

A look at Headbourne Worthy through Old Maps: An evening lecture by Howard Tissiman to the Worthys Local History Group

The development of Headbourne Worthy between 1086 to 2017 was explored using historic and more recent maps. Each map was analysed to investigate: Firstly, who produced them; secondly, why the maps were produced; and finally, what the topographical documents reveal. Howard began his talk by recapping the history of Headbourne Worthy which came into being as part of St Swithun's Priory in the 9th century. In 1086 the Domesday Book put a value of £25 on the Parish comprising approximately around twenty-eight houses and three mills. In 1424 the village belonged to the Duke of York. By 1594 there were nineteen taxpayers, indicating the settlement had shrunk by a third, with revenues consequently declining. Moving on to 1665, and the time of the Hearth Tax, there were twenty-seven houses. So, over a 600-year period, between the 11th and 17th centuries, Headbourne Worthy had remained relatively static.

By the 18th century, estate surveys were being undertaken for landowners to document their land and holdings. One of William Godson's finest maps was for Winchester, produced in 1750. It is, no doubt, the success of this map that led to Godson being commissioned to produce the 1753 estate map which subsumes Headbourne Worthy. Each field and property is numbered. In turn, each number was then cross-referred on the corresponding manorial roll or index. Sadly, the manorial roll for Godson's map has been lost, but the map does show the skeleton of Headbourne Worthy and the roads appear to be in the right and familiar place, and of a similar length to those we know today. However, Barton's Farm appears to be in the wrong place, and the London Road is absent (the latter not being constructed until 1790). A comparison and overlay of a modern map showed that Godson's survey has the roads (omitting London Road) in the right places and to the right scale (in perches). Indeed, it is an accurate representation. Some of the spellings of places and routes are different. However, Pudding House Farm has not changed much since Godson recorded it in 1753. The "green land" of pasture and meadows in proximity to London Road and Bedfield Lane illustrates the wetness of this triangle on which crops could not grow. Today we know this to be the site of the watercress beds adjacent to The Good Life farm shop. The alignment of Bedfield Lane has shifted, and the late 20th century route we use today replaced the original layout (which is preserved by the footpath on the trout fishery side of the lane). This area is very wet as it is the head source of the city brook which once would have fed the mill stream of Hyde Abbey. It is possible that Mill Lane, the only road on Godson's map to have a name, may indicate the site of one of Headbourne Worthy's lost mills. In terms of an identifiable village centre, as the parish is mainly situated on chalk down, houses were built on the higher and drier ground away from the east side where land has the tendency to flood. This is the reason why Headbourne Worthy is a scattered settlement.

Shifting over into Kings Worthy briefly. The old "pink" Post Office neighbouring St. Mary's Church sits facing the meander of the earlier road which is illustrated on the 1763 map. This meander off the modern main London Road correlates precisely with Godwin's topography,

as does the Basingstoke Road, both demonstrating the accurate representation of his survey of a very rural parish that had grown little since Domesday.

Moving forward 84 years to 1837, the next map of interest was the Tithe Map of Headbourne Worthy. Originally, tithes were introduced in the 8th century as a tax paid to the Church, with the amount being paid dependent on the amount of produce from the land, normally being 10% of that profit. Tithes were paid on: all things arising from the ground (e.g. wheat, barley, oats etc.), all things nourished from the ground (sheep, cows, pigs etc.), and, all the produce of mans' labour (e.g. wicker baskets etc.). With the introduction of the Parliamentary Enclosures Act in the 18th century, tithes declined as other forms of taxation were introduced. The Tithe Commutations Act was passed in August 1836 and eradicated tithe payments in kind, being replaced by contributions of land and cash. The valuer W.J. Simons of St Cross duly mapped Headbourne Worthy, listing each property and field, valuing them and calculating the money payment, as opposed to the tithe proportion, due to the Rector. This took him until September 1837 to complete. Interestingly, the largest and most profitable landowner in that year was Richard Bright, with land valued at £1240, thus generating a yearly revenue to the Rector of £243. Winchester College (then known as St Mary's College) had land within the catchment of Headbourne Worthy valued at £149, with £52 of this revenue going to the Rector. Total revenue amounted to £1792 of which the Rector was awarded £395, which accounts for more than 20% of overall revenue from the Parish.

The Tithe Map also has points of topographical interest, as it records the names of roads, routes, and places, now known by different names. For example: Down Farm Lane is marked on the 1837 map as Hoggish Lane, Wellhouse Lane was Weldings Drove, Gravelly Lane is now Springvale, White Way at Eversley Park, Willis Way reflects Willis Lane, and the Race Down (a race course owned by Richard Bright and in existence by 1727) is marked. The race track which acts as a marker for the start of the gentrification of the Parish, was closed in 1914 when the Army took over the land. The London & South West Railway is not marked, as it was still under construction in 1837, being opened in 1840. Taylor's Corner is recorded, being owned and occupied by George Taylor, comprising a blacksmith's shop, cottage and garden (not the house on the site today) with a value of only 1s and 2d. and nothing to be paid to the Rector. Similarly, there was no revenue demanded by the Rector for the Church and Churchyard which only had a value of 2s and 11d. The present route of London Road to the east of St Swithun's Church had been created, and the road at St Mary's straightened. However, there were still only thirty houses in Headbourne Worthy in 1837. Revealing very little growth and population expansion in this still predominantly agricultural settlement.

The next map discussed was the Ordnance Survey of 1869/70 revised in 1908, and printed in 1909. Now in inches to the mile, the historic OS map illustrates standard topographical symbols with which we are familiar today. Originally these maps were created for detail and precision by the military. The 1909 edition shows the four farms within Headbourne Worthy, with Upper Farm being bisected by the London & South West Railway, Manor House to its south, and Lower Farm and Pudding House Farm to the south-east respectively. Headbourne Worthy House has the later Dicot, Newbury & Southampton Railway (opened

in 1885) running to its east and to the east of Pudding House Farm. This line is now the A34 dual carriageway. Chislands (Chisslands or Clerk's Piece which is detailed on a map in St Swithun's Church) a triangle of land that was bequeathed to the church for the purpose of raising funds to repair it. As the plaque details: 3½ acres bounded on the north by Weldon's (Weldings) Drove leading to the Andover Road. The railway station at Headbourne Worthy (aka Kings Worthy) is detailed, as is the late eighteenth century turnpike London Road, now interestingly labelled as a "Roman Road". Social improvement is demonstrated by the building of the school on School Lane, and the corresponding routes to enable pupils to walk to school. The map illustrates some growth within the Parish. However, Headbourne Worthy has retained its origin as an agricultural settlement despite the beginnings of gentrification with the construction of large "country-style" houses, including Headbourne Worthy House and South Croft.

Whilst much appears to have changed within the environs of Headbourne Worthy, Howard's talk actually demonstrated that the Parish and its infrastructure has not changed much in over a millennium. Much of what we see and know today would be identifiable to our predecessors, as their environs are to us.

Jane Wheeler.