



THE MYSTERIOUS
LATER HISTORY
OF
ASCOTT PARK

FEBRUARY 2012

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008 the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust produced a report describing the later history of Ascott Park to the east of Stadhampton on the B480. This paper is an update based on subsequent research from original documents and an excavation organised by the Trust in 2009. Reference is made to surveys commissioned by the Trust including the findings reported to date by the Trust's freelance archaeologist, Brian Dix. A Historical Trail based on this latest research has been set up jointly by the Buildings Trust and the County Council, and leaflets can be obtained from some local libraries or on-line from the County Council's website (Google "Ascott Park")

The Trail leaflet calls Ascott Park a "Place of Mystery". The central mystery is where the Dormer family lived at Ascott Park between the time they first acquired the estate in 1518, and 1780 when the last Dormer occupant died. This paper shows that Ascott Park Cottage lies on the site of the Dormer manor house and that it was occupied by the family throughout this time, despite two unsuccessful attempts to build houses on new sites in the Park. The subsequent history of the manor house is also traced until its eventual disappearance (other than a small fragment) in the middle of the nineteenth century. This account, as will be seen, differs from the many earlier histories and articles on Ascott Park, including the version of events in the Victoria County History.

THE SITE OF THE OLD MANOR HOUSE

Various editions of the Ordnance Survey, beginning with the 1881 1st edition, pinpoint the area around Ascott Park Cottage as the site of the old manor house. (Fig.1) All the evidence collected in this paper shows this to be correct. This is where the Dormer family and their successors lived throughout their time at Ascott. _

Ascott Park Cottage appears to be a much altered remnant of the original manor house. Parts of this building date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if not earlier. The massive fireplace at one end suggests it was originally part of a much larger building. A curtilage wall (possibly sixteenth century and later) separates the property from the outer park: the wall also runs down the easternmost boundary of the cottage garden where there was a gateway constructed in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century and removed in the 1920s to the Victoria and Albert Museum.(Fig.2) A garden attached to the manor house could have typically been contained within this walled area in the Tudor and early Stuart period. The overgrown area to the south is shown with a formal garden layout on the Davis map of 1793 and may be where Sir Michael Dormer (grandson of the earlier Sir Michael) cultivated the rare plants brought to him in 1607 from Sir Henry Fanshawe's garden at Ware Park in Hertfordshire. (1)

The manor house on the cottage site was the one besieged and supposedly damaged by Hampden in the Civil War. It was still occupied when an inventory was made in 1650 following Sir Robert Dormer's death the year before.(2) Ascott and the newly built Rousham were then divided between Sir Robert's two sons,

William and Robert.

A “VERIE NOBLE” NEW HOUSE

William Dormer was a flamboyant character who earned the name “the Splendid” by using silver to shoe his horses and line the wheels of his carriage. The 1650 Inventory of Ascott suggests the siege caused little if any damage and William was more likely making his mark by deciding to build a grand new house after the Restoration. “There was a verie noble house built there”, says the antiquary Anthony a Wood in October 1662 (3), “and the outside being finished ..the joyner’s shavings took fire by accident and so ‘twas burnt down.”

It has long been believed that the site of this house was marked by a large hollow in the ground where the present tree avenues cross, between the granary and the dovecote.(see Fig.3) A comprehensive survey undertaken by English Heritage in 2007 of all the earthwork features in the Park follows the accepted view and concludes the landscape was remodelled at the same time.(4) But grave doubt has now been thrown upon this interpretation by the 2009 excavation. Brian Dix the archaeologist explains :

“A single trench across the cellar-like depression showed that a wall had been removed from around the sides together with the flagstones of a floor at the base, confirming that it had been intended as part of a structure. However, the cleanliness of the site and absence of signs of sustained building activity suggest that the project was unfinished and apparently abandoned early on. Since there were neither traces of burning nor other remains consistent with the demolition of a largely completed building like that of in 1662, it seems that this structure was entirely different ” (5)

These conclusions are amplified in a summary report and interpretation produced by Brian Dix at the end of the dig in August 2009, with a more detailed description of the archaeology (6) In suggesting potential areas for further excavation he suggests investigating the stone foundation visible along the north-west edge of the hollow, “in order to clarify the existing interpretation of it as an abandoned building project” (7) So, if this conclusion is correct, we have to look elsewhere for the site of the 1662 house.

