



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Chastleton

Social History

Social Structure and Communal Life

The Middle Ages

The two large manors of Chastleton and Brookend emerged by c.1160 from an earlier pattern of small estates, each manor developing its own physical community, its own set of fields and commons, and (by the 14th century) its own manor courts. A unifying factor was the parish church, founded probably by one of Chastleton's early Norman d'Oilly lords, who were Oxfordshire landowners on a large scale. Though given to Osney abbey in 1129 the church was effectively refounded c.1180 by a later lord of Chastleton, Bardulf son of Roger, a probable d'Oilly relative whose family seem to have occupied the stone-built manor house next to the church from the late 12th to late 13th century. A farmhouse for Osney abbey's small Chastleton estate stood nearby, while a manor house for Eynsham abbey's larger Brookend manor existed certainly by the 15th century and probably much earlier.¹

In 1279 the Chastleton and Brookend estates had similar numbers of tenants, the majority of whom were villeins holding a yardland in return for customary payments and labour services. A few freeholders paid cash rents mostly for a yardland or two, while a much larger freeholder, Henry of Fretherne (alias Framilode), occupied a hide or four yardlands.² Presumably he or his family came from Framilode in Fretherne (Glos.),³ and other bynames suggest immigration from Admington (now Warws.), Barton-on-the-Heath (Warws.), and Ashby, perhaps one of the places of that name in Northamptonshire.⁴ Several peasant families named in 1279 remained in the early 14th century, alongside newcomers such as the Collinses.⁵ Individual taxation payments, which excluded those below the tax threshold, ranged from 4*d.* to 3*s.* 10*d.* in 1306, with an average of 20*d.* and a median of 16*d.*, and from 17*d.* to 17*s.* in 1316. Chastleton's lord John Trillow paid almost twice as much tax (16*s.* 8*d.*) as anyone else in 1327, and was probably resident, since his heir Robert

¹ Above, landscape etc.; landownership; econ. hist.; below, relig. hist.

² *Rot. Hund.* II, 729.

³ Above, landownership (minor estates), incl. footnote.

⁴ TNA, E 179/161/8 ('de Adelmynton'); *Rot. Hund.* II, 729 ('de Asseby', 'de Barton').

⁵ TNA, E 179/161/8–10.

Trillow endowed a chantry in the parish church soon after John's death in or by 1334.⁶ Later Trillow lords probably also resided, amongst them Sir John Trillow (d. c.1372), who was high sheriff in 1365.⁷

Population decline in the century or more after the Black Death saw holdings amalgamated on both manors, and at Brookend in particular several redundant houses were abandoned and fell into ruins.⁸ As manorial authority weakened, Brookend's unfree tenants increasingly left without permission. Two took holy orders, one of them later becoming vicar of Enstone,⁹ and by 1469, when turnover of tenants was high, only four Brookend holdings remained occupied. One Brookend family which did continue was the Jameses, whose frequent appearances before the manor court suggest the social dislocation accompanying these changes. The widow Agnes James was repeatedly described as a scold and a disturber of her neighbours, and throughout the 1480s broke the pound several times and felled trees without the lord's permission. After being evicted from her farm in 1488 she refused to leave, occupying it 'by force and arms' in 1490. Her successor Thomas James (presumably her son) proved equally troublesome and possibly mentally unstable, being described in the court at which he, too, was evicted as 'furious, a lunatic, and with a desperate mind possessed, always threatening to kill himself, not believing in the Catholic faith'.¹⁰ The four tenants still available to act as manorial officers included the prosperous sheep farmer Peter Barton (d. 1505), who requested burial inside the parish church. Even so Brookend's manor court was often powerless to act, failing to enforce its orders and unable to prevent repeated invasions of the manor's commons. Chastleton itself may have suffered less disruption, but was probably increasingly dominated from the late 15th century by the Fletchers, who served as stewards and demesne farmers for successive absentee lords, and who also held Osney abbey's farm.¹¹

⁶ Ibid.; below, relig. hist. (Middle Ages).

⁷ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 46; H.P. Trillo, *The Trillowes of Chastleton: A Medieval Oxfordshire Family* (2011).

⁸ Unless indicated, para. based on: TNA, SC 2/197/14; BL, Harl. Rolls B1, B11–14. Cf. *Eynsham Cart.* II, pp. xxv–ix; T. Lloyd, 'Some documentary sidelights on the deserted Oxfordshire village of Brookend', *Oxoniensia* 29/30 (1964/5), 116–28; C. Dyer, 'Villages in crisis: social dislocation and desertion, 1370–1520', in C. Dyer and R. Jones (eds), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (2010), 38–40; above, landscape etc. (popn); econ. hist. (medieval).

⁹ *Eynsham Cart.* II, p. xxvii; below, Enstone, relig. hist. (relig. life).

¹⁰ 'furiosus, lunaticus et mente captus ac desperatus, semper intendens occidere se ipsum, non credens in fide catholica': BL, Harl. Roll B14.

¹¹ Above, econ. hist. (medieval); TNA, PROB 11/14/614 (Barton, printed in *Oxon. Wills*, 86).

1500–1800

In 1523 the parish's wealthiest taxpayer by far (paying 8s. 6d.) was the Chastleton demesne farmer Thomas Skey (who had succeeded the Fletchers), while three other men each paid 2s. 6d., two 18d., three 12d., and one the basic servant's or labourer's rate of 4d.¹² From the 1550s, however, Chastleton was again dominated by resident lords,¹³ of whom the widowed Katherine Throckmorton was impleaded in 1589 by Robert Whitney, the non-resident owner of the manor's other half, who claimed that she was encroaching on his rights and rents.¹⁴ Following Katherine's death in 1593¹⁵ her Roman Catholic grandson and heir Robert Catesby, who later led the Gunpowder Plot, was often resident, taking his son Robert to be baptized at the church in 1595, instigating the parish's enclosure in 1596,¹⁶ and in January 1601 returning to live at Chastleton after a period of absence.¹⁷ Despite selling the manor to Walter Jones in 1602 Catesby still occupied the manor house in January 1605, only ten months before the Plot's culmination, living a 'monastical' life 'without women' alongside his co-conspirator Thomas Winter.¹⁸



Memorial brass to Katherine Throckmorton (d. 1593) in the parish church (left).

