

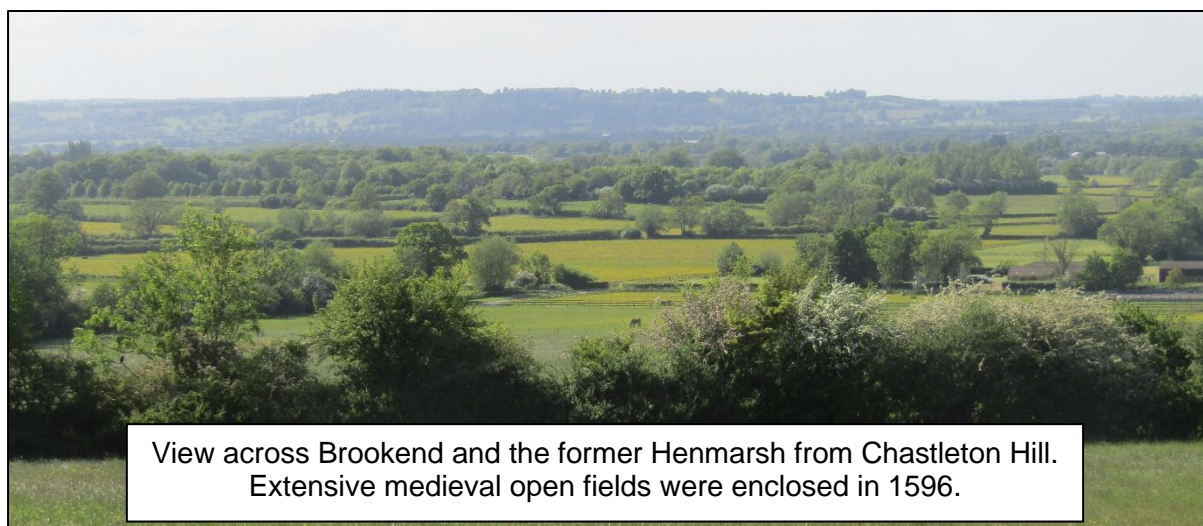


VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Chastleton

Economic History

Chastleton has remained an agricultural parish, its economy long dominated by the mixed sheep-and-corn husbandry, dairying, and cattle-rearing typical of the Cotswolds. Enclosure came early (in 1596), following a period during which Chastleton's and (more especially) Brookend's open fields were increasingly converted to sheep pasture. Thereafter most farms continued to be held from the parish's large estates, of which Chastleton manor covered more than half the parish from c.1790 until 1936. Few inhabitants practised crafts or trades save for long-lived blacksmithing, carpentry, and stonemasonry, while a small village shop traded for almost a century until 1970. At least one early watermill had disappeared by the end of the Middle Ages.



View across Brookend and the former Henmarsh from Chastleton Hill.
Extensive medieval open fields were enclosed in 1596.

The Agricultural Landscape

The parish's early agricultural landscape was varied, with a mix of arable fields, wet and dry pastures, streamside meadows, and small woods. Chastleton had two open fields c.1200,¹ and Brookend had its own separate fields probably by 1279, which from the 14th century were regulated by its own manor court.² Surviving ridge and furrow indicates extensive

¹ *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 326.

² *Rot. Hund.* II, 729; *Eynsham Cart.* II, p. xxv; TNA, SC 2/197/14; C. Dyer, 'Villages in crisis: social dislocation and desertion, 1370–1520', in C. Dyer and R. Jones (eds), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (2010), 38.

medieval arable on both manors, much of it (especially in Brookend) having been reclaimed from marsh and heath probably in the 12th century. As the soil was consequently often damp and poor, however, much of it was laid to grass after the Black Death,³ and in 1596 all the remaining open fields in both Chastleton and Brookend were enclosed by private agreement. In 1843 arable closes still covered only 540 a. (a third of the parish's farmland), the rest (1,155 a.) remaining under grass.⁴

Common meadows and pastures (also enclosed in 1596) formerly existed on both manors, the meadows including one named Blakemor c.1180, when it was part common and part demesne.⁵ Land described as waste (*uasta*) in 1086 and as heath (*brueria*) c.1153 lay chiefly in Brookend, having originally formed part of the much larger tract of marsh and heath known as Henmarsh.⁶ A part near the Four Shire Stone formed a common pasture called Brookend Heath until 1596, when 138 a. of it was allocated to the lord of Brookend and 19 a. (known later as Bades Heath) to the lord of Chastleton.⁷ Chastleton's own principal pre-enclosure common was Chastleton Hill, a 'wild, gorse-grown down' adjoining Adlestrop Hill in Gloucestershire, where intercommoning was agreed for the tenants of Chastleton and Adlestrop manors in the late 12th century.⁸ Additional commons lay at Stuphill or Whitehill near the boundary with Evenlode (now Glos.), where small furze closes or leys were created at enclosure in lieu of the traditional right to cut furze there.⁹ Early private closes included a croft formerly held by the miller c.1180, one held freely from Chastleton manor in 1279, and one at Brookend allocated to the rector in 1459 as part of his glebe.¹⁰ Several other small closes (some of them called 'splatts', a dialect word for small plots of land) existed in 1596, along with 17 tofts, 20 gardens, and 24 orchards.¹¹

