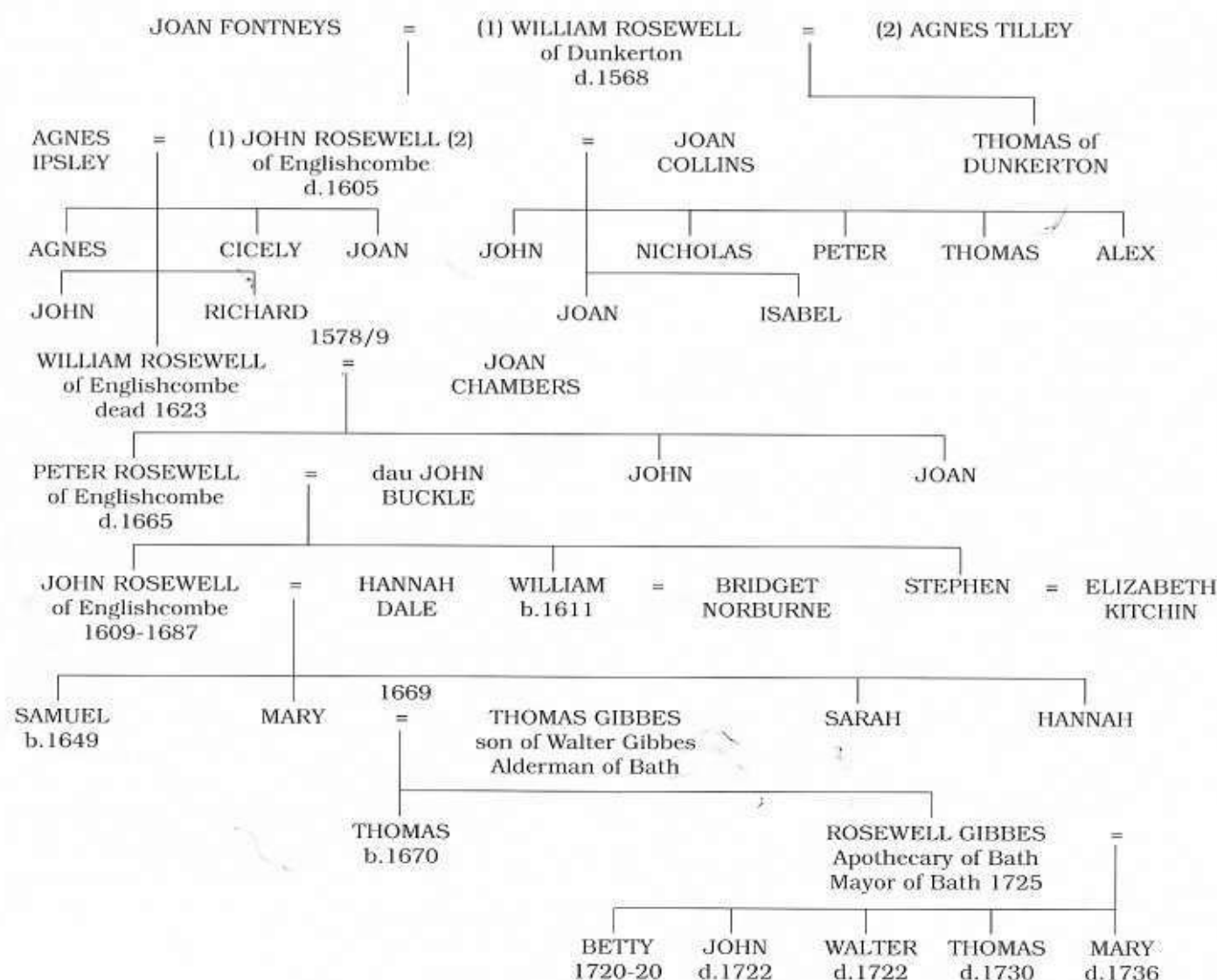


The Bisse and Rosewell Families

Lord Russell purchased the manor of Englishcombe on 5 September 1543 only to sell it again within 5 days. Clearly he was acting for the real purchasers. He was the Crown rent receiver for the former Gournay estate and had probably been approached with offers. Half the manor was bought by John Raynes and the other half by James Bisse of Stoke St Michael and his younger brother John.⁹⁵ James Bisse also bought the rectory of Englishcombe from the Crown in July 1544; the grant describes him as a cloth-maker.⁹⁶ Raynes and the Bisses jointly leased the manor of Englishcombe to William Rosewell of Dunkerton, with remainder (inheritance) to his sons John and Thomas.⁹⁷

This lease could have been more carefully worded; it later caused problems. Was the farm to be divided between the sons on the death of William? Or was John to inherit the farm as the eldest, with Thomas as his heir if he died childless? William seems to have tried to settle the matter just before he died by releasing his own right in the manor and persuading Thomas to do likewise so that a new lease could be granted to John Rosewell and his sons William and John. Thomas clearly felt that he had a grievance. He took the matter to the Chancery Court after William's death, but gained nothing by it.⁹⁸

THE ROSEWELLS OF ENGLISHCOMBE



Later dissension arose among the children of John. He had a huge brood -- eight sons and five daughters -- by two wives.⁹⁹ It seems there was jealousy between the offspring of different mothers. The eldest son was William and in 1578 or 1579 he married Joan, the daughter of Humphrey Chambers of Tresham, Gloucestershire. Humphrey paid £80 for John Rosewell's contract to give half of Englishcombe farm to William immediately and the other half after John's death. John reneged. For years he permitted William and Joan to share the farmhouse but not the profits. Then around 1594 he expelled them from the farm and they went to live at Twerton; William saw in this the influence of his half-brothers.¹⁰⁰ William had a good case and it was heard in Chancery in May 1600. The verdict is not recorded, but it clearly went in his favour. It was William who took on the manor farm after his father's death in 1605.¹⁰¹

Lord Russell's transgression in selling off Duchy of Cornwall lands, which by law were inalienable, went unpunished until James I came to the throne. Once again England had a Prince of Wales in his sadly short-lived son Henry Frederick. On 27 July 1609 a writ was issued 'calling upon the heirs of John lord Russell and on James Bisse, John Bamfield and Francis Buckland, holding the manors of Inglescomb, Widcombe, Laverton and West Harptree, Somerset to show cause why the grant thereof by Henry VIII to said Lord Russell should not be revoked, these manors being annexed to the Duchy of Cornwall'.¹⁰²

This James Bisse was the great-nephew of the James who had bought half of Englishcombe.¹⁰³ It

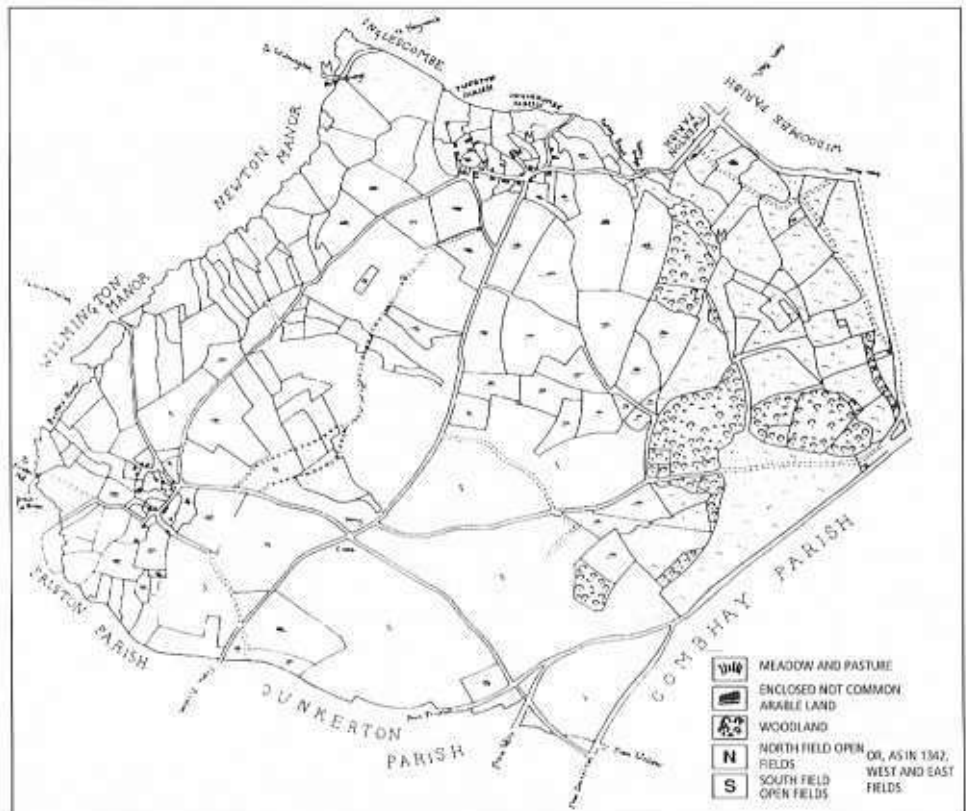


Fig 2 – Working from John Norden's written survey of 1611 and later maps, Avon County Council Planning Department produced a reconstruction plan of Englishcombe in 1611.

is unclear how the whole manor came to him, but it was now irretrievably lost; all four manors returned to the Duchy. James Bisse never accepted the loss and his will of 1643 left 'my manor of Englishcombe and Inclebatche, which manor is (as I conceive) wrongfully detained from me' to his daughter Elizabeth Orange 'to whom I give full power to sue recover and possess the said manor'.¹⁰⁴ It was a pipe dream. However, Englishcombe rectory remained with the Bisse family for several more generations (see p.33).