Information Point 5 on the trail looks directly at the line of the trench dug in 2009 and explains what was found, or rather, not found. At the other end of the hollow, on the easternmost side, there are still signs of another trench dug across the hollow in 1969. This was the work of Susan Wade-Martin (formerly Everett) and her colleagues. Their report in the County Council’s Historic Environment Record revealed that “layers of ash, burnt wood and melted lead” were all found “in quantity”, along with bricks and mortar, in the bank that runs along the south side of the hollow (8). A magnetometer and resistivity survey commissioned by the Trust in 2007 appears to show an area of building rubble between this side of the hollow and the granary (9) This, together with the burnt material in the nearby bank, makes sense of Brian Dix’s suggestion that any further excavation

examines this area for evidence of the 1662 house site.(7) He also suggests comparing it with a similar spread identified by the geophysical survey north-west of the cellar-hollow.

WHERE DID THE DORMERS GO AFTER THE 1662 FIRE ?

Having suffered a major setback with the fire William Dormer probably decided to cut his losses. In doing so, he simply abandoned this site and continued to occupy the existing large manor house dating from the medieval/Tudor period. This would be the site of the property with the 12 hearths recorded in the 1666 Hearth Tax and the four chimneys shown on Plot's map of 1697. If there were another new building occupied in the park at this time one would expect a second building to be recorded in the hearth tax. William may also have improved the manor house as a cheaper alternative to any new building. The nineteenth century sketch of the manor house reproduced in the Oxford Mail (30.12.1970)- (Fig 6) the original of which has since been lost-suggests some seventeenth century features. But whether William was responsible is pure supposition.

THE LANDSCAPED PARK

Our earlier research also supposed that the formal landscaping on the park may have been started about this time. This would include Piccadilly Cottage pavilion, the garden parterre shown on later plans, water features in the southernmost wooded area and the tree avenues, including the one leading to the surviving gatepiers. This French style of formal gardening became popular after Charles II's return from exile on the continent. William's father-in-law was the poet and politician Edmund Waller. Waller kept in with both Cromwell and Charles II by writing poems in their praise, one such in 1661 waxing lyrical about the changes the king made to St James'Park with the creation of a great canal and tree avenue pre-dating the present lake.(10) William Dormer would certainly have known of this and not to be entirely outdone by the fire may have resolved on carrying through the improvements he intended for the park.

If the ornamental water features in the wooded area were completed after his lifetime they would have been representative of what was being done in William of Orange's time when son John Dormer had taken over the estate. Dutch style water gardens had then become even more popular. An intriguing break in the curtilage wall just below the slope of the lower second terrace suggests the water garden may have followed on later. We also know from the excavation that the upper terrace was once a walled enclosure. The pattern of landscape gardening in the seventeenth century characteristically included a series of walled garden enclosures around the house; these opened up into an outer park with a variety of Arcadian elements as the eighteenth century progressed.

THE ENIGMATIC ASCOTT ESTATE PLAN

The existence of an estate plan drawn up for the “Lordship of Ascote ..., belonging to John Dormer, Esq.” came to light at a meeting with one of the local residents (11). John Dormer took over the estate from William, his father, in 1683 and ran it until his death in 1707. Another John followed, and the coat of arms on the map linking him with the Dightons of Clifford Chambers (near Stratford-upon-Avon) enables us to date it any time between his marriage to Alice Dighton in 1712 and his death in 1728. The map was produced by William Burgess who learnt his map-making skills from his father John Burgess of Stanton St John. There are numerous estate maps of this part of Oxfordshire, and other areas, by William Burgess in the Bodleian Map Library. There is also one produced by John Burgess of Wheatfield in Oxfordshire in 1700, and the style, including the elaborate cartouche, is very similar to the one of Ascott. Burgess’s map ornamentation became simpler, following the pattern of others, as the eighteenth century progressed.