Robert Catesby's signature and seal on a Chastleton deed in OHC (below).



¹² TNA, E 179/161/170; above, econ. hist. (1500–1800).

¹³ *Oxon. Visit.* 14–18; above, landownership (Chastleton).

¹⁴ OHC, E24/1/1D/37–8, also reciting earlier (c.1539) disputes.

¹⁵ For her memorial brass, below, relig. hist. (Reform to 1789).

¹⁶ OHC, par. reg. transcript, baptism 1595; *ibid.* E24/1/1D/8; above, econ. hist. (1500–1800).

¹⁷ OHC, PAR60/1/R1/1, f. 50.

¹⁸ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1603–10, 190; above, landownership (Chastleton).

The Joneses lived at Chastleton from c.1612, when the new Chastleton House was completed for Walter (d. 1632) and his wife Helen or Eleanor (née Pope, d. 1638). Walter himself was a lawyer and the son of a Witney clothier, while his wife was the daughter of a London goldsmith. Despite having earlier served as town clerk and MP for Worcester, and working as an attorney at the Court of Star Chamber in London, Walter never held office in Oxfordshire, and no later family members served as high sheriff.¹⁹ Nonetheless his probate inventory of 1633 shows his considerable personal wealth and his luxurious surroundings at Chastleton, valuing his goods at £1,143 including plate (£221), linen (£180), 23 beds (£169), tapestry hangings (£60), and 69 pictures (c.£20).²⁰ Several of his daughters made advantageous marriages,²¹ and in 1609 his son and heir Henry married Anne Fettiplace, a daughter of Sir Edmund Fettiplace of Swinbrook, their union being commemorated in an armorial overmantel in Chastleton House.²² According to a later family tradition Henry's son and heir Arthur (d. 1687) fought as a Royalist at the battle of Worcester in 1651, subsequently evading Parliamentary troops searching for him at Chastleton House by hiding in the closet over the porch, and in 1660 planting two oak trees in the park to mark the Restoration.²³ The Joneses certainly remained sympathetic to the Stuart cause, later acquiring a bible which had reputedly been used at Charles I's execution, whilst Henry Jones (d. 1761), a lawyer who served as president of the Jacobite Cycle Club of Gloucestershire in the 1740s, probably owned the set of Jacobite drinking glasses still preserved in the house, and planted a stand of Scots pines in the park as a mark of his Jacobite allegiance.²⁴ By 1750 his estate was heavily mortgaged, however, with tenants' rents in arrears, and in 1755 he was briefly imprisoned for debt, despite financial assistance from his wife's brother John Hancock. Hancock himself was a wealthy Gloucestershire landowner who came to live with

¹⁹ H.L. Turner, 'Walter Jones of Witney, Worcester, and Chastleton: Rewriting the Past', *Oxoniensia* 73 (2008), 33–43, dispelling a number of myths found in other sources. Jones's son Henry obtained exemption from offices by letters patent in 1638: OHC, E24/1/L/2.

²⁰ OHC, E24/1/W/2; transcript in J. Marsden, 'The Chastleton Inventory of 1633', *Furniture Hist.* 36 (2000), 37–42, which establishes that £1,142 17s. 4d. is the true total value of his goods rather than £1,935 12s. 4d. given in the manuscript.

²¹ Eliz. married Geo. Greenwood of Chastleton, Helen married Ralph Holt of Stoke Lyne, and Sarah married Wm Banks of Winstanley (Lancs.): 'Oxon. Visit. 1634', *Misc. Gen. et Her.* 4th ser. V, 17–18; *VCH Oxon.* VI, 316. The Banks' son Wm (d. 1676), an MP, has a memorial brass in the church: *Hist. Parl.* s.v. Wm Banks I.

²² OHC, E24/1/1D/32–6; above, landownership (Chastleton). For a hoard of refillable wine bottles bearing Henry's initials, G. Marshall, 'From rubbish to unique artefact: an unusual archaeological hoard from Chastleton House', *Oxoniensia* 61 (1996), 403–10.

²³ M. Whitmore Jones, *History & Description of Chastleton House* (1893), 14–19; repeated in M. Dickins, *Chastleton House* [c.1935], 10–11; N. Cooper et al., *Chastleton House* (National Trust guidebook, 2001), 50–2. No independent evidence has yet been found to support these claims.

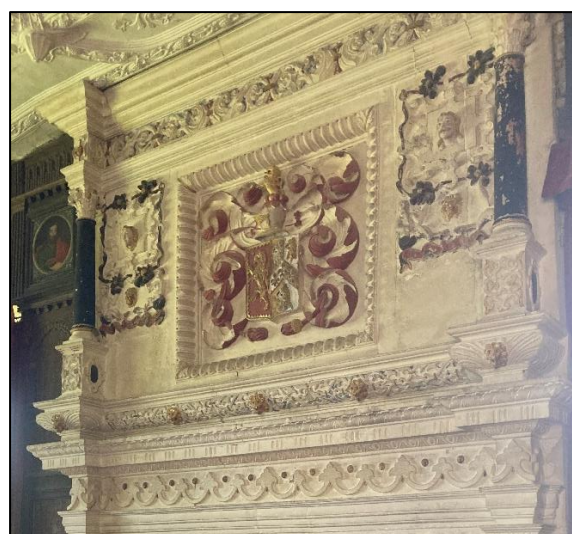
²⁴ Whitmore Jones, *Chastleton House*, 19–21; Dickins, *Chastleton House*, 16–18; and for the bible (associated with Wm Juxon, bp of London) and the Jacobite glassware, Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 23–4, 27, 52. Juxon (d. 1663), later archbishop of Canterbury, settled at neighbouring Little Compton: *ODNB*, s.v. Wm Juxon.

the family at Chastleton House,²⁵ and who at his death in 1793 left £1,000 to his nephew (Henry's son) John Jones (d. 1813). By then John had already restored the family's fortunes, substantially enlarging the estate and renovating the house.²⁶



Memorial brass to Edmund Ansley (d. 1613) in the parish church (left).

