Bristol Omnibus company in 1970, Badgerline in 1985, and First Bus in 1995, although in 2017 most local services were operated by Faresaver, a company based at Bumpers Farm, Chippenham.¹³³ The bus station was improved in 1962 and 1968, and rearranged in 2006, when excavations uncovered the canal wharf beneath.¹³⁴

POPULATION

Domesday Book records on the royal manor of Chippenham 31 slaves working the demesne, 52 households headed by a villein and 92 by the lesser categories of peasant, with a further 2 peasant (bordar) households on a minor estate.¹³⁵ A separate Domesday entry for Stanley adds 3 villein and 3 bordar households.¹³⁶ The total of households recorded in 1086 exclusive of the demesne was therefore 152. In 1332 there were 59 Chippenham burgesses who contributed £16 18s. 10¼d. to the tax known as the fifteenth and tenth, the second largest payment (after Salisbury) of any Wiltshire borough.¹³⁷ Chippenham's tithings were separately assessed, 14 Allington inhabitants paying £2 2s. 8d., 14 Stanley inhabitants £2 8s. 3½d., and 19 Tytherton Lucas inhabitants £3 2s. 2½d.¹³⁸ Totals when the tax was reviewed two years later were in each case slightly higher, and Rowden was explicitly included in the Chippenham total.¹³⁹ To the 1377 poll tax 257 Chippenham inhabitants contributed, as well as 48 from Allington, 66 from Stanley, 45 from Tytherton Lucas, and 112 from an unidentified location, 'Ende', which has been surmised to be a part of Chippenham.¹⁴⁰ Chippenham's total of 257 payers placed the town 18th by population of Wiltshire's fiscal units, but if the outlying parts of the parish are included the total, 528, would place it fifth.¹⁴¹

The chantry certificate for the parish recorded 667 communicants in 1548, suggesting a total population of c.888.¹⁴² Lists of householders within the borough drawn up c.1604 and 1685 recorded 103 and 100 respectively.¹⁴³ A religious census taken in 1676 reported 858 adults in Chippenham parish,¹⁴⁴ but a century later a demographer claimed that in 1773 the

¹³¹ *Roadways*, 3 (Sept. 1929); R.J. Crawley and F.D. Simpson, *The Years Between*, 3 (1990), 6–7.

¹³² Crawley and Simpson, *Years Between*, 78.

¹³³ *Companion to Road Passenger Transport Hist.* (2013), 56, 98; www.faresaver.co.uk/ (accessed 19 Dec. 2017).

¹³⁴ Crawley and Simpson, *Years Between*, 253; Alder, *Chippenham and the Wilts & Berks Canal*, 61.

¹³⁵ *Domesday*, 162, 191.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 186.

¹³⁷ *Wilts. Tax List of 1332* (WRS. 45), 4–5.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 98–9, 101.

¹³⁹ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 296, 298–9.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 307–8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 312.

¹⁴² TNA, E 301/58.

¹⁴³ *Recs. Chippenham*, 26–8, 73.

¹⁴⁴ A. Whiteman (ed.), *Compton Census of 1676*, 128.

total population was 2,407 in 483 houses.¹⁴⁵ The 1801 census total for the parish was 3,366 and this had risen to 3,506 in 600 dwellings in 1821, of whom 110 lived in Allington and 195 in the other tithings.¹⁴⁶ These figures were disputed by the borough council, who claimed that there had then been 755 houses, and extrapolated a total population of 4,411.¹⁴⁷ This was close to the official figure in 1831, 4,333, which rose substantially to 5,438 in 1841, swollen by the presence of 315 itinerant railway labourers.¹⁴⁸ Between 1851 and 1891 the population levelled at c.5,000–5,400, of whom 1,352 were living within the borough in 1881.¹⁴⁹ Boundary changes during the 1880s and subsequently make direct comparisons impossible, but the combined population in 1901 of Chippenham Within (3,655) and Without (1,948) stood at 5,603, and rose only modestly to 6,075 in 1931. After the urban portion of Langley Burrell was taken into the civil parish in 1934, a total for the whole parish of 11,851 was reported in 1951.¹⁵⁰ Pewsham, as an extra-parochial place and then a civil parish, was separately enumerated, its population rising from 139 in 1801 to 303 a decade later, and 480 in 1841; it declined thereafter, to 367 in 1881 and remained static until after 1931, but had risen to 561 in 1951.¹⁵¹

Each decennial census since 1951 saw a rise in Chippenham's population, and this was especially marked during the 1950s (48 per cent increase 1951–61), 1980s (33 per cent increase 1981–91), and after 2001 (28 per cent increase 2001–11). These increases largely reflected boundary changes, as urban Chippenham expanded into Hardenhuish and Pewsham.¹⁵² In 1961 the total was 17,543, rising modestly to 19,128 in 1981, but then to 25,376 in 1991, and from 28,065 in 2001 to 36,548 in 2021.¹⁵³ The Chippenham community area, larger than the parish, had a population of 45,337 in 2011, the largest in the Wiltshire unitary authority.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁵ R. Price, *Essay on the Population of England* (2nd ed., 1780), 7.

¹⁴⁶ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 344.

¹⁴⁷ *Recs. Chippenham*, 154–5.

¹⁴⁸ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 319, 344.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 344.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 355.

¹⁵² *above*, boundaries.

¹⁵³ *Census*, 1961–2021.

¹⁵⁴ *Wilts. Census 2011 Selected Statistics Profile Tool: Chippenham Community Area*.

CHIPPENHAM BOROUGH

ORIGINS, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

THE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL TOWN, TO 1554

Before 1066

The earliest reference to Chippenham, in 853, is as a royal residence (*villa regia*) in which Burgred, the Mercian king, married the daughter of Aethelwulf, king of the West Saxons.¹⁵⁵ In 878 an invading Danish force captured the royal residence, described as on the eastern bank of the Avon, and overwintered there, but was defeated by Alfred at Edington the following year; his army pursued the invaders back to the citadel (*arx*) at Chippenham, seized the horses and cattle and slaughtered the men outside, and laid siege before the castle gates.¹⁵⁶ An Anglo-Danish or Scandinavian iron spearhead of this period was uncovered close to the river during the construction of the Emery Gate shopping centre in the 1980s.¹⁵⁷ Saxon pottery, a loom weight and stylus were also discovered.¹⁵⁸ Chippenham was one of many estates bequeathed in 888 in Alfred's will,¹⁵⁹ and was occupied by 10th-century kings on at least four occasions, before 924, in 930, 933 and 940.¹⁶⁰ After 940 Chippenham is not recorded again until Domesday.¹⁶¹

Medieval streets and Topographical Features

Chippenham High Street runs south-eastwards from the town bridge up to St Andrew's parish church, broadening into an open, and subsequently infilled, funnel-shaped market place. In the 14th century it was also known as King Street (*in vico regali*).¹⁶² Bradenstoke priory (Lyneham) had acquired before 1260 two adjacent tenements in Chippenham, one of which was described no later than c.1307 as situated in the High Street opposite the market place.¹⁶³ It is possible that they became the Hart (later White Hart) inn (45–50 Market Place), which belonged to Bradenstoke until its dissolution and had its frontage along the northern side of the market place.¹⁶⁴ A second inn, the George, was partly owned by St Mary's chantry until 1548;¹⁶⁵ and a third, the Bell (38–39 Market Place), occupied part of the eastern side,

¹⁵⁵ *Eng. Hist. Docs.* (ed. Whitelock), i, 189; Asser, *Life of King Alfred* (ed. Stevenson), 8.

¹⁵⁶ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 40, 45–6.

¹⁵⁷ *WAM*, vol. 83 (1990), 229.

¹⁵⁸ inf. from Mr M Stone.

¹⁵⁹ *Eng. Hist. Docs.* (ed. Whitelock), i, 492–5.

¹⁶⁰ *Eng. Hist. Docs.* i, 545; Electronic Sawyer, S422, S423, S473, S504.

¹⁶¹ Coins issued at 'CEPEN' 978 x 1016, are now considered to have been minted at Ipswich: J Haslam, *Wilts. Towns: the Archaeological Potential* (1976), 15; cf. *WAM*, vol. 46 (1932), 100.

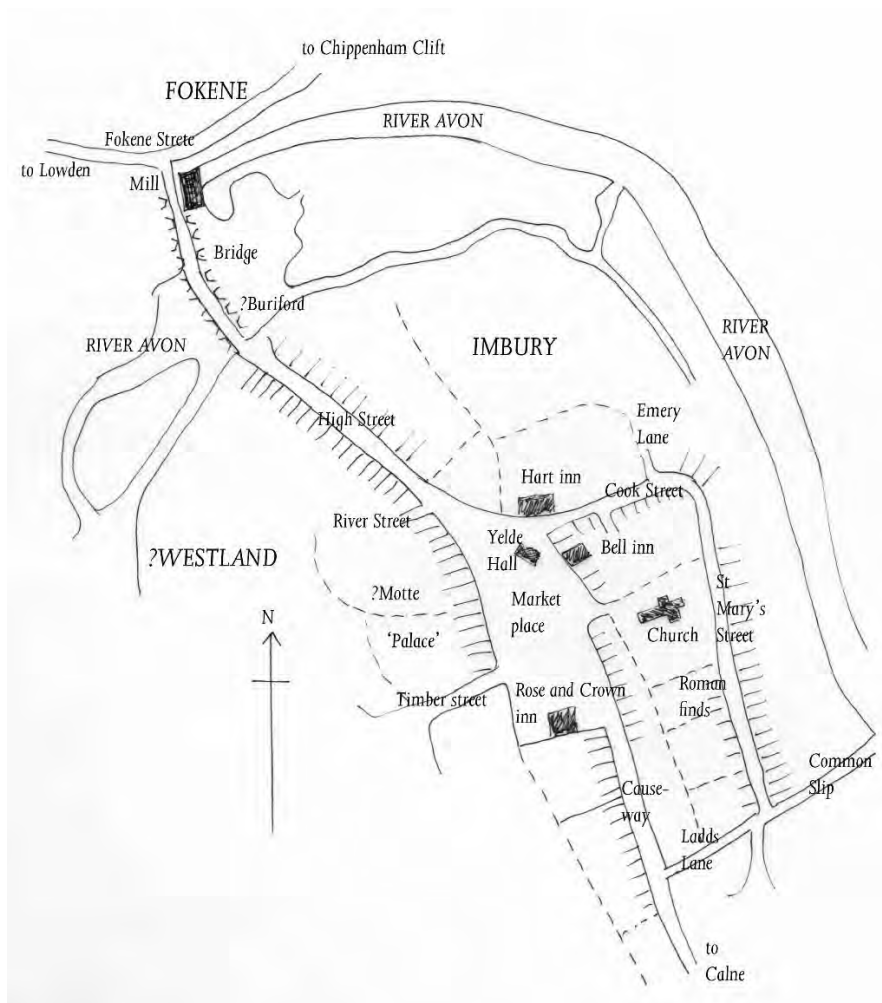
¹⁶² *Recs. Chippenham*, 298–9 (the 1369 and 1378 deeds refer to the same property).

¹⁶³ *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58–60 (nos. 123, 124, 126, 127)

¹⁶⁴ *L&P Hen. VIII*, 19 (2), 417 (no. 690 (65)).

¹⁶⁵ TNA, E 301/58.

north of the church, and is first recorded as an inn in 1446.¹⁶⁶ Part of the premises it occupied had been described in 1326 as a tenement in High Street occupied by the widow of a smith.¹⁶⁷ Thomas Tropenell of Great Chalfield acquired the Bell inn and adjacent premises in 1451.¹⁶⁸ Nearby, and also fronting High Street, was a tenement belonging to the chantry of St Mary in the parish church.¹⁶⁹ Domestic pottery and glassware fragments dated to the 13th century were discovered in 1951 on the site of the former post office, which lies north of the former Bell inn.¹⁷⁰



Another group of High Street premises recorded in deeds appears to have stood at its north-western end. In 1227 a Frenchman, Durand, and his brother Ralph gave a messuage by the bridge to Stanley abbey (Bremhill).¹⁷¹ An adjacent burgage, acquired by Thomas Tropenell in 1459, took its name Iremongers from Henry Iremonger (d. before 1432) or perhaps from

¹⁶⁶ J.S. Davies (ed.) *Tropenell Cart.* I, 87–8

¹⁶⁷ *Tropenell Cart.* I, 81.

¹⁶⁸ *Tropenell Cart.* I, 88–90.

¹⁶⁹ *Tropenell Cart.* I, 85, 115; *Recs. Chippenham*, 298–9; perhaps to be identified with the chantry's tenement held in part by Bradenstoke priory at the Dissolution: TNA, SC 6/HenVIII/3986..

¹⁷⁰ *WAM*, 55 (1954), 373.

¹⁷¹ *Cal. Chart.* I, 39; *WAM*, vol. 15 (1875), 254.

John Iremonger, a resident close by in 1348.¹⁷² Another neighbouring property was Rasshesplace, so-called by 1432. John de la Barre and his descendants appear to have lived nearby,¹⁷³ their name suggesting that a barrier had existed at the bridgehead. Two other families, Tabler and Childe, may also be connected with this immediate area;¹⁷⁴ their premises lay beside a street opposite or leading to 'Buriford', perhaps an old name for the river crossing, or that of a ford for vehicles alongside the medieval bridge.¹⁷⁵ Bradenstoke priory at the Dissolution held a cottage beside the bridge.¹⁷⁶ An excavation close to the bridge (1–2 High Street) revealed medieval wall foundations.¹⁷⁷

Other medieval deeds relate to property which cannot be precisely located. Stanley abbey was given a free burgage in the 13th century which extended as far as the Imbury ditch, and so probably had its frontage on the east side of High Street.¹⁷⁸ A possible burgage boundary was revealed in this area by excavation in 2001 behind 21–23 High Street, although the Imbury ditch was not encountered.¹⁷⁹ Evidence that High Street premises were being redeveloped in the 14th century is provided by a deed of 1370, whereby Walter Haywode, a significant landowner,¹⁸⁰ let a plot and curtilage there, stipulating that the lessees build and maintain a new house on it.¹⁸¹ St Andrew's church also acquired at least four properties in High Street, in 1422, 1455 and 1471, identified by previous owners, Code, Wase and Endford;¹⁸² Codes place had become God's place by 1748.¹⁸³ Away from the market place, no extant medieval architectural features have been identified in the High Street.

The market place, regarded in the middle ages as part of the High Street, retains two significant secular medieval buildings. The Rose and Crown inn, at the south-west corner, although subsequently altered at many periods, retains features of a 14th- or 15th-century timber-framed hall house with cruck roof and through-passage screening a service end with solar above, and a wing to the rear.¹⁸⁴ The Yelde Hall is a 15th-century large-panelled timber-framed building on a limestone wall base, occupying the footprint of an earlier, probably

¹⁷² *Tropenell Cart. I*, 104–14; *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 86 (no.334). John Iremonger was a neighbour of John Childe, whose property adjoined the burgage later occupied by Henry Iremonger.

¹⁷³ Alice atte Barre lived between John Childe and John Iremonger in 1348: *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 86 (no.334).

¹⁷⁴ Roger le Tabler was John de la Barre's tenant before 1228: *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58 (no. 121). Reginald le Tabler occupied Iremongers before 1347: *Tropenell Cart. I*, 104–5. John Childe's premises next to Iremongers was perhaps that acquired by Roger Childe in the 13th century: *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 86 (no.334); WSA, 9/1/73.

¹⁷⁵ *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58 (no. 121); WSA, 9/1/73. Durand's holding was also near Buriford: *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58 (no. 119).

¹⁷⁶ TNA, SC 8/HenVIII/3986.

¹⁷⁷ McMahon, *Chippenham*, 9.

¹⁷⁸ WSA, 1213/3, transcribed in WSA, 473/40, p. 25 (no. 23); *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, iv, A9382. For Imbury, see below.

¹⁷⁹ WAM, vol. 96 (2003), 231–2.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, C 143/402/39.

¹⁸¹ *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 87 (no.343).

¹⁸² WSA, 811/212, terrier of church lands.

¹⁸³ WSA, G19/1/5/1.

¹⁸⁴ NHLE, 1268032; inf. from WBR..

14th-century cruck-built structure.¹⁸⁵ Tree-ring analysis of timberwork suggests a construction date of 1446–58.¹⁸⁶ It is a four-bay open hall with collar-truss tie-beam roof, and a fifth bay to the north of two storeys, the upper formerly used as a courthouse, the lower as a lock-up. It was described c.1560 as a ‘yelde hall’ (guildhall)¹⁸⁷ or church house standing alone in the middle of the street, maintained by the townspeople and used for church ales, plays, council meetings and hundred courts.¹⁸⁸ Excavations beneath Chippenham museum suggested that the western market frontage lay open in the medieval period.¹⁸⁹

Remains of a medieval building, including a supposed Norman doorway, were discovered c.1820 behind 11 Market Place close to a substantial mound; they were thought to indicate the site of the royal premises and the area was renamed ‘The Palace’ or ‘Palace Square’ in consequence.¹⁹⁰ Excavations in the area in the 1990s encountered a complex of features and artefacts of 13th- to 15th-century date, including evidence of two buildings.¹⁹¹ Nothing was found to support the identification with the king’s hall, although such a building existed as late as 1200.¹⁹² It has been suggested, however, that the mound and doorway may have belonged to an anarchy period motte.¹⁹³

Eight traders in 1281/2 and nine in 1352/3 paid rent for a stall (*celda*) each in the market place.¹⁹⁴ In 1428 rent was paid for no fewer than 23 ‘shamells’, four standings for selling victuals in the market place and seven shops.¹⁹⁵ Several ‘shamells’ were repaired in 1487 and two in 1500, and at the latter date two more were newly made.¹⁹⁶ Shambles and shops with lockable doors and windows had been erected before 1566.¹⁹⁷

Running away north-eastwards from the market place Cook Street (later regarded as part of St Mary street)¹⁹⁸ is recorded in 1370 as the location of a messuage and two cottages, and in 1374 of a house adjacent to a tenement belonging to the chantry.¹⁹⁹ A lease of a burgage in Cook Street is recorded from 1452, and a cottage there was given in 1470 to a chaplain in the parish church.²⁰⁰ A messuage, named Peperwhytes after its tenant from 1401, stood on the south side of the street next to a passageway connecting with the smith’s

¹⁸⁵ NHLE, 1267996; K.A. Rodwell, *Archaeological investigations at the Yelde Hall, Chippenham, 2001–2* (2003), 21–2 (unpublished report, copy in WBR).

¹⁸⁶ Rodwell, *Yelde Hall*, 22.

¹⁸⁷ The spellings Guyldhall and Guyldhall were used in 1569; *Recs. Chippenham*, 302.

¹⁸⁸ *Recs. Chippenham*, 295.

¹⁸⁹ inf. from Mr M Stone.

¹⁹⁰ Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* I, 236–7; Daniell, *Chippenham*, 5–6; OS Map, 25”, Wilts. XXVI.2 (1886 edn.); cf. Haslam, *Wilts. Towns*, 16.

¹⁹¹ McMahon, *Chippenham*, 9.

¹⁹² *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58 (no. 120);

¹⁹³ WAM, vol. 93 (2000), 108.

¹⁹⁴ TNA, SC 12/16/52; *ibid.* SC 12/16/54.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, SC 6/1049/18.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, SC 6/HenVII/939–940.

¹⁹⁷ *Recs. Chippenham*, 292–3.

¹⁹⁸ Although the 1554 borough charter defines its boundary as the southern limit of Cook Street, suggesting that the names were interchangeable: *Recs. Chippenham*, 262.

