

# A HISTORY OF WOOD FARM OXFORD



**A report for Oxford Preservation Trust  
by Liz Woolley,  
using research by Stephanie Jenkins**

September 2024



*Wood Farm from Google Earth, January 2024.*

*Cover page: Mosaic adjacent to 21 Atkyns Road, unveiled on 14 March 2017. The mosaic was created by local volunteers with the help of the Workers' Educational Association, and with artistic direction from Clare Goodall.*

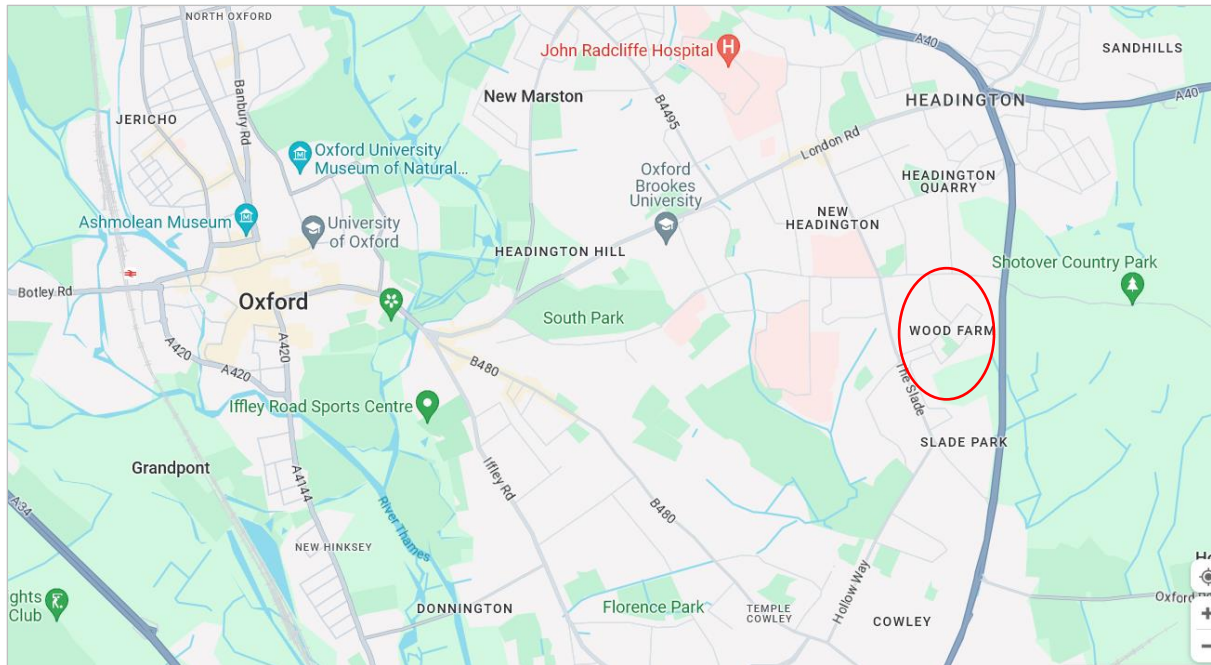
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## INTRODUCTION

Wood Farm is a housing estate about 2¼ miles east of the centre of Oxford, lying between the suburbs of Headington and Cowley. It is bounded to the north by Old Road, the old coaching route from Oxford to London via Shotover and Wheatley; to the east by the Eastern By-pass, part of Oxford's ring road; to the south by the Slade Park housing estate; and to the west by the Slade, the road linking Headington and Cowley. The estate comprises 22 residential roads laid out from the early 1950s onwards, partly on the sites of a Second World War Prisoner of War camp and a Second World War army camp. It incorporates Magdalen Wood West, a piece of ancient woodland which was once part of the Royal Forest of Shotover.



Google Maps.

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE LAND AT WOOD FARM

Wood Farm is generally thought of as a mid-20th-century housing estate, but the history of the area goes back centuries. It is part of a wide district lying to the south and east of Oxford, notable for the large numbers of Roman pottery kiln sites uncovered during archaeological excavations. The products of these kilns were traded widely across southern England in Roman times. Antiquarian observations during quarrying operations in the 19th century noted the presence of a Roman kiln complex at the northern end of land now occupied by Pauling Road in Wood Farm.<sup>1</sup>

On 8 November 1246 Henry III granted land at Shotover, east of Oxford – including the area later occupied by Wood Farm – to the Hospital of St John the Baptist “whence by a former grant the Hospital were accustomed to have dry wood and underwood fetched twice a day by a sumpter-horse”.<sup>2</sup> This hospital had been founded, probably in the 12th century, and

<sup>1</sup> Thames Valley Archaeological Services, *New Children's and Community Centre, Wood Farm Primary School, Titup Hall Drive, Headington, Oxford: Archaeological Watching Brief*, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar of the Muniments of St Mary Magdalen College, Magdalen College Archives, Shotover deeds 3 and 5.

endowed by the king “for the relief of poor scholars and other miserable persons”. In 1231 the king had granted it “the garden of the Jews outside the East Gate” (now the site of Magdalen College) so that buildings might be erected there, including an infirmary staffed by brothers and sisters who nursed the sick and the dying. Thereafter the hospital amassed considerable property, and became a wealthy institution.<sup>3</sup>

The land at Shotover granted to the Hospital of St John in 1246 was mainly wooded, and included the present Shotover Wood, Magdalen Wood and Brasenose Wood, all part of the ancient Royal Forest of Shotover.<sup>4</sup> On 11 July 1443 a warrant from Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, keeper of the royal forests south of the River Trent, directed the keeper of the forest of Shotover to allow the Hospital of St John “to enjoy all their rights, in pursuance of letters patent of the king confirming the grant of land made by Henry III, & the latter’s grant of the right of feeding 50 pigs in Whittlewood forest, 50 in Bernwood, and 50 in Shotover”.<sup>5</sup>

The woodland at Shotover passed to Magdalen College in around 1458, when that college was founded by William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.<sup>6</sup> The buildings of the Hospital of St John the Baptist, just to the east of Oxford’s centre, as well as its other land and properties further afield, were appropriated and were probably part of the college’s original endowment.<sup>7</sup>



*Magdalen College, Oxford: bird's eye view with academic figures and almanac. Line engraving by George Vertue, 1730. Wellcome Collection. Public Domain Mark. Source: Wellcome Collection, 20531i.*

<sup>3</sup> ‘Hospitals: St John the Baptist, Oxford’, in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1907), pp.158-9. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol2/pp158-159>, accessed 06/01/2024.

