



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Kiddington with Asterleigh parish

Social History

Social Character and Communal Life

The Middle Ages

From the 11th to the mid 15th century Kiddington's population was mostly divided amongst the three separate communities of Asterleigh, Over Kiddington, and Nether Kiddington, the first two forming a separate parish focused on Asterleigh church, and apparently sharing a field system. Until the 1270s they also belonged to a separate lordship. A further handful of people lived in the tiny hamlet of Boriens adjoining the south-eastern boundary, but probably identified most closely with neighbouring Glympton.¹ Lords, drawn mostly from middling local gentry families, seem to have been at least intermittently resident for much of the period (until the early 14th century in both Asterleigh and Nether Kiddington), and included several women controlling all or part of the manors either in dower or in their own right.² All exercised additional local influence as patrons of the two churches, and some of the Williamscot lords (who held additional manors in Williamscot and Noke) were involved in county administration, both Richard (d. 1291) and Richard (d. by 1357) serving as sheriff.³

The wider 13th-century population comprised a typical Midland mix of unfree villeins and freeholders, the former owing a range of rents and labour services, and the latter (who at Over Kiddington and Asterleigh were almost as numerous) paying much smaller rents, sometimes partly in kind.⁴ The villeins (save for one cottager) all occupied whole yardlands which probably generated a surplus for market, though they presumably varied in wealth and status, the 'reeve' (*prepositus*) family possibly serving as reeves for the lord, despite their name becoming hereditary.⁵ Some freeholders had much smaller holdings, and none more than two yardlands; nonetheless their free status probably set them apart, one representing the lord at the hundred court, and two owing scutage or 'shield money' (which was more

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

² e.g. Lettice and Joan de Saussay (13th cent.), possibly Mgt Williamscot or Nowers (1372), Eliz. Williamscote (1428): above, landownership.

³ Below, relig. hist.; Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 44, 47.

⁴ Para. based on *Rot. Hund.* II, 734, 852 (wrongly entered under Combe), 853, 877.

⁵ e.g. Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 26, 37, 122; TNA, E 179/161/10.

often associated with the knightly class). Two others were millers. Peter of Barton and Robert of Newington were possibly incomers,⁶ though the Punchards (who held two free yardlands) had been established since the 12th century, and in the 1230s–40s claimed various landholdings against the Saussay lords and others in a series of lawsuits, one of which involved a trial by combat.⁷ The overall range of taxable wealth was fairly typical for the area, with 14 people in 1327 paying 1s. or less and five wealthier inhabitants paying over 4s., including over 9s. paid by the Williamscot lords.⁸

Pressure on land prompted woodland clearance and assarting into the 14th century,⁹ but mid-century plagues both reduced the population and altered the balance between the various settlements. Asterleigh's gradual desertion culminated in 1466 in its absorption into Kiddington parish and the closure of its church, removing the village's last communal focus, and by the early 16th century piecemeal enclosure and amalgamation of the few remaining holdings for sheep-grazing had completed its transformation into a single ring-fenced farm.¹⁰ Turnover within the wider parish is reflected in the disappearance of 13th- and early 14th-century family names, a few of which remained in 1381, but none (except for the Colgroves) by c.1500.¹¹ A further change was the manors' transfer c.1454 to the Babington family, who remained resident at Kiddington until the early 17th century.¹²

Social and communal life is poorly recorded, but presumably focused on the churches and manor courts and perhaps on unrecorded alehouses. The two parishes' unification (along with that of their open fields) may have created a greater sense of cohesion, although Nether Kiddington (close by the church and manor house) and Over Kiddington (adjoining the main Chipping Norton road) probably retained slightly different characters. Occasionally there were outbreaks of violence: a group of local men attacked Thomas de Williamscot's premises in Asterleigh and Charlbury in 1367 (assaulting him and his servants), and a cattle theft was reported in 1387, while a servant of the rector may have been involved in an abortive west Oxfordshire uprising in 1398.¹³ More common were woodland offences in nearby Wychwood forest. The Punchards were amongst several Kiddington and Asterleigh families implicated in deer poaching (for which Peter Punchard was briefly imprisoned in 1256), while others included Kiddington's rector, accused in 1272

⁶ Cf. also John of Bledington, probably related to the rector: TNA, E 179/161/8–9; below, relig. hist.

