

Documentary History for
**Lower End House, 72 Bicester Rd, Long Crendon,
Buckinghamshire**

Site Code: LON-M

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. Lower End in about 1900, Lower End House in the centre (Photo: Eric Sewell Collection)

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Oxbow Books

LON-M: LOWER END HOUSE, 72 BICESTER RD, LONG CRENDON,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 6870 0924

Illustrations:

1. Lower End House in about 1900

2. View of cruck truss

3. Part of the 1827 map of Long Crendon

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Documentary history by Nat Alcock and Eric Sewell, building on the work of John Chenevix Trench†.

For court roll and documentary source references, see the bibliography of primary sources.

Abbreviations:

Bodl. Bodleian Library, Oxford

CBS Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

TNA The National Archives



Fig. 2. View of cruck truss.

SUMMARY ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This former farmhouse has an L-shaped overall plan. To the west, aligned E-W is a relatively short and low range (I), now with stone walls. To the east, aligned N-S is a higher and longer range (II), with partly stone and partly timber-framed exterior walls (the south gable recently re-framed).

RANGE I. The most significant feature is seen in the first floor room. It contains the upper part of a very fine arch-braced cruck truss, probably dating from the period 1400-1450. On the north side, the wall has been rebuilt within its original line, and the cruck truncated, with the blade now carried on a timber lintel (the end of the cruck and the lintel visible outside). This cruck was certainly the central open truss of the two-bay medieval hall of a substantial house. By comparison with other examples, it would probably have had additional bays at both ends. Most probably, the inner room would have been to the east, probably with a ground floor chamber and solar above; to the west would have been a single storey service room.

In the early 16th century, a large chimney and fireplace was inserted into the hall, probably with its back to the cross-passage; it is this fireplace that suggests that the service end of the house was to the west. Everything west of the chimney was demolished, perhaps when the hall was reduced in width and the walls were rebuilt in stone, probably in the 18th or 19th century.

RANGE II. This is a three-bay range of two storeys with attic, dating from about 1600. It was originally fully timber-framed, though it has been partly rebuilt in stone. When it was built, it replaced the previous chamber bay of the cruck house – including also the truss at the east end of the cruck hall (which probably stood somewhat further east than the side wall of range II. At this point, it probably provided the main accommodation of the house, parlour to the front and service rooms behind, with sleeping chambers over. The former hall with its big chimney probably became the kitchen. At this date, also the present ceiling was inserted in this room.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Summary

This was a substantial freeholding with about 60 acres of land (probably to be equated to two yardlands), mostly in the open fields but partly in enclosures. It was owned by the Cannon family from before 1630 (when it belonged to Thomas Cannon) to 1667, and had been acquired by the Maund family by 1721. It was held by Emanuel Roads and his descendants from 1795 until after 1832.

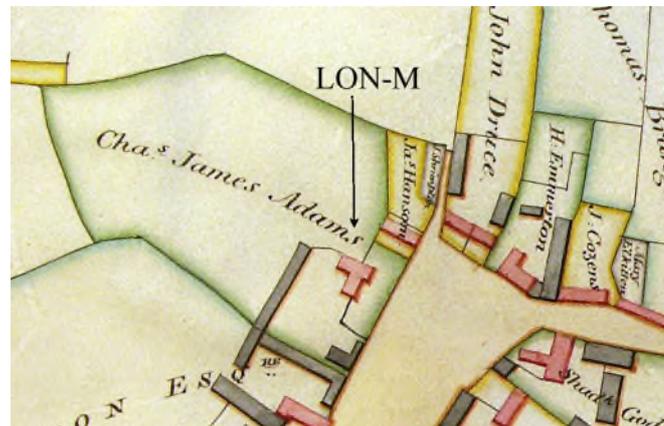


Fig. 3. Part of the 1827 map of Long Crendon (CBS IR/95/Q).

Ownership Evidence

In 1827 it was owned by Charles James Adams, a tailor of Oxford (occupied by James Fryer); he was allocated 31 acres at enclosure.¹ Its ownership and occupancy can be traced through the Land Tax assessments from 1782.

1782-91 Mr Strange: Tenant: Henry Emerton initially £5-0-0, from 1789; £5-2-10½.

1793-94 John Bartlett: Tenant: Henry Emerton £5-2-10½.

1795-1809 Emanuel Roads: Tenant: John Reynolds 1795-99, Self 1800-09; £5-2-10(½). (exonerated in 1799).²

1811 Mrs Roads: Tenant: Chris Dodwell £5-0-0.

1812-16 Mrs Frogley: Tenants: John Dodwell 1812-13, Thomas Briaris 1814. £5-0-0.

1817-32 Charles James Adams: Tenants: Jn Bruce 1817-20, Jas Fryer 1821-29. Smith, Spencer 1830-32. 1817-27, £5-0-0. 1829-32 £5-2-10.

It is mentioned in the 1811 will of Mary Roads, widow of Emanuel Roads, grocer, of Oxford, as 'my freehold estate at Long Crendon called Lower Farm or Maunds Farm, purchased by my husband of

¹ CBS, Q/RPL/1/48. Electoral Register for 1833: Charles James Adams of Oxford, farmhouse and land at Lower End. In fact, he held it in right of his wife, Sarah Roads.