In 1611 the Duchy of Cornwall's surveyor, John Norden, made a written survey of all the former Gournay manors (fig 2). Most of the meadow and common land was enclosed by that time and enclosures had also nibbled into the two great open fields.¹⁰⁵ The manor house called 'le ferme' and the demesne lands were held by William Rosewell (app.3).

The Civil War and its Aftermath

Prince Henry -- a youth of brilliant promise -- died aged 16 just over a year after Norden's survey was made. His younger brother Charles was now now Prince of Wales and in 1625 ascended the throne as Charles I. Charles was a man of charm and talent, but little ability to compromise. From 1629 he ruled without parliament and imposed taxes which were deeply unpopular. When he finally called two parliaments in 1640, the MPs passed act after act to curb royal powers. When Charles tried to arrest five MPs in January 1642, the breach between king and parliament was complete and preparations began for war. Both sides recruited men in Somerset, but the area around Bath was a Puritan stronghold and came out strongly for parliament.¹⁰⁶

Thomas Clement of Englishcombe joined the parliamentary army. Duchy tenants might have been expected to fight for the king and perhaps some did, but Thomas was not himself a Duchy tenant. He was a younger son of John Clement, yeoman farmer of Englishcombe (see p.10), who had a house where the former school now stands.¹⁰⁷ However, John Clement had bought some land in Batheaston in trust for Thomas and his brother Benedict, so Thomas was independent of the Duchy. Thomas mortgaged his land in 1642 and joined up. Stationed at Worcester before the battle of Edgehill, he wrote his will in the house there of one Will Goffe on 10 October 1642 'being neither sick nor weak of body' yet 'apprehending danger'. Thomas survived Edgehill, but died at the battle of Naseby on 14 June 1645.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile those at home were contributing to the parliamentary army, willingly or not. Parliament held the area until July 1643 and were in control of the trained bands, the groups of part-time soldiers who were England's defence until the formation of the regular army. Englishcombe supplied two trained men and their weapons. In addition, a horse and musket were requisitioned. Parliamentary troops were billeted in Englishcombe eight times for

periods between a day and seven weeks. They and their horses had to be fed, which must have made great demands on the resources of the community. One can imagine John Clement's feelings when Captain Butler's troop of 80 horses was let loose to graze in his meadow about mowing time. Also taxes were levied for the war and Englishcombe contributed towards the improvement of Bath's defences and the support of the Bristol garrison (app.5). The cost of war was high, as always. However onerous Charles I's taxes had appeared at the time, when local people looked back on the subsidy they had paid to the Crown in 1641 (app.4), it must have almost faded into insignificance. The total paid by Englishcombe then was £6 10s 8d, whereas they paid £48 18s 12d in 1643 and £66 8s 0d in 1645-6 in war taxes.¹⁰⁹

Charles I was executed in January 1649 and parliament took control of Crown lands, including those of the Duchy of Cornwall. In December 1650 the manor and farm of Englishcombe were surveyed (app.6) and in February John Warre of London contracted to purchase.¹¹⁰ It is not clear whether the sale was ever made, but it was in any case a comparatively short break from Duchy ownership. With the Restoration in May 1660, Englishcombe returned to the Crown.

The parliamentary survey, together with the hearth tax returns for 1664-5, provide some insight into the standard of living of the farming community. There were 22 houses assessed for hearth tax, with an average of 3 hearths per household, indicating comfortable homes for that time. There was little or no substandard housing.¹¹¹ Neither were there any great houses. Englishcombe manor house, near the church, had been the home of stewards and tenant farmers for around three centuries. In 1650 it was held by Peter Rosewell and had a hall, parlour and kitchen on the ground floor with 'other necessary rooms', probably food stores. Above were four bedrooms with garrets above them (app.6).

A Divided Manor

John Rosewell, son of Peter, died 1 December 1687, aged 79. His grave-stone read 'This grave's a bed of Roses: Here doth ly John Rosewell, gent. His wife, nine children by.'¹¹² John had outlived most of his family. His son Samuel was still living in 1672¹¹³ and may have succeeded his father, but it seems he had no children, for in 1699 the manor farm was divided. One half was leased to John Rosewell's son-in-law Thomas Gibbs.¹¹⁴ The Gibbs were a prominent family in Bath; Thomas's father Walter was mayor three times. This half of the farm descended in 1722 to Thomas's son Rosewell Gibbs, apothecary of Bath, who became mayor in 1725.¹¹⁵ The other half was leased to Joseph Damer, John England and John Elderton. It was John England who paid the rent and presumably was the actual farmer.¹¹⁶ John Rosewell had also bought one third of the manor of Twerton, which was similarly divided after his death between Gibbs and England, who may have been another son-in-law.¹¹⁷

When the manor was surveyed by William Simpson in 1792, he was scathing in his comments. 'The Manor House and Demesnes were some years ago

divided into two Farms, and the House being much decay'd was entirely taken down and rebuilt. This Division of the Demesnes was executed without any taste or judgement ... the Gardens, Orchards and Fields are much intermixed with each other, though nothing was more easy than to have drawn a line between them.' Simpson continued 'In Norden's time and also when the Parliament Survey was taken, much the greater part of the Copyhold lands was in Common Field, but they have since been nearly all Inclosed ... The mode of Inclosing was the worst possible. Fences were made round the various pieces just as lay, without any regard to convenience ... hence they are all intermixed ... and almost every Tenant has a Road thro' his neighbour's Field ... It is not by any means a pleasant place to reside at, nor at all famed for sociality.' By this time half the manor farm was leased to the Rev. William England and the other half to Matthew Brickdale, who held adjoining houses north of the church.¹¹⁸ Their respective sub-tenants were Joseph Deans and John Cottle (app.8).



Plate 9 – The Manor House of Englishcombe.

Nailwell, Kilkenny and Padleigh

The population of Englishcombe was at its height around 1860 and had spilled out to the fringes of the parish. In 1664-5 Englishcombe's 22 dwellings would have housed around 126 people.¹¹⁹ The population had nearly doubled by the time of the first census in 1801 and it climbed to 559 in 1861.¹²⁰ In 1792 there were 40 houses in the parish and about 70 in 1840.¹²¹

A cluster of houses appeared at Nailwell, where there were only fields in the 18th century. 'Well' in the name reflects the spring there, the source of Widdlecombe Brook, which would have made it a good place to build in the days before mains water. Two fields at Nailwell were part of the farm once owned by the Baggridges, which was fragmented in the 19th century. By 1840 Peter Wyatt owned Widdlecombe field with four cottages west of the lane.¹²² They can be seen on the map of 1822



Plate 11 – Westvale as it is now.

(pl.10). By 1939 they had been converted into a single house known as Westvale and occupied by Sholto Ernest Hassell, butter merchant.¹²³ His meadows were later amalgamated with the Home Farm and Westvale is now a private residence (pl.11).

