

History and Antiquities of Kibworth

A paper prepared and presented by Rev Montagu F F Osborn, Rector of St Wilfrid's Church, Kibworth, during a two-day gathering in Kibworth of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society in August 1863. Proceedings of these meetings were reported in the Leicester Journal published on Friday, August 7, 1863 – except that the Rev Osborn's lecture was omitted from that report due to lack of space. A full transcription of the newspaper report can be found on this website under the title 'Historic Gathering at Kibworth 1863'

Most of those who hear me are aware that the name Kibworth, as popularly used, includes the parishes, lordships, or manors of Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp, and Smeeton Westerby, although this latter parish by an order of Council, dated 1852, has no longer any ecclesiastical connection with Kibworth. They are aware, moreover, that Kibworth Beauchamp is ecclesiastically the mother parish, and Kibworth Harcourt a hamlet of it; such also was Smeeton Westerby (in itself properly two distinct villages), though now no longer so, in consequence of the severance just mentioned.

In offering to this Meeting a paper on such portions of the history and records of the antiquities of Kibworth as I have been enabled to trace, I will begin with Kibworth Harcourt, as that which claims precedence from me out of respect to the possessors of the Manor, with whom I have the honour of being connected, and from the fact that this Manor has been in the uninterrupted and undisputed possession of Merton College, Oxford, for almost 600 years, while the Manor of Kibworth Beauchamp has changed hands several times, as also that of Smeeton Westerby.

Manor of Kibworth Harcourt

From the earliest date of certain record the family of the Harcourts were in possession of the manor of the parish which has ever since been called by their name.

1 The earliest document which I have obtained from the Rolls in the Treasury of Merton College, is a writing or charter of Richard de Harcourt, the Lord of Harcourt, to his son Saer (or Seher), granting to him his Manor of

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Kibworth; this is attested among others by Simon de Montfort, and therefore must have been before the battle of Evesham, AD 1265, at which Simon de Montfort was killed.

- 2 The next document is a charter of S. de Harcourt to John le Ferrun, a citizen of London, granting to him his Manor of Kibworth Harcourt, together with the *vivaria*, mills, fisheries, &c, except the advowson of the Chapel of Kibworth Harcourt, of the value of twenty "solidi" per annum, attested by William of Kileby (Kilby).
- 3 Charter of John le Ferrun to his special friend Walter de Merton, late Chancellor of England and Bishop of Rochester, in the reign of Henry II, wishing him "sempiternam salutem," granting to him the Manor of Kibworth Harcourt, AD 1269, attested by Robert de Wyvill.
- 4 1269. Saer de Harcourt confirms the above grant of the Manor to Walter de Merton, with a reserved rent of twenty solidi.
- 5 1271. Final agreement between Walter de Merton and Saer de Harcourt.
- 6 1272. Concession of the Manor to Walter de Merton by William de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, the feudal superior.
"manerium Quod est de feodo nostro."
Walter de Beauchamp, steward to King Henry I., married Emeline, daughter and heir to Urso de Abitor, by Adeliza his wife, brother to Robert le Despencer (ie steward) to King William the Conqueror, "Cujus terra est

Chiburde sc. Roberti Dispensatoris." He lived at Smeeton (*see Kibworth Beauchamp*).

- 7 Letter of the same to his bailiffs, to give to Walter de Merton peaceable possession of the said manor.
- 8 Walter de Merton leaves eight marks to his sister Edith, wife of Thomas Tayllard.

