

FWP47

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Documentary Analysis

Fyfield

Maps F(1) and F(2)

Domesday

The Bishop of Winchester held *Fifhide* in 1086, which a certain Edward held of the Bishop. It paid geld for 5 hides in the time of Edward when it had belonged to the Sacrist, probably the treasurer, of the church (at Winchester). In 1066 Alsi, a monk, held the land of the Bishop. There was land for 3 ploughs and of this land 3 hides were in *demesne*. In the *demesne* there were 2 ploughs and 1 serf. Not in *demesne* 3 villeins and 9 bordars with 2 ploughs are recorded. There were 3 acres of meadow and 30 of pasture. The woodland was 3 furlongs long by 1 furlong broad. It was, and was still worth 100s. (VCH, ii, 120).

Thus in Fyfield we have mention of land for three ploughs (although four are recorded) and thirteen farmers. Three hides were in *demesne*, so the villeins and bordars must have farmed the remaining 2 hides amongst themselves. The three acres of meadow would have been around the river and the thirty of pasture probably mostly on the downs to the north. If a furlong is taken as 220 yards (201m), then the woodland area measured 600m by 200m, or 12 ha (30ac). This wood was no doubt to the south of the estate. In 1567 Fyfield had 48ac of wood.

The Manor

Fyfield is not mentioned in the Geld Rolls, although it is assumed that it was part of the Selkley Hundred (VCH, ii, 201). The Prior of Winchester held *Overton* and *Fifhide* in 1284. Belonging, like East Overton, to the Bishop of Winchester, allows us an indication of why the two manors were amalgamated and run as an entity in the later and post-medieval periods. A combined manor of East Overton and Fyfield would have formed, taking the Domesday figures, a 20 hide estate with at least 18 acres of meadow, 350 of pasture and over 100 of woodland, dwarfing neighbouring West Overton and Lockeridge.

In 1210 East Overton and Fyfield were economically independent and were valued at £16 and £8 respectively. A flock of 100 sheep is recorded in Fyfield. In the early C13th the prior of St. Swithun's withdrew his manors of EO & Fyfield from the Selkley hundred and included them in his own hundred of Elstub, which also included Alton, Patney & West Stowell (VCH ix, 199). Robert Tregoze held the honour of fees of *fifhide* in 1242-3 (VCH, ii, 110). In 1243 the Prior of St. Swithun's claimed the manor, which was confirmed in 1284. In 1291, St. Swithun's appropriated Overton church with its dependent chapels, although there is evidence it could have been as early as March 1281 (reference??). The church, including Fyfield chapelry, was assessed at £13 6s. 8d. (VCH iii. 200) in 1291 and in the later C13th Fyfield was administered as part of the manor of East Overton, although with separate open fields. In 1309 the manors were interdependent and together their joint income was £116. In 1332 *Fifhyde*, and in 1344 'Little Fyfield', were assessed for taxation with East Overton (VCH iv, 299). In 1377 the chapelry of Fyfield had 22 poll-tax payers (ibid., 310). In 1541 the Crown granted the advowson of the Overton chapels to the newly formed Winchester chapter, and after it descended like the manor of EO.

In the C12th a font at Fyfield church was made and in the early C13th the chancel of St. Nicholas at Fyfield was built. In 1281 a chaplain at Fyfield is mentioned, in the 1550s a Curate served there and in 1584 a reader served the Fyfield parishoners (VCH iii. 201). In 1588 a house and orchard in Fyfield belonged to the church of Overton. In 1608 four acres of land in Fyfield were called Priest Croft 'on which the Vicaridge House standeth and a Garden grounde'. Priest Croft is the parcel of land opposite the modern development of Priest Acre. The Vicar of Overton was ordered to rebuild the benefice at Fyfield (VCH iii. 200) in 1686, at the same time perhaps the present roof of the church was built. Today Fyfield House, just NE of the church, lies on the site of Manor Farm, called 'Mr Goodmans Homestead' in 1819.