¹⁹⁹ H.M.C, *Hastings MSS*, i, 240; *Recs. Chippenham*, 298.

²⁰⁰ TNA, SC 6/HenVII/939; WSA, 9/1/74.

premises, and became part of Thomas Tropenell's Bell inn property in 1451.²⁰¹ The north side of Cook Street was probably undeveloped furthest from the market place, as an excavation in 2006 near the Emery Lane turning (61 St Mary street) found no evidence of medieval occupation.²⁰²

At its northern end Cook Street turns a right-angle into St Mary street, so-called by 1413, presumably because the chantry of St Mary in the parish church held land there.²⁰³ An alternative name was New Street, since this defined the northern extent of the Bell inn premises in 1406.²⁰⁴ In 1320 two cottages in 'Nyweststrete' stood next to 'Natwelane' (Narrow lane?) leading to the Avon, which may be an early name for the lane later known as Common Slip.²⁰⁵ Stanley abbey in 1485 let a newly built messuage adjacent to St Mary's chantry land with a barn and garden in 'Narwelane' by the Avon.²⁰⁶ Several houses fronting St Mary street retain late-medieval fabric, including a cruck-framed building (56 St Mary street) at the turn into Cook Street.²⁰⁷ St Mary House (15 St Mary street) and the Woodhouse (52 St Mary street) retain features of 15th-century hall houses, the former stonebuilt, the latter timber-framed and of L-shaped plan with parlour wing to rear.²⁰⁸ The stone floor and posts of a late-medieval timber building were discovered during excavations in 2015 behind The Architect's House (16 St Mary street).²⁰⁹

The positions of other streets or locations named in medieval deeds are uncertain. East Street, where at least five cottages as well as tenements, plots of lands, a messuage and a croft called Westcroft were located c.1320,²¹⁰ was perhaps an alternative name for the Causeway (first recorded in 1493).²¹¹ Horscroft, which gave its name to the king's new street in 1252,²¹² was described in 1532 as abutting the road which led to Calne.²¹³ Another croft described in the 1532 lease lay next to Wood street abutting 'Boltesclose'.²¹⁴ If this refers to the tenement in 'Boltestrete' that was held by Richard Bolte before c.1328, then Bolt Street and Wood Street were adjacent or synonymous.²¹⁵ Bradenstoke priory leased a tenement called Bagkyntons to John Bigges in 1538, and two other tenements, in 1512 and 1539.²¹⁶

²⁰¹ *Tropenell Cart.* I, 88–95.

²⁰² *WAM*, vol. 101 (2008), 276.

²⁰³ WSA, 473/10, transcribed in WSA, 473/40, pp. 93–4. Tropenell's Bell inn premises abutted chantry land: *Tropenell Cart.* I, 85.

²⁰⁴ *Tropenell Cart.* I, 83.

²⁰⁵ *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 81–2 (no.317).

²⁰⁶ *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, iv, A9356.

²⁰⁷ NHLE, 1267912.

²⁰⁸ NHLE, 1267937; 1267949; no. 18 (NHLE, 1267942) also retains late-medieval details.

²⁰⁹ *WAM*, vol. 109 (2016), 249; vol. 110 (2017), 257; vol. 111 (2018), 350.

²¹⁰ *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 81 (no. 317), 84 (no. 326).

²¹¹ TNA, PROB 11/9/260, bequest in will of John Hollwey.

²¹² *Cal. Chart.* I, 376–7.

²¹³ WSA, 3448/3/1.

²¹⁴ WSA, 3448/3/1; 'Wotestrete' occurs in the early 13th century: *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 83–4 (no. 325).

²¹⁵ *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 81 (no. 315); two curtilages in 'Bolstrede' were sold in 1362/3: TNA, E 326/932; cf *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, i, B932. P-N Wilts, 90 refers also to a lost *Langstret* (Long Street), but the reference there given is incorrect.

²¹⁶ TNA, SC 8/HenVIII/3986.

Suburban development on the right bank of the Avon had occurred before c.1250, and property there was described as within the town of Chippenham.²¹⁷ The area took its name, *Fokene*, from the stream which flows into the river there (now Hardenhuish brook), and the road now Foghamshire was *Fokenestrete*, which by c.1327 was lined with cottages and tenements, including property belonging to St Mary's chantry.²¹⁸

The Sequence of Urban Development

The topography of pre-conquest Chippenham, despite much speculation,²¹⁹ cannot be determined with any certainty. A church, mills and defences existed by 1066, and the presence of royal premises may be inferred,²²⁰ but their location and inter-relationship is unknown. The 'king's old hall' survived as late as c.1200,²²¹ but the suggested site of a royal 'palace' behind 11 Market Place has not been confirmed by excavation.²²² The following interpretation is based on topographical analysis, derived especially from a detailed map of 1784,²²³ and by analogy with comparable towns in Wiltshire and elsewhere.

The discovery in 2017 of early Romano-British occupation debris, adjacent to the medieval parish church, including potsherds and cremated bone associated with a Roman building,²²⁴ suggests that the Anglo-Saxon antecedent of the church overlies, or was sited in association with, a Roman building; such a juxtaposition is not uncommon, and occurs nearby at Box and Cherhill. In other Wiltshire towns of Saxon origin, notably Calne, Wilton and Marlborough, the *villa regia* or 'kingsbury' and church were adjacent, and so it is likely that the royal premises at Chippenham lay north of the church, its extent defined by the line of Cook Street and St Mary street.²²⁵ North of this complex lay an area described as 'Imbury' (and variants, now Emery Lane and Emery Gate), which has been interpreted to mean 'around the burh';²²⁶ by the 13th century it included a ditch, presumably for defensive purposes.²²⁷ On topographical grounds St Mary street has the appearance of the central spine road of a rectilinear Saxon town, with properties extending back to the river on the east and a common rear boundary on the west, ending with a straight southern boundary denoted by Common Slip and Ladds Lane.

The replacement of a ford (perhaps referenced in the name Buriford) by a bridge, and the establishment of a market in the 13th century or earlier, may have refocused the town along a High Street, which broadened into a large open market place adjacent to the church and former royal premises.²²⁸ Elements of medieval town planning are apparent in straight

²¹⁷ *Lacock Abbey Charters* (WRS. 34), 88–9 (nos. 357–61).

²¹⁸ *ibid.*; *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 80 (no. 312).

²¹⁹ e.g. J. Haslam, *Anglo-Saxon Towns of Southern England* (1984), 132–6.

²²⁰ *Domesday*, 162; for defences, see discussion of 'Embury' below.

²²¹ *Cart. Bradenstoke priory* (WRS. 35), 58 (no. 120).

²²² above, Medieval streets and Topographical Features.

²²³ WSA, G19/1/53L: Map of Chippenham by John Powell, 1784.

²²⁴ WAM, vol. 111 (2018), 350; inf. from Mr M Stone.

²²⁵ Haslam, *Anglo-Saxon Towns*, 134–6. P. McMahon, *Chippenham* (Extensive Urban Survey), (2004), 18–19.

²²⁶ W.J. Ford, *Survey of the Archaeology of the Chippenham Area* (1967), 16.

²²⁷ WSA, 1213/3; *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, iv, A9382.

²²⁸ this and subsequent paras, above, Medieval streets and Topographical Features.

rear boundaries east of the lower High Street and west of the Causeway, the latter in line with the western edge of the market place.²²⁹ Curving boundaries west of the market place and north of Timber Street may result from a 12th-century fortified motte.

By the 14th or 15th century the open market place contained not only a freestanding public building, the Yelde Hall, but also permanent or semi-permanent shambles and shops, and at least three substantial inns, on its northern, eastern and southern frontages (Hart, Bell and Rose and Crown respectively).

Medieval settlement in the River Street and Blind Lane (Gladstone Road) area cannot be established from medieval documentary evidence; an extent of 1281/2 lists five tenants farming virgates and half-virgates land at 'Westland',²³⁰ perhaps in this area. Across the river, however, a suburb had developed by the 13th century running east and west from the bridgehead and mill, towards Chippenham Clift and Lowden respectively.

FROM THE CHARTER TO THE RAILWAY, 1554–1841

The Early Modern Town, to c.1790

The 1554 charter defined the town at that date as extending from the central part of the bridge to the southern end of Cook Street, which was clarified in 1604 to mean and include St Mary street.²³¹ The western ('Brymland') and eastern limits (the gate posts of Huntingdon's lands) cannot be located but, significantly, the bounds appear not to have extended to the river on either side.²³² Since occupancy of a dwellinghouse within the borough bestowed rights within the town lands (principally Englands and West mead, between Wood Lane and the river, south-west of the town)²³³ and electoral franchise, their numbers were controlled; the earliest list, of c.1604, recorded 103 householders,²³⁴ which total had increased to 117 in 1613 as a result of new building and subdivision,²³⁵ but then rose only slightly, to 122 in 1671, 126 in 1754, and 129 in 1831.²³⁶ By this last date a further 45 dwellings existed within the borough which were not burghage houses.²³⁷

The 1613 list of burgesses, updated to 1651, is topographically arranged, and may be used to describe the extent of the early modern town.²³⁸ Beginning at the south-western corner of the market place Wood Lane led away to the forest, implying that Timber Street on its present course did not then exist. Two houses fronted the market place south of the Angel inn (then called the Bull),²³⁹ and a further six to its north as far as the entrance to Back Lane (later River Street). In Back Lane were ten houses, one untenanted, and thence the run of

²²⁹ Evident on the 1784 map: WSA, G19/1/53L.

²³⁰ TNA, SC 12/16/52.

²³¹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 262, 275.

²³² *Recs. Chippenham*, 262.

²³³ J. Perkins, *Hist. of the Corporate Property . . . of Chippenham* (1905), 6–19 and plan.

²³⁴ *Recs. Chippenham*, 26–8.

²³⁵ WSA, G19/1/6, ff.76r-77v; *Recs. Chippenham*, 36–7.

²³⁶ *Recs. Chippenham*, 328, 84, 150.

²³⁷ *Recs. Chippenham*, 150.

²³⁸ This para: WSA, G19/1/6, ff.76r-77v, referring also to WSA, G19/1/49PC, 1820 borough plan.

²³⁹ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 128.

properties down both sides of High Street to the bridge was more or less continuous. There were fifteen houses on the west side between the Back Lane turn and the George inn (in 2019 W.H. Smith), and at least seven in the vicinity of the bridge itself,²⁴⁰ with three more running up the east side to a house called the Porch.²⁴¹ Thereafter, apart from the entrance to what was later Chapel Lane, the east side of High Street was built up continuously to the (White) Hart inn (in 2019 Iceland). Properties on both sides of Cook Street were intermittent, and included a cottage recently built (in 1609) behind their gardens, in Imbury.²⁴² St Mary street (probably including Cook Street) was as late as 1662 regarded as an enclave separate from the rest of the town, when 28 houses there were assessed for tax;²⁴³ they stood on both sides of the road south of the church and churchyard. Two inns, the Bell and the Lyon, occupied the east side of the market place, with four houses between (including one described as in the churchyard). The 1613 list names the occupants of a further 26 burgage houses after the Lyon, which must include those built along the Causeway, then known as Rotten row,²⁴⁴ mostly at its northern (market place) end, as well as the block later occupied by the Bear inn and its neighbours.



Missing from the 1613/1651 list were the shops and standings infilling the market place. After 1569 the burgesses controlled the market, and between 1570 and 1593 granted

²⁴⁰ The tenement of Robert Barton, described in 1625 as near the bridge (WSA, 3448/1/4, f. 16), was seven properties after the George in the 1613 list.

²⁴¹ Referred to in TNA, C 142/681/60 IPM of William Bayliffe, 1612. It stood on or close to the site of the modern entrance to the Emery Gate shopping centre; see B.G. Bayliffe, *Family of Bayliffe in Glos. and Wilts.* (1993), 17; B.G. Bayliffe, *Bayliffe 2004* (2004), 117.

²⁴² *Recs. Chippenham*, 37.

²⁴³ TNA, E 179/259/29/2, m. 46v (27 houses); TNA, E 179/199/424 (1 house abated).

²⁴⁴ *Recs. Chippenham*, 37: Robert Alwaye and William Harmer, cited there in Rotten row, appear on the 1613 list separated from the Lyon by ten properties.

leases for four new shops adjacent to the shambles, and in 1580 for seventeen existing shops, mostly to traders in cloth.²⁴⁵ In 1603 it was noted that some of the shops used for standings in the shambles and market place had been converted for habitations, but this did not entitle their occupiers to the privileges enjoyed by burgesses.²⁴⁶ Also excluded were the inhabitants of Foghamshire, across the bridge, since this lay outside the borough boundary. In 1662 there were at least 12 householders there liable to tax on a total of 31 hearths, an average of 2.6 per household.²⁴⁷ This compares unfavourably with an average 3.5 hearths in the 104 taxed households in Chippenham borough, including the St Mary street enclave. St Mary street, with seven of its 27 houses taxed on five or more hearths, appears slightly more affluent than elsewhere, although the largest properties, with 11 and 14 hearths, were in the town, and 16 other town properties had five or more hearths.²⁴⁸

In High Street only one property, a modest two-storey house fronting the corner of Chapel Lane, has been identified as retaining 17th-century fabric,²⁴⁹ but in the Causeway several examples survive of burgage houses of this period. They are typically of limestone rubble construction, and of two storeys, some with attics, under stone slate roofs, and three at the market place end (nos. 1, 4 and 53, Tudor House) are timber-framed.²⁵⁰ Around the market place itself (apart from the medieval Yelde Hall and Rose and Crown inn) only one property (now two shops, 17 and 17a) retains its early-modern appearance, a steeply-pitched timber-framed house of through-passage plan with two storeys and attic.²⁵¹ Several others, including the Angel and former White Hart inns, and most houses adjoining the churchyard have disguised their 17th-century or earlier origins behind later frontages.²⁵² The same is true of most of the large town houses lining St Mary Street, although more modest early burgage houses of rendered limestone rubble survive on both sides of the market place end of the street (former Cook Street).²⁵³ A house in Foghamshire and a run of three cottages on Monkton Hill date from c.1700; they and a pair of cottages of similar date at the beginning of Wood Street cannot have been burgage properties.²⁵⁴

Rising population and increased prosperity, which began during the decades before 1700 and accelerated through the 18th century, gave rise to much new and replacement building, both within the borough boundaries and on its periphery. Land south and south-

²⁴⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, 313–15.

²⁴⁶ *Recs. Chippenham*, 37; in 1612 three tenements are recorded as containing shops: WSA, 122/1.

²⁴⁷ TNA, E 179/259/29/2, mm. 46v, 47r.

²⁴⁸ TNA, E 179/259/29/2, mm. 46r, 46v.

²⁴⁹ NHLE, 1268108 (20 High Street); K.A. Rodwell, '20 High Street, Chippenham: report on the structural history of the building' (2002), copy in WBR.

²⁵⁰ NHLE, 1267847 (53 Causeway), 1267867 (20 Causeway), 1267885 (37 Causeway), 1267896 (1 Causeway), 1267898 (3 Causeway), 1267899 (4 Causeway).

²⁵¹ NHLE, 1268069

²⁵² NHLE, 1268038 (cottage behind 32 Market place), 1268042–3 (36, 38–9 Market place), 1268047–8 (46–8, former White Hart), 1268061 (Angel). It should be noted, too, that the church tower and spire were rebuilt during this period (1633): Orbach and Pevsner, *Wilts.* 219.

²⁵³ NHLE, 1267917 (64–5 St Mary Street), 1267931–3 (4–10 St Mary Street).

²⁵⁴ NHLE, 1268135 (33 Foghamshire), 1267973 (6–7 Monkton Hill), 1268094 (now 35 Gladstone road).

west of the town belonged to Monkton manor,²⁵⁵ whose owners in 1679 let on a 200-year lease a block of waste land in the Timber Street area, where 12 cottages existed by 1680.²⁵⁶ Six more and a stable were subsequently erected along the north side of Timber Street, near the back gate of the Angel inn.²⁵⁷ Most of these cottages were demolished in the 20th century to build the cinema, library and bus station, but three surviving properties retain fabric which may be dated to this building campaign.²⁵⁸

Before 1733 Monkton manor had also let c.20 cottages and the Packhorse inn to tenants along the Causeway and its continuation, London Road, as well as three in Common Slip and one in the Butts.²⁵⁹ A further 20 leases were issued between 1733 and 1792, mostly of waste land for building in the Butts, Causeway, London Road and Baydon Lane, but including also two shops behind Cook Street and a piece of waste in Timber Street near the Bear inn.²⁶⁰ Cottages in the Butts were demolished c.1969,²⁶¹ but others survive in Common Slip and, notably, along the Causeway, where at least 18 houses retain fabric and character of the 18th century or earlier.²⁶² John Britton's description, published in 1801, of a 'long train of cottages which, for half a mile, or more, skirt this approach in humble, but interesting succession,' remains apt.²⁶³

One other area of 18th-century expansion outside the borough, entirely demolished and reordered during the 1970s, lay at the lower end of River Street. Around the convergence here of Blind Lane (later Gladstone Road) and Back Lane (later Factory Lane and subsequently Westmead Lane), and along River Street itself down to Back Avon bridge, a colony of workers' cottages and small terraced houses developed from the 1720s or earlier;²⁶⁴ many had become derelict, and some had been demolished, a century later, but were then refurbished or replaced.²⁶⁵

The gentrification of Chippenham's architecture during the Georgian period, either by refronting existing houses in ashlar Bath limestone or building anew, was the result not only of wealth amassed by those who controlled the burgeoning cloth industry, but also, as Britton remarked, by the town's 'favourable situation as a principal thoroughfare to the western cities'.²⁶⁶ The aspiration to become 'Little Bath' is seen in the marketing of a chalybeate well as

²⁵⁵ A Platts, *Hist. of Chippenham* (1946), 67.

²⁵⁶ WSA, 137/10/5-7; WSA, 212B/1738.

²⁵⁷ WSA, G19/992/16.

²⁵⁸ Nos. 19 and 21 Timber Street (The Old Bakehouse) and 35 Gladstone Road: files in WBR; photograph in C. Smith, *Chippenham Walkabout* (1977), 18.

²⁵⁹ WSA, G19/992/16.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*

²⁶¹ WBR, WI Countryside Survey, Chippenham, 1969.

²⁶² NHLE; WBR files.

²⁶³ Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* II, 261.

²⁶⁴ The 1784 map (WSA, G19/1/53L) shows this area thickly built over; see also photographs, e.g. in Smith, *Chippenham Walkabout*, 20.

²⁶⁵ WSA, G19/150/11 (7-9, 12-14 Factory St); G19/150/20 (18 River St); G19/150/22 (10-14 Gladstone Road).

²⁶⁶ Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* II, 236.

