

## FENNY STRATFORD IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

[By W. BRADBOOKE]

Fenny Stratford before 1730, when it became a separate parish, was a hamlet, endship, or chapelry of the large parish of Bletchley. It is situated on Watling Street immediately north of the Ousel, where the road crosses it. Fenny Stratford proper is on the west side of the road, which is here the boundary dividing Bletchley from Simpson, which parish lies east of the road. The little town of Fenny Stratford is therefore in two parishes, by far the larger part being, however, in Bletchley, and was also the most populous "endship" of that parish; in 1600 the whole population was about 600, more than half being in Fenny Stratford. In the latter part of the 17th century the endship probably had a population of about 400. The parish of Simpson had about 350 people, of whom about 100 dwelt in the two dozen houses on the Simpson side of the road. Cole says that in 1725 there were 97 houses in Fenny Stratford, of which 71 were in Bletchley parish. The 17th century remains are now few; many thatched cottages have been destroyed during the last thirty years, four only remaining about 250 yards s.s.w. of the church. The most noticeable house, nearly opposite the church, is a brick building with two chimney stacks, some of the chimneys being dummies.

Between the Bull Inn and the canal is a very large barn-like building and part of a house showing 15th to 17th century details, which are fully described in the report of the Historical Monuments Commission. This building is now adapted as a factory; it formerly contained remains of painted plaster, showing birds, foliage, and a demi-cat playing a fiddle. Some of this is now in the County Museum.

Fenny Stratford derived its living for the most part from travellers on the great highway of Watling Street. As Little Brickhill is only two miles south and Stony Stratford six miles north, and those places possessed better inns, the custom enjoyed by Fenny



BUILDING, FENNY STRATFORD (former brewery)  
9No 3 in Hist. Mon. Comm Report, Vol II. 114)

Stratford inns was probably inferior, the other places being more attractive. During the Civil War its position between the Royalist garrisons at Oxford and Buckingham and the Parliament garrisons at Ayles-bury and Newport Pagnell caused some military events in the neighbourhood ; burials of soldiers are recorded, and on 2nd July, 1644, Sir William Waller had 400 footmen at Fenny Stratford.

After the victory of the Parliament commissioners reported that there " ought to be a church built at Fenny Stratford." The recommendation was not acted upon; everyone knows that the times were not favourable. Local conditions were far from good and about to become worse, the epidemics of sickness, plague, increased poverty, and, of course, lawlessness. The constables had full employment. The following is a sample :—

	s	d
1685 pd for a warrant & my journey about Thomas Taylor	3	6
pd to Robert Wilson for watchinge Taylor's whore	1	0
pd for beere then	1	0
pd to William Wilson for vittuals and drink for her		
4 days	7	0
expended at ye takinge of Taylor	1	6
expended at Willow Hall to warne the people out of the town.....		6
Cole records: "In 1641 the constables houses were Denbigh and Willow Hall two cottages on Watling St. Willow Hall was pulled down in 1706."		

The Fenny Stratford overseers-of-the-poor account book for the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century consists of 43 paper leaves, 15¼ inches high by 6 inches wide; the covers are missing, and the book has been kept folded transversely. The record begins in 1653, and ends in 1687. The years 1656-8, 1663, and 1673-4 are miss-ing ; the accounts for the remaining 30 years are perfect, being exactly kept and well written.

Up to 1667 the annual record begins with a list of ratpayer with their respective assessments, headed, "A levy made for and towards the releife of the Poore of Feny Stratford in the pish of Bleachley quarterly as foll . . . . . ." Sometimes the place is called "Feny Stratford on Bletchly side." The detailed account of expenditure is usually headed, "Disbursed for the

Poore of feney stratford by me — overseer for ye yeare —, " or "The acomtes of — overseer etc. " These accounts were audited about Lady Day at a meeting of the inhabitants (ratepayers), when the balance in hand, if any, was handed to the new over-seer, who was then appointed for the coming year, and the book signed by all present, including the two magistrates visiting for that purpose, " seen and allowed by us. "

During the eleven years in which a list of rate-payers is given about 170 individuals are mentioned. Many of these only occur once; there are 117 surnames. For four years 90 names appear each year, and for other years 72 to 80 names; after 1665 there is a drop to 65 names. In 1653-5 the annual levy was £10 to £12, during 1659-62 it rose to £87, in 1665 it was only £24; the effect of the plague caused a rise to £63 in 1666. Then came the peaceful time of the golden days, for 16 years the expenditure varied from £31 to £45 per annum, only once rising to £47. In 1684 there was a rise to £80, and an era of increased expenditure set in. The assessments varied markedly; before 1660 some individuals paid only ½ d. per quarter.