It appears that the Knights Templar held land in Fyfield, as in the Charter Rolls of 1270, the holders of lands comprising the area known as Rockley, as well as that known as *Fifhide*, are noted. In 1276, the assessment carried out on George de Cantilupe's property reveals that John of Tregoz held half a knight's fee at Rockley, which by the time of his own death in 1299 had become a whole fee held of him by Nicholas Poinz. Three other fees were held of John in Norton and Fifhide, by Roger of Bavent. John of Tregoz's second daughter Sibyl married William de Grandisson and they were given seisin by the king in 1302 of one knight's fee in Rockley and three in Norton and Fifhide. By the time of William's death in 1336, the combined area of the three supported a total of six and a half knight's fees, two held at Norton by Roger de Bavent, one and half at Fifhide, by his son and namesake, and three by Hugh Poinz (an heir of Nicholas) at Rockley. The trebling of fees on the Rockley estate no doubt reflected the freeing up of land made possible by the abolition of the Order of the Temple in 1312 (Yarrow 1995, 7-8).

The Tenants

The combined manors consisted of 11 holdings of 1 virgate (20a.) held for the usual agricultural services and small money rents in the late C13th. The virgater who acted as woodward was excused certain of the usual duties but was instead bound to carry the lot and crop of the manorial timber to the lord's court. There were also 13 holdings of 1/2 virgate. These tenants owed services similar to those of the virgaters, but owed half their money rent. The cottar, probably at Raddon, looked after two of the lord's plough-teams at the ox-yard there (Hanna, pp. lvi-lvii, 458; WAM. lviii. 109). In 1299 the combined manors of East Overton and Fyfield supported 717 ewes, 400 hoggasters and 322 lambs. These were folded into three sheepcotes, one south of the Kennet at Audley's Cottages (now Hill Farm), and two north of the river at Hackpen and at 'Raddon' (VCH iii. 194). The position of the sheepcote at Hackpen is unknown.

In 1545 at least eight of the inhabitants were able to contribute to the benevolence of that year (VCH iii. 186). The 1567 survey records that the *demense* farmer leased an additional 3 yardlands at Fyfield and that there were 1 copyhold farm of 2 yardlands, 5 of 1½ yardland and 2 of 1 yardland (14½ yardlands in total; VCH iii. 194). The sheep for both EO & F were stinted at 100 to the yardland.

In 1841, 150 people lived in Fyfield (VCH iv. 349). In 1856 North Farm at EO & Fyfield Farm were worked together and c.1860 numerous cottages near the river, at the south end of the village, burnt down (VCH, xi, 187). The population was 200 in 1861, 152 in 1891 and 178 in 1901. The number of inhabitants had increased by 1901 because of the transference of Clatford Park and Overton Heath to the civil parish of Fyfield in 1896 (VCH ix, 186).

The Village

Map F(2)

As noted elsewhere (see Lockeridge), much of the SVR of Fyfield lie in the tiling of Lockeridge. The earliest maps thus show a small village, straddling two lanes (2 & 9) from the church to a wide ford across the Kennet (3; SU 15106840).

The boundaries are confusing between Lockeridge and Fyfield, however. In the late C18th, the dividing line seems to have been, in the fields north of the village, along a line more or less the same as the modern parish line, across the Bath Road to Priest Acre. After this it differs, as it proceeded down to the hedge line (4; green line), then north along the path, then east to the river. By the way, the land north of Priest Croft, opposite Priest Acre, was growing turnips in 1819, which is probably why the modern 1:25000 map shows a large T for turnips at this point.

The boundary between the two estates in the early C19th, on the other hand, appears to be different from the one forty years earlier. This 1811-19 one is marked in red pen, and puts even more land into the Lockeridge estate, though north of the road and towards the Kennet it was the same as the earlier map. That the southern section of this land north of the river was in Lockeridge, not Fyfield, is demonstrated by the words 'To Fyfield' marked on the path (12) from Lockeridge House towards the church of St. Nicholas.

