

VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Kingham

Social History

Social Character and Communal Life

The Middle Ages

Until the mid 14th century Kingham's lords were generally resident, occupying the moated manor house on the village's north-western edge.¹ Philip de Mandeville maintained a prison there in the 1230s--40s, and his brother and heir William was also 'of Kingham', possibly sharing the house with Philip's widow Bibelisa, who held a part of the manor in dower.² William's brother-in-law Ralph Carbonel was probably resident in the 1260s,³ and following the manor's division the Chastilun and Flambard families may have both resided for a brief period.⁴ The manor house passed apparently to the Chastiluns, however, who received licence to crenellate in 1347 and a grant of free warren (allowing hunting of small game) in 1355.⁵ Litigation over the manor erupted after Bibelisa de Mandeville's death in 1258, when the earl of Hereford (as overlord) attempted to seize a third of the manor in wardship,⁶ and in the 1330s Ralph Chastilun, his son Gilbert, and their supporters became embroiled in violent conflicts with the lords of neighbouring Churchill, resulting in Ralph allegedly killing their hayward.⁷ The Mandevilles' prison at Kingham was probably short-lived,⁸ although a man accused of theft escaped from it c.1241, claiming sanctuary in Kingham church.⁹

Amongst the wider population, around two thirds of the manor's tenants by the 1270s were unfree villeins. Most held yardlands or half-yardlands for cash rents only, having agreed with the Mandevilles to commute their labour services and other customary dues for increased payments of 16s. per yardland, an amount said to far exceed the value of the

¹ Above, landownership (manor ho.).

² *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, no. 1024; New Coll. Arch. 11773; A.H. Hershey (ed.), *Special Eyre Rolls of Hugh Bigod 1258--60*, II (Selden Soc. 133, 2021), pp. 384--5.

³ TNA, JUST 1/703, m. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.* E 179/161/9; above, landownership.

⁵ *Cal. Pat.* 1345--8, 218; *Cal. Chart.* 1341--1417, 147.

⁶ Hershey (ed.), *Special Eyre Rolls*, II, pp. 384--5.

⁷ *Cal. Close* 1333--7, 597; *Cal. Pat.* 1334--8, 355, 508; 1340--3, 447; above, Churchill, social hist. (Middle Ages).

⁸ Cf. R.B. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England* (1968), 87--97.

⁹ *Oxon. Eyre, 1241*, no. 1024. For a later claim of sanctuary in the church, TNA, JUST 1/703, m. 4.

former works and customs. The manor's freeholders, amongst them the blacksmith and miller, each held two yardlands or less, mostly for low or nominal rents, although a few paid the villeins' rate of 16s. per yardland, suggesting recent manumission.¹⁰ Richard de Matham, the only free tenant holding by knight service, was one of a long-standing Kingham family who gave land to Bruern abbey,¹¹ while Ralph of Debden (most likely an Essex man with links to the church's patron Walden abbey) apparently had his own sub-tenants.¹² An unspecified holding forfeited by a Kingham man hanged for theft was earlier bestowed on a royal huntsman.¹³ Early 14th-century subsidy rolls suggest only moderate prosperity, with three quarters of taxpayers in 1306 paying less than 2s., and in 1327 a third of the total was paid by the Chastilun and Flambard lords and by one other inhabitant, the remaining 29 taxpayers paying between 12d. and 3s. 6d.¹⁴ Families such as the Franklins, Partricks, and Tolcocks remained for several generations, although many other names appeared more fleetingly, implying a fairly rapid turnover. Tenants' bynames suggest immigration from Cornwell, Sarsden, Oddington (Glos.), and Greatworth (Northants.).¹⁵

The Black Death and later outbreaks of plague reduced population, and further change followed the Flambards' and Chastiluns' replacement as lords by the non-resident Beaufeus (of Barford St John) and New College, Oxford.¹⁶ From the 1390s New College let its manor to Robert (and later Richard) Gurgan, who collected tenants' rents and held the manor courts. The college nonetheless invested heavily in improving manorial buildings and (to a lesser extent) maintaining tenants' houses, and college members visited regularly. A reduction in the Gurgans' rent suggests ongoing difficulties in filling vacant tenancies, and some tenant buildings fell out of use.¹⁷ Even so the manor provided a regular income which the college protected against claims by the rival Beaufeu lords. In the late 15th century the Beaufeus' lessee admitted illegally cutting furze on the college's ground, and around the same time the Beaufeus attempted unsuccessfully to enclose land adjoining Bury Pen close, which Kingham's inhabitants claimed as a right of way.¹⁸ Claimants to the Beaufeu manor were themselves in dispute during the minority of Humphrey Beaufeu's son in 1485.¹⁹

1500--1800

¹⁰ *Rot. Hund.* II, 733; above, econ. hist. (non-agric.).

¹¹ TNA, C 146/10551; *ibid.* E 179/161/8--10; *ibid.* E 210/3934; *ibid.* E 326/8553; *ibid.* JUST 1/700, m. 5; New Coll. Arch. 11774; 11793; 11799; *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, 140.

¹² *Rot. Hund.* II, 733 ('participes'); for the family, *Oxon. Fines*, 207; TNA, E 179/161/8.

¹³ *Close* 1234--7, 87, 112; cf. *Rot. Hund.* II, 733 (Rob. le Venur).