Of the 80 or 90 people who paid rates very few were sufficiently interested to attend the annual audit; the average attendance was only six or seven. In 1665 the exceptional number of 14 attended, and in four other years only three. During these thirty years the accounts were signed by 42 individuals, only two making their mark, X, and then only once each, which shows that illiteracy was not a failing of the responsible parishioners. The Rev. Edw. Taylor only missed thrice. The more constant attendants were Francis Chevall, William Innes, John Jauncey, and John Chapman.

Two magistrates had to attend and approve the accounts and sign the same. Twelve gentlemen did this duty; the autographs appearing most often are those of Anthony Chester, Will. Tyringham, Tho. Duncombe, and Tho. Farrer.

In 1668 is the following: "These accounts are not allowed till the neighbours have inspected them and

that we may know from them at our next monthly meeting what they have to object against them. April 4, 1668. Tho, Hackett. " Finally, " Allowed by us, June ye 6, 1668. T. Longueville, Will Tyring-ham."

The position of Fenny Stratford on a great trunk road made it very liable to suffer when the Kingdom was visited by epidemics of sickness because of the conveyance of infection by travellers. The 17th century comprised many visitations; the years 1593, 1625, 1643, 1657-8, 1665, and 1685 were especially marked. In 1643-4 the burials at Bletchley were twice the usual number. During the period 1653-1664 there were 346 baptisms and 350 burials. This excess of deaths was due to the heavy mortality in 1657, when there were 74 burials, and in 1658 when there were 72 burials. The sickness was a form of fever and ague known as the new disease, and prevailed over several counties. At the Claydons the Rector and many others died, and there were 40 or 50 people ill at a time. Dr. Denton, of Hillesden, described the disease as " a long tertian or quartan." Fever and influenza was rife in the autumn of 1657 and the spring and autumn of 1658. Dr. Thomas Willis, then living in Oxford, wrote that the summer of 1657 was very dry and hot; in August there was sickness in every village round Oxford.

The population of the parish of Bletchley is estimated at 900 about this time; in 1676 Archbishop Sheldon's census was 960. The endship or township of Fenny Stratford was the most populated part. The mutilated subsidy roll for the hearth tax gives 65 houses — the real number was over 70. We may suppose there were 400 people. Of the 74 burials in 1657 more than 40 were from Fenny Stratford, 19 being in August. In 1658 of the 72 burials 34 were from Fenny Stratford, 14 being in August. The township must have lost one-tenth at least of its inhabitants.

In 1665 the plague exceeded all other visitations in extent and fatality. The infection in all probability came from London, perhaps brought by some citizen deserting the stricken city, for two Londoners died at that time in Fenny Stratford.

In Bletchley register there are 126 burials (55 men, 71 women) recorded, chiefly in August, September, and October—this is for the whole parish ; some deaths must have escaped registration, as Cole says that in the Bletchley part of Fenny Stratford died 106, and in the Simpson part 23, in all 129. As there is no extant record for Simpson it is unknown if plague victims were buried there, perhaps not, as there was a plague pit for burials in a field called " Graves Close, " where the County Council Schools now stand. Some households were probably extinguished : Cole-man 4 deaths, Cooper 4, Dench 4, Goodman 5, Hakins 6, King 8, Warner Morby 5, Sansom 4, etc.

It is noticeable that the overseer's accounts give but little information — the word plague is absent, and the year's expenditure was only £24:19:9! The Easter audit was attended by fourteen — largest number on record — possibly because the previous year's expenditure was £57. The plague came after this record attendance. There are three payments, total 2s. 2d., to Mr., Cowly "for tobacco for ye visited."

The herb was regarded as disinfectant, protective, etc. The boys at Eton College were ordered to smoke in school daily. One-third of the population of Fenny Stratford perished in 1665, and as many others must have left the place temporarily at least; the town suffered a set back for many years.