A 'washpool' mentioned c.1200 was presumably a sheepwash,¹² and fishponds were granted to Osney abbey by the lord of Chastleton in 1276.¹³ A medieval rabbit warren,

³ HER, PRN 28433, 28440–2, 29335; Dyer, 'Villages in crisis', 38–9; T. Lloyd, 'Some documentary sidelights on the deserted Oxfordshire village of Brookend', *Oxoniensia* 29/30 (1964/5), 117, 122, 126–7; below (medieval).

⁴ Below (1500–1800); OHC, tithe award.

⁵ *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 325. For enclosure, below (1500–1800).

⁶ DB, ff. 156v.–157; *Eynsham Cart.* I, pp. 74–5; below (medieval). For Henmarsh, above, landscape etc. (landscape).

⁷ OHC, E24/1/1D/8. For Bades Heath, *ibid.* tithe award and map; *Sale Cat., Chastleton Estate* (1936): copy in *ibid.* E24/1/1D/78.

⁸ OHC, E24/1/1D/8; Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. d 244, p. 755 (description); BL, Cotton MS Vespasian B XXIV, f. 48v.

⁹ OHC, E24/1/1D/8; E24/1/3D/1–2; E163/D/1; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 90.

¹⁰ *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 325, 330–2; *Rot. Hund.* II, 729; below (milling); relig. hist. (endowment).

¹¹ OHC, E24/1/1D/8. For 'splatts', cf. *PN Oxon.* I, 342; P. Cavill, *A New Dictionary of English Field-Names* (2018), 397.

¹² *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 326 ('wassepole'); cf. Cavill, *New Dict.*, 452.

¹³ *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 326. For an earthwork interpreted as a medieval fishpond, but more likely to represent a millpond, below (milling).

recalled in the name Coneygree, occupied steep ground south-west of the village.¹⁴ Woodland apparently covered only 14 a. in 1596, most of it in a wood called the Grove,¹⁵ but new coppices and plantations were established in the 17th and 18th centuries,¹⁶ and by 1819 the Chastleton manor estate was ‘finely stocked with ancient timber’.¹⁷ In 1843 and 1910 there were just over 30 a. of woods, little changed in 2024.¹⁸

Medieval Farming

In 1086 land in Chastleton was run as six or seven separate estates. Three (totalling just over three hides) were described as ‘waste’ (i.e. marsh or heath), although one of them (belonging to Urse d’Abetot) supported a tenant (*villanus*) and was worth 6s. a year, despite not paying geld. The largest estate (held by Ælfric and rated at 5¾ hides) covered six ploughlands, and was fully stocked, with four slaves (*servi*) working the two demesne ploughteams, and six villeins and one bordar sharing the remaining four. Ralph’s much smaller estate (reckoned at two ploughlands) was under-stocked, with only a single demesne ploughteam worked by two bordars and a slave, whilst on Ilbert de Lacy’s estate (rated at just under a hide) a villein and a bordar worked a single demesne ploughteam on just half a ploughland. Demesne meadows on those three estates covered 26 a., 10 a., and 7 a. respectively, while their annual values were £3, £1, and 10s., Ælfric’s having fallen from £4 in 1066. No woodland was mentioned.¹⁹

Two out of four hides given to Eynsham abbey c.1153 were reportedly heath,²⁰ but had been converted to farmland by 1279 when the abbey’s Brookend estate comprised 16 tenanted yardlands. Of those, 3½ were divided between two freeholders whose cash rents totalled 14s. 8d., while the rest were held by 12 villein yardlanders and one half-yardlander, each of whom owed rent, tallage, and labour services including ploughing, mowing, carting, and harvest works. The estate’s annual value was £5 8s. 10¾d. Chastleton manor’s eight yardlanders (one of whom served as reeve) undertook similar labour services, each also paying tallage and a traditional annual render of three hens, a cock, and a loaf of bread. Five freeholders (occupying five yardlands and a croft between them) owed cash rents or pepper totalling 20s. 8d., whilst the two-ploughland demesne was worth £5 6s. 8d. a year, out of an

¹⁴ OHC, E24/1/1D/8 (‘Conyngere’); E24/1/3D/1–2 (‘Conygree’); *ibid.* tithe award and map (‘Coneygree’); Cavill, *New Dict.* 88.

¹⁵ OHC, E24/1/1D/8.

¹⁶ Northants. Archives, C 2408; OHC, E24/1/F2/12.

¹⁷ Brewer, *Oxon.* 505.