¹⁴ TNA, E 179/161/9--10; Glasscock (ed.), *Subsidy 1334*, 236.

¹⁵ *Rot. Hund.* II, 733; TNA, E 179/161/8--10; *Cal. Close* 1323--7, 310; *Cal. Pat.* 1334--8, 355.

¹⁶ Above, landscape etc. (popn); landownership.

¹⁷ New Coll. Arch. 6583; 6585--6; below (1500--1800).

¹⁸ New Coll. Arch. 11772; 3819, p. 415.

¹⁹ TNA, C 1/76/35; above, landownership.

Kingham's lords and principal landowners remained non-resident throughout the period, New College exercising its lordship through its officials and through periodic visitations by the warden and fellows. Entry fines and heriots were collected at its manor courts (held by the steward), which oversaw admission of new tenants, building repair and maintenance (for which timber was regularly provided), and agricultural offences.²⁰ The courts also had a social side, the warden on one occasion offering the members of the homage a glass of ale in the parlour before dismissing them.²¹ The college let the demesne farm at 20-year terms, resident lessees including Michael Young in the 1540s--60s and Anthony Bromsgrove in the 1620s--40s,²² while a later Michael Young (d. 1648) and Bromsgrove's son-in-law Richard Archbould (d. 1670) both served as college bailiff.²³ The college sought to maintain its rights against other landowners and to resolve tenant disputes, one particularly contentious issue being the college's granting of a copyhold to the tenant of a cottage built on the waste, which some freeholders alleged in 1670 had been built at the parish's expense. The objections were led by the bailiff and tenants of the Ramsdens (as absentee lords of the other main Kingham manor), and by the troublesome John Barber, who owned an alleged manor and who constantly challenged the college through minor trespasses and complaints.²⁴

Prominent tenant families in the 16th century included the Horleys, Kerwoods, Maysmores, Newmans, and Wrigges, all of them taxpayers in the 1540s when individuals' goods were assessed at between £1 and £10, with a median of £4.²⁵ Probate valuations over the period 1544--74 varied even more widely from £5--£60, although again with a modest median of £14 10s.²⁶ Several of the parish's wealthier inhabitants were among those called to serve as archers or billmen in 1542, when the parish also furnished an armed archer on horseback.²⁷ William Hale (d. 1551) left goods worth an above-average £20, though after his debts and legacies were paid (including to nine children) his widow Joan's second husband William Clark claimed that she was left with barely 8s. The marriage ended in separation, Clark alleging that he had married Joan only because she threatened to abort their unborn child, and admitting that he had once struck her on the ear.²⁸ Ralph Walter, one of a well-off Kingham family, was excommunicated in the 1580s for entering into an

²⁰ New Coll. Arch. 3797--8; *Woodward's Progress*, 46--70; below, local govt (manor courts).

²¹ *Woodward's Progress*, 59 (at harvest time).

²² Bodl. MSS Ch. Oxon. 1404--38; 1441--6.

²³ New Coll. Arch. 3809; 3811--12; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 300/7/10; above, landownership (manor ho.).

²⁴ *Woodward's Progress*, 46--70, esp. 61--4; above, landownership.

²⁵ TNA, E 179/162/227.

²⁶ Based on 17 surviving inventories in OHC, MSS Wills Oxon., Kingham wills.

²⁷ P.C. Beauchamp (ed.), *Oxon. Muster Rolls 1539--69* (ORS 60, 1996), 40.

²⁸ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 180.75; TNA, E 179/162/227; *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1570--4*, pp. 21--2, 26.

unlicensed and possibly bigamous marriage at Longborough (Glos.), while other church court cases involved unpaid mortuary dues and neglecting the upkeep of Kingham church.²⁹

Kingham's leading yeomen shared in the growing prosperity of the period, the sheep-and-corn farmer John Powis (d. 1608) furnishing a hall, parlour, and chambers, and leaving goods worth £171,³⁰ compared with a parish median of £40 for the years 1584--1616.³¹ The median fell to c.£28 over the period 1618--48, when most inhabitants occupied very modest houses, more than three fifths of them taxed in 1662 on only one or two hearths, and just eight (including that of John Powis's descendant Edward) taxed on four or more.³² During the Civil War New College's gentleman lessee Anthony Bromsgrove and the well-off college freeholder John Allen actively supported the king, while the rector George Morecroft was ejected by Parliament before resecuring the benefice through force.³³ Differing views may be reflected in the name of an alehouse closed shortly before 1664, housed in a building known as New England, presumably from the Puritan colony in America.³⁴

Thomas Hacker's arrival as lessee of New College's manor in 1671 and the institution of the rector William Dowdeswell in 1680 introduced two new long-standing, wealthy, and influential families to the parish,³⁵ Hacker (d. 1688) being followed by his sister Elizabeth (d. 1697), son Richard (d. 1715), and grandson Thomas (d. 1734), all of whom lived in Kingham.³⁶ Other families remaining for several generations included the Boulters, Eatons, Farrands, and Gilletts.³⁷ The median value of inhabitants' probate inventories rose from £40 during the period 1662--89 to £74 in 1690--1712,³⁸ although inequalities may have widened, Richard Eaton (d. 1693), who held a quarter-yardland on New College's manor at the ancient customary rent of 5s., leaving goods worth only £9, whereas his contemporary William Farrand (d. 1676), with 2¼ yardlands, left goods worth £121.³⁹ As elsewhere parish officers such as churchwarden, overseer of the poor, constable, and fieldsman were filled from among the leading landholders, while parish rates funded maintenance of the village pound and commons as well as parish poor relief, including settlement and removal orders.⁴⁰ Communal pastimes included a village wake on Easter Monday, and though there were no

²⁹ E.R. Brinkworth (ed.), *The Archdeacon's Court: Liber Actorum, 1584*, I (ORS 23, 1942), pp. 46, 52--3, 55, 58--9; *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1570--4*, pp. 33--4; 1603--6, pp. 22--5; below, relig. hist. (relig. life).