‘Chippenham Spa’ behind The Grove (55 St Mary street) before c.1750.²⁶⁷ It is seen also in the remodelling and enlargement of market place inns, beginning with the former Bell (nos. 38–9) in 1680, and then the former White Hart (nos. 44–8), the former King’s Head (no. 35) and the Angel, all in the early-18th century.²⁶⁸ Tradesmen and professionals also smartened up their premises in response to Chippenham’s thoroughfare status, giving a Georgian veneer to the market place, Cook Street and High Street, although much of the latter has been replaced by later buildings.²⁶⁹ A notable loss, in 1935, was the seven-bay facade by John Wood the Elder of 24–25 High Street, taken down and re-erected in Bath.²⁷⁰

But it was in St Mary street that the wealth of the clothiers, especially after their pact with Sir Samuel Fludyer in 1754,²⁷¹ was translated into expensive building and rebuilding campaigns. Before the textile industry became largely factory-based, after c.1790, clothiers ran their businesses from, and sometimes erected workshops behind, their townhouses. No. 45, of the 1760s, is one of several examples, and others are known from sales in 1771 and 1785.²⁷² John Britton, brought up in a nearby village, credibly maintained that the clothiers ‘gradually detached themselves from the society of the other inhabitants, and formed a circle of their own’,²⁷³ and he presumably had St Mary street in mind – the other Wiltshire clothing towns had similar enclaves.²⁷⁴ At least 16 premises in the street were built, extended or refronted during the 18th century.²⁷⁵

Traffic and Mechanisation, c.1790–1841

Increasing coach and other wheeled traffic during the 1780s prompted improvements to the town bridge in 1796 and, more importantly for the later development of Chippenham, the creation by the Marshfield turnpike trust in 1792 of New Road, which offered a straighter and easier ascent for travellers towards Bristol or Malmesbury than the narrow and steep course of Foghamshire, including Monkton Hill.²⁷⁶ The area had become quite heavily built up by 1766,²⁷⁷ and examples of cottages of this era remain in Foghamshire.²⁷⁸ New Road was driven through a timber yard and quarry, apparently with minimal loss of existing houses, and did not become lined with buildings until the 1830s and later.²⁷⁹

²⁶⁷ WAM, 55, 15–16. The date 1694, given by Daniell, *Chippenham*, 34, and often repeated, is suspect. The creator of the spa, (Judge) Rogers Holland, was born c.1701, and not created a judge until 1737: *Hist. Parl. Commons 1715–54*, II, 145. The spa was first taken notice of in 1750.

²⁶⁸ NHLE, 1268043, 1268047, 1268041, 1268061

²⁶⁹ NHLE; WBR files; Orbach and Pevsner. *Wilts.*, 224–5. Examples include 11, 16, 25a, 25b, 33, 34 Market Place; 61–63 St Mary street (formerly Cook Street; 6, 10–11 High Street.

²⁷⁰ A. Foyle and N. Pevsner, *Som.: North and Bristol* (2011), 167.

²⁷¹ below, econ. hist, textiles; Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* II, 249–50; *VCH Wilts*, IV, 159.

²⁷² K.H. Rogers, *Wilts. and Som. Woollen Mills* (1976), 77–8 and additional refs. supplied by Mr Rogers. The 1784 map (WSA, G19/1/53L) depicts many buildings running down to the river behind St Mary street properties.

²⁷³ Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* II, 251.

²⁷⁴ K.H. Rogers, *Warp and Weft* (1986), 40.

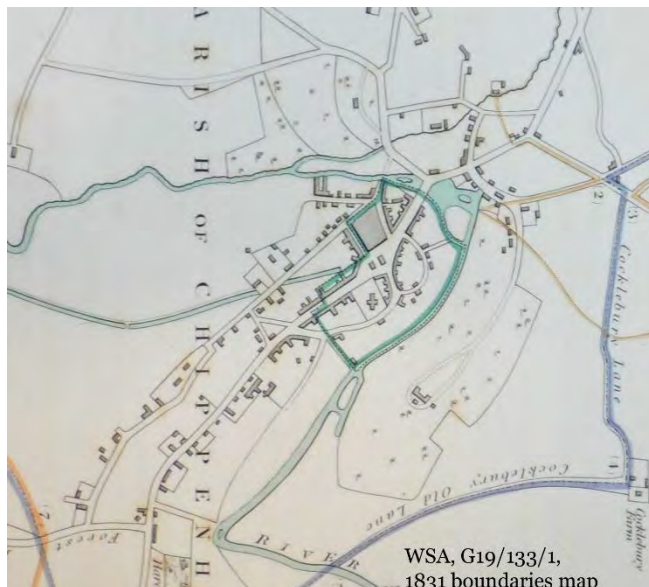
²⁷⁵ NHLE.

²⁷⁶ above, communications; D. Gerhold, *Bristol’s Stage Coaches* (2012), 51–3; *Recs. Chippenham*, 105–8.

²⁷⁷ WSA, 97/1H, 1766 sketch map; cf WSA, G19/1/53L, 1784 map.

²⁷⁸ 28–30 Foghamshire, restored in 1983: WBR file WILBR: B1873.

²⁷⁹ WSA, G19/133/1, 1831 map.



A second innovation affected the other side of town. The Chippenham arm of the Wilts & Berks canal was completed in 1803, terminating in a wharf and associated coal yards behind Timber Street and the Rose and Crown inn.²⁸⁰ The site had been gardens in 1784, so that little demolition need have been involved, and existing cottages in Timber Street were retained.²⁸¹ The wharf was heavily used until the 1850s, but then rapidly declined, although the coal yard operated until 1914; the bus station now (2019) occupies the area.²⁸²

The introduction of water and, later, steam power to enable mechanised cloth manufacturing from the 1790s led to the erection of factories in west and north-west Wiltshire towns, including Chippenham. Bridge factory, below the town bridge between the river and Bath Road, was begun after 1796 and extended to include a five-storey building employing steam power c.1813.²⁸³ Its counterpart, upstream of the bridge, was the town mill, rebuilt after a fire in 1816 and similar in appearance to the Bridge factory; although functioning as a grist mill, its design suggests that it may have been intended to convert it to cloth production.²⁸⁴ A small factory built off Westmead Lane before 1808 was combined in 1815 with a much larger building, of five storeys, said then to be newly erected, and the two were operated together as Waterford mill.²⁸⁵ The lane was renamed Factory Lane in consequence. Other factories, smaller in scale, were built in the Butts (c.1805),²⁸⁶ and perhaps also in Chapel Lane, where an industrial building, later used as a school, was restored

²⁸⁰ above, communications; R. Alder, *Chippenham and the Wilts & Berks Canal* (2011), 19.

²⁸¹ Alder, 52–5, map and aerial photograph.

²⁸² Alder, 26–31, 54.

²⁸³ Rogers, *Wilts. and Som. Woollen Mills*, 78–9. Additional information for this para. communicated by Mr Rogers.

²⁸⁴ *ibid*, 78.

²⁸⁵ *ibid*, 79–80.

²⁸⁶ *ibid*, 77.

c.1983.²⁸⁷ Apart from this last example, none of these buildings survived into the later-20th century, the cumulative effect they and the canal wharf had on the character and townscape of 19th-century Chippenham must have been considerable.

Writing in 1801, John Britton praised Chippenham's inhabitants for their 'judicious alterations and improvements' but hoped that they would not leave their plans half-completed.²⁸⁸ He objected to the 'disfiguring cluster of old houses, the shabby town hall, and the butchers shambles' as being discordant objects. His lifetime was indeed to see further rebuilding and refronting, especially along High Street and around the market place,²⁸⁹ culminating in the work of improvement commissioners in 1834, which included street paving, cleaning, gas-lighting, and general tidying and removing obstructions.²⁹⁰ Also in 1834 the new hall in Italianate style, raised on a stone vault to accommodate marketing beneath, was built in the High Street; the market was extended in 1850. The former George inn (W.H. Smith) was rebuilt nearby in 1835, mimicking the hall's design.²⁹¹ These campaigns notwithstanding, several substantial 'disfiguring' timber-framed buildings survived into the 20th century, notably at the upper end of High Street.²⁹²

In 1821, preparatory to a boundary enlargement, the burgesses reported that there were 174 houses within the borough, of which 129 were burgage houses.²⁹³ The 45 which did not enjoy burgage privileges stood mostly in Timber Street, River Street, Cook Street and the Causeway, and perhaps adjacent to the Shambles.²⁹⁴ But by then, the burgesses claimed, the total number of dwellings in Chippenham parish, as opposed to within the confines of the borough boundary as defined in 1554, was 756, with a further 30 built up to 1831.²⁹⁵ While a fair proportion of these stood in the outlying settlements, it is clear from the 1831 map that much of this total was accounted for by ribbon development along London Road, the Butts, the Causeway beyond Ladds Lane, and in Wood Lane, as well as cottages and workers' housing in the Factory Lane, Blind Lane and the lower River Street area, and across the bridge in Foghamshire and Monkton Hill.²⁹⁶ In consequence the borough boundary was extended in 1834 to include them.²⁹⁷

RAILWAY, MOTORWAY, AND BEYOND, FROM 1841

Station Hill and the St Paul's District, 1841–1914

²⁸⁷ Letter in file lent by Mr Rogers.

²⁸⁸ Britton, *Beauties of Wilts*, II, 239.

²⁸⁹ NHLE; WBR files; Orbach and Pevsner. *Wilts.*, 222–5. Examples are 4–5, 7, 10–12 High Street, 18, 20, 26, 35, 36, 50 Market Place.

²⁹⁰ below, local govt; see also contemporary poem about 'improvements' in J. Chamberlain, *Chippenham* (1976), 133–5.

²⁹¹ Orbach and Pevsner, *Wilts.*, 224.

²⁹² see photographs in Smith, *Chippenham Walkabout*, 25–7.

²⁹³ *Recs. Chippenham*, 150, 322.

²⁹⁴ Deduced from the maps of 1820 (WSA, G19/1/49PC) and 1831 (WSA, G 19/133/1).

²⁹⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, 154. The figure may be inflated, as the 1821 census recorded only 600 houses.

²⁹⁶ WSA, G 19/133/1.

²⁹⁷ above, boundaries.

Chippenham's expansion during the later 19th century was centred on the railway station and its approach, and land to the north of the line. In this respect its career during the 1840s was similar to that of Swindon, a far less populous place in 1831, but its equal 20 years later.²⁹⁸ Much of the area upon which development took place lay within Langley Burrell parish, and had as its focus an important junction of no fewer than seven roads beside the Little George inn, which was well established before 1784.²⁹⁹ The junction itself, described as Crossways in 1657 and Chippenham Clift in 1698,³⁰⁰ was the terminus of Maud Heath's causeway (Langley Road), and its continuation down to Chippenham as Monkton Hill. Here it was crossed by a lane from Lowden to Cocklebury (later Park Lane and Foundry Lane), and both the Malmesbury road and Greenway Lane converged on this crossing, as did the new turnpike road from 1792.

In 1831 there were seven houses in Langley Burrell parish adjacent to Chippenham, with a total population of 35.³⁰¹ A tollhouse, erected by the Marshfield turnpike trust, stood at the junction, close to the inn, and in 1834 there were also at least four houses in the path of, or very close to, the proposed railway viaduct at the junction of New Road and Marshfield Road; five houses stood in Langley Road in 1840.³⁰² Apart from various outbuildings much of the area was occupied by closes of pasture, whose boundaries were largely respected by later development, but there was also a large timber yard on the site of Station Hill, and the station itself was built on part of a pasture recorded as the Wall Ground in 1784. The later St Paul's church was built on glebe pasture land.³⁰³

The railway severed the road down Monkton Hill and the lane to Cocklebury, and in consequence the occluded sections north of the line had been renamed by 1861 Old Road and Foundry Lane respectively.³⁰⁴ To maintain access to Cocklebury the G.W.R. company in 1842 purchased land alongside the line to connect Monkton Hill, then the principal access to the station, with Cocklebury Lane.³⁰⁵ Station Hill was not made until 1857, as a private venture by the landowner, who sold it to the G.W.R. company in an exchange in 1858.³⁰⁶ A terrace of cottages in St Mary's Place, parallel to Station Hill, and a small cluster of railway cottages at the station approach, had been erected by 1861.³⁰⁷

North of the line substantial stonebuilt terraces of workers' housing appeared at Landsend (Landsend Place, by 1854),³⁰⁸ St Paul's Street (by 1858),³⁰⁹ and Springfield Buildings

²⁹⁸ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 344, 358. Chippenham's population in 1831 4,333, in 1851 4,999; Swindon in 1831 1,742, in 1851 4,879.

²⁹⁹ WSA, T/A Langley Burrell; WSA, G19/1/53L; J. Britton, *Autobiography*, pt. 1 (1850), 58.

³⁰⁰ WSA, 118/53; inscription illustrated in K.S. Taylor, *Dry Shod to Chippenham* (2012), 100.

³⁰¹ WSA, G19/133/1, report on boundaries.

³⁰² WSA, A1/371/4MS; WSA, T/A Langley Burrell.

³⁰³ WSA, A1/371/4MS; WSA, T/A Langley Burrell; WSA, G19/1/53L.

³⁰⁴ TNA, RG 9/1284, ff. 111–12.

³⁰⁵ WSA, G19/141/3.

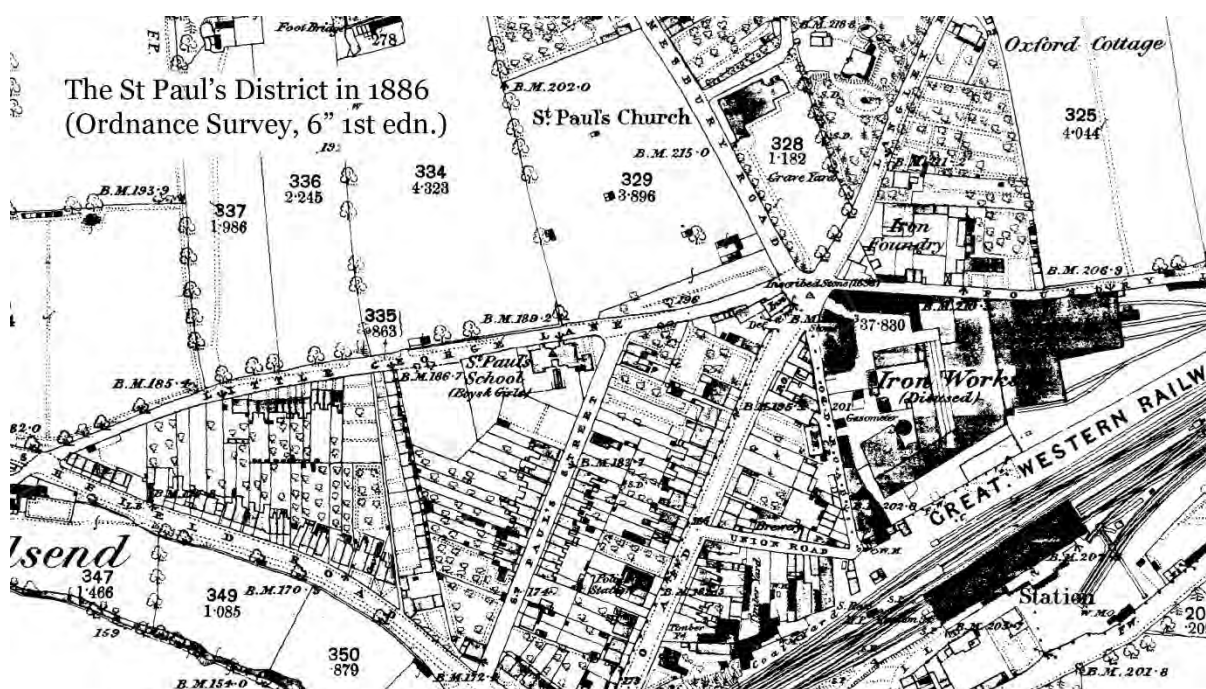
³⁰⁶ WSA, G19/141/3. The road may have been under construction in 1855: WSA, G19/1/39, 17 July 1855.

³⁰⁷ TNA, RG 9/1284, ff. 36–7, 111–12.

³⁰⁸ date on building.

³⁰⁹ WSA, G19/120/1, G19/120/3: the development was first called Brookfield, but St Paul's Street by 1860.

(by 1861),³¹⁰ as well as shorter terraces of three or more houses along Park Lane (Springfield Place, Prospect Place) and Marshfield Road.³¹¹ More affluent stone villas, detached or in pairs, were built on New Road (or Oxford Road, as the stretch from the viaduct to the Little George was generally known as late as 1868),³¹² principally during the 1860s and later.³¹³ In consequence the number of freeholders entitled to vote in the district rose from 33 in 1856 to 66 in 1859, and from 84 in 1865 to 168 in 1868.³¹⁴



Streetlighting along Marshfield Road to Landsend, and New Road to the Little George, was provided in 1853/4,³¹⁵ but a sewer, though contemplated in 1854, was not laid until 1863/4.³¹⁶ St Paul's church was built close to the Little George junction in 1854 and dedicated in 1855, when a new ecclesiastical parish was created for it to serve.³¹⁷ St Paul's school, with teachers' housing, was built in the angle of Park Lane and St Paul's Street in 1857/8.³¹⁸ Chippenham police station was built in New Road in 1857,³¹⁹ by which date also most of the town's carriers used either the Little George or the Great Western inn, which stood beside the

³¹⁰ TNA, RG 9/1284, ff. 89–91, but begun 1853: inscription on building noted by C. Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names* (2018), 85.

³¹¹ WSA, G19/120/1; TNA, RG 9/1284, ff. 88–98.

³¹² WSA, G19/1/39, 3 Nov. 1854; WSA, G19/120/3, 1868 list.

³¹³ WSA, G19/120/2–3; TNA, RG 10/1899, ff. 73–4.

³¹⁴ WSA, G19/120/1–3.

³¹⁵ WSA, G19/1/39, 30 Apr. 1853, 25 Apr. 1854.

³¹⁶ WSA, G19/1/39, 17 Oct. 1854; WSA, G19/129/2, p. 12.

³¹⁷ below, Religious hist., church buildings.

³¹⁸ below, Education, to 1900.

³¹⁹ WBR, heritage statement 41–42 New Road, Chippenham (2018).

viaduct.³²⁰ Old Road began to be established as a commercial area by 1855, with two beerhouses, a shopkeeper, tailor, and other businesses, but by 1867 more tradesmen operated from New Road and Landsend (Marshfield Road).³²¹ Also by 1867 Union Road, so-called because it linked Old Road and New Road, had been created, presumably to make a more direct alternative access to the railway station from the west.³²²

Residential and commercial development, and its infrastructure, were in part driven by the railway itself, but more significantly by the success and rapid expansion of the railway engineering firm of Rowland Brotherhood, who was himself responsible for building Landsend Place and St Mary's Place.³²³ Beginning in 1842 his business expanded across land adjacent to the railway station until 1866, but ceased trading from his Chippenham facility in 1869, with the loss of 200 jobs.³²⁴ This effectively signalled the end of the first period of expansion in the St Paul's district, and little new building took place between 1870 and 1885.³²⁵

Although Brotherhood's premises were taken over by other industrial concerns, it was the establishment on part of the site in 1891 of the Wiltshire Bacon Curing Company, and in 1894 of a railway signalling plant in Foundry Lane (later to become Westinghouse) that stimulated further residential expansion.³²⁶ Between 1885 and 1899 terraced housing, typically of undressed stone with ashlar dressings and bay windows (unlike the more squat, Bath stone terraces of the 1850s) was built along Malmesbury Road near St Paul's church, and on both sides of Park Lane (so-called from 1893);³²⁷ also in pairs opposite Landsend Place and elsewhere along Marshfield Road.³²⁸ Downing Street, humbler terraced housing on a site, then quite isolated, south of Bristol Road, also dates from this period.³²⁹ Speculative housebuilding continued apace after 1900, undertaken largely by a local builder, Frank Field, who developed Tugela Road on former allotments in 1902, Ashfield Road in 1904, and Hawthorn Road in 1907.³³⁰ Parkfields (1905) and a terrace opposite St Paul's churchyard were other pre-war additions.³³¹

London Road and Wood Lane, 1841–1939

³²⁰ *Kelly's Dir. of Wilts.* (1859 edn.), 403–4.

³²¹ *ibid.* (1855 edn.), 30–1; *ibid.* (1867 edn.), 240–4.