¹⁸ OHC, tithe map and award; *ibid.* DV/X/37. Cf. OS Maps 6", Oxon. XIII (1900 edn); 1:25000, sheet 45 (2005 edn).

¹⁹ DB, ff. 156v.–157v., 161; above, landownership (Chastleton).

²⁰ *Eynsham Cart.* I, pp. 74–5.

annual yield of £11 13s. 10*d.* from the manor as a whole. Henry of Fretherne occupied his separate one-hide (four-yardland) freehold directly, with no tenants, while Osney abbey's three-yardland estate, covering perhaps 135 a., was run directly by the abbey, the abbot paying 13s. 1*d.* in tax (the highest amount after the lord of Chastleton) in 1316.²¹

Chastleton's and Brookend's open fields probably both followed a two-course rotation,²² although Chastleton's medieval yardlands (at 45 a.) were larger than Brookend's (at 32 a.).²³ Annual accounts for Osney abbey's three-yardland farm (covering the period 1311–56) suggest a balance of arable and pastoral farming before the Black Death, with livestock typically comprising a few cattle (mainly for traction), and a small flock of sheep overseen by a shepherd. Arable crops were wheat, rye, oats, barley (in dredge only), and peas, with some of the grain being allocated to the vicar and to the abbey's retained workers (or *famuli*), who included two ploughmen and two tithe-collectors. Payments were usually also made for haymaking, and a new sheepcot was built in 1345–6. Nevertheless, the accounts show a steady decline in the farm's profitability, partly reflecting the high cost of hired labour, and outgoings of (usually) £1 13s. 8*d.* to the vicar and 4s. to the abbey's infirmarer. Resulting losses were partly offset by tithe receipts, which included between 45 and 97 fleeces a year,²⁴ and in 1341 one Chastleton man and another from Brookend were named among local suppliers of wool to the king's commissioners.²⁵

In the years immediately following the 1349 plague most of Osney abbey's arable in Chastleton was left uncultivated, and in 1355–6 the quantity of seed sown was still less than half that noted in 1347–8, suggesting only slow recovery. One response was to convert vacant arable to pasture, and in 1354 the abbey brought in more than 300 sheep from its surrounding Cotswold estates.²⁶ Similar challenges faced Eynsham abbey's tenants at Brookend,²⁷ where a rental of 1363 shows some small-scale accumulation of (presumably vacant) holdings, although 11 out of the 14 tenants still held a yardland or less, and the manor's annual value had risen a little since 1279 to £6 11s. 2*d.*²⁸ By the 1380s, however, when wool from the manor was sold at St James's fair in Chipping Campden (Glos.),²⁹ more widespread depopulation was evident, with several tenants having fled the manor and

²¹ *Rot. Hund.* II, 729; above, landownership; TNA, E 179/161/8 [1316 tax]; below.

²² Lloyd, 'Brookend', 119–20; Dyer, 'Villages in crisis', 38; cf. OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40.

²³ *Oseney Cart.* IV, p. 326; *Eynsham Cart.* II, p. 63.

²⁴ Bodl. MSS dd Ch. Ch. c 26, OR 2, 4–14, 19; D. Postles, *Oseney Abbey Studies* (2008), 33–77, misdating the 1311–12 account (OR 2) and the 1312–13 account (OR 5) to 1277–8 and 1278–9 respectively; Lloyd, 'Brookend', 118–22.

²⁵ *Cal. Close* 1341–3, 334.

²⁶ Bodl. MSS dd Ch. Ch. c 26, OR 12–14, 19; Lloyd, 'Brookend', 121–2.

²⁷ *Eynsham Cart.* II, pp. xxvi–ix; Lloyd, 'Brookend'; Dyer, 'Villages in crisis', 38–40.

²⁸ *Eynsham Cart.* II, pp. xxv–vi, 62–4.

²⁹ BL, Harl. Roll A43.

numerous buildings in disrepair.³⁰ By 1443 only three permanent tenants (holding 8½ yardlands between them) remained at Brookend, the other 7½ yardlands being unlet and in the lord's hands.³¹ The parish's wider poverty is suggested by Osney abbey's assertion in 1459 that falling population, the paucity and non-cultivation of the soil, and the high cost of labour and royal taxes had drastically reduced its tithe income, which resulted that year in the reunification of the vicarage with the rectory.³²

In 1469 Brookend manor comprised just four large holdings of between two and 8½ yardlands, with a total rental of £5 5s. 11d. The largest was occupied by John Barton,³³ whose son Peter (d. 1505) grazed a flock of c.450 sheep presumably on large sections of the former open fields which had been converted to pasture. Barton sold his wool to merchants such as John Heritage of Moreton-in-Marsh (Glos.), whose father-in-law Richard Palmer (of the same place) repeatedly invaded Brookend's commons with his sheep, keeping 240 there illegally in 1490. Another of Heritage's wool suppliers in 1501–2 was Thomas Fletcher,³⁴ who had presumably succeeded John Fletcher (fl. 1489) as the Chastleton demesne farmer.³⁵ By 1509 Thomas also held Osney abbey's three yardlands for 30s. a year,³⁶ and in 1513 he took on an additional three yardlands on the manor estate, previously let to another tenant.³⁷ Chastleton manor as a whole generated income of £16 16s. 4d. in 1480–1.³⁸