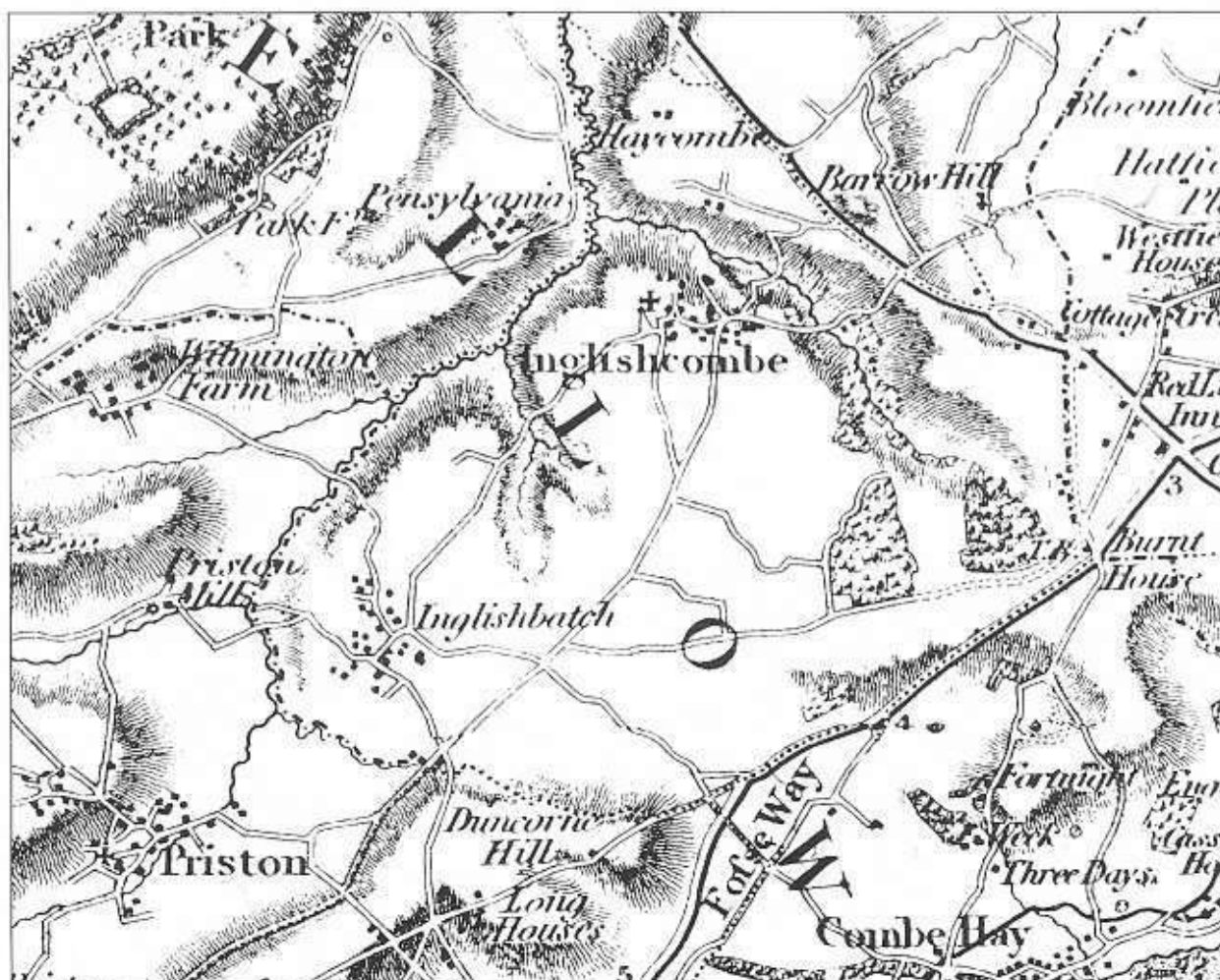


Plate 10 – Detail from the map of Somerset in 1822 by Christopher Greenwood.

The smaller ex-Baggridge field lay in a rough triangle between two lanes and the parish boundary. This was clearly purchased specifically for building. By 1840 the Malt and Hops Inn was prominently placed at the crossroad. Ten cottages on the rest of the plot were owned by three men: William Green, Benjamin Gay and John Jacobs. Gay lived in one, but all the others were rented out; they were presumably purpose-built for rental.¹²⁴ Benjamin Gay seems to have been an odd character. In 1820 he bought a wife for five shillings from her husband David Hawkins of Dunkerton, who gave her away at the altar. When Gay got home he beat his daughters and threw them out to make way for his new purchase.¹²⁵

Another group of houses grew up along Kilkenny Lane, which probably takes its name from a field called Kilkensey on the corner where this lane met the way to the reservoir. In the 18th century there was a long triangle of waste ground between

Kilkenny Lane, the Wells Road and the Old Fosse Road. This was leased to the parish. The crossroad where the Wells and Old Fosse Roads met was known as Burnt House. Between 1792 and 1804 a turnpike house was built at Burnt House Gate, where Bristol View now stands (pl.12), with two cottages nearby called the Poor House. Another cottage was built in 1804 close to the entrance of Vernham Wood.¹²⁶ This could have been the first of Woodside Cottages or perhaps the earliest of Rose Cottages, owned by Edward Dutton in 1840.¹²⁷

Other enterprising persons built cottages on waste land beside the road at Padleigh in the 18th century. The Duchy surveyor noted indignantly that George Evans had built a cottage just above Padleigh Bridge in about 1750 and had never paid anything to anyone! What is now Woodland Cottage, a little further up the hill, was owned by Rev. England of the Manor Farm.¹²⁸



Plate 12 – Bristol View, Kilkenny Lane.

The Victorian Period: An Era of Change

By 1840 Jacob Cottle was running half of the manor farm (app.9), and on 15 September 1846 there was a serious fire in his farmyard (pl.13). The West of England and Sun fire-engines raced to the scene. It took them only half an hour to reach Englishcombe from Bath. (These were of course horse-drawn engines.) They found all Cottle's ricks and barns ablaze. A cottage in front of the farmyard, home of the crippled Thomas Butler, was speedily destroyed, along with the barns and ricks. A servant girl confessed to starting the fire. Cottle was fortunately insured, so the cottager was the chief sufferer.¹²⁹

No doubt Jacob Cottle built himself a new barn and more renewal followed the reunification of the manor farm. Simpson's survey had been made just a few years after long leases had been granted for both halves of the manor farm. As they ran out, the

Duchy granted new ones for shorter terms.¹³⁰ Finally the two halves were vacant together and the farm was reunited in 1864 under Alfred and Frederick Stone.¹³¹ A new farmhouse and barn were built in 1869 to the south-west of the church.¹³²

Building work created a need for stone. Quarrying had begun by the late 18th century on the waste ground near Burnt House. It was noted in 1804 that 'many loads of stone are still dug here'.¹³³ In 1840 there was a quarry in the southern tip of the parish, south of the road to Combe Hay; by 1849 there were several quarries for building stone and repair of roads.¹³⁴ The Victorian period was a great era for road-building; poor country roads had hard surfaces laid down for the first time. One of Englishcombe's oldest residents recalled his father saying that the road from Englishcombe to Bath