The overseer's expenditure for the year (1666) after the plague more than doubled; £66: 3: 7 had to be raised for increased poverty in a smaller population, there being less than 70 assessed instead of 80 or 90 of preceding years. Trade must have nearly vanished, for the Bucks section of Watling Street was entirely deserted for a time by travellers. Passengers deviated at Ilockliffe, and took the road through Woburn, Hogsty End, Wavendon, Broughton, and Newport Pagnell to Stony Stratford, or through Lathbury to Northampton.

An interesting item in 1666 is: "pd. Goodman Banbury & Richard Crane for ye Cooking stool and whipping post £1: 13: 10." This shows that original sin or the old Adam had not been exorcised by the

Recent chastisement, and that the local women re-tained the misuse of their tongues. The common scold, *communis rixatrix* (for the law confines it to the feminine gender), is a public nuisance, and if con-victed shall be sentenced to be placed in a certain engine called the trebucket or cucking stool, which in the Saxon tongue signifies the scolding stool, though now corrupted into ducking stool because the residue of the judgment is that when so placed she shall be plunged in water for her punishment. The cucking-stool was simply a chair in which the sinner was placed, usually in front of her own door, to be pelted and insulted by the mob.

In 1667 conditions required relief to the amount of £70, and then for fifteen years the annual amount required by the overseers varied from £31 to £45. Double this expenditure was necessitated by the sickly time of 1683-5, when the death-rate rose to about 35 per thousand.

Cole records that in the prosperous times before the plague several large inns flourished, but after 1720 only four remained — the ancient post house, the Red Lion, The Bull, The Saracen's Head, and The Swan.

In 1457 George Longuevyle, armiger, owned in Fenny Stratford a " hospice ibidem vocat le George " with other property. This house is mentioned in Bletchley register in 1652, and was pulled down in 1681. The Saracen's Head in 1661 was said to be the principal inn; it stood at the corner opposite Simpson Lane, the house is old, with probably 17th century remains; it is now a shop. The Angel, mentioned in 1620, stood where the National School (now disused) stands, the Bell and the Antelope were close by — they and the Red Lion have long disappeared. The Bull, which still flourishes, is mentioned more often than any other inn, and was certainly the largest and most important; the premises were formerly part of the property of the fraternity or guild of S.S. Margaret and Catherine.

The Swan still stands at the corner of Simpson Lane, and is in Simpson parish ; it was not probably as important as the others, for there is no mention of.

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it in the parochial records. It is one of the oldest inns now existing, and is known to have been an inn since 1472 at least.

In spite of the conditions of the time there were three tradesmen enough up-to-date to mint tokens, the illegal money of necessity to supply the small change required in our social system. Robert Honnor minted two farthings — one dated 1665 bore the grocer's arms,



the initials R.L.H., and Robert Honnor of Fenistrat-ford; the other, dated 67 (sic), omitted the arms and had Fenne Stratford. The initials R.L.H. were those of the issuer and his wife Luce. The latter was buried at Bletchley, 29 July, 1671. When Robert died is not known; he lived on the Simpson side, and the register transcripts supply all that is known of his household.

Edw. Elliott servant of Robert Honnor bur. 7 June 1636.

Anne daut of Robert and Luce Honnor bap. 26 Jan. 1638.

Robert son of Robert and Luce Honnor bap 6 and bur  
7 May, 1677.

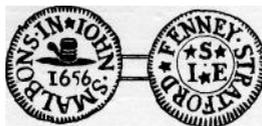
Rob. (or Rich) son of Robert and Martha Honnor bap. 8 July,  
1678.

Rob. Son of Robert and Martha Honnor bur 1 Dec., 1680.

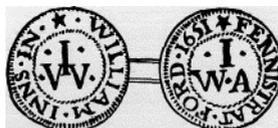
Robert Honnor paid tax on three hearths, but does not appear in the assessment lists as he did not live in the parish. Bletchley register records the burial on 29th May, 1721, of Robert Honnor, of the parish of Simpson, an aged old man. His tombstone says that he died on 26th May, aged 77, and was a chandler and groaser, of Fenny Stratford. He must have been the son of the token issuer. On 1st Jan., 1644, Roberte sonne of Edward Honnor of Stratford was bap. at Bletchley; if he issued the token in 1665 he must have been under 22.

Between 1636 and 1694 there are 27 entries in Bletchley register of the families of Edward and William Honner; the family was not native, it appears and disappears at the dates mentioned. William Honnor was overseer in 1664, his wife Sara died of

the plague, he married his " mayd " at Bow Brickhill in 1666, and died in 1670. Edw. Honnor was a malster and died in 1650.