³⁰ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 50/3/16; TNA, C 142/304/5; above, econ. hist. (16th cent. to parl. enclo.).

³¹ OHC, Kingham wills and inventories (median based on 29 inventories).

³² *Ibid.* (based on 37 inventories); TNA, E 179/255/4.

³³ *Cal. Cttee for Compounding*, III, 2209; below, relig. hist. (relig. life).

³⁴ *Woodward's Progress*, 56.

³⁵ Bodl. MSS Ch. Oxon. 1465--6; 1479; 1495--6; 1501--2; 1507--8; below, relig. hist.

³⁶ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 34/3/28; 34/5/17; 133/5/1; TNA, PROB 11/663/405; *Par. Colln*, II, 195.

³⁷ OHC, par. reg. transcript; *ibid.* MSS Wills Oxon., Kingham wills.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Kingham wills and inventories (medians based on 19 and 11 inventories respectively).

³⁹ *Ibid.* MSS Wills Oxon. 20/5/5; 23/3/2; New Coll. Arch. 4781; 3809--12.

⁴⁰ OHC, PAR154/4/F1/1; PAR154/5/A1/1; PAR154/5/F1/1; PAR154/6/F1/1; PAR154/8/F1/1; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 64--73, 78--86, 134--5, 142--3.

pubs in 1664 two existed by the 1750s.⁴¹ The quarter sessions dealt with routine cases of assault, theft, recovery of impounded livestock, bastardy, and drunkenness, whilst more seriously, in 1766, the assize court sentenced Anne Lamphrey (b. 1738) and her mother Mary to death for the murder of Anne's illegitimate daughter.⁴²

Since 1800

In the continued absence of resident lords, the leading inhabitants in the early 19th century were the rector and principal tenant farmers.⁴³ New College retained a close interest, though by the 1870s its estate was much reduced by sales, and its lordship was increasingly nominal.⁴⁴ More influential was the landowner and incumbent John Lockwood (rector 1836--79), who was wrongly identified as lord and 'squire' and whose authority was reportedly unquestioned until the establishment of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in the 1870s.⁴⁵ Lockwood chaired the parish vestry meetings at which parish officers were appointed, and was succeeded as chairman by his son Samuel (rector 1880--1911), whose influence was such that a meeting in 1885 was adjourned because of his absence.⁴⁶ The Lockwoods were overshadowed from the late 19th century by the self-styled squire Charles Baring Young (d. 1928) of Daylesford, who established Kingham Hill school and whose contributions included repairs to the church tower and bells, provision of garden allotments, and (in 1910) construction of a new village hall and reading room (replacing one of Lockwood's).⁴⁷ Other well-off professional incomers included (by the 1860s) the explorer Lt-Col. John Barrow (d. 1898),⁴⁸ in 1873 the historian and ornithologist William Warde Fowler (d. 1921), a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, who published a study of Kingham,⁴⁹ and (c.1903) the journalist and essayist Basil de Sélincourt (d. 1966).⁵⁰

⁴¹ *Par. Colln*, II, 194; *Woodward's Progress*, 56; OHC, QSD/V/1 (run by Sam. Bennett and John Clemson).

⁴² OHC, Cal. QS, I, 136, 166, 284, 295; II, 20, 48, 50; IX, 71, 113; *Gloucester Jnl*, 10 Mar. 1766; 'A full and authentick narrative of that most cruel murder ... by Mary Lamphrey and Anne her daughter ... at Kenkam in Oxfordshire' (c.1770): copy in Bodl. Vet. A1 b.3 (60).

⁴³ Above, econ. hist. (16th cent. to parl. enclo.); below, relig. hist.

⁴⁴ New Coll. Arch. 1433; 7838; above, landownership; below, local govt.

⁴⁵ W. Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New: Studies in a Rural Parish* (1913), 81; above, landownership; below, relig. hist.