<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>5</sup> Calendar of the Muniments of St Mary Magdalen College, Magdalen College Archives, Shotover deed 4.

<sup>6</sup> Magdalen College Oxford, *The history of Magdalen College*, <https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/about-magdalen-college/the-history-of-magdalen-college>, accessed 26/12/2023.

<sup>7</sup> Magdalen College Archives catalogue of six medieval and early modern deeds relating to Magdalen’s lands at Shotover dated between 1246 and 1596, catalogued by William Dunn Macray in the 1860s and 1870s as the ‘Calendar of the Muniments of St Mary Magdalen College’. Magdalen College’s estate paper catalogue, 1970s, by Chris Woolgar. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

Magdalen College was built on what had been the hospital's site, and the western part of the woods in Headington became known as 'Magdalen Wood' and 'Open Magdalen'. The distinction between these two terms is not always clear and at times they appear to have been used interchangeably, but generally, and certainly in the early period, 'Magdalen Wood' seems to have referred to area of trees and 'Open Magdalen' to an area of pasture on which animals could be grazed.

Land such as this was a valuable resource and Magdalen College employed a 'woodherd' to look after it. Open Magdalen was one of four open areas near Headington Quarry, known collectively to local people as 'The Moors', which also included Open Brasenose, the Ridings, and Slade Common. None of these were officially a common, but common rights were exercised over them by the villagers of Headington who cut fuel from them.<sup>8</sup> However, such rights were frequently disputed, and the history of the land at Wood Farm is characterised by conflict between its owner and its tenant farmer, and those who lived locally and felt that they had the right to use the land for their own purposes. On 10 February 1515, a warrant from Sir Thomas Lovell, Justice Itinerant in Eyre, to the keeper of the forest of Shotover directed him to "permit the President and Scholars of Magdalen College to cut down the trees in the portion belonging to them (now marked out by stones because the old boundaries have almost been forgotten), to enclose it with hedges, and to plant and cultivate it, during a term of 7 years, in accordance with letters patent of the king [Henry VIII]".<sup>9</sup> Hence the college could "exclude all cattle of commoners who had been accustomed to feed their cattle there" and "all rights of common previously exercisable thereupon ceased for such periods".<sup>10</sup>



*Extract from a Christ Church estate map of 1771, on which Magdalen Wood (M) is labelled 'Magdalen Oaks, common to Cowley with Headington' and has an area of 41 acres, 1 rood and 8 perches. Brasenose Wood (B) is labelled as 'Oaken Brasen Grove, common to Cowley with Horspath'. Until the 19th century Magdalen College was the biggest landowner in Headington, and Brasenose College also held a sizeable amount of land.<sup>11</sup> Further south-west on the map, 'Bullington Green' is the area now mainly occupied by Southfield Golf Course. Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, Christ Church Maps, Cowley.<sup>12</sup> Image courtesy of the Keeper of Special Collections at Christ Church.*

<sup>8</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>9</sup> Calendar of the Muniments of St Mary Magdalen College, Magdalen College Archives, Shotover deed 2.

<sup>10</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.2.

<sup>11</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>12</sup> *A Survey of an Estate, Belonging to the Dean and Canons of Christ Church, lying in the Parish of Cowley, in the County of Oxford, 1777*, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/c17a7e06-5d1c-401e-9dbe-01974312148f/surfaces/2cdceff1-a6b1-4d68-9f59-17cee76d8830/#>, accessed 06/01/2024.

Land in Headington was also valuable to Magdalen College because of the many quarries there. Stone from these was the main building material for college and university buildings from the late 14th to the mid-18th centuries. Magdalen College owned a quarry, possibly from as early as 1474, situated just to the west of where Gladstone Road is now, near Headington's workhouse (and hence it was sometimes known as Workhouse Pit).<sup>13</sup> It also owned another one south of Old Road, at the north-eastern corner of Wood Farm (on the site now occupied by Meadow Close and Dorchester Close). In 1793 Magdalen invited tenders for opening up a new quarry in Magdalen Wood. One of the applicants, Edward King, whose estimate for the work came to £661 10s, supported his bid by reminding the college that “The outside courses of your New Building [completed in the 1730s] is all of Woodpit stone dig [sic] and wrought under the direction of my Father and Self.”<sup>14</sup>



Extract from Richard Davis's 'New map of the County of Oxford', 1793, sheet no. XI. The area labelled 'Magdalen Wood' seems actually to be Brasenose Wood, with Magdalen Wood to the north (stretching all the way up to Old Road), and the settlement of Headington Quarry above it. Old Road runs west to east from Headington Hill to Wheatley via Shotover, passing across the northern edge of the woodland and the area which would later be the site of Wood Farm. At this time Old Road was the main coaching road to London, and Titup Hall, a coaching inn, is marked. This inn had been there since at least the 17th century, providing overnight accommodation for travelers and their horses, and food and drink for both visitors and locals. Titup Hall's importance as a coaching inn lessened towards the end of the eighteenth century when the new London Road opened (marked on this map as 'New Road') with a new coaching inn, the Britannia (marked here as 'The White House'). Titup Hall was probably demolished in the 1840s; by 1850 it had been replaced by the Crown & Thistle, whose building survives.<sup>15</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0250911.

<sup>13</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: The quarries, Magdalen (or Workhouse) Quarry*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/quarries/magdalen\\_pit.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/quarries/magdalen_pit.html), accessed 15/01/2024.

<sup>14</sup> *Proposal by Edward King for opening a quarry in Magdalen College wood, 3 May 1793*, Magdalen College Archives, ES/5/3. Plan of Wood Farm drawn up by Magdalen College in 1872 (showing Wood Pit Ground and Wood Pit Hill), Magdalen College Archives MP/4/58a.

