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## Great Haseley analysed, 1841-51

*The Great Haseley History Group plans to produce a series of analyses of the village based on census returns. This is the first of them. The interpretation here is the author's; he takes responsibility for any errors or omissions, but the article is written on behalf of the group as a whole.*

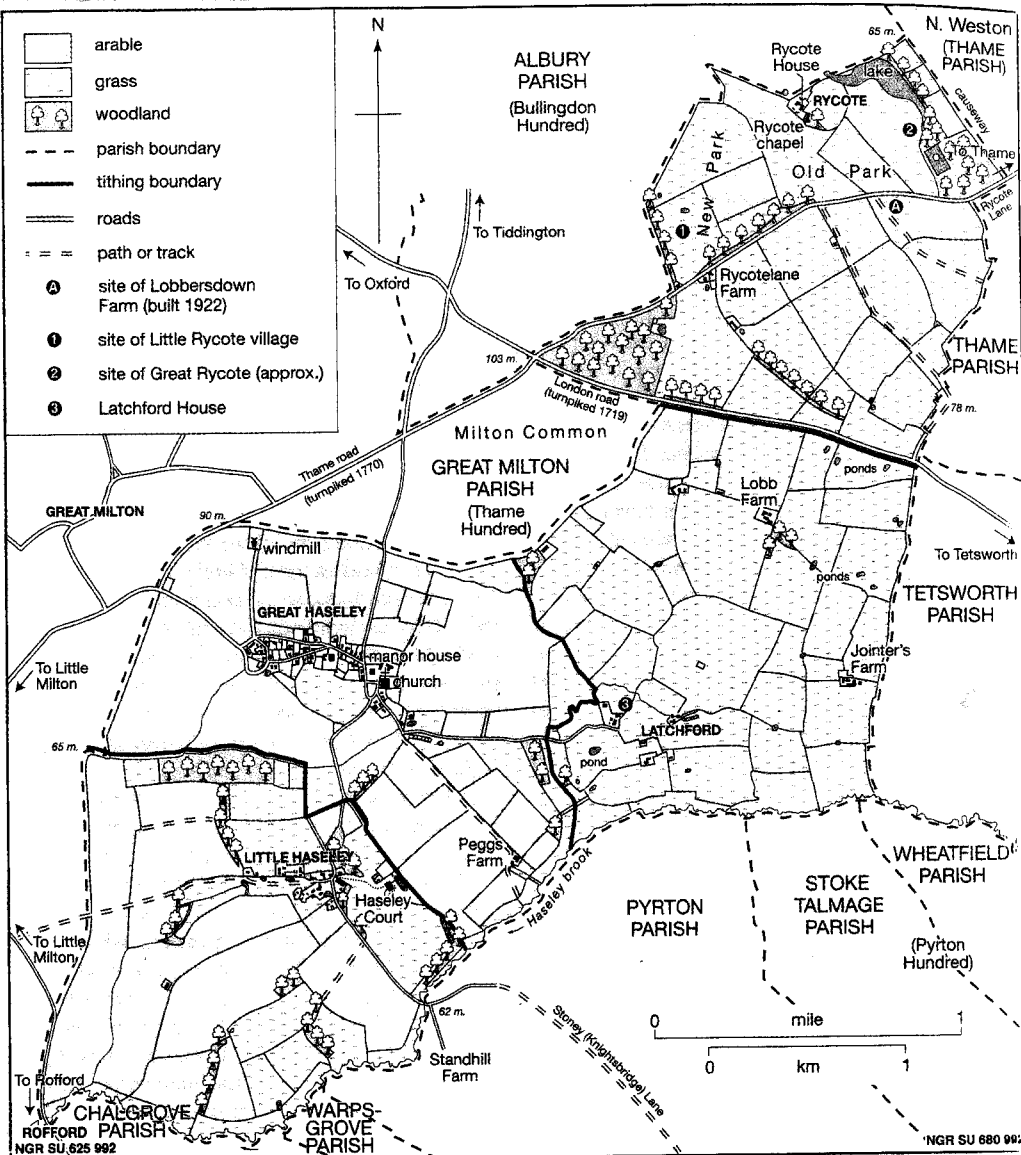
### Introduction

THE PARISH OF GREATHASELEY (c. eight miles south-east of Oxford and five miles south-west of Thames), which includes the hamlet of Little Haseley, has a character that is enriched by several good-quality stone-built houses from the C17 and C18. These are complemented by many earlier one- and two-storey cottages of limestone rubble with elm timber-framing and brick dressings.<sup>1</sup> There are also larger houses, such as the C18 Church Farm House. Great Haseley Manor House (late C17 and C18, rebuilt in the late C17) is located close to the church and nearby tithe barn, suggesting a mediaeval manorial siting. Most cottages in Great Haseley were owned by the owners of Haseley Court up to the 1950s, when they began to be purchased by resident families.<sup>2</sup>

By 1801 there were 115 houses and a population of 608 (about 5.3 per family) in the parish. Subsequent growth was highest in Great Haseley itself and in 1841 reached a peak of 577 persons in 106 houses (about 5.4 per family). By 1981 this had become 575 in 209 houses (about 2.8 per family) and by 2011 the proximity to the M40 and hence of London made the village highly attractive to outsiders, and increased house prices dramatically.<sup>3</sup>

### How many were there?

In the 1841 census Great Haseley parish excluded Rycote, Latchford, and Lobb Farm and had a population of 577, of whom 52 per cent were female, in 106 households. By the 1851 census, which included Great Haseley village, Little Haseley, Peggs farm, Latchford, Jointers farm, Lobb, Drop Short, Rycote, Windmill, and Orangemoor, this had fallen to 558, with a similar split between females and males, but now in 123 households (about 4.5 per family).



*Cath d'Alton made this map of Great Haseley parish as it was in 1839 for Vol. XVIII of the Victoria History of the County of Oxford. It is based on the tithe map and drafts supplied by the staff of the VCH; it illustrates the article by Mark Page on the history of the parish in that volume, a major source for Jim Baldwin's analysis here of Great Haseley in the mid-C19. The contrast between the arable south-western end of the parish and the dominant grassland of Latchford and Rycote to the east and north is noticeable.*