Although Walter de Merton intended this Manor for the College which he had founded at Oxford, and mentions it among several other estates he had assigned to them in his second charter of 1270, and makes a particular provision out of it in a memorandum at the end of his charter, and although in the preceding instrument I have lately quoted by William de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and also the composition between Richard de Harcourt and the college, made in the twelfth year of Edward I, each assert the Founder's concession of this manor to his college, yet there is no legal conveyance of it extant, as there is of his other estates; on the contrary, he made grants out of it before he died, as e.g. to his sister Edith as in the immediately preceding instrument. Accordingly by an inquisition held at Leicester in the sixth year of Edward I (1281), it was declared that Walter de Merton died seised of the Manor of Kibworth, and that his six heirs were—Christiana de Wortynge, Agnes de Ewelle, Edith Tayllard, Peter de la Clyve, Richard Olyver, Alan de Portesmue. This being the case, each of these six heirs shortly after gave up their shares in the manor to Merton College for a certain consideration in money, but with a view to carry out the founder's intentions, and for the good of the College. Christiana de Wortynge, Agnes de Ewelle, and Edith Tayllard, devised their shares to their sons, and these sons' shares were bought by the College, together with the share of Alan de Portesmue, previously to which Peter de la Clyve and Richard Olyver had sold their portions. Part of the consideration in the case of Peter de la Clyve was that his two sons should be educated free at Merton College, and should have a reasonable allowance for food and clothing, one gown and cap a year, two pair of linen "pannorum," six pair of socks, and three pair of shoes, "si tanto indigeant."

While these surrenders of the shares of the heirs of Walter de Merton were going on, Sir Saer de Harcourt gives up the whole reserved rent of 20s, "totum dominium manerii," except half a mark from his tenement of Newton (Neuenthon) and Glen, "provisu franchii plegii; quem visum deo Epo et haeredibus cum manerio dimisi." Thus the college, in virtue of these grants, became in the place of the former superior lord, besides their actual possession of the manor.

The next document in connection with this manor is a composition between Richard de Harcourt (the succeeding heir of Saer de Harcourt) lord of Bosworth, and Merton College, whereby he grants the estate and chapel of Kibworth Harcourt to the College, to be held of him and his heirs for ever, as of the appurtenances of the manor of Bosworth, rendering half a mark a year, and a knight's fee on the death or cession of every Warden of the College. Receipts of this half mark, called the Harcourt noble, occur in 1394 and 1416; it is also mentioned as a yearly charge from the manor in the rentals of 12 Henry VII c. 28, Elizabeth 1586. It seems to have been paid as late as 1748, but not since.

In 1297, Henry de Fotheringhay and Robert de Caudevere assigned certain lands to the Warden and scholars of Merton College, and in 1325 the said Warden held the lands of John de Harcourt by the service of half a knight's fee.

Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1314) gave up to John de Wantyngge, Warden of Merton College; and Thomas de Beauchamp, his son (1345), gave up to Robert de Trengge, Warden, all his right over the lands bought from Henry de Fotheringhay and Robert de Candevere by the college "praeter servitia."

Lastly, in 1633, (I. Pars. Original 9 Car. I. Rot. 65,) a confirmation was granted to the college of their property at Kibworth and in other counties. There was a chapel of Kibworth Harcourt concerning which I speak more

particularly in a subsequent part of this Paper: it was probably founded about 1260, and the King granted the advowson to Walter de Merton in 1270; the foundation may, however, have been earlier.

Manor of Kibworth Beauchamp

The first grant of land in the manor of Kibworth or Chiburde, was made in the reign of Edward the Confessor to Edwin Alford, who also held lands at Fleckney and Wistow, and was no doubt the progenitor of the honoured family of Halford of Wistow. At the time of the Domesday Book Survey (1080) the manors were granted to Robertus Dispensator, i.e. Robert the Steward or Butler, whose name was subsequently refined into Despenser by a self-legalizing process. William the Conqueror bestowed lands upon him for services performed about his royal person. In 1221 we find that the manor of Kibworth Beauchamp was held of King Henry III by Walter de Bello Campo, or Beauchamp, by the service of being chief Panteler (variously called Pantler or Panneter) to the King on the day of his coronation. This service was performed by him in 1246.

In that year the King granted to him to hold a weekly market on his manor of Kibworth on Monday. This manor continued in the family of the Beauchamps till 1369, when Philippa, wife of Guy, Earl of Warwick, deceased, held both the manor and advowson of Kibworth on condition of placing a napkin upon the King's table on Christmas day, the duties of a butler being naturally considered unsuitable for one of the fair sex. In 1384 the Countess Philippa died, and the manor passed to some other descendants of the Warwick family, respecting whom there is nothing specially worthy of record, until in 1406 it came to Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who was one of the most eminent and distinguished personages of the period. He was born at Salwarpe, in Worcestershire, in 1381, and King Richard II and Scroope, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, afterwards Archbishop of York, stood sponsors at his baptism. I must pass over his many and distinguished military