³²² It is shown (though not named) on WSA, G19/700/1; for the name, Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 48.

³²³ this para: S. Leleux, *Brotherhoods, Engineers* (1965), 20–9; O.S. Nock, *Hundred Years of Speed with Safety* (2nd edn, 2014), 179–82; Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 49, 85; below, econ. hist. [not yet written].

³²⁴ Below, econ. hist.

³²⁵ O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XX.14 (1886 edn.). An exception was Ashes Hamlet, eight pairs of rustic cottages between Greenway Lane and Langley road, which existed by 1885.

³²⁶ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 222; Nock, *Hundred Years*, 10, 181; below, econ. hist.

³²⁷ Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 82.

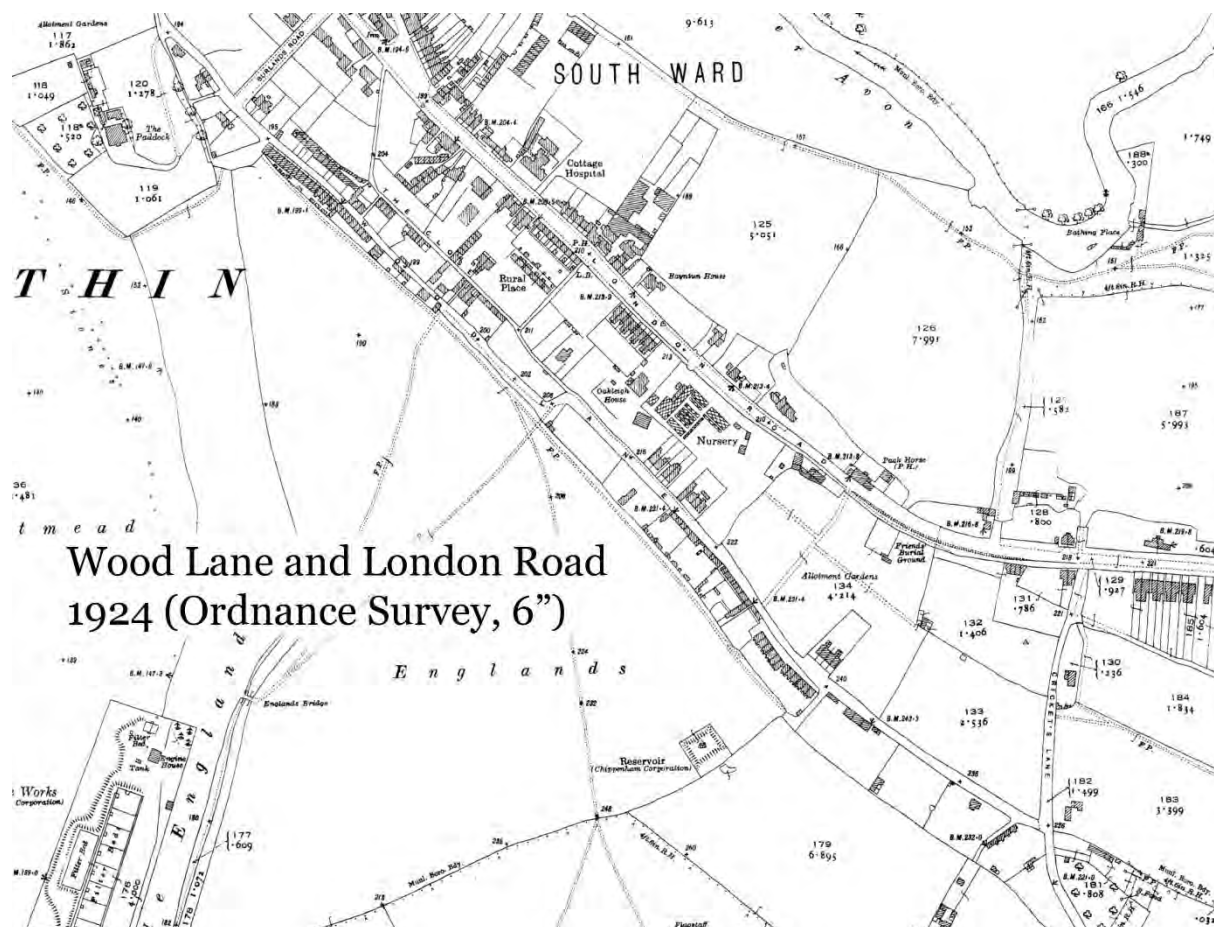
³²⁸ O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XX.14 (1886, 1900 edns.).

³²⁹ *ibid.*

³³⁰ Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 71, 75.

³³¹ *ibid.*, 83.

The scattering of weavers' cottages along London Road, noted by Britton in 1801, was paralleled by others along Wood Lane.³³² Although later 19th-century development on this side of Chippenham was on a far smaller scale than around the railway and St Paul's, there was ample scope for infilling along and between the two roads. By 1841, in addition to Lansdown Place and New Town at the southern end of the Butts, a terrace of ten three-storey weavers' cottages, Victoria Buildings, had been built on London Road, and a group known as Nelson's Place set back towards Wood Lane.³³³ Further terraces of workers' housing sprang up during the 1850s, along Wood Lane (Prospect Place and Austen's Buildings), near Lansdown Place (Sambrook Place, begun in the 1840s, and Queens Square), and between London Road and Wood Lane (Albert Cottages and the Close).³³⁴ Thereafter the pace of development slowed and, individual houses aside, only one more group of eight brick and slate cottages, Moseley Terrace, was built (c.1880–5) during the century.³³⁵



On the recommendation of the Local Government Board, Chippenham council built two terraces of six 'workmen's cottages' at the south-eastern end of Wood Lane in 1914, to

³³² Britton, *Beauties of Wilts.* II, 261; WSA, G19/133/1.

³³³ TNA, HO 107/1171/17, ff.54–71.

³³⁴ TNA, RG 9/1283, ff. 96–119; RG 9/1284, ff. 7–16.

³³⁵ O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XXVI.2 (1886, 1900 edns.).

rehouse tenants of buildings the council proposed to demolish for road widening,³³⁶ and all were occupied by early 1915.³³⁷ Of two-storey brick and slate construction, rendered to the upper storey, and with roundels bearing the council's insignia and date, in appearance they are similar to those built in Chippenham and elsewhere after 1919; they were designed in-house by A.E. Adams, the borough surveyor, and built by Syms of Calne.³³⁸ This seems to have been a pioneering move by the council, as they are possibly the only municipal council houses built in Wiltshire before the First World War.³³⁹

When council building on a large scale recommenced after 1919, attention was first directed north of the railway line, but by 1923 a site at Cricketts Lane, close to the 1914 houses, was contemplated, and the first houses there were built in 1925 and occupied in 1926.³⁴⁰ Further council housing along and at the further end of Wood Lane, and in London Road, was constructed during the 1930s, including on the site of allotments and a plant nursery.³⁴¹ Westmead Terrace, 22 houses in Wood Lane, were built in 1933–4 and occupied by 1935.³⁴² Private housing, by contrast, was concentrated along London Road, where typical ribbon development and infilling occurred on a small scale during the 1930s.³⁴³

Northern and Western Chippenham, 1919–45

In 1917, in response to a government request, Chippenham borough council estimated that 26 houses were needed immediately and a further 75 after the war.³⁴⁴ The council's first post-war building campaign was the Ladyfield estate, south of Sheldon Road, where land was purchased in 1919 and an estate of 42 houses completed in 1922.³⁴⁵ The land had in fact been laid out for private housing and some houses built before the war.³⁴⁶ In 1923, uncertain of the future expansion of Westinghouse, the council deferred further building in the area until 1926, and meanwhile encouraged private housebuilders.³⁴⁷ In fact private terraced housing had already been constructed along and adjoining Sheldon and Audley Roads before 1912,³⁴⁸ so that the pattern of council and private development west of the railway line between the wars was to an extent opportunistic infilling.

³³⁶ WSA, G19/103/3, pp. 211, 214, 255–6; *Wilts Gaz.* 9 Apr. 1914. The cottages survive as 157–179 Wood Lane.

³³⁷ WSA, G19/100/5, p. 218; G 19/100/6, pp. 6, 18, 28, 56, 77.

³³⁸ WSA, G19/103/3, pp. 225, 292.

³³⁹ <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2019/10/22/mapping-pre-first-world-war-council-housing/#comments> (accessed 22 Nov. 2019).

³⁴⁰ WSA, G19/100/7, pp. 478, 489, 497; G19/100/8, pp. 64, 170.

³⁴¹ WSA, G19/100/8, p. 536; G19/100/9, p. 298, 442; O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XXVI.2 (1926, 1938 edns.); *Dir. Chippenham and Dist.* (1925–39 edns.).

³⁴² WSA, 19/100/9, p. 298; *Dir. Chippenham and Dist.* (1933, 1935 edns.).

³⁴³ O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XXVI.2 (1926, 1938 edns.); London road was used to illustrate a national trend in J. Haddon, *Discovering towns* (1970), 65–9.

³⁴⁴ WSA, G19/100/5, p. 309.

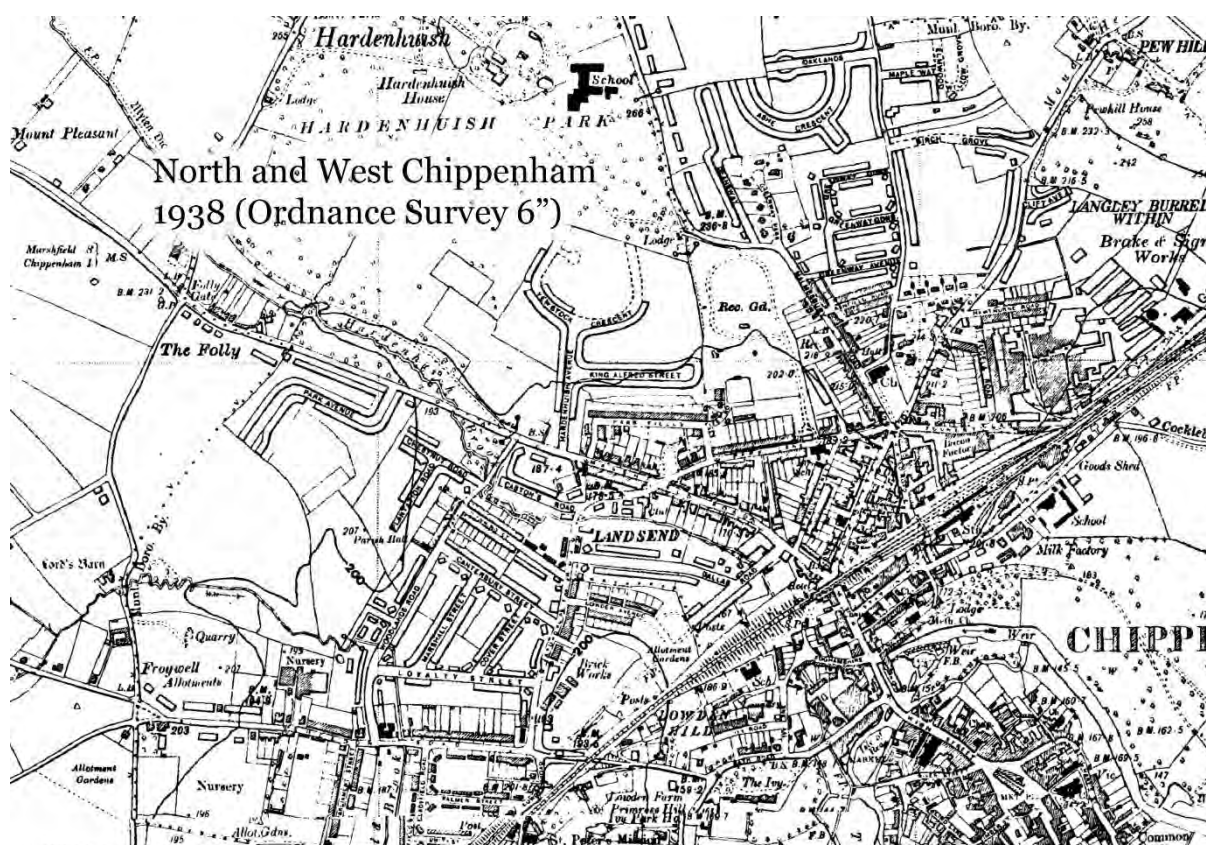
³⁴⁵ WSA, G19/100/5, pp. 415–16; G19/100/6, pp. 89, 310.

³⁴⁶ WSA, G19/150/3; OS Map 25", Wilts XX.14 (1912 edn.).

³⁴⁷ WSA, G19/100/7, p. 396.

³⁴⁸ O.S. 25" map, sheet Wilts XX.14 (1912 edn.).

The council's second large-scale foray into housebuilding in the area was the Woodlands estate of 68 houses, completed in 1928 on a site compulsorily purchased the previous year.³⁴⁹ This extended the 1890s Downing Street private development and, as a result of successive campaigns between 1931 and 1936, at least another 160 council houses were built over a large block of land bounded by Hardenhuish brook on the north, and Audley, Sheldon and Woodlands Roads on east, south and west respectively.³⁵⁰ Private housing meanwhile was concentrated further north, towards Marshfield Road and its continuation, Bristol Road. Here were laid out Dallas Road (c.1929–34), Plantation and Chestnut Roads, and Park Avenue (all by 1938).³⁵¹



Meanwhile, in 1937, the council tendered for an estate of 150 houses to be built on either side of Greenway Lane, north of existing private housing (principally Greenway Gardens) which had spread along the lane from the late 1920s. This estate, whose roads embody the names of trees, was under construction during 1938 and many houses were occupied by 1939.³⁵² Another scheme, prompted by the Air Ministry's requirement for civilian housing in connection with RAF Hullavington, was begun in 1938 with the purchase

³⁴⁹ WSA, G19/100/8, pp.308, 322, 404.

³⁵⁰ WSA, G19/100/9, pp. 164, 442; O.S. 6" map, sheet Wilts XX.SW (1947 provisional edn.).

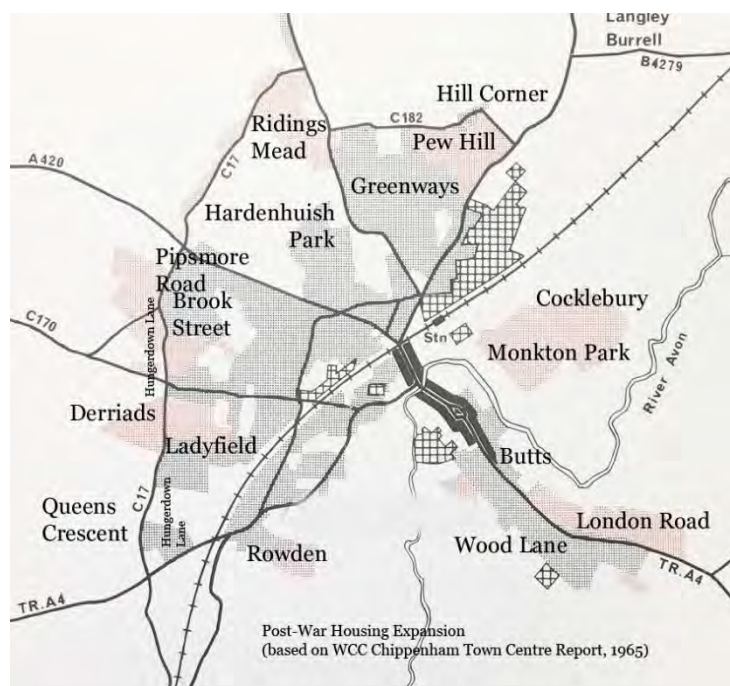
³⁵¹ *Dir. Chippenham and Dist.* (1929, 1933, 1935, 1939 edns.); O.S. 6" map, sheet Wilts XX.SW (1947 provisional edn.).

³⁵² WSA, G19/100/10, pp. 130, 177, 238, 247 (from which it appears that only 128 houses were built); *Dir. Chippenham and Dist.* (1929–39 edns.).

of land at the southern end of Hungerdown Lane; by May 1940 78 of the target of 100 houses had been completed.³⁵³ Then, from 1943, two estates of 'prefab' bungalows were built nearby, between Ladyfield Road and the railway, and in the Brook Street area further north, to rehouse survivors of Bristol bombing; some roads were named after locations in the city.³⁵⁴ In 1950–1 the borough council acquired all 440 from the Ministry of Supply to house council tenants from 1952, and all were still occupied in 1960; the last survivors were not cleared until 1970.³⁵⁵

Accommodating Population Growth, 1945–1974

Between the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the demise of Chippenham borough council in 1974 the town's population grew by about 60 per cent, and most of the increase, 5,692, occurred between 1951 and 1961.³⁵⁶ By 1961 growth had slowed dramatically, the population increasing further by only 1,585 up to 1981. The physical growth of Chippenham reflected these statistics.



The council had proposed in 1944 the purchase for housing of an 18 a. site in the angle of Hungerdown Lane and Derriads Lane, and in 1946–7 built 110 houses there.³⁵⁷ Also in

³⁵³ WSA, G19/100/10, pp. 247, 399.

³⁵⁴ Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 111–12; *Dir. of Chippenham* (1950, 1964 edns.); O.S. 1:1250 scale, sheet ST9072NE (1969 edn.)

³⁵⁵ WSA, G19/100/13, pp. 882, 922; G19/100/14, p. 197; G19/127/1, pp. 97, 268.

³⁵⁶ Census 1951–81 totals were 11,851 (1951), 17,543 (1961), 18,696 (1971), 19,128 (1981). The 1939 total, derived from TNA, RG 101/WRCA-WRCN, was c.11,700 (± 50 , as the totals for 2 of the 13 enumeration districts are missing, and have been estimated from their page extent).

³⁵⁷ WSA, G19/100/11, pp. 188, 256; G19/100/12, pp. 322, 421, 442; G19/700/30PC.

1947 land was acquired to extend the Greenway Lane estate, and tenders were invited to build 30 houses there the following year.³⁵⁸ Augmented by a further 28 houses this estate was completed in 1951 and included the 1,000th council house to be built in Chippenham.³⁵⁹ These houses stood west of Greenway Lane, but in 1950 adjacent land to the east, bordered by Hill Corner and Pew Hill, was laid out for 74 traditional and non-traditional (Reema) houses, which were built 1952–4.³⁶⁰ One further council housing estate was begun during the early 1950s, between London Road and the Avon. Work was in progress by 1953, and continued with traditional and non-traditional houses, and from 1958 old people's bungalows.³⁶¹

By the end of 1956 there were 1,849 rented council properties in Chippenham, including the 440 'prefabs'.³⁶² By contrast with the pre-war estates, principally semi-detached houses built along straight residential streets, those planned and built after 1945 followed national trends by including open spaces, lock-up garages and the provision of shops and other services. The Derriads estate was innovative, since within a level triangular site it was laid out around a rectangular open space and the houses set well back from the access roads. Later schemes, at Greenway, Hill Corner and especially north of London Road, made good use of their sloping sites to provide variety and landscaping.