### Where did they come from?

In the 1841 census there were 38 people in the parish who had been born outside Oxfordshire (6.6 per cent). By 1851, over the whole of the parish, this figure had increased to 71 (12.7 per cent). The advent of the railways obviously improved general mobility and the Oxford to London road was close by, as was the road to Thame which had been an important route since the Middle Ages.<sup>4,5</sup>

### What was their work?

The census enumerators in 1841 identified 23 occupations in Great Haseley which, between them, employed 137 people. By the time of the 1851 census the identified occupations had almost doubled to 40, embracing 265 people. By far the largest workforce was the one supporting agriculture. Agricultural labourers numbered 83 in 1841. This grew to 123 by 1851 in the whole of the parish.<sup>6</sup>

### Children

The position of children in the village changed much over the decade; poverty<sup>7,8</sup> was pronounced and families needed to maximise employment and income. In 1841 there were 104 boys aged five to 18, of whom eight were working as assistants in cordwainer or tailor families, and one 11-year-old boy was employed as an agricultural labourer. The rest were at school but not recorded specifically in the census. Of the 100 girls aged five to 18 only two were employed (both as servants). There were also 84 children under five who were recorded as living at home.<sup>9</sup>

By 1851 the situation was very different: 29 boys (aged five to 18) out of a total of 76 were employed. 12 out of 91 girls were employed and there were 77 children under the age of five. This census listed 103 boys and girls as scholars and, although girls had to pay towards their education, for boys it was free.<sup>10</sup> The curate, William Birkett, built a girls' school in 1843 next to the boys' school (founded in 1841) on Back Way. In 1854 about 60 pupils over five were attending each school.<sup>11</sup>

A Congregational chapel had been built in 1839 and around 1846, the Bishop of Oxford, William Wilberforce, considered protestant dissent to be rife in Great Haseley.<sup>12</sup> In 1851, with support from several local

farming families, over 50 people were attending the Congregational chapel.<sup>13</sup> An Anglican Sunday school continued throughout the C19 though a Congregational Sunday school suffered from local opposition.