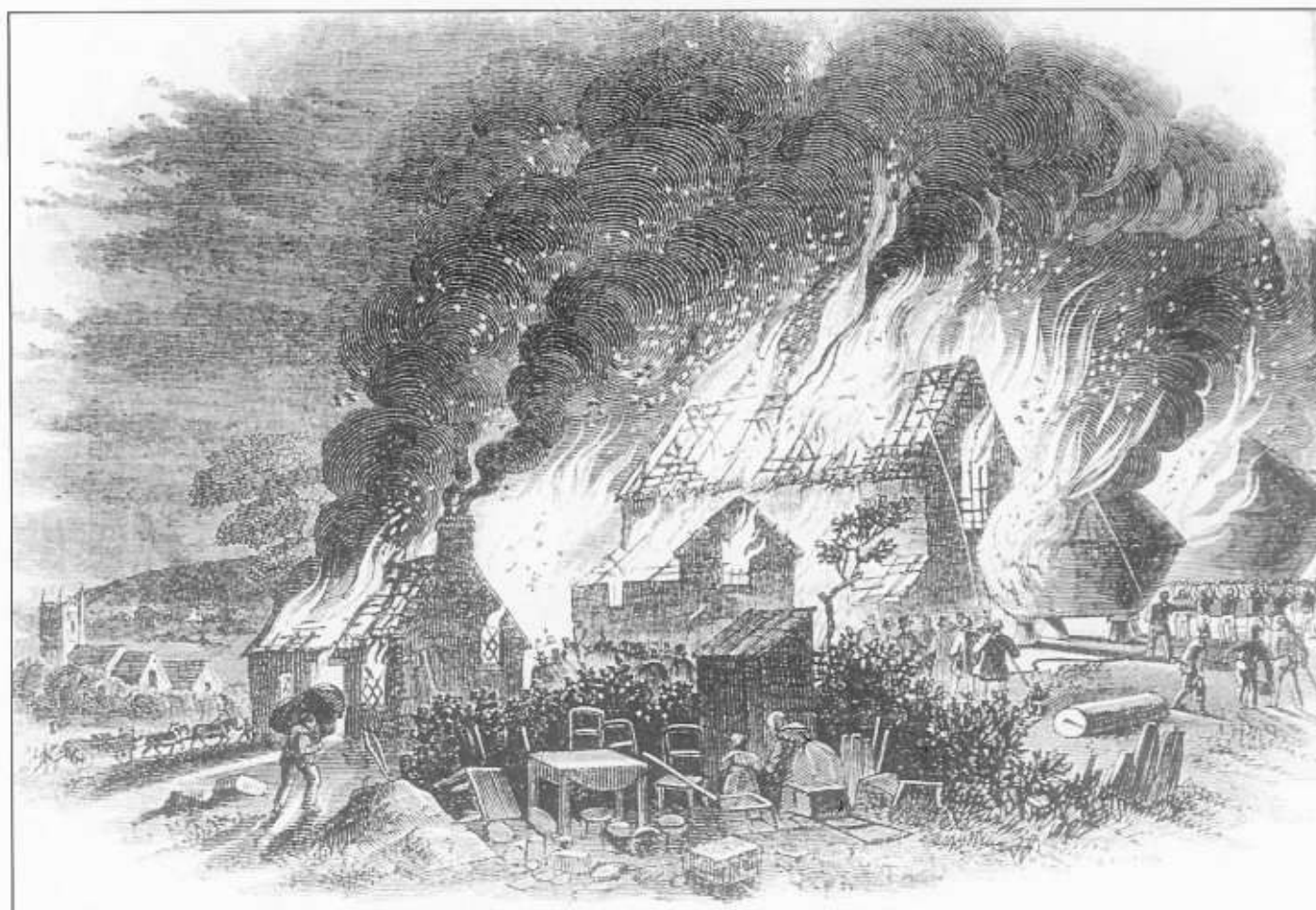


Plate 13 – Fire in Englishcombe destroying Jacob Cottle's barn and ricks north of the church. Engraving by E. Evans from *The Pictorial Times* 26 Sept 1846.



Plate 14 – Thomas Barnes's steamroller crashed into an outhouse by the Grove Tavern, Padleigh Bottom, on 15 March 1909. It was being driven to Englishcombe to carry out work for the Rural District Council.

employed between 60 and 100 people on a regular basis well into the present century. Tied houses for permanent staff were built along Whiteway Road, but seasonal workers came in from all the villages around.¹⁴³

Englishcombe had always had a fragmented community. Now, with new hamlets springing up on the edges of the parish, the population was even more scattered. In past centuries, the church provided a focus for community life, but Englishcombe had dissenters from

was little better than a cart-track at the start of this century.¹³⁵ No doubt the steamroller (pl.14) had come to mend matters but it ended up doing unforeseen damage.¹³⁶ Englishcombe had another useful raw material. Around 1800 Charles Hall began to dig fuller's earth from a field above West Wood and send it to Bristol.¹³⁷

Otherwise the parish was entirely agricultural and a large part of the population worked on the land. In 1883 a specialist business was established which became a major employer for local people.¹³⁸ Walter T. Ware had acquired Haycombe farm and in 1890 he bought Barrow Castle (pl.15).¹³⁹ Ware started Inglescombe Nurseries at the old Haycombe farmhouse.¹⁴⁰ A new farmhouse was built to the north (pl.17) where there had been a barn in 1840. At first it was known as Haycombe Barn Farm.¹⁴¹ A visitor noted in 1899 that Ware's hothouses were 'well worth a visit, especially when the lilies are in bloom. He sends away daily cut flowers, chiefly daffodils, roses, tulips, lilies of the valley and others.'¹⁴² The business was labour-intensive; land for bulb-planting was all dug by hand. The nursery

early days. Thomas Culverhouse was fined for non-attendance at church around 1600, while Katherine Evans of Inglesbatch went as far as Keynsham in 1670 to attend an illegal conventicle.¹⁴⁴ The Act of Toleration in 1689 permitted freedom of worship and non-conformists often held meetings in their own homes at first, but as numbers grew, so chapels sprang up. There was a dissenting meeting house in Englishcombe in 1804, a Baptist chapel was built at Inglesbatch in 1813 and another chapel at Rush Hill in 1832.¹⁴⁵ In 1845 the Salem Congregational Chapel was built in Englishcombe village by William Jay.¹⁴⁶



Plate 15 – Barrow Castle, built in 1851, with the present owner Elizabeth Hall. Nearby is Barrowmead Cottage, an older building in appearance, presumably part of Barrow Farm.



Plate 16 - Letterhead of Inglescombe Nurseries.

The chapel-goers held sway in Englishcombe. While the Salem Chapel was packed with worshippers, the vicar could scarcely summon up a congregation of 10 adults. Harold Lewis commented in 1876 'Such a woe-begone miserable church it has never been my lot to attend.' The fabric was decaying, there was no vestry, so the vicar had to change behind a buttress, 'for some inscrutable reason the pews all face westwards, so unless you kneel upon your seat you have your back to the minister throughout the Communion Service' and above all it was empty. Lewis recognised that some parishioners lived in scattered hamlets, but commented 'if they can come to the alehouse, they are not too far off to come to the Church.'¹⁴⁷

By that time the old manor house had been converted into an ale-house.¹⁴⁸ Earlier there had been a 'beer house' opposite the vicarage, run by Joseph Perrin (app.9). However Englishcombe village seems to have lost its pub by the 1890s. A more lasting institution was the Board School, built in 1872 to replace the parochial school supported by the vicar in the 1860s.¹⁴⁹ The village also acquired a post office, which moved as different villagers took on the responsibility. The map of Englishcombe in 1885 (pl.18) shows the post office on the site of Inglescombe Cottage. William Cox was the Duchy tenant of this

property in 1840. George Cox was Parish Clerk in 1885 and he was also sub-postmaster by 1889, so probably he was the first to run the post-office in Englishcombe.¹⁵⁰

Any rural community needed horses shoeing, farm carts and implements mending and other carpentry and metalwork. Charles Flower was the blacksmith in Englishcombe village in the middle decades of the 19th century, with a forge where the old schoolyard now is. He branched out into making iron chair and sofa backs. Meanwhile Inglesbatch had its own blacksmith in Joseph Miles, with George Milsom in a carpenter's shop conveniently next door.¹⁵¹ In the 1870s and 1880s Englishcombe supported three carpenters: Milsom, John Phillips and James Charles with Henry 'Donkey' Wise taking over from Charles in the 1880s. But when



Plate 17 - Haycombe Farm in 1995, with Richard G. Wyatt, the farmer (no relation to the Wyatts of Manor Farm) and his mother, the former farmer's wife.