<sup>15</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 07/01/2024.



*Extract from a painting believed to date from 1840, showing Titup Hall on the left, with Windmill Road leading off to the right. Titup Hall must have been demolished and replaced by the present Crown & Thistle shortly after this painting was made.<sup>16</sup> Image courtesy of Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Top. Oxon b. 90, fol. 16r; No. 33.*

## **WOOD FARM IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, AND INTO THE 19TH CENTURY**

By the late 18th century, a farm – Wood Farm – had been established at the western end of Magdalen Wood and Open Magdalen, and Magdalen College was leasing it to a man named Stephen Town(e)send. Townesend was an architect, master mason and builder, the fourth generation of a well-known Oxford building firm which had carried out extensive work at Magdalen College since the 1740s.<sup>17</sup> His family operated several stone quarries in Headington. In 1797 Townesend sold the family business to his foreman Thomas Knowles (who founded the Knowles building firm which survived until 2017), and took up farming instead.<sup>18</sup> He leased Wood Farm from Magdalen College for a term of twenty years. The college valued the land in total at £138 7s 6d, and Magdalen Wood at £70; it was noted that “The President and Fellows [of Magdalen College] will allow this tenant the Woodland the first 10 years of the term without paying any rent except a peppercorn. They will also allow the Woodland the next four years at £28 10s 0d per year. And also will allow all the under wood roots to this tenant. The above allowances in the rent together with the under wood roots are given to the Tenant as a Compensation towards the expense of grubbing and bringing the woodland into Tillage.” This suggests that Townesend had begun to turn the woodland into arable land for his own use, with the college’s blessing. The reference to “under wood roots” indicates that any timber Townesend felled belonged to the college, but he was allowed to keep the roots that were below ground (a potentially valuable resource for replanting elsewhere).<sup>19</sup>

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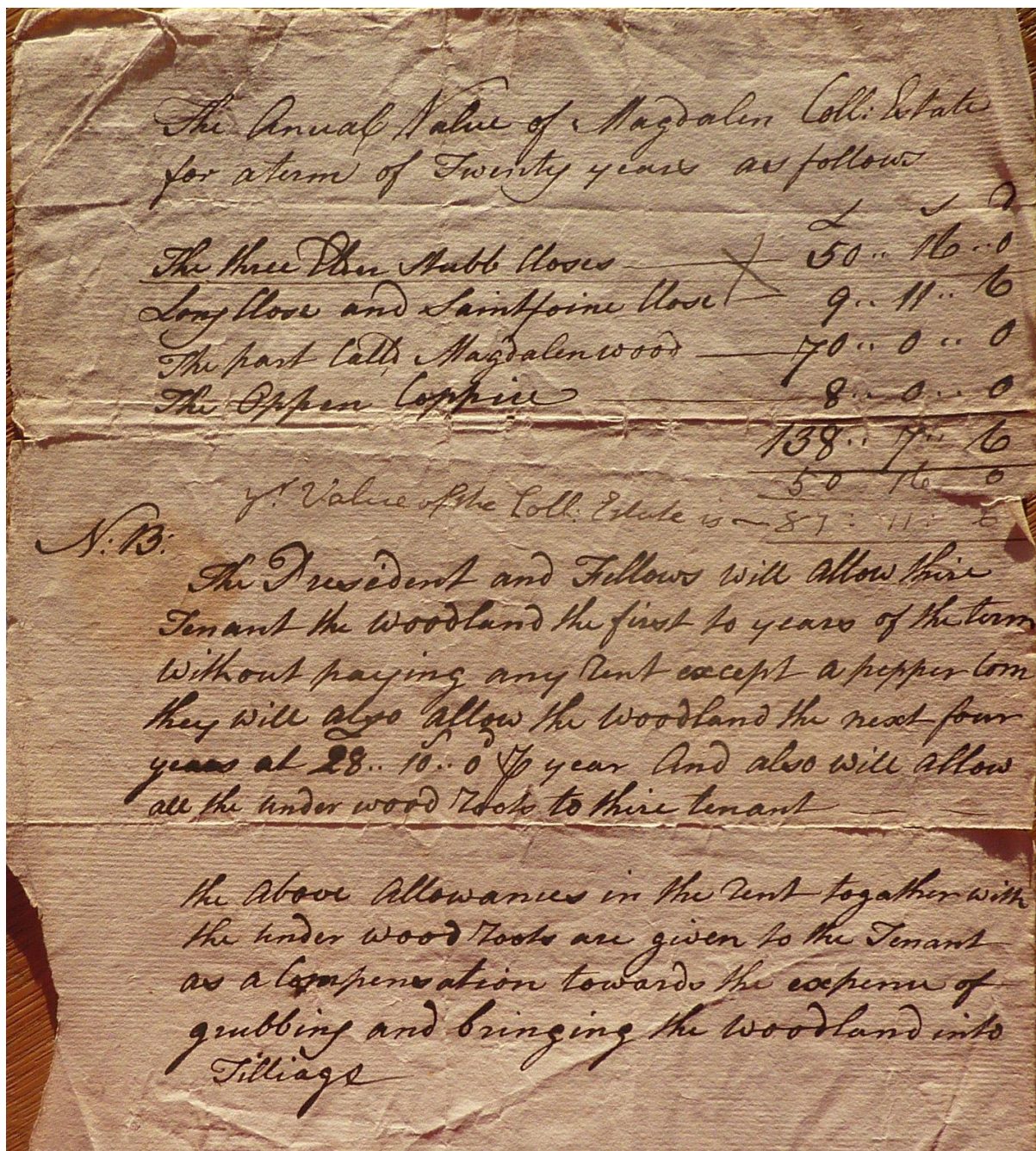
<sup>16</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 07/01/2024.

<sup>17</sup> Records for ‘Townesend’ in the Magdalen College Archives catalogue, [https://archive-cat.magd.ox.ac.uk/search/all:records/0\\_50/all/score\\_desc/townesend](https://archive-cat.magd.ox.ac.uk/search/all:records/0_50/all/score_desc/townesend), accessed 20/01/2024.