**Dramatic changes**

In 1841 Haseley Manor House had three male and two female servants in residence and no other occupants; but by 1851 it had enjoyed a complete revival with the arrival in the early part of the decade of Hugh Hammersley (1813-84) with his first wife Philippa Mary Ann Phillips and his family. Hugh is listed in the census as esquire and magistrate, and was a deputy lieutenant of Oxfordshire.<sup>14</sup> In 1851, four of his eight children (six born in Great Haseley) were being schooled at home by a governess, Emily Mills. The household had a butler, cook and four nurses, a groom and three maids; five of the servants came from nearby villages. The Hammersleys were from the nearby parish of Pyrton, having held the manor house there since the middle of the previous century.

**An important position**

In the 1841 census William Birkett was enumerated as Clerk, with his wife, Mary, and his five children. They were supported by three servants, all born in Oxfordshire, and had staying with them at the time three independent persons, all under the age of 20.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1851 census William Birkett was enumerated as Rector.<sup>16</sup> The Rectory, which has C14-C15 origins, was in need of major repairs. In 1846 the architect George Gilbert Scott (later of St Pancras Station and Albert Memorial fame) proposed dismantling the building, apart from the hall, and rebuilding it using the original materials. William Birkett met the cost of alterations with a mortgage.<sup>17</sup> William lived there with his wife, a son and two daughters, a coachman, footman, cook, and three maids. William was supported by William John Dry, as curate.

**An explosion of skills**

The decade 1841-1851 saw a dramatic increase in the number of skills practised in Great Haseley village. More occupations were taken up as the demand for them rose.<sup>18</sup>

(see tables opposite).

**People in Service (e.g. servants, maids, nurses, housekeepers)**

1841 census	1851 census
16	28

**People in Agriculture**

Occupation	1841	1851
Farmer/retired farmer	6	6
Agricultural labourer	80	123
Pauper (former ag lab)	0	38

**Examples of Occupation, trade or craft<sup>19</sup>**

Occupation, trade or craft	1841	1851
Mason	5	10
Blacksmith	2	4
Carpenter	5	4
Basket-maker	0	2
Lacemaker	1	8
Grocer	2	3
Cordwainer	3	9
Baker	1	3
Butcher	1	2
Esquire and magistrate	0	1
Gardener	1	4
Total of all occupations	23 <sup>20</sup>	40 <sup>21</sup>

This upsurge in skills satisfied demand, not only in the growing village and also in places nearby such as Thame where there was increased demand for goods and services during this period. The masons (and the Cooper family in particular) were finding business in the Oxford colleges<sup>22</sup> and the result was increased family income and a consequent reduction in poverty.

In 1841 John Terry ran the Black Prince as publican; others ran the Plough, Crown, Straggler, and George public houses. Their number was far fewer than in the previous century when drovers used more than 12 places serving alcohol as they wound their way to markets through Henley to London<sup>24</sup> along Stoney Lane south of the village.

By 1851 a sub-post office was operational, run by the same John Terry, who also ran a carrier service to Oxford.<sup>25</sup>

It is remarkable that the trade of blacksmith was a Hurst family domain from the C17 through to the C20. As a blacksmith Ann Hurst aged 68 in 1851 employed two others.<sup>26</sup>

In 1841 John Billing was a land surveyor and his son Gabriel Billing was a machine-maker, possibly satisfying demand from the farming community. The Haseley tower mill was run by John as owner-occupier. Gabriel was to take it over later in the C19 century before it was leased to the baker, William Cross. By 1851 John Billing was 76 and a widower, still working as a land surveyor, Gabriel was 34, now called a machinist in the census, and employing an 18-year-old apprentice machinist, Isaac Russell. This shows an increase in demand for machinery (probably agricultural) at the time and the location developed into the Haseley Ironworks