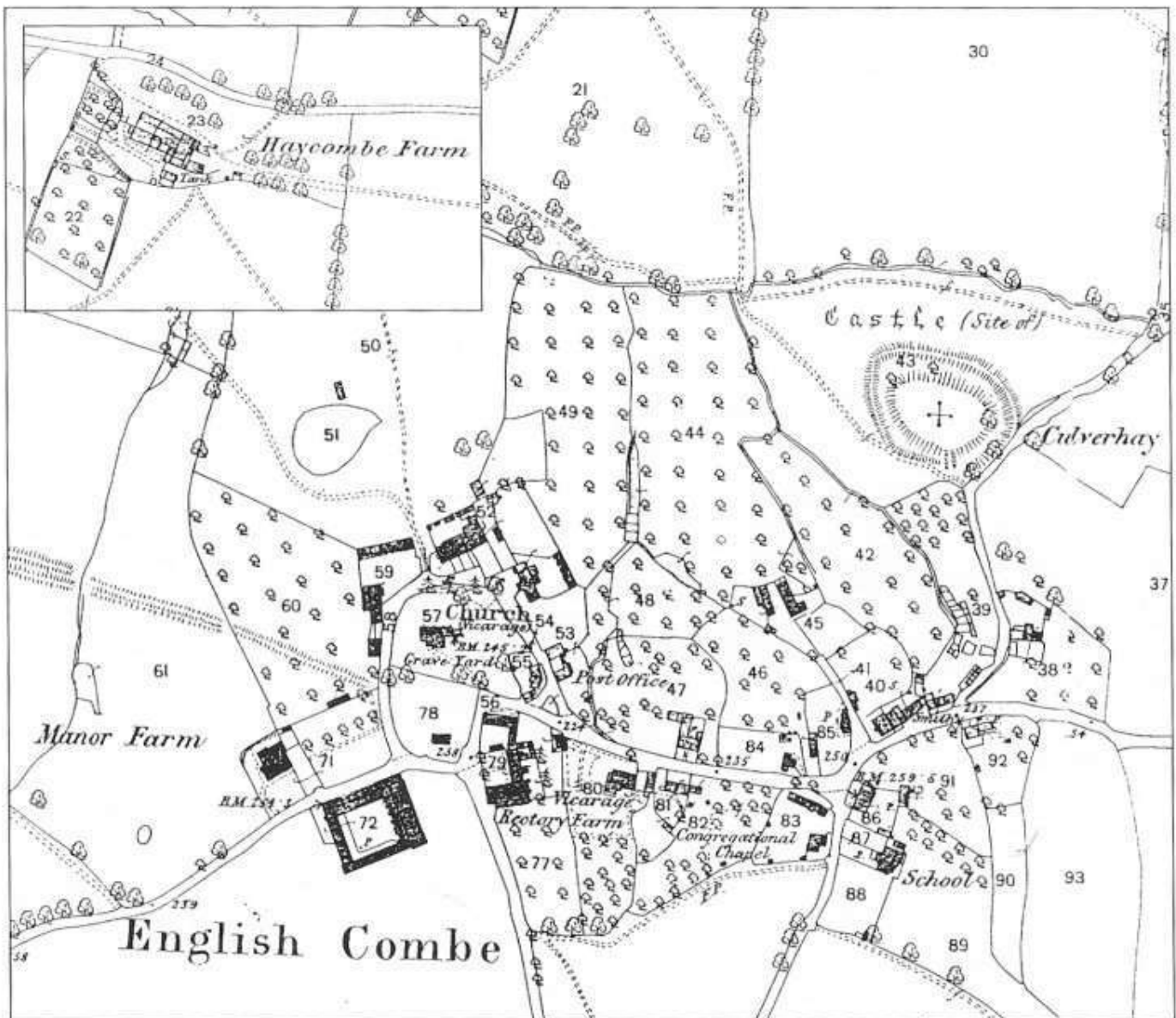


Plate 18 – Detail from the Ordnance Survey map of Englishcombe in 1885.

Milsom retired Inglesbatch lost its carpenter; the smithy there seems to have closed down some years earlier.¹⁵² Edward Short became the blacksmith in Englishcombe village after the school was built on the site of the old forge. A sketch made on 5 December 1874 shows a new smithy on the north side of the road to Bath.¹⁵³ The wheelwright from around 1900 was Richard Seaman, with whom the last wheelwright of Englishcombe, George Salter, finished his apprenticeship. His workshop was near the village green. George's son Desmond perfectly recalls the traditional method of making wheels; when the carpentry was complete, they would be rolled down to the smithy to be ringed with iron.

In 1894 the Local Government Act established parish councils. Parishes, originally concerned only with church matters, had gradually taken on functions of local administration. For example in Englishcombe the parish officers were in charge of the parish pound in 1840.¹⁵⁴ The Act regularised the position, stipulating that parish councils should meet at least once a year and should be elected in parishes with a population over 300. Englishcombe's population declined gradually from the high point of 559 (1861) to 524 (1881) and then there was a marked fall to 398 in 1891. This was presumably the result of an exchange of land with Twerton on 25 March 1885, under the Divided Parishes Act of 1882.¹⁵⁵

In Our Own Time

As the 20th century opened, enough visitors were coming to Englishcombe to encourage the wife of Richard Chave of Blakes Farm to open a tea-garden (pl.19). 'Mrs Chave sometimes has tea-parties of



Plate 19 – Blakes Farm in use around 1906 as a tea-garden. The farmhouse still has these delightful 17th-century mullioned windows. The name derives from the 19th-century tenant, Francis Blake, but in the 17th century the Masters family were the farmers here.

over 100, such as one would hardly expect in a country village', wrote a dedicated rambler in 1899. Her teas were much praised 'with Devonshire cream, the cheeriest hostess and brightest of gardens.'¹⁵⁶ Perhaps 'Mrs Chave also sold the

postcards of Englishcombe which started to appear around this time and include at least three views of the tea-garden.¹⁵⁷ It was English-combe's only real brush with the tourist industry.

Blakes Farm also served as an off-licence. Englishcombe village had lost its pub in the 19th century, but by 1909 the Grove Tavern was serving beer at Padleigh Bottom. The licensee was Thomas Davis at least until the second world war. But in the 1950s lack of trade forced the subsequent owner to convert the Grove Tavern into kennels. The closure of the only pub in the parish was much lamented.¹⁵⁸ In the 1920s the village gained a new meeting place; the Prince of Wales gave a site adjoining the old forge to the church for a parish hall. The hall is a simple metal structure, but for many years it served its purpose as a focus for community life. Before the war it was the scene of lively events like the performance of 'Princess Ju Ju' (pl.20).¹⁵⁹

The economy of the parish has remained agricultural, though the numbers employed on the land have fallen with the increasing mechanization of agriculture. When William Wyatt arrived in Englishcombe in September 1934 to take over the Manor Farm, he had probably a dozen or more workers. 'Half the cottages in the village housed these workers' writes Jill Wyatt in her account of the family's 60-year tenure. Today William's grandsons Leslie and Richard employ no one outside the family. As tied cottages became vacant, they were sold by the Duchy and have been enlarged and modernized.¹⁶⁰



Plate 20 – The cast of 'Princess Ju Ju' performed by the Englishcombe Choral Society at the parish hall c1936. Cast: Princess Ju Ju – Pamela Salter, her two handmaidens – Mrs Salter, Miss Sally Frayling, Lunar Goddess – Evelyn Clarke, Shee Ma Guin and his aide – Alma and Kate Vaughan. Others: Douglas Hawkins, H.J. (Ben) Derrick, Fred Weaver, Alli Vaughan. Children front row left to right: Douglas Salter, Jean Padfield, Desmond Salter, Audrey Moddick, Rita Cox.

At Inglesbatch, the picture was probably similar. Benjamin Woolley had taken over from Thomas Day by 1861, living at what he called 'The Manor House, English Batch'. By 1889 George Tucker Date held Inglesbatch Farm and his



Plate 21 – Frederick 'Shep' Hallett, the shepherd who came with William Wyatt from Dorset in 1934, pictured here c.1945 with his son and his flock in the lane outside the Manor Farm.

family continued there until 1955, when it was taken over by Laurence Stocker Pow, whose sons Michael and Gerald are the present farmers.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile Robert Scurlock had bought the freehold Home Farm by 1923 and his family are still farming the land there.¹⁶²

Inglescombe Nurseries continued to employ the same numbers until the 1960s, since flowers have to be cut and packed by hand (pl.22). After Walter Ware's death his son-in-law, Cyril Titchmarsh, took over Inglescombe Nurseries. Mrs Titchmarsh née Ware bred a daffodil called 'Inglescombe' and another called 'Fortune', which remains a best-seller.¹⁶³ Mr Titchmarsh served on the parish council, for some time as chairman, and took a keen interest in local history. In

1937 he wrote a guide to the parish church, with notes on the history of the manor.¹⁶⁴ He was generally acknowledged as the village squire and played Father Christmas to the schoolchildren. Mrs Titchmarsh would collect the children's letters to Father Christmas with requests for gifts, nothing to be over 10 shillings in value.¹⁶⁵ During the second world war, Titchmarsh 'dug for victory', turning bulb land over to potatoes, but after the war, it was business as usual. After he sold Inglescombe Nurseries to Bryan Meering around 1970, Titchmarsh retired to Barrowmead Cottage in the grounds of Barrow Castle, where he died. By 1972 with the increasing popularity of the potted plant rather than cut flowers, together with the rising running costs of Victorian coalfired greenhouses, the decision was made to concentrate on a new venture. This was a garden centre built on land at Whiteway Road and providing continuity of employment for a few of the staff of the former nursery. Whiteway Garden Centre was purchased by Hilliers in 1993.¹⁶⁶

The second world war touched Englishcombe as everywhere in Britain, although as a rural area it escaped heavy bombing. Two unexploded bombs fell in the fields, one of which was detonated without damage. The most dramatic incident from the air war came in 1941, when two British Whirlwinds collided in mid-air and one crash-landed on the barn of the Manor Farm. The pilot baled out too late; possibly he had stayed at the controls struggling to keep the aircraft clear of the village. He too fell through the barn roof and was



Plate 22 – Three long-serving nurserymen at Inglescombe Nurseries in the 1960s. From left: Walter Whatton, Ernest Densley, Edwin Williams.