Arms of Walter Jones (d. 1632) and his wife Eleanor (née Pope) in the Great Chamber of Chastleton House (below).



Brookend's only resident lords were the Ansleys, of whom Edmund (d. 1583) and his Roman Catholic wife Katherine (d. 1596) moved to the parish from neighbouring Cornwell. Their grandson and heir Edmund (d. 1613), also a Catholic, married Anthony and Katherine Throckmorton's daughter Margaret, and at his death left more than £900, being commemorated (despite his recusancy) with a brass in the parish church. His son Edmund (d. 1659) moved to Worcester before 1634, however,²⁷ and by 1642 the only other resident gentry were the Greenwoods,²⁸ of whom George (d. 1650) acquired much of the Ansleys' estate and married one of Walter Jones's daughters.²⁹ Thomas Greenwood (d. 1717) married as his second wife a daughter of the lord of Cornwell Sir Thomas Penyston, Bt (Cornelia Philarista Maria),³⁰ while Thomas's son Thomas (d. 1749) served as high sheriff in

²⁵ Dickens, *Chastleton House*, 18–19; Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 52–4; OHC, E24/3.

²⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1234/173; OHC, par. reg. transcript, burial 1793; above, landownership (Chastleton).

²⁷ *Oxon. Visit.* 120; OHC, par. reg. transcript, marriage 1588/9; above, landownership (Brookend); Cornwell, social hist. For recusancy and the brass, below, relig. hist. (Reformn to 1789).

²⁸ TNA, PROB 11/123/39; *Oxon. Visit.* 263; *Prot. Retns*, 82.

²⁹ Above (this section); landownership (Brookend; other estates).

³⁰ OHC, E24/1/3D/14–15; *Par. Colln*, I, 85; below, Cornwell, social hist.

1730–1, his widow and heir Milcah (d. 1753) leaving more than £6,000 in her will, and endowing two parish charities.³¹ When the family's eventual heir Thomas Fothergill left the parish 'to go on his travels' in 1769 the house was let to tenants, including (in 1774) the future Somerset MP Henry Hippisley Coxe,³² and when Fothergill finally moved to Pirton (Herts.) in 1786³³ it was bought by John Jones for his brother Arthur. New furnishings in 1787 (the year of Arthur's marriage) included a Persian carpet, a Broadwood piano, and Wedgwood pottery.³⁴

Prominent among 16th- and 17th-century tenants were members of the Durham, Phipps, Wade, Widdowes, and Williams families, all of them taxpayers in 1577 when individuals' goods were assessed at between £1 and £6, with a median value of £4.³⁵ Wills reveal contacts with local market towns, particularly Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold (both Glos.) and Chipping Norton,³⁶ and the yeoman Hugh Williams (d. 1561) also farmed in Condicote (Glos.), requesting burial in Chastleton church (apparently in the former chantry chapel) alongside his daughter.³⁷ Few such people were especially wealthy, however, none of the 12 probate valuations dated before 1700 exceeding £100, with eight under £50 and two under £10.³⁸ One of the best-off (with goods worth £84) was the yeoman John Phipps (d. 1617), who occupied an eight-roomed farmhouse furnished with featherbeds, curtains, cushions, and carpets, while by contrast the Brookend labourer John Grove (d. 1639) occupied a single room, although his possessions included 'a tabor, pipes, and other musical instruments' along with £13 'ready money'.³⁹ The 1665 hearth tax shows a similar disparity in the parish's housing, with one dwelling taxed on one hearth, one on three hearths, and three on four hearths, while two inhabitants (respectively assessed on one and two hearths) were excused payment on grounds of poverty. By contrast the lord Arthur Jones, the rector, and two members of the Greenwood family all occupied houses with 8–15 hearths.⁴⁰ Suitors to the manor court in 1782 numbered ten farmers, 15 labourers, and eight men employed in crafts or trades, alongside nine domestic servants (who are otherwise poorly recorded). The farmers included members of the prominent Davis and Harbidge

³¹ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 141–2; TNA, PROB 11/805/105; above, landownership (other estates); below (welfare).

³² OHC, E24/1/MS/1; E24/2/2D/23; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. d 564, f. 104; *Hist. Parl.* s.v. Hen. Hippisley Coxe.

³³ Herts. Archives, DE/R/E63.

³⁴ OHC, E24/1/F6/5; above, landownership (other estates).

³⁵ TNA, E 179/162/341.

³⁶ e.g. OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 69/1/20; 113/1/6; 17/1/28.

³⁷ TNA, PROB 11/44/62; below, relig. hist.

³⁸ Wills and inventories in OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. (transcribed by Salford Probate Group), excluding Walter Jones' 1633 inventory (above).

³⁹ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 50/4/29; 297/3/50. Grove's inventory was worth £14 in all.