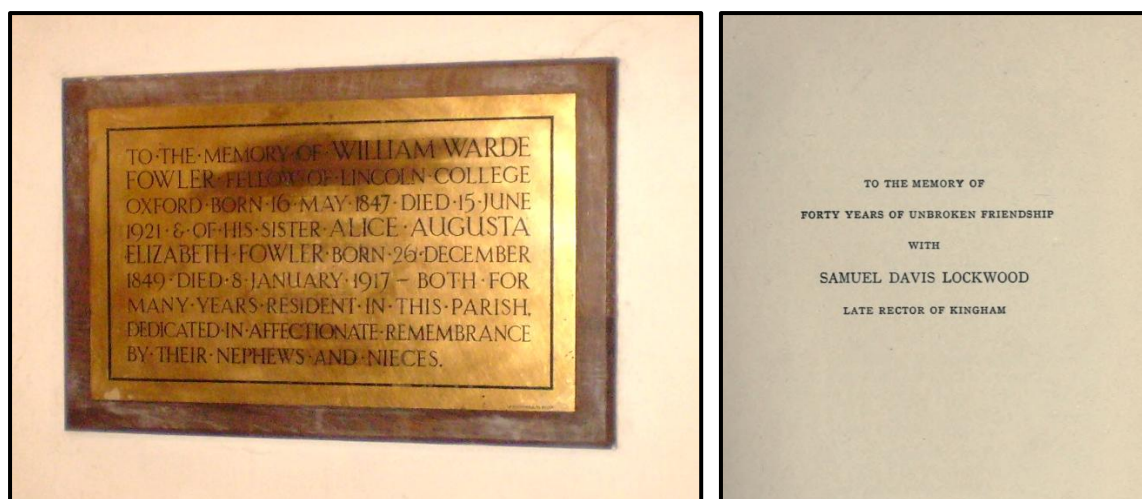
⁴⁶ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 104--7; below, local govt.

⁴⁷ R. Mann, 'Squire Young and Kingham Hill', in *Our Village: Kingham As It Used To Be* (1986), pp. 23--4: copy in OHC; *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1877); below (educ.; welfare); relig. hist.

⁴⁸ *PO Dir. Oxon.* (1869); *ODNB*, s.v. John Barrow (1808--98); Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*, 75--80; Bodl. MSS Eng. hist. d 18--81 (diaries).

⁴⁹ *ODNB*, s.v. Wm Warde Fowler; Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*.

⁵⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1903); Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 197.



*The memorial to William Warde Fowler (d. 1921) and his sister Alice in the parish church (left). Warde Fowler dedicated his book *Kingham Old and New: Studies in a Rural Parish* (1913) to the rector Samuel Lockwood (d. 1911).*

The bulk of the 19th-century population comprised agricultural labourers, domestic servants, and crafts- and tradespeople. Widespread poverty prompted the establishment of village Friendly Societies and several new charities,⁵¹ and was also reflected in petty theft: one labourer in 1829–30 was convicted of stealing apples, and others of illegally cutting wood, while thefts more generally caused a group of parish landholders in 1802 to combine to protect their property.⁵² Wages remained low until the foundation of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, which the rector deplored for rousing workers' discontent,⁵³ while enclosure in 1850 removed inhabitants' common rights. Some of those dispossessed briefly consulted a Chipping Norton lawyer, although Warde Fowler later alleged that the rights were of little value and that enclosure was generally unopposed.⁵⁴ By the early 20th century he discerned an improvement in workers' living conditions, reporting that rising wages, cheap goods, and declining consumption of alcohol minimized discontent and discouraged 'any hankering after a change of life', while a similar sentiment was expressed by a local stonemason, quoted as saying that 'now the working folks live as farmers did in my father's time', while 'farmers live like gentry'.⁵⁵ Warde Fowler's optimism was questioned even at the time, however, and not everyone prospered.⁵⁶ A shortage of adequate housing (which

⁵¹ Above, econ. hist.; below (welfare).

⁵² OHC, Cal. QS, IX, 349, 361; *Oxf. Jnl*, 13 Feb. 1802.

⁵³ Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*, 65–6, 72; OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 347, f. 245v.; P. Horn (ed.), *Agric. Trade Unionism in Oxon. 1872–81* (ORS 48, 1974), 31, 34, 53.

⁵⁴ M. Sturge Gretton, *A Corner of the Cotswolds* (1914), 69, 79; Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*, 54–72.

⁵⁵ Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*, 73–4, 204–7; M. Sturge Henderson, *Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire* (1902), 10.

⁵⁶ *Oxf. Chron.* 20 June 1913 (book review titled 'The Happy Village').

persisted even after the construction of the first council houses in 1920) compelled some families to live in grossly overcrowded cottages,⁵⁷ and petty crime (including poaching) continued alongside begging, vagabondage, and heavy weekend drinking.⁵⁸

In 1851 almost two thirds of Kingham's population had been born in the parish, and four fifths were native to Oxfordshire.⁵⁹ Long-standing families such as the Gilletts and Keens remained, although by the early 20th century, some formerly familiar surnames were disappearing, and Warde Fowler reckoned the population to be 'continually changing'.⁶⁰ In- and out-migration was encouraged by the advent of the railway, the onset of agricultural depression, and the opening of Kingham Hill school, and contributed to an altered social complexion in which fewer inhabitants were dependent on farm work.⁶¹ Communal life, in the absence of a resident lord, relied on the initiative of a few individuals, short-lived ventures including Lt-Col. Barrow's marching column of 'drill boys' and Margaret Munn's troop of Boy Scouts, both of which ended with the death or departure of their leaders.⁶² Longer-lasting organizations included cricket and football clubs (established by the 1870s and 1890s respectively, and periodically re-formed), a choral society (founded in 1919), and branches of the Women's Institute (1918) and British Legion (1929).⁶³ A Wesleyan Band of Hope promoted Temperance, and may have hastened the closure of two of the village's four 19th-century pubs (the Fox and Victoria Arms), leaving only the Mill inn and the Plough.⁶⁴ The latter hosted the village Friendly Society, which held its annual feast on Ascension Day, when a travelling fair and brass band (and possibly morris dancers) assembled on the green.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 2 Mar. 1898; *Cheltenham Chron.* 28 Oct. 1899; *Banbury Advertiser*, 24 Sept. 1903; OHC, RDC9/2/A1/4, p. 162; RDC9/2/A3/13, s.a. 1948.