We have a photocopy of the estate plan at a much reduced size from the sale catalogue (Fig 4) but all we have from the full scale coloured original is a black and white extract showing the Park and Ascott village. (Fig 5) It shows the tree avenues, the semicircle along the edge of the park beside the existing highway, formal gardens laid out as a series of parterres, the two rectangular shaped fishponds, and the ornamental water features in the woodland below the terraced gardens. Of special interest is the old manor house, shown running in a north-south direction at the top of the smaller walled garden. Both its shape and position look to be somewhat diagrammatic and it certainly does not relate to the position of the supposed manor house as shown on later plans. On these it is within the walled garden. The granary/icehouse and the dovecote are also not shown.

But the most telling feature is a large centrally placed square building with curved wings exactly where the hollow is today. A third party was able to tell us the building was brown on the original plan so it was not a water feature. Our assumption is that it was John Dormer’s statement of his intention to build yet another new house, to do what his grandfather had failed to do some fifty years earlier. As the granary/icehouse and dovecote are not shown we assume they were intended for removal when the new house was built. But our dig has shown that John Dormer also failed and the question is why.

THE VILLAINOUS JOHN DORMER

William Dormer’s grandson John was a thoroughly bad lot. (12) Hearne describes him in 1710 as a “young gentleman of a most wicked, profligate, debauch’d Life, a Person of no Conscience nor Religion, and who is not known to have ever done one virtuous or good thing...” Hearne gave a colourful account of John Dormer murdering a man in Woodstock Park because he would not hand over his wife for Dormer’s gratification. He fled to Yarnton “without his hat” and escaped a conviction for murder only because another Dormer was one of the judges and a bunch of “rascals and villains ”was collected for the jury. (13).

That was not the end of John Dormer’s misdeeds. Research carried out in the County Record Office (14) indicates Richard Carter of Great Haseley lent John

Dormer money which he could not repay. The case went to court in 1725/26 and it appears John Dormer was declared bankrupt. During the course of these proceedings Carter sued Dormer for libel after receiving an insulting letter. John Dormer responded by turning up at Carter's house with an armed gang. This "sad swearing heathenish irreligious man", as Hearne later described him, died soon after in London of smallpox . This was in 1728 when he was only 40.

THE LANDSCAPING REASSESSED

Brian Dix's account in the *Historic Gardens Review* (5) describes the remains discovered in the formal gardens, including some crumbled steps leading from the upper to the lower terrace, a north-south axial path topped by gravel, and a parallel path on the western side. The paths repeat the pattern shown on the estate plan although the steps were not centrally placed as on the plan. Does this suggest the gardens were laid out, and the tree avenues planted, at the time the plan was produced ? No exact dating evidence has so far been identified from the excavation, apart from some early eighteenth century lead tags with numbers referring to a lost inventory of fruit trees or other plants. Dix says in his article that "although the gardens seem to have been completed, at least in outline, largely in accordance with the map evidence, many details, including when they were laid out, remain uncertain"

A tree ring count would be useful to help date the lime trees in the avenues. A recent study of the trees by Sarah Couch, a historic landscape specialist, suggests that they were planted over a period of time, starting with some trees in the side avenues in the early eighteenth century. (Sarah Couch's study is deposited with the Ascott Park papers in the Oxford History Centre) The gatepiers, from their design, appear to be of late seventeenth century date. Pinpointing the location of the 1662 house would help to relate it to the known landscape features. But it is significant that the upcast from the hollow forming the groundworks for John Dormer's new house was used to create the raised walled-in terrace. This operation suggests the rest of the gardens may have been laid out, and possibly some if not all of the tree avenues planted at the same time. Landowners, as they do today, often copied the fashions of their neighbours and a date in the younger John Dormer's time (1707-28) would make it contemporary with what was being done at Heythrop, Shotover and Blenheim. The vast tree avenue shown stretching to the estate boundary on John Dormer's plan, and probably never planted in its entirety, emulates the long avenues we see today at Blenheim and Heythrop.