Private housing during the 1950s was concentrated on former parkland north and east of the town, and on Cocklebury farm. The development of the Hardenhuish estate had begun before the war, in 1937 in fact, so that by 1939 Hardenhuish Avenue, King Alfred Street and some houses in Yewstock Crescent were built and occupied.³⁶³ Work resumed after 1945 and Yewstock Crescent was complete by 1950, and linked to Malmesbury Road by Wedmore Avenue.³⁶⁴ Hungerford Road followed, and in 1955 permission was granted for a further 120 private houses north of Hardenhuish school; Ridings Mead and Brookwell Close were occupied by 1957.³⁶⁵ In 1954 the borough council purchased the Monkton Park estate, and in 1957 a private developer, E.H. Bradley, acquired Cocklebury farm, with a view to building c.800 houses.³⁶⁶ The first estate roads, including Sadlers Mead and Esmead, were laid out and named in 1958, and by 1961 Esmead was built, with Eastern Avenue, Sadlers Mead and nearby roads completed by 1964.³⁶⁷ Work proceeded eastward towards the Avon, so that by 1971 there were 529 houses on the estate, and by 1976 618 with permission for a further 85.³⁶⁸

Although population growth may have been less acute by the late 1950s, the borough council still had the problem of replacing the 'prefab' bungalows and rehousing their tenants. In 1958 plans were announced for 240 houses off the northern end of Hungerdown Lane, and

³⁵⁸ WSA, G19/100/12, pp. 339, 346, 618; G19/700/20PC.

³⁵⁹ WSA, G19/100/13, p. 773; G19/100/14, pp. 77, 102.

³⁶⁰ WSA, G19/100/13, pp. 985; G19/100/14, pp. 152, 371; G19/100/15, p. 146; G19/700/24PC; G19/723/9–10.

³⁶¹ WSA, G19/100/14, pp. 371, 406; G19/100/15, p. 146; G19/152/1, 4; G19/723/8.

³⁶² WSA, G19/127/1, p. 41.

³⁶³ *Dir. Chippenham and Dist.* (1939 edn.); Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 87–9.

³⁶⁴ *Dir. of Chippenham* (1950 edn.); Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 88–90.

³⁶⁵ *Dir. of Chippenham* (1953, 1957 edns.); WSA, G19/127/1, p. 23.

³⁶⁶ WSA, G19/127/1, pp. 2, 48.

³⁶⁷ WSA, G19/127/1, p. 65; *Dir. of Chippenham* (1961, 1964 edns.).

³⁶⁸ North Wilts D.C., *Chippenham Dist. Plan, interim report of survey* (1977), pp. 18–22.

a contract for the first 140 was drawn up in 1959.³⁶⁹ By 1961 much of the estate, centred on Pipsmore Road, Allington Way and Lords Mead, was built and occupied.³⁷⁰ Meanwhile, in December 1960 an ambitious plan was announced to build 616 council houses on the two 'prefab' sites over five years; this was not in fact achieved until 1970.³⁷¹ The Brook Street estate was redeveloped first, and was completed in 1966.³⁷² Much of the existing street plan was retained, including Brook Street and Redland, whereas the Ladyfield (or Westcroft) estate, redeveloped between 1966 and 1970, adopted a new layout.³⁷³ Elsewhere, the council in 1961 proposed a mixed development of council and private housing between Hungerdown Lane and Derriads Lane beyond the existing council estate.³⁷⁴ This, the Queens Crescent estate, was begun in 1963 and included plans for 130 council houses alongside extensive private development which continued until 1984.³⁷⁵

Before its responsibilities were taken over by North Wiltshire District Council in 1974, the borough council engaged in two further housing initiatives. One was a co-operative venture with a housing association, begun in 1973, to build houses and flats off Hungerdown Lane.³⁷⁶ The other was a scheme to regenerate the Butts at the southern end of St Mary street, then regarded as a 'twilight area'.³⁷⁷ Many of the 128 properties affected were listed buildings, and the council in 1971 adopted a consultants' report to retain and modernise most, while building new flats and integrating the development with a link road across the river to connect with the Monkton Park estate – which in the event was not built. This conservation approach stood in contrast to the wholesale clearance of more modest housing in the River Street area slightly later (1973–4), which was replaced by the Borough shopping precinct and car park.³⁷⁸

Further Expansion for Working and Living, 1974–2019

In 1974 virtually all Chippenham's industries were located close to the town centre or the railway station.³⁷⁹ The largest site by far was the wedge defined by Langley Road and the railway line, which had been occupied by Westinghouse, its predecessors and other industrial concerns, since the 1840s, and which offered scope for expansion northwards across farmland beyond Pew Hill. Next in importance were the former textile mill sites along Westmead Lane

³⁶⁹ WSA, G19/127/1, p. 69; G19/152/7.

³⁷⁰ *Dir. of Chippenham* (1961, 1964 edns.); Allington Way was only partially occupied in 1961.

³⁷¹ WSA, G19/127/1, pp. 97, 268.

³⁷² WSA, G19/723/12, 14; G19/127/1, p. 191.

³⁷³ OS Map 1:10560, sheet ST97SW (1960, 1985 edns.).

³⁷⁴ WSA, G19/127/1, p. 105.

³⁷⁵ WSA, G19/723/15; Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 116.

³⁷⁶ WSA, G19/127/2, 18 Jan. 1973, 31 Aug. 1973.

³⁷⁷ Chippenham B.C. *The Butts area, Chippenham . . . : report prepared by the Eric Cole design group* (1971); press reports in WSA, G19/127/1, pp. 282–3.

³⁷⁸ WSA, G19/127/2, 1 Aug. 1973, 27 Jan. 1974. The scheme had been under consideration since 1965: WSA, G19/127/1, p. 169.

³⁷⁹ This section, where not otherwise specified: North Wilts D.C., *Chippenham Dist. Plan, interim report of survey* (1977), pp. 37–8, and plan 6; OS Map 1:2500, sheet ST87/97 (1986 edn.); 1:25000, sheet 196 (1998 edn.); Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, *passim*; personal observation; below, econ. hist.

and close to the town bridge. Other sites were relatively small, along Cocklebury Lane near the station, a commercial laundry at Ivy Lane and – away from the centre – a haulage depot in Wood Lane, and two mixed industrial estates developed since the 1950s, off Audley Road and Bath Road, both adjacent to the railway embankment. Commercial life, also, was concentrated in the town centre, where a second shopping precinct, Emery Gate, was constructed in 1986, and the railway district, and the only significant institutions and employers on the periphery were the secondary schools at Hardenhuish and the hospitals at Rowden (the former workhouse), Greenways (maternity) and Frogwell (isolation).³⁸⁰

Littlefields, an area south of Bath Road beyond the railway viaduct which extended along Saltersford Lane to the borough boundary, had been earmarked for industry in 1965, but no development had taken place up to 1977. Bumpers Farm, beyond the western limit of 1970s suburban development, belonged to the borough council by virtue of it being historically part of the portfolio of town lands; the council had applied for and received permission for a warehousing and distribution centre there in 1973, but it too was undeveloped in 1977. By the mid-1980s both estates included large manufacturing and warehousing plants, and expansion took place before 1998 southwards at Bumpers Farm as far as Derriads Lane, and westwards from Littlefields and the Pheasant roundabout along Bath Road. The western limit of industrial and residential expansion was defined by West Cepen Way, Chippenham's western bypass, constructed 1997–9.³⁸¹

The virtual doubling of Chippenham's population between 1971 (18,696) and 2011 (35,830) was achieved by a mix of housing strategies aligned to national trends and policies, including the creation of an 'urban village', Pewsham, on a greenfield site, residential development up to the line defined by the western by-pass (Cepen Park South and North), infilling small sites within the existing suburban area, and redeveloping brownfield sites near the town centre. It reflected also the switch from local authority provision to home ownership and was driven in part by wider commuting horizons offered by the M4 motorway, opened in 1971.

The focus during the 1980s and early 1990s was on two areas, Lowden and Pewsham. At Lowden the Ivy Field or Charter Road estate between Bath road and the Avon south of the Ivy, for which outline approval for 280 dwellings existed in 1976,³⁸² comprised small detached houses and a large proportion of two and three-storey flats in linked blocks. Slightly later, the Erleigh Drive estate of larger houses was built nearby on Primrose Hill, between Bath Road and the railway line.

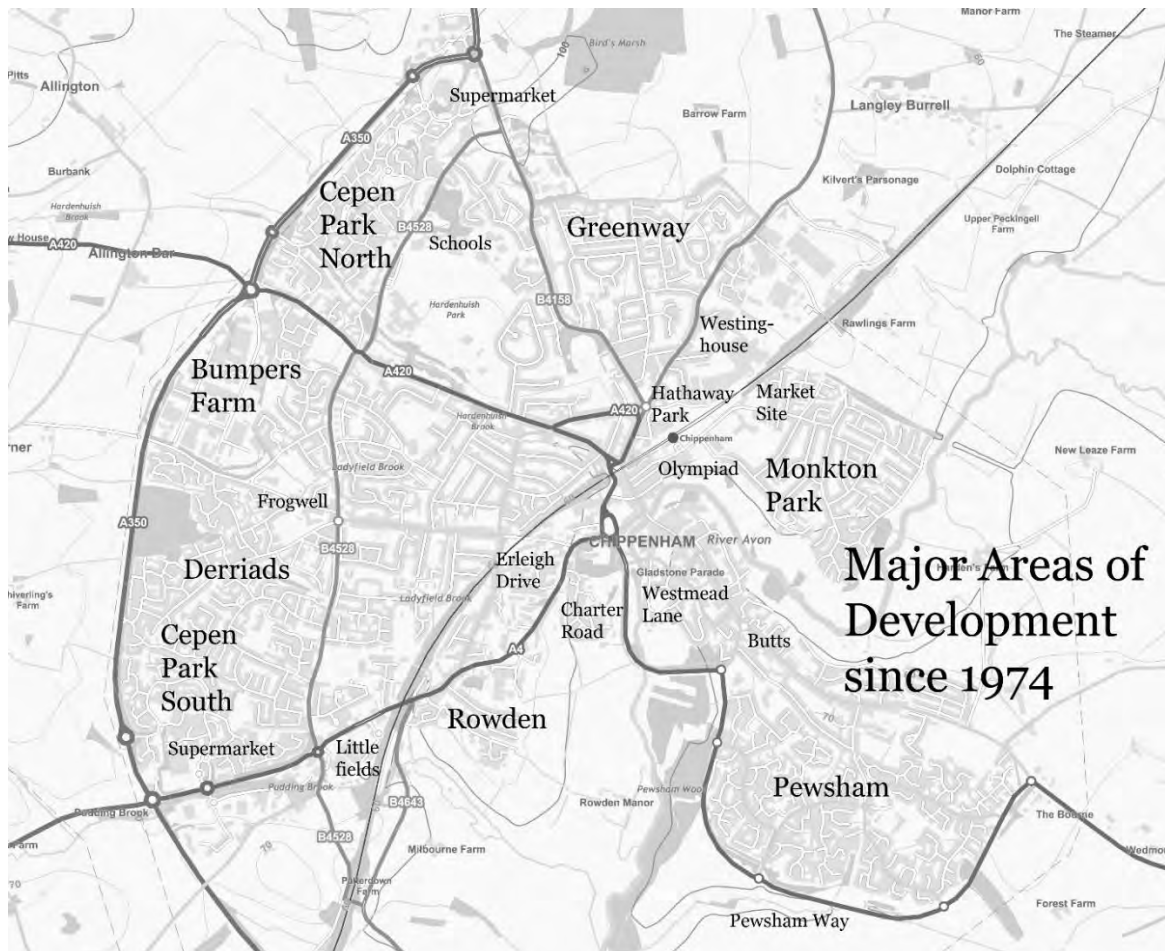
The much larger Pewsham development, for which 1,101 dwellings had been approved in 1976, was built in phases, from east to west, largely between 1985 and 1995, although with later infilling at the western edge. Roughly oval in shape, and much larger in area than the historic centre of Chippenham, its layout reflected pre-existing features, notably the line of the Chippenham arm of the Wilts & Berks canal as its southern perimeter, some field boundaries, and Forest Lane, a wide driftway which ran south from Wood Lane past Rooks

³⁸⁰ Datestone on building; below, social hist, education; welfare provision.

³⁸¹ above, intro., roads.

³⁸² North Wilts D.C., *Chippenham Dist. Plan, interim report of survey* (1977), pp. 20–2.

Nest Farm to Jay's Bridge across the canal. Pewsham Way was built just beyond the canal line to embrace the estate on three sides and provide access routes into it; as an example of 'planning gain' it functioned also as a by-pass for London Road into Chippenham and a link with Avenue La Fleche, the town centre relief road. The houses were arranged in short culs-de-sac (many named after First World War casualties included on Chippenham war memorial),³⁸³ and these were served by three estate roads which met at a roundabout in the centre of the estate, adjacent to a school, shops and other community facilities.



Two large estates, similar to Pewsham in layout, were built west of Chippenham during the 1990s, over farmland which lay between existing suburban housing and the line of the western by-pass. Cepen Park South, set out behind a supermarket which opened in 1990 beside Bath Road, was built up from 1991, and its racecourse nomenclature reflected the former landowner's career as a horse trainer and owner. Slightly later, Cepen Park North, completed in 2003, occupied land between Malmesbury Road and the new by-pass, and also included a supermarket. Smaller campaigns of this period included an extension to the Monkton Park estate (with golf course road names), and the development of a former rugby ground next to Birch Grove at Greenways.

³⁸³ Dallimore, *Chippenham Street Names*, 145–56, which offers biographical details of more than 40 names.

Most additional housing since 2000 was achieved by building over former industrial or commercial sites close to the town centre. After the cattle market closed in 2005 its site off Cocklebury Road was developed for eco-housing and the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre. Redevelopment principally for flats began at around the same time along Westmead Lane and Flowers Yard, west of the town centre, on former factory and scrapyard premises. The progressive closure and relocation of industrial activity from the Westinghouse plant from 2009 released brownfield land off Langley Road for housing, retail and other uses, including a hotel; this was at the planning stage in 2014 and under way in 2019.³⁸⁴ In 2017 land was allocated for a further 2,625 dwellings to meet a planned target of 4,510 new homes in Chippenham by 2026. Much of this lay north of the town, between Malmesbury Road, Langley Road and Monkton Park; and south of Bath Road, at Rowden and Saltersford.³⁸⁵

Concomitant with housing expansion was the provision of new churches, schools, leisure facilities, retail outlets and other amenities.³⁸⁶ Notable was the development of Monkton Park as an open space close to the town centre, and the adjacent Olympiad leisure centre and swimming pool, which opened in 1989.³⁸⁷ Shopping provision included not only the two large out-of-town 1990s supermarkets adjacent to the western by-pass, but also refurbishments of the 1980s town centre precincts on either side of the High Street (Borough Parade and Emery Gate), and by the Hathaway (begun 1990) and adjacent Old Foundry (from 2015) retail parks north of the railway station on former industrial sites. The former maternity hospital at Greenways was demolished and the site developed as a business park. Further education provision was expanded in 2016 by the completion of the Cocklebury Road campus of Wiltshire College and University Centre, alongside Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, which opened in 2007.³⁸⁸

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Information about Chippenham's medieval urban government is very sparse, despite having characteristics of borough status by c.1200, and electing members to Parliament from 1295. Its manorial government devolved largely to outlying manors within the wider parish. From 1554 until 1835 borough government was in the hands of a bailiff and self-perpetuating corporation, whose activities are well recorded. After 1835 Chippenham was governed by improvement commissioners and an elected council, which continued with modifications until 1974, and developed the usual range of services appropriate to a town of its size. Borough government was abolished in 1974, but from 1984 some services have been provided by a town council. Chippenham elected two members to most Parliaments from the 14th century until 1867, when reduced to a single member. After 1885 the borough seat was

³⁸⁴ Nock, *Hundred Years of Speed with Safety* (2nd edn, 2014), 207–7; personal observation.

³⁸⁵ Wilts. Council, *Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, adopted May 2017*, pp. 21, 24–6.

³⁸⁶ Individual churches and schools are described below, soc. hist.; religious hist.

³⁸⁷ below, soc. hist., sport.

³⁸⁸ <https://www.wiltshire.ac.uk/aboutus/campuses/chippenham>; <http://www.wshc.eu/history.html>.

abolished and Chippenham fell within a county division, whose boundaries have several times been redrawn, but which for most of its history has retained the town in its name.

MANORIAL GOVERNMENT

Chippenham was held by the West Saxon royal house when Æthelswith, the daughter of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, was married there to Burgred, king of Mercia in 852.³⁸⁹ Vikings took control of the vill in January 878, but it was recovered by Alfred during the same year and Chippenham remained a Saxon royal holding and base.³⁹⁰

In 1066 and 1086 the manor of Chippenham was held by the Crown and comprised the majority of land within the parish including the vill and forest.³⁹¹ Also within the parish in 1066 Toki held one unidentified hide; by 1086 it was held by Reginald Canute.³⁹² William Durus held West Tytherton of Alvred in 1066, when it paid geld for four hides. Wulfgifu and Aelfgifu held it as two manors in 1086.³⁹³ Azelin held Stanley of Waleran in 1086 and Selwine had held it in 1066; it paid geld for one hide and three virgates of land.³⁹⁴ Stanley was assessed separately at one hide and three virgates, held by Selewin in 1066 and Azelin (of Waleran) in 1086.

This manor of 'Greater' Chippenham appears to have remained until c.1200 when a process of morcellation began to divide it into the several smaller manors and large freeholds that can be distinguished in the mid-13th century manors of Allington, Monkton, Rowdon, Sheldon and the rump of Chippenham and perhaps Cocklebury, Lowden and Tytherton Lucas which achieved some autonomy, but may never have had full manorial status, including the right to hold courts.

Chippenham: The core of Chippenham was itself divided between the manor, consisting of some urban tenements and arable close to the town, the borough as a separate urban entity and the forest consisting of woods and wood pasture to the south. The early history of landholding and ownership is made complicated by the description of lands granted in smaller manors (Lowden, Sheldon, Rowden and Monkton) as land within Chippenham.³⁹⁵

No records of manorial courts held for Chippenham exist before 1500 and nothing is known of their procedure or business. A sheriff's tourn was held at Chippenham in April 1502,³⁹⁶ which included presentments from the tithingmen of Luckington, Sherston, Alderton, Cadenham (in Bremhill), Lackham (in Lacock), Surrendell (in Hullavington), North Wraxall, Box, Hartham (in Corsham), Tytherton Lucas, Langley Burrell, Leigh Delamere and Yatton Keynell, and heard serious offences of rustling livestock.

³⁸⁹ Ricardi de Cirencestria *Speculum Historiale*, i, 323.

³⁹⁰ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, (S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, eds. 1983) 20–1.

³⁹¹ *Domesday*, 175.

³⁹² *Ibid.* 191.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* 181.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 186.

³⁹⁵ e.g. *Cal. Pat.* 1281–92, 368. From later references this manor can be identified as Rowden.

³⁹⁶ TNA, SC 2/208/29.

A view of frankpledge with manor court was held at Chippenham in October and at Easter 1512–1534.³⁹⁷ These courts, like the sheriff's tourn, included presentments made by tithingmen from those manors across the hundred that did not hold a court leet. Besides the business of the leet (principally the regulation of butchers, brewers and bakers), the courts noted repairs to hedges, scouring ditches and clearance of dung from under the elm in the market place,³⁹⁸ which may represent residual concerns of the court baron for the manor of Chippenham. There were also repairs to highways and in 1525 to Chippenham bridge.³⁹⁹ A payment of *rewmannorum*, a fine paid to the hundred court, was recorded in 1525.⁴⁰⁰

These Chippenham courts appear to be the remaining elements of the greater Chippenham Domesday manor once the view of frankpledge had been removed and granted to its more significant constituent manors with their own courts leet, including Chippenham, Rowden, Monkton, Stanley, Bremhill, and briefly Nethermore.⁴⁰¹

A court held at Chippenham in September 1514 with view of frankpledge was styled the *sevenpound* court.⁴⁰² It received payment of *cert money* (hundred penny) from a single unspecified tithing, and oversaw the assize of ale, repairs to buildings at *Westmedend* and strays. A perambulation of the liberty was ordered to begin at the cross on the bridge and extend to *Fayreford alias Hardneshe*. Free tenants were mentioned, including the prior of Stanley, as well as property owned by the chantry of the Blessed Virgin. The court concluded with presentments relating to ruinous tenements which might usually be heard at a court baron.