Farms and Farming 1500–1800

By 1523 Fletcher had been succeeded as Chastleton's demesne farmer by Thomas Skey, who in 1542 held the manor house with nine yardlands (probably over 400 a.) for £9 6s. 8d. annual rent. Five other manorial tenants occupied farms of between a half and four yardlands (c.23–180 a.), covering 13½ yardlands in all. The manor's total rental income (including from the demesne) was £17 3s., which was shared equally between the owners of its two halves, although in the 1550s Katherine Throckmorton and her husband Anthony (d. 1587) took the entire demesne back in hand, and in 1589 Katherine allegedly withheld

³⁰ TNA, SC 2/197/14; BL, Harl. Roll B1.

³¹ BL, Harl. Roll B11.

³² *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 330–2; below, relig. hist. (endowment).

³³ BL, Harl. Roll B12.

³⁴ TNA, PROB 11/14/614; BL, Harl. Roll B13; C. Dyer, *A Country Merchant, 1495–1520: Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages* (2012), 57, 157–9, 176–7.

³⁵ TNA, E 40/14711; BL, Harl. Roll B13; Dyer, 'Villages in crisis', 39; Dyer, *Country Merchant*, 159.

³⁶ *Oseney Cart.* VI, pp. 231, 261–2; above, landownership (other estates); cf. *Valor Eccl.* II, 218.

³⁷ OHC, E24/1/1D/2.

³⁸ TNA, SC 6/1117/15.

Robert Whitney's share of the rents.³⁹ The parish's other main estates were less profitable, rents from Eynsham abbey's Brookend manor totalling only £6 6s. 8*d.* in 1535, while Osney abbey's farm was still let for 30s. a year.⁴⁰

Following the Dissolution both monastic estates passed into private hands, and in 1596 an agreement to enclose the parish's remaining open fields and commons was reached between their new owners Edmund Ansley and George Greenwood and the lord of Chastleton Robert Catesby, with new enclosures distributed amongst them in respect of Chastleton manor's 22½ yardlands, Brookend manor's 16, and Greenwood's three. The estates then had respectively six, four, and three tenants, and Catesby and Ansley both exploited their own demesnes.⁴¹ Brookend manor (worth only £5 14s. a year in 1618)⁴² was broken up between 1634 and 1642, most of its tenant farms passing to an enlarged Greenwood estate,⁴³ while Chastleton's lord Arthur Jones retained five tenant farms in 1667, when he also kept seven fields and a wood in hand. His largest tenant holding was the future Hill farm, leased to the Green family.⁴⁴

Sheep-and-corn husbandry continued (alongside dairying) throughout the period. Wills typically mentioned wheat, barley, beans, peas, and hay, along with livestock including sheep, cattle, and pigs, and several farmers owned malting and dairying equipment.⁴⁵ Ewes with lambs sold for 3s. 4*d.* each in the 1540s, when the rector received ½*d.* as tithe from each lamb sold before Holyrood day (3 May), while markets included Moreton-in-Marsh (Glos.), where Richard Durham (d. 1556) took his peas for sale.⁴⁶ Tithe apples, corn, eggs, hemp, lambs, milk, and wool were all paid in kind in 1664, when milk tithes were taken every tenth day between 2 May and 1 August.⁴⁷ On Chastleton manor the Joneses clearly invested in their demesne farm: in 1633 Chastleton House had a dairy, milk-house, meal-house, brewhouse, and wool-house (equipped with scales for weighing fleeces),⁴⁸ while agricultural produce left by John Jones on his death in 1738 included 8 qrs of malt worth £10, 1,500 cheeses worth £12, and wheat, oats, and barley valued at more than £350, stored in his 'hill barn'.⁴⁹ John's brother and heir Henry (d. 1761) added lime to the soil to improve it for

³⁹ Ibid. E 179/161/170; OHC, E24/1/1D/37–8; E24/1/F1/2; *Valor Eccl.* IV, 164; above, landownership (Chastleton); below, social hist. (1500–1800).

⁴⁰ *Valor Eccl.* II, 208, 218.

⁴¹ OHC, E24/1/1D/8; E24/1/1D/37–8; above, landownership.

⁴² GA, D1447/1/263a; cf. OHC, E24/1/2D/10.

⁴³ OHC, E24/1/3D/5; above, landownership (Brookend; other estates).

⁴⁴ OHC, E24/1/1D/50–1 and 55–6.

⁴⁵ Ibid. and TNA, Chastleton wills and inventories (transcribed by Salford Probate Group).

⁴⁶ *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1542–50*, p. 1; 1581–6, pp. 38–9; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 181.125.