The modern parish boundary is in blue, and again differs from the earlier versions, as it takes the hollow lane (5) through the field, between the red and green lines, then south along the path to the Kennet, thus giving *Fyfield* more land than it ever appears to have had previously. This lane (5), called 'Old Road' or 'Pipers Lane' in 1819, was part of the Roman road, and was described by Crawford as a 'deep trench' in 1925. It is shown as a village lane on each of the late C18th-early 19th maps. South of it was a plot called 'Pipers Croft'.

The dividing line between 'East Overton and Lockeridge Farm Lands' in 1811 is marked in pink and follows the track across 'Fifield Field', across the Bath road to Pipers Lane (5).

The road from the A4 south to the western end of Pipers Lane (5), was called 'The Lockeridge Road' in 1819, and was constructed between 1811 and 1815 and measured '10 feet' in width. Prior to the construction of this road, the route into the villages came across the field and the Bath Road, to the Old Road, following the pink line.

Further east, the road to the A4 passed the church was also realigned during the Inclosure years. In the late C18th the lane went directly west of the churchyard and onto the fields. Although in 1819 this lane was still in use, shown by the fact it was called 'Old Road' (7), and north of the Bath Road the 'Old Field Road' (6; both shown in green with purple dots), it had by then been superceded by the 'New Road'. At some time, the track north of the A4, upto Fyfield Hill/White Acre (8), was realigned so that its southern end, where it met the A4, came out opposite the 'new' road out of Fyfield village.

South of the church, the village lane went directly south in 1811-19, though in the late C18th the road forked here, with what seems to be the main village street travelling south-east (9) to join up with the village which lay west of the ford (3). As this site was subject to frequent flooding and, after numerous cottages were burnt down c.1860, the village here was abandoned in favour of one higher up the plain, around the church. Some settlement already existed here, especially along the Bath Road, south of Ivy House Farm, where a row of seven or eight houses and the 'Fighting Cocks' inn stood (VCH ix, 186-7). The 'Fighting Cocks' inn is first mentioned in 1811, though the settlement was certainly there in 1773 (A&D). Most of these cottages were demolished during road widening in the late 1930s. The houses at Priest Acre were built in the earlier C20th (VCH ix, 187). The

prominent bank north of Ivy House Farm (11) is shown on the 1811 and 1819 maps and may well be the remnants of a southern headland to the arable fields.

On the eastern side of Fyfield, the present boundary between Fyfield and Clatford is shown in blue. The approximate line of the earlier boundary is marked in red (10; a more exact illustration is needed), before the decision to demarcate this boundary with a ruler was taken by the Inclosure commissioners. This early C19th line follows markers on the hills north of the village, which, judging by neighbouring parishes, could well be dillons, stones or lynchets, or a combination of the three. This original estate line on the higher downs certainly followed a line of stones, shown on the early 25" maps, as does the modern parish boundary. One of these stones was/is undoubtedly 'Long Tom'. Further south, the a kink in the boundary (13; and indeed the modern bridleway) around SU 150698 was demarcated with 'dillons' in 1811.

Fields & Downland

The references to fields in the manors of Overton and Fyfield in the records of the Bishop of Winchester are as follows; Northfield (1287), Westfield (*passim*), Munkfield (1280), Eastfield (*passim*), Southfield (1311 & 1312), Northfield at Scrufeleput (1312), La inlonde and above the church (1312), Wyte'hull (1316), Hardeston (1312), Curtelynych at Fyfield and above the church there (1312), La Worglound (Fyfield, 1312). There was also a Munkmede (1248), Gravelesputte (1312) and Modayslynch (1312).