John Smalbones was a hatter, and issued his token in 1656 with the initials I.E.S. He was probably the son of Richard and Annis Smallbones, who settled here after his birth, and had several other children baptized at Bletchley after 1633. John and Elizabeth his wife had their first child, John, born in 1652, and in the fatal year 1658 his wife and two children died. Like his father, he was a chapman. His second wife, Martha, died in 1664, and he appears no longer in the local records. There are 16 entries between 1633 and 1664 in Bletchley register, and five entries at Bow Brickhill before 1700 of this family.



William Inns was a mercer, and minted his brass-farden in 1651, the earliest date of any token issued in this county. He and Alice his wife had seven children baptized between 1633 and 1651, and probably one born before they settled at Fenny Stratford. His wife died in 1670, and he died in 1683, and the family became extinct. One son, Joseph, born 1643, and buried in 1690, is perhaps the Joseph Innes who minted a token at Shenley in 1670, and there married Elizabeth Daniel in 1673.

William Inns was overseer in 1655. He and his son William fairly regularly attended the annual audit. The son died in 1686. He paid tax on six hearths, and was one of the larger ratepayers. There are entries of payments made to him for cloth, linen, etc.

The most important individual in Fenny Stratford was Mr. John Jauncey. He signed the annual audit eleven times. In 1682 he was overseer. He paid tax on 16 hearths, and was by far the heaviest ratepayer, in some years paying from £12 to £16. He died in 1698, and was buried in Bletchley church near the Grey Tomb. His wife, Mary, died in 1693; she was the daughter of John Dewberry, who was of a family of innkeepers and butchers. John Jauncey appeared in Fenny Stratford about 1650. Cole states (Add. MSS. 5821) that he was bailiff of the Manor to the Duke of Buckingham and Dr. Thomas Willis, and appears to have been somewhat of a rogue, the Manors being in much disorder when bought by Dr. Willis for £17,700, and then producing £869 per annum. In 1650 he kept the Black Bull Inn, and in 1681 pulled down the George because it hindered the custom of his other house, the Red Lion. The family tradition is that he was an ex-cavalry officer disinherited by his father, possibly for political reasons. His son John, baptized at Simpson in 1659, educated at Westminster and Oxford, became rector of Shenley and ancestor of many clergy. (See **RECORDS**, Vol. IX., p. 206.)

The Chevall family was native from the 14th century at least up to comparatively recent date. Francis Chevall signs the audit more often than any except William Inns; he was overseer in 1676. Three or four of the family paid hearth tax, and were medium ratepayers.

The poor were assisted and relieved by the rates and certain property bequeathed for that purpose; there was also a town house or poor house, repairs to which were defrayed by trustees as appears from extant receipts, e.g., £3: 7: 6, paid in 1681 to Henry Banbury.

In 1653 occurs the item in the town accounts : "Reed, of Jo. Chapman for the interest for £5 of towne stocke for one whole year the £5 being in ye hande of Jo. Wells of ffeny stratford, " ye sume of — 6s. — This item appears in 1654, but not later, for the Charity Commission then dealt with it. It was probably derived from a portion of land given for the



PAINTED PLASTER—FENNY STRATFORD.

(No. 3 in Hist. Mon. Comm. Report. Vol. II, 114.)

poor in 1500 by David Bryne; there was also the .£10 given by Richard Borne. There is some confusion between these two men; they may be one individual. By deed, 22nd Jan., 1600, the £10 was vested by William Dewberry, butcher, in Francis Kynnes inn-holder, John Chevall yeoman, Thomas Coleman shoe-maker, John Utton yeoman, Thomas Searle yeoman, and Thomas Cowper baker, for the benefit of the poor.

There was evidently scandal and maladministration of the local charities, as the Act, 43 Eliz., "to redress the misemployment of goods, etc., left to the poor," was invoked, and a Government Commission held an enquiry at Newport Pagnell on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1654. A jury of 13 good and lawful men of the county under the guidance of the Commissioners, found that John Chevall yeoman, William Kinns yeoman, William Fuller yeoman, feoffees and trustees of one messuage, etc., had abused their trust by demising part of the messuage on lease for 21 years at a rent of 33s. 4d. to one of themselves, viz., Fuller. Also Chevall had in possession £15 belonging to the town, with interest since 25th March, 1649; and John Chapman had £5, and William Moore, shoemaker, held £12, the gift of the late Thomas Grantham for the use of the poor.