There was perhaps also a court baron held in Chippenham for the manor of Chippenham, styled a hallmoot, at least until the early 16th century, for which no records have survived.⁴⁰³

Sheldon: At Sheldon the courts were irregular in the 15th century, when the demesnes were in hand the bailiff accounted for the profits of courts for the whole year, one court leet was held in the year ending Michaelmas 1416,⁴⁰⁴ one court leet and one court baron were recorded at Michaelmas 1429,⁴⁰⁵ two courts baron at Michaelmas 1453,⁴⁰⁶ and a court baron, styled the hallmoot for Sheldon and Lowdon, in 1475–1476.⁴⁰⁷ In 1535 a court held in November, noting only the absences of freeholders, was recorded after the Michaelmas hundred court.⁴⁰⁸

³⁹⁷ TNA, SC 2/208/64–6, 68–70, 72–3, 75–6 and 78–9.

³⁹⁸ TNA, SC 2/208/75.

³⁹⁹ TNA, SC 2/208/69.

⁴⁰⁰ TNA, SC 2/208/70.

⁴⁰¹ Below, Outer Chippenham (manorial govt.).

⁴⁰² TNA, SC 2/208/28. This court is bound into a volume of manorial courts and sheriff's tourns, format similar to SC 2/208/29, but there is no indication of where it was held or whether it was attached to the manor or borough.

⁴⁰³ *Recs. Chippenham*, 296.

⁴⁰⁴ WSA 192/29A.

⁴⁰⁵ WSA 192/29B.

⁴⁰⁶ WSA 192/29C.

⁴⁰⁷ TNA, SC 2/209/56.

⁴⁰⁸ TNA, SC 2/208/79.

The provisions of the lease of Sheldon acquired by Henry Hulberte in 1583 required that he hold the lord's court for the manor of Chippenham, Sheldon and Lowdon, with due warning, at the farm of Sheldon as the tenants were accustomed.⁴⁰⁹ In the period 1628-1640 a court baron was held twice or three times each year mostly dealing with cases of repairs to buildings, infringements on the highways and admission of customary tenants.⁴¹⁰

Copyhold admissions were still being made into the mid-19th century.⁴¹¹ In 1719 a presentment made at the court baron recorded that Chippenham manor had rights to all the sub-soil within the borough except the east side of Cook Street and all of St Mary Street.⁴¹² The last court for Chippenham, Sheldon and Lowdon was held on 5 November 1901, but the lords of the manor continued to extract new rents for works beneath the sub-soil such as water pipes until at least 1909 the agreements being recorded in the court book.⁴¹³

Allington: Allington held both court baron and court leet. The courts in 1536 produced a revenue of only 1s. 4d., so they can not have been frequent or well attended.⁴¹⁴ The homage could not agree their customs in October 1644 and were ordered to meet before the next court to set them out.⁴¹⁵ Courts were held beyond the last surviving presentments made in 1742 as fourteen copyhold tenants occupied 250 acres in 1776 and four copyholders remained in 1847.⁴¹⁶ By the early 18th century the courts dealt exclusively with property transfers.⁴¹⁷ Tithingmen were selected by rotation at Allington, women were to find a surrogate, and no other officers were mentioned.⁴¹⁸

Rowden: Rowden manor held both court baron and court leet, from October 1570 the courts were sometimes titled 'Rowden and Froghamshire' or 'Chippenham, Rowden and Froghamshire'.⁴¹⁹ Tensions sometimes arose between manors abutting Chippenham and the borough's bailiff: in 1595 the tithingman of Rowden presented an intrusion by the bailiff at Froghamshire to seize clothes belonging to a felon worth 10s.⁴²⁰ The court leet usually met twice each year until the 1630s, then annually, appointing a constable, tithingman and ale taster and in 1738 maintaining a pound and stocks 'at the end of the bridge'.⁴²¹ The court baron was not held regularly, it often met twice in a year year in the 16th and 17th centuries, but in the early 18th century merged with the court leet which from 1741 was held annually.⁴²²

⁴⁰⁹ WSA, 442/1.

⁴¹⁰ WSA, 490/1541.

⁴¹¹ WSA, G19/992/18.

⁴¹² WSA, 415/29.

⁴¹³ WSA, G19/992/18.

⁴¹⁴ TNA, E 315/398..

⁴¹⁵ Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/WY 1/58/2.

⁴¹⁶ WSA, 1780/4 and Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/WY 1/58/7.

⁴¹⁷ Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/WY 1/58/2 and 5.

⁴¹⁸ Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/WY 1/58/2.

⁴¹⁹ BL, Add. MS. 37270.

⁴²⁰ BL, Add. MS. 37270.

⁴²¹ WSA, 84/35, 122/1 and 473/53.

⁴²² WSA, 473/53.

The last recorded court was held in 1799 by which date the business of the court had reduced to the appointment of officers.⁴²³

Stanley: Court baron and court leet were held at Stanley. From the early 15th to the mid-16th centuries the courts elected tithingmen for the tithings of Stanley and Nethermore,⁴²⁴ but by 1569 they only elected for Stanley tithing.⁴²⁵ In 1575 the homage declared an out of court surrender made in a tenant's own house to be unlawful.⁴²⁶ In 1576 the court elected two highway supervisors and a tithingman who made presentments relating to the assizes of bread and ale and oversaw use of the lord's mill.⁴²⁷ The court baron and court leet were held twice each year in the mid 16th century and in the spring only from 1633.⁴²⁸ Stanley tithing was called 'Tytherton-Stanley' in 1830.⁴²⁹

In 1557 an order was made in the court that the tithingman, or his deputy, should at all times have the key to the pound.⁴³⁰ In 1612 the lease of the demesne included the stocks and the manor at some time maintained a pillory at 'the Pillory Field'.⁴³¹ Both the stocks and pound required repairs in 1652.⁴³² In the 16th and 17th centuries wills were proved in the court.⁴³³ During the 18th and 19th centuries the court became almost exclusively concerned with conveyancing of customary land and the last recorded court was held in 1848.⁴³⁴

Tytherton Lucas: Although no court records are known to survive for Tytherton Lucas, lists of tithingmen, 1677-1723, 1733-49, and overseers, 1691-1724, 1735-47, are included in Thomas Gardiner's commonplace book.⁴³⁵

Nethermore: The Nethermore presentments in Edward Bayntun's court leet at Stanley from 1547-1560 almost exclusively relate to payments of pannage by half a dozen customary tenants.⁴³⁶ In 1560 Bayntun sold Nethermore to Henry Sharrington who already held Lacock manor.⁴³⁷ From 1560 the tithingman of Nethermore made presentment at Lacock court leet, the tenants still paid pannage, but defaults of attendance became more frequent.⁴³⁸

⁴²³ WSA, 473/61.

⁴²⁴ WSA, 2664/1/2B/33 and 84/35.

⁴²⁵ BL, Add. MS. 37270; WSA, 122/1.

⁴²⁶ BL, Add. MS. 37270.

⁴²⁷ WSA, 122/1.

⁴²⁸ WSA 84/35 and 122/1.

⁴²⁹ *Pigot's Dir. Wilts.* (1830), 794.

⁴³⁰ WSA, 84/35.

⁴³¹ WSA, 122/1.

⁴³² WSA, 473/52.

⁴³³ WSA, 122/1.

⁴³⁴ WSA, 473/61.

⁴³⁵ WSA, 811/216; transcribed in *WN&Q*, 7, 102-5, 147-9.

⁴³⁶ WSA, 84/35.

⁴³⁷ WSA, 2664/1/2A/497.

⁴³⁸ WSA, 2664/1/2B/17.

In September 1583 Nethermore held its own court baron, without court leet, because there were insufficient male tenants to empanel a jury for the leet.⁴³⁹ In 1583 seven tenants were in attendance including three widows. The court met annually in September 1584 and March 1585 to record payments of pannage, transfers of tenancies and sub-tenancies, never listing more than ten tenants including widows and on each occasion stating that there were insufficient tenants to form the leet jury. When it met in 1588, there were twelve male jurors for the court leet, perhaps because this session recorded the death of Elizabeth Banckes; one of the wealthiest tenants. In September 1593 the court convened again as a court baron again without court leet because there were insufficient men: nevertheless a case of assault was presented. Courts baron were held in 1594, 1600 and the court in 1601 is the last recorded by the Stapleton estate.

A court book headed 'Lacock and Nethermore' commencing in 1604 contains only courts for the former manor,⁴⁴⁰ but the settlement which confirmed Olive Stapleton's rights in 1608 stated that she should hold Nethermore including "the rent called Head Silver".⁴⁴¹ In 1613 the tithingman of Nethermore once again made presentments at the Stanley court leet.⁴⁴² The following year the tithingman defaulted and was not mentioned again until 1628 when a fine of 5s. was imposed on Thomas Fortune, tithingman of Nethermore, for non-attendance.⁴⁴³

Nethermore's tiny population could not sustain a court leet or court baron: there were only eight houses assessed for the hearth tax in 1662.⁴⁴⁴ At some time before 1778 the tithingman of Nethermore began to attend and make presentments at Chippenham hundred court with other tithingmen who did not attend a court leet.⁴⁴⁵ This small tithing was eventually amalgamated with Pewsham in 1884.⁴⁴⁶

Monkton: In 1557 Monkton court leet regulated trade and manufacturing, fining John Vices for the sale of poorly tanned hides.⁴⁴⁷ Monkton manor held a court baron and court leet with view of frankpledge in 1615.⁴⁴⁸ Court baron and court leet were held twice yearly 1692-1718 and thereafter less frequently until by the late 19th century they were held every two years.⁴⁴⁹ The court met at the Angel Inn which was within the manor, although it was also within the bounds of the borough.⁴⁵⁰

Monkton had a set of stocks which required a new lock and key in 1822.⁴⁵¹ The Monkton court leet oversaw the removal of a set of stocks from the Butts to a site opposite the

⁴³⁹ WSA, 2664/1/2B/29.

⁴⁴⁰ WSA, 2664/1/2B/27.

⁴⁴¹ WSA 2664/1/2A/95.

⁴⁴² WSA, 122/1.

⁴⁴³ WSA, 122/1.

⁴⁴⁴ TNA, E 179/259/29, part 2, rot. 47.

⁴⁴⁵ WSA, 212A/27/21/5.

⁴⁴⁶ *VCH Wilts*, IV, 344.

⁴⁴⁷ WSA 192/10.

⁴⁴⁸ WSA 9/1/192.

⁴⁴⁹ WSA 1769/27/1 and G19/992/10-13.

⁴⁵⁰ WSA, G19/992/12.

⁴⁵¹ WSA G19/992/14.

Methodist chapel in 1831, reported that the pound required repairs in 1831 and 1834 and noted the replacement of a common pump in 1851.⁴⁵² In 1851 the tenants objected that the court was not held as frequently as in the past and requested a return to annual courts.⁴⁵³ In the second half of the 19th century copyholds were gradually enfranchised under the Copyhold Acts with the last extinguished in 1896.⁴⁵⁴

In the 18th and 19th centuries the Chippenham court baron simply exploited its ownership of wastes and verges to to profit from small fines, but the Monkton court leet maintained regulatory functions. Monkton court in the 19th century appointed a constable, tithingman, bread weigher and hayward.⁴⁵⁵

BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

Government before 1554

Chippenham had burgages by c.1200,⁴⁵⁶ and two grants of burgage houses survive from 1208 and c.1225.⁴⁵⁷ The entanglement of administration in town, parish, manor and hundred has obscured the precise nature of borough government over several centuries. In 1281 the lord of Sheldon, Geoffrey Gascelyn, nominated a bailiff for both town and hundred, and two sets of electors of juries, for the hundred and borough, at the eyre that year.⁴⁵⁸ The bailiff had a house in the town where he had imprisoned at least one suspected wrongdoer in 1268.⁴⁵⁹ The bailiffs mentioned in relation to two hearings in 1297 were appointees of Edmund Gascelyn, lord of Sheldon manor,⁴⁶⁰ which in 1287 was said to include the borough of Chippenham.⁴⁶¹ This anticipated by eight years the first summons of burgesses from Chippenham to parliament.⁴⁶²

In 1307 Chippenham was described as a vill within Sheldon manor, with 13 free tenants including two former members of parliament.⁴⁶³ At this period the lord of Rowden, adjacent to the town, enjoyed a third share of the proceeds of its markets and fairs. In 1361 the crown knew or assumed that there were burgesses in Chippenham who could be required to pay the expenses of members of parliament.⁴⁶⁴ Edward III acknowledged in 1376 that Elizabeth Gascelyn of Sheldon, as lady of the town, also enjoyed rights to the fair and market.⁴⁶⁵ In the 15th century, when Sir Walter Hungerford and his successors held both

⁴⁵² WSA G19/992/14.

⁴⁵³ WSA G19/992/14.

⁴⁵⁴ WSA G19/992/14.

⁴⁵⁵ WSA G19/992/14.

⁴⁵⁶ WSA, 2664/1/2A/75.

⁴⁵⁷ *Hungerford Cart. I* (WRS. 49), 83–4, 88.

⁴⁵⁸ *Collectanea*, (WRS. 12), 53.

⁴⁵⁹ *Collectanea*, (WRS. 12), 125.

⁴⁶⁰ *Close*, 1296–1302, 98–99.

⁴⁶¹ *Wilts. Inq. p.m.* 1242–1326, 170–71.

⁴⁶² Below, this section (Parl. representation).

⁴⁶³ *Wilts. Inq. p.m.* 1242–1326, 171.

⁴⁶⁴ *Close*, 1360–1364, p. 253.

⁴⁶⁵ *Close*, 1374–1377, pp 184–85.

Sheldon (from 1424) and Rowden (from 1434), there are few indications as to how urban government functioned distinct from manorial government. The Yelde Hall, constructed between 1446 and 1458, but replacing an earlier, possibly mid-14th-century, building,⁴⁶⁶ functioned as the meeting place for court sittings within the hundred and manor and for church entertainments within the parish, combining two roles distinct in other settlements. It was not at this stage considered the property of the borough.⁴⁶⁷

After Walter, Lord Hungerford's, attainder in 1540, Henry VIII made administrative arrangements for the town of Chippenham distinct from those for the manor as a whole. Two joint bailiffs were appointed, who might enlist deputies and who were to enjoy the profits of the fairs, markets and tolls, with rent and revenues from the town being paid annually to the king's treasurer of the chamber.⁴⁶⁸ This appears to have been an adaptation or continuation of arrangements under the Hungerfords. In 1545 the writ for electing members of parliament was addressed to the two bailiffs, constables and townsmen, whereas the election indenture of 1553 mentioned only one bailiff.⁴⁶⁹

The Chartered Borough, 1554–1835

Chippenham was chartered by Mary I on 2 May 1554 and the charter was regranted with no substantive changes by Elizabeth I on 29 January 1560.⁴⁷⁰ It provided for government by a single bailiff, initially Henry Farnewell alias Goldney, and twelve named burgesses. Thereafter, successive generations of the Goldney family served as bailiff and, following the abolition of the role in the nineteenth century, as mayor.⁴⁷¹ The bailiff was to be elected annually at Michaelmas by and from among the burgesses meeting in the Yelde Hall; the burgesses were to hold office for life or until they moved away, and then an inhabitant of the borough was to be elected to replace them. This corporation was to set laws and ordinances for governing and victualling the borough's artificers and inhabitants, and was granted named 'borough lands', the revenue from which was to support two members of parliament and maintain the bridge and causeway. The boundaries of the borough and the extent of its lands were defined by the charter.⁴⁷²

Ordinances, as set down in 1596, regulated corporate administration, including prohibiting inhabitants from seeking redress against the borough officers in royal or manorial courts; the good conduct of burgesses and the details of commercial life, including those which might affect corporate integrity, such as the admission of apprentices or granting of tenancies and sub-tenancies; and general well-being, such as cartels to control the price of

⁴⁶⁶ WBR, WILBR: B1233, K.A. Rodwell, 'Archaeological investigations at the Yelde Hall, Chippenham, 2001–2', for North Wiltshire District Council, October 2003, 21–22.

⁴⁶⁷ WBR, WILBR: B1233, K.A. Rodwell, 'Archaeological investigations at the Yelde Hall, Chippenham, 2001–2', for North Wiltshire District Council, October 2003, 25–27.

⁴⁶⁸ *Recs. Chippenham*, 297–8.

⁴⁶⁹ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, 1509–1558, i, 219.

⁴⁷⁰ This para: *Recs. Chippenham*, 261–72 (Latin text and English translation of the charter).

⁴⁷¹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 347–8.

⁴⁷² For the boundaries, above, Origins, growth and development (early modern town); for borough lands, below, this section (property).

provisions.⁴⁷³ There was also a town clerk, funded from fines extracted from transgressors against the borough.⁴⁷⁴ Inhabitants of the borough were liable to imprisonment for demeaning the bailiff and burgesses in word and deed.⁴⁷⁵ This extended the provision applied to burgesses in their oath, which was used to remove Gabriel Farnwell alias Goldney from the corporation in 1600.⁴⁷⁶

From 1604, when James I confirmed the borough lands and regulated their use,⁴⁷⁷ the borough maintained an orderly record of its income and expenditure, which was substantially reliant on income from the borough lands and from the fees paid by freemen.⁴⁷⁸ The resulting pattern of land management, whereby access to small parcels was divided on rotation between the inhabitants, shaped the calendar of corporation business, and required the borough to maintain lists of eligible inhabitants and leaseholders within its borders who were thus eligible to partake in produce or (if leased out) profits.

An order of 1617 established that the borough's inhabitants were not to cut and use or sell green wood from the royal forest on pain of being excluded from the profits of the borough.⁴⁷⁹ In the first Civil War, the borough was obliged to contribute towards the funding of both parliamentary and royalist forces, but after the occupation of the borough and negotiations for the removal of troops in 1646, conformed to the parliamentary settlement.⁴⁸⁰ The proclamation of Charles II was marked with wine, beer and bellringing on 12 May 1660, with more elaborate celebrations for the coronation in 1661.⁴⁸¹

Chippenham's charter was surrendered to Charles II in 1684 and a new charter was granted by James II. This prescribed the appointment of new burgesses but reserved to the crown the power to remove the bailiff or any burgess at will.⁴⁸² Although the new corporation demonstrated loyalty to James II when he passed through on his way to Bath in 1687, there were signs of unhappiness; they ordered the holders of borough lands to pay additional rent so that the borough could afford to contest two cases in chancery.⁴⁸³ In 1688 James II dismissed the bailiff and four burgesses and replaced them,⁴⁸⁴ but later that year the survivors of the old corporation met, cancelled the new charter, and chose new burgesses and a bailiff.⁴⁸⁵ A debt owed by the discontinued corporation of James II was waived in 1689.⁴⁸⁶ Thereafter each bailiff was sworn into office and received the sacrament at quarter sessions.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁷³ WSA, G19/1/6, f. 5v, 5.

⁴⁷⁴ WSA, G19/1/6, f. 14.

⁴⁷⁵ WSA, G19/1/6, f. 14v.

⁴⁷⁶ WSA, G19/1/6, f. 21v.

⁴⁷⁷ WSA, G19/1/6, ff. 28–40r.

