

Documentary History for  
**35 The Causeway, Steventon, Oxfordshire**

*Site Code: STE-J*

**from**

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

**by**

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Fig. 1. View of the house from the north.

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***Oxbow Books***

## STE-J: 35 THE CAUSEWAY, STEVENTON, OXFORDSHIRE

Grid reference: SU 4673 9172

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Documentary history by Nat Alcock and Chris Currie with the assistance of Heather Horner and Catherine Lorigan

*References:* Currie, C. R. J. (1976) 'Smaller domestic architecture in North Berkshire, c 1300 - c 1650', Oxford, D. Phil thesis; Currie, C. R. J. (1992) 'Larger medieval houses in the Vale of the White Horse', *Oxoniensia*, 57, 81-244.

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

In the admissions tables, Mess = messuage (house); a r p = acres rods perches; v. = virgate/yardland; d. = died. s. = surrendered.

*Abbreviations:*

BRO Berkshire Record Office, Reading

Reg Parish registers at BRO; transcript published on CD by Oxfordshire Family History Society.

TNA The National Archives

WAM Westminster Abbey Muniments

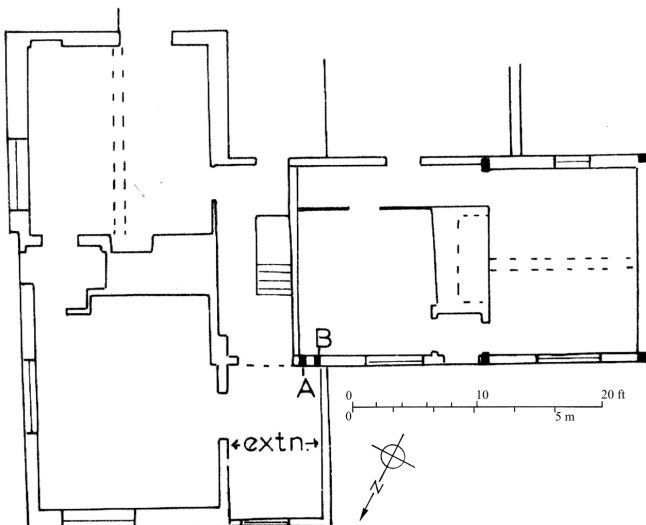


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering

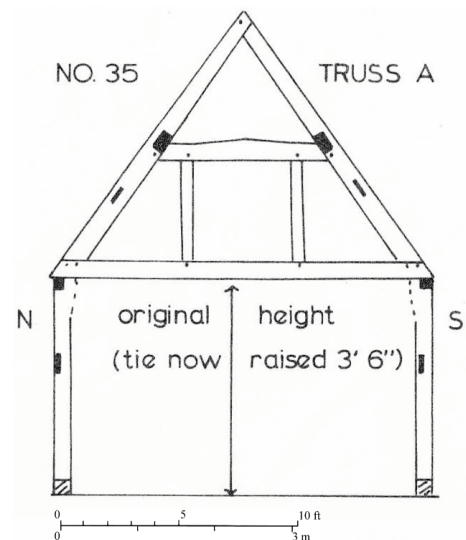


Fig. 3. Section of truss A ( both from Currie(1976))

### SUMMARY ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

This house (including no. 37 The Causeway) was originally single-storeyed, of three bays aligned parallel to The Causeway, comprising two hall bays with an open hearth, and a one-bay chamber. It is box-framed with curved braces to the (original) wallplate, and is dated to the early to mid-sixteenth century. The roof was raised (re-using the original timbers) and an axial chimney stack inserted, both probably in the seventeenth century. It now has a lobby entry and a newel stair behind the chimney. The easternmost bay is now of crosswing form. Internally, it had (1976) been completely modernised, but the roof timbers are sooted, although apparently re-set. The wing probably contains the remnants of a medieval cross-wing, although it is possible that an original in-line end bay was reconstructed in cross-

wing form. In the former case, the east bay of the hall range must have been very short, no more than a passage bay (perhaps similar to 39 *The Causeway*). Fuller details are given in Currie (1976).

## DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

### Summary

This holding can be traced back to 1459 when it was surrendered by Henry Cooke to John Iremonger, comprising a messuage and a one-acre croft. In 1491 it came into the hands of John Yate, and was among the extensive property that passed from his family to William Stone in 1546. When it was transferred to William's brother, James, in 1563, it was accompanied by four arable yardlands. It remained with the Stone family until 1764. The architectural evidence suggests that the house was probably built by the tenant who held it from John Yate.