John Dormer's debts and possible bankruptcy, and his early death soon after, seem sufficient reason for giving up the ill-fated housebuilding project in the hollow. But the work on the gardens appears not to have stopped, maybe as Dix says, to form a pleasant recreational area next to the old manor house that continued to be occupied. In his will made in 1725 John Dormer required his "loving wife Alice" to keep "the Gardens in decent order". So maybe in that respect the Ascott estate plan was realised and, contrary to what Hearne says, the younger John Dormer did achieve something after all, even though it ran him into debt and possible bankruptcy. !

ALICE DORMER AT ASCOTT

John Dormer left a young widow but no children. Alice continued to occupy Ascott House for her lifetime but ownership of the estate reverted to the Dormers at Rousham. This was the time when the Dormer brothers, Colonel Robert and General James, were busy with the celebrated improvements to Rousham House and grounds, most particularly by William Kent. There would be no incentive, if indeed the means, to do anything to update Ascott, which was occupied only by the widow of a cousin first removed. The family link with Ascott became even more tenuous after the Rousham estate passed to General Dormer's maternal cousin Sir Clement Cottrell. Sir Clement's son, Sir Charles Cottrell-Dormer decided to sever his links with Ascott and although he continued to pay an annuity to Alice, ownership of the estate was conveyed to Alice's own family, the Dightons, in 1760. (15)

Alice lived on at Ascott until her death in 1780. The property is identified with a symbol as Ascot Place on Philip Overton's County Map of 1715. The "house, garden and park" is described as "walled and paled in" in the agreement of 1760. We believe the wall is the curtilage wall around the manor house referred to above and that the pale is the outer boundary of the park defined by the line of trees along the public footpath on the west, the main road and possibly part of the lane leading off the main road to the farmyard. Jeffery's map of 1768 shows the house more or less where Ascott Park Cottage now stands.

ANOTHER PUZZLE- THE GRANARY/ICEHOUSE AND DOVECOTE

Various dates are given for the granary/icehouse and the dovecote. English Heritage says in its 2003 note scheduling the granary/icehouse that this building was constructed in the 1660s as part of the planned layout including the new house. The dovecote was already there before the 1662 house was built and could well date back to the sixteenth century. But would the granary/icehouse have been designed with a Tudor style doorway in the 1660s ? (16) There are, however, Tudor style windows on the post-restoration Piccadilly Cottage pavilion so maybe they are stylistic throwbacks. It is also questionable whether the basement of the granary is an icehouse – there is no funnel-shaped drain and the floor appears solid. The building is more likely to have originally been a garden pavilion, used for outdoor meals and activities, with cool storage in the basement below.

It is also puzzling that a late seventeenth century garden pavilion seemingly designed to complement an older dovecote as part of a planned landscape should have at its centre a hollow which did not accommodate the 1662 house but apparently a much later one. And which, if the eighteenth century estate plan is partly a statement of intent, should have included the demolition of the two garden buildings which appear so obviously to complement the later house site and the tree avenue. These mysteries have still to be unravelled.

ALICE DORMER AND THE CURSE ON THE CHAPEL PLATE

Alice Dormer's death saw the dispersal of the contents of Ascot House amongst her family.(17) Apart from a few personal items virtually all of it went to a niece, Mary Egerton. The chapel plate was left to Alice's nephew, Lister Dighton, of Clifford Chambers for use in Clifford church. It included a very fine chalice and paten dating from 1494 – amongst the oldest known in the country. (18) They were used in the church until recently but have now been removed to a secure location.