⁷ *Cur. Reg.* XIV, pp. 114, 349–50; *Oxon. Fines*, pp. 90, 113–15, 118; *Oxon. Eyre 1241*, pp. 49 (Begbroke), 81; 'Oxon Eyre, 1261', II, nos. 157, 658; *Rot. Hund.* II, 734.

⁸ TNA, E 179/161/9; above, econ. hist.

⁹ Above, econ. hist. (agric. landscape).

¹⁰ Above, landscape etc. (popn; settlement); econ. hist.; below, relig. hist.

¹¹ *Poll Taxes 1377–81*, ed. Fenwick, II, 333 (Shepherd, Wisdom, Toly/Toky); TNA, E 179/161/170; E 179/161/177; E 179/161/194; E 179/161/175.

¹² Above, landownership; below.

¹³ *Cal. Pat.* 1364–7, 435–6; E.G. Kimball (ed.), *Oxon. Sessions of the Peace* (ORS 53, 1983), pp. 65 and 85–6 (giving both Kiddington and Kidlington).

of receiving poachers and deer carcasses at the rectory house. Villagers were also accused of regularly carrying off large quantities of fire- or fencing wood.¹⁴

1520–1800

The 16th- and 17th-century population chiefly comprised the families of tenant yeomen and husbandmen, shading through to smallholders, labourers, and servants along with a few craftsmen. Some tenants (particularly in the 16th century) were sheep-farmers on a large scale, involved in enclosure and engrossment, but others had much smaller holdings and some only cottages and common rights.¹⁵ Probate valuations in the later 16th century ranged from £3 to £133 (with an average of £38 and a median of £23), and those in the 17th century from c.£2 to over £300 (median £59); some of the largest valuations included substantial (and possibly irrecoverable) debts owed to the testator, however, while most wealth was in any case wrapped up in farm stock rather than disposable income.¹⁶ Luxuries were mentioned infrequently despite houses gradually becoming more elaborately furnished, so that by 1730 the farmer Ann Clements had ‘pictures’ in one of her two parlours and curtains in a bedroom.¹⁷ Even so most houses remained small, over three quarters of those taxed in 1662 possessing only one or two hearths.¹⁸ Long-lasting families included the Busbys, Colgroves, Franklins, Offields, Wests, and Slaymakers,¹⁹ though there was some movement between local villages, and many of the larger 18th-century farmers seem to have been relative newcomers.²⁰ Wills show connections with a range of places including Woodstock, Chipping Norton, Deddington, and Banbury, as well as with villages such as Glympton, Taston, Northmoor, Tew, and Combe.²¹

On a completely different social level were Kiddington’s resident lords the Babingtons and (from c.1609) the Brownes, occupying a mansion house taxed on 21 hearths.²² The Babingtons (until 1558 hereditary keepers of the old palace of Westminster and of the Fleet prison) took a close interest in Kiddington, promoting piecemeal enclosure and occasionally overseeing or witnessing tenants’ wills.²³ Sir William (d. 1577) was sheriff in 1574–5 and died

¹⁴ Schumer, *Oxon. Forests*, 22, 26, 65, 67, 82, 122.

¹⁵ Above, econ. hist. (Middle Ages; 1520–1800).

¹⁶ Based on 40 probate valns 1556–1730 in OHC, MSS Wills Oxon.

¹⁷ Ibid. MSS Wills Oxon. 178.168 (silver spoons, 1541); 122/3/40 (Clements).

¹⁸ TNA, E 179/255/3, f. 50; E 179/255/4, pt 1, f. 69.

¹⁹ e.g. TNA, E 179/161/177; E 179/161/194; *Prot. Retns*, 130; OHC, QSD/E/I, pp. 99–104, 230–3; QSD/L/172–3; *ibid.* MSS Wills Oxon.; *ibid.* par. reg. transcript.

²⁰ For migration, *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1589–93*, nos. 6, 35, 38, 81; 1592–6, nos. 58, 60; OHC, Cal QS, IV, pp. 470, 482, 517, 521, 675; *ibid.* PAR151/5/A3/13; PAR184/5/A3/3 [etc.].

²¹ e.g. OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 99.32; 185.112; 4/6/31; 153/3/51; 298/3/11.

²² Above, landownership; TNA, E 179/255/4, pt 1, f. 69.