⁴⁷⁸ WSA, G19/1/18.

⁴⁷⁹ WSA, G19/1/6, f. 89v.

⁴⁸⁰ WSA, G19/1/18, ff. 115v, 116v, 119v–120, 122v–123v, 125v–127.

⁴⁸¹ WSA, G19/1/18, ff. 177v, 181.

⁴⁸² WSA, G19/1/7, ff. 2v–3.

⁴⁸³ WSA, G19/1/7, f. 24v.

⁴⁸⁴ WSA, G19/1/7, f. 28v.

⁴⁸⁵ WSA, G19/1/7, ff. 30v–31v.

⁴⁸⁶ WSA, G19/1/7, f. 34.

⁴⁸⁷ WSA, G19/1/19, Walter Scott (1689–90).

After 1720 the corporation's membership included names associated with estates outside the borough and with its parliamentary representation. Rogers Holland (MP, 1727–37) was elected burgess in 1729, and Edward Bayntun Rolt (MP, 1737–80) made a freeman in 1740.⁴⁸⁸ Although several bailiffs chose to mark diplomatic and military successes, in 1713⁴⁸⁹ and 1741,⁴⁹⁰ it seems only to have been with the accession of George III that the corporation began to use national commemorations to communicate with the court, sending under the common seal condolences to the new king on the death of George II in 1760.⁴⁹¹ From the election of Henry Dawkins in 1769 the corporation minutes began to note the elections of MPs.⁴⁹²

The bailiff's accounts suggest periods of lax administration. No accounts were entered for the years 1725–26, 1754–55, or 1760–1, and only summary accounts for 1730–1.⁴⁹³ But in 1755–56 an annual allowance for the bailiff was first entered in the accounts, later sometimes referred to as a salary.⁴⁹⁴ In the same year the bailiff's and burgesses' seats in the parish church, which had lately been improved, were given formal recognition by the vicar-general of Salisbury diocese.⁴⁹⁵ The bailiff and burgesses undertook to maintain the seats in good order thereafter, and a cleaner subsequently appears in the accounts.⁴⁹⁶

Matthew Humphrys complained in December 1780 that four burgesses were resident outside the borough and should therefore be replaced, and his motion passed; but Humphrys and two other burgesses refused to attend subsequent meetings called to choose replacements, thus preventing their election until one of those forcibly retired was prevailed upon to attend to make the meeting quorate.⁴⁹⁷ Humphrys himself resigned from the corporation in 1783.⁴⁹⁸

During the 1780s the corporation took steps to enforce other neglected aspects of its charter obligations, including in 1783 its power to regulate victualling in conjunction with a statute for setting the assize of bread.⁴⁹⁹ Also in 1783 it investigated an alleged disorderly house, which entertained 'vagrants and other lewd persons'.⁵⁰⁰ It requested that its MPs support a motion for the repeal of stamp duty on receipts,⁵⁰¹ sent humble addresses to the king in 1784 and 1786,⁵⁰² and a loyal address in 1789 congratulating the king on his recovery

⁴⁸⁸ WSA, G19/1/7, ff. 159, 189.

⁴⁸⁹ WSA, G19/1/19, Richard Singer (1712–13).

⁴⁹⁰ WSA, G19/1/19, William Johnson (1740–41).

⁴⁹¹ WSA, G19/1/7, fo. 271v.

⁴⁹² WSA, G19/1/7, fo 285.

⁴⁹³ WSA, G19/1/19.

⁴⁹⁴ WSA, G19/1/19, William Gale (1755–56); John Heath (1786–87).

⁴⁹⁵ *Recs. Chippenham*, 320–21.

⁴⁹⁶ WSA, G19/1/19, William Pinnington (1777–78).

⁴⁹⁷ WSA, G19/1/8, 95–7, 99.

⁴⁹⁸ WSA, G19/1/8, 127.

⁴⁹⁹ WSA, G19/1/8, 133.

⁵⁰⁰ WSA, G19/1/8, 134.

⁵⁰¹ WSA, G19/1/8, 146.

⁵⁰² WSA, G19/1/8, 151, 205.

from insanity.⁵⁰³ In 1788 a freeman, James Woodman, was debarred from receiving profits from the borough lands after uttering the phrase, 'Damn the burgesses'.⁵⁰⁴ The sentiment of bailiff and burgesses may have been reflected in the borough's humble address to the king in 1792, thanking him for issuing the proclamation for suppressing the publication of seditious pamphlets.⁵⁰⁵

The early nineteenth century was clouded by anxiety over the borough's political independence. During 1802 the bailiff and burgesses had to negotiate a dispute regarding burgage house leases between the agent of the Dawkins family interest and that of the Fludyer interest. They resolved that the two parties should 'grant free and equitable leases of all such houses' but were particularly critical of the Fludyers and their agent Ralph Hale Gaby, who was himself a burgess and in due course bailiff.⁵⁰⁶ Thereafter the borough minute book acted also as a poll book at contested elections, beginning in July 1802.⁵⁰⁷

The corporation continued to take an interest in national and international politics,⁵⁰⁸ and celebrated the fiftieth year of George III's reign in 1809.⁵⁰⁹ In 1814, and again in 1826, it petitioned that the African slave trade be abolished, but in 1821 opposed the relief of Roman Catholic disabilities.⁵¹⁰ In 1831 it was successful in petitioning against the borough being included in schedule B of the Reform Bill as the 'borough and parish', arguing that the combined population of these areas exceeded the population of 4000 recorded in the 1821 census and so the parliamentary borough should not lose a seat.⁵¹¹ However, this could not stand in the way of the whig government's reform agenda. The last minute entered in the name of the chartered corporation was on 12 August 1835, the traditional breaking of Westmead as prescribed by the decree of 1604. When the bailiff and burgesses met again, on 26 December, it was to implement the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.⁵¹²

By 1835, freemen indicated their selection of bailiff 'by sticking a pin in the name of the one chosen.' The Royal Commission into Municipal Corporations noted, 'The candidates are generally chosen according to ancientry, or from the burgesses who have not yet served the office of bailiff.' Freemen also tended to return the first name of the two nominated burgesses.⁵¹³ Burgesses were elected for life from among freemen.

The Municipal Borough, 1836 to 1889

⁵⁰³ WSA, G19/1/8, 243.

⁵⁰⁴ WSA, G19/1/8, 225.

⁵⁰⁵ WSA, G19/1/8, 283–4.

⁵⁰⁶ WSA, G19/1/8, 452–7.

⁵⁰⁷ WSA, G19/1/8, 462–7.

⁵⁰⁸ WSA, G19/1/8, regarding the Duke of York in 1809, and the relief of Russians in 1813.

⁵⁰⁹ WSA, G19/1/8, 580.

⁵¹⁰ WSA, G19/1/8, 639–642; *ibid.* G19/1/9, 22 March 1821, 25 January 1826.

⁵¹¹ WSA, G19/1/9.

⁵¹² WSA, G19/100/1, ff. 3–4.

⁵¹³ *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales* (London: Parl. Papers, 1835), 1245.

The 1835 Act brought the self-perpetuating corporation to an end, replacing it with a body of 12 councillors, elected on a male ratepayer franchise of householders who had been resident for three years. Councillors served for three years and were selected on a triennial basis. In addition, four aldermen were elected by councillors, who served for six years. A mayor replaced the post of the bailiff.⁵¹⁴ The mayor was annually selected each November by aldermen and councillors. There is evidence to suggest the selection of a mayor was agreed years in advance; possibly this mirrored the former system whereby the bailiff was chosen based on age or from among those who had not previously served.⁵¹⁵ There was not, therefore, an especial break with the past, as the last bailiff, William Pope, was elected the first mayor, and it was determined, on the attorney-general's advice, that burgage holders under the unreformed borough could still be admitted as freemen.⁵¹⁶ A new town clerk was appointed, displacing Harry Goldney, who was awarded £30 compensation.⁵¹⁷ A change in practice was the payment of interest on money from the borough charities placed in the borough fund, and restoration of their independent accounts.⁵¹⁸ Soon after Pope's appointment, in January 1836, he was awarded a salary of £5.⁵¹⁹ In 1848, the mayor's salary was increased to £20, at which level it remained for over forty years.⁵²⁰

Alongside the new corporation and by separate legislation a body of commissioners was set up in 1834 for lighting, watching, cleansing, paving and improving the town.⁵²¹ Its functions overlapped with and augmented those of the corporation until it was replaced in 1870 by a local board of health, under the provisions of the 1858 Local Government Act.⁵²²

In 1841 the council resolved to move meetings from the council chamber in the Yelde Hall to the New Hall.⁵²³ It gave £25 towards new pews in the parish church in 1847,⁵²⁴ and replaced the old corporation pew with a new one.⁵²⁵ In 1848 it petitioned Parliament against increasing property and income tax,⁵²⁶ and in 1850 addressed Joseph Neeld MP for 'his munificent liberality in erecting a new market house and sheds for cheese',⁵²⁷ subsequently requesting permission to place his arms on the front of the hall.⁵²⁸ Also in 1850 the mayor, on behalf of the inhabitants, signed a humble address to the queen expressing their indignation

⁵¹⁴ WSA, G19/100/1, 3–7; *Recs. Chippenham*, 161.

⁵¹⁵ For example, in 1882 owing to the incapacity of Alderman Dowding to accept the post, counsellor Keary 'consented to take the again this year instead of next.' *Wilts. Times and Trowbridge Advertiser*, 11 November 1882, 5.

⁵¹⁶ WSA, G19/100/1, 13–14.

⁵¹⁷ WSA, G19/100/1, 17.

⁵¹⁸ WSA, G19/100/1, 33, 16 May 1837.

⁵¹⁹ WSA, G19/100/1, 7 Jan. 1836, 7, 8 Jan. 1836, 8.

⁵²⁰ *Recs. Chippenham*, 168, 258.

⁵²¹ Chippenham Improvement Act, 4&5 Wm IV, c.47; copy in WSA, G19/1/42.

⁵²² *VCH Wilts*, V, 257; WSA, G19/100/2, 24 Nov. 1869.

⁵²³ WSA, G19/100/1, 125.

⁵²⁴ WSA, G19/100/1, 214.

⁵²⁵ WSA, G19/100/1, 220–1.

⁵²⁶ WSA, G19/100/1, 226.

⁵²⁷ WSA, G19/100/1, 271–3.

⁵²⁸ WSA, G19/100/1, 284.

at the papal edict re-establishing the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England, and calling for its repression.⁵²⁹

A committee was appointed in 1858 to consider widening the town bridge, but the plan was abandoned in 1860 through inadequate funds in favour of ongoing repairs;⁵³⁰ these were often subcontracted to the improvement commissioners.⁵³¹ In 1866 the corporation established a committee to survey income and expenditure with a view to prioritizing purposes specified in the charter,⁵³² and in 1867 borrowed £100 from the Wilts and Dorset Bank, which it repaid in May 1872.⁵³³ Other council business during these years included a change to the payment of church rates,⁵³⁴ an investigation of fishing rights in the River Avon,⁵³⁵ and a display of charters and records for the Wiltshire Archaeological Society meeting in the town.⁵³⁶

The council decided in 1868 to adopt the Local Government Act 1858 within the district, including the municipal borough,⁵³⁷ and to amalgamate the borough and parish as an educational district to comply with the 1870 Education Act.⁵³⁸ In 1871 it petitioned parliament in favour of its MP Gabriel Goldney's Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill; this would have relieved the restrictions upon the uses to which the corporation could apply the borough funds.⁵³⁹ The local board suggested in 1874 that they take over the sweeping and scavenging of the town bridge and approach roads.⁵⁴⁰

Although borough funds were in surplus in the mid-1870s, to the extent that widening the town bridge was again considered, savings made by the borough could be reversed by central government demands. This occurred in 1878 when the borough was ordered to pay its justice clerk a salary instead of fees, and to appoint an inspector under the Contagious Diseases Act.⁵⁴¹ Despite the overlap of members and officers, the interests of the borough council and the local board were sometimes at odds. In 1879 the clerk to the board, who was also the town clerk, found the board's request that a site outside the Yelde Hall be allocated to a public urinal was rejected as the borough considered the location inappropriate.⁵⁴² A different defence of corporate dignity was found in co-operating with neighbouring small boroughs in 1882 and 1883 to reduce the charges of the revising barristers who compiled the lists of burgesses.⁵⁴³

⁵²⁹ WSA, G19/100/1, 282–4.

⁵³⁰ WSA, G19/100/2, 9 Nov. 1858, 20 May 1860.

⁵³¹ WSA, G19/100/2, 10 May 1864.

⁵³² WSA, G19/100/2, 13 Feb. 1866, 9 Nov. 1866.

⁵³³ WSA, G19/100/2, 9 Nov. 1867, 14 May 1872.

⁵³⁴ WSA, G19/100/2, 11 May 1869.

⁵³⁵ WSA, G19/100/2, 11 May 1869, 15 May 1869.

⁵³⁶ WSA, G19/100/2, 10 Aug. 1869.

⁵³⁷ WSA, G19/100/2, 13 Mar. 1868.

⁵³⁸ WSA, G19/100/2, 26 Nov. 1870.

⁵³⁹ WSA, G19/100/2, 29 June 1871.

⁵⁴⁰ WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Nov. 1874.

⁵⁴¹ WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Nov. 1876, 12 Feb. 1878, 3 Aug. 1878, 23 Oct. 1878.

⁵⁴² WSA, G19/100/3, 12 Aug. 1879.

⁵⁴³ WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Nov. 1882, 13 Feb. 1883.

The council saw the Local Government Bill of 1886 as an opportunity, and proposed a clause which would allow small boroughs to extend their borders by provisional order without the expense of an act of parliament.⁵⁴⁴ Initially unsuccessful, the proposal was supported by Walter Long, MP for East Wiltshire and parliamentary secretary to the Local Government Board.⁵⁴⁵ Eventually it was approved, and provided a mechanism for amalgamating the local board with the borough, with the new borough having the local board's boundaries, thus anticipating the urban districts set up by the 1892 act. The successful initiative was taken by the local board initially without reference to the borough.⁵⁴⁶ Following the borough's approval of the scheme, the responsibilities and rights of freemen were protected as was the income from the borough lands.⁵⁴⁷ A special meeting on 29 October 1889 marked the end of the 'old borough' and thanked Frederick Hastings Goldney, who had been working since 1881 on a history of Chippenham using the borough records, for his service as the old borough's last mayor.⁵⁴⁸

The Municipal Borough, 1889 to 1914

Elections were held to replace all twelve councillors, after which new aldermen and a mayor, Daniel Collen, were selected from their number. Collen had previously served that office in 1876,⁵⁴⁹ and supported the borough's enlargement.⁵⁵⁰ This first election, perhaps at the instigation of a liberal candidate, Revd. H.B. Bardwell, had been fought openly on party political lines.⁵⁵¹ Following Collen's elevation the council chose William Baily, a cloth dyer, as his replacement, 'the working man's representative on the council.'⁵⁵² Meetings were held as either the municipal borough or the urban sanitary authority (urban district council from 1895), with the urban sanitary authority's minutes continuing those of the local board of health. The new committee structure reflected its new responsibilities: those on the borough lands and the bridge, the council's historic primary responsibilities, were merged, while new committees included a united sanitary, water and fire brigade committee chaired by Alfred John Keary, who had chaired the local board of health throughout its existence.⁵⁵³

The new council ended traditional payments to the churchwardens.⁵⁵⁴ It was liable to pay the county council for policing, as it could not claim county borough status under the

⁵⁴⁴ WSA, G19/100/3, 11 May 1886.

⁵⁴⁵ WSA, G19/100/3, 11 Oct. 1886.

⁵⁴⁶ WSA, G19/101/4, 96; WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Nov. 1887, 8 Dec. 1887.

⁵⁴⁷ WSA, G19/100/4, 12, 13, 16–18.

⁵⁴⁸ WSA, G19/100/3, 10 May 1881; G19/100/4, 46.

⁵⁴⁹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 346. For boundary changes during this period, above, Landscape, settlement and buildings (boundaries and parish origins).

⁵⁵⁰ *Devizes & Wilts. Gaz.* 14 November 1889, 8.

⁵⁵¹ *Devizes & Wilts. Gaz.*, 31 Oct. 1889, 8.

⁵⁵² *Devizes & Wilts. Gaz.*, 14 Nov. 1889, 8.

⁵⁵³ WSA, G19/100/4, 51–3.

⁵⁵⁴ WSA, G19/100/4, 69.

1888 Act and, despite its historic autonomy, no longer had an independent judicial bench.⁵⁵⁵ In its urban sanitary capacity the council decided in 1891 to introduce house numbering.⁵⁵⁶

The council applied to retain all its previous liabilities and responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1894, section 33, which enabled it to apply for the powers of a parish council.⁵⁵⁷ Although rejected by the local government board, who argued that the borough already had all relevant powers,⁵⁵⁸ the case was renewed in 1896 through the MP for the Chippenham division, Sir John Dickson Poynder, and granted with the exceptions of assessing poor rates and appointing assistant overseers of the poor.⁵⁵⁹ These followed in January 1897 but excluded the power to revoke the existing appointments. The borough appointed the overseers of the poor in Chippenham Within and Langley Burrell Within for the first time in 1897,⁵⁶⁰ and applied to transfer to themselves from the board of guardians powers to appoint 'assistant overseers, vestry clerks and other similar officers', and appoint the collector of poor rates for the parish of Chippenham Within.⁵⁶¹

In 1898 the council committed a sum equivalent to a penny rate to support technical education, having failed to persuade Sir Algernon Neeld to accept the mayoralty, in the hope that he would emulate the generosity of his forebears.⁵⁶² The death in 1900 of A. J. Keary, four times mayor and chairman of the local board of health, was marked by lavish tributes and a commissioned portrait for the Town Hall.⁵⁶³

Council meetings moved from the Town Hall to the Town Clerk's office in 1907.⁵⁶⁴ A further extension of the borough was agreed by the Local Government Board in 1914; the provisional order was amended on the advice of the town clerk to protect the rights of freemen.⁵⁶⁵ Contested borough elections were curtailed in 1914 with the outbreak of war; instead the mayor, James Beaven, proposed that the new council should include two senior councillors as aldermen, six from the new west ward to be nominated at a public meeting, and three new councillors for north and south wards to come one each from the Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties.⁵⁶⁶ The councillors selected Alderman Coles, who had served twice previously, as the new mayor. It was hoped that he would be able to read a declaration of peace before the end of his year's tenure.⁵⁶⁷ Until 1930 mayors continued to be selected at a meeting of the full council each November. On appointment, a mayor nominated his deputy.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁵⁵ WSA, G19/100/4, 144–8.

⁵⁵⁶ WSA, G19/101/4, 314–16.

⁵⁵⁷ WSA, G19/100/4, 29 Nov. 1894, Local Government Act 1894, 56&57 Vic. ch. 73, sections 5–19, 33.

⁵⁵⁸ WSA, G19/112/2, 143–4.

⁵⁵⁹ WSA, G19/112/2, 204, 226.

⁵⁶⁰ WSA, G19/112/2, 254.

⁵⁶¹ WSA, G19/100/4, 248–9.

⁵⁶² WSA, G19/100/4, 276–7.

⁵⁶³ WSA, G19/100/4, 318–19, 360–1.

⁵⁶⁴ WSA, G19/103/2, 165.

⁵⁶⁵ WSA, G19/103/3, 271.

⁵⁶⁶ WSA, G19/103/3, 308.

⁵⁶⁷ *Wilts. Times and Trowbridge Advertiser*, 14 November 1914, 6.