⁵⁸ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 19 Oct. 1870, 24 Apr. 1884, 2 Mar. 1898; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 185, 198--9.

⁵⁹ TNA, HO 107/1732.

⁶⁰ OHC, par. reg. transcript; Warde Fowler, *Kingham Old and New*, 90.

⁶¹ TNA, RG 13/1398; R. Mann, *Kingham: A Farming Community*, 6: copy in OHC; above, econ. hist.; below (educ.).

⁶² Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 289--91; P. Horn (ed.), *Village Education in Nineteenth-Century Oxfordshire* (ORS 51, 1979), p. xl.

⁶³ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 293--303; *Oxf. Times*, 29 July 1876; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 23 Oct. 1895.

⁶⁴ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 185, 187; above, econ. hist. (non-agric.); below, relig. hist. (relig. life).

⁶⁵ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 25 May 1887, 3 June 1908; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 186--7; *Oxon. FS*, pp. 180--1; K. Chandler, *Morris Dancing in the English South Midlands, 1600--1900* (1993), 180; below (welfare).



The Royal British Legion Club hall (left) and a parish war memorial installed on the village green in 2000 (right).

Nine inhabitants were killed in the First World War (out of 96 who served), and two in the Second,⁶⁶ during which the parish hosted c.80 children evacuated from London's East End. Troops were billeted in village buildings and members of the Women's Land Army worked on local farms,⁶⁷ while the parish also suffered multiple air raids, albeit with no casualties.⁶⁸ A Brownie pack and a Girl Guide company formed in 1943 and 1944 continued in the 1980s--90s, when other clubs and societies catered for various age groups and interests. A few were of long standing, although the Women's Institute closed in 1995.⁶⁹ During the 1980s the resident population (excluding Kingham Hill boarding school) increased to c.700, and by 1992 three fifths of inhabitants had moved to the village in the previous 15 years. Local employment opportunities slowed the village's domination by commuters, second-home owners, and the retired, although lack of affordable housing forced many young families to leave despite the benefits of a housing association shared-ownership scheme, and by 1991 the proportion of over-50s had risen to two fifths.⁷⁰ Kingham's increasing social exclusivity was in line with that of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds in general and of neighbouring Daylesford in particular, where a successful farm shop opened in 2002,⁷¹ and in 2004 Kingham was voted 'England's favourite village' by *Country Life* magazine, its popular gastropubs adding to its high reputation 20 years later.⁷²

Education

⁶⁶ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 219--20; war memorial in church. A further 335 former pupils of Kingham Hill sch. served in World War I: A.F. Jarvis, *Fifty Years of Kingham Hill 1886--1936* (1936), 43.

⁶⁷ OHC, S154/1/A1/1; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 231--40.

⁶⁸ *Oxon. Atlas*, p. 155; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 252--3; below, relig. hist. (relig. life).

⁶⁹ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 299--300; *Kingham Now: Life in a Cotswold Village* (1986); *Kingham 1992: A Village Appraisal* (1993): copies in OHC; *ibid.* O3/2/70.

⁷⁰ *Kingham 1992: A Village Appraisal*, pp. 1, 6--9; OHC, OXO000759 (LT_725-4), broadcast interview with Valerie Harris, 2 Apr. 1988 (online at <https://heritagesearch.oxfordshire.gov.uk>); *Country Life*, 11 Nov. 2004, p. 64; *Census*, 2011 (online datasets).

⁷¹ Above, vol. overview (society); VCH *Oxon.* XIX, 20; 'Carole Bamford and 20 Years of Daylesford', *Financial Times*, 10 Sept. 2022; <https://www.daylesford.com> (accessed June 2024).

⁷² *Country Life*, 7 Oct., 11 Nov. 2004; above, econ. hist. (non-agric.).

Village Schools

Kingham's rector Ralph Willett (d. 1575) left 2*d.* to every 'scholar' at his burial, suggesting some local teaching, while two inhabitants in 1636 and 1721 left money to keep their children in education until the ages of 16 and 18 respectively.⁷³ In 1738 the rector catechized 'small children' at Lent, and in the 1750s--70s supported a charity school (funded by donations) for c.20 poor children, in which the boys were taught to read and the girls to read, sew, and spin before entering agricultural or domestic service.⁷⁴ That was replaced before 1802 by a Sunday school run by Charles Western (rector 1785--1835), which taught c.30 children to read and which continued (with c.50 pupils) in 1815, alongside some short-lived dame schools which charged 2--3*d.* a week to keep 'little children ... out of harm' while their parents were at work. Most children left school as soon as they themselves were old enough to work.⁷⁵

Western's first attempt to establish a day school failed apparently for that reason, but one existed by 1835 when it was attended by 23 boys and girls. A further 30 infants attended three dame schools, all four being supported at the parents' expense.⁷⁶ The day school was presumably that which was subsequently housed in a converted tithe barn south of the church, said later to have been opened in 1836;⁷⁷ the school was affiliated to the National Society, and was run on a voluntary basis aided by government grants, while the premises were extended in 1887.⁷⁸ A few gentleman pupils were taken in the 1850s, and under the long-serving schoolmaster William Jackson (in post from c.1860 to his death in 1905) attendance reached over 120 in the 1890s, when he was assisted by his wife and two daughters.⁷⁹

By 1910 pupils' attainments were judged unsatisfactory and the school poorly managed, with three teachers overseeing 40 infants, while 75 older children were divided into seven groups under just two teachers.⁸⁰ The building, too, had become dangerous due to the sudden subsidence of its roof and walls, forcing the school to take temporary refuge in the village hall. Charles Baring Young (as principal landowner) offered to build a new school

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/57/694; OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 18/2/7; 116/4/55.