### Location

This is plot 38 on the Tithe Map (Fig. 4), owned and occupied by Robert Lyford, with the orchard behind (plot 39). The location of plot 42 is also significant. It was owned by Wantage Town Lands, and is frequently mentioned as an abuttal for other property.

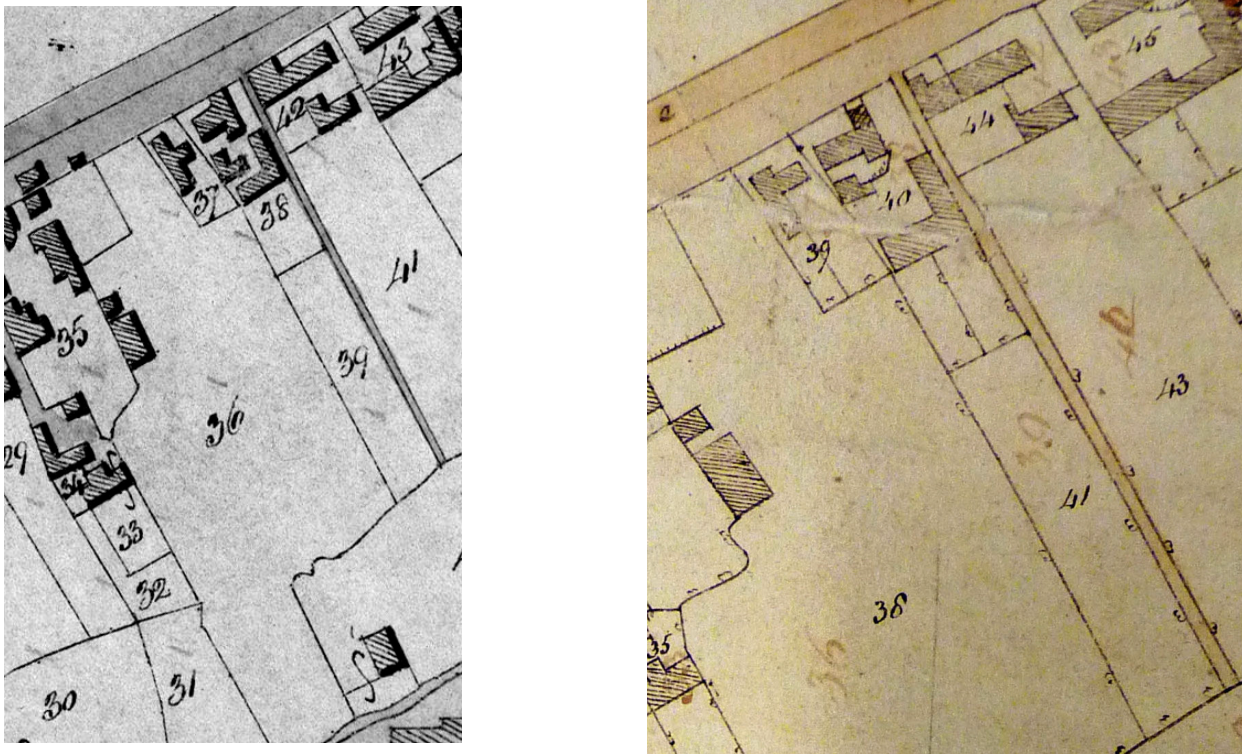


Fig. 4. Excerpts from the 1842 and 1839 maps of Steventon: (a, left) the 1842 Tithe Map;  
(b, right) the 1839 map

35, 37 *The Causeway* is plot 38 (1842) or 40 (1839)  
(1839 map reproduced courtesy of Steventon Parish Council).

### *History after 1664 (Table 1)*

This is holding 35 in the c. 1800 copyhold index, identifiable in the court books as the only holding belonging to Robert Lyford at the date of the Tithe Map. It can be traced in the books from 1662, when it was surrendered by James (I) Stone to his son Robert (I) as a house with 42 acres, and in 1677 was

passed on to the latter's son, James (II).<sup>1</sup> The family also owned Green Farm II (STE-M) and, when the properties were transferred to the James (II)'s sons, this one in 1713 to James (III) and Green Farm II in 1723 to Robert (II), this holding was somewhat reduced in favour of the other.<sup>2</sup> It was surrendered by James (III) in 1755 to be held jointly with his wife, Sarah, who inherited on his death in 1764.<sup>3</sup> She and her daughter sold it immediately to Robert Lyford, who settled the farm on his son in 1791. The latter was still the owner in 1842.