In 1567, Fyfield's fields were named North, South and Rylands, with a common meadow in EOv called Broad Mead and one in Fyfield called Berry Mead. At the same time the common pastures of EOv, called Prior's Ball, Full Ridge and Hursley, estimated at 100ac, were used by the tenants all year round. High on the Downs to the north were Balmere Pyke, Balmers Ponde, Temple Hookes, Roddon Cowlease, Roddon Coppice, a Rudge banck, Lolling thorne, Mapple Dyrley and Bury Waye. The tenantry sheep downs were on Broad, 34ac, and Little, 8ac, downs, with the Fyfield estate containing a sheep down of 130ac called North Down. Atleys or Audley's down, 80ac, south of the village, was common to the tenants there during the spring, summer and autumn, but after 11 November the farmer of East Overton was entitled to it. Fyfield also contained Fyfield Wood, 40ac, and Audley's Coppice, 8ac, in 1567 (VCH iii. 194-5; Straton 1909, 252).

In 1608 there is mention of Priest Croft and Rylands. A traveller in 1644 described Fyfield Down as 'a place so full of a grey pebble stone of great bigness as is not usually seen', where 'they lie so thick as you may go upon them all the way' (VCH iii. 186; Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army [Camd. Soc. 1st series, lxxiv, 151]). In 1704 we have Rylands, North Field, Priest Croat (*sic*), Fore Hill, East Hill, Court Linch, Smillans, Hownsell, Red Lands, Lockeridge Field, a Paddock by the church and Mortimer's Paddock.

By 1697, Fyfield manor was administered separately from EO, although perhaps much reduced from its original size. The manor was then in the hands of Thomas Fowle and remained in the Fowle family until 1840. This family undoubtedly gave their name to Fowle's Copse, which before had been known as Priest Grove. In 1719 some lands in the open fields and common meadows of EO & F were inclosed or exchanged by agreement between the lord of EO and his tenants there, the freeholders and leaseholders of Lockeridge tithing, the lord of Fyfield manor and others. In 1728 East Overton manor contained Hackpen and 'Rodden' downs, 276ac, Hursley down, 26ac, and a tenantry down of 101ac. In 1743 the Bath to London road was turnpiked (VCH iii. 195).

The field north of Fyfield village was called 'Fifield Field' in the late C18th, but in 1811 it was called 'North Field' and was, from north to south, divided into The Forty Acres, Croft Acre, Saddleback, Long Lands, Red Lands, Crow Linch (with Rock Lands), Houndshill,

White Lands, Knell Thorn, Forehill, Hitching, Middle Forehill, East Forehill and East Hill. The 1811 map also gives us a clear indication of the eastern boundary of Fyfield with Clatford (Preshute) before Inclosure when the boundary was made into a straight line from the boundary stone at SU 147708 to the Bath-London road (see above).

To the south, the field east of the lane to Hillside Farm was called South Field, with a pound at SU 142681 (14). As already noted, Hillside Farm is the successor to Audley's Cottage, the *Attely* sheephouse of the C13th. As such, it is the oldest known, continuously inhabited location in this study area. South of Lockeridge Lane was Audley Down (yellow), then the woods at Priest Grove (red).

In 1812 the estate was offered for sale (by RC Fowle?) and was bought by John Goodman who owned it in 1815 (VCH iii. 192). According to VCH, by 1812 Fyfield manor comprised of three farms, two, of 338a and 27a, containing land on either side of the Bath road, and one of 112a. representing the remenant of the former demense (ix, Inclosure award & map). At the time of parliamentary inclosure in 1821, the Lord of EO was allotted some 500a in Fyfield chapelry for the manor of EO. The lord of Fyfield was allotted 218a. The vicarial glebe of Overton comprised of 46a in Overton & 18a in Fyfield.

At some point between 1811 and 1819, the Delling or 'Keeper's House' was built to the north-west of Wroughton Copse. This new home had two gardens, one around the house, the other in the south-west corner of the enclosure. A square pond was also built to the east of the house. Boundary stones are clearly marked on the early C19th maps along the eastern and western edges of the parishes on the higher ground. One such stone stood at the very northern tip of Fyfield where the land unit meets Preshute (SU 126729) along 'Temple Hedge', others stood along the western side, along what is today's Ridgeway (which in the 1810s was not recorded).

