

## THE PARISH CHURCH OF HIGH WYCOMBE.

*(Third Notice.)*EXTRACTS FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS' AND  
OVERSEERS' ACCOUNTS.

It is very much to be regretted that the earliest volumes of these parochial accounts have not been preserved. Their disappearance has, necessarily, been accompanied by the loss of many items of information respecting the church and the poor that might have proved extremely interesting and useful to the historian and antiquary in his endeavour to portray the inner social life of the community at the period to which these documents relate. The volumes that have been preserved are kept in a large, iron-bound box—probably an old vestment chest—which stands in the north chancel aisle near the organ, and is secured by six strong locks.

The volumes now in existence are as follow :—No. 1, 1667-1684; No. 2, 1684-1700; No. 3, 1733-1741; No. 4, 1759-1768; No. 5, 1769-1780; No. 6, 1780-1793; No. 7, 1793-1801 (Poor); 1800-1830 (Church); No. 8, 1802-1819. It will be noticed that, besides the loss of the registers which, no doubt, existed prior to the commencement of No. 1, there occur intervals between Nos. 2 and 3, and 3 and 4, of about half a century altogether.

The existing records contain a mine of useful information in reference to the social condition of the people and the administration of the poor laws. Interspersed among the more prosaic entries we occasionally come across curious or amusing items, and references to many peculiar customs and usages now obsolete.

I may state here that no extracts are given in this paper relative to the Bells and Clock. They will be found in my account of the High Wycombe Church Bells in Vol. VI., page 341, of the RECORDS.

The plan I have adopted in dealing with the extracts contained in this paper is to treat them more with regard to their subject matter than to preserve a strictly chronological order.

The earliest portion of the accounts with which I am now dealing is contained in two long narrow volumes, bound in leather, and secured by brass clasps. They are evidently continued from older books now non-existent. No. 1 begins in 1667, and contains entries of receipts and expenditure down to 1684. These relate to poor rates. The other way of the book contains the accounts of the church rates, which do not begin till 1670, and are headed "The p̄ishe and forrins of Chepinge Wicombe Com. Buck." They are carried down to 1679, when a break occurs until 1682, some blank leaves being left for the intervening years, but never filled in. In 1677 the accounts are signed by "W. Fletewode," and in 1681 by "Tho. Waller." The former belonged to the family of Fleetwood, of the Vache, Chalfont St. Giles, the latter to the Wallers, of Hall Barn, Beaconsfield.

Vol. II. commences Oct. 22, 1684, and the last entry is April 8, 1700. On the first leaf is written in large bold letters—"Ex dono Reverendissimi\* Mathei Archdale gener. Anno dom. 1684." At the other end of the book we find—"This Booke was given by Mathew Archdale genr. to the Parish. Price 5s. Annoq. Dom. 1684.

GEORGE SHRIMPTON	} Overseers."
and	
JOHN BOWDEN.	

These two volumes do not contain many entries of much interest. What few there are will be found in their proper order with the other extracts. It may, however, be interesting to note in passing that in the earlier volume Jno. Kingham is rated for "a fulling mill," and that Cressex† is written "Cressets." As regards the poor rate particulars of payments begin in 1672, and are entered up monthly, the number then in receipt of relief being on an average about twenty; but

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\* There does not appear to be any reason for this description.

† The name of a farm between Wycombe and Marlow.

the recipients rapidly increased, and had reached to double that number in the next year.

## ENTRIES RELATING TO THE CHURCH.

These are neither numerous nor of great importance, but the following may be worth quoting:

		£	s.	d.
1762.	Prayer Book for ye Parson ... ..	0	8	0
1763.	Washing surplices and Communion Linnen	2	19	0
1764.	Paid William Stanworth for Cleaning the Communion Plate, Almanack, Paper, &c....	0	3	3
	Paid do. for mending the Pulpit Cloth and Cushion, and two surplices and also 20 staples for the Pulpit ... ..	0	2	7
	Man! Hobbs for pavements ... ..	0	12	0
	For the Umbrelloe ... ..	1	8	3

This, I imagine, was procured to be used as a shelter for the minister, when officiating at funerals in wet weather. It must have been something substantial considering the price.

1766.	Diging of 24 load of gravel at Holsper Heth* ... ..	0	12	0
	Fetchng same to ye churchyd ... ..	3	12	0
	Other expences ... ..	0	7	11
	For labour ... ..	1	0	0½
	Thos. Birch for a Superfine Damask Table Cloth and Napkins ... ..	1	18	3
	Wm. Stanworth, his Bill for cleaning the Communion Plate, an Almanack, and a pen and ink ... ..	0	3	3
	Church Prayer Book ... ..	0	12	6
	For a pair of bellows for Thunder ... ..	0	0	6

This last entry puzzled me for some time; but, judging that the solution of the enigma was to be found in the fact that "Thunder" was the name of a person, I searched the book through a second time, and at last found, under the year 1764, the following: "Paid Thos. Thunder for ringing the bell, £1. 5. 0," which, of course, rendered the matter plain.

1767.	Wm. Tilbury's Bill for makin a surplice ...	0	12	6
1768.	Nov. 11. "At a Vestry then held and duly sum- moned. It was then agreed to erect some new seats in the parish church for the Inhabitants to seat			

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\* Between Wycombe and Beaconsfield.

themselves in during Divine Service. (The occasion of such new erection is) because the seats already are adjudged not sufficient to hold the said inhabitants that attends Divine Service on the Lord's Day ; Upon condition nevertheless that the Corporation agree to pay and discharge half the expence of such new Erection, or else this Order to be of no Effect.

SAM<sup>L</sup>. GROVER, }  
SAM<sup>L</sup>. BATES } Churchwardens.

JAMES BATTING }  
— } Overseers.

George Lane, Aaron Wooster, Hugh Stratton,  
Jer. Lambe, Mr. Bates, John Scott, Ralph Spicer,  
Geo. Bates, Jno. Wildman.

Principal Inhabitants."

On July 12, 1765, a similar resolution had been passed ; but a note is added to the effect that : "The above order was squash'd by reason it was deem'd no vestry and nothing agreed upon." This accounts for the matter cropping up again at a subsequent date.

In the Corporation Books there is a memorandum dated March 28, 1728, which ordered "that the town Chamberlain do new build the Aldermen's seats in the Church of Chepping Wycombe, and be allowed his expences in his accounts." The Corporation seats were on the south side of the nave opposite the pulpit, and they remained there until the restoration of the Church in 1875.

For many years there are no entries respecting the Church which call for special mention.

1815. For destroying Jack Daws on the steeple ... 0 11 8

In this year Mr. R. H. Pontyfix's name appears among the Church officials as Organist. The manner in which the amount of his salary was paid made it extremely difficult to ascertain what it really was. A few instances will suffice to illustrate this :

1815.	* Mr. Pontyfix for salary	...	...	...	8	2	0
1817.	Mr. Pontyfix as per receipt	...	...	...	-	-	-
Jan <sup>y</sup> 1817.	} By cash to Mr. Pontyfix on account						
Jan <sup>y</sup> 1818.							
March 1819.							
Jan <sup>y</sup> 1820.							
					37	17	6

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\* He was a pupil of Mr. Maverley, organist at West Wycombe.

1821. Richard Pontifix and tuning the organ	...	12	2	0
Paid Mr. Pontifix, organist	...	...	7	2 0

And so on. It is not until 1827 is reached that we meet with the definite statement: "Rich<sup>d</sup> Pontifix half-year salary £10." In the face of these entries it is somewhat curious to come across the following minute:

"The 26th day of March, 1819.

"At a joint vestry this day duly summoned and held and met in the Parish Church of Chepping Wycombe aforesaid by the Inhabitants of the Borough and Parish of Chepping Wycombe aforesaid. It is ordered that Mr. Richard Hurl's Pontyfix be appointed Organist at the annual salary of Twenty Pounds to be paid out of the respective Church rates of the said Town and Parish."