Plate 23 – The Englishcombe Home Guard and other war-time local services. Top row left to right: Tom Smith, Len Harding, Peter Lane, Bill Butler, Peter Date, George Barrett, Bob Purnell, Fred Knott, Fred Peach, Alfie Legg. Middle row left to right: Geoff Rowe, Sid Dyer, Des Salter, Fred Rose, Bill Sawyer, Roy Meddick, Bob Lane, Bill Bax. Bottom Row left to right: Fred 'Shep' Hallett, Harold Bambury, Kate Vaughan (now Mrs Brooks), Captain of the Home Guard Walter Burden, Rita Cox (now Mrs Ashdown), Taffy Ashman, Bill Cox, Sam Lane, Ivor Harding.

killed.¹⁶⁷ The war affected lives more than property in the parish. The people of Englishcombe played their full part in the war effort. Of those who joined the armed forces, some never returned (app.10.) Others served in the Home Guard and local services (pl.23).

The population of the parish has fallen from around 350 to around 300 since 1901 and the parish has shrunk. Areas have been absorbed by land-hungry Bath City Council for Haycombe Cemetery (1937) and Culverhay School (c.1953). In 1948 Bath City Council Housing Committee proposed to buy 11 acres at Stirlingdale Farm for 50 houses.¹⁶⁸ This

area north of Rush Hill was in Englishcombe Parish and it too is now part of Bath.

Innox Grove was built by Bathavon Council in the post-war period and apparently named after a nearby field.¹⁶⁹ Otherwise only a very few new houses have been built in the parish in this century. Between the visits of two successive Princes of Wales (pls. 24 and 25), Englishcombe gained mains water and electricity, but remained a rural community. The comparatively unspoilt nature of Englishcombe village was recognised in 1986 by Wansdyke District Council, who designated it a conservation area.



Plate 24 – HRH Edward, Prince of Wales, visiting Englishcombe on 18 July 1923.



Plate 25 – HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, visiting Englishcombe in 1970.

A Walk around Englishcombe Village: Then and Now

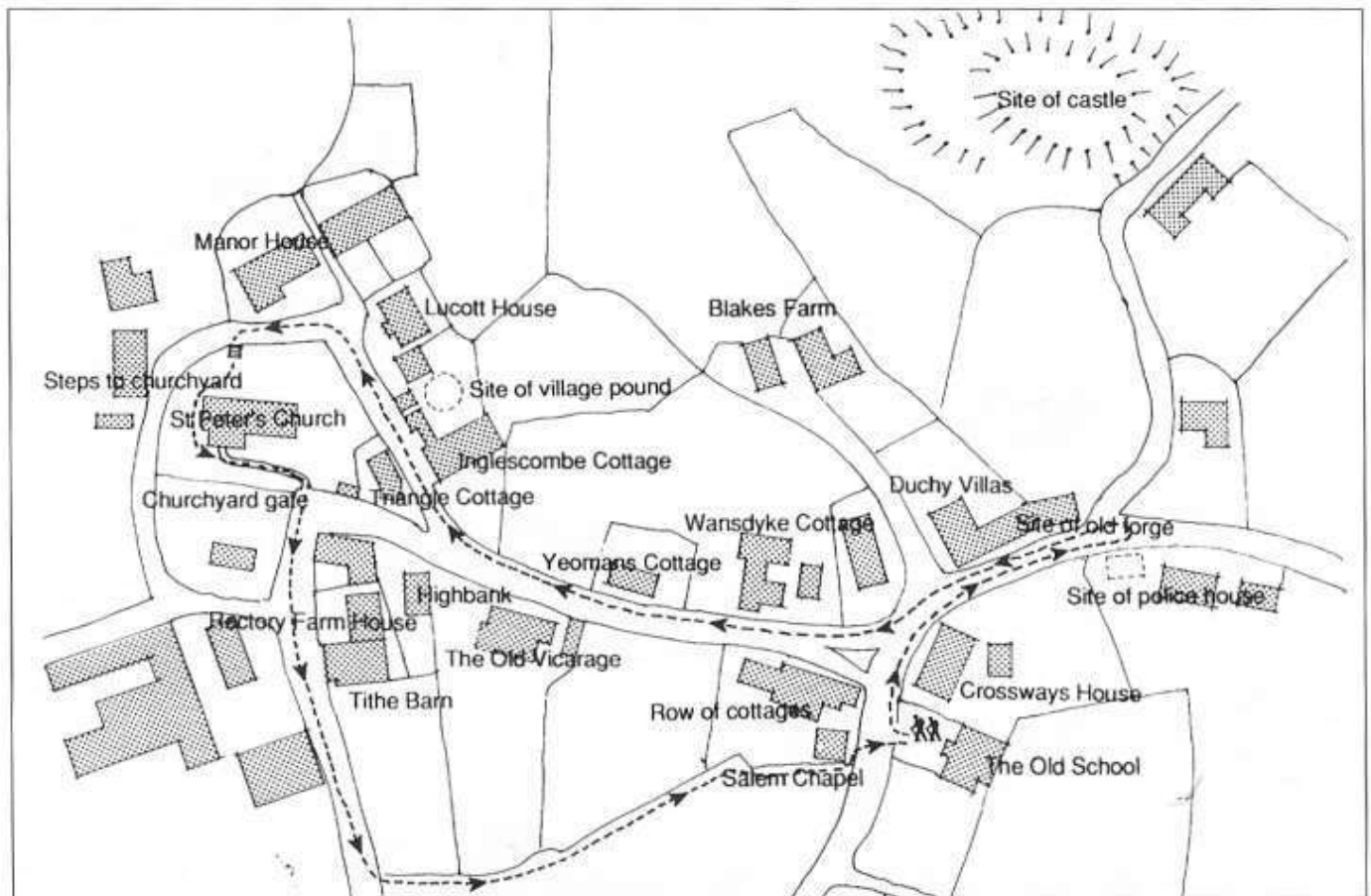


Fig 3 – Walk around Englishcombe Village.

Walking round the old centre of Englishcombe, you can see how much remains from the past and what has changed with the help of old sketches and photographs.

Start in the old school yard. The school was built in 1872. In its early years it would have provided the whole education for most of the children of Englishcombe. Few children stayed at school after the age of 12 in those days. The photograph (pl.26) must have been taken in the early part of this century, when the school catered for between



Plate 26 – Postcard photograph of the Englishcombe School in the early 20th century.

60 and 90 children.¹⁷⁰ Later it served the community equally well as a primary school. The school was closed because of falling rolls in 1985, despite a determined attempt by local residents to save it.

Opposite the school is the Salem Chapel, built in 1845. Services here were crowded to the point of discomfort in the 1870s while the church was almost empty. Harold Lewis rather blamed the vicar. Could he not manage to interest a congregation, when he had nothing to do all week but prepare his sermon? By contrast, the lay preachers in the chapel worked six days a week and came out on the seventh to save souls.¹⁷¹

Reaching the village green you see on your left a row of cottages. There was a single house there in the late 18th century, built on glebe land. In 1845



Plate 28 – Postcard photograph of Crossways House, then the post office and baker's shop, in about 1906.

One was still thatched when the photograph was taken (pl.27).