The chalice bears traces of enamel and has a representation of the Crucifixion. But it also has something more. On a pommel on the hexagonal stem halfway between the base and the cup the silversmith has carefully inscribed the word "Jesus". If the chalice is held upside down a curse can be seen painstakingly inscribed alongside the lettering reading " A POX ON Y (ye ?) " ! An article written recently illustrating the curse (19) speculates on who might have been responsible but it is our belief that the villainous John Dormer was the one responsible. It entirely fits his character as a "heathenish irreligious man" given to wild rages.

THE DIGHTONS TAKE OVER ASCOTT

John Dighton, Alice's brother, took over ownership of the Ascott estate in 1760. He was a London solicitor living in Holborn and married Elizabeth, daughter of John Hunter of Fort St Madras in India. In 1753 the Dightons had bought a large estate on top of the Chilterns called Shirburn Lodge and the family used this as their country residence. When John died in 1761 Ascott was inherited by his son James Lucy Dighton, ten years old at the time. As he was a minor, the Ascott estate was managed by his mother Elizabeth until he came of age. This may explain the wording "Mrs Dighton's plan" written on the reverse of John Dormer's estate plan,

It seems the Dightons had taken on more than they could manage. In 1766 they were forced to sell the Shirburn Lodge estate because of debt. (20) In 1773, after James Lucy Dighton had come of age, the Oxford Journal says he offered Ascott for sale with 700 acres of land. The sale did not proceed and Alice Dormer continued to live there until her death in 1780. It is not known whether James Lucy ever lived there, either with his aunt or after she died. Since the contents were dispersed at the time of Alice's death, including the church plate, it may be the Dightons dispensed with occupying the house and started to rent it out.

James Lucy was eventually cast out by his family. He was cut out of the Clifford estate inheritance "on account of his dissipated character and fondness for the table covered with green baize." (21) Money problems doubtless forced him to sell the Ascott estate in 1795 to the Blackalls, landowners in the Great Haseley area.(22) He then went to India, eloped on his return to the Continent, was interned by Napoleon and finished up living in a villa in the London Road, Gloucester. So the Dightons at the end fared no better with Ascott than the Dormers.

ASCOTT HOUSE BECOMES TENANTED

Richard Davis's map of 1793/4 is the first to show the tree avenue, with a house symbol to the east and somewhat to the north of the walled garden (again on the site of Ascott Park Cottage). When the Blackalls took over in 1795 the property probably became tenanted. A visitor to the site in 1805 says the house in which the Dormers lived was rented out to a farmer, probably a Mark Belcher identified in the land tax records (23). Dix suggests that the gardens had already fallen into disuse by the late eighteenth century and that the deliberate removal of the precipitous slopes from the terrace adjoining the hollow, dated by sherds of late eighteenth century tableware in the latest levels, indicates the grounds were given over to grazing about this time. (5)

The chapel (on a site immediately to the south of Piccadilly Cottage) ceased to be used as the private chapel for the house and was abandoned. A sketch of it in J.H.Parker's *Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Oxford* (pub1846) shows it to be still complete in 1811. Shortly afterwards the roof was removed and in the 1823 it was demolished. A datestone for this year on the farm buildings leaves little doubt how some of the stone was reused. There are several sketches of the chapel before its final demolition in the *Views Index* in the Bodleian Library. Two were done by J.C. Buckler whose father designed the library at Magdalen College.

Interestingly, after 1818 a John Blackall is recorded as both proprietor and the sole occupier of Ascott paying land tax. Numerous deeds in the Oxfordshire Record Office record "John Blackall of Ascott" as one of the parties to various transactions. A Blackall family tree in the same Record Office (24) shows this John Blackall was born at Great Haseley in 1792 and died in 1829. It therefore seems he took the Ascott farming enterprise back in hand in 1818 and could well have moved into the manor house. If so he was the last of the big landowners to live at Ascott., although tithe payments in 1819 and 1826 show it was by then being called Park Farm (25)