<sup>18</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Oxford History: Mayors & Lord Mayors, John Townesend (1648–1728) Mayor of Oxford 1720/I*, [https://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1714\\_1835/townesend\\_john\\_1720.html](https://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1714_1835/townesend_john_1720.html), accessed 27/12/2023.

<sup>19</sup> Katie Hambrook (Oxford historian and place-name expert), e-mail to Liz Woolley, 22/02/2024.





A valuation by Magdalen College surveyor Edward Barton of the college's estate at Headington, including 'Magdalen Wood', late 18th century. The incoming tenant is not named, but it is likely to have been Stephen Townesend. Reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford, ES/1/21.

However, Townesend died at the age of 45 in 1800, only three years after taking on the tenancy of Wood Farm. He left it to his brother John.<sup>20</sup> The 1804 Headington inclosure award refers to "a Farm house [near the Slade] belonging to the President and Scholars of Magdalen College and their Lessee John Townsend"<sup>21</sup> and the inclosure map (below) shows the farm buildings.

<sup>20</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Oxford History: Mayors & Lord Mayors, John Townesend (1648–1728) Mayor of Oxford 1720/1*, [https://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1714\\_1835/townesend\\_john\\_1720.html](https://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1714_1835/townesend_john_1720.html), accessed 27/12/2023.

<sup>21</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Non-listed buildings, Brasenose Farm and Wood Farm*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose\\_farm.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose_farm.html), accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Transcription of the Headington Inclosure Award, 1804*,



Extract from the Headington inclosure map, 1804 (west at the top). The Slade runs north to south near the upper edge of the image. John Townsend's holdings are immediately to the east of the northern end of the Slade. They include a 'Pit' (labelled '1'), referred to in the inclosure award as "Stone, Sand and Gravel Pits to be used in Common by the Proprietors of Lots and Estates in the Parish of Headington aforesaid and their tenants[i.e. Magdalen College and John Townsend] as well as for their own necessary uses as for repairs of the Turnpike Roads or other public and private Roads in the said Parish."<sup>22</sup> Immediately to the east of the Pit are the two buildings – one large and one small – of Wood Farm (2), which is at the north-western corner of 'Open Magdalen Common'. Titup Hall (labelled 'Titap', 3) is north of the wooded area, on Old Road. At this time, and right through until the 1920s, Headington was a village surrounded by farmland, worked by tenant farmers, and Wood Farm was just one of at least seven farms in the area, including Mathers (formerly Magdalen) Farm, Church Hill Farm, Laurel Farm, Highfield, Barton (now Lower) Farm, and Manor Farm.<sup>23</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0082793.

The 1804 inclosure award meant that the fields either side of Open Magdalen were fenced off and cultivated, but it left Open Magdalen (and Open Brasenose) as common land, available for anyone to use. On 29 September 1821 a notice appeared in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* stating that an application would be made to Parliament in the next session "for leave to bring in a Bill for dividing, allotting, and inclosing ... certain pieces or parcels of commonable land or ground called Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Elder Stubbs, or by whatsoever other names the same are respectively known". However, this enclosure does not appear to have taken place and local people continued to pasture their cattle on Open Magdalen.<sup>24</sup> The inhabitants of Cowley were "accustomed every morning to drive their common herd of cattle" from the open fields called Cowley Riding and Hundred Acres, through the gateway at the north-western corner of Open Magdalen and along the driftway which ran diagonally across it, to "the open waste grounds called Cowley Common and Elder Stubbs, returning every evening through an adjoining field belonging to the Principal and Fellows of Brasenose

[https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/enclosure\\_award.pdf](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/enclosure_award.pdf), accessed 27/12/2023.

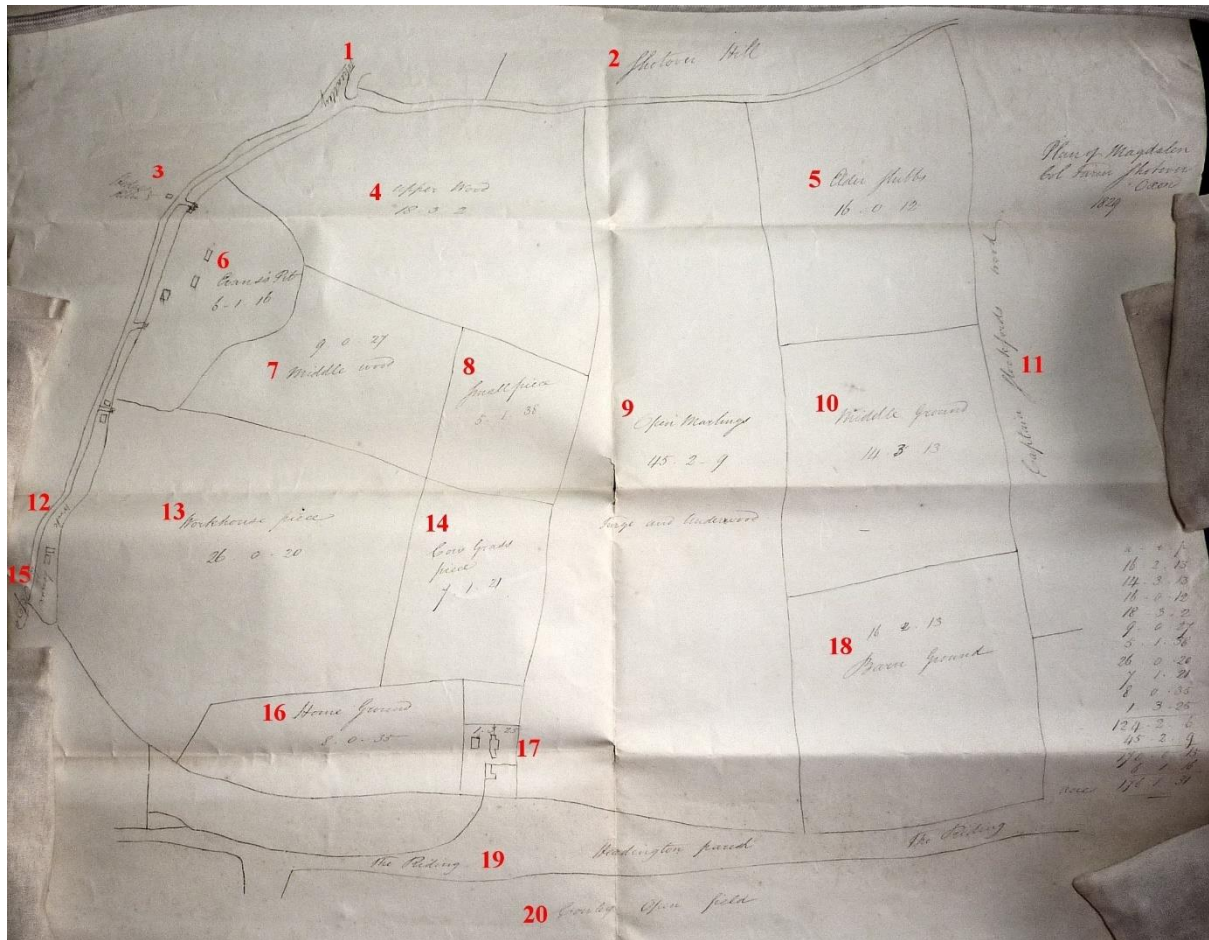
<sup>22</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Transcription of the Headington Inclosure Award, 1804*,