Later on it was found that Kinns, Dewberry, and Christopher Hurst were bound to pay Chevall £5 :4 for the use of the poor, and Thomas Norman and his son John were also bound to pay £5:4 to Chevall for the same.

Finally, on 27th Sept., 1654, the Commissioners annulled the lease to Fuller, deposed the corrupt trustees, and appointed Rev. Edward Tailor, William Howberd, William Inns, John Chapman, Thomas Johnson, Thomas Scriven, Thomas Banbury, Tymothy Jeves, Francis Tompkins, Richard Cole, Henry Style, Thomas Goodman.

Chevall was made to pay over the money, with 6 per cent per annum interest, in his possession to Rev. E. Tailor and W. Howberd. Chapman had to do the same. Messrs. Kinns, Dewberry, and Hurst, and the Normans also had to pay the money they owed to

Rev. E. Tailor and W. Howberd. All these funds and trusts are for the use and benefit of the poor for ever. William Moore was also ordered to pay the legacy of Thomas Glantam, yeoman, whose will, dated 15th Oct., 1625, left £12 to the poor and made Moore his executor. After 30 years this legacy was still unpaid, and in spite of the exposure of the enquiry and the order of the Commission it never was paid. Moore was a very small ratepayer, and only paid tax on one hearth.

## EXPENSES OF THE OVERSEERS

The overseer always required some help in making up his accounts, and in addition sometimes had to pay a superior penman for writing them up, and a regu-larly recurring entry is " for making up the account 1s. 6d., or 6d. or 8d." Another expense was that of making the levy or assessing the ratepayers. This appears to have usually been done at the Bull or the Lyon, or some other inn, the actual cost of the levy making was nearly always 1s., but what was spent at that function was another matter, and was probably regulated more by the thirst of those present than by the amount levied.

	s.	d.
1665 for levy making and expenses ye parish busighness	10	0
1667 ffor making the levy.....	1	0
spent at the levy making.....	1	6
1675 expended at making the levy.....	4	6
for expenses of the neighbours when my levy was made.....	3	10
1676 paid for makinge up my accompts.....	3	0
1685 expended at the levy making.....	6	0

There are also entries " lost by levy, " and refusals. In 1676, there were six refusals, but as they only totalled 4s. 8d. the defaulters must have been poor. Frequent journeys to the justices, petty sessions, and other parishes necessitated horse hire and long absence, which had to be paid for:

	£	s.	d.
1661 laid oat for toune besnes.....	1	2	9
1666 for 20 journeys my horse and self.....	1	10	0
1667 ye pety sessions my horse & self.....	2	6	
1670 for going to Newport horse and self.....	1	6	

PAUPER RELIEF

The first items in each year's accounts give the details of continuous relief, the weekly pay — this varied according to the health or ability to work of the recipient; 2s. 6d. was about the highest amount, it was rarely exceeded, 1s. was most usual. The last phase of several lives can be followed in these accounts: beginning with occasional help which at last became continuous with sporadic additions of clothing and other things, and finally mention of charges for shroud, tolling bell, and making grave. A very expensive party was Mrs. Mary Stope, or Stapp. In 1669 is an entry £5 paid to Ann Duck for the use of Mary Stope, clothing items 23s., also a "wascoate," and 1s. for a lock: all of which seems to indicate some sort of restraint. A selection of her after-history follows:—

	£	s.	d.
1670 paid to Any Smith for the use of Mary Stope .....	6	12	0
1672 paid to Robert Willson and Susan Oliver for Mary Stope.....	5	4	0
1677 paid Mary Stopp for 50 weekes at 2/6 the weeke .....	6	5	0
paid for a new coate ċ wastcoate ċ two shirts and a new paire of shooes ċ a paire of shooes mendinge ċ one apron ċ stockings ċ stringes to tie her shooes .....	1	5	2
1678 pd Mary Stapp 26 wekes at 2/6 a weke .....	3	5	0
pd for 2 pare of shooes ċ 2 pare of stokin 2 capes one apron a neckcloth clothes mending two laces and shooes and stocking mending .....	11	7	
pd for striping of her and wasshing of her her shroud and pson fetching the beare and other expenses at her funerall and going to ye Justices .....	15	11	

Another example is Margret Basse, receiving occasional help before 1668; it became continuous from then to her death. Most of the time she received 1s. per week. In 1683 she died, and 9s. 4d. was spent on shroud, winding her, grave, etc.