⁵⁶⁸ WSA, G19/100/8, 10 Nov. 1924, 56.

The Borough Council to 1974

In 1924 the council moved into six offices and a committee room at 5 High Street; meetings took place at the Town Hall.⁵⁶⁹ At the time, the council comprised 18 councillors, six from each of the three wards, and six aldermen. Paid officials were the town clerk, borough treasurer, medical officer, borough collector, mace bearer and messenger, surveyor's clerk, and the surveyor, A.E. Adams, who doubled as water engineer, sanitary inspector and Shops Act inspector. Meetings of the full council took place on the first Tuesday of each month.

Mayors continued to be selected at a meeting of the full council each November. On appointment, a mayor nominated his deputy.⁵⁷⁰ In 1930, the mayoral selection process was adapted. Henceforth, a private meeting was held in October where voting papers were issued containing the names of those willing to accept the office, and a ballot took place.⁵⁷¹ The councillors and aldermen continued to form a small, often self-perpetuating clique. In November 1930, the three retiring aldermen were 'unanimously' re-elected as aldermen for a further six years. This included EM Awdry whose son EP Awdry was elected mayor. The new mayor chose to appoint the previous mayor as his deputy.⁵⁷²

By the early 1930s office provision was proving inadequate, and discussions took place, 1934–6, on extending the current site, converting another building or building new premises. All options proved problematic, but the use of the town hall for committee meetings from 1935 provided some relief.⁵⁷³ In 1942 the council purchased offices at 9–10 Market Place, adapted from 'very old buildings', which were large enough to incorporate also a council chamber and mayor's parlour.⁵⁷⁴

In 1955 council governance was arranged into four committees. The Public Health Committee was responsible for sewage and its disposal, refuse collection and disposal, water supply, public lighting, public conveniences, cleaning of highways and disease prevention. Its most significant expenditure was water supply at the cost of £32,000, but the water account was projected to be in credit. The General Purposes Committee was accountable for parks and open spaces, the cattle market, office buildings and halls, borough property and burial grounds. The Housing and Planning Committee had the largest expenditure at £81,560, but its housing stock generated an income of £77,145. The disbursements of the Finance Committee were largely made up of salaries and associated costs.⁵⁷⁵

By the 1950s mayoral elections took place in March each year; it remained an important part of the town calendar. In 1956, the first woman mayor was selected, Muriel

⁵⁶⁹ This had been two years in the planning: WSA, G19/100/7, 323, 336, 488; G19/100/8, 42.

⁵⁷⁰ WSA, G19/100/8, 10 Nov. 1924, 56.

⁵⁷¹ WSA, G19/100/8, 7 January 1930, 511. The following year the system was adapted slightly, whereby, candidates needed to be proposed and seconded and their details sent to the town clerk by 1 Oct. before the private meeting to select the mayor. WSA, G19/100/9, 7 July 1931, 135.

⁵⁷² WSA, G19/100/9, 10 Nov. 1930.

⁵⁷³ WSA, G19/100/9, 347, 362–3, 379, 386–7, 430–1, 492, 538.

⁵⁷⁴ WSA, G19/126/1; *Wilts. Times*, 17 Oct. 1942.

⁵⁷⁵ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from *Wilts. Times*, 5 Mar. 1955.

Culverwell, whose husband had also had the honour.⁵⁷⁶ The Awdry family remained a significant force within the council. In 1961 Colonel E.P. Awdry resigned from the council after 39 years; his father had been a member for 55 years.⁵⁷⁷ The family legacy continued with son Daniel, mayor in 1955, the seventh member of his family to serve. He stepped down from the council in 1964 after over 20 years' service to concentrate on his parliamentary career.⁵⁷⁸

By the early 1960s the council premises were proving insufficient for the expanding town, and staff were working 'in extremely archaic conditions.'⁵⁷⁹ A new council office building in the 'modern style' was planned on council-owned land in Monkton Park, intended to add to the dignity of the town and to the efficiency with which the Council's functions are carried out.' The proposal that the site should also be used for the county council and the Calne and Chippenham rural district council was quickly rejected,⁵⁸⁰ despite the rural district council's need for offices in Chippenham.⁵⁸¹ In 1966, when the future of local government was uncertain, the mayor, H.W. Page, argued that the new building was needed, as the old office accommodation had been inadequate, and especially as the annual turnover of the authority exceeded £1,000,000.⁵⁸² The still controversial new eight-storey concrete civic office building was opened in November 1967,⁵⁸³ the council was praised for significantly offsetting building costs by agreeing to sell its old offices to the county council for £60,000.⁵⁸⁴

In 1965, the council discussed the aldermen system, but a vote decided to retain it despite some objections that it was undemocratic and an anachronism.⁵⁸⁵ There was also tension between the county and borough councils, particularly about planning approval both within the town and the surrounding area.⁵⁸⁶ The county council was branded 'against Chippenham' and 'a band of little Hitlers' over its attitude to the development of a shopping centre in the town.⁵⁸⁷ In 1969, the Redcliffe-Maud Report was published by the Royal Commission into local government, and although its specific proposals relating to Chippenham were not implemented, it led to an overhaul of local government.⁵⁸⁸

Borough seal

The coat of arms of the Gascelyn family (manorial lords of Sheldon 1250–1424) was a field with ten billets and a label. The Hussey (de la Huse) family (manorial lords of Rowden until 1392) apparently used a coat with three boots.⁵⁸⁹ Gode and John Enforde, *custodes* for the

⁵⁷⁶ WSA, G19/127/1. Press cuttings from *Wilts. Times*, 5 March 1955 and *Wilts. Times* 10 March 1956.

⁵⁷⁷ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from *Wilts. Times*, 15 Dec. 1961.

⁵⁷⁸ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from *Wilts. Times*, 6 Mar. 1964. Obituary *The Times*, 5 Nov. 2008.

⁵⁷⁹ *Wilts. Times*, 10 November 1967; WSA, G19/126/1.

⁵⁸⁰ *Wilts. Times*, 4 May 1962; *Wilts. Times*, 10 May, 6 Sept. 1963; WSA, G19/126/1.

⁵⁸¹ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 9 July 1965; *Wilts. Times*, 10 November 1967.

⁵⁸² WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 27 May 1966.

⁵⁸³ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 10 Nov. 1967.

⁵⁸⁴ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 10 Nov. 1967.

⁵⁸⁵ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 8 Jan. 1965.

⁵⁸⁶ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings, e.g. *Wilts. Times*, 4 Nov. 1960, 9 Feb. 1962, 4 May 1962.

⁵⁸⁷ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Gaz. & Herald*, 25 Feb. 1971.

⁵⁸⁸ WSA, G19/127/1: cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 8 Aug. 1969, 10 Oct. 1969.

⁵⁸⁹ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 22–3.

church of St Mary, Chippenham, in 1369 used a seal showing these arms suspended from a palm tree.⁵⁹⁰ This represented civic authority as manorial and pertaining to the manors of Sheldon and Rowden. It was adopted as the common seal of the borough, either as continuing use or a revival of symbolism associated with a period before Hungerford control of Chippenham manor. By 1623 the two arms were encircled with the words *Sigillum communis burgi Chippenham*.⁵⁹¹ A new matrix for the seal was commissioned by bailiff William Gale (1675–6) at a cost of £1 4s.⁵⁹² The motto ‘Unity and Loyalty’ was added during the 19th century. The arms passed to the charter trustees in 1974 and to Chippenham town council in 1984; in 2019 it was used as part of the council’s logotype on its vehicles and website.

Borough arms

A list of the borough arms viewed by the bailiff and burgesses in 1636 included four corslets and four gorgetts (throat armour), four pikes, five muskets, five rests, five bandoleers, seven swords and an eighth sword bought by the constables, and nine ‘Headpeeces’.⁵⁹³ ‘Pikes, musketts and other armes’ were loaned to the borough by Samuel Elliott in 1660–1, who was subsequently responsible for the cleaning and restocking of the borough’s arsenal.⁵⁹⁴ Robert Elliott was responsible for maintaining the arms at the start of the 18th century.⁵⁹⁵ They were maintained as ‘the Militias Armes’ throughout the war of the Spanish succession, but are not mentioned in connection with later wars.⁵⁹⁶

Borough plate

In 1889 the borough plate was described as a silver mace given by Joseph Neeld in 1844; a gold chain and gold badge bearing the borough arms in coloured enamel, subscribed for by the corporation in 1874; a loving cup given by Sir Gabriel Goldney in 1885, and another loving cup given by Herbert Smith in 1887. A mid-20th century list stated that Goldney gave two cups, one in 1882 and another in 1883.⁵⁹⁷ In 2019 the borough plate was held at Chippenham museum. The mace was inscribed with the name of Harry Goldney, mayor in 1844, and with the information that it was the gift of Joseph Neeld. The mayoral badge was described as of silver gilt and enamel, with the inscription ‘Unity and Loyalty 1873’. A silver gilt loving cup depicting the borough arms was inscribed as given by Sir Gabriel Goldney MP to the corporation during the mayoralty of Alfred H Keary in 1882. Another loving cup with a cover was given in 1885 in the mayoralty of Edgar Neale, also by Goldney, described as ‘the last Member for the Borough... a direct lineal descendant of Henry Goldney Esquire MP, the first Member upon the Incorporation of the Borough under the Charter of Queen Mary in

⁵⁹⁰ *Recs. Chippenham*, 298–9.

⁵⁹¹ Chamberlain, *Chippenham*, 22.

⁵⁹² WSA, G19/1/18, f. 234.

⁵⁹³ WSA, G19/1/5, f. 1.

⁵⁹⁴ WSA, G19/1/18, f. 181.

⁵⁹⁵ WSA, G19/1/19, Richard Aland Power (1700–01).

⁵⁹⁶ WSA, G19/1/19, William Stephens (1703–04).

⁵⁹⁷ A. Platts, *Chippenham: a History* (1947), 91.

1553.’ The ‘loving cup’ from Herbert Smith of F.H. Goldney’s list is a coronation cup, with no handles, but gilt lined.⁵⁹⁸

Courts

The Chippenham town charter did not refer to a borough court. The absence of a defined jurisdiction for the bailiff and burgesses in this respect meant borough affairs could have been open to interference by lords of the manor, something which the borough sought to curtail. Probably for this reason a set of by-laws was recorded in the first minute book of the bailiffs and burgesses prohibiting inhabitants from seeking reformation or justice in matters relating to good order within the borough other than from the bailiff and burgesses without licence.⁵⁹⁹ Thus, many cases were brought before the bailiff and burgesses at the town hall.⁶⁰⁰ When borough justice required strengthening the bailiff and burgesses could, instead, order the offender to be indicted at the quarter sessions. The process was, no doubt, made easier between 1575–1587 when the quarter sessions met sporadically in Chippenham.⁶⁰¹ At such times the town hall was ‘strewn with herbs and green rushes’, perfumed with frankincense and decorated ‘with certain stuffe’ borrowed from Sir Gilbert Prynne ‘to hang about the Hall when the Justices sat’.⁶⁰²

The use of this extra-legal jurisdiction by the borough dwindled in importance over time. By 1835, Municipal Corporation Commissioners did not find the town in possession of a borough court. They noted that ‘all authority’ provided under borough ordinances ‘is now entirely gone.’⁶⁰³ Instead, a judicial structure was provided by a court of requests that had been established in 1765 to serve the town and its neighbours Calne and Corsham for the recovery of debts under 40s. The bailiff and burgesses served ex-officio at these proceedings,⁶⁰⁴ and it was noted to be ‘much used’ in the 1830s.⁶⁰⁵

Chippenham was also a petty sessional division formed under legislation in 1828.⁶⁰⁶ Sessions were held once a month, although it was noted in 1835 ‘there is usually one

⁵⁹⁸ Correspondence from Melissa Barnett, Head of Heritage and Museum Services, Chippenham Town Council, 8–9 July 2019.

⁵⁹⁹ *Recs. Chippenham*, 6–7.

⁶⁰⁰ WSA, G19/1/6–13.

⁶⁰¹ *VCH Wilts*, V, 80–110.

⁶⁰² Daniell, *Chippenham*, 66.

⁶⁰³ *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales* (London: Parl. Papers, 1835), 1247.

⁶⁰⁴ See 5 Geo. 3 c.9.

⁶⁰⁵ Note in 1847, under 9 and 10 Vic. c.95, all courts of request were abolished. *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales* (London: Parl. Papers, 1835), 1247–48. See also *VCH Wilts*, V, 170–94.

⁶⁰⁶ Division of Counties Act, 9 Geo.4, c. 43.

magistrate in the town every Monday.⁶⁰⁷ These were usually in the town hall and later new hall, although sometimes at the Angel inn during the 1830s.⁶⁰⁸

Under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 (5 & 6 Wm. 4 c.76), Chippenham was not listed among boroughs which were to have a Commission of the Peace. However, borough magistrates appear to have been appointed.⁶⁰⁹ Later the Chippenham mayor and ex-mayor were listed in directories as 'borough magistrates.' Proceedings by borough justices were arranged when required, and are likely to have been rare.⁶¹⁰ The most significant intervention was after a riot at the parliamentary election for the borough in July 1865 when 33 prisoners were brought before the borough magistrates.⁶¹¹ Later, there was some ambivalence on behalf of the town council to the jurisdiction of borough magistrates.⁶¹²

The town remained a petty sessional division into the 20th century and sessions continued to occur at the new hall or Neeld Hall, except when they were in use as a military hospital. In 1945, magistrates at the petty sessions complained of the bad acoustics, traffic noise and poor heating at the town hall, and sessions were moved to the county courtroom at 11 Market Place.⁶¹³ The Joint Standing Committee later actioned this and proceedings moved to the county court.⁶¹⁴ The court was closed in 1996.⁶¹⁵

Town Halls

The 15th-century town hall was described c.1560 as a 'yelde hall' (guildhall), the name by which it is now more commonly known.⁶¹⁶ The upper section was used as a court room, the lower as a lock-up. It was used as the council chamber until 1841, when it was moved into the 'New Hall'.⁶¹⁷ Thereafter, the Yelde Hall was used as an armoury by the Chippenham Rifle Corps.⁶¹⁸ In 1882, the corps were ordered to pay an annual rent of 5s. and insure the property

⁶⁰⁷ *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales* (London: Parl. Papers, 1835), 1248. Justices' minute books are available from 1836–61 (WSA, B11/151/1–2, 4–10), court registers 1896–1993 (WSA, B11/110/1–56, B11/110/52/1–3). Separate registers were made for juvenile and family court hearings.

⁶⁰⁸ *Return of Description of Building in which Justices of Petty Sessions Districts in England and Wales hold Usual Sittings* (London: Parl. Papers, 1845), 37; *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1889 edn.). Angel inn: *Wilts. Independent*, 4 Nov. 1839.

⁶⁰⁹ e.g. *Wilts. & Gos. Standard*, 19 May 1838, 3, *Wilts. Independent*, 7 June 1838, 3, *Devizes & Wilts. Gaz.* 5 Apr. 1888, 10, 13 Feb. 1890, 8; *Wilts. Times*, 12 Nov. 1932, 10.

⁶¹⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Wilts.* (1889, 1915 edns.).

⁶¹¹ *Wilts. Times*, 22 July 1865, 3.

⁶¹² WSA, G19/100/4, 11 Apr. 1901, 343; 2 July 1901, 362; *Salisbury & Winchester Jnl*, 2 July 1864, 9.

⁶¹³ *Wilts. Times*, 23 June 1945, 4.

⁶¹⁴ *Wilts. Times*, 22 September 1945, 4.

⁶¹⁵ *Hansard*, 7 March 2000, col.559W–660W.

⁶¹⁶ The spellings Guyldhall and Gyldehall were used in 1569. *Recs. Chippenham*, 302. Above, Chippenham Borough, the Saxon and medieval town.

⁶¹⁷ WSA, G19/100/1, 9 Nov. 1841, 138.

⁶¹⁸ Perhaps from 1846: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150923202915/http://www.chippenham.gov.uk/history-of-the-yelde-hall.9519.aspx>; but not cited in notes of minutes until 1860 when a chest was made available for their use: WSA, G19/100/2, 8 May 1860.

for £200.⁶¹⁹ Ten years later the corps also took over the ‘old lock-up’ as an ammunition store.⁶²⁰

From c.1870 part of the main hall was also used as a fire engine house.⁶²¹ In 1902 the council considered moving the fire station to a new building in the Market Yard but the move was rejected in favour of alterations being made to the Yelde Hall site.⁶²² The fire brigade was given full use of the hall in 1911 when the armoury was moved.⁶²³ After that its structure was subject to significant alterations to better accommodate the fire engines.⁶²⁴ However, in 1945, the service relinquished their use of the building when they moved to new accommodation on Dallas Road.⁶²⁵

There was a police lock-up at the Yelde Hall until at least 1884.⁶²⁶ The same year, the council considered its options to lease or sell the building, but after review unanimously decided to retain it. They also agreed the need to keep the structure water-tight, and repairs were completed the following year.⁶²⁷

Its use as a museum was discussed in 1909,⁶²⁸ but it was not finally opened as a museum until November 1963, following the demolition of adjoining property (which had formed part of the fire station) and renovations costing £3, 500.⁶²⁹ By February 1964 it had received 900 visitors.⁶³⁰ Visitor numbers climbed, and in 1970 it was receiving over 4,000 a year.⁶³¹

By 1999 the museum accommodation was no longer adequate, and the museum was moved to 9–10 Market Place, which had previously served as council offices. Following its renovation in the early 2000s, the Yelde Hall was used as a tourist information centre, and in 2012, it reopened as part of the Chippenham Museum and Heritage Service.⁶³²

‘New Hall’ was erected by Joseph Neeld, part of market developments and a planned (but not implemented) National school which were started by Neeld in the 1830s and extended in 1850.⁶³³ The hall was designed by James Thomson (1833 & 1848/50), whose long

⁶¹⁹ WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Oct. 1882. In 1881, the roof had been repaired. WSA, G19/100/3, 9 Nov. 1881.

⁶²⁰ WSA, G19/100/4, 9 Feb. 1892, 113.

⁶²¹ For its use as a fire engine house from c.1870:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150923202915/http://www.chippenham.gov.uk/history-of-the-yelde-hall.9519.aspx>; but not cited in notes of minutes until 1895: WSA, G19/100/4, 14 May 1895, 190.

⁶²² WSA, G19/103/1, 2 Dec. 1902, 223, 22 Dec. 1902, 228.

⁶²³ WSA, G19/103/3, 10 Jan. 1911, 8.

⁶²⁴ Below, Public Services and utilities, fire service.

⁶²⁵ Below, Public Services and utilities, fire service.

⁶²⁶ WSA, G19/100/3, 19 Feb. 1884, 18 June 1884.

⁶²⁷ WSA, G19/100/3, 19 Feb. 1884, 13 May 1884, 18 June 1884, 10 Feb. 1885.

⁶²⁸ G19/100/5, 9 Nov. 1909, 114, 7 Dec. 1909.

⁶²⁹ WSA, G19/126/1. *Wilts. Times*, 8 Jan. 1955, 5 May 1956, 7 July 1956, 5 May 1961, *Wilts. Times*, 7 June 1963, 8 Nov. 1963.

⁶³⁰ WSA, G19/126/1. Press cutting from the *Wilts. Times*, 8 Nov. 1964, 7 Feb. 1964.

⁶³¹ WSA, G19/127/1. Press cuttings from the *Wilts. Times*, 20 Mar. 1970.

⁶³² <https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/9617637.historic-chippenham-hall-to-re-open/> [accessed 31 January 2021].

⁶³³ Below, Chippenham, economic hist., markets and fairs.