⁴⁰ *Hearth Tax Oxon.* 186–7; cf. TNA, E 179/255/4.

families, John Davis serving as chief constable of the hundred in the 1780s,⁴¹ while a village blacksmith served as parish constable in 1688.⁴²

Little is known of the parish's social life before 1800, although John Grove's possession of musical instruments in 1639 suggests communal music-making and dancing, despite the lack of a public house.⁴³ In 1767 John Hancock bought a hautboy and a bassoon and gave a guinea to 'the singers', presumably for a west-gallery band and choir in Chastleton church, which remained a social focus and saw sporadic investment, particularly in the 1680s when a parish rate financed the tower's rebuilding following a fire.⁴⁴ Few crimes or misdemeanours were reported, although the churchwardens presented two parishioners for adultery in 1761, and two labourers were arraigned for assault in 1792.⁴⁵

Since 1800

In 1828 the Joneses were succeeded as resident lords by their distant cousins the Whitmore Joneses, of whom John Henry (d. 1853) was active locally as a magistrate, poor-law guardian, captain in the Oxfordshire militia, and member of the Heythrop Hunt. The family worked hard to preserve good relations with their tenants, often treating them to a Christmas feast and rent bonus, although both John Henry and his widow Dorothy (d. 1862) clashed with the resident rector Horatio Westmacott, whom Dorothy described in 1855 as a 'heartless little man'.⁴⁶ William Whitmore Jones (d. 1874) hosted a parish dinner, sports, and fireworks to celebrate a royal wedding in 1863,⁴⁷ and in 1862 his younger brother Walter (d. 1872) captained the village cricket team, although he is more widely remembered for codifying the game of croquet, which he played on lawns at Chastleton House.⁴⁸ Their sister Mary (d. 1915), an author and novelist, lodged at the rectory house by 1891 and still in 1907,⁴⁹ but retained ownership of Chastleton House, which (although it was often let to

⁴¹ OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 1/36, no. 9; *ibid.* Cal. QS, III, pp. 232, 233, 236; above, econ. hist. (1500–1800).

⁴² Wm Breakspear: M.S. Gretton (ed.), *Oxon. Justices of the Peace in the 17th Century* (ORS 16, 1974), 50; above, econ. hist. (trades).

⁴³ Gretton (ed.), *Oxon. Justices*, 50 ('no public house, brewhouse, nor any victualling house').

⁴⁴ Dickins, *Chastleton House*, 26; below, relig. hist. (church archit.).

⁴⁵ OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 60, f. 20; *ibid.* Cal. QS, II, f. 56.

⁴⁶ I. Hilton (ed.), *The Chastleton Diaries: Change and Continuity in the Nineteenth Century* (2011), 14–15, 18, 47, 70, 73, 74; *Oxf. Jnl*, 30 Dec. 1843, 12 Mar. 1853; above, landownership (Chastleton); econ. hist. (since 1800). For clashes over charities, below (welfare); and for the bp's rather different view of Westmacott, below, relig. hist. (since 1789).

⁴⁷ *Oxf. Jnl*, 14 Mar. 1863.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 4 Oct. 1862; *ODNB*, s.v. Walter Thos Jones Whitmore [sic]; Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 58. Walter changed his surname to Jones Whitmore in 1867.

⁴⁹ *Evesham Standard*, 4 Sept. 1915; TNA, RG 12/1179; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1899 and 1907 edns); below, relig. hist. (since 1789).

tenants) she allowed to be used for a wide variety of events.⁵⁰ She also occasionally opened it to paying visitors,⁵¹ writing a guidebook for the purpose.⁵²

In 1861 six live-in servants and a gardener were employed at the house, with similar numbers of domestic staff engaged at the rectory house and at Kitebrook House, the country residence of the Chipping Norton brewer W.S. Hitchman (d. 1881).⁵³ Hitchman's philanthropy rivalled that of the Whitmore Joneses,⁵⁴ and in the 1890s his successor F.H. Freer built some model cottages for his employees, besides enlarging his own house.⁵⁵ Chastleton's wider community largely comprised tenant farmers and their families, servants, and labourers,⁵⁶ many of the latter apparently leaving the parish in the later 19th century as agricultural depression took hold.⁵⁷ Most farmers remained tenants of the Whitmore Joneses, exceptions including the Harbidges of Brookend, whose social standing was reflected in their appropriation of the church's north chapel for their private pew and burial vault.⁵⁸ Thefts, assaults, and poaching were recorded occasionally,⁵⁹ and a society for prosecuting felons was established in 1819,⁶⁰ while by 1846 there was a resident police officer.⁶¹ Tensions of a different kind ran high in 1881–2, when the rector Gustavus Sneyd was embroiled in a sex scandal and alleged that he had been robbed at gunpoint by one of his accuser's family.⁶²

Communal life still largely revolved around the parish church and Chastleton House (where the 'Chastleton band' played in 1855),⁶³ while occasional prize fights held at the Four Shire Stone in the 1830s attracted large crowds.⁶⁴ A village school existed intermittently from the early 19th century, and in 1855 Hitchman's building of an additional school serving both Chastleton and neighbouring Little Compton prompted further co-operation between the two

⁵⁰ e.g. *Oxon. Weekly News*, 17 Oct. 1877 (fair and 'fancy bazaar'), 25 Dec. 1878 ('amateur theatricals'), 30 Dec. 1885 (Primrose League dinner); 23 Oct. 1895 (carpentry classes); *Oxf. Jnl*, 14 Aug. 1886 (Primrose League fête), 29 Oct. 1887 (magic show).

⁵¹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 8 Aug. 1877; *Oxf. Jnl*, 11 Aug. 1894.

⁵² Whitmore Jones, *Chastleton House*. Cf. M. Whitmore Jones, *The Gunpowder Plot and Life of Robert Catesby, also an Account of Chastleton House* (1909).

⁵³ TNA, RG 9/912; above, landownership (other estates).

⁵⁴ Below (educ.; welfare).

⁵⁵ *Evesham Standard*, 27 Mar. 1897.

⁵⁶ TNA, HO 107/878; *ibid.* RG 9/912; RG 11/1521.

⁵⁷ Above, landscape etc. (popn); econ. hist. (since 1800).

⁵⁸ Above, landownership; econ. hist.; for vault, OHC, PAR60/10/A/1, f. 19; Dickins, *Hist. of Chastleton*, 41.