[https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/enclosure\\_award.pdf](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/enclosure_award.pdf), accessed 27/12/2023.

<sup>23</sup> Leslie and Griselda Taylor (eds), *Within Living Memory: Recollections of Old Headington, Oxford* (Friends of Old Headington, 1978), pp.43-4.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

College.” Headington villagers were accustomed to using the driftway across Open Magdalen for similar purposes.<sup>25</sup>



A Magdalen College plan of Wood Farm in 1829, giving the acerages of each of the parcels of land associated with the farm. East is at the top. The map has been annotated with numbers to make it easier to identify the names written on it:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Road to Wheatley (Old Road)        | 11. Captain Stockford's Wood                  |
| 2. Shotover Hill                      | 12. Workhouse                                 |
| 3. Hedges Kiln                        | 13. Workhouse Piece                           |
| 4. Upper Wood                         | 14. Cow Grass Piece                           |
| 5. Elder Stubbs                       | 15. Road to Oxford (Old Road)                 |
| 6. Evans's Pit                        | 16. Home Ground                               |
| 7. Middle Wood                        | 17. Magdalen Farm (Wood Farm) buildings       |
| 8. Small Piece                        | 18. Barn Ground                               |
| 9. Open Marlings, Furze and Underwood | 19. The Riding, Headington Parish (the Slade) |
| 10. Middle Ground                     | 20. Cowley Open Field                         |

Reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford, EP/253/9.

After John Townesend's tenancy came to an end, Magdalen College rented out Wood Farm to a succession of lessees. From 1824 to 1832 William Fox was the tenant<sup>26</sup> of what was at the time sometimes known as Magdalen Wood Farm.<sup>27</sup> It is probable that the plan above was

<sup>25</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.10.

<sup>26</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, pp.12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Confusingly, Magdalen College owned another farm, called Magdalen Farm, on Barton Lane in Headington.

drawn up in anticipation of Fox leaving the farm. From 1832 to 1849 the tenant was James Eley,<sup>28</sup> though at the time of the 1841 census (below), the farm was occupied by an agricultural labourer, William Saunders (aged 53, and originally from Horton cum Studley), his wife Martha (48, born in Wantage), and their six children, aged between twenty and ten, all born in Cowley or Headington. The two oldest boys, Frederic and Stephen, were working as agricultural labourers like their father.<sup>29</sup>

10

City or Borough of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parish or Township of Headington Enumeration Schedule.

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts
			Lusan White	50			yes	
			Thomas do	12			yes	
			Harratt do	10			yes	
			Henry do	7			yes	
			William do	5			yes	
			Richard do	3			yes	
Bullington Green Farm	1		Robert Hinde	25		Bariff	no	x
			Mary do	25			no	v
			Charles Cross	15		Servant	yes	
			James Windsor	14		do	yes	
Wood Farm	1		William Saunders	53		Ag. Lab.	no	x
			Martha do	48			no	v
			Frederic do	20		Ag. Labourer	yes	
			Stephen do	15		do	yes	
			Sarah do	15			yes	
			Hester do	15			yes	
			Mary do	12			yes	
			William do	10			yes	
Harry Bear	1		William Steels	75		Ag. Lab.	yes	
			John do	65			yes	
			Thomas do	40		Ag. Lab.	yes	
			William do	35		do	yes	
			Elizabeth Sheppard	13			no	v
do	1		James Parsons	50		Ag. Lab.	yes	
			Ann do	40			yes	
TOTAL in Page 12			4	15	10		TOTAL	

Part of the 1841 census return for Headington, showing the Saunders family at Wood Farm.

The adjacent property was 'Bullington Green Farm', otherwise known as 'Brasenose Farm'<sup>30</sup> (the buildings of which still exist).

The property occupied by the Steels and Parsons families was called 'Harry Bear' or, in the 1804 Headington inclosure award, 'Harry Bears Bottom'.

Note that in the 1841 census the ages for those over 14 were rounded down to the nearest five years, so '15' can mean anything from 15 to 19. More accurate ages can be ascertained from the 1851 census, as can people's places of birth.

This is now known as Mather's Farm. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*,

[https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>28</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.13.

<sup>29</sup> 1841 and 1851 census returns for William Saunders and family, Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 07/01/2023.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington history: Non-listed buildings, Brasenose Farm and Wood Farm*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose\\_farm.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose_farm.html), accessed 07/01/2023.