Mr. Pontyfix was appointed in 1784, and had therefore acted as Organist for 35 years at the date of the joint vestry.

At a vestry meeting held Nov. 9, 1814, in the Church, and from thence adjourned to the Guildhall, a proposition to erect a gallery was negatived; but it was agreed that the pulpit should be moved, and the church re-pewed. The following were appointed a committee to assist the vicar and churchwardens: The Rev. Charles Bradley,\* Messrs. Gwillim, Prestage, Wheeler, Slater, and Carter, Jun<sup>r</sup>. At another vestry, held on the 15th of the same month, it was agreed upon unanimously that the work should be carried out, and the Mayor, Thomas Westwood, was added to the Committee.

But little progress, however, appears to have been made in prosecuting the undertaking, and the next year we find the following minute:

"May 17, 1815.

"At a joint vestry this day duly summoned and held and met in the parish church of Chepping Wycombe aforesaid it is unanimously ordered that a petition be immediately prepared and presented to the Ordinary to grant a Faculty to enable the Churchwardens of the town and parish at their joint expense to erect pews on the north aisle in the space of

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\* The Rev. Charles Bradley, father of the present Dean of Westminster, was Curate of High Wycombe during the incumbency of the Rev. James Price. He published two volumes of Sermons preached in Wycombe Church, which were very popular, and ran through several editions.

forty-nine feet by eight feet and six inches in width and also seats on the northern and southern sides of the Organ Gallery\* for the accommodation of the Sunday School children and also to enable the said churchwardens to remove the pulpit and desks to the next pillar adjoining eastward to the present scite of the pulpit that being considered by the parishioners now assembled under all the circumstances the best situation."

A considerable sum was expended upon repairs to the church in 1828 and 1829. They were begun in 1827, when several amounts to plasterers, masons, etc., were paid, and £13 19s. was expended upon the carriage of stone from Marlow. The following is a summary of the expenditure extracted from the churchwarden's accounts :

				£	s.	d.
In 1829.	Paid by the Parish	...	...	199	15	1
	Do. Borough	...	...	196	5	8½
				396	0	9½
In 1830.—	Paid by the Parish	...	...	226	14	1
	Do. Borough	...	...	184	2	1½
				410	16	2½

#### EXTRACTS RELATING TO THE POOR.

The entries dealing with the relief of the poor are naturally the most important and most numerous. It must be understood that in the following remarks under this heading only a few extracts are given as specimens of the kind of entries these books contain. Some of them are quoted as typical of a great many other similar ones; others are set down because of their peculiarity, or as illustrative of the conditions under which the poor lived, the manner in which they were treated, and the mode of administering the Poor Laws. They will, if carefully studied, afford an insight into the social life of the people, such as can be gained in a like degree from no other documents extant. To make provision for the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the aged,

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\* At the West-end in front of the tower.

had always been a source of trouble to the Government and parochial authorities. Since the dissolution of the monasteries, when their revenues were confiscated, and money intended for the poor had been put into the pockets of the rich, the difficulty in dealing with the subject in anything like an adequate manner became greatly intensified. It cannot be said that the efforts made by the legislature to grapple with this social problem proved very successful, or that the methods adopted for suppressing vagrancy and relieving the indigent were of such a character as to be likely to achieve their ends. In fact, they frequently produced just the state of affairs they were intended to remedy. Able-bodied tramps were "sore-blooded"—sometimes to a cruel degree; but it did not put down vagrancy, while it hardened and degraded the "sturdy vagabonds," who were subjected to the whipping. Little discrimination was exercised to distinguish between the criminal and the unfortunate. All sorts and conditions of men had to come under the same iron rule. Public chastisement was inflicted upon women and young girls as well as upon men. Vagabonds and beggars found wandering out of their parish, or place of settlement, were set in the stocks for three days and three nights with bread and water only, and then sometimes whipped before being sent back. A "sturdie beggar" who continued in his evil course had the upper part of his right ear cut off, so that he might easily be recognisable, and for a further offence he was adjudged and executed as a felon. The severity, however, proved wholly ineffectual; and though the milder but more permanent mischief of the Poor Law was introduced, matters did not improve, but rather grew worse instead of better. It became the common practice in agricultural parishes for farmers to pay their labourers only half wages, and send them to the overseer to supply the means for procuring the remaining necessities for subsistence. The system levelled all distinctions of vice and virtue, of work and idleness, of skill and awkwardness. The Poor Law Act of 1834, which came into operation the following year, has wrought wonders. It has raised whole counties from the condition of pauper bondage to that of communities of well-paid workmen, and diverted two millions of money from the

degrading channel of parish pay to the honourable channel of wages honestly earned.

The following extracts will quickly introduce us into the inner circle of the life of the poor and outcast. In November, 1673, these kind of entries commence, and are of very frequent occurrence in after years:—

Pd. to a sicke man and sendinge him away 0 4 0

The chief endeavour of the parish authorities was to get rid of such unwelcome arrivals as quickly as possible, and pass them on to another parish.

The resident poor were better treated, as the next few extracts show.

1673.	Pd. for keepeinge the wench with the Lame hand ... ..	0 17 6
	Memorandum ye 5th day of february, 1674. Henry Sheirfeild & Geo. Boulton beinge then overseers of ye poore of ye pish of Chepinngge Wycombe in ye county of Bucks did pay unto the buildinge of John Sextons house the full sum of fflower pounds sixteen shillings and fower pence uppon ye consideration yt erected cottage shall be at ye disposinge of the pish for ye time to come.	
1674.	Pd. for a shift for Levy Skidmores boy ...	0 2 0
	D <sup>o</sup> for ye cure of ye Widd. Winckels finger	0 5 0
1733.	Budds wifes examinaton when he left her in the parish ... ..	0 1 0
	Making 2 Originall Orders to Remove her and children ... ..	0 3 0
	2 Justices hands to them ... ..	0 4 0
	Goeing to Mr. Stehns to have them signed	0 2 0
	Expences in removing them ... ..	0 1 6
	The Constables bill for quarteridge money and carriage of vagrants through the county and other expences ... ..	3 14 10
	Susannah Ricket for Lodging a Travelling Woman taken w <sup>th</sup> fitts and for necessarys for her in such a condition ... ..	0 2 6
	Paid Mr. Burt mony due to him w <sup>ch</sup> was borrowed for building the Workhouse ...	20 0 0
	and for Interest for the same ... ..	0 10 0
	Coles for the use of the Workehouse and carriage ... ..	9 10 0
	D <sup>r</sup> Clarks bill for Vissick and other things for the poor ... ..	7 0 0
	Mr. Robins a bill for this book and books for the Workhouse ... ..	1 6 0

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth a law was passed



imposing a poor rate on all occupiers of land, houses, and other property, the overseers of each parish being empowered to raise sufficient money in this manner to provide materials for setting those to work who were not otherwise able to maintain themselves. The scene of this pauper labour thus acquired the name of "Work-house."

There were two workhouses in Wycombe. The one for the Borough stood on the site of the Alms-houses opposite the Grammar School. The parish workhouse was at Marsh Green. The building is still in existence, and is now let in tenements. At that time every parish had to provide for its own poor. Unions were established by the New Poor Law of 1834.

1733.	Pd. Edw <sup>d</sup> Grove for curing Rich <sup>d</sup> Tovey's Legg ... ..	0	2	6
1734.	On account of a travelling man who fell ill at Blackmoors Head...	0	2	6
	Paid W <sup>m</sup> Heyfield for buriall fees for ye traveller as dyed ... ..	0	4	6
	For a shroud to Dean for the traveller as died at the Blackymoore Head ... ..	0	1	6
	For heel peicing and fore peicing of shoes and a pair of cloggs for Wid. Carter ...	0	1	1
	Feb. 30 ( <i>sic</i> ). Given to travelling woman as Lay Sick wth a feather wth 4 children in ye Lord Shelburns Brick Kilne* the Ld Shelburne advised to give her some money and send her away ... ..	0	2	6

This last entry is one which affords a very accurate idea of how the sick poor were treated, and the anxiety on the part of the authorities to be rid of the responsibility and cost of providing for them.