⁵⁹ *Oxf. Jnl*, 8 Jan. 1848; OHC, Cal. QS, II, f. 440; *ibid.* QS1847/1/L3/6; QS1847/2/L1/11; QS1848/1/L3/17.

⁶⁰ *Oxf. Jnl*, 1 May 1819.

⁶¹ OHC, QS1846/4/L2/76

⁶² *Oxon. Weekly News*, 2 Aug. 1882; P. Inder and M. Aldis, *Gustavus Sneyd: A Scandal in the Parish* (1998), 11; below, relig. hist. (since 1789).

⁶³ Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 75.

⁶⁴ Bodl. MS Top. Oxon. d 244, p. 732; *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 May 1830; *Bell's Life in London*, 15 May 1836.

parishes,⁶⁵ a joint choral society being established in 1876,⁶⁶ a Band of Hope Temperance society in 1883,⁶⁷ an annual flower and vegetable show in 1883,⁶⁸ and a branch of the Conservative Primrose League in 1885.⁶⁹ A Chastleton and Little Compton branch of the new National Agricultural Union was formed in 1894 at a meeting held in Chastleton House, with the Revd Sneyd elected as chairman and Mary Whitmore Jones as treasurer.⁷⁰ Both the Hitchman school and Chastleton National school (established in 1871) then doubled as reading rooms,⁷¹ while other amenities included allotment gardens provided by the Chastleton estate, covering 24 a. at three sites in 1910 and still in 1936 (when they were sold).⁷² The parish's more prosperous inhabitants benefited from a golf club founded in 1895 under the chairmanship of Albert Brassey of Heythrop, which until 1920 managed a nine-hole course on Chastleton Hill.⁷³



This family photograph, taken c.1895, includes the Revd and Mrs Gustavus Sneyd (at either end) and Mary Whitmore Jones (centre), who then lived with the Sneyds at the rectory house (now Chastleton Glebe). Source: OHC, POX0070162.

From the 1880s Chastleton House was generally let to tenants,⁷⁴ of whom Charles Taswell Richardson, a director of the East India and Ceylon Tea Co. Ltd, was resident from 1897 until his death at sea in 1920. His widow Mabel (or May) gave a memorial window to the parish church in 1921, and remained as tenant until 1933.⁷⁵ The following year the

⁶⁵ Below (educ.).

⁶⁶ *Oxf. Times*, 30 Dec. 1876; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 24 Jan., 11 Apr. 1877.

⁶⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 2 May 1883, 1 Sept. 1886, 6 Aug. 1890.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 25 Aug. 1886, 29 June 1908; *Oxf. Jnl*, 12 Aug. 1899.

⁶⁹ *Oxf. Jnl*, 13 June 1885; *Evesham Standard*, 4 Sept. 1915; OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 37/200 (min. bk 1885–1914).

⁷⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 21 Mar. 1894. The NAU was established in 1893: P. Readman, 'Conservatives and the Politics of Land: Lord Winchilsea's National Agricultural Union, 1893–1901', *EHR* cxxi. 490 (Feb. 2006), 25–69.

⁷¹ *Banbury Guardian*, 11 Nov. 1875; *Oxf. Jnl*, 13 June 1885; below (educ.).

⁷² OS Maps 1:2500, Oxon. XIII.8 (1900 edn); XIII.4 (1905 edn); OHC, DV/X/37; *ibid.* E24/1/1D/78. A small area of allotments adjoining the Little Compton boundary remained in 2023.

⁷³ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 27 Nov. 1895; *VCH Oxon.* II, 371; M.J. Elson, *The Richardsons at Chastleton: the story of the family who rented Chastleton House from 1896 to 1933* (2nd edn, 2018), 7; TNA, RG 14/8258.

⁷⁴ *Oxf. Jnl*, 6 Oct. 1883 (R.J. White), 29 Oct. 1887 (Mr Carew Hunt); *Oxon. Weekly News*, 5 Aug. 1885 (T.W. Walday); *Evesham Standard*, 7 June 1890 (Mrs Vallange Condell).

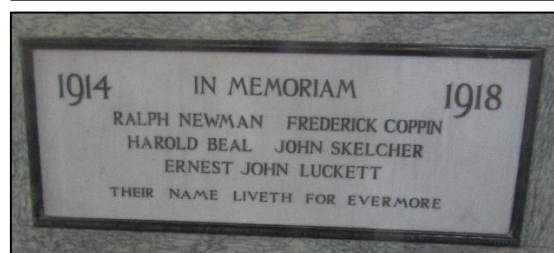
⁷⁵ Elson, *Richardsons*; below, relig. hist. (church archit.).

widowed Irene Whitmore Jones (d. 1955) took up residence at Chastleton House with only a butler and a single maid, selling off most of the estate in 1936, and opening the house to paying visitors. Day-trippers still visited under her successors the Clutton-Brocks, although the income generated was not sufficient to prevent the house from falling into decay.⁷⁶ Of the parish's other gentry houses, Chastleton Glebe was rescued from disrepair by its first private owner William Cooke Kettle (d. 1925), after it ceased to be the rectory house in 1914.⁷⁷ Later owners were the Hon. Osmond Hastings (d. 1933), second son of the 13th earl of Huntingdon,⁷⁸ and Lt-Col. Charles Walwyn (d. 1959), a distinguished soldier and showjumper.⁷⁹ Kitebrook House was generally let to tenants both before and after the First World War,⁸⁰ during which (in 1916–18) it served as a Voluntary Aid Detachment hospital with 40–70 beds.⁸¹ The war itself claimed the lives of five parishioners.⁸²



Left: Part of the west window in the parish church given by Mabel (or May) Richardson in 1921 in memory of her husband Charles (d. 1920).

Below: First World War memorial in the parish church.