The expenditure on clothing comes next to weekly pay in amount; it is informative, giving details of making, prices of materials, etc. A complete outfit is sometimes given.

	s.	d.
1667 ffor a payre of stockins for King .....	1	6
ffor a pavre of linings for King .....	1	8
ffor a shirt and making for King .....	2	6

	ffor cloth for breeches for King .....	3	2
	ffor pockets- and butons and making for King .....	1	6
	ffor a wasket for King.....	2	4
	ffor buttons and: making for King .....	1	0
	ffor a pare of shooes for King .....	2	4
	pd for 2 hatts for Hawkins and Marriott .....	3	0
	pd for a dublet ċ breeches for Marriot .....	9	0
	pd for a dublet ċ breeches for Hawkins .....	10	0
	pd for 3 bands and making them .....	2	0
1669	pd for a- sute of clothes for Coleman's boy .....	12	0
1670	pd for clothes for Fuller's boy lining and making ...	18	6
	for one shifte for Fuller .....	3	0
	for a hate for Fuller .....	1	6
1670	for a new shifte and bodyes .....	5	6
1671	pd for apernes and one payre of stokins .....	4	6
	pd for 2 shifts .....	7	0
	pd for mending of Cherys shooes .....	1	0
	for linen for her head for Chery .....	2	4
1671	for mending a coate for Chery and laces .....		8
	for a smoke and the making .....	3	10
	for 2 paire of bodies for Stope and Chery .....	6	0
	for mending some linen .....		4
	for one shifte for Stope and the making .....	3	4
	for a paire of stokins footed .....		6
1672	for smalle linen and making .....	3	0
	for making a new wascoate and footing 2 pare of stokins .....	2	0
1675	pd ffor a pare of old shooes for Mary Davies .....	1	0
	pd for mending her shooes .....		8
	pd for an apron for her .....	1	6
	pd for a pare of hose for her .....	1	8
	pd for lynin cloth to make her capps and neck- clothes .....	2	0
	pd for a pare of gloves .....	1	0
	pd for a pare of croches .....		6
	for a knife and comb .....		10
	for paper .....		2
1676	paid for a paire: of gloves .....		10
1677	paid for an upper coate, two petty coats, two shirts, two waistcoates, a paire of stokins, two biggins, two neckclothes, two ffillets, one cap, one back cloth ċ a paire of shooes for Jo. Curnocks child .....	11	3
1679	pd for making a frock ċ buttons .....	1	8
	pd for making ċ bindinge two paire of drawers .....	1	6
1680	for a skin to make pocketts .....		6
1684	paid for a letter from London .....		4
	paid for two aleberries .....		6

This last item may have been either medicinal or convivial or funereal, or perhaps all three; it occurs with the entries of illness and burial of John Waters' wife. An aleberry was a delectable beverage made by boiling ale with spice, sugar, and sops of bread. There are entries recording the payment of rents for

poor people; also charges for thatching and repairs to their cottages. As the overseers would not repair private property these charges must have been in-curred for town property, or for poor tenants of the manor holding according to the manorial custom which required tenants to do repairs.

	£	s.	d.
1660 for quit-rent wood straw & motar for Willi. Wilson's house .....		1	4
(quit-rent, paid by freeholders and copy-holders of a manor as an acquittance of other services.)			
1672 paid for Thomas ffenner his rent .....	1	14	2
1677 paid to Robt. Honner for one year & halfe rent for Robt. Gibbs .....		2	8 0
1679 pd rents for 4 people .....	3	16	4
1684 paid to ffran. Chevall for straw to thatch Robt. Gibbs House .....		8	0
paid for two mens work for three days thatching ....		6	0

In cases of necessity payment of hearth tax would naturally follow payment of rent. Mention is made in Domesday Book of fumage or smoke farthings paid by custom, to the King for every chimney in a house. The first statutory establishment was 13 and 14 Charles II. C. 10 (1662), whereby an hereditary revenue of 2s. per hearth in all houses was granted to the King for ever. It then produced about , £200,000 per annum. The parish constable and two inhabitants of credit appointed yearly were once in each year empowered to view the inside of every house in the parish. The Statute I Will, and Mary st. I. C. 10 (1688) repealed the last, declaring hearth money to be a great oppres-sion to the poorer sort, and a badge of slavery exposing every man's house to be entered and searched at pleasure by persons unknown to him. Sample entries are:—

	s.	d.
1679 pd for chymney money for Jo. Heth .....	1	0
1680 pd for one years duty for hearth money for John Heath .....	2	0
pd for one halfe years duty for hearth money for Willm. Oliver .....	1	0
pd for a certificate for hearth money & expended with the Colector .....	1	0

The medical items in the accounts lack particulars we should like to know; the nature of the illness is not always stated, and the names and residences of the

medical men are not given, for there was none in Fenny Stratford.