⁷⁴ *Secker's Visit.* 94; OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, f. 75v.; d 559, f. 83v.; d 562, f. 95; d 564, f. 288v.; c 327, p. 107.

⁷⁵ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 566, f. 202v.; d 707, f. 100; c 433, f. 128; *Educ. of Poor Digest*, p. 726.

⁷⁶ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 129; *Educ. Enq. Abstract*, p. 749.

⁷⁷ OHC, tithe award and map, no. 489; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 70, p. 131; cf. *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883), saying c.1840.

⁷⁸ *Retn Public Elem. Schs* (Parl. Papers 1877 [C 1882], lxvii), pp. 342--3; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 108.

⁷⁹ *Oxf. Jnl.* 2 July 1859; TNA, RG 9/910; RG 12/1178; RG 13/1398; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883--99 edns); *Return of Schs* (Parl. Papers 1894 [C 7529], lxv), pp. 494--5.

⁸⁰ TNA, ED 21/14482.

at his own expense and to maintain its existing voluntary status, but inhabitants chose instead to accept the offer of local authority control. Repeated orders to close the old building were only partially observed until February 1912, when pupils were temporarily transferred to Churchill, and a new school was opened in September that year, built by the county council for c.£2,000 on land near the green bought from the local Groves family. That had accommodation for 65 infants and 88 older children in four classrooms, separated by a corridor from a projecting bay which contained a purpose-built cookery centre.⁸¹ A new teacher's house was added on an adjoining plot c.10 years later.⁸²

After the school's reopening inspectors generally judged both the building and the teaching favourably, and in 1946 it was reorganized as a county primary school, the older children going to Chipping Norton.⁸³ As neighbouring schools closed in the 1960s--80s (including those at Idbury, Salford, and Churchill), Kingham's numbers increased to c.130, and the building was extended and provided with a new playing field on former allotments.⁸⁴ Further extensions followed in the 1990s--2000s, when the school taught 200 pupils aged 4--11.⁸⁵ It remained open in 2024.



Kingham primary school (built 1911–12) in 2024, featuring its central roof lantern and gabled dormers (formerly glazed).

Kingham Hill School

A boarding school for poor boys, many of them from London, was established in 1886 by Kingham's largest landowner Charles Baring Young of Daylesford. Young was a

⁸¹ Ibid.; OHC, CC4/128/2; CC4/128/5--6; CC4/128/9--10; CC4/128/12--13; CC4/128/20; *Banbury Guardian*, 25 Apr. 1912.

⁸² OHC, RDC9/3/F6/2, f. 174; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 270. Not shown on OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. XIX.4 (1922 edn).

⁸³ OHC, CC4/128/3; CC4/128/7--8; *ibid.* S154/1/A1/1; *VCH Oxon.* XXI, 152.

⁸⁴ OHC, OXO000759 (LT_725-5), broadcast interview with Stanley Cripps (headmaster 1971--85), 2 Apr. 1988 (online at <https://heritagesearch.oxfordshire.gov.uk>); OS Map 1:2500, SP 2624 (1979 edn); *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 359; XXI, 325; above, Churchill, social hist. (educ.).

⁸⁵ WODC online planning docs, W95/1552; W2002/1097; 06/2061/P/CD3; 24/00101/FUL; OS Map 1:2500, SP 2624 (2023 edn); Ofsted inspection report (2010).

philanthropist with a strong Christian faith, whose intention was to provide spiritual, physical, and intellectual training for pupils' future lives in trade, industry, and agriculture in Britain and overseas.⁸⁶ An initial intake of 12 boys was expanded to 95 by 1891 and to 216 in 1901, when resident pupils were aged 5--19, and between its opening and 1909 there were a total of 721 admissions.⁸⁷ Accommodation was provided in eight separate boarding houses (built 1886--1907) scattered across the site, while other purpose-built facilities included a library, chapel, gymnasium, open-air swimming pool, sanatorium, laundry, bakehouse, and workshops for practising carpentry, plumbing, smithing, metal-working, shoemaking, and other crafts.⁸⁸ The school's farm produced milk, butter, eggs, wheat, and meat, and its gardens vegetables and fruit, and in its early years the community was largely self-sufficient.⁸⁹ From Young's death in 1928 the school was run by the charitable Kingham Hill Trust, which continued to provide a wholly free education, although by the late 1920s fewer than 100 boys attended.⁹⁰