## The Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road



*The Crown & Thistle in about 1905.  
Image courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.*

From 1903 the pub housed the headquarters of the Quarry Pig Club, whose purpose was to insure pig owners for a charge of 2d a month (later 3½d) against loss of stock through disease. In its early days the club had 220 members, but this had dropped to 45 by 1933.<sup>32</sup>

*Right: the pub in about 1930. The building to the left must have been demolished to make way for Titup Hall Drive, a new road created in the early 1950s to give access to the Wood Farm housing estate.<sup>33</sup> Image courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.*



After a series of short-term landlords, the pub was run by three generations of the Lee family for 82 years from 1891 to 1976.<sup>34</sup> When he retired in 1976, Frank Lee (left) recalled that he had been born in the pub and started serving behind the bar at the age of ten.<sup>35</sup>

When Morrell's Brewery closed in the late 1990s, the Crown & Thistle was taken over by Greene King.<sup>36</sup> The pub closed permanently on new year's eve 2011,<sup>37</sup> and has been unoccupied ever since.

*Image courtesy of the Oxford Mail.*

<sup>31</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 11/01/2023.

<sup>32</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 11/01/2023.

<sup>33</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 11/01/2023.

<sup>34</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 11/01/2023.

<sup>35</sup> John Chipperfield, "Pub closure ends an era", *Oxford Mail*, 12 March 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, Former Crown & Thistle pub, Old Road*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown\\_thistle.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/crown_thistle.htm), accessed 11/01/2023.

<sup>37</sup> John Chipperfield, "Pub closure ends an era", *Oxford Mail*, 12 March 2012.

## RICHARD PETHER, TENANT OF WOOD FARM, 1849–91

In 1849 the Saunders family moved to a property on the ‘Old Oxford Road’ in Shotover,<sup>38</sup> and Wood Farm was taken over by new tenants: brothers Richard and Henry Pether.<sup>39</sup> According to the Headington Rate Book of 1850 (below), the Pethers rented the farm – just over 164 acres – from Magdalen College, plus other land nearby:<sup>40</sup>

Name of occupier	Name of owner	Description of property rated	Name or situation of property	Size of plot (acres, roods, perches)	Gross estimated rental value (pounds-shillings-pence)	Rateable value (pounds-shillings-pence)
Richard and Henry Pether	Revd JC Pring	Land	Glebe land	65, 0, 0	£55-5-0	£52-0-0
Richard and Henry Pether	Magdalen College	House and land	Wood Farm	164, 2, 0	£138-5-0	£125-10-10
Richard and Henry Pether	The Poor of Headington	Land	Peat Moors	5, 0, 0	£1-5-0	£1-0-0

Richard Pether had been born in Cowley in 1815 and his brother Henry two years later; both were baptised at St James’s Church in Cowley. They were the sons of a carpenter, John Pether, and his wife Ann. The Pether family lived at Bartlemas Farm in Cowley, west of Wood Farm, and were butchers as well as farmers. By 1851 however, Richard Pether had moved to Wood Farm, whilst his younger brother Henry remained at Bartlemas.<sup>41</sup>

Parish or Township of <i>Headington</i>		Ecclesiastical District of <i>Quarry</i>		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of	
No. of Inhabitants	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind or Deaf or Dumb
					Male	Female			
	90 Wood Farm	Richard Pether	Head	M	34		Farmer 207 acres 1/2 Ann Cowley	Cowley	
		Ann M. Pether	Wife	F	31			Sunningwell	
		Mary Ellen Pether	Daughter	F	4			Cowley	
		Sarah Pether	"	F	3			Headington	
		Emily Ann Pether	"	F	6 M			Cowley	
		Andrew Pether	"	M	25			"	
		Henry P. Pether	Servant	M	23			Bucks Brill	
		Maith Jones	"	F	23			From Adderton	
		Sarah Bowle	"	F	14			Cowley	
		William Jenkins	"	M	36			Marpath	

Extract from the 1851 census, showing the Pether household at Wood Farm in Headington Quarry. Richard Pether was 34, and described as a farmer of 207 acres employing seventeen men. His wife Ann (née Wheeler) was 31 and originally from Sunningwell. In 1851 the couple had three young children; they went on to have eleven children, but only six survived into adulthood.<sup>42</sup> In 1851 they also had four live-in servants, the youngest Sarah Bowle, aged 14.

By the time of the 1861 census Richard Pether was employing twelve men and eleven boys to look after the 207 acres of Wood Farm:

<sup>38</sup> 1851 census return for William Saunders and family, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 07/01/2024.

<sup>39</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.13.

<sup>40</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Headington Rate Book 1850* [http://www.headington.org.uk/family\\_history/name\\_lists/rate\\_book\\_1850.pdf](http://www.headington.org.uk/family_history/name_lists/rate_book_1850.pdf), accessed 23/12/2023.

<sup>41</sup> Baptism records and 1851 census returns for the Pether family, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 08/01/2024.

<sup>42</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877–1963)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/nuffield.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/nuffield.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.

Page 4] The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Parish [or Township] of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecological District of			
Headington						Headington Quarry			
No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House	HOUSES (Use in-tersect (U.S. or (S.))	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and-Dumb
						Male	Female		
14	Harrold Cottages	1	Harry Matthews Wife James Ford Mary A. Ford Thomas Ford Fanny Ford	Wife Head Wife Daughter Daughter Daughter	Married Married Married Married Married	67 25 16 18 18	House hold Shepherd Ward Scholar Thresh	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
15	Quarry	1	John Parsons John Parsons Richard Parsons Henry Parsons	Head Wife Son Son	Married Married Married Married	62 27 14 17	Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington	
16	Quarry	1	John Stiel Ann Stiel David Stiel Mary Stiel Sarah Stiel Emily Stiel Robert Stiel Richard Stiel Ann Stiel Elizabeth Stiel	Head Wife Wife Daughter Daughter Daughter Daughter Daughter Daughter Daughter Daughter	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	44 41 12 12 12 10 8 8 5 11 11	Labourer Wife of Scholar Scholar Scholar Scholar Scholar Scholar Scholar Scholar	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
4	Total of Houses...	4				17	13		