*Table 1. Admissions: 1664-1887*

References headed *Adm* are to the numbered list of admissions in WAM 57045; others are to volume and page of the court books, or to compiled lists of admissions.

<i>Adm</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Descr</i>	<i>Rent</i>
7423 m.6	1672	Stone, Robert, son of James, sen	s. Jame Stone	19 June 1662. House in which he dwelt, Cookes lane (N), barn etc; 42½ac	27s 10¼d
104	1677	James Stone, jun	s. Robert Stone	2 M, barns, 2 virg = 42½ac ( <i>includes holding 85</i> )	£1 9s 10d
334	1713	James Stone, jun	s. James Stone, sen	M, orch, gdn, 31½ac; Meadow called le Cherry Croft, close Walter Doe (S); Keats Close, Le Causeway Close (E); Le Grass Close	£1 1s
560 2/344	1755	James Stone & Sarah his wife, then son James; s. to will	s. James Stone & Sarah	[ <i>same</i> ] exc. Cherry Croft purchased from James by Edw Harman (rent 1s)	£1
598 3/41	1764	Stone, Sarah, widow	d. James, elder (will, 9 Jan 1756)	M, 31 ½ ac, Keates Cl: devised to Sarah.	£1
3/42	1764	Robert Lyford	Sarah Stone, Richard & Sarah Twycross	[Sarah Twycross, daughter of James & Sarah Stone]	£1
3/292	1791	Robert Lyford, jun & Elizabeth, wife	s. Robert Lyford; £800 marriage portion	Marriage. RL junior = E Commins of Garford	£1
	1836	Joseph Lyford	s. Robert Lyford	Conditional surrender	
C092	1836	Robert Lyford	s. Robert Lyford	Surrender to bar entail	

*Ownership from 1546 to 1662 (Table 2)*

The ownership of the house can be traced in the hands of the Stone family from 1546, when an enormous block of properties was acquired from Thomas Yate on behalf of William Stone (who was under-age) (C1087). It is interesting to note that at the same date the farm called Waynemans was acquired for his brother James from Thomas Wayneman (the later Home Farm, STE-L). In 1560-3, William (who must now have been of full age) sold off the whole of his property in half a dozen transactions. Among these,

<sup>1</sup> This 1662 admission is only recorded in the engrossed court roll for 1672, and was omitted from the bound up copies in WAM CC 292094. Relevant register entries are: 1662, baptism of Robert son of James Stone; 1663; 1698 burials of James Stone; 1699, burial of Robert Stone.

<sup>2</sup> It seems from the 1686 and 1696 rentals, that the landholding had already been split in some way, since James Stone, junior, paid only 16s in each year.

<sup>3</sup> In James's will (9 Jan 1756, proved in 1764), he left his copyhold property to Sarah with the proviso that if she were to die before being admitted, it should go to his daughter Sarah Stone (who had married Richard Twycross on 14 Mar 1763 (IGI, omitted from *Reg*).

he passed two blocks of property to James (C434-5), including specifically ‘a messuage on the high street’ (*alt’ strat’*) between the messuage of Thomas Sympson (W) and that late of the Chantry of Wantage (E) (i.e. TM 42), clearly to be identified with 35 The Causeway.<sup>4</sup> In 1597, James Stone settled this house (now called Wyckes) on his son, another James for life (then to descend to the heirs of John Stone, senior) (C671); it also comprised Keates Close, about six virgates of land and common rights (C671). In 1604, the house and half the land (four virgates) was settled by John Stone (presumably *senior*) on himself with remainder to his son, James (C717). It is next identified in 1653, when James Stone (John’s son, or perhaps grandson) passed the house and a yardland onto his son, Robert, to which another yardland was added in 1661 (C282-3), confirmed in 1662, just before James’s death in 1663.<sup>5</sup>