In the 1930s the Board of Education classified Kingham Hill as an elementary school for c.120 boarders aged 5--15 (under a headmaster and four staff), while c.40 older boys were also still resident and engaged in learning a trade. Inspectors' reports were highly favourable, and in 1943 the Board recommended Kingham's recognition as a secondary school. By then it taught c.30 boys under 11 and c.150 (aged 11--16) in both academic and practical subjects, while ten older boys served four-year apprenticeships.⁹¹ After 1945 the school lost some of its early distinctiveness and evolved into a more typical fee-paying boarding and day school, although its earlier ethos persisted in the Trust's provision of bursaries and in the offering of subsidized places to boys with home difficulties or in local authority care, among them the future Labour politician Andrew Adonis (b. 1963), Baron Adonis. Its continuing concern for the less advantaged led to its being branded 'Borstal on the Hill', and in the 1980s--90s pupils' academic attainments were generally poor.⁹² In 1992 the school became co-educational, with an initial intake of 21 girls joining an existing cohort of 161 boys, and by 2023 there were 348 pupils (197 boys and 151 girls) aged 11--18, two

⁸⁶ For Young and the school's early history, A.F. Jarvis, *Fifty Years of Kingham Hill 1886--1936* (1936); A.F. Jarvis, *Charles Baring Young of Daylesford 1850--1928* (1950). For the site and bldgs, above, landscape etc. (settlement; built character).

⁸⁷ TNA, RG 12/1178; RG 13/1398; Jarvis, *Fifty Years*, 80.

⁸⁸ Jarvis, *Fifty Years*, 12--13; OS Map 1:2500, Oxon. XIV.13 (1900--22 edns).

⁸⁹ Jarvis, *Fifty Years*, 25--6.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 59--60; TNA, ED 35/5731.

⁹¹ TNA, ED 35/5731--2.

⁹² *Oxf. Times*, 3 Nov. 1961: cutting in OHC; *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 July 2010.

fifths of whom were boarders.⁹³ Examination results improved in the early 21st century, when successful fundraising provided investment for enhanced facilities.⁹⁴

Welfare

New College made an alms payment in the 1430s,⁹⁵ and a poor men's box in the church was mentioned in the 1570s--90s,⁹⁶ while small bequests to the poor (in cash and kind) were common in 16th- and 17th-century wills.⁹⁷ The rector Ralph Willett (d. 1575) left the larger sum of £6 13s. 4d. to pay for the marriages of 20 poor women from Kingham or Wick Rissington (Glos.), and a further 6s. 8d. a year for three years to assist Kingham's poor at Christmas and Easter.⁹⁸ A poor's stock worth £35 existed by 1671, when Elizabeth Archbould added a further £10. Later contributions, including £10 each from Anne Gibbard (d. 1709) and Richard Hacker (d. 1715), raised it to £79 10s., of which £36 was reportedly lost by a bankrupt schoolmaster.⁹⁹ The chief contributors in the 18th century were the Dowdeswells, increasing the stock's value to £163 by 1738 and to £213 in the 1770s, when c.£10 annual interest was given to the poor at Christmas and Easter. The stock was managed by the rector and churchwardens, who in 1759 received a separate £500 from Elizabeth Barnes, a relative of the rector Richard Foley's widow Anne Dowdeswell (d. 1802). That produced interest of c.£20 a year, which was used to clothe young people going into service.¹⁰⁰ During Foley's incumbency (1750--83) poor communicants were given money privately after the communion service, and an offertory introduced by his successors was distributed in bread at Christmas.¹⁰¹

Despite those bequests, by the late 18th century the bulk of the parish's poor relief was met from the poor rates, which rose from £88 12s. in 1776 to an average of £113 14s. a year in 1783--5.¹⁰² Following a common pattern, expenditure increased to £253 by 1802--3, when 43 people (including 25 children) received regular out-relief and 19 occasional relief, in all about 14 per cent of the population.¹⁰³ In 1813--15 around a tenth of the population

⁹³ <https://www.kinghamhill.org.uk/alumni/30-years-of-girls> (incl. newspaper cuttings dated Sept. 1992); <https://www.kinghamhill.org.uk/about/reports> (accessed May 2024).

⁹⁴ *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 July 2010; above, landscape etc. (built character).

⁹⁵ New Coll. Arch. 6586.

⁹⁶ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 89/3/5; 17/1/48.

⁹⁷ e.g. *ibid.* 183.400v.; 184.288v.; 185.514; 41/1/18; 50/2/59; 69/4/47; 5/5/19; TNA, PROB 11/46/282.

⁹⁸ TNA, PROB 11/57/694. Willett held Wick Rissington in plurality.

⁹⁹ OHC, PAR154/13/F1/1; *ibid.* MS Wills Oxon. 133/5/1; TNA, PROB 11/336/178; PROB 11/511/306. The schoolmaster's identity is not known.

¹⁰⁰ OHC, PAR154/13/F1/1; *ibid.* MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, f. 75v.; d 559, f. 83v.; d 562, f. 95v.; d 564, f. 288v.; c 327, p. 107; *Secker's Visit.* 94; *Char. Don.* 980--1.

¹⁰¹ OHC, MSS Oxf. Dioc. d 556, f. 76; d 562, f. 96; d 564, f. 289; b 12, f. 77v.; b 37, f. 208.

¹⁰² *Poor Abstract*, 1777, 141; 1787, 190; OHC, PAR154/5/F1/1 (overseers' rate book 1780--1800).