² Contract 28559, 25 Mar 1799: Emanuell Roads, Farmhouse with barns etc; close called Grace [sic] Close; close called Calves Close (TNA, IR24/40).

the assignees of Mr Thomas Cooper'.³ She left half of the farm each to her daughters Mary and Sarah, to be inherited by their children (with remainder if no heirs to the other daughter). Mary married William Frogley in Oxford in 1812,⁴ and on her death in 1817, the farm was inherited by her younger sister Sarah, who had married Charles Adams, tailor of Oxford, in 1811.

The farm's ownership from 1721 onwards is explained in a deed of 1795, which also describes it in detail (quoting a mortgage of 1735), as comprising:

12 ac 1r in Down Field; 11 ½ ac in South & West Fields; 12 ac 1 r in Upper Field; 15 ½ ac ley pasture & meadow; 1 ydl lot meadow in lot; Lammas Close, Grass Close 3 ac; Calves Close, adjoining Grass Close, 3 ac.⁵

The ownership recital starts with the bequest of the farm in 1721 by John Maund of Thame to his son, Robert; the latter died intestate and his brother, William inherited the farm. In 1746, he bequeathed it to his wife, Hester (later the wife of Thomas Strange of Benson) for life and then to his heirs;⁶ his brother, Timothy, died intestate, leaving their sisters Catherine Maund and Mary Wheeler (later Bartlett) as co-inheritors. The former in 1761 left her reversion to be sold for the benefit of her five nephews and nieces; Mary's son John Wheeler sold her half to one Thomas Cooper, who went bankrupt in 1793. His trustees sold his half at auction to Emanuel Roads, and the inheritors of the other half agreed to sell their part to him as well. The story is further complicated by the ramifications involved in a £600 mortgage taken out by Robert Maund in 1735. This was eventually assigned to Hester Strange, and part was used as a marriage portion for her daughter, Mary, the other part being inherited by Thomas Strange; it was eventually paid off in 1795.

The later ownership of the farm has not been traced, but by 1910, the house had been separated from the land and was owned and occupied by Mr George F Organ.

Earlier documents

In his will, John Maund of Thame, of 1721 (referred to in the 1795 deed), bequeathed to Robert Maund the younger, eldest son of kinsman Robert Maund of Thame, tanner, all his messuages in Long Crendon, from the decease of his honoured father Robert Maund. It appears probable that the farm had been handed over to John by his father in exchange for a £50 annuity, secured against the farm (so that it would only be inherited by the younger Robert, when the elder one died).⁷

The description recited from the 1735 mortgage allows us to identify Lower Farm with property sold in 1667 by William Cannon the younger ((2) in the tree, LON-O, Fig.9) and Thomas Hearne to John Clarke of Chilton, which is described in virtually identical terms.⁸ The house was then in the occupation of William Cannon and Richard Benham. This deed gives a warranty against actions by Henry Cannon

³ TNA, PROB 11/1526. Her husband (will 1810, TNA, PROB 11/1512) left all his real and personal property to Mary, but without giving any details. Emanuel Roads, born at Middle Claydon, Bucks, married Mary Reynolds (b. 1758 at Notley Farm) at Long Crendon in 1780.

⁴ Oxfordshire Archdeacon's Marriage Bond Index - 1634 – 1849 (on-line). The will of Mary Frogley, wife of William Frogley of South Denchworth, Berks was proved 25 Feb 1817 (TNA, PROB 11/1589).

⁵ Bodl, Ms. Ch. Bucks. 1507; two earlier deeds also survive, that are mentioned in it: of 1746, Ms. Ch. Bucks. 1505, and of 1780, Berks. R.O. D/EH/T94.

⁶ Thomas Strange of Benson, Oxon, appears in the 1784 Roll of the Knights of the Shire for Buckinghamshire, owning a Long Crendon freehold (presumably in the right of his wife, although this was not stated).

⁷ TNA, PROB 11/589; proved 9 Feb 1723 [/4?]

⁸ CBS, D-X376/1. (1) William Cannon, younger, of Long Crendon and Thomas Hearne of Chearsley. (2) John Clarke of Chilton. For £856 13s 4d, Messuage where Wm Cannon and Richard Benham inhabit with land in various open fields: 12 ac 1 r; 11 ½ ac; 12 ac 1 r; 16 ½ ac, and Grasse Close & Calves Close (adjacent) (13 ac). With bond and terrier attached.

(the father) & Thomas Cannon (the grandfather of William). It also refers to a lease of 1630, made by Thomas Cannon for the lives of Thomas, Henry and Mary Cannon, which was perhaps a family settlement assuring them of annuities or marriage portions. Thus, the farm had already been a Cannon freeholding in 1630.

Thomas Cannon the grandfather appears to be the head of the main branch of the family, dying in 1658 (aged 89); he had sons William and Henry and daughter Mary (and presumably also a son Thomas). His son, Henry, had three sons, William, Henry and Thomas; the latter was not born until 1632, so cannot be the person named in the 1630 deed. The younger William was the purchaser of Lovedens in 1658 (see LON-O, Fig. 9).

No earlier owners have been firmly identified, but it possibly belonged to John Whode [Wood or Hood?], whose name is given as the adjoining property to the messuage of Thomas Raynold in 1554; the latter is tentatively identified as Northend Farm (see LON-U).

Building References

In the Hearth Tax return, William Cannon, junior, is listed with five hearths; Richard Benham is not mentioned.

1910 Valuation, hereditament 294.

Detached house of stone and brick, rough-cast and tiled. Two attic rooms; three bedrooms; sitting room, kitchen and scullery.