	For a warrant and serving on Powells daughter ... ..	0	2	6
	Spent at the Antelope† then when Mr. Welles examined her ... ..	0	3	6
	Given W <sup>m</sup> Powell ... ..	0	5	0
	Mr. Welles thought it necessary to Mr. Betchelor to finde out the truth of Powells daughter being married ... ..	0	1	0

\* "Brick Kiln Close" is rated in the book to Lord Shelburne. It was near Keep Hill.

† The original Antelope in the High-street. The present Antelope in the Church Square was then known as the Royal Oak.

Pd. at the Blackmoors Head for beer for the  
men as caryed the traveller as died there and  
Laying him out and affidavit and a Link... 0 6 3

"Travelling women," or tramps on the road, as we should now designate them, were a great horror to the overseers, especially if they happened to be sick, or had a large family, or were in such a condition that they would probably have to spend their "month" in the parish. Lodging houses such as Hollis's, to which frequent reference is made, were kept under strict surveillance, and, if any poor unfortunate female were discovered, means were quickly adopted to get the unwelcome visitor out of the parish as soon as possible; sometimes an attendant was paid to see these women safely over the parish boundary. It was the same in the case of accident—a person with a broken limb, for instance, would be paid so much to "go out of the parish." Notwithstanding all the vigilance exercised by the authorities frequent instances of cases of the kind referred to occur among the entries in the books. The following may be taken as an example. The account is given with less delicacy than plainness; but that was the fashion in those days, and this is not the worst that might be quoted.

1735. Spent with Mr. Harding being sent about a woman as cryd out at Hollises	...	...	0	1	0
The midwife	...	...	0	2	6
Given to Hollises wife for things laid out for her	...	...	0	6	6
Expences at Hollises	...	...	0	0	8
For nursing the Traveling Woman as was brought abed at Hollises 2 weekes and victuals for the nurs...	...	...	0	10	0
For beer and bread and chees for the woman when she was delivered	...	...	0	3	0
The midwife	...	...	0	4	6
For Keeping the woman 2 weekes and necessarys for her in her lying Inn washing sope fireing use of Linen bed and other things she being lowsy and having the Itch spoiling ye bed and bedding	...	...	0	15	0
Giving the woman when she went away and hiring a messenger to goe with her out of the parish towards Marlow	...	...	0	4	0
Expences at baptising the child and in procuring Godfathers	...	...	0	1	6
Paid the minister for baptizing the child and clark	...	...	0	1	6

For the most part the parish officials were able to write their own names; but about this time Robt. Dennis has to make "his mark" as churchwarden.

1735.	Dr. Clarke a bill for ye poor ...	...	3	6	0
1736.	Robert Oxlads wife a bill for surgery	...	0	7	6
	Robert Oxlad for curing Mary Heel...	...	2	0	0

These Oxlades were doubtless a couple of quacks, a class of practitioners who were very plentiful in those days. They generally attended to broken limbs, deformities of all kinds, and other maladies, in which boldness of treatment rather than science was required.

1737. Some rather heavy expenses were incurred this year, when the authorities were troubled about certain surgical operations.

	Surgen Hawes about Ralph Kings leggs	...	7	7	0
	Surgen Winch likewise abt curer of Ralph Kings leggs	...	5	5	0
	The Surgen for curing of Edward Wye	...	8	8	0
1739.	For horse hire & expences in going after Richd. Lane into hertfordshire & Bedfordshire on the account of Mary Carpenter	...	0	17	6
1740.	Being 5 dayes in a journey in finding out William East paper-maker horse hire and expenses charged at several places and towns in seeking after him...	...	4	5	0
	Spent in going 2 times to Marlow concerning W <sup>m</sup> East	...	0	3	0
	Mr. Pownall for Pills for Mary Scott	...	0	2	0

The following items are of a melancholy character, relating as they do to a poor woman who was evidently out of her mind.

June.	Winch for a horse to carry Miriam Hollis to London	...	0	7	6
	Walter Davis for his Chaisous to carry Miriam Hollis to London	...	0	5	0
Aug.	Proving Miriam Hollis into Bedlam	...	5	4	0
Sept.	To Workhouse & thence to Bedlam	...	1	1	0
Dec.	A letter from Bethlehem	...	0	0	6
	Charges burying Miriam Hollis	...	1	12	6
1741.	The travellers that had a child born at the Harrow	...	0	7	6
	Charges burying the man who died at the Harrow	...	0	18	7
1760.	Gave Edw <sup>d</sup> Heel papermaker	...	0	2	6
	Gave a woman & child that was sick to go out of the parish	...	0	0	6

	Gave a Boy that had Broke his arm to go out of the parish ... ..	0	0	6
	Mending the windows at ye Workhouse ...	1	10	0
	for beer at the Maidenhead ... ..	0	2	6
	Gave a man & his wife to carry them to London in Order to get into ye Hospital...	0	2	0
1762.	Expences going to Marlow for a warrant for Patt Atkins ... ..	0	2	6
	Gave Patt Atkins & sending her off... ..	0	4	0
	Expences fetching Goody Bennett into the House ... ..	0	2	0
	paid the County Stock* ... ..	6	4	2
	paid Mr. Norton his bill about the boy that was blind ... ..	4	15	10
	Expences at Marlow with Judith Andrew Warrant horses & going the second time	0	15	6
	Paid for the Wedding ring ... ..	0	10	6

The overseers had several matrimonial affairs on hand about this time.

1764.	Expences of taking William Shrim and Marrying him, the Ring &c ... ..	1	14	2
	Expences about taking Leerward and putting him into Joal... ..	4	5	9

Gentlemen in the position of the above, who had either proved false to their vows, or were reluctant to fulfil them, and had caused the scandal-mongers' tongues to wag to the discredit of some female, were very summarily dealt with. They soon found themselves "in hold," where they were kept until they consented to ratify their vows by matrimony.

	Expences of burying the young woman that was killed at Dearoms ... ..	1	16	0
	For carrying old Betty Bradshaw to the Workhouse ... ..	0	1	0
1765.	Expences at Mrs. Woosters for beer at the Vestry... ..	0	15	8
1766.	Expences at Easter Vestry at Mrs Woosters	2	4	4
	Abraham True for Breeches for the Workhouse people ... ..	2	9	0
	Betty Bradshaw and Child ... ..	0	1	3
	Expences at Marlow about Bett harris ...	0	1	0

June 13th.

"At a Vestry then held and duly summoned It was agreed to chose a Governor for Maintaining the poor, And

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\* A similar amount appears in the accounts for several years. It was a kind of County Rate.

that we Do agree to Lett the same to James Daveny of the parish of Chepping Wycombe in the County of Bucks at the sum of two hundred and sixty pounds pr annum for three years and that the said James Daveny is to keep the poor one month before he receives any pay from the said parish and to maintain them according to the Articles of Agreem<sup>t</sup> wh<sup>h</sup> will be hereafter made and written.

JAS. PRICE, Vicar.

JNO. BIRCH

AARON WOOSTER

JOHN HEALEY

GEORGE LANE

RICHARD LANSDALE

GEORGE BATES

SAM<sup>l</sup> GROVER

JOHN SCOTT

} Churchwardens.

} Overseers.

} Principal Inhab<sup>ts</sup>

I the aforesaid James Daveny Do hereby Consent to the above Agreem<sup>t</sup> of Costry As witness my Hand the day and year above written.

JAMES DAVENY."

In 1768 the poor were let to the same person for £300 for one year, and in 1769 for £280. In June 1761, and again in 1764, they were let to Thomas Deane of West Wycombe for three years for £260.