On the right of the village green is Crossways House. This is an older house than one might realise from the front. Internal features suggest that it is 16th or 17th century. The Culverhouse

family lived here in the 17th century, probably including the recusant Thomas Culverhouse (see p.22). It was a farm then, but by the mid-19th century the land once worked by the Culverhouses had been absorbed into the manor farm. When the photograph (pl.28) was taken, Crossways was the village post office and baker's shop. John Weeks was the baker in the late 19th century. His daughter Maria succeeded him and took on the role of sub-postmistress as well. She married into the Love family, long-established in the parish. Maria Love ran



Plate 27 – Postcard showing the row of cottages by the village green in around 1915. The figures standing outside are Gertrude Peach née Densley and her son Leslie.

the house was owned by a devout Christian, William Robins, who gave part of his garden as the site of the Salem Chapel.¹⁷² The cottages are of different dates. Early in this century Albany House was owned by Mr West, who built the extension for his daughter when she married.¹⁷³ Perhaps the smaller cottages preserve part of the earlier house.

the post office into the 1920s, but the shop closed when she left Crossways.¹⁷⁴

Walk past Crossways towards Bath. On the left you see Duchy Villas (pl.29). The post office was transferred here when William Vaughan the blacksmith took over as sub-postmaster in 1927.

Next door is the old forge (pl.30). Opposite the forge used to stand a heavily-buttressed old house now demolished (pl.31). Turn and compare the view with the Irvine sketch (pl.32). A delightful old gabled house stood on the site of Duchy Villas. Isaac Love lived there in 1840 and, although it went through other families in between, the tenant in 1611 was Elizabeth Love.¹⁷⁵

Retrace your steps to the village green and take the lane to the church. On your right you will pass Wansdyke Cottage, a former tied cottage. Next is Yeomans Cottage, formerly the Thatched Cottage. In the 17th and



Plate 29 – Duchy Villas in the early part of this century. This pair of houses was built sometime between 1875 and 1885, when it appears on the Ordnance Survey map (pl.18).



Plate 30 – Englishcombe village forge in the early 20th century. Edward Short (left) and his assistant Walter Clarke are working at the anvil.

18th centuries, the miller's house was on this plot.¹⁷⁶ From here you can compare the view with the photograph (pl.33). The vicarage, built in 1877, is still there, though privately owned. Englishcombe no longer has a resident vicar.¹⁷⁷ Opposite the vicarage a brooklet emerges from under the road and runs down the side of what was the miller's land to join Padley Brook. This presumably powered the water-mill. The mill had gone by the time of the first mapped survey, so its site is unknown, but it is grouped with the miller's house in earlier written surveys (apps.3.6.7).

As you reach the fork in the road, on your left is a cottage called Highbank.

This was built on glebe land and was at one time used as a school. Turning right at the fork, you pass Triangle Cottage on the left (pl.34). This was owned by Thomas Brunker in 1792 and he created a triangular garden for himself out of waste ground at the fork in the road.¹⁷⁸ On the right after Inglescombe Cottage you pass the site of the village pound and then Lucott House, converted from a 19th-century barn. In living memory the village thatcher, George 'Granfer' Tuck (pl.35), used the entrance of this barn to work in.¹⁷⁹ Turning left you come to the old manor house. Three cottages used to stand to the left of the

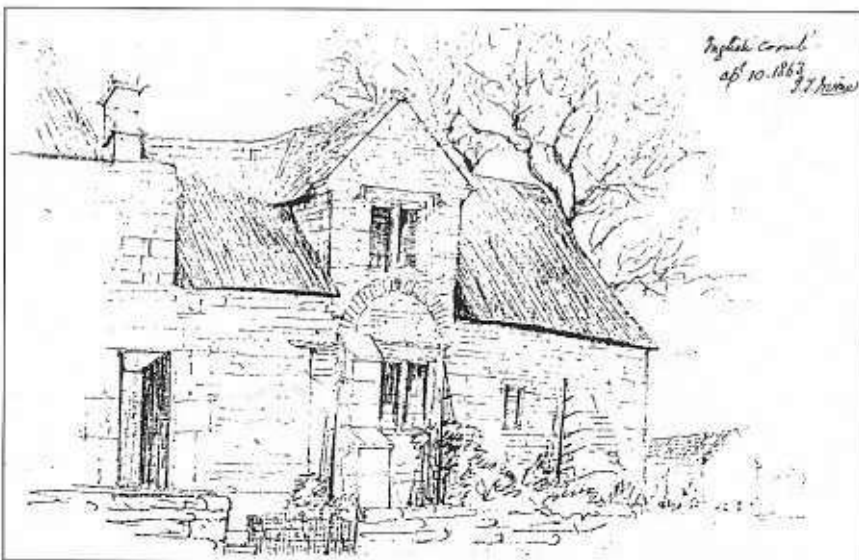


Plate 31 – Sketch by James Irvine on 10 April 1863 of an old house which stood opposite the forge. Before the second world war, this was the house of the village policeman and had a prison cell.

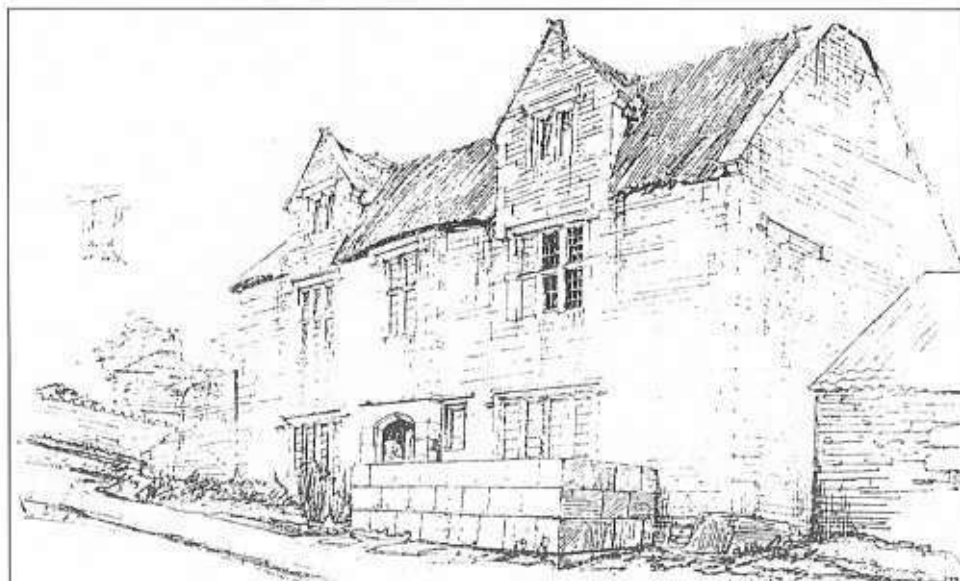


Plate 32 – Sketch by James Irvine on 17 August 1867 of the house on the site of the present Duchy Villas.



Plate 33 – Postcard of Englishcombe in about 1915 showing the vicarage on the left and Triangle Cottage in the right background.



Plate 34 – Triangle Cottage in around 1924, with Samuel and Mary Jane Watts.

house. When Englishcombe received mains water in 1939, it was not piped into these cottages because of the expense; they had a single tap outside. In the 1960s the manor house, by then very dilapidated, was renovated. The cottages and farm buildings were demolished and the materials used to build the present houses adjacent.

Now climb the steps into the churchyard. From here you may catch a glimpse through the trees of the ring-mounds that mark the site of the castle of the de Gournays (pl.36). Moving round the church you have a good view of the Wansdyke to the west. The line of the Wansdyke continues along the churchyard wall. When the church was built, this post-Roman earthwork would have been a more prominent feature and used as a convenient boundary; the lane through the village no doubt follows the line of the Wansdyke.

The church is open on Sunday afternoons in the summer. At other times you can apply to one of the keyholders listed in the window. The dedication is

unknown, but as the church belonged to Bath Priory for so many years, the patron saint is taken to be St Peter, the same as the priory. The church has excellent examples of the architecture of different periods. The earliest work -- mainly the lower part of the tower -- is Norman. The fine Romanesque arcading with a zig-zag pattern is the most notable feature of the church. On the floor of the tower is an effigy of a priest c.1300. The chancel is in the Decorated style (1250-1360), but looking closely at the tooling of the masonry, you will see the diagonal scratches typical of Norman masons. Clearly the chancel was thrifflily rebuilt using as much of the old masonry as possible. The chapel is a later addition, as is the west window, both perhaps the work of one of the late 14th-century de Gournays. The soffit of the chapel



Plate 35 – George Tuck, the village thatcher, seated in front of his son Fred Tuck (right) and Frederick Watts (left). To the left is a bundle of the lathes or spars that he made for keying in thatch on roofs or ricks.



Plate 37 – Sketch of Englishcombe Church by Samuel Loxton in 1913.