⁴⁷ Northants. Archives, C 2420; C 2426.

⁴⁸ OHC, E24/1/W/2; transcript in J. Marsden, 'The Chastleton inventory of 1633', *Furniture Hist.* 36 (2000), 37–42.

⁴⁹ OHC, E24/1/F2/3.

wheat, barley, and peas,⁵⁰ while sainfoin and ryegrass were introduced in the parish before 1700.⁵¹ Some malting was apparently on a commercial scale. In 1635 the rector had a malthouse adjoining his hemp plot,⁵² and shortly before 1742 a six-bay malthouse in Chastleton village was extended by two bays,⁵³ while the maltster John Bishop was mentioned in 1782.⁵⁴



17th-century farmhouses: Home Farm (left) and Hill Farm (right).

For much of the 18th century most farmers still rented from the manor or from the Greenwood estate, and in 1737 Edward Jeffreys leased Brookend's manor house and at least 140 a. to the yeoman Richard Davis for 12 years at £120 annual rent, at or above the regional average per acre.⁵⁵ In 1773 the Greenwoods' successor Thomas Fothergill had seven tenants each holding between 25 and 129 a.,⁵⁶ while the lord of Chastleton John Jones, who acquired several of Fothergill's holdings, had seven leasehold farms c.1800, some extending into Evenlode (then Worcs.), and totalling 1,034 a. in all. The largest (the 414-a. Hill farm) was occupied by William Davis (d. 1811), a 'celebrated' breeder of longhorn cattle,⁵⁷ whose family had been tenants there since 1730.⁵⁸ Jones had earlier kept 141 a. in hand, and in 1797 made £82 from the sale of coppiced wood.⁵⁹ Richard Davis of Kitebrook (or a namesake) held Lord Camden's 169-a. Upper Brookend farm for £150 annual rent in

⁵⁰ Ibid. E24/1/F5/1. For Henry's financial difficulties and tenant arrears, below, social hist. (1500–1800).

⁵¹ OHC, E24/1/1D/55–6; E24/1/6D/1.

⁵² Ibid. MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 40, f. 90.

⁵³ Ibid. E24/1/6D/10.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Acc. 5428, Box 1/36, no. 9.

⁵⁵ Kent Archives, U840/T217; cf. R.C. Allen, 'The price of freehold land and the interest rate in the 17th and 18th centuries', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. 41.1 (1988), 43.

⁵⁶ GA, D610/Z1; above, landownership.

⁵⁷ OHC, E24/1/E/12; *Oxf. Jnl*, 31 Aug. 1811; 21 Mar. 1812.

⁵⁸ OHC, E24/1/6D/2; cf. *ibid.* E24/1/E/1; *ibid.* Acc. 5428, box 7/16; Northants. Archives, C 2311; *Oxf. Jnl Syn.*, 8 July 1789.

⁵⁹ Northants. Archives, C 2336; OHC, E24/1/E/9–10.

1790,⁶⁰ although by then there were also some notable freehold farms, the Harbidges and Davises each working c.50 a. in their own ownership.⁶¹ Two former Fothergill farms totalling 197 a. (known as Banwell's and Slatter's after previous tenants) were re-divided the same year.⁶²

Farms and Farming Since 1800

The lord John Jones and his brother Arthur were well known for their cheeses c.1810, which were sold in quantity at local markets and fairs.⁶³ Their chief tenants were still the Davises of Hill Farm, of whom John (d. 1839) had 700 sheep and 80 longhorn cattle in 1820.⁶⁴ J.H. Whitmore Jones, who inherited the manor in 1828, took a keen interest in farming and estate management, even though his tenants' rents (totalling £1,732 in 1848) were often in arrears. He too kept sheep and longhorn cattle, grew barley, wheat, beans, potatoes, and swedes, made beer and cider,⁶⁵ and held regular timber sales, of which one in 1844 generated £1,605 and attracted merchants from London and Liverpool.⁶⁶ Some 179 a. (including 27 a. of woods and coppices) were kept in hand in 1843, when his principal tenanted farms were Hill (484 a.), Home (177 a.), and Grove (145 a.). Large farms outside the manor estate were Upper Brookend (202 a.) and Middle Brookend (163 a.), the first of which was owned and occupied by William Harbidge. His livestock, auctioned after his death in 1843, comprised 250 sheep and 60 longhorn cattle including 27 dairy cows.⁶⁷

Whitmore Jones (d. 1853) was evidently popular with his farm tenants, who in 1850 voluntarily ploughed, harrowed, and sowed land on Hill farm which had been left uncultivated since the Davises gave up the tenancy the previous year.⁶⁸ Their successors (with 384 a.) were the Byes, who in 1851 employed seven labourers, the other eight farmers in the parish (with 66–200 a.) each employing between seven and two. Little had changed by 1861, when there was also a resident corn dealer and a pig dealer,⁶⁹ although emergent agricultural trade unionism probably lay behind labourers on two Chastleton farms refusing to work in

⁶⁰ OHC, E24/1/C/7; cf. Northants. Archives, C 2311.