	£	s.	d.
1667 paid ye surgion, for Gutteridges mayd .....	2	5	0
pd Gutteridges mayd 4 weeks .....		10	0
“ “ “ 4 “ .....		6	0
“ “ “ 7 “ .....		7	0
expended at 3 severall times one ye bone seter and churgion .....		1	6
1675 pd ye widdow Oliver and one to looke after her in the time of her sicknes beinge in hav time	12	0	
1676 pd to Widow Oliver .....	2	0	6
pd for goinge to Lughton to have Oliver's leg sett .....		1	0
the widow was buried 22 July.			
1676 ffor one goinge to Mr. Rickson to know what he would give to have Eliz. Fuller cured .....	1	0	
1677 paid for a shirtt for Jo. Curnock and for charges at the Bull when he was put into the ffat of hot graines .....	5	1	
1678 for gothering herbes & other things for Curnockes child when it was sicke .....	14	0	
1681 Joan Banbery. pd. in moneyes when shee was in labouer .....		8	0
pd to ye Midwife .....		2	6
pd to Will. Willson for ye childrens cure .....	2	10	0
1684 Luce Everall. paid for the cure of her knee ...		10	0
1685 Henry Banbury. pd for curinge his head of the scald .....		16	0
pd for caps for his sore head .....		1	6
pd for sixe bottles of water and fetching them and lookinge to her .....	1	0	0

Occasionally a marriage was arranged—literally so—by the overseer. The bridegroom being coy and reluctant in such cases required persuasion, even to compulsion; of course, he had made himself morally liable. Some expense to the ratepayers was inevitable, but when the man was of another parish his bride accompanied him thither, and the ultimate saving might be great. The union of Robert Norman and Sarah Price on 30th December, 1686, was preceded by the following manoeuvres:—

	£	s.	d.
1686 pd for a warrant for Robt. Norman .....	1	0	
pd for ye takinge of Robt. Norman ...		6	
pd. to ye clark for his marridge .....		6	
pd for ye kepping of Robt. Norman at Heny. Banbereys senr .....		8	0

No one was allowed to exercise a trade in a town without having served for seven years to it as an apprentice. The overseers could apprentice poor



Photo by ]

COTTAGES, FENNY STRATFORD  
(No 5 in Hist Mon Comm'rs Report II 115.)

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FENNY STRATFORD, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 21

children with the consent of two justices until 21 to such persons as they thought fitting who were com-pellable to take them. The indentures were voidable on reasonable cause by appeal to Quarter Sessions.

During the period covered by these accounts about 15 children were apprenticed. Indentures preserved in the parish chest relate to some apprenticed in years not included in the accounts. Specimen entries are :—

	£	s.	d.
1653 John None when he was put to be apprentice .....		13	8
1654 paid to put Sara None to be apprentice .....	1	6	0
1659 paid to Jo. Banbury with one of Burdens children wck he hath prentice .....		5	5 0
1660 ffor puting Willi. Wilson out prentice .....	10	0	0
for earnst & Indenture making etc .....		5	2
1668 paide for the Lettinge out of Mary Boone .....	6	0	0
paide for makinge of Mary Boones indentures ... Some of the girls were apprenticed to lace- making, an industry extensively carried on.		2	6
1666 paid goody Saynsum for learning the widow Marriots child a lase .....		1	0
1671 for thred and bobins and pillow cloth etc .....		2	0
1666 pd for thred for ye widdo Mariot .....			6

There are a good many items about hemp, for purchasing supplies, distributing to paupers, paying for weaving, and selling manufactured article. This municipal trading was, of course, done at a loss, but each successive overseer repeated the experience to the cost of the rates. A Bletchley terrier of 1724 states " there is growing in the parish neither flax nor hemp." This was probably true in the preceding century.