²³ *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, II, pp. 30–1; *Cal. Pat.* 1553–4, 443; 1557–8, 229, 311; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 182.43; 299/3/6; above, econ. hist.

probably of gaol fever contracted at the Oxford 'Black Assize', although his widow converted to Catholicism and became a prominent recusant, along with some of her descendants.²⁴ The aristocratically-related Brownes (to whom the Babingtons sold the manor) were Catholics until their departure in the early 19th century, forming part of a wider network of local Catholic gentry families, maintaining a Catholic chapel in the manor house, and by the 18th century attracting a wider Catholic presence amongst their tenantry, albeit mostly cottagers and craftsmen rather than large farmers.²⁵ As Catholics and Royalists they suffered doubly during the Civil War and Interregnum, when the estate was kept together through the efforts of Margaret Browne and her mother-in-law Dame Elizabeth, after Margaret's husband Peter was fatally wounded at the battle of Naseby leaving her with a young family to support.²⁶ Their son Henry (d. 1689), made a baronet at the Restoration,



Browne family memorials in Kiddington church: that on the left listing successive family members from Henry (d.1639) through to the 1750s, and that on the right commemorating two children who died in infancy in 1764 and 1770.

served as sheriff in 1687–9, when his pro-Catholic and Jacobite sympathies attracted comment from Anthony Wood.²⁷ Meanwhile he paid close attention to Kiddington, enclosing the parish, buying up some of the few remaining freeholds, and reportedly rebuilding Kiddington Hall.²⁸ Relations with tenants seem generally to have been amicable, although in 1689 one claimed that Henry's widow Dame Frances had deprived him of the tenancy of the Chequers inn because (in his role as parish constable) he had had to search the manor house on account of their recusancy.²⁹ Two or three 'gentlemen' mentioned in the 17th

²⁴ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 94 (misdating the Assize); Davidson, 'Cath. Oxon.', 150–8, 310; below, relig. hist.

²⁵ Davidson, 'Cath. Oxon.', 90–8, 310, 581–2; below, relig. hist. Hen. Browne (d.1639), a son of the 1st Vct Montagu, married Rob. Catesby's sister Anne, but avoided any implication in the Gunpowder Plot.

²⁶ OHC, B.IV/1–8; TNA, C 5/430/22; above, landownership; econ. hist.

²⁷ Brunner and Lunt, *Sheriffs*, 130; *Wood's Life*, III, 260; OHC, B.V/1–6 (shrievalty); B.IV/9–12 (recusancy fines).

²⁸ Above, landownership; econ. hist.

²⁹ TNA, C 5/97/79.

century were either wealthy farmers, or associates (and possibly high-ranking servants) of the Brownes.³⁰

By the 18th century some larger tenant farms were emerging, with (as earlier) the most prominent farmers regularly filling parish offices such as that of churchwarden.³¹ Kiddington Hall saw some modernization and extensive landscaping, probably overseen (at least in part) by the long-lived Lady Barbara Mostyn (née Browne), who held the estate for half a century with her husbands Sir Edward Mostyn, Bt (who brought additional estates in Flintshire) and Edward Gore. The family (who despite their Catholicism continued to support the neighbouring parish church) had wide social connections, Barbara's stepmother Frances enjoying a close friendship with Horace Walpole, although claims that Sir George Browne (d. 1754) was the model for Sir Plume in Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712) are probably mistaken.³² Social life within the wider parish focused probably on the Chequers at Over Kiddington (where an armed highway robber was apprehended in 1782), and in the 1780s Kiddington wake was held on the Sunday after the feast of St Peter (1 August).³³ Occasional parish perambulations brought together lord, rector, and leading farmers, who presumably also met at regular vestry meetings.³⁴

Since 1800

Kiddington remained an estate parish throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, with most of the population either estate tenants or employees, and resident owners playing a prominent local role.³⁵ Charles Browne-Mostyn (1752–1844) ran the estate from 1801 (when Lady Mostyn moved away), farming, socializing with neighbours (including the earls of Shrewsbury at nearby Heythrop), supporting a school, and hunting and shooting,³⁶ although from 1816 he intermittently let the house fully furnished, latterly to the Webbs.³⁷ Mortimer

³⁰ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 296/3/35; 149/4/1; TNA, PROB 11/200/371. A later 'gentleman' was Thos Tidmarsh (d. 1775), the prosperous tenant of the Chequers: TNA, PROB 11/1018/22; OHC, QSD/E/I, p. 231; QSD/V/1.

³¹ e.g. *Prot. Retns*, 130; OHC, MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 79, ff. 248–89 (also incl. the publican Thos Tidmarsh).