'Lorient Cottage' stood at SU 128726 in 1811, but by 1819 the building had become 'Glory Ann', and remained so until its demolition in the late 1950s. The pits or ponds which were associated with the building are still visible and today. New Totterdown appears to have been built between 1885 and 1889. Fyfield Down was referred to as Overton or East Overton Cow Down in the early C19th, although in the late 18th it was 'Roddens Cow Down'. Other changes had occurred; in c.1790 the area north of the Delling was called 'Dillon Sheep Down' (thus the name Delling), by 1811 it had become 'Overton Sheep Down', yet in 1819 it was still being referred to as 'Dillon Down'. Dillons being the local name for boundary mounds delineating land units on the Downs in Berkshire and Wiltshire, with a possible origin in the Early English word *de/an*; to divide. Indeed, the land between the sheep down or Fyfield Tenants Down (the dry valley of Clatford Bottom) and the pasture of Rodden Sheep Down (East Overton Cow Down) was 'divided by small Hills called Dillions' (1811 map).

The priory of St. Swithun's was granted the right to free warrening within their *demesne* land in Fyfield in 1300 (VCH ix, 192), and by 1880 a large warren had been established on Fyfield Down. In 1910, Alexander Taylor killed c.14,000 rabbits to make downland gallops safer. In 1896 Clatford civil parish and extra-parochial place of Overton Heath were transferred to Fyfield. By 1906 Fyfield Farm, 573a., was worked separately from North, 958a., & South, 451a., Farms at EO. In the early 1930s the Fighting Cocks Inn, Congregational chapel and many cottages south side were demolished when the A4 was widened.

Woods

Fyfield today contains Fowl's Copse, Fyfield Wood, part of Reeves' Firs, Broadleat, Keepence Wood, Stone's Wood and Pyles Copse. In the early C19th, this area was much

reduced as Overton Heath and Clatford Park were not part of the parish of Fyfield. As such, the woodland in 1811 contained Fowle's Copse (or Priest Grove) and Reeves Firs, Barrow Copse, Pig-trough Copse and Broom Copse (the wooded area of 1811 is shaded pink, the boundary is dark blue). A holly bush is marked on the 1811 map (15). This land at the very southern end of Fyfield in 1811 was called Heath Grounds, the same as the area of land, belonging to East Overton, which borders it on the west. Days Cottage stood at SU 155651 in 1811, called Heath Cottages in 1925 (1) and an unnamed building, possibly just a barn, is marked on the late C18th map where Bayardo Farm stands today.

In 1588, the 'Wooddye Grounde called by the name of Priests Grove' was claimed by the vicarage of Overton and was thought to lie in the parish of Overton. It lay 'betweene one copice called Atles Copse on the West and a certain Parke lately inclosed on the Est and a certen Ground called Henley on the South which ...the Vicars of Overton ...have cutte and taken the Woodie thereupon from tyme to tyme at their Wills and pleasures'. In 1608 a 'piece of Bushie Ground called Priest Grove by estimation two acres' was noted. In 1704 the bounds of Priest Grove, now four acres, were noted. It lies next to Atlas Down, 'to the East upon Cliffords Ground, from the gete running Westward to a more called Picked Stone and there to the Rails of Atlas Copice and southward? from a stone in Birds Hedge westward to a hillock and thence to an ash in Henley Hedge about four Lug (leagues?) above Henley Road'. Atlas Down and Atlas Copice, called Atlas Down Ground and Atlas Drove Commons in the late C18th, are surely derived from *Attlee*, one of the three sheepcotes noted in 1299. This sheepcote stood where Hillside Farm is today (SU 152678), though until 1925 at least it was known as Audley's Cottage.