A sketch of the manor house dating from this period was discovered in the 1960s and reproduced by Don Chapman, writing under the pseudonym Anthony Wood, in the *Oxford Mail*.(26)(Fig.6) It was found alongside a sketch of the chapel without its roof and clearly by the same artist, so we know it dates from John Blackall's time (he inherited the estate in 1803). The seventeenth century gateway is also shown, and although the perspective is somewhat askew, it is clear the manor house ran in a north-south direction on the south side of the present cottage and was reached through the gateway at the end of a short tree-lined avenue leading off the lane that joins the main road. The avenue is shown on the estate plan and can still be identified on air photos, although the position of the manor house on the estate plan is completely at variance with what we know to be correct on the other evidence.

THE GATEWAY TO ASCOTT HOUSE (Fig 2)

This is not to be confused with the gatepiers on the main road. The gateway from its design is, according to the V&A catalogue, late Elizabethan in date. Or bearing in mind the similarity to the ornamental strapwork and finials on the top of the Tower of the Five Orders at the Bodleian Library –built after 1613- it

could even be Jacobean, dating from the early seventeenth century. This is fortuitous as it is hoped, if sufficient funds can be raised, that it will be taken from storage at the V&A and re-erected at the Readers' entrance from the large new public entrance hall planned for the remodelled New Bodleian Library. An inspired location as the Latin inscription over the gateway roughly translates as "If you're good you can come in, but if not keep out!"

The exact point where gateway stood on the easternmost boundary wall of Ascott Park Cottage can still be identified. The gap in the wall is shown on a July 1979 planning application for cottage improvements. The proposal included building up the opening and the making good can clearly be seen on site today. As well as the air photos showing the original avenue leading up to the gateway (see Fig 3) Colin Judge's history has a photo showing it in situ with a view of the roof of Ascott Park Cottage behind. So there can be no doubt about its original location

THE END OF ASCOTT HOUSE

On John Blackall's death the Ascott estate passed to Walter Long, a distant cousin living in Hampshire. The Franklin family took the tenancy in 1830 and some years later purchased the freehold. The tithe map of 1839/45, which looks a model of precision, clearly shows Ascott Park Cottage where it now stands but with a much larger projecting wing to the south. This confirms the position of the manor house as illustrated in the sketch reproduced in the Oxford Times. The tithe map register describes the cottage site and walled garden as "Old House Garden and Nursery".

Most significantly, none of the maps from 1768 show any other building in the centre of the park (other than the dovecote and granary/icehouse on the tithe and O.S.maps).

The Franklins were an enterprising family. The Census returns show that their farm grew to a peak of 1200 acres with a workforce of nearly 80 by 1871. Thereafter they reduced both their acreage and workforce as the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century set in. But they were not short of business. Edward Lane Franklin had also started up as a valuer and enclosure commissioner from the beginning of his tenancy and this side of the business grew until it became the family's main occupation. By the 1880s the Franklins had gone into partnership and thus began the well-known local estate agents firm of Franklin and Jones.

Franklin and Jones initially had their offices at Ascott Farm. This is the place now called Ascott Manor, a large private residence of some age immediately adjoining the main farm buildings. It is also the place where members of the Franklin family lived until the Ascott estate was conveyed to the County Council in 1920. So what happened to the old manor house ?

The very large south wing of the manor house came down some time between the production of the tithe map and the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1881 – quite possibly in the 1840s. Parker in 1846 refers to "some ruins of the

Dormer mansion". The 1881 1st Edition of the Ordnance Survey shows Ascott Park Cottage as the "site of Mansion". In the context of how we have described the pattern of actual occupation this is correct, although not of course in its application to the site of William Dormer's ill-fated Restoration house or the later one attempted by John Dormer

It therefore seems that the Franklins abandoned the old manor house for the house now, somewhat confusingly, called Ascott Manor. They no doubt regarded it as inconvenient and much too big for their needs, and the house they occupied was obviously much better placed immediately by the farm buildings. It does not stretch the imagination to conclude they demolished the manor house, apart from the tiny part left today, and re-used the stone for purposes around the farm. A decorative fragment of the old chapel can for instance be seen in the east boundary wall of Ascott Manor

CONCLUSION

Other changes no doubt took place to the form of the old manor house before its final effective demolition and it may have contracted in size at different stages. But the documentary research to date has expanded our knowledge of its history and the Park well beyond anything so far published. This research in turn has left a series of unanswered questions which we hope others will now try to solve.