exploits, only recalling to your recollection Shakespeare's mention of him in the second part of King Henry IV, and the heart-stirring speech of Henry V before the battle of Agincourt. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and on his return home through Germany, Italy, and other countries of the Continent, he behaved himself so valiantly at several tilting matches in which he was engaged, that he was everywhere received with the greatest honours, and established for himself a European reputation for feats of arms. In return for his pre-eminent military and diplomatic services, he was created Lieutenant-General of the realm of France and of the Duchy of Normandy, the highest dignity which an English subject could attain. He died in possession of it in 1439.

After him his son Henry held the manor, and he was also so distinguished for his martial accomplishments that King Henry created him Duke of Warwick, and bestowed on him extraordinary honours and privileges. He granted him lands in the counties of Warwick and Leicester, made him King of the Isle of Wight, and actually crowned him with his own hands. The Duke died in 1445, and afterwards we find Everard Digby, ancestor of the celebrated Sir Everard and Sir Kenelm Digby, holding lands at Kibworth. In 1461 Everard Digby was attainted of high treason, and in 1465 the manor passed into the hands of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, by his marriage with Ann Beauchamp, as heir general of the Beauchamp family. In 1471 the Earl was slain at the battle of Barnet, fighting against Edward IV. The manor was taken from his widow and afterwards restored to her. In 1492 it came to Edward, Viscount Lisle, by his marriage with Margaret, oldest daughter and co-heir of Richard, Earl of Warwick, who officiated as chief Panteler at the coronation of Anne Boleyn.

In 1504 one Grey died seized of the manor held of the King *in capite*. Dudley, Viscount Lisle, afterwards (1547) Earl of Warwick and (1551) Duke of Northumberland, having lost his life and lands for treason against Queen Mary in 1553,

the manor fell to the crown, and in 1559 Queen Elizabeth granted it to Sir Ambrose Dudley, who died in 1589 without issue, having been created Earl of Warwick and a Knight of the Garter, and it once more therefore reverted to the crown. In 1590 Anthony Ward was seized of the manor. In 1602 Doctor John Beridge (*his lineal descendant, and munificent restorer, the Rev Basil Beridge, Rector of Algarkirk, Lincolnshire, lately visited this parish and restored the memorial brass in the north chancel wall, to the memory of his ancestor, who was Rector of Kibworth for thirty years*), Precentor of Lincoln Cathedral and Rector of this parish, possessed the manor and also the advowson of the church. His son William was also Rector, and John the son of William died without issue. The manor and advowson were then sold. The advowson was redeemed; but in 1685-8 a fine was levied on manor and advowson, under which Sir Richard Halford, Bart. purchased the manor and held it till his death in 1727, keeping courts there annually. In 1728 Sir W Halford petitioned to be allowed to execute the office of Great Panteler at the coronation of George II, an office which had been attached to the holder of the manor of Kibworth Beauchamp, but the claim was disallowed. At the end of the last century the Earl of Denbigh was lord of the manor in right of his Countess, relict of Sir Charles Halford, Bart. The lordship of the manor is now in the family of the Halfords of Wistow, and their courts have been held here from time to time.

Manor of Smeeton Westerby

This place consisted formerly of two distinct villages, Smeeton and Westerby. Smeeton is variously written, Smitone, Smetherton, and Esmeditone in ancient writings. In Domesday Book one ploughland and two oxgangs are described as being of the royal demesne, being part of the manor of Great Bowden. Robert Despenser held three ploughlands in Esmeditone; he also held one ploughland and two oxgangs in Witenesta, which from its situation in Domesday Book and from the similarity of the name, seems to be Westerby.