³² L.G. Wickham Legg (ed.), *Tusmore Papers* (ORS 20, 1939), 40, 47–8, 50, 53, 78–80; Leics., Leicester and Rutland RO, DG39/1404–5; DG39/1405; DG39/1432; above, landownership; below, relig. hist.

³³ Oxf. Jnl Syn. 2 Jan. 1782; Warton, *Kiddington* (1783 edn), 1. Asterleigh's medieval church had been dedicated to St Peter: below, relig. hist.

³⁴ OHC, par. reg. transcript, miscellanea (app. A); *ibid.* PAR150/17/MS1/1; below, local govt.

³⁵ *Gore's Visit*. 196; above, landownership; econ. hist.

³⁶ Corresp. in Leics., Leicester and Rutland RO, DG39, summarized at <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk> (accessed July 2023); below (educ.). Lady Mostyn (d. 1810) moved to Oxford then Woodstock.

³⁷ *Oxf. Jnl*, 14 Sept. 1816, 9 Aug. 1823, 10 and 24 Nov. 1827, 7 Aug 1830; *Northampton Mercury*, 7 Feb. 1824, 2 Jan. 1836.

Ricardo (owner c.1840–55) rebuilt and relandscaped the house, contributed to church improvements (despite a difficult relationship with the rector), and built a new cottage row in Over Kiddington, but sold up following his wife Katherine's death in 1854 at the age of only 37, preceded by her brother three years earlier.³⁸ His successor Henry Lomax Gaskell (d. 1889), son of a Wigan solicitor,³⁹ built several new houses, a new school, and probably a village water fountain, although his philanthropy belied a difficult and irascible temperament, and c.1870 he ordered the Chequers' closure reportedly to prevent his sons drinking there. After his death the house was let until his son Capt. Henry Brooks Gaskell and his family moved back c.1902, followed from 1907 by Henry Melville (Hal) Gaskell (d. 1954), a talented painter and (like his father and grandfather) a local JP.⁴⁰



Memorials in Kiddington church's south chapel to Mortimer Ricardo's wife Katherine (d.1854, age 37), and to Capt. Henry Brooks Gaskell (d.1907) and his wife Helen May (d. 1940).

The wider community comprised estate staff and servants, tenant farmers, landless labourers, and a few craftsmen or shopkeepers.⁴¹ In 1861 over 45 per cent were still native to the parish, with several more from nearby villages, although a few (including leading farmers, the schoolmaster, and many estate staff) came from as far as Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, and Wales or Scotland.⁴² One native inhabitant was the shoemaker George Busby (d. 1899), who published poems on local historical themes.⁴³ Poor rates were relatively low, although a Kiddington branch of the National Agricultural Labourer's Union sought wage increases in 1872,⁴⁴ while petty crime

³⁸ Above, landscape etc. (built character); landownership; below, relig. hist.; memorials in church.

³⁹ For an evocative account of the Kiddington Gaskells, J. Dimpleby, *A Profound Secret: May Gaskell, Her Daughter Amy, and Edward Burne-Jones* (2005 edn).

⁴⁰ Above, landscape etc. (built character); landownership; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns); OHC, par. reg. transcripts; Dimpleby, *Secret*, esp. 65–9, 74–86, 113–14, 284–90, 419–20.

⁴¹ Above, econ. hist.

⁴² TNA, RG 9/902. For migration, cf. OHC, QS1831/1/A4/6; QS1831/3/A4/21; QS1857/4/A9/1; QS1865/1/A7/1.

⁴³ Bodl. GA Oxon. c 317/10 [1]; Geo. Busby of Kiddington, *Oxon. Village Rhymes* (1899): copy in Bodl. GA Oxon. 8° 963; cf. *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883–95 edns); OHC, par. reg. transcript.

⁴⁴ P. Horn (ed.), *Agric. Trade Unionism in Oxon. 1872–81* (ORS 48, 1974), 23, 37; below (welfare).

included poaching and occasional thefts.⁴⁵ Social events at Kiddington Hall included a cricket match in 1863 and a bazaar in support of the church in 1897, followed by a concert in the school.⁴⁶ A village band was mentioned in 1882 (when it accompanied harvest festival celebrations),⁴⁷ and by the early 20th century there was an annual flower show.⁴⁸ A reading room was opened in a prefabricated hut near the school before 1911,⁴⁹ although the parish's few shops and services remained concentrated at Over Kiddington near the Chipping Norton road.⁵⁰



The reading room and cookery school, opened by 1911.