⁶¹ GA, D4084/Box28/4; OHC, QSD/L/70; Northants. Archives, C 2408.

⁶² Northants. Archives, C 2343; above, landownership (other estates). For Sam. Banwell and Jos. Slatter as Fothergill tenants in 1773, GA, D610/Z1.

⁶³ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. d 244, p. 737; OHC, E24/1/F2/8.

⁶⁴ *Oxf. Jnl*, 5 Aug. 1820; 13 July 1839. For John, below (trades).

⁶⁵ N. Cooper et al., *Chastleton House* (National Trust guidebook, 2001), 56; I. Hilton (ed.), *The Chastleton Diaries: Change and Continuity in the Nineteenth Century* (2011), 32, 58, 59, 63; OHC, E24/1/F2/10; *ibid.* Acc. 5428, Box 52/19; *Oxf. Jnl*, 4 May 1844; 12 June 1847.

⁶⁶ *Oxf. Jnl*, 3 Dec. 1836; 13 Apr. 1844; 16 Jan. 1847.

⁶⁷ OHC, tithe award and map; *Oxf. Jnl*, 10 Feb. 1844; above, landownership (Brookend).

⁶⁸ *Oxf. Jnl*, 8 Sept. 1849; 13 Apr. 1850; M. Whitmore Jones, *History & Description of Chastleton House* (1893), 26–7; Hilton (ed.), *Chastleton Diaries*, 59; below, social hist.

⁶⁹ TNA, HO 107/1732; *ibid.* RG 9/912.

1872.⁷⁰ In the 1870s William Valentine Beman (d. 1898) of Home Farm was a noted cheesemaker,⁷¹ and in 1880 some 517 sheep belonging to William Matthews of Hill Farm were offered for sale at Moreton-in-Marsh fair.⁷² From the 1880s onwards most farms saw the usual shift towards pastoralism as agricultural depression took hold, with a modest increase in permanent grassland, and numbers of cattle increasing by 44 per cent from 282 (including 121 in milk) in 1870 to 408 (with 118 in milk) in 1920. Sheep numbers, by contrast, fell from 1,093 to 203, reflecting falling wool prices, while the acreage under cereals (chiefly wheat, barley, and oats) shrank by a quarter.⁷³

Eight farms were still held of the manor in 1910, the only other significant holdings being Upper Brookend (202 a.), Middle Brookend (125 a.), Kitebrook End (91 a.), and Lower Brookend (73 a.). That last was described as a 'dairy and sporting farm' in 1920, when much of its 129 a. lay in Evenlode.⁷⁴ In 1933 the manor estate itself covered 1,279 a. in Chastleton and Evenlode, producing rents totalling £1,329 13s.; its main tenant farms were Hill (379 a.), Harcombe (223 a.), Home (170 a., with outbuildings at Hogg's Barn), Grove (157 a.), Heath (141 a.), Durham's (63 a.), and Splatts (63 a.), while some 26 a. of woods remained in hand. Most of the farms were sold in 1936,⁷⁵ leaving just Grenemore (formerly part of Home farm) and the 83-a. Splatts farm, which the estate retained until 1959 and 1967 respectively.⁷⁶ During the Second World War the parish's eight principal farms employed more than 30 workers between them, and despite wartime pressures still combined arable with livestock, most farmers maintaining mixed dairy and beef herds, and three keeping more than 100 sheep. Wheat, barley, and oats remained the main crops, with smaller acreages of turnips and mangolds for fodder.⁷⁷

From the 1950s Capt. Peter Aizlewood kept pedigree Jersey cattle on Brookend House farm,⁷⁸ and in 1970 (when four of the parish's 11 agricultural holdings were dairy farms) more than two thirds of the farmland was under grass.⁷⁹ A herd of 54 Hereford cattle was sold from Harcombe farm in 1977, and 143 Friesian dairy cattle from Grove farm in

⁷⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 17 Apr. 1872; *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 June 1872; cf. P. Horn (ed.), *Agric. Trade Unionism in Oxon. 1872–81* (ORS 48, 1974). For a later effort to establish a local union branch, below, social hist. (since 1800).

⁷¹ *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 Nov. 1873; 6 Sept. 1879; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 4 Nov. 1874; 31 Aug. 1898.

⁷² *Oxf. Jnl*, 5 June 1880.

⁷³ TNA, MAF 68/255; MAF 68/2985.

⁷⁴ OHC, DV/X/37; *Sale Cat.*, *Lower Brookend Farm* (1920): copy in GA, D2299/2168.

⁷⁵ OHC, Acc. 5576, Box 8/16; *Sale Cat.*, *Chastleton Estate* (1936): copy in ibid. E24/1/1D/78; *The Times*, 9 Oct. 1936.