In 1297, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, the king's brother, died seized of lands at Smeeton. The family of the Braybrokes, in Northants, were formerly lords of the manor here, and it passed by marriage into that of the Latimers. Members of this family and others were seized of lands held under the Earl of Warwick, and of the Turviles of Normanton. In 1361 Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Lancaster, died seized of a knight's fee in Smeeton and Westerby, held by Hugh Turvile. In 1415 Henry V granted the manor of Smeeton and Westerby to Henry, Archbishop of Canterbury; Henry, Bishop of Winchester, Thomas, Bishop of Durham, and several others. Sixteen years later, Margaret, wife of Edward Latimer, died seized of the same, held of Richard de Turvile. In 1509 it was held of the King by the family of Griffin, which family alienated it in the reign of Queen-Elizabeth. In 1628 it was granted with the manor of Foxton to Charles Harbord, and shortly afterwards it was conveyed by him to William Lewis and others. The present lord of the manor of Smeeton is H H Hungerford Esq. of Dingley.

The Parish Church, Village, &c

I shall not enter at length upon the subject of the parish church of Kibworth, dedicated to St. Wilfrid, Founder of Ripon Church and Monastery, and Bishop of York. We have had the opportunity of hearing an account of it from Mr Slater to-day. I will confine myself here to remarking that it evidently occupied an important position among county churches, befitting an important village. This probably is, in a great measure, attributable to the possession of the manor by persons of distinction (there is considerable similarity between Kibworth and Wigston churches, and it is probable that both churches had the same architect). It is probable also that as the present church was built soon after Merton College came into possession of the manor of Kibworth Harcourt, they may have taken an active share in, or at least promoted, the enlargement and improvement of the church, especially as this was built about the time (say 1350, the date of the nave, aisles, and chancel) which is worth



KIBWORTH CHURCH, LEICESTERSHIRE.
in 1801

noting, that the chapel of Kibworth Harcourt ceased to exist. For in 1379, Thomas Hulman STB, "Wicliffii Sectar," was inducted into "*the ground of the said chapel,*" thereby showing that no fabric then existed; but the chapelry was endowed with a certain amount of land, and the College continued to present to it till 1509, or near the Reformation, though it had long

List of Priests or Chaplains of the chapel of Kibworth Harcourt—1274, Master Walter, an acolyte (it was then called the chapel of Wytside). 1366, Simon de Lanborne. 1379, Thomas Hulman. 1385, John Bloxham. 1446, Thomas Roberd (died). 1446, Henry Sever. 1447, John Arundell. 1459, Henry Sever. 1509, William Spark (resigned). 1509, William Knight.

become a sinecure. Some time previously the Bishop of Lincoln directed a court of inquiry concerning the vacancy of the chapelry. The spot on which the chapel stood has been pointed out to you to-day (it forms a corner of the upper portion of the field called "The

March") and it was called "The Sanctuary," in the remembrance of persons now living.

There was also a church or chapel at Smeeton or Westerby, for accounts vary; but certainly for between 400 and 500 years St. Wilfrid's church served as the church of the three parishes till 1849, when the present church at Smeeton was built. The chancel or priest's door, which is of the style called "Early English" or "First Pointed" shows that a church of that style and date i.e. the twelfth century, preceded the present; and this doubtless succeeded an earlier church (*it is possible that the capitals and base of the sedilia are coeval with the chancel door*).

When the Rector of the parish was forcibly ejected from the living in the time of the Commonwealth, a person who styled himself the Rev John Yaxley, but who was really a captain in the army, and had served for many years in the Parliamentary army against King

Charles I, usurped the living by appointment of the Parliamentary Committee at Leicester for thirteen years, till the lawful Rector was again restored. Yaxley turned the font out of the church, and it became a trough for watering; and some years after it was in the yard of one Robert Brown, one of the officers under Captain Yaxley. This font was buried in the churchyard for many years; it was afterwards—about twenty-four years ago—in the possession of the Rev James Beresford, late Rector of this parish. At his decease it came into the possession of J Marriott, Esq. of Kibworth Harcourt, who, having had it repaired where necessary and placed on a new base, restored it to the church. The style of this font exactly coincides with that of the rest of the church.

On July 23rd 1825, the beautiful tower and spire, 159 feet high, fell down while under repair, and after a long delay the present tower was built, after the model of East Carlton in the county of Northampton. The old tower and spire greatly resembled that of Brampton-Ash, in the same county. In 1846 the whole of the interior of the church was refitted with open seats; in 1854 the whole of the stone work of the church—windows, arches, pillars, and porches—was relieved of numerous coats of whitewash and colouring. In 1860 the flat roof and ceiling of the chancel, and the blockade of the chancel arch were removed, a new roof erected, and a new east window inserted. Four new buttresses also, in character with the other buttresses of the church, were built on either side of the east wall of the chancel, replacing two hexagonal buttresses at the angle of the wall. The western arch was restored, or rather reconstructed, to replace that which was destroyed by the fall of the tower in 1825 and not rebuilt, thereby throwing open the tower and west window to the church.