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The First World War brought refugees to the area,⁵¹ and up to five parishioners were killed in action, Hal Gaskell subsequently insisting that soldiers who had survived should also be named on the church memorial plaque.⁵² His mother Helen Mary (May) Gaskell established the War Library, a national scheme providing reading material for wounded soldiers, for which she earned a CBE. Earlier, she had organized village industries for young men and women in the Kiddington area.⁵³ Village allotments existed by the 1920s,⁵⁴ and the inter-war period saw much continuity despite the loss of village crafts and falling agricultural employment. Social events were still held in the school,⁵⁵ and the reading room and flower shows continued, while a Women's Institute branch (chaired by Mrs Gaskell) was formed in 1923, meeting initially in the reading room and later in Kiddington Hall. During the Second World War it admitted evacuees and organized knitting and salvage schemes to support the

⁴⁵ e.g. OHC, QS1835/4/L1/52; QS1836/1/L4/1; QS1839/1/L3/16; QS1856/2/L3/1.

⁴⁶ *Oxf. Jnl*, 22 Aug. 1863; flier in Bodl. GA Oxon. c. 317/10 [1]. The hosts in 1897 were the Hall's lessees the Thurburns.

⁴⁷ *Oxf. Jnl*, 29 July 1882 (drum and fife band); 7 Oct. 1882 (harvest festival).

⁴⁸ OHC, POX0047090 and POX0047092; Dimpleby, *Secret*, 418.

⁴⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1911 and later edns); OHC, POX0165445–6.

⁵⁰ Above, econ. hist. (non-agric.).

⁵¹ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1873, Vct Dillon to bp of Oxford 14 Apr. 1921.

⁵² *Ibid.* c 1872, corresp. 1919–20; memorial plaque in church (naming two fatalities, though a separate Roll of Honour lists three more).

⁵³ *The Times*, 8 Nov. 1940; Dimpleby, *Secret*, 365, 368, 371–2, 386–7, 401–2. For her relationship with the painter Edward Burne-Jones (d. 1898), *ibid.* 20–2, 121–227.

⁵⁴ OHC, Woot. P.C. III/vi/1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* S150/1/A1/1, s.a. 1928–30.

war effort.⁵⁶ The estate remained intact following its purchase in 1953 by the chartered accountant Sir Laurence Robson (d. 1982) and his Swedish wife Inga-Stina (d. 1999), a leading Liberal politician and long-serving magistrate, who established the Kiddington Hall Conference Centre. In 1974 she became Baroness Robson of Kiddington, speaking for the Liberals in the House of Lords.⁵⁷

At its sale in 2009–10 the estate was still marketed as ‘a real estate with all ... that implies, including a grand main house, historic landscaped gardens and parkland, in-hand and tenanted farms, 39 estate houses including most of the village ... and an excellent private shoot ... all in Heythrop Hunt country’.⁵⁸ Following the estate’s division into two parts, Over Kiddington (where properties were let commercially) reportedly acquired a more transitory population, while Nether Kiddington was said to be populated by owner-occupiers and families who showed a stronger sense of community and often attended church services.⁵⁹ The school, shops and post office had all closed, however, and the WI branch was suspended in 2004,⁶⁰ while a building behind the Chequers, used as a village hall by the 1940s, was converted to domestic use c.2015 after many years standing empty.⁶¹ Difficulties over car access to the church (via the Kiddington Hall driveway) prompted brief controversy in 2021, although the Hall’s owner Jemima Goldsmith was acknowledged to be supportive.⁶² The parish’s population as a whole remained overwhelmingly White British, with over half of those employed engaged in managerial, professional, or skilled occupations. The very low proportion of home ownership (7.7 per cent) presumably reflected the estate’s continuing dominance, although another 10 per cent occupied social accommodation.⁶³

Education

A school taught by the miller’s wife was mentioned in 1682, and John Cudworth (rector 1687–1729) ran a school in the rectory house, albeit aimed at ‘the best families of the neighbourhood’ rather than at village children.⁶⁴ A short-lived Roman Catholic school was

⁵⁶ Ibid. O3/2/69/A1/1; O3/2/69/PR1/1; O3/2/69/MS1/2; Dimpleby, *Secret*, 418; *Kelly’s Dir. Oxon.* (1920–39 edns).

⁵⁷ Above, landownership; *ODNB*, s.v. Robson [née Arvidsson], Inga-Stina, Baroness Robson of Kiddington (accessed May 2024).