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The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Parish [or Township] of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecological District of			
Headington						Headington Quarry			
No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House	HOUSES (Use in-tersect (U.S. or (S.))	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and-Dumb
						Male	Female		
17	Wood Farm (cont)		John Pether Elizabeth Pether Emma Pether Ann Saunders John Pether Mary Pether Robert Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether	Head Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	70 65 19 27 14 14 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17	Labourer House hold Wife of Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
18	Brasenose Farm	1	John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether	Head Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	70 65 19 27 14 14 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17	Labourer House hold Wife of Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
19	Crown & Thistle	1	John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether	Head Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	70 65 19 27 14 14 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17	Labourer House hold Wife of Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
20	Tit-up Cottages	1	John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether	Head Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	70 65 19 27 14 14 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17	Labourer House hold Wife of Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
21	Tit-up Cottages	1	John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether John Pether Elizabeth Pether Ann Pether	Head Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife Wife	Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married Married	70 65 19 27 14 14 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17	Labourer House hold Wife of Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer Labourer	Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington Headington	
4	Total of Houses...	4				17	11		

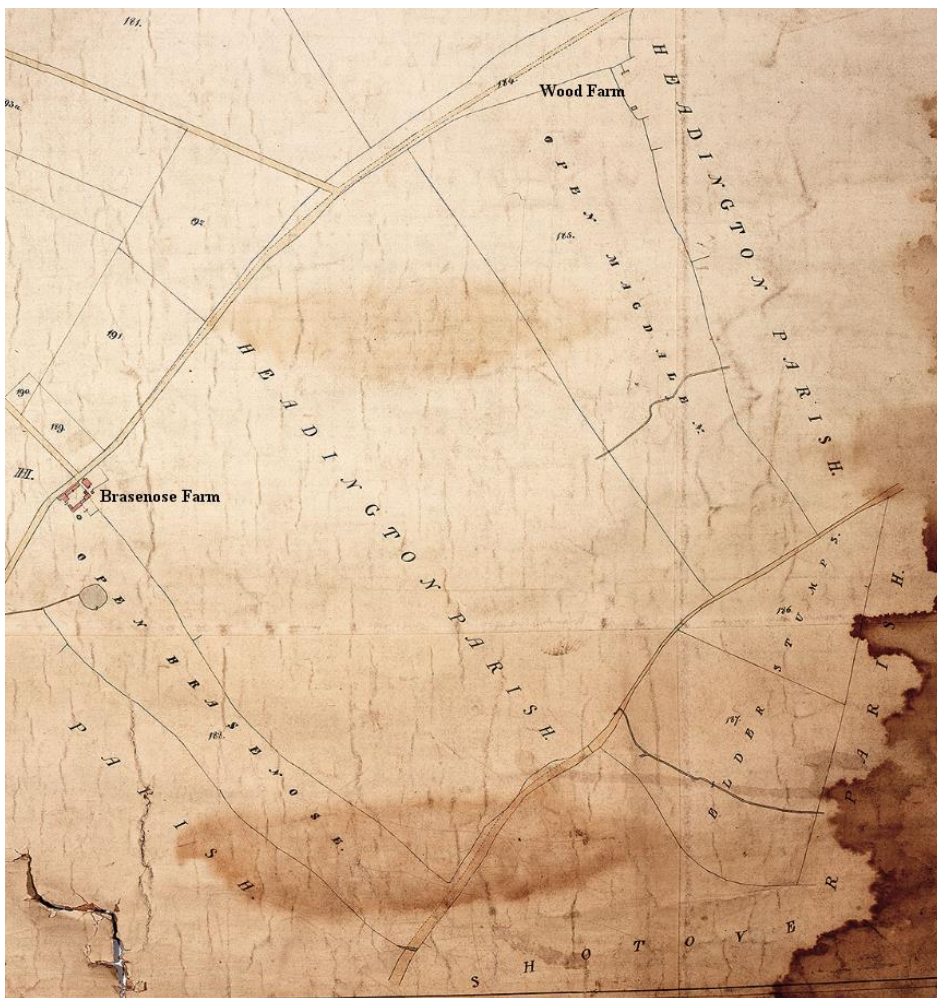
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Extract from the 1861 census, showing the Pether household at Wood Farm (spread over two pages). Richard and Ann now had seven children under the age of fifteen. Living with them were Richard's widowed father John, and five servants. One of these was 29-year-old William Saunders, a carter; who had himself grown up at Wood Farm when his father was the tenant there in the 1840s (see p.9). Other properties shown include Harry Bears Pits; Brasenose Farm; the Crown & Thistle pub; and Tit-up Cottage. The latter was the first of a terrace called Tit-up Cottages, now 158 to 166 Old Road, which date back to the 18th century.<sup>43</sup> Here the cottage was occupied by Job and Fanny Kimber, the grandparents of William Kimber, the famous Headington Quarry morris dancer and musician.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Christine Bloxham and Suzanne Shatford, *The Changing Faces of Headington, Book 1* (Boyd Publications, 1996; reprinted 2003), p.58.

<sup>44</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, William Kimber (1872-1961)*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/kimber.htm](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/kimber.htm), accessed 08/01/2024.

From the early 1860s onwards Richard Pether's farm increased in size, partly because he started to encroach on the previously common land of Open Magdalen.<sup>45</sup> The area had become overgrown with furze (gorse) and trees, which local people cut for fuel, as well as hunting for rabbits and birds there. On 26 January 1861 Jackson's Oxford Journal reported that seven men of Headington parish were charged by Richard Pether with cutting the oak trees growing in Open Magdalen, and stealing and carrying them away. They said that they had done it "under a supposition that they were entitled to the wood, as well as the feed, as a right of common, the place not having been inclosed at the time of the [1804] Headington Inclosure". The Justices showed some sympathy, and fined the defendants the minimum amount. However, several more cases swiftly followed and the penalties became harsher: when Charles Webb, Charles Gird, and Thomas Wharton, labourers of Headington Quarry, were charged by Richard Pether with stealing nineteen furze faggots from Open Magdalen, they were each sentenced to seven days' imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>46</sup>



*Extract from the Cowley tithe map of 1864, showing Open Magdalen and Open Brasenose, annotated with labels for Wood Farm and Brasenose Farm. North-west is at the top. At this time the tenant of Wood Farm, Richard Pether, was starting to encroach on Open Magdalen and use it for his own benefit. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, 112/M.*

<sup>45</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Non-listed buildings, Brasenose Farm and Wood Farm*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose\\_farm.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose_farm.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>46</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.



