



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Kiddington with Asterleigh parish

Local Government

Manor Courts and Officers

Nether and Over Kiddington manors may have originally had their own manor courts (the latter including Asterleigh), but once the manors were held together the courts, too, were presumably combined, as they certainly were by the 1640s. By then they were annual and were concerned primarily with agricultural regulation, and appointed two fieldsmen and a constable.¹ They were still mentioned in a settlement of the manors in 1694, but in reality probably lapsed following Kiddington's enclosure in 1686.²

The lord and tenants of Over Kiddington also owed suit to the Chadlington hundred courts, and those of Nether Kiddington to Wootton hundred. In the 1270s the lord Richard de Williamscot discharged his suit to the three-weekly Chadlington hundred court through a free tenant, and attended the sheriff's twice yearly tourn (at which his tenants paid 6s. 8d.). The hundred's annual view of frankpledge was held at Kiddington by the bailiff of the earl of Gloucester (as lord of Chadlington hundred), who received all the fines plus 2s. cert money, and a separate annual view for Wootton hundred was also held in Kiddington. Richard or his bailiff additionally attended Wootton hundred's 'great' hundred court once a year.³ The Chadlington hundred views continued in the 1540s, when the tithingman for Over Kiddington and Asterleigh paid 5s. 9d. a year in certainty and wardship,⁴ but by the 1640s the lord of Kiddington held his own view of frankpledge along with the annual manor court.⁵

Kiddington's woods and assarts (chiefly south of the Chipping Norton road) were generally treated until 1641 as lying within Wychwood forest, despite the area being supposedly removed in 1298–1300.⁶ In the 16th century the parish sent a reeve and four other representatives to the annual forest court (or swanimote) held at Fenny Chapel in neighbouring Ditchley, where their presentments included grazing offences, nuisances, and failure to maintain hedges. Presentments were also made by the lord's woodward, and in

¹ OHC, SL161/1/CR/1; *ibid.* B.I/51; above, landownership.

² OHC, B.I/89; above, econ. hist. (agric. landscape).

³ *Rot. Hund.* II, 734, 877; above, landscape etc. (boundaries).

⁴ GA, D9125/3/26, ff. 45, 110v.; TNA, SC 2/197/20–1; *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 25–6. For the Wootton hundred cts, *VCH Oxon.* XI, 3–5; TNA, LR 2/197, f. 134v.; *ibid.* SC 6/962/20.

⁵ OHC, SL161/1/CR/1; *ibid.* B.I/51.

⁶ Above, landscape etc. (boundaries); econ. hist.

1585 the forest regards fined the lords of Kiddington and Glympton for establishing rabbit warrens in the assarts, to the detriment of those with pasture rights.⁷

Parish Government and Officers

Asterleigh presumably had its own churchwardens until the church's closure in 1466,⁸ and two for Kiddington were mentioned in 1530, when they were changed frequently (to the parishioners' detriment) rather than holding office for a fixed period.⁹ They were later chosen at the Easter vestry in the usual way, drawn usually from amongst the leading farmers and sometimes serving more than one term.¹⁰ Other officers by the 17th century included two overseers,¹¹ a poorly remunerated parish clerk,¹² and two parish constables, of whom the one for Over Kiddington reported in 1688 that the stocks and pound were in good repair.¹³ In the 1840s (when the vestry met in the rectory house schoolroom) there was also a surveyor of highways.¹⁴ Asterleigh farm paid no parish or poor rates for much of the 18th and early 19th century, being deemed to be extra-parochial.¹⁵

The parish became part of Woodstock Poor Law Union in 1834, of Wootton Highway Board district in 1864, and of Woodstock Rural District in 1894, until transferred to Chipping Norton Rural District in 1932.¹⁶ Asterleigh briefly became a separate civil parish in 1866, but was united with Kiddington in 1895 when joint overseers and a joint waywarden replaced their formerly separate officers, and a new joint parish meeting was established.¹⁷ That continued in 2024 (chaired by J.R. Goffe of Whitehouse Farm), and under local government reorganization in 1974 the whole parish became part of the new West Oxfordshire District.¹⁸ For ecclesiastical purposes Kiddington was united with Glympton and Wootton in 2003, the

⁷ OHC, E36/6/CR1/1–11; cf. *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 27, 291.

⁸ Below, relig. hist.

⁹ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 52.

¹⁰ OHC, par. reg. transcript, miscellanea 13 Apr. 1612; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 79, ff. 248–89; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 124v. Twentieth-century chwdns included the lords H.M. Gaskell and Laur. Robson: OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1872, faculties.

¹¹ OHC, B.I/51B (assessors); *ibid.* PAR184/5/A3/3.

¹² *Ibid.* PAR150/17/MS1/1; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. d 580, ff. 152–3.

¹³ *Prot. Retns*, 130; M. Sturge Gretton (ed.), *Oxon. Justices of the Peace in the 17th Cent.* (ORS 16, 1934), 78.

¹⁴ OHC, QS1842/1/A9/1.

¹⁵ TNA, IR 18/7727, testimonies 30 Nov. 1848; above, landscape etc. (boundaries); relig. hist.

¹⁶ *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 144–5, 150–1; *London Gaz.* 27 Oct. 1863, p. 5086; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883 and later edns). Both Nether and Over Kiddington were annexed to Wootton hundred's petty sessional south division in 1834: OHC, QS1834/1/A16/1.

¹⁷ Above, landscape etc. (boundaries); *Union of the Civil Parishes of Kiddington and Asterleigh* (1895): copy in TNA, ED 21/14478.

¹⁸ <https://meetings.westoxon.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?ID=1227> (accessed Dec. 2024).

new joint parish council including representatives from all three villages, including a Kiddington churchwarden.¹⁹

¹⁹ 'Parish Profile: The Parish of Wootton, Glympton and Kiddington' [c.1924] (PDF accessed online May 2024).