Closure of the village school in 1921 led to children being educated at the former Hitchman school in Little Compton, with which Chastleton still shared a choral society and a Women's Institute in 1933.⁸³ The Second World War affected the parish little differently from surrounding rural communities, with Chastleton House briefly accommodating an evacuated

⁷⁶ Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 58–9; K. Ferry, *Chastleton House* (Nat. Trust guidebook, 2013), 10–11; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1939 edn); *Banbury Guardian*, 3 Mar. 1955. For 1936 sale, above, landownership (Chastleton); econ. hist. (since 1800).

⁷⁷ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1915–24 edns); *Banbury Guardian*, 18 June 1925; above, landscape etc. (settlement; built character).

⁷⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1926–31 edns); *Glos. Echo*, 26 Oct. 1933; *Who was Who* (accessed online Oct. 2023), s.v. Hon. Osmond Hastings.

⁷⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1939 edn); *Tewkesbury Reg.*, 7 Aug. 1959.

⁸⁰ TNA, RG 14/8258; OHC, DV/X/37; GA, D4084/Box50/9; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1899–1911 edns).

⁸¹ Elson, *Richardsons*, 45–6, 106; *Cheltenham Chron.*, 24 Mar. 1917.

⁸² War memorial in church; below, relig. hist. (church archit.).

⁸³ Below (educ.); *Tewkesbury Reg.*, 25 Mar. 1933.

school, and being used to store artworks removed from Oxford's Ashmolean Museum.⁸⁴ Chastleton had its own Women's Institute from 1945 until 1959, meeting latterly in the former school, which was initially used for vestry and parish meetings but which by the 1950s was a village hall run by trustees. It was converted into a house soon afterwards, however,⁸⁵ and after the post-office shop shut in 1970⁸⁶ the parish retained few if any amenities. A private preparatory school opened in Kitebrook House in 1959 continued in 2024.⁸⁷

Despite that lack of social provision, from the 1970s Chastleton increasingly attracted affluent incomers, with two thirds of inhabitants owning their own homes by 1991.⁸⁸ Several were prominent professionals, including the artist, journalist, and academic Alan Clutton-Brock (d. 1976) of Chastleton House, the journalist, novelist, and biographer Penelope Mortimer (d. 1999),⁸⁹ and the architect John Pawson of Home Farm.⁹⁰ The restaurateur, author, and broadcaster Prue Leith, made a dame in 2021, lived at Chastleton Glebe from 1976 to 2020, at first with her husband, the author and property developer Rayne Kruger (d. 2002). She subsequently moved (with her second husband John Playfair) into a new architect-designed house on neighbouring Middle Brookend farm, having sold Chastleton Glebe to the racing driver and businessman Gregor Fiskien.⁹¹ Chastleton House, meanwhile, was bought in 1991 for the National Trust, which conserved it and re-opened it to the public in 1997, the property also featuring in several films.⁹² In 2024 charity teas were regularly served to visitors in the adjacent church, which by then belonged to a larger ecclesiastical parish, and was rarely used for worship.⁹³

Education

The fact that two former Brookend villeins took holy orders in the earlier 15th century suggests some early access to basic education, perhaps through Eynsham abbey or the parish priest.⁹⁴ No further provision is known until 1738, however, when the rector supported

⁸⁴ Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 58.

⁸⁵ OHC, O3/2/25; *ibid.* Acc. 5428, Box 1/89, letter 3 Nov. 1951; Box 2/8, letter 21 July 1952; below (educ.).

⁸⁶ Above, econ. hist. (non-agric.).

⁸⁷ Below (educ.).

⁸⁸ *Census*, 1991.

⁸⁹ *ODNB*, s.v. Alan Clutton-Brock, Penelope Mortimer.

⁹⁰ *House & Garden*, 11 May 2022.

⁹¹ R. Kruger, 'Historical Notes on Chastleton Glebe' (n.d., c.1990): typescript in private possession; info. (2023–4) from Dame Prue Leith, John Playfair, Gregor Fiskien, and Carolina Fiskien.

⁹² Cooper et al., *Chastleton House*, 59–60; Ferry, *Chastleton House*, 2, 11; www.nationaltrust.org.uk (accessed Oct. 2023).

⁹³ Local info.; below, relig. hist.

⁹⁴ Above (Middle Ages).

a person to teach a few poor children under five years of age,⁹⁵ while in 1808 a woman taught c.20 children reading and the catechism, paid for by their parents.⁹⁶ From 1810 there was also a Sunday school attended by 18 boys and eight girls, which used National Society books and was funded by subscription, although the parish's farmers were 'very unwilling' and no longer supported it by 1817, when it was run by the rector's wife and daughters.⁹⁷ Both that and the day school continued in 1834, the former teaching ten boys and 14 girls aged 8–14, and the latter c.14 children still paid for by parents, taught by a single mistress in a cottage.⁹⁸ The day school moved into alternative premises in the village (made available by the lord J.H. Whitmore Jones) in 1852,⁹⁹ and in 1854 the mistress was Elizabeth Bartlett.¹⁰⁰



The former Hitchman's school in Little Compton (left) and pupils and teachers outside Chastleton school in 1906 (right). Source: OHC, POX0164795.

In 1855 W.S. Hitchman of Kitebrook House built a separate National school and teacher's house just outside the parish in Little Compton, sited on his own land beside the Worcester road. Known initially as Chastleton (Hitchman's) District school, it was placed under government inspection in 1863, receiving government grants,¹⁰¹ and by 1869 taught 29 children from Chastleton out of a total average attendance of 64. A further 19 adults from the parish attended winter evening classes there three times a week. The Chastleton day school had then closed, although the Sunday school still had 20 pupils in its own schoolroom in the village.¹⁰² Hitchman relinquished personal control of his school in 1870, when a

⁹⁵ *Secker's Visit*. 40.

⁹⁶ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 707, f. 41.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* c 433, f. 54; d 576, f. 69; cf. *Educ. of Poor Digest* (Parl. Papers 1819 (224), ix), II, p. 720.