JOHN SYKES M.A.

OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS TRUST

Acknowledgements and Footnotes follow below

Visitors to the Park should note that Ascott Park Cottage is private property. The privacy of the occupants and of other residential properties adjoining the Park should be respected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oxfordshire Buildings Trust is very grateful for the help and support offered by various people in and around Ascott and Stadhampton in preparing this paper, in particular, John and Arlene Osborne, Dane Clouston, John Godfrey, Ann Tothill, Joyce Bartlett and Jane Wheeler. Special thanks also go to Charles and Angela Cottrell-Dormer for allowing access to the Ascott archives at Rousham, to Neil Monaghan, former Head of Property at the Oxfordshire County Council, for his encouragement and support, and to the staff at the County Council, the record offices and the libraries who have produced and pointed the way to the relevant papers. The Trust is grateful to Sarah Couch for allowing us to quote from her Survey of the trees at Ascott Park. Much useful information has also been provided by Colin Judge personally and in his excellent History of Stadhampton.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Ascott Park 1898 Edition of the Ordnance Survey
- Fig 2 The Gateway to the Manor House
- Fig. 3 Aerial photo of Ascott Park
- Fig. 4 Extract from the Ascott Estate Plan
- Fig 5 Photocopy of the Ascott Estate Plan from Sotheby's catalogue
- Fig. 6 Sketch of the Manor House- early nineteenth century

FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES

I have used three main sources:

Rousham Archives
Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC)
Bodleian Library – Duke Humfrey (BL)

All the maps referred to may be found in the OHC

Figures in brackets are the references for the bracketed figures in the text

- (1) Miles Hadfield A History of British Gardening (pub 1969) p70
- (2) Rousham Archives D 86 A Summary of the Inventory has been deposited in the OHC
- (3) Life and Times of Anthony a Wood ed. A H Clark 1891 Vol 1 p 458
- (4) Ascott Park. Analytical Earthwork Survey of a 17th Century Park and Garden
English Heritage Research Department Report Series No 93-2007
Mark Bowden and Anya Rardin. Downloadable from the English Heritage

website

- (5) "Gone But Not Forgotten" Brian Dix Historic Gardens Review Issue 24 January 2011. This article incorporates much of the Trust's earlier historical research
- (6) Archaeological Excavation at Ascott Park. Summary Report and Interpretation Brian Dix, August 2009. The final Report from Brian Dix is still awaited at the time of this update. He may be contacted at 5 Idris Villas, Tywyn, Gwnedd, LL36 9AW. Tel and fax: 01654 711226. Brian Dix has the finds and when returned they will be deposited at the County Council's Museum store at Standlake.
- (7) Letter to Oxfordshire Buildings Trust from Brian Dix suggesting potential areas for future excavation 7.10.09.
- (8) Trial excavation by Ray Hodgkins and Susan Everett 1969 PRN 1797 OCC Historic Environment Record, Westgate Library, Oxford.
- (9) Plan 8g Survey Using Magnetometer and Resistivity June 2007, Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics for Oxfordshire Buildings Trust.
- (10) Miles Hadfield op cit p.124-5 Waller had his wits about him. When asked by Charles II to explain why the St. James Park poem was inferior to the one about Cromwell he replied "Sir", we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as in fiction". He also got his daughter married off to William Dormer despite being cousin to John Hampden, the man who supposedly besieged William and his father at Ascot. The Waller family lived at Hall Barn near Beaconsfield, currently the home of Lord Burnham.
- (11) The Ascott Estate plan is described as follows in Sotheby's London sale catalogue for 12th December 1994 (Atlases, Travel and Natural History). (Lot) 137 Ascot, Oxfordshire-Burgess (William). "Survey of the Lordship of Ascot in the County of Oxon, belonging to John Dormer, Esq", manuscript estate plan on vellum, in 2 sheets joined, in ink and colours, decorative title cartouche, compass rose and dividers, large elaborate coat of arms of the Dormer family, inscribed on reverse "Mrs. Dighton's Plan" (Eden B.720), 1340 by 830mm (c.1700).