1767.	For 5 Bushell of Barley for Bennett the				
	Blind man to sow his f <sup>d</sup> ... ..	1	0	0	
	Widow Blackwell her Bill for Keeping				
	William Till in hold by the Tythingman	1	6	2	
	John Wedge Tythingman his bill concern-				
	ing the said W <sup>m</sup> Till. ... ..	1	12	6	
	Mr. Henry Allnutt his Bill for Cloaths for				
	ye poor in ye Workhouse ... ..	26	7	3	
	For a marriage license for Thos. Ives, the				
	Ring, Parson, Clerk, and Sextons Fees ...	2	14	0	
	Gave him in cash ... ..	0	7	3	
	Spent at the Wedding ... ..	0	6	6	
	James Daveny a bill for going after				
	Verender and Savage, and Carrying the				
	Militia man to Stratford, and what he				
	paid for redeeming the Sheet and Grind-				
	stone that Betty Clinkett parned ...	2	15	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	Gave James Cook for the Small Pox ...	1	1	0	
	D <sup>o</sup> and one Turnpike ... ..	4	4	1	
	Taking and carrying to Joal and marrying				
	W <sup>m</sup> Strange and Mary Jefferys ...	10	2	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1768.	James Cook the remainder for the small				
	pox and a letter 1 <sup>d</sup> ... ..	2	2	1	
	Paid Doctor Summer his yearly salary for				
	doctoring the poor ... ..	15	0	0	

	Mr. Daveney for keeping William Strange in hold ... ..	0	10	0
1769.	pd for a ring for Eliz <sup>h</sup> Norcott ... ..	0	7	6
	Gave Eliz <sup>h</sup> Norcott ... ..	0	2	0
	Brown at the Ship a bill for a man in hold there ... ..	1	6	0
	Mr. Daveny two Bills for the expenses of Aldridges and Savages Weddings ...	6	15	1
1770.	pd George Atkins when his family had the small pox, letters, etc. ... ..	2	5	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1771.	paid the expenses marrying of Amos Miler For 1 quarter of oats for Bennett to see his field ... ..	4	14	8
		1	4	0

1772. In this year Mr. James Deveny the Governor of the poor was allowed £20 extra by order of the Vestry "by reason of provisions &c being got dearer."

1773.	Mr. Holyday in part of the Bill of expenses of Mary Weedon's being had to Bethelam paid Samuel Line for writing a paper for John Field to get off of the Taxes in the town thro' a great illness ... ..	3	1	6
		0	0	6
1774.	Thomas Childs a bill for thatching done at Flackwell heath at the parish houses there W <sup>m</sup> Shrimpton his bill of the expences of a vagrant fell on the road in fits ... ..	3	0	2
		0	8	9
	W <sup>m</sup> Wise on account of a broken leg ... ..	0	7	6
	Gave James Morton of Thame to marry Rebekah Burkett ... ..	2	13	6
	A license parsons fees and the clerks fee ...	2	4	6
1775.	Expences taking John Neighbour ... ..	0	5	8
	Also marrying him to Eliz <sup>h</sup> Phillips ... ..	2	12	6

Any one might have imagined that the amounts paid—just upon £5—for persuading James Morton to marry Rebekah Burkett, and for the expenses attending their nuptials, were quite enough for the parish to have to find out of the rates. But no! these two favoured individuals must celebrate the event by a jollification, so we find the following entry—

	A bill for Rebekah Burkett's wedding being kept at Richard Wright's at Spring Gardens* ... ..	1	11	4
1778.	James Coleshill for sweeping the workhouse Chimneys ... ..	0	1	6
	Gave Joseph Hollis being bit with a mad dog ... ..	1	11	6

\* On the London-road just below the site of the old pest house.

May 15th.

"It was agreed at this vestry to appoint a committee of Twelve Persons to inspect into the workhouse and it is herewith ordered that three or more of the said Committee shall go into the workhouse the first thursday of ever month at eleven o'clock in the forenoon in order to here and settle all complaints and disputes that shall be made by the poor or the Governor from time to time."

Then follow the names of the Committee. In 1776 Joseph Bell agreed to provide "Phisick and surgery for the poor (midwifery and amputations excepted)" for £15 a year.

1780.	Expences marrying Henry Arnott and Mary Smith	...	...	...	...	5	0	6
1788.	Joseph Lovell by Draft to Mr. Joseph Veary for his small pox bill	...	...	...	...	14	14	9
1792.	Expences of a child found drowned	...	...	...	...	1	13	6
1793.	Paid a chairmaker that was ill	...	...	...	...	5	0	
	Mary Phillips for nursing the Chairmakers wife	...	...	...	...	7	6	
	for the Chairmaker	...	...	...	...	15	0	

This is the first entry I met with in which the present staple trade of the town is mentioned.

1796.	Expences of the marrying of Robt Palfrey with Ann Bowler	...	...	...	...	9	13	5
1804.	Expences of the churchwardens meeting at the Oak*	...	...	...	...	6	9	
	Do. at the Maidenhead	...	...	...	...	16	0	

Broken legs appear to have been fashionable during this year—

	Paid Richard Nash for the maintenance of Richard Briant with a broken leg	...	...	...	...	11	2	4
	For the maintenance of Richard Tapster with a broken leg	...	...	...	...	4	7	3½
	For Dell with a broken leg	...	...	...	...	6	6	2½
1806.	Expences going to London to apprehend Thomas Clements, bringing him therefrom, and fetching the woman from Brill to be married	...	...	...	...	8	0	8
	Marriage fees &c	...	...	...	...	4	14	0
1816.	Expenses of marrying James Cross and Martha Dorrell	...	...	...	...	4	10	7

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\* In Church Square : now the Antelope.

The usual expenses connected with the Workhouse are continued year by year with little variation. A novel feature, however, is introduced in 1809.

"And it is further ordered at this vestry that part of the Marsh Green adjacent to the Poorhouse of the said parish be inclosed at the expence of the parish for the purpose of enabling the Governor to keep two cows for the use of the paupers in the said Poorshouse."

It may, perhaps, be interesting to make a note of the expenses connected with the Wycombe Poorhouse for the last two years of its existence. For 1833 they amounted to £2085 6s. 3½*d.* the average number in the House being 66; for 1834 they were £2087 7s. 3½*d.* for an average of 61. The sums paid to the Treasurer of the Union for the first four years, after the passing of the New Poor Law Act, were as follow—

1836	-	£771.
1837	-	1291 3s. 5 <i>d.</i>
1838	-	849.
1839	-	1285.

At the end of the 18th century it became customary to allow labourers a certain sum weekly according to the number they had in family. This was a bad policy and caused much mischief, as their employers took advantage of it to pay the men as little as possible, leaving the rest to be made up with parish pay. One Act allowed magistrates to grant relief to persons out of the workhouses, even to such as held property. The whole system was an evil of the greatest magnitude, it pauperised the labourers, reduced them to degradation, took away the motive and reward of industry, and oppressed the capital that ought to have been used in the employment of labour. The overseer became, in fact, the paymaster of the labourers, the able-bodied as well as the aged and enfeebled, and he let them out like gangs of slaves, making as much of them as he could, supplying the remainder required for their support out of the rates, paying a certain amount to all indiscriminately. In Wycombe, for example, in 1819 the expenses for victualling the paupers in the House for six months were, omitting odd shillings and pence, £343; while the weekly allowances to out-paupers and for casual relief amounted to £433.



It mattered not whether a man was industrious or idle, sober or drunken, civil or insolent, frugal or improvident, good, bad, or indifferent. Nothing was taken into account but the number of their families, so that those who had the fullest quiver had the fullest purse, too. It made every labourer a pauper and his children paupers. The abandoned woman was a gainer by her shame, as every illegitimate child brought her a weekly allowance from the parish, and the amount of money paid on this account was astounding. It cannot, therefore, be said that the New Poor Law of 1834 was not an imperative necessity. The new system has brought innumerable blessings to the poor, to the rate-payers, to the community at large, which money cannot value nor figures calculate. It is not perfect. No system of human devising ever will be, but that it has an enormous superiority over the old system cannot be denied.