During the last year three new roofs have been placed upon the nave and aisles, replacing old ones more or less in a state of decay, and which had been under ceiled about fifty years ago. The whole of the whitewash also has been removed from the walls and doors, and rough

stucco substituted. An organ was placed in the church in 1856, and the east window of the north aisle was filled with stained glass in memory of the late J B Humfrey Esq. of Kibworth Hall. In the course of the late restorations a piscina was opened in the east end of the south aisle, corresponding to, though not precisely in the same position as, that in the north aisle. There is a staircase leading up to the skreen from the end of the south aisle, but as the steps were much dilapidated, and the entrance unsightly and inconvenient, and also caused a draught, it has been closed up, though to the great regret of Archaeologists.

[Note: the chancel skreen has been most effectively and faithfully restored 1868, by Mr J Wilson of Kibworth Beauchamp under the direction of W Slater Esq, but much of the details is original on his part. It is in fact a reconstruction, as but very slender relics of the ancient skreen remained.]

The present piscina in the chancel is after the pattern of the original one removed and not restored when the east end of the chancel was rebuilt in 1817. The curious deeply splayed window in the south chancel wall, the use of which is not clearly intelligible, was opened in 1852; the two still more singular windows over the chancel arch more recently. The rebuilding of the spire, which of course could not have the same character as the former, which was a very beautiful “broach” spire, is a question which I will leave to the opinions of our learned friends here to-day.

Kibworth Beauchamp Free Grammar School

The free Grammar School in Kibworth Beauchamp in which we are now assembled, is of a date so ancient as to be unknown. Nichols thinks it was founded probably towards the close of the fifteenth century, or about one hundred and fifty years after the church. But in the year 1722, some persons who made a complaint respecting its management to the Court of Chancery, state “that several hundred years ago divers messuages, lands, and

tenements, had been vested in trustees for the maintenance of a free school at Kibworth." In a bill in Chancery, in the time of Henry VII, the plaintiffs set forth that certain lands and tenements in Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, Smeeton Westerby and Carlton Curlieu, were heretofore given for the maintenance of a free Grammar School and schoolmaster in Kibworth.

In 1601 the statute about charitable uses was made, and a commission of inquiry into Kibworth school was directed in 1614 upon this statute to certain commissioners; and on an inquisition held in 1625, it was found that certain messuages, lands, &c. in the occupation of Thomas Kilpeck, Thomas Vale, Rowland Wood, Christopher Glover Marriott, Nicholas Kind, John Foxton, Zachary Chapman and others, had been given to the maintenance of a free Grammar School and master, the commissioners decreed and confirmed this use; and that the schoolmaster should build a school-house in Kilpeck's close, and make leases for twenty-one years, not under the proper value. Two leases are extant, of the date of Henry VII, for Kilpeck's farm of two yardlands to be held *in perpetuum*. Since then there have been various disputes respecting this charity, and various enfeoffments and orders made thereupon.

In 1725, Francis Edwards Esq. (the representative of a family possessed of considerable property at Kibworth Beauchamp and Smeeton, which has since been alienated by sale), a great benefactor, took down the school-room, an inferior building and much out of repair, and rebuilt it in the present form, with the master's house adjoining, about fifty yards from the site of the old school, at his own expense; hitherto there had been no schoolmaster's house. This Grammar School is free to the sons of all parents resident in Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, and Smeeton Westerby: about the end of the last century there were about one hundred scholars. The earliest documents on record, referred to in 1709, require that reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic, and Latin if desired, shall be

taught, and that the master shall be, and shall remain, a clergyman of the Church of England. The last scheme from the Court of Chancery for the management of this school was made in 1822, and the last election of Trustees took place in 1860. The National School was built in 1842.