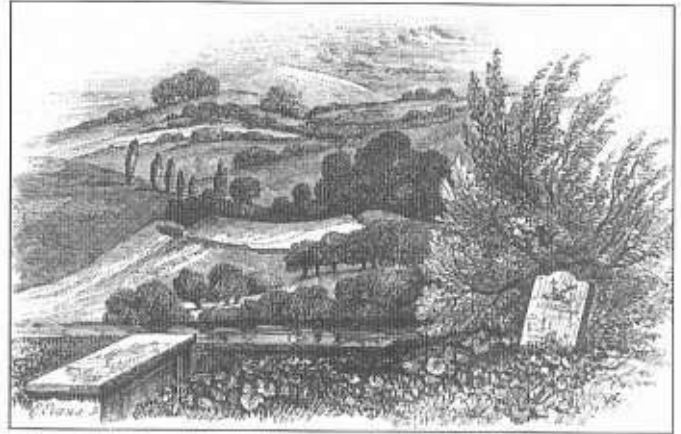


Plate 36 – Site of the castle of the Gournays at Englishcombe. Engraving by E. Evans from Record of the House of Gournay (1848).

window is carved with the emblems of the stations of the cross and the arms of Bath Priory: the key and sword. The west window has intriguing carvings: a rose and a quiver of cross-bow shot. These were the rents of the de Gournay lands. James Irvine sketched the interior of the church in 1868, with the perverse box pews which all faced backwards (pl.38). After criticism of the state of the church in 1876, the vicar commissioned an architect's report, but it was not until 1885 that funds were found for a new roof and seats. Further restoration and re-roofing was carried out in 1937-8 and 1991-4.¹⁸⁰

From the church door follow the path to the churchyard gate and turn right to the Rectory Farm. The farmhouse and barn are little changed from the time they were sketched by Irvine (pls.39, 40). The house with its stone-mullioned windows is probably 17th century, while the barn is 14th century.¹⁸¹ The rectory was held by Bath Priory until 1539. This meant that the priory had the advowson (right to nominate the vicar) and the greater tithes (one tenth of the corn, grain and hay) of the parish. In addition certain lands belonged to the rectory. In 1341 Bath Priory leased out these lands to William the Shepherd of South Stoke.¹⁸² This grant did not include the right to collect tithes, so

it was probably the prior who had the barn built. In 1514 Prior William Bird leased the mansion, rectory and tithes of Englishcombe for 38 years to three members of the Collins family, one of whom was still living in 1539, when Bath Priory was surrendered to the Crown.¹⁸³ Perhaps the last Collins died shortly afterwards, for in July 1544 Henry VIII granted the rectory and advowson of Englishcombe to James Bisse.¹⁸⁴ From then until 1808 the owner of the Rectory Farm had the right to select the vicar. The rectory remained in the Bisse family until around 1700 (see p.16 and app.12).¹⁸⁵ The barn was restored in 1993-4 with the aid of English Heritage and is open on Sundays and Bank Holidays from April to September from 2-6 p.m.

You now have a choice of routes to return to your starting point. Either retrace your steps along the lane or walk 50 yards past the barn, then turn left into the footpath through the field which emerges at a stile by the Salem Chapel.

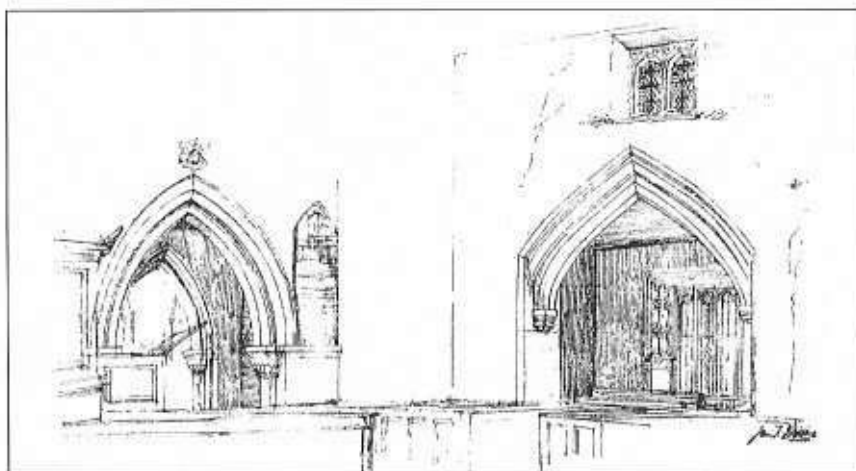


Plate 38 – Sketch of the interior of Englishcombe Church by James Irvine.

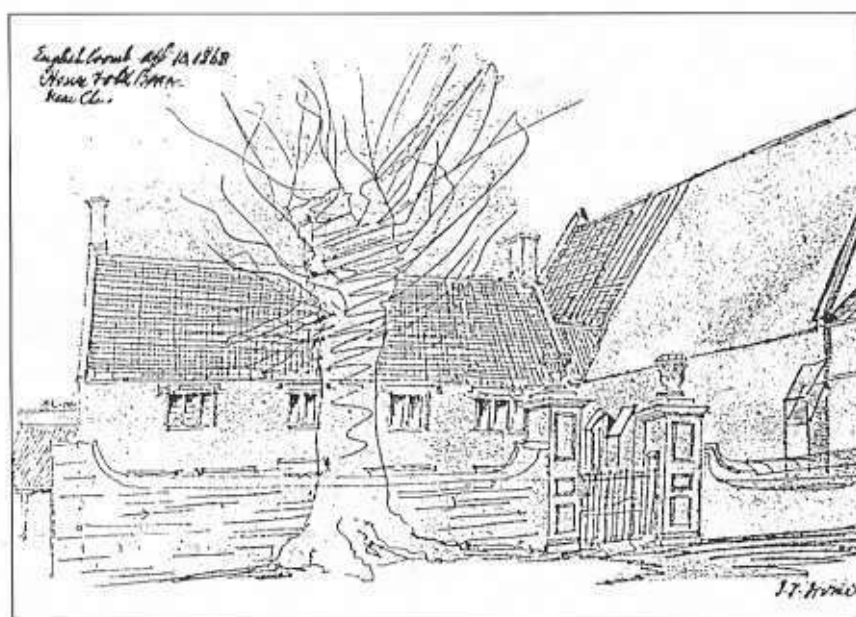


Plate 39 – Sketch of the Rectory Farm House by James Irvine on 10 April 1868.

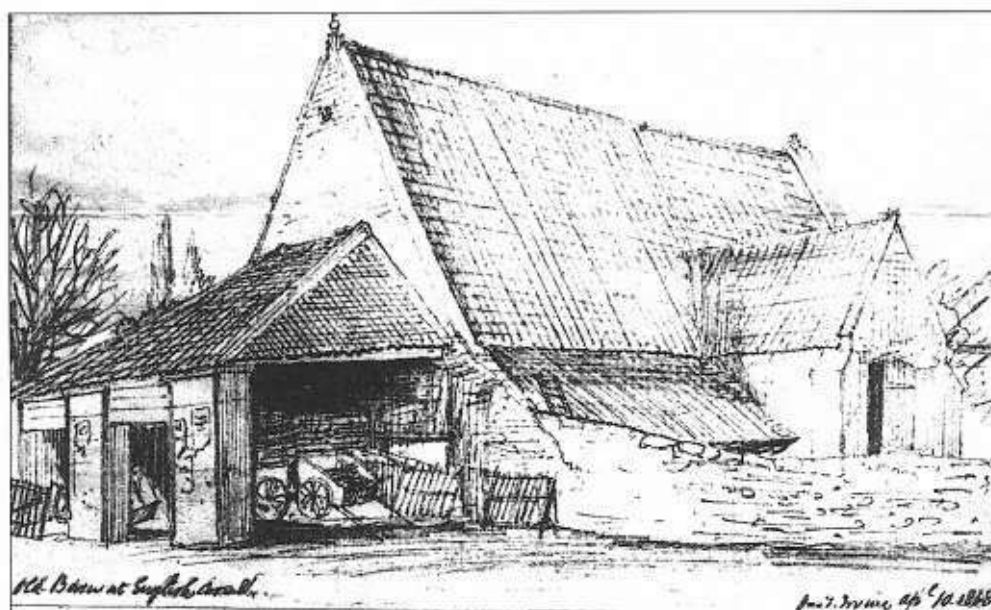


Plate 40 – Sketch of the Rectory Barn by James Irvine on 10 April 1868.