### The dominance of agriculture

Great Haseley's inclosure in 1822 probably increased local poverty by removing the traditional grazing rights of cottagers.<sup>27</sup>

In the Haseleys in 1839 (*see map, p 32*) more than two thirds of the land was arable compared with Latchford and Rycote, which had most under grass.<sup>28</sup> The main farms in the parish were Peggs Farm, run by John Atkinson employing 12 men and four boys, and Church Farm, run by John Shrimpton employing 16 men. Haseley Court and Stone's Farm were, in Little Haseley. In Latchford were Lobb, Charity, Latchford House, and Jointers Farms. Rycotelane Farm was held of the Earl of Abingdon. The surnames Shrimpton, Atkinson and Cooper featured strongly for many years, up to the present time, as farmers and also as wheelwrights, innkeepers, stonemasons, carpenters, and grocers in the village.<sup>29</sup> This stability of ownership and the fact that farm sizes changed little during the C19 helped stabilise farming through a period of agricultural depression.

### The position of a pauper

In 1834, Great Haseley parish became part of the newly-created Thame Poor Law Union. Poor rates were collected from parishioners, with exemptions for those suffering poverty. The census of 1841 enumerate no paupers, but this had changed drastically by 1851 when five people were identified simply as paupers and 33 as paupers, who were former agricultural labourers or farmers.<sup>30</sup> What is also striking is the fact that

many paupers were living in households where they had no relations. It appears they were not required to go to the Thame workhouse but to remain in the village. More than likely the aim was to keep their labour available for the peaks of farming demand.

In 1841, out of 80 enumerated as agricultural labourers, 12 were over the age of 65 and one was 87. By 1851 most agricultural labourers over the age of 60 were shown as paupers and were therefore in receipt of payments from the parish and allowed to retire from such a physical occupation.

### Unusual classifications

In the 1851 census two persons were fortunate enough to be shown as annuitants; one was noted as independent and one as having no occupation. One person was a Registrar of Births and Deaths and probably worked in Thame or Oxford. A son of the rector (Augustus Henry Birkett) was enumerated as a Master of Arts of Oxford University. The 1851 census was a more elaborate affair than that of 1841, which did not even include the parish of birth; however, the enumerator had to rely on the information given by the head of the household who could well have hidden the fact that a son was in fact a grandson to an unmarried daughter. □

### Notes and references

Abbreviations. *VCH: Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, Vol. XVIII (unless otherwise specified), Benson, Ewelme, and the Chilterns (Ewelme Hundred) ed. Simon Townley; Great Haseley ch. by Mark Page (manors with Robert Peberdy). Web-sites have been italicised.

1. *VCH*, p 240.
2. Abstract of Title of Haseley estate, 1951.
3. Census returns and *VCH*, p 238.
4. 'Thame Trade, industry and Agriculture' in *VCH Vol. XVII*, ed. Mary Lobel, p 789.
5. *VCH*, p 237.
6. Census returns 1841 and 1851.
7. *VCH*, pp 258-60.
8. *Ibid.* p 261.
9. Census returns 1841 and 1851.
10. *VCH*, p 260.
11. *Ibid.*

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12. *VCH*, p 269.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *The Peerage.com*, p 43960.
15. Census return 1841, p 15.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *VCH*, p.265.
18. Census returns 1841 and 1851.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Includes steward, tailor, and cordwainer assistants, male and female
21. Excludes scholar, wife, no trade, infant, degree-holder, and annuitant.
22. *VCH*, p 254.
23. Census return, 1841.
24. *Local droveroads.co.uk*: Oxford, Haseley to Pyrton, and see *VCH* map, reproduced on p 32 above.
25. *VCH*, p 237.
26. Census return 1851.
27. *VCH*, p 258.
28. See Great Haseley tithe award held in Oxfordshire History Centre.
29. Census returns 1841 and 1851.
30. Census return 1851.