The old Rectory house—almost in living memory—occupied the position of the present Railway Station, and there is a tradition that Oliver Cromwell slept in it the night before the battle of Naseby; a room in the house was always called "Oliver's room."

There was an ancient stone cross which used to stand nearly opposite the manor house in Kibworth Harcourt on the opposite side of the road. It was somewhat dilapidated, and was unfortunately taken down forty-five years ago instead of being restored. The base may still be seen in one of the opposite fields.

The oldest house in Kibworth Harcourt and in the whole parish is the manor house; in Kibworth Beauchamp the house occupied by Mr Buzzard; and in Smeeton Westerby the house occupied by Mr T Jesson. The remains of the oldest house may be seen a little higher up the road on the same side, formerly occupied by ancestors of the family of Cobley in this parish.

In a close in Kibworth Harcourt, called Hall Close, is a large mound surrounded with a single ditch, with a circumference at the bottom of 122 yards, and its diameter at the top about sixteen yards. There is an elevated barrow connected with it, which as you know has been just opened under the auspices of the Archaeological Society, and is believed to have been a burying place. Fragments of bones and pieces of Samian pottery have been discovered on the present occasion.

In 1564 Nichols says there were eighty-two families in Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, and Smeeton Westerby; and the freeholders in 1630 were William Ward, William Innocent, Richard Clarke, Thomas Parsons, and

John Storer. In 1722 twenty-two freeholders polled at an election from Kibworth Beauchamp, fifteen from Kibworth Harcourt, thirty from Smeeton, and one from Westerby. In 1775 twenty-three from Kibworth Beauchamp, nine from Kibworth Harcourt, and thirty-one from Smeeton Westerby. Nichols, writing at the end of the last century says that the population was 1300 (the present population is 1867, viz. Kibworth Beauchamp 868, Kibworth Harcourt 466, Smeeton Westerby 533), and that two-thirds of the men were employed in husbandry, and some few manufacturers; that in the whole parish there were twenty-four teams kept; in Kibworth Beauchamp there was formerly a tannery manufactory carried on, now nearly laid aside; in the other parishes there is a little stocking weaving; spinning of worsted with the two-handed wheel is very generally used, being the principal employment of the women. In 1779-1780, the enclosure of the parishes took place, and 3900 acres (about 148 yardlands) were enclosed. The present gross acreage of the parish is 3967, of which 1370 are in Kibworth Harcourt, 1359 in Smeeton Westerby, and 1238 in Kibworth Beauchamp. Since the enclosure the proportion of pasture land to arable has much increased, though of late years a slight reaction has taken place. Sir F Morton Eden, author of a valuable book called "The State of the Poor, or a history of the labouring classes in England from the Conquest to the present time" (1797) says, speaking of this parish at that time—

"The prices of provisions are, beef 4½d to 5d a lb.; mutton 5d; veal 3½d; butter 9½d to 10d; bread 3½d a lb., or 1s for 4 lbs; coals 1s 1d a cwt; potatoes 6d a gallon; milk ½d the pint, but of this little is sold. The wages of labour vary much; a common labourer in husbandry earns about 8s 6d a week in winter, and 10s or 12s in summer; women spin worsted, and can earn 6d to 10d a day; children of twelve or fourteen years old earn about 6d a day by spinning. In Kibworth Beauchamp there are two alehouses, in Kibworth Harcourt four, in Smeeton Westerby two. The average value of land is about 25s an acre; nine-tenths of the land is pasture; there are no commons nor waste lands in the parish. The rates before the enclosure of the parish were not one-third of what they are at present; and the people attribute the rise

of them to the enclosure; for they say before the fields were enclosed they were solely applied to the cultivation of corn, and the poor had plenty of employment in weeding, reaping, threshing &c, and could collect a great deal of corn by gleaning, but that the fields being now in pasturage, the farmers have little occasion for labourers, who, being thrown out of employment, must of course be supported by the parish. One-third or one-fourth of the men who were required twenty years ago, would now be sufficient to perform all the farming work in the parish. At this time many labourers are getting work at a canal cutting in the neighbourhood, otherwise the rates must have been higher. In the winter when a man is out of work he applies to the overseer, who sends him from house to house to get employ; the housekeeper who employs him gives him his victuals and 6d a day; the parish adds 4d for the family. Persons working in this manner are called roundsmen. The tradesmen, small farmers, and graziers are very loud in their complaints against those whom they call monopolizing farmers and graziers, an evil which they say increases every year. The poor complain of bad treatment from the overseers, and the overseers accuse the poor of being saucy."