#### BEATING THE BOUNDS.

These processions or perambulations of parish bounds were of very ancient origin, and took place every year on what were called in old English the *Gang-dagas* during Rogation-tide, that is, the three days next preceding Holy Thursday, or the feast of our Lord's Ascension. It was customary upon one of these days—or, in cases of large parishes, like Wycombe, upon two of them—for the clergy accompanied by the churchwardens and parishioners to go round the bounds and limits of the parish, when they were wont to deprecate the vengeance of God, pray for a blessing upon the fruits of the earth, and see that the rights and properties of the parish were duly safe-guarded. The Rogations or Litanies, then accustomed to be used, gave the name to the days by which they are ecclesiastically known. These Rogations were originated by Mamertus, Bp. of Vienne, in the Auvergne district of Central France, about the middle of the 6th century, on account of the frequent earthquakes that occurred in that volcanic region, and the incursions of wild beasts which ruined and depopulated the city. By the Canons of Cuthbert, Abp. of Canterbury, made at the Council of Cloveshoo, A.D. 748, it was ordered that

these Rogations should be observed by the clergy and people. By the advertisements of 7 Elizabeth it was directed "that in the Rogacion Daies of Procession they singe or saye in Englishe the two Psalms beginning *Benedic anima mea* (ciii. and civ.) &c. with the Letanye & suffrages belonging thereunto with one homelye of thankesgevyng to God." The "Judicious" Hooker, who was rector of Drayton Beauchamp from 1584 to 1595, we are told, would by no means omit to observe the customary time of procession, and George Herbert says—"The Country Parson is a lover of old customs, if they be good and harmlesse. Particularly he loves Procession, and maintains it, because there are contained therein four manifest advantages. First, a blessing of God for the fruits of the field. 2. Justice in the preservation of bounds. 3. Charitie in loving, walking, and neighbourly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if there be any. 4. Mercie, in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution and largess, which at that time is or ought to be used." In some parishes the perambulation took place on Ascension Day itself instead of one of the proper Rogation Days.

The observance of the Gang-Days for "possessioning" the parish was regularly kept up in Wycombe. The religious ceremonies of the occasion latterly fell into disuse, and appear to have been subordinated to that which was deemed utilitarian, and the former custom of invoking a blessing upon the fruits of the earth was altogether omitted. From the following extracts it will be seen that these processions formed an expensive item every year in the parochial accounts, and that their cost had a tendency to increase as time went on. From the first of these entries, of which I give the various items in full, it will be noticed that there was far more "beer and vitals" about the proceedings than prayer and exhortation.

1763. May 13. Expences possessioning paid Mrs.					
Winch for 8 Notts...	...	...	...	0	1 4
Spent at the Maidenhead	...	...	...	0	0 10
Paid Jno. Hall for Wans	...	...	...	0	2 0
Paid for Liquor at Haslemore	...	...	...	0	2 0
Gave Mr. Dennis's servants	...	...	...	0	3 0
paid for Liquor at the Marsh	...	...	...	0	0 3
May 14. Paid for Veal & Mutton 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs				0	9 7
Gave Mr. Batting's servant	...	...	...	0	1 0

paid for Liquor at Bennetts...	..	...	0	2	7½
paid for Liquor at Blackwells	...	...	0	2	0
paid at the New Inn Loudwater Vitals,					
Drink & Horses	...	...	2	11	5
paid for Liquor at the Marsh	...	...	0	2	0
paid 2 water men	...	...	0	8	0
paid for Liquor at the Maidenhead...	...	...	0	7	4

The Maidenhead here mentioned was an inn of some repute at the corner of Maidenhead Lane (now Crown Lane) and the High-street. In more recent years it was used as the Conservative Club House, and is now occupied by Messrs. A. Vernon and Son as offices. The two watermen were employed to wade through the streams where the parish boundary crossed them. The veal and mutton were cheap, only 4<sup>d</sup> per lb.

1774. The expences making the Perambulation					
round the parish two days	...	...	3	9	5
1777. Expences going a possessioning	...	...	3	16	11
1798. Expences possessioning the parish	...	...	6	11	2
Possessioning dinner	...	...	5	12	4
Men's breakfasts, dinners, beer, &c.	...	...	1	4	0

From the last extract it will be perceived that the ceremony and its attendant circumstances cost above £13. In 1806 the cost was a little over £8, and in 1811 above £11. The entries relative to these perambulations are carried down to 1830, the last entry reading thus :

perambulating the boundaries of the parish £10 3 0

#### THE PEST HOUSE.

Pest Houses existed in most parishes, and were generally erected in some isolated spot at a distance from inhabited houses. They were used chiefly when an epidemic of small pox occurred, in order that the ravages of that dire disease might be, as far as possible, lessened, and the spread of infection prevented. The awful effects of this scourge before the general introduction of vaccination can scarcely be realised at the present day. The suffering and misery caused by it was terrible, and when the disease disappeared a great proportion of the populace were left horribly scarred and some blinded. During an outbreak the town was shunned by every one, and business came to a stand-still, so that it took a considerable period of time for the place to recover itself.

The Pest House in Wycombe stood eastward of the town on the north side of the London Road, near where the Railway Bridge now crosses it. This locality was then a much less frequented spot than it appears to be at present. The main road into the town at the time when the Pest House was built was not the fine broad open thoroughfare it is now, and did not touch the houses until it reached the bottom of Easton Street. The London Road frontages have been laid out for building since that time.

The entries relative to the Pest House are neither numerous nor very important. They commence abruptly, and end in a similar manner. The earliest entries I have met with referring to the Pest House occur in 1763; but it is probable that some place of a similar character had been in existence long before that time, and that either a new building was erected then, or an old one altered and enlarged; for in that year considerable expenses were incurred "about the Pest House," and a sum of £25 was paid as half the purchase money. In the following year at the Easter Vestry six gentlemen were appointed to "inspect into" the matter; but it was not until the beginning of the next year that building operations were commenced, upon which a sum of over £162 was expended. In 1766, and subsequent years, Mary Winslow was care-taker of the Pest House, and for her services received 13s. each half-year.

1763.	Expences about the pest house	...	...	0	4	8
	Paid Mr. Fastnedge his bill about the pest house	...	...	9	6	8
	D <sup>o</sup> expenses about D <sup>o</sup>	...	...	0	2	8
	Mrs. Lluellyn the half-part of the purchase for the pest house	...	...	25	0	0

These were, apparently, the preliminary expenses, and on the cover of the Overseers' book of accounts from 1759 to 1768 (No. 4) there is the following note:—

"MR. GEO. LANE  
JNO. BIRCH  
JAMES BATTING  
AARON WOOSTER  
RICH<sup>d</sup> LANSDALE  
W<sup>m</sup> BURNHAM

The above persons are nominated to inspect into the Pest House by the Order of the Vestry held and duly summoned the sixth day of April 1764."