	£	s	d
1660 for 20 pound of hemp spinning.....		7	6
for weaving.....		4	2
payd for hemp.....		11	8
1659 sold for linnen cloth being 79 ells for.....	3	12	0
1660 received for linnin cloth.....	1	0	0
1675 imployed ye widdow Foster in hempe to spin 3lb.....		2	0
9lb. more to her at 6d. a lb.....		4	6
for sping.....		3	0
1676 paid for making two- shifts for Mary Chery of the cloth yt was made of the yarne that John Poole left.....			8
Lost by the cloth that Widow Foster spun the yarne in the whole year.....	10	4	
for 16 lb. of hemp.....		8	0
for spinninge 161b of hemp.....		5	4
1677 lost by spinninge and weavinge of 901bs of hemp for the toune.....		14	3

22                    **RECORDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

There were two " fullers " in the parish who treated or "fulled," i.e., whitened, compacted, etc., the manufactured article.

There are 40 burials recorded in these accounts, the expenses of which would not be allowed to be excessive. Charge for a coffin occurs for 15 of these, and the reduced charge for the remainder indicates that they were interred uncoffined, and in accordance with the dictates of common sense and the instruction of the Church. The cost of a coffin for an adult was 6s. to 8s., and it is not apparent why this expanse was incurred for some only and not for all. It is notice-able that eleven of these coffins were used during 1683-5, a period of increased mortality from epidemics. Perhaps the post-mortem effects of the prevalent diseases made a coffin necessary for the comfort and safety of the survivors. An unavoidable expense was the shroud of wool, ordered by the Woollen Act, 1666, and re-enacted 1678, when those responsible had to make affidavit that the corpse was wrapped in woollen, etc. Enforced for a century, the Act then fell into desuetude, and was repealed in 1814. In 1681 the out-going overseer makes note that no corpse had been interred at Bletchley contrary to this Act during the past year.

During the period covered by these accounts 38 travellers were buried at Bletchley, who nearly all died in Fenny Stratford, and two were buried at Simpson. Of these 40 strangers, ten men and five women were unnamed and unknown. A good many of these were buried by the overseers. During 1679-84 seven poor passengers are recorded as dying at Gutteridge's. The entry is always for a shroud and making the grave; these tramps were buried without coffin. Illustrative extracts follow :—

	s.	d.
1654 pd at burial of bastard inf.....	2	2
1660 for 4 men for Kren a cripell to church.....	1	2
1664 pd for fetching ye beare & striping Athurbury & bread beare, tbred and watching him and cary- ing him to church and for strawe and for a shroud and a shift and candles and to ye clerke....	13	4
1676 paid for makinge the grave and fetchinge the Beer for Widow Oliver.....	1	0

1677	paid for a coffin & a grave for Jo. Curnocks wife .....	7	0
	(Sarah wife of John Curnock bur. 1 July died in childbirth)		
	paid for a coffin for Tho. Heyles.....	8	0
	paid for a sheet & for fetchinge the bear and cary- inge him to church and for the grave.....	9	6
1678	Mary Stapp. pd for striping of her and wasshing of her her shroud and pson fetchng the beare and other expenses at her funerall and going to the justices.....	15	11
1679	pd for a shred for Charles Norman and for fetch- inge the Beer.....	5	9
	pd for making his grave & caryng him to buriall	2	0
	pd for a shred for a passenger that died at Gutteridge.....	3	10
	pd for making her grave.....		6
1680	paid for carryng Ann Brown to her buriall & layng her out & to the messenger for to goe to give notice for the ringinge of the Bell.....	5	2
	pd for making 2 graves.....	1	0
1681	pd for a poore man yt dyed att Tho. Gutteridge for a shred and buryng & making ye grave & carrng of him to church & his afedavie.....	5	6
1683	Margret Bass paid for a shred and for making her grave and for caryng her to church and fetch- ing the bear.....	7	4
	pd for stripping and winding her and for affiidavitt	2	0
	pd for Goody Harper's sonns coffin and carryng to church.....	10	6
1684	paid for two coffins.....	12	0
1685	pd. for a coffin for Joane Banbery & her shred for ringng the bell & making the grave and for beer for the men that carried her to buriall.....	17	6
1687	pd for stripping of a travilor and making of one affidavie.....	1	0

The foregoing compilation is defective because of the absence of information about the "Sympson side." There are no registers nor account books before 1700 in that parish. In the Bodleian Library there are a good many register transcripts, but they are missing for the most interesting years.