⁷⁶ WODC online planning docs, 19/02916/HHD (Grenemore); *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12 May 1967.

⁷⁷ TNA, MAF 32/910/81.

⁷⁸ *Evesham Standard*, 19 Dec. 1958; *Tewkesbury Reg.*, 24 July 1964.

⁷⁹ TNA, MAF 68/5189.

1981.⁸⁰ Five farms in 1970 were worked part-time, although in 1981 half of those inhabitants in employment still worked in agriculture, falling to a third in 1991.⁸¹ Farming patterns shifted between 1970 and 1988, numbers of cattle dropping by more than a third from 828 (including 161 in milk) to 499 (102 in milk), while sheep numbers rose more than sixfold from 313 to 1,895. Wheat remained the dominant arable crop, followed by oilseed rape and barley.⁸² Some farmers diversified, Grove farm housing racehorses from the 1990s,⁸³ and Durham's farm a riding school for 18 years until 2021, when it turned to commercial haymaking.⁸⁴ By 2024, when Splatts and Hill remained traditional mixed farms, c.160 a. at Middle Brookend was worked organically under a rotation of clover and arable crops.⁸⁵

Non-Agricultural Activities

Trades, Crafts, and Retail Medieval occupational bynames included smith and bowler (a maker or seller of bowls, dishes, or cups),⁸⁶ and a blacksmith repaired ploughs and carts on Osney abbey's estate in the 1330s–40s.⁸⁷ Later blacksmiths included Thomas Smith (mentioned in 1559) and successive members of the Green family, of whom William (d. 1670) left his anvils, bellows, grindstones, iron, and tools to his kinsman William Breakspear.⁸⁸ Another blacksmith's shop existed in 1817.⁸⁹

A carpenter was mentioned in 1599, and in 1740 the lord let a 'new erected' workshop to the wheelwright John Bartlett.⁹⁰ That was probably the long-running carpenter's-cum-wheelwright's shop in Chastleton village (opposite Grenemore) which was run by the Bartletts until 1879, when William Bartlett, who had a portable steam sawmill which he rented out, went bankrupt,⁹¹ and by the 1880s–90s it had been refitted as a smithy.⁹² Members of the Newman family were masons in the 1760s–80s (one of them building a

⁸⁰ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 19 Aug. 1977; *Western Daily Press*, 14 Feb. 1981.

⁸¹ TNA, MAF 68/5189; *Census*, 1981–91.

⁸² TNA, MAF 68/5189; MAF 68/6123.

⁸³ WODC online planning docs, W93/0208, 23/01788/FUL; www.gallagherracing.com (accessed Aug. 2023).

⁸⁴ WODC online planning docs, 23/00372/PDET28; www.cotswoldriding.com (accessed Aug. 2023).

⁸⁵ Local info. (2023–4).

⁸⁶ *Rot. Hund.* II, 729 (*faber*, *le bolur*); TNA, E 179/161/8 (*le bolour*); P. Hanks, R. Coates, and P. McClure (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (2016), s.v. Bowler.

⁸⁷ Bodl. MSS dd Ch. Ch. c 26, OR 4–9; D. Postles, *Osney Abbey Studies* (2008), 51.

⁸⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1558–60, 210; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 25/2/31; TNA, PROB 11/131/152; PROB 11/334/231.

⁸⁹ OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 1/50; possibly associated with a long-running carpentry and wheelwright's shop (below).

⁹⁰ OHC, E24/1/5D/1; E24/1/6D/8.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* tithe map; TNA, HO 107/878; *ibid.* RG 10/1458; *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1847–77 edns); *Bicester Herald*, 28 Nov. 1879; GA, D4176/1 (sawmill).

⁹² OS Maps OS Maps 1:2500, Oxon. XIII.8 (1885–1900 edns); still called Old Forge in 2023 (local info.).

cottage on waste by the ‘town pool’ c.1765),⁹³ and quarrying is documented from 1597, when George Greenwood allowed the lord Robert Catesby’s servants to cross his land with carts to access a quarry at Harcombe on the Adlestrop boundary.⁹⁴ A butcher was mentioned in 1628, and malting in the 17th and 18th centuries,⁹⁵ although the parish lacked its own pub or alehouse.⁹⁶ A ‘shop’ containing unspecified ‘instruments’ in 1557 was probably a craft workshop.⁹⁷



The village shop c.1900. The sign above the left-hand window reads ‘J. Gardner, grocer’. The post office opened in the right-hand cottage (Old Post Office) in 1908. Source, OHC, POX0190109.