The Oxfordshire Buildings Trust is still trying to trace the coloured original, but has been given a black and white extract showing the Park. A copy has also been obtained of a photo of the map in the sale catalogue.

- (12) The Victoria County History Vol.7 p.127 has incorrectly merged the two Johns as one. I have relied on the family tree in Thomas Delafield's unpublished History of Great Milton 1740-50 (BL) Ms.Gough Oxon 48. Delafield is writing about recent events and his dates are far more credulous. Our other research makes the distinction between the two Johns clear.

The older John Dormer ran the Ascott Estate until his death in 1707. His marriage to

Katherine Spencer is recorded in the very fine monument in Yarnton Parish Church showing Sir Thomas Spencer with his wife, son and four daughters. The monument is attributed to John Nost and the Tate Gallery holds a painting of it by John Piper.

The birth of the younger John Dormer in 1699 is recorded in the Yarnton parish register. This and more useful information about the Spencer connection can be found in "The Spencers of Yarnton 1584-1714" by Alison Adcock, published 1981.

- (13) Hearne's Collection Vol.3 1710-12 (O.H.S.XIII) p.25-26 & Vol.IX (O.H.S.LXV) p.404 (OHC). Hearne's account of this episode is reproduced in Appendix I.
- (14) Alison Griffiths who works in Shropshire County Archives (2009) has historic family connections with Ascott and has researched the following documents in OHC: CJIII 3-6.
- (15) Rousham Archives L64. The land transfer information in the Victoria County History is incorrect. It also conflicts with the Land Tax records below.
- (16) Timothy Mowl in his Oxfordshire volume of the Historic Gardens of England (pub.2007) is similarly puzzled by the dating (p.32). He believes the Flemish Bond brickwork may suggest a date after the 1630's.
- (17) Alice Dormer's Will 13.2.1780 (OHC)
- (18) VCH Glos. Vol. 6 p.215
- (19) Ronnie Mulryne, Trinity Times, Holy Trinity Parish Church Magazine February 2012. For illustrations of the curse on the chalice see an article by Colin McDowell in the same magazine November 2011
- (20) Private and personal Acts 1967 (7 Geo III c.25)
- (21) The Dighton family history has been mostly taken from The Dightons of Clifford Chambers by Conway Dighton, pub.1902 (BL)2182 D d.17, supplemented by information from David Booth in Oxfordshire Family History Vol.13, No.2, p.102, August 1999. A superb portrait miniature of James Lucy Dighton was sold by Christies for £23,900 in 2002.
- (22) Land Tax records 1785-1832 (OHC)
- (23) (BL) MS.Top. Oxon b75, f.52. The Belcher family also had a farm on the other side of the Stadhampton-Chalgrove road, still called Belchers. Colin Judge says there is a story that stone from the chapel and manor house was used in this building. So maybe Mark Belcher (tenant 1804-16) also did a useful bit of demolition work and re-used the stone.
- (24) Lin xii/i/19 (OHC)
- (25) PAR 171/15/F/1 (OHC)

- (26) Oxford Mail 13.12.1970 (OHC) – this sketch of the manor house/farmhouse is later reproduced in Colin Judge's History of Stadhampton. It was discovered together with the chapel sketch by Mrs. Kathleen Ring in the papers of the Rev. Eric Baker of Great Milton. The originals cannot be traced.