⁵⁸ *Country Life*, 9 Sept. 2009, pp. 112–113.

⁵⁹ ‘Parish Profile: The Parish of Wootton, Glympton and Kiddington’ [c.2024] (PDF accessed online May 2024).

⁶⁰ OHC, O3/2/69/A2/9; above, econ. hist (non-agric.); below (educ.).

⁶¹ OHC, O3/2/69/A1/1, 10 Jan. 1949, 9 Feb. 1953; WODC online planning docs, 15/03005/FUL (accessed Jan. 2025).

⁶² *Daily Mail*, 19 Oct. 2021; *The Telegraph*, 19 Oct. 2021.

⁶³ *Census*, 2021 (online datasets).

⁶⁴ *Bp Fell and Nonconf.* 35; Warton, *Kiddington* (1783 edn), 10.

noted in 1759,⁶⁵ but no other provision is known until 1808 when a small unendowed school taught c.25 children reading, the catechism, and (for girls) needlework.⁶⁶ The rector J.G. Browne opened a second school in a barn at the rectory house c.1826, and by 1831 (when the original school was supported by Charles Browne-Mostyn) the two together provided for 46 children, which was thought adequate. Books provided for children were 'eagerly read', although there was no formal parish lending library.⁶⁷ The rector's day (though not Sunday) school may have closed by 1833, and in the early 1850s Mortimer Ricardo and his wife supported a day school held in an estate cottage in Nether Kiddington.⁶⁸ That was reopened as a mixed National school in 1856, in new Gothic-style premises built by Henry Lomax Gaskell: the buildings included a teacher's house and had accommodation for 85, although attendance was initially under 30, rising to c.50 by the 1890s. The school received government grants supplemented by pence and voluntary contributions, and was subject to inspection,⁶⁹ although the Gaskells retained ownership, managing the premises through a small local management group which they chaired. It became a county council school in 1920–1, though still leased from the Gaskells until 1939 when H.M. Gaskell sold the freehold.⁷⁰



Kiddington school, built by Henry Lomax Gaskell in 1856; the adjoining teacher's house is on the left.

The school saw a fairly rapid turnover of staff,⁷¹ and early reports were varied: in 1904 the inspector thought school discipline excessive, and though a new head was making 'excellent progress' in 1911 the infant room was too small. The main classroom, too, was dark and poorly ventilated a few years later. Cookery classes (held in the same prefabricated building which housed the parish reading room) were laid on by 1911, but in 1920 the school

⁶⁵ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, f. 65v.; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 79, f. 266.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 707, ff.167–168v.; c 433, f. 126.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* c 2202, no. 30; b 38, ff. 124–5.

⁶⁸ *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (1835), p. 749; *Billing's Dir. Oxon.* (1854); OHC, 234/A and 234/M, no. 174.

⁶⁹ *Retns Relating to Parishes* (Parl. Papers 1867–8 (114), liii), pp. 342–3; *Retn Public Elem. Schools* (Parl Papers 1877 [C 1882], lxvii), pp. 214–15; *Schools in Recpt of Parl. Grants* (Parl. Papers 1898 [C 8989], lxi), p. 199; for bldg, NHLE, no. 1053096; above, landscape etc. (built character).

⁷⁰ TNA, ED 21/38010; ED 21/59606; OHC, S150/1/A1/1; *ibid.* CC4/125/23.

⁷¹ e.g. *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1864–77 edns); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883–1939 edns).

still suffered from high staff turnover and inadequate premises.⁷² Children over 11 were transferred to Enstone school in 1926 and to Charlbury in 1932, and by 1930 the roll at Kiddington was only 23, prompting appointment of an uncertificated teacher.⁷³ By 1936 the school's future (despite its 'very pleasant tone') was uncertain, the options considered including rebuilding or repair by the LEA, or conversion to a Church school.⁷⁴ In the event it continued as a local authority primary school, which fended off a threat of closure in 1976 but was finally shut in 1987.⁷⁵ The main school building later housed a private kindergarten which closed in 2015, after which it was converted into a private house.⁷⁶

Adult evening and bible classes were provided by the rector in 1884, but were apparently short-lived.⁷⁷