Four families worked in trades in 1811, rising to seven in 1831, when John Davis (d. 1839) of Hill Farm was both a farmer and an auctioneer.⁹⁸ By 1841 there was also a tailor and a shoemaker,⁹⁹ and in 1870 Mary Whitmore Jones was credited with promoting point lacemaking as a cottage industry for women in the district.¹⁰⁰ The Newmans remained as stonemasons and builders into the early 20th century, perhaps working the Chastleton Hill quarry, from which building stone was advertised in 1878.¹⁰¹ A grocer’s shop opened c.1880 was long run by Jesse Gardner (d. 1907), followed after 1915 by the Skelchers,¹⁰² who had already started a post office next door (in Old Post Office) in 1908. The post office shop closed in 1970, after which Chastleton had no shops or trades.¹⁰³

⁹³ OHC, E24/1/6D/16–18; *ibid.* Acc. 5428, Box 1/36, no. 9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* E24/1/2D/7–8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* E24/1/4D/4–5; above (1500–1800).

⁹⁶ M.S. Gretton (ed.), *Oxon. Justices of the Peace in the 17th Century* (ORS 16, 1974), 50; below, social hist.

⁹⁷ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 182.162 (Thos Wilkes).

⁹⁸ *Census*, 1811–31; *Oxf. Jnl*, 13 July 1839.

⁹⁹ TNA, HO 107/878; cf. HO 107/1732; *Gardner’s Dir. Oxon.* (1852).

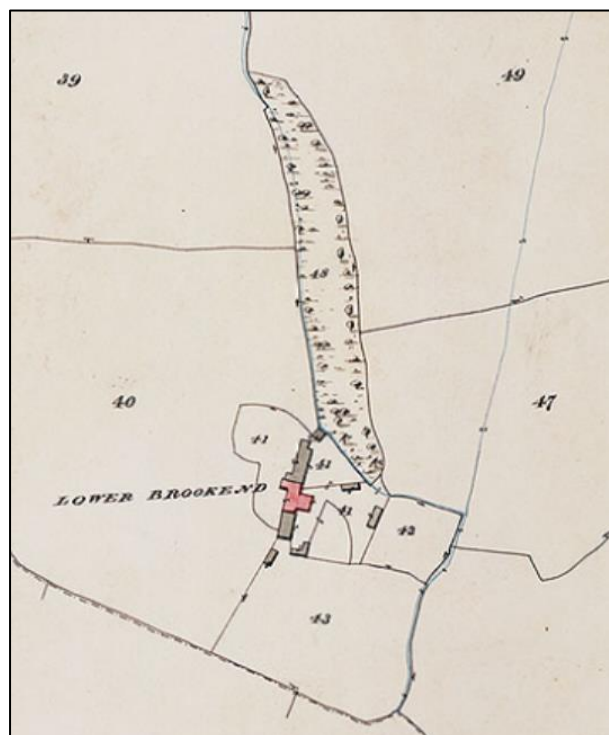
¹⁰⁰ *Oxf. Jnl*, 16 July 1870.

¹⁰¹ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1847–77 edns); *Kelly’s Dir. Oxon.* (1883–1931 edns); OHC, DV/X/37; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 6 Mar. 1878.

¹⁰² TNA, RG 11/1521; *Kelly’s Dir. Oxon.* (1887–1939 edns); OHC, par. reg. transcript, burial 1907; photo (c.1900) in *ibid.* POX0190109.

¹⁰³ *Kelly’s Dir. Oxon.* (1911–39 edns); *Birmingham Daily Post*, 15 Aug. 1970; above, landscape etc. (communications).

Milling Chastleton manor had a mill by c.1200 and probably by c.1180, when the lord granted a croft formerly held by the miller.¹⁰⁴ That or a successor continued in 1356,¹⁰⁵ and was possibly the 'old mill' mentioned in 1489, when Chastleton's demesne farmer John Fletcher was accused of wrongfully diverting its watercourse.¹⁰⁶ That probably stood on or near the site of the later Lower Brookend Farm, where traces of its leat survive, and its millpond is represented by the earthworks of a long narrow pond on the stream close to the Evenlode boundary, adjoining a field known as Mill Piece in 1596.¹⁰⁷



Lower Brookend Farm (demolished c.1970) stood on or near the site of a medieval watermill, the millpond of which survives as earthworks and is here mapped (in 1842) as a long, thin wood (no. 48). Water was supplied by a leat branching off the stream and rejoining it below the mill. Source: OHC, tithe map.

¹⁰⁴ *Oseney Cart.* IV, pp. 325, 326.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, CP 25/1/190/21, no. 13; although no mill was mentioned in 1279 (*Rot. Hund.* II, 729).

¹⁰⁶ BL, Harl. Roll B13, ct Oct. 1489.

¹⁰⁷ OHC, E24/1/1D/8 (also mentioning 'Myllmedowe' and 'Mylleleyes'); *ibid.* E24/1/2D/12; Bodl. MS C17:49 (199); OHC, tithe map and award, nos. 39–40; VCH fieldwork and info. (2023) from Prof. Chris. Dyer. Interpreted as a medieval fishpond in C. Parry, 'A Survey of a Fishpond at Lower Brookend Farm, Chastleton', *Oxoniensia* 54 (1989), 405–9; HER, PRN 2785.