⁹⁸ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 39, f. 81; b 41, f. 63; cf. *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (Parl. Papers 1835 (62), xlii), p. 743.

⁹⁹ OHC, PAR60/10/A/1, f. 30; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, f. 179.

¹⁰⁰ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1854). Cf. Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 73.

¹⁰¹ *Oxf. Chron.* 12 May 1855; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 15 Dec. 1880. Cf. Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 74.

¹⁰² OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 332, f. 119; c 335, f. 85; *Retn of Parishes* (Parl. Papers 1867–8 (114), liii), p. 347.

management committee was formed,¹⁰³ and in 1903 it was taken over by Warwickshire county council as Little Compton council school.¹⁰⁴

A new National school in Chastleton village opened in 1871, housed in purpose-built accommodation provided by William Whitmore Jones. Its single small schoolroom (with an entrance porch) was partitioned between mixed and infants' classes, the building's £210 cost being met mostly by subscriptions, with only £40 coming from grants. The school managers were the rector and Whitmore Jones as lord of the manor.¹⁰⁵ Most of the Chastleton children attending Hitchman's school were transferred there, and from 26 at its opening average attendance rose to 31 in 1905, before falling to only 20 in 1916 when the school was threatened with closure.¹⁰⁶ The headmistress from 1877 until her death in 1917 was Mary Tibbles, who was accommodated rent-free in an estate cottage ('the best in the village');¹⁰⁷ by 1901 she was assisted by her daughter Mary, who succeeded her as headmistress, becoming Mary Bartlett on her marriage in 1918.¹⁰⁸ In 1920 her teaching was 'vigorous and stimulating', but average attendance was only 14 (with no infants), and in 1921 the school was closed and its ten remaining pupils transferred to the Little Compton council school,¹⁰⁹ which continued as a mixed junior and infant school until 1996.¹¹⁰ Chastleton's redundant schoolroom was later used for vestry and parish meetings and as a village hall, eventually becoming a private dwelling.¹¹¹

A mixed private preparatory school for day pupils and boarders was opened at Kitebrook House by Anne McDermott in 1959.¹¹² A decade later, when inspectors found it 'happy and successful', it taught 59 children (45 girls and 7 boys) in six forms,¹¹³ rising to 75 pupils by 1985.¹¹⁴ In 2023 the roll numbered 301 girls and boys aged 3–13.¹¹⁵

¹⁰³ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 15 Dec. 1880.

¹⁰⁴ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 11 Dec. 1903.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, ED 21/14399; OHC, CC4/44 (with photos taken in 1906); *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. c 338, f. 96. Cf. *Retns relating to Elem. Educ.* (Parl. Papers 1871 (201), iv), p. 324. No school records (e.g. log bks) have been located.

¹⁰⁶ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 338, f. 96; b 199; *ibid.* CC4/44/9; TNA, ED 21/37932; *Banbury Guardian*, 20 Jan. 1916.

¹⁰⁷ OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 8/74; *ibid.* CC4/44/1–2; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, burial 1917.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, RG 13/1400; RG 14/8258; OHC, par. reg. transcript, marriage 1918; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1920).

¹⁰⁹ TNA, ED 21/37932; OHC, CC4/44/1–2, 11.

¹¹⁰ OS Map 1:2500, SP 2529 (1979 edn); <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/125516> (accessed Jan. 2024). The bldg is now a private house (Old School).

¹¹¹ OHC, PAR60/2/A/2; *ibid.* Acc. 5428, Box 44/31–2.

¹¹² www.kitebrookpst.org (accessed Oct. 2023).

¹¹³ TNA, ED 172/433/3.

¹¹⁴ *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 18 Jan. 1985.

¹¹⁵ Inspection rep. (Feb. 2023) at www.kitebrookpst.org.

Welfare

Accounts for Osney abbey's estate in 1336–7 record occasional gifts of wheat and rye to beggars,¹¹⁶ and 16th- and 17th-century parishioners often made small bequests to the poor in cash or kind.¹¹⁷ More unusually, Robert Durham (d. 1587) provided a calf to be rented out at 3s. 4d. a year for Brookend's poor,¹¹⁸ while the rector Robert Windle (d. 1592) left 10s. to every householder and 4d. to every other person living within the parish.¹¹⁹ By 1738 offertory money given in church had long been used for apprenticing poor children,¹²⁰ although later in the 18th century it was more commonly given to sick or poor communicants,¹²¹ and c.1830 the rector used £4 of it for the Sunday school, either distributing the rest amongst the poor, or spending it on paupers' blankets, clothing, and medical care.¹²²

No parish-based Friendly Societies are known,¹²³ but in 1855 Dorothy Whitmore Jones sold 4 tons of coal to the poor at half price,¹²⁴ and in the 1870s tea and coal clubs each had around 20 subscribers.¹²⁵ A few years later a clothing club and a penny savings bank were attached (respectively) to Hitchman's school and to Chastleton National school,¹²⁶ and both the Hitchmans and the Whitmore Joneses gave out Christmas beef.¹²⁷ The Richardsons of Chastleton House were the largest subscribers to the coal club c.1900 (when it had 16 members), and Mary Whitmore Jones distributed parcels of clothing from her needlework guild at Christmas.¹²⁸

In 1769 the Chipping Norton apothecary Thomas Mackarness administered smallpox inoculations in an isolated house near the Four Shire Stone,¹²⁹ and by 1900 the parish was served by the Heythrop branch of the North Oxfordshire Benefit Nursing Association, of which Mary Whitmore Jones was secretary.¹³⁰ Otherwise no doctors or nurses are known to have practised in the parish, inhabitants presumably looking to neighbouring towns for medical provision.

¹¹⁶ Bodl. MS dd Ch. Ch. c 26, OR 7; for estate, above, landownership.

¹¹⁷ e.g. OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 181.125 (corn and cheeses); TNA, PROB 11/123/39 (20s.); PROB 11/391/206 (£5).