During the Spring of the next year a large amount of building and repairing was carried out at the Pest House, as will be seen from the following extracts :—

1765.	At a meeting about the pest house ...	0	3	6
	Lawrance Gomm his bill for Carpenter's work to the pest house ...	62	14	0
	Mrs. Dormer for Bricklayers work ...	42	10	0
	John Floyd ...	35	8	0
	Joseph Pontyfix * ...	2	17	9
	Manual Hobbs † ...	2	10	0
	Thomas Mead for glazing ...	6	19	3
	Mr. Veary ‡ ...	3	18	6
	Thos. Elliott ...	0	7	3
	For the House Raring, Beer for the men, and Gravel, and Carriage ...	2	2	9
	W <sup>m</sup> Mead for measuring the work ...	3	6	0
1765.	paid at a meeting about the pest house ...	0	3	6
	Mr. Dormer for work done at the pest house ...	10	9	6
1766.	Mr. Gomm a bill for work done at the pest house ...	1	1	0
	W <sup>m</sup> Birch for iron work and a well rope for the pest house well ...	0	7	10
	Thomas Humfrey for moving Gadsdens family to the pest house ...	0	2	0
	W <sup>m</sup> Pussey for a Load of Wood delivered at the pest house ...	0	17	0
1767.	Chain for pest house well ...	0	1	6
	Joshua Pattison his bill for mending ye pest house windows ...	0	12	10½
	James Davenys § expences with Gold and his wife with the Small pox at Flackwell Heth, and at the pest house, Doctor's bill, Bread bill and other expences ...	8	3	10
1768.	A Load of Wood for the pest house ...	0	18	0
	¼ of a load of Billett, ¼ of Stackwood and 50 fag <sup>ts</sup> ...	0	17	6
1769.	Carriage of Francis James to the pest house ...	0	2	0

The last payment to Mary Winslow as care-taker of the Pest House occurs at the end of 1775, after which it does not appear that anyone acted in that capacity.

1771.	Thomas Wingrove for work done at the pest house ...	0	2	8
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\* Of Downley, brickmaker.

† A stone-mason.

‡ A blacksmith, whose shop was situated in Oxford-street near the Half Moon.

§ James Daveny was the doctor.

	The Widow Dormer for do. ...	...	...	5	2
	Mr. Pattison for do. ...	...	...	2	6
1772.	James Daveny a Bill for Keeping a man				
	with ye small pox at ye pest house ...	3	3	9	
1773.	Mr. Mead for work done ...	...	...	7	9
1780.	Land tax for the pest house ...	...	...	0	2 0
1784.	paid Mr. Barton window tax for the pest				
	house... ...	...	...	0	3 0

Similar entries in reference to these taxes occur for several years. Ten years earlier (in 1774) £3 13s. 0d. was paid as window tax for the Workhouse. The overseers, however, entertained some objection to this tax, which led to the following :—

Expences at Marlow when we appeald about  
the Workhouse Windows ... 0 7 6

The appeal was unsuccessful, for the window tax appears among the expenses year by year for some time.

The old Pest House was purchased in 1829 for £180 by Mr. William Paine, who soon afterwards pulled it down. The last entry relating to the Pest House occurs at the Easter Vestry of 1829 to the effect that £43 15s. had been received as one-fourth part of the net proceeds of the sale of the building.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Under this heading I have grouped several interesting extracts from these old accounts dealing with a variety of subjects. The parochial authorities used to deal with "varmin" in a very summary manner. For the destruction of "powlcatts" and hedghogs the sum paid was 4d. each; for sparrows 1/6 per dozen. Two shillings a year were paid "for writing out ye register of such p-sons as wer buried in woollen." The first of these entries occurs in 1742. In 1764 Gerrard's Cross appears as "Jallus-crass;" in 1766 and several subsequent years Tylers Green as "Tyling Green." Cressex is written "Cressets," "Cressocks," and "Cressoks," and does not appear in its modern form until the present century—in 1819.

1738. Spent at the ffalcon about outing a boy to  
Dennis ... 0 1 6

"Outing" = apprenticing. A great many instances occur about this period of boys and girls being "outed." Acts

of Parliament were passed 39 and 43 Elizabeth empowering churchwardens and overseers to apprentice the children of the poor, and separate lists with copies of their indentures were usually kept of such persons. I subjoin a copy of one of these documents taken from the register.

"An Agreement made between Timothy Costard of the Parish of Chesham in the County of Bucks and the Churchwardens and Overseers and there successors of the parish of Chipping Wycombe in the said County Witnesseth that the said Timothy Costard doth hereby agree to hire as a servant girl Martha the daughter of John Bolton deceased a poor girl of our said parish of Chipping Wycombe for one year at the yearly wages of five shillings per year To be paid her in money or in Cloths by the said Timothy Costard and one shilling earnest as witness our hands this 30th day of November 1764.

TIMOTHY COSTARD	the Master.
JNO. BIRCH	} Overseers.
AARON WOOSTER	
JAMES BATTING	} Churchwardens."
— — —	

The "one shilling earnest" was given the girl by "the master" to bind the bargain. Servant girls were a good deal cheaper then than they are at present. Even allowing for the difference in the value of money, 5/- a year was not an exorbitant price to pay a girl for wages.

1738. pd. ye Scotchmans Robbery mony ... 37 3 6

In certain cases, when a robbery had been committed, and the thieves were not caught, the Borough or parish, like the Hundred, appears to have been held responsible for the loss sustained.\*

In 1746 a long list of various commodities is given, together with the cost of several domestic utensils. These were for the Workhouse, and the price of each being given separately in the accounts instead of lumped as usual, enables us to calculate the price of articles of food, etc., at that time—a century and a half ago. We find from these entries that cheese was 3*d.* per lb., bacon 4*d.*, beef 3*d.*, and veal 2½*d.* A sack of peas cost 14*s.*, a "sasepan" 8*s.*, a "buckett" 2*s.*, "2 Tubbs" 1*s.*, and 2

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\* See old legal text books as to the process of pursuing felons by "Hue and Cry."

sacks of flour £2 13s. 4d. These prices seem to indicate that while meat was cheap household utensils were dear. Clothing was moderate in cost, as we find 3 pair of breeches for 7s. 6d., and 10 pair shoes for £1 8s. 10d.

In 1760 the Militia accounts become intermixed with those of the parish, and a sum of £11 11s. 0d. was "disbursted" for the militiamen's wives, and in the next year the amount paid was £31 15s. 10d. It appears that the authorities were at sea over the matter, so they expended 9d. for a copy of a "Militia Act of Parliament" to ascertain their position. The Overseers had the Militia payments to make, and then recover the amount—if they could.

1761.	Received the Militia money at Aylesbury...	12	2	0
	Expences at Aylesbury about getting the Militia money	...	...	0 7 0
1762.	Paid for the Militia men that was Drawn and other expences...	...	...	63 8 0

The Militia affairs seem to have troubled the parochial authorities a good deal. The following extract carries the matter a step further.

"June 4th 1762.

At a vestry then held and duly summoned it was agreed by the Officers and principal inhabitants of the parish of Chipping Wycombe in the County of Bucks That any person within the said parish liable to serve in the Militia Shall pay down six shillings to the Churchwardens and Overseers (which said money) shall Indemnify such persons from serving in the Bucks Militia for the space of three years. And that a meeting will be held at Mrs Woosters at the Maidenhead by the Churchwardens and Overseers to receive the said money on Friday the Eighteenth day of this instant June. And also if any deficiency shall be in not having money to Indemnify the said persons (so paying) to receive out of the poors rate such sum or sums that shall be wanted. And lastly any person belonging to the said parish that is not willing to pay the said sum of six shillings shall be obliged (if provided he should be drawn) to provide himself a substitute or go himself."

This minute is signed by the Churchwardens, the Overseers, and Principal Inhabitants. Then follows a list of 54 persons who paid their 6s. A similar entry occurs in 1776, when it was agreed that they should form a stock or fund to provide substitutes for persons drawn to serve in the Militia, and the names of 48 persons are given who



subscribed 6s. each. In 1769 an attempt was made to carry out a similar scheme, but although a page is headed—"Names of Subscribers"—no names are entered.

1762.	Jan. 15.	Expences proclaiming peace*	...	0	2	0
1763.	paid Thos. Mead for Sodering the Screw on					
	ye Pipe of the Gt. engine...	...	...	0	1	3

Frequent mention is made about this time of the "engins," and charges are entered for their "playing," "cleaning" and "working." These were, no doubt, the fire-engines, which were formerly kept in the church at the west end, and remained there down to within living memory. About this time a letter from London cost  $3\frac{1}{2}d.$

Vestry meetings were often held at an inn, as the following instances will show.