Table 2. 35 *The Causeway* from 1546 to 1661

Date	Adm	To	From	Premis	WAM
1546	C1087	Wm Stone aged ___ years by Wm Backhouse clerk his uncle	Thos Yate gent out of ct	Huge estate <i>including</i> : 1 mess and parcel of land cont 1 ac as inclosed by hedges & ditches late John Iremongers, surrendered by John Bett [1491, C1197]	7412, rot 39d-40
1563	C434	James Stone	s. Wm Stone	1 ½ v once John Yate, croft or parcell called a pyddell in le estende, pasture of 1 cow in le Cowleys, 1 ½ a meadow (1 highmead, ½ Byndemede)	7418, rot 5d
1563	C435	James Stone	s. Wm Stone	1 mess called poundclose,, pasture of 1 cow in le cowleyes, ½ a in higmead, rent 20d; <b>one mess on high street</b> between mess of Thos Sympson on W and mess late of Chantry of Wantage on E, rent 8d; 4 a arable a cowpasture rent 2s	7418, rot 5d
1597	C671	James Stone his son for life, then John Stone sen of Stev yeo and heirs	s. Jas Stone	<b>1 mess or ten and appurts called Wyckes</b> now in occ of Thos Smalebone situate betw ten now in tenure of Wm Simpson to W and lane called Cakeslane to E; 1 close Keates close a croft called Stichins; arable and meadow [ <i>details</i> ]; common pasture for 8 horses & 160 sheep. Rent £4 19s	7419, rot 13 and d
1604	C717	John Stone for life; rem to Jas Stone his son	s. John Stone	<b>1 mess or ten called Wickes</b> lying next ten of Wm Simpson to W; Keates close; Stichins croft; 4v. rent 49s 9d.	7524, f 7
1661	C282	Rob Stone his son	s. Jas. Stone 7 Dec. 1653	Mess, lane(E); buildings structures backsides (atria) orchards gardens and a close, yardland of 21 ac; 3 rods meadow; ½ a mead in Binditch, 2 closes called Keats Close, and Homesetten; pasture	7421, rot. 5; 7422
1661	C283	Rob his son after death of James	s. James Stone 13 Apr 1661	Yardland cont 21 a (details), meadow (rubbed), common for 2 cows	WAM 7422

<sup>4</sup> The location is confirmed by the abuttals given in 1601 of the house of Thomas Sympson on the tenement of James Stone (E) (WAM 7419, rot 16), and in 1661 of the house of William Simpson on the house of James Stone, senior (N) (WAM 7421, rot. 1).

<sup>5</sup> Robert was only admitted when the courts were functioning again in 1661.

*Ownership before 1546 (Table 3)*

The estate sold by Thomas Yate to William Stone in 1546 contained a house 'late Wykes', which *prima facie* should be the house 'called Wyckes' recorded in James Stone's hands in 1597. However, tracing this back to 1441 reveals that it stood on a corner site, between The Causeway and the east side of either Stocks Lane or High Street.<sup>6</sup> The deceptive name in 1597 undoubtedly arose because 35 The Causeway had been underlet to the Wickes family in the 1590s. In his will, John Wickes (d 1591) left to his wife Joan the remaining years of the lease of the house which he held from James Stone.

Of the other houses bought by William Stone from Thomas Yate, which might correspond to 35 The Causeway, most can be identified with other properties. However, a messuage and close known as Iremongers, acquired by John Yate in 1491 and tracable back to 1459, is described then as a messuage and one acre lying between the land of John Bokyngham and a lane leading to the tenement of Henry Cooke. Since Bokyngham is known to have held 39 The Causeway (STE-E), this matches the location of no. 37 precisely (see STE-E history). This house can be followed from its surrender by Henry Cooke to John Iremonger (C1852), from him to John Bette (C1509) and from the latter to John Yate (C1197).

*Table 3. Descent from Henry Cooke to John Yate of Iremongers, 1459 to 1491*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Adm</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>WAM</i>
1459	C1852	John Iremonger	s. Hen Cooke & Alice his w	1 mess 1 a land lying betw the land of John Bokyngham on the side of a lane leading to the tenement of sd Hen Cooke	7409, rot 35d
1475	C1509	John Bette	s. John Iremonger of Abingdon out of ct	1 mess and 1 parcel of land cont est 1 a as inclosed with hedges and ditches	7410, rot 18
1491	C1197	John Yate of Charney	s. John Bett	1 mess and parcel cont 1 a as inclosed by hedges and ditches, late John Iremonger's	7411, rot 10d

*Probate Records*

**John Wickes, d. 1591.** As noted, he was a sub-tenant to James Stone at 35 The Causeway. As well as passing his lease to his wife Joan (and then son Richard), his will mentions sons, William and John, and daughter, Margaret. His inventory names: Hall and Chamber and probably an un-named kitchen or buttery. This is compatible with the structure of 35 The Causeway before its roof was raised and the hall ceiled.

Apart from the 1759 will of James Stone, this branch of the Stone family seems generally to have surrendered this property before death and no other probate records can be linked to the holding.

<sup>6</sup> Surrender in 1441 of Richard Wyke to William Edmund (WAM 7264, rot 35d). The house possibly stood on what later became the orchard of 10 Milton Lane, which belonged to William Stone in 1560.