¹¹⁸ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 17/1/28.

¹¹⁹ TNA, PROB 11/81/103.

¹²⁰ *Secker's Visit.* 41.

¹²¹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 555, f. 121; d 558, f. 129; d 561, f. 125; d 564, f. 104.

¹²² *Ibid.* b 38, f. 55; Northants. Archives, C 2338.

¹²³ *Oxon. FS.*

¹²⁴ Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 77.

¹²⁵ OHC, E24/1/F2/12.

¹²⁶ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 1 Jan. 1879; *Evesham Standard*, 1 Feb 1890.

¹²⁷ Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 18; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 1 Jan. 1879; *Evesham Standard*, 9 Jan. 1904.

¹²⁸ Elson, *Richardsons*, 22; *Evesham Standard*, 9 Jan. 1904.

¹²⁹ *Oxf. Jnl Syn.* 11 Mar. 1769.

¹³⁰ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 9 May 1900.

Parish Charities The rector Christopher Scott (d. 1640), the lord Arthur Jones (d. 1687), and the widow Hester Greenwood (d. 1705) each left £10 for the use of the poor, the interest from which was still properly applied in 1738 but was not mentioned later.¹³¹ Amongst later donors, Bridget Corpson (d. 1740) of Charlbury, widow of Chastleton's rector Richard Corpson (d. 1715), left £10 for a bread charity, which yielded 10s. annual interest distributed in loaves at Christmas.¹³² A second bread charity (distributed on the first Sunday of each month) arose from £100 left by Milcah Greenwood (d. 1753), along with a further £400 for clothing six poor parishioners annually. The charity's trustees were the rector and Greenwood's executrix Ellen Biggs,¹³³ and by 1799 three men and three women were clothed each year.¹³⁴ New trustees were appointed in 1814, when £482 2s. 6d. (representing Greenwood's £500 less costs) was invested in stock. A decade later that produced £22 5s. a year, one fifth of which was spent on bread, and the rest on clothing distributed at Christmas.¹³⁵ Jane Williams of Bourton-on-the-Hill (Glos.) left a further £100 stock for the relief of Chastleton's poor in 1831.¹³⁶

A long-running dispute between the Whitmore Joneses and the rector Horatio Westmacott in the 1840s–50s centred on whether the lord of the manor was automatically a charity trustee.¹³⁷ New trustees (including Mary Whitmore Jones) were appointed in 1882,¹³⁸ and in 1911 three men received boots and a full suit, and three women boots, a dress, and a woollen shawl.¹³⁹ A Charity Commission Scheme of 1916 appointed seven new trustees to manage Corpson's, Greenwood's, and Williams's charities, the total annual income (then £21 5s. 8d.) being spent on medical aid as well as clothing and bread. Food vouchers were issued instead of bread by 1933,¹⁴⁰ and under a Scheme of 1979 all three charities were combined as the Chastleton Relief in Need charity. That continued to provide small grants in cash or kind until 1994, when it ceased to exist.¹⁴¹

¹³¹ TNA, PROB 11/183/336; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 204.59; 129/3/16; *Secker's Visit.* 41.

¹³² TNA, PROB 11/700/347; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 561, f. 125; *12th Rep. Com. Char.* (Parl. Papers 1825 (348), x), p. 415. For Ric., below, relig. hist. (Reformn to 1789).

¹³³ TNA, PROB 11/805/105; PROB 11/934/115; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 327, p. 98; d 555, f. 121; d 561, f. 125.

¹³⁴ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. b 8, f. 85; d 570, f. 71; *12th Rep. Com. Char.* 416.

¹³⁵ OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 7/100; *12th Rep. Com. Char.* 416.

¹³⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1782/209; *VCH Oxon.* VII, 111. Jane was the widow of the Revd Thos Williams, son of Chastleton's rector Edw. Williams (d. 1789): cf. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (Warws.), ER 13/9/9; below, relig. hist. (Reformn to 1789).

¹³⁷ Hilton, *Chastleton Diaries*, 53, 70, 73, 74; OHC, Acc. 5428, Box 1/2; Box 1/8; Box 1/20; Box 47/28; Box 48/130; Box 48/133.

¹³⁸ *Oxf. Jnl.*, 26 Aug. 1882; OHC, PAR60/2/A/1, f. 38v.

¹³⁹ OHC, Acc. 5576, Box 10/78.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* PAR60/13/A1/1; PAR60/13/A2/1.

¹⁴¹ Char. Com. website (accessed Oct. 2023), no. 261948; cf. OHC, PAR60/13/A2/2.

Parish Poor Relief In 1700 and 1719 the Quarter Sessions heard petitions from two poor labourers whom the parish had refused to support.¹⁴² By 1776 overall expenditure on the poor was £32, including £4 17s. spent on renting accommodation;¹⁴³ in 1799 that included two new cottages near the Four Shire Stone, which the overseers rented from Richard Davis of Kitebrook.¹⁴⁴ Following the usual trend, expenditure rose significantly to £70 in 1785 and to £209 in 1803, when 18 adults and 16 children received permanent relief and another eight persons occasional relief, in all just under a fifth of the population. Costs peaked at £331 in 1813, supporting 25 people permanently and 12 occasionally,¹⁴⁵ but fell to £228 in 1820, £125 in 1825, and £109 in 1834.¹⁴⁶ Responsibility passed the following year to the new Chipping Norton Poor Law Union.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² OHC, Cal. QS, III, pp. 365–6, 453.

¹⁴³ *Poor Abstract*, 1777, p. 437.

¹⁴⁴ GA, D1447/1/263b.

¹⁴⁵ *Poor Abstract*, 1787, p. 655; 1804, pp. 400–1; 1818, pp. 354–5.

¹⁴⁶ *Poor Rate Retns*, 1822, p. 136; 1825, p. 171; 1830–1, p. 159; 1835, p. 154.

¹⁴⁷ Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 394; *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 144–5.