1739.	Paid ye expences of the Vestry held at ye					
	Bell on Easter Tuesday	...	...	...	1	15 3
1766.	Expences at the Easter Vestry at Mrs.					
	Woosters	...	...	...	...	2 4 4

The next year the expences at the same inn—the Maidenhead—amounted to £2 18s. 0d. Very little business appears to have been transacted without the aid of beer. The items referring to liquor are innumerable. Beer is charged for upon every conceivable occasion—at baptisms, marriages, vestries, bell-ringing, funerals, &c., and the amounts paid are not always small ones. The most amusing items I have met with touching upon this matter occur in 1764, thus—

Davison the Taylor for altering the Cloths at						
the Workhouse	...	...	...	...	0	4 6
The Taylors beer	...	...	...	...	0	4 7 $\frac{1}{2}$

They show that the liquor consumed by the thirsty "Knight of the Goose" actually cost more than his labour!

The following is one of the most curious and interesting among the entries of a miscellaneous character which these old books contain.

1774. Feb. 14th. Ralph Spicer being churchwarden at the time—I mention his name because all honour is

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\* Ratified by Treaty of Paris, Feb. 10, 1763.

due to him for attempting to prevent the desecration of the churchyard, and for endeavouring to put a stop to a cruel and debasing sport.

“paid Daniel Pearce for Crying down the  
Cocks being thro'd at in the churchyard  
&c. on Shrove Tuesday ... .. 0 0 3

The amount paid was small, but its purpose was excellent. Cock-throwing was a Shrove-tide custom very prevalent in “the good old times,” which has happily so long gone out of fashion that very few people, probably, know how the so-called sport was carried on. The owner of the bird would put him in training some time before Shrove Tuesday by throwing sticks at him, in order to accustom him to the threatened danger, that by springing aside he might avoid the missile. When the time arrived for the sport to commence, the cock was placed in position, a stake with a cord attached to it was driven into the ground, the other end of the cord being fastened to one of the cock's legs, which, while allowing the bird sufficient freedom to enable him to hop about, at the same time prevented him making his escape. Preliminaries being thus arranged, a crease was marked off at a distance of twenty-two yards, at which the person stood who threw at the bird. He was allowed three shies at the cock for twopence, and if he knocked him down, and could run up and catch the bird before he recovered his legs, the thrower won the cock, or its equivalent in money. The cock, if well trained, would elude the sticks hurled at him for a long time, and thus gain a considerable sum of money for his master. Sometimes, however, the poor creature was fastened by two cords, one on each leg, which were attached to short stakes driven into the ground, and it was shied at for mere wanton cruelty to see who could knock him over first. It is a strange commentary upon the state of religion and morals generally during the last century that our churchyards should have been put to such profane uses as were then customary. They were often the rendezvous for rowdy meetings of a political or parochial character, sometimes even pigs were allowed to run riot among the graves, and games of various kinds were frequently played within the churchyard.

The cock-throwing in Wycombe took place in the north-eastern part of the Churchyard, and on an adjoining piece of waste land beyond the Vicarage Farm, where Castle-street now is. This open piece of ground was used as a playground by the boys of the town, and as a drying-ground by the washerwomen; and on Shrove Tuesdays was the scene of the annual piece of cruelty—shying at cocks. It was a dangerous game, and instances are recorded when severe injuries were received by the spectators from the heavy weapons hurled at the prisoner at the stake. Disputes and quarrels arose among the mob standing round, which often resulted in broken arms, legs, and skulls. It was not until about half a century after the date of the above extract that this cruel diversion was discontinued.

On Jan. 2, 1733, and on several subsequent occasions, occurs the name of "Thos. Burt," as a principal inhabitant, and in 1737 he figures as one of the overseers. For many years he paid rates for the "Parsonage," and for "Grub'd Ground." The latter subsequently became chargeable to Lord Shelburne. This Thomas Burt was in his early days a labourer, and in 1729, whilst employed in grubbing in Carey's Grove, on the hill which now bears his name, he discovered a large sum of money. Could this spot have been the "grub'd ground" for which he is rated in the books? With the money thus obtained he was able to commence business in the High-street as a "maulster," and in time he rose to the position of one of the chief tradesmen in the town. In 1750 it is said that a son of his committed suicide by hanging himself in a barn belonging to the Vicarage farm. In 1761 James Burt was one of the churchwardens.

In 1762 I find this entry:—

Received of Mr. Lane for W<sup>m</sup> Folkes and  
the Quakers that he distrained ... 1 3 3

Among "varmin" destroyed about this time, I find in 1772, 4*d.* paid for a "wessel;" in 1773, 6*d.* for the " $\frac{1}{2}$  of a fox;" in 1775, 2*d.* each for two stoats—910 sparrows are accounted for in that year. In 1781 a couple of badgers were numbered among the slain, and paid for at the rate of 1/- each.

In 1698 an order was passed at a Quarter Sessions

held at Wycombe directing the constables and other parish officials to apprehend vagrants, and "cause them to be whipped naked from the middle upwards till their bodies shall be bloody," and then pass them on towards their own parish. The directions contained in this Order were very generally observed throughout the county, and in some places lists were kept of such persons, as at Burnham, for instance, where a large proportion of the persons thus punished were women and children. Whether the order was strictly carried out at Wycombe, or not, there is no evidence adducible from the parish records to show, except of a negative character, for in going through the books I met with only a single instance, and that was in 1778, in which year we find the following among the disbursements :—

Paid W<sup>m</sup> Cock for going with Price to  
Justice Toneyn\* and for whipping him 0 3 0

In 1772 commence some interesting entries relating to the two new turnpike roads which were then in course of construction. The first is called "the London Turnpike road," which was constructed from the bottom of Easton Street and ran eastward towards the Marsh, the second, "the Cross Turnpike road," running north and south through Wycombe from Reading to Hatfield, a distance of 50 miles.

The present road from High Wycombe to West Wycombe had been made by Sir Francis Dashwood of West Wycombe, in 1752, and its completion was commemorated by the erection of the Obelisk which stands at the corner of the Bradenham-road. The construction of the obelisk was carried out by Banister Watts, stonemason of High Wycombe. A copy of the account rendered for the work is still in existence, in which the various parts of the structure are thus set out :—"the Collom in the road, the Ball, Capitel, Caping on the Pediestle, the Die pedestle, the plinth and curb." The cost of erecting the obelisk and doing some repairs at the church was £27 7s. 8d. The old West Wycombe-road, portions of which may still be traced, ran near the river, a short distance to the south of the present one. The

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\* He lived at Radnage.

improvement that had been made in the western approach to the town may have led the inhabitants to desire a similar treatment to be extended to the road on the east side.

Up to this time the entrance to the town by the London-road had not been a very convenient or imposing one. The north side of the London-road had been occupied by extensive nursery gardens, but after the thoroughfare had been widened and properly laid out the garden ground was sold for building purposes, and substantial residences were erected facing it. A toll-gate was placed near the Hayward's cottage; but was pulled down in 1826, and a neat well-built toll-bar was erected at a cost of £500 near the top of Bassetsbury Lane. That has in its turn been demolished, but the old toll-house still exists with its clock to point the hours to passers-by.

The entrances to the town on the Marlow and Amersham sides were, perhaps, worse than that from the direction of London. The Marlow road came down the hill into Wycombe where the dell is in what is now the Park, and passing Loakes House on its eastern side, now the Abbey, ran into the town by an old road called Horsenden Lane at the top of Easton-street. In the place of that narrow inconvenient lane, a broad well laid out road was constructed from the southern end of St. Mary-street. The road running northward passed up Crendon Lane, and thence wound its way along the "Shrubbery." It was narrow and rutty, and in bad weather almost impassable. It is said that the initiative in having the new road made in this direction was taken by the then Marquis of Salisbury—grandfather to the present Prime Minister—who was accustomed to pass this way on his journey to take the waters at Bath. From Reading the road was good all the way to the City of Waters; but between the Berkshire town and Hatfield, where the Marquis resided, it was in many parts execrable. On the new "Cross road" a toll-gate was erected on each side of the town, near the top of Marlow Hill on the south, and towards Hazlemere on the opposite boundary of the valley.