¹⁰³ *Poor Abstract*, 1804, 400--1; *Census*, 1801.

needed help, and up to 13 people were accommodated in a parish workhouse, overall costs averaging £385 a year.¹⁰⁴ Increased agricultural distress raised expenditure to more than £555 in 1818 (c.24s. per head of population), though costs fluctuated over succeeding years, from £275 in 1824 to £424 in 1826, and to £313 (c.12s. per head) by 1834.¹⁰⁵ Following the 1834 Poor Law Act primary responsibility for Kingham's poor passed to the newly established Chipping Norton Poor Law Union, although the parish still appointed overseers, and in 1853 twice levied a poor rate totalling 9d. in the pound.¹⁰⁶ Help was also available from Kingham's Friendly Societies, one of which had 50 members in 1803 and 65 a decade later, while another (established in 1842) met at the Plough inn.¹⁰⁷ That was replaced in the early 20th century by a rival 'slate club', which shared out its assets annually.¹⁰⁸

Charitable support continued, the poor's stock (with increased capital of £352) still producing c.£10 a year in the early 19th century, which was given in cash sums ranging from 1s. 6d. to 5s. The Barnes clothing charity's capital had increased to £554, although its annual income fell to c.£16, of which Charles Western (rector 1785--1835) distributed only £15 due to lack of oversight of the accounts. The payments (no longer directed towards the young) provided coats and gowns every other year for 20 poor men and 20 poor women.¹⁰⁹ Additional charities were established by the grocer William Harvey (d. 1805) and his brother Joseph (d. 1812) of Churchill, who each left £100 laid out at 5 per cent interest, the combined income of £9 1s. 6d. distributed with the poor-stock interest at Christmas and Easter.¹¹⁰ A separate endowment of £100 by the grocer John Laskey (d. 1863) produced c.£3 a year for coal at Christmas, while £5 15s. interest on £200 left by Sarah Trenchard (d. 1867) was used to buy bread or blankets.¹¹¹ All those charities continued in the 20th century,¹¹² and were amalgamated under a scheme of 1974 to create the Kingham Relief in Need charity, which in 2020 spent £1,900 out of an income of £2,850.¹¹³

Allotments totalling 4 a. were laid out at enclosure in 1850, in lieu of the poor's right to gather fuel. The land was vested in trustees, who increased the area to 5 a. and distributed the rents amongst the poor, though by the 1950s falling demand meant that not all the allotments were cultivated.¹¹⁴ In 1969 part of the land was sold to provide a playing

¹⁰⁴ *Poor Abstract*, 1818, 354--5; *Census*, 1811--21.

¹⁰⁵ *Poor Rate Retns*, 1822, p. 136; 1825, p. 171; 1830--1, p. 159; 1835, p. 154; *Census*, 1821--41.

¹⁰⁶ *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 144--5; OHC, Chap. XV/i/1--9; below, local govt.

¹⁰⁷ *Poor Abstract*, 1804, 401; 1818, 355; *Oxon. FS*, p. 180; above (since 1800).

¹⁰⁸ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 186.

¹⁰⁹ *12th Rep. Com. Char.* 255--6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 256; TNA, PROB 11/1427/95; PROB 11/1533/441; above, Churchill, social hist. (welfare).

¹¹¹ *Char. Digest*, 36--7; OHC, PAR154/13/F1/1.

¹¹² OHC, PAR154/13/MS1/1; *ibid.* Chap. XIII/ii/1.

¹¹³ Kimber Rep.; *Char. Com.* website (May 2024), no. 203241.

¹¹⁴ OHC, encl. award and map; *ibid.* DV/X/68 (and map); *ibid.* Chap. XIV/i/3; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 276.

field for the adjoining school, the proceeds being invested by the fuel allotment charity, which was registered in 1962 and run by the parish council. That continued in 2022--3, when £125 was spent out of an income of £604.¹¹⁵ Additional allotments provided by Charles Baring Young were vested in a separate parish council charity, which had an income of £840 in 2022--3. Other charities supported the village hall (which the parish council also managed) and the primary school association.¹¹⁶

Until the 19th century medical treatment (except perhaps midwifery) was probably only available outside the parish. Nurses were resident in Kingham by the 1840s,¹¹⁷ and others were later employed at Kingham Hill school,¹¹⁸ while by the 1930s the village accommodated a district nurse.¹¹⁹ The parish Friendly Society was one of several served by the surgeon Mowbray Jackson in 1879, and in the 1930s the village was visited weekly by the Chipping Norton physician John O'Shea and by the long-serving Shipton-under-Wychwood doctor Gordon Scott (d. 1986).¹²⁰ Medical services were otherwise available at Chipping Norton.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ *Banbury Guardian*, 3 Apr. 1969; Char. Com. website, no. 206248; above (educ.).

¹¹⁶ Char. Com. website, nos. 285351; 294561; 1122540.

¹¹⁷ TNA, HO 107/878 (Mary Clement); HO 107/1732 (Sarah Steel).

¹¹⁸ e.g. *ibid.* RG 13/1398 (Maria Burch).

¹¹⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1931--9 edns); OHC, RDC9/2/A3/17, s.a. 1953--4.

¹²⁰ *Oxon. FS*, p. 181; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1935--9 edns); *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 68, 71, 209.

¹²¹ *Kingham 1992: A Village Appraisal* (1993), p. 12: copy in OHC; *VCH Oxon.* XXI, 160.