This complaint on the part of the labouring population on account of the laying down arable into pasture is not new; in the reign of Henry VIII we hear of riots in parts of the country from the same cause. Reflections on political economy form no part of my subject; I will not therefore go beyond the above statement of facts. Although the stocking-frame had been invented long before this time (by Rev W Lee of Calverton, Nottinghamshire, 1589),* yet probably it had not come into the villages to any great extent many years before, but it must certainly have assisted to employ part of the surplus population thrown out of employ by the enclosure. In 1680 it is generally asserted that stocking making began in Leicester in a house at the North Gate. But great opposition, as you well know, was shewn to the new frames by the knitters for many years, and in 1792 three thousand frames were employed in Leicester and the surrounding villages, Kibworth no doubt being among the number. The first cotton-stocking frame was made in 1760. Owing to riots and destruction of machinery by the

Luddites, an Act of Parliament passed in 1812, made it death to break a stocking-frame. Sir F M Eden, before quoted, gives an account of the regular pensioners on the poor list of Kibworth Beauchamp in 1795, and this may serve as a specimen for Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby:

	Age	Money	Coals
A weaver's widow	50	3 6	0 7½
A man with two grandchildren	65	10 0	0 11½
A stocking weaver	60	1 0	0 7½
A labourer and family	40	0 0	0 7½
A stocking weaver	55	0 0	0 7½
A labourer	50	0 6	0 7½
Ditto	50	1 6	0 7½
Ditto	55	2 0	0 7½
A labourer's widow	55	0 0	0 7½
A soldier's child	7	2 6	
A spinster	40	1 6	
A bastard child		1 6	
Two old men at Leicester		4 0	
A spinster	55	5 0	
A weaver and family	40	4 0	
A weaver and three children	40	2 0	
A weaver and four children	30	3 0	
A labourer and six children	35	4 0	
		Money	£2 6 0
		Coals	£0 5 11½
			£2 11 11½

The following appears to have been taken down from the lips of a labourer in this parish by Sir F M Eden in August 1795:—

“The labourer is forty years of age; has a wife and five young children; about half the year he worked at the canal, and had 2s a day; when the weather prevented his working, the parish allowed him 1s 2d a day. For the twenty-six weeks from Michaelmas he earned £11 1s, for the Spring quarter he earned £5 17s; for the Summer quarter, including victuals allowed, £8 18s 6d; eldest girl earns 2s a week by spinning; total earnings £31 10s 6d. The parish pay the man's rent, find him coals, occasionally give him wearing apparel, and lately 2s a week. Six pounds of bread are used daily; this used to be 10d, but of late has been 2s, and now is 1s 6d; this alone is £27 6s a year. The man says they use little or no potatoes, seldom get butter, nor oatmeal; buy a little cheese, and sometimes have meat on a Sunday; his wife and daughter drink a little tea; that they would use much more bread if they could afford it, that his children

are almost naked and half-starved; he has lately worked many days with only bread diet, and has not tasted beer for many weeks. In 1776 the poor rates for Kibworth Beauchamp were £65 16s 6d; for Kibworth Harcourt £54 9s 6d; for Smeeton Westerby £78 6s 8d. In 1784, £147 14s 4d = 2s 9d in the pound in Kibworth Beauchamp, and in 1795, £205 = 4s in the pound; in Smeeton Westerby much higher.”

The following I have gathered out of the Parish Registers as some of the most interesting specimens of their contents.

“1641 Know all men, that the reason why little or nothing is registered from this year till the year 1649, was the civil wars between King Charles and his parliament, which put all into a confusion till then, and neither ministers nor people could quietly stay at home for one party or the other.

“1651 Buried Elizabeth Bryan, an ancient maide of Kibworth Harcourt, March 15.