Welfare

One-off bequests to the poor were made occasionally from the mid 16th century, amongst them two strikes of wheat to those with no plough (1558), £10 from the lord Henry Browne (d. 1639), a 12d. loaf to each poor family (1768), and gifts of £5 and 5 gns each from the innkeeper Thomas Tidmarsh (d. 1775) and the farmer George Bustin (d. 1778).⁷⁸ Offertory money was distributed to poor (Protestant) families with the churchwardens' consent, and by 1831 was merged with an unspecified sum distributed in winter flannels. Kiddington acquired no endowed charities, however, and poor relief was otherwise funded from the parish rates.⁷⁹ The parish built two cottages on the 'waste' c.1736 (later occupied by poor widows),⁸⁰ and in 1775–6 spent £35 5s. 6d. on poor relief, including £2 2s. on accommodation. In line with national trends that rose to £90 by 1785 and to c.£143 by 1803, when 16 adults and 27 children received out relief. By 1813 expenditure (excluding legal costs) was over £200, benefiting 18 people excluding children, and in 1819 a total of £274

⁷² Corresp. and reports: TNA, ED 21/14478; ED 21/38010; OHC, CC4/125/10–13; plans and photos: OHC, CC4/125/27–37.

⁷³ OHC, S150/1/A1/1, *passim*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* CC4/125/13; TNA, ED 21/59606, memo 20 Feb. 1936.

⁷⁵ *Oxf. Mail*, 16 July 1976, and *Oxf. Times*, 4 Jan. 1980: cuttings in OHC, KIDD/372; <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/129750> (accessed Nov. 2024). From 1932 it also took some Glympton children: *VCH Oxon.* XI, 131.

⁷⁶ WODC online planning docs, 08/1803/P/LB; 15/04251/FUL; www.cotswoldsaway.co.uk (all accessed Jan. 2025). The adjoining teacher's house remained separate.

⁷⁷ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. c 350, f. 227v.; c 365, f. 226v. A schoolroom at the rectory ho. was mentioned in 1903: *ibid.* B28/1/F1/58.

⁷⁸ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 183.405; 115/3/8; 99.32; TNA, PROB 11/944/255; PROB 11/1018/22; PROB 11/1509/401 (£20 from Dame Barbara Mostyn, d. 1810).

⁷⁹ *Secker's Visit.* 89; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, ff. 67v.–68; b 38, ff.124–5. Asterleigh (viewed as extra-parochial) paid no poor rates: TNA, IR 18/7727, 30 Nov. 1848; below, *relig. hist.* (endowment).

⁸⁰ OHC, Cal. QS, III, p. 483; *ibid.* QSD/E/I, p. 233. (Not identifiable in 1851: *ibid.* 234/A.)

was raised. Thereafter costs fell off intermittently,⁸¹ and in the late 1820s advertisements for tenant farms emphasized the parish's relatively low poor rates, a reflection, presumably, of the estate's control over housing and thus immigration.⁸²

In 1835 responsibility passed to the new Woodstock Poor Law Union, from whose workhouse several parishioners were returned for burial over the following decades.⁸³ Parish poor rates, meanwhile, were collected on the usual pattern until national reorganization in 1925,⁸⁴ accompanied by occasional philanthropic gifts, as when the Hall's incoming tenants the Thurburns gave each cottager five hundredweight of coal in 1894.⁸⁵ No Friendly Societies were established, and in the 19th and early 20th centuries the nearest recorded medical care was in Charlbury or Enstone.⁸⁶

⁸¹ *Poor Abstract*, 1777, p. 437; 1787, p. 656; 1804, pp. 406–7; 1818, p. 354; *Poor Rate Retns*, 1822, p. 136; 1825, p. 172; 1830–1, p. 159; 1835, p. 154. For removals, e.g. OHC, Cal. QS, IV, pp. 470, 517, 675.

⁸² *Oxf. Jnl*, 7 June 1828, 21 Aug. 1830; *Oxon. Atlas*, p. 117 (showing labour deficit); above, landownership; econ. hist.

⁸³ *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 144–5; OHC, par. reg. transcript, burials 8 Mar. 1838, 18 June 1839, 15 Jan. 1880, 11 Mar. 1885 etc.

⁸⁴ TNA, ED 21/14478, Union of Kiddington and Asterleigh Civil Parishes (1895); OHC, Woot. P.C. II/vi/1 (rate bk 1921); Rating and Valn Act, 1925, c. 90.

⁸⁵ *Oxf. Jnl*, 24 Nov. 1894.

⁸⁶ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1847 and later edns); *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns); above, Enstone, social hist. (welfare).