1772.	Paid Mr. Lansdale what he paid Mr. Winch				
	the Surveyor the Composition for the				
	new Turnpike road	...	...	...	20 0 0

1774.	The Rev <sup>d</sup> Mr. Price the composition money for the two turnpike roads	...	...	10	0	0
1784.	Mr. Allnutt one years composition for the Cross Turnpike Road from Reading to Hatfield due Michaelmas 1783	...	...	10	0	0
	Rich <sup>d</sup> Mead Composition for the London Turnpike Road	...	...	5	0	2
1786.	Composition for the cross Turnpike Road	...	...	10	0	0
1796.	Mr. Daveny a Bill for work on the roads	...	...	34	15	9

Similar entries occur until 1800.

The militia affairs cropped up again in 1776, when the subscription to the Stock was raised to 8s. per man. Two years later the following entry occurs:—

1778.	The weekly payments which be paid to the militia men's families	...	...	55	9	2
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These payments were made towards the support of the wives and children during the time the men were absent on service.

1782.	Francis Dandridge for militia allowance from the parish	...	...	3	0	0
	Expences for substitutes that was not excepted	...	...	8	10	
	For substitutes to serve for the subscribers in the Militia over what was received	...	...	17	11	6
	Expences going after Militia mens substitutes	...	...	3	4	2½
1783.	Benjamin Johnson of Uxbridge for wool wheels	...	...	2	17	0

These were, no doubt, for the use of the inmates of the workhouse. In 1791 the labour of the poor brought in £13 6s. 5d.

The expenses connected with the Easter vestry meetings had a decided tendency to increase. In 1766 they amounted to £2 4s. 4d.; in 1788 they had risen to £6 9s. 0d.; and in 1796 to £10 3s. 6d. In 1772 they began with an item for having a waiter to attend on the vestry; but he did not very materially add to the expenses, as they paid him only a shilling. The overseers about this time appear in a new character as money-lenders:—

1788.	Lent Christopher Walters in his share of the houses in Wycombe expectant on the death of his mother-in-law Mrs Lane	...	...	10	0	0
1789.	Printing bills of the workhouse being broke open	...	...	0	4	0
	William Cock for sticking them up and paste	...	...	0	0	8

This is the first occasion upon which printing is referred to. This year, too, a post-chaise and post-boy appear for the first time.

About the close of the last century inoculation for the smallpox began to be practised, and was considered a wonderful advance on the road towards getting rid of the disease. By being inoculated the patient received a small portion of the poison into his system, the disease ran a mild course, and future attacks were prevented. The great objection to this method of treatment was that those who were inoculated, although they had the disease but slightly, were liable to communicate it to others who would have it in the usual way, and thus the means taken to prevent the smallpox only tended to spread it more widely than ever. The following is the first instance recorded in Wycombe:—

1790.	Thomas Scull half part of his bill for attending in the Hall on the Inoculation...	0	15	0
	The Town Constables half part of their bills for their attendance in the Hall ...	0	7	6
	Mrs. Willis half part of her Bill for breakfast in the Hall ...	0	19	6
	Mr. Samuel Treacher half part of the wood used in the Hall ...	0	10	6
1799.	paid Richardson's famly inoculation ...	2	2	0

In 1791, and following years, a sum of £10 is paid to the Rev<sup>d</sup> James Price, Treasurer of the Sunday Schools, as a year's subscription.

1793.	Paid William Johnson, William Bridgwater, Robert Bowers, Joseph Priest, Henry Henry, William Harris, and William Courtmer, seven persons, balloted to serve in the Militia for this Parish being the allowance by Act of Parliament for the half part of a Volunteer ... ..	28 0 0
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1795. May 29th.

“Whereas by an Act of Parliament made and passed in the thirty fifth year of the Reign of his present Majesty King George the Third Intituled an Act for raising a certain number of men in the several counties of England for the service of his Majesty's Navy And whereas the said Act hath been put into execution and the number of men to be raised for the said Parish of Chepping Wycombe doth amount to one man and a half which at the price allotted to be paid by his Majesty's Justices of the Peace acting in and for the said

Hundred of Desborough by the said Parish of Chepping Wycombe doth amount to the sum of Fifty pounds exclusive of the expenses that shall and may arise to the churchwardens, overseers, and other officers of the said parish Now at a Vestry duly summoned held and met by the said churchwardens and overseers and other inhabitants of the said parish who names are hereunto subscribed It is ordered and agreed that a Rate or Assessment at sixpence in the pound shall be assessed rated collected by Messrs Thomas Cox and William Chalk the overseers of the said parish of Chepping Wycombe to be by them raised levied and paid according to the direction of the said recited act."

In 1824 the postage of a letter from Aylesbury was 8d. In 1827 John Hulls was paid £14 17s. 6d. "for repairing engines."

The term "Wycombe Abbey" is not found in any of the books. The name is invariably written Loakes House till we reach the year 1818, when it appears for the first time as Loakes Abbey. The park is mentioned that year for the first time, too. No reference is made to a newspaper till we reach 1806, when the "County Chronicle" is named; a few years later the "Oxford Journal" comes on the scene.

The accounts are printed for the first time in 1829 by J. W. Burnham of Wycombe. For the year ending March 30, 1832, a "special rate" amounting to £8 15s. 11½d. was paid for Marlow Bridge, and another the next year of £13 3s. 11d. These sums were paid towards the cost of the erection of the present iron suspension bridge, which was constructed in the years 1829-31, at an expense of above £22,000, including the approaches to it on both sides of the river, and the cost of the Act of Parliament, &c. The onus of building the new bridge and repairing it in future was placed upon the two counties by the Act in the proportion of four-fifths by Bucks and one-fifth by Berks. The former bridge was of wood, and crossed the river from the bottom of Duck Lane, now St. Peter's-street.

Mrs. Ann Spicer was one of the Overseers in 1803.

The following is an interesting record:—

"The Borough and parish of Chepping Wycombe in the county of Bucks

The 5th day of September 1803.

At a Vestry this day duly summoned held and met in the Guildhall of the said Borough for the purpose of considering



how and in what manner the money should be raised for the Cloathing of the Volunteers for the Army of Defence of England for the said Borough and Parish. It is ordered by the churchwardens Overseers and Inhabitants at the said vestry assembled that churchwardens and overseers of the said Borough do raise and pay out of the poors rates of the said Borough already made or hereafter to be made for the relief of the poor of the said Borough for this present year the sum of one hundred pounds for the Cloathing or uniform of sixty four of the said Volunteers now inrolled in the said Army of defence being the Quota for the said Borough. And it is further ordered that the Churchwardens and Overseers of the said parish do raise and pay out of the poors rates of the said parish already Made or hereafter to be made for the relief of the poor of the said parish for this present year the sum of fifty pounds for the Cloathing or uniform for thirty two volunteers now inrolled in the said Army of Defence being the Quota for the said parish."

These volunteers were raised owing to a threatened invasion of England by Napoleon. At the beginning of the year war with France appeared imminent. War was declared in May, and throughout the country every sacrifice was being made to secure the safety of the empire. Wycombe, Borough and Parish combined, had to supply 96 men. The military spirit had been rife in the town during the last decade of the 18th century, when General Wynne raised here his famous regiment of horse, and later a Military College had been established, so that it may be taken as granted that little difficulty was experienced in raising the required number of men towards the Army of Defence.

R. S. DOWNS.