“1654 On Wednesday, the 5th of April, about nine o'clock at night, the English Commissioners and the Dutch Ambassadors (after many great sea fights, and much loss both of the Dutch and English side), totally finished the ratifications of the peace, the articles being wholly agreed for Holland and Denmark with us, and they were then signed by the Lords Ambassadors on the one side, with full power from the Estates; and the Lords Commissioners, with full power from the Lord Protector, on the other side; and sealed and delivered on both sides; (then, in another handwriting) ‘To God be all the glory.’

“1658 Know, that Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions and territories thereunto belonging, departed this life, September 3, 1658, and that his eldest son, the Lord Richard Cromwell, was immediately proclaimed Lord Protector.

“1660 Buried, Richard West, of Kibworth Harcourt, about one hundred years old.

“1665 The towne of Smeeton was visited with the plague this year.

“1678 Given towards the rebuilding the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London, £3 18s 8d, whereof 40s was given, by the Rector of the Parish, £1 18s 8d by the Parishioners.

“1680 Collected in the whole parish towards the redemption of the English captives in Algiers, £4 8s 8d.

- "1681 Collected towards the French Protestants, £1 13s 3d.
- "1684 Collected for the fire at Newmarket, and paid to Master Ward, Bookseller at Leicester, by the Archdeacon's order, 14s 2d.
- "1695 Collected towards the relief of the sufferers at Warwick, the summe of £6 17s, and paid in to the Archdeacon.
- "1706 Joyce Eastwood, widow, in the 106th year of her age, of Kibworth Beauchamp, bury'd May 2.
- "1811 Collected for the British Prisoners in France, after a sermon preached for them on the occasion, May 5, the sum of £8 8s 7d. J Goodman, Curate."

The Parish Register dates from 1574, or two hundred and ninety years ago; the oldest names of that date now remaining among us are, Brian, Carter, Grant, Innocent, Iloff, Smeeton, Lenton, Clarke, Goodman, Swingler, Oswin, Bale, Mitchell, Coleman, Branston, Mattock, Bent, Cobley, Weston, Ward; most, if not all, of these being two hundred and fifty years old, some two hundred and ninety. The word "husbandman" occurs for labourer in the earlier parts of it.

The first coach from Leicester to London commenced running through Kibworth in 1774, and the first mail in 1785. The former was drawn by six horses, and the passengers slept two nights on the road, at Northampton and Dunstable. For some years before the construction of the London and North Western Railway, twenty-eight coaches, up and down, ran through Kibworth daily. The first milestone on the Glenn Road was the half-way stone between London and Manchester. The portion of the turnpike-road between the "Rose and Crown" and "The Lodge," was made about 1806 ; previous to which date it took the winding course by the "Fox," the "Old House," and the "Manor House," until numerous accidents induced the alteration.

Many, doubtless, have been born, or passed their lives in Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp, or Smeeton Westerby, men of renown or of distinguished merit, whose names are unknown or unrecorded. Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester, and Lord High Chancellor of England—more than once Regent of the Kingdom in the King's absence—one of the most eminent and honoured men of his day, the pious and munificent founder of Merton College, died 1277. John Bloxham, Warden of Merton College, and Archdeacon of Winchester, died 1387; Henry Sever, Chancellor of Oxford, 1443; Provost of Christ's College, Cambridge, 1441, and Warden of Merton College; men of wide renown, may fairly be mentioned as having been Chaplains of Kibworth Harcourt. Passing over the eminent mediaeval Lords of the Manor*, we have in later times the Rev Dr John Berridge, the Rev J Jennings, who kept a School in Kibworth Harcourt, and had the eminent Dr Doddridge for a pupil, who at his death in 1723 succeeded to his school. Dr John Aikin, the physician and literary writer, was born here in 1747; Mrs Barbauld and Lucy Aikin, both well-known writers, were his sisters.

St. Wilfrid's Church has looked down from its "Church Hill" on many interesting changes and events for more than five hundred years, which we should like to have seen with our eyes, or respecting which we should like to have heard some trustworthy account e.g. How was the first Kibworth Feast kept? But our work lies with the present, and so to do it, that we may each of us leave some mark for good behind us for the future.

** In the absence of any known derivation, I can only conjecture that the "Warwick Road" from Kibworth Harcourt to Saddington takes its name from the Warwick family.*