In 1862 Richard Pether fenced part of Open Magdalen off, and in 1869 he began to cultivate it.<sup>47</sup> By 1871 his land holdings had thus increased to 295 acres, and he was employing nine labourers, five women and five boys:

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										[Page 90]
*Civil Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board or Improvement Commissioners (District) of	Ecclesiastical District of			
Headington							Quarry			
No. of House	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES in this House	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN		1. Deaf-Blind 2. Blind 3. Lunatic or Idiot
						Male	Female			
117	Waring Road No. 1	1	Matthew Bennett	Head	single	22	edg. Lab.	Worcester, Hereford		
			Ann	Wife	single	28		Worcester, Hereford		
			William	son		7		do	do	
			Robert	do		12		do	do	
118	Wood Farm	1	Richard Pether	Head	single	56	Farm. (Labouring Class)	do	Headington	
			Ann	Wife	single	57		do	Headington	
			Ann	Daughter	Married	19		do	Headington	
119	Wood Farm	1	Richard Pether	Head	single	59	Farm. (295 acres, employing 9 labourers & 5 boys)	do	Headington	
			Ann	Wife	single	58		Worcester, Hereford		
			John G. Wheeler	Dom.	single	20		Worcester, Hereford		
			Elizabeth Pether	Daughter	Married	26		do	do	
			John	do	Married	28		do	Headington	
			Ann	do	do	19		do	do	
			David	do	do	10		do	do	
			Sydney P. Wheeler	Grandson	do	7		Worcester, Hereford		
			Emily Ann	Daughter	Married	20	Farm. (Labouring Class)	Worcester, Hereford		
			John	Dom.	Married	22		Worcester, Hereford		
120	Public House "Green & White"	1	James Pether	Head	single	32	Publican	Worcester, Hereford		
			Elizabeth	Wife	single	20		Worcester, Hereford		
			Ann	Daughter	single	7		Worcester, Hereford		
121		1	John	Head	single	25	Labourer	do	do	
			Ann	Wife	single	29		do	do	
			William	son	Married	21		do	do	
			Ann	Daughter	Married	19		do	do	
Total of Houses..		5	Total of Males and Females..		10		11			

Extract from the 1871 census, showing the Pether household at Wood Farm. Richard and Ann still had five children living at home, plus their grandson Sydney (Mary's son), an 'indoor' farm servant, and a domestic servant. In 1876 Richard and Ann's daughter Emily Ann (here aged twenty) would marry Frederick Morris, a clothier's assistant from Hallow in Worcestershire; their son, born the following year, was William Morris, later Lord Nuffield.<sup>48</sup>

In 1872, Magdalen College noted that until very recently, Open Magdalen had been "covered with timber-trees and underwood and thick brakes of furze briars and thorns with very little grass except by the sides of the driftway". This cattle road had not, the college said, been used by Headington villagers since the fields of their parish had been enclosed in 1804, and by Cowley villagers since a similar fate had befallen them in 1853. Hence "only a small portion [of the driftway, at the northern end] can now be traced, the remaining portions having been long overgrown with briars and grass". The college's tenant, Richard Pether, was permitted to "cut and take so much of the timber and other trees growing there as might be required for repairs on Wood Farm and also to take so much of the underwood furze briars and thorns as might be required for fuel to be consumed on Wood Farm or for the purpose of providing fodder and litter for the cattle used on Wood Farm and for other purposes of husbandry and also to cut and make up faggots for sale and sell the underwood furze briars and thorns and other products of the soil".<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.14.

<sup>48</sup> Frederick Morris and Emily Ann Pether marriage record, Headington Quarry, 7 November 1876, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 02/01/2024.

<sup>49</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, pp.9-12.

However, the people of Headington and Cowley were incensed by Richard Pether's requisitioning of Open Magdalen – an area of some 44 acres, and one of the last remaining pieces of what they considered to be common land – and by Magdalen College having allowed him to do so. On 5 August 1871 “a large crowd of persons ... came to the said Open Magdalens and levelled the fences ... and carried away a great part of the crops growing there, and also a quantity of faggots of furze which Richard Pether had cut and stacked”.<sup>50</sup> Rowdy public meetings were held, and on 19 August it was reported in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* that parishioners had met at the Britannia Inn to assert their rights over Open Magdalen and had agreed to take possession of it “by stocking it, and thus trying the issue”. In fact the fight for the Open Magdalens was to continue for another thirty years, taking the form of mass trespasses by local people (sometimes accompanied by “fiddles, tambourines, &c”), large-scale raids for wood, the cutting and taking away of Richard Pether's crops, and the illegal grazing of cows and other animals. The residents of Headington Quarry – known for their strong spirit of resistance – were particularly active in this long-running dispute. Historian Raph Samuel noted that “Quarry children were quite as assertive in defending common rights as their parents, and took a leading part in the fight for the Open Magdalens – particularly the incendiary fires which marked its later stages.”<sup>51</sup>

**To Navy and Railway Contractors, Timber Merchants, and Others.**

**IMPORTANT SALE.**

**Upwards of 500 OAK TREES, all felled and stripped, many of large dimensions, and suitable for Navy and Railway purposes; also their LOP and TOP, including a large quantity very useful for posts, fences, rustic garden seats, &c., at Mr. Pether's Farm, Open Magdalen, within two miles of Oxford.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY Messrs. R. PIKE and SON,**

**Upon the Premises, on Thursday, June 27th, 1872, at 12 o'clock, by order of the President and Scholars of Magdalen College.**

**The Timber will be divided into about 60 Lots. The Lop and Top will comprise about 80 Lots.**

**Three Months' Credit will be allowed on the Timber.**

**Catalogues may be had a week previous at the place of Sale and at the Auctioners' Offices, 21, New-Inn-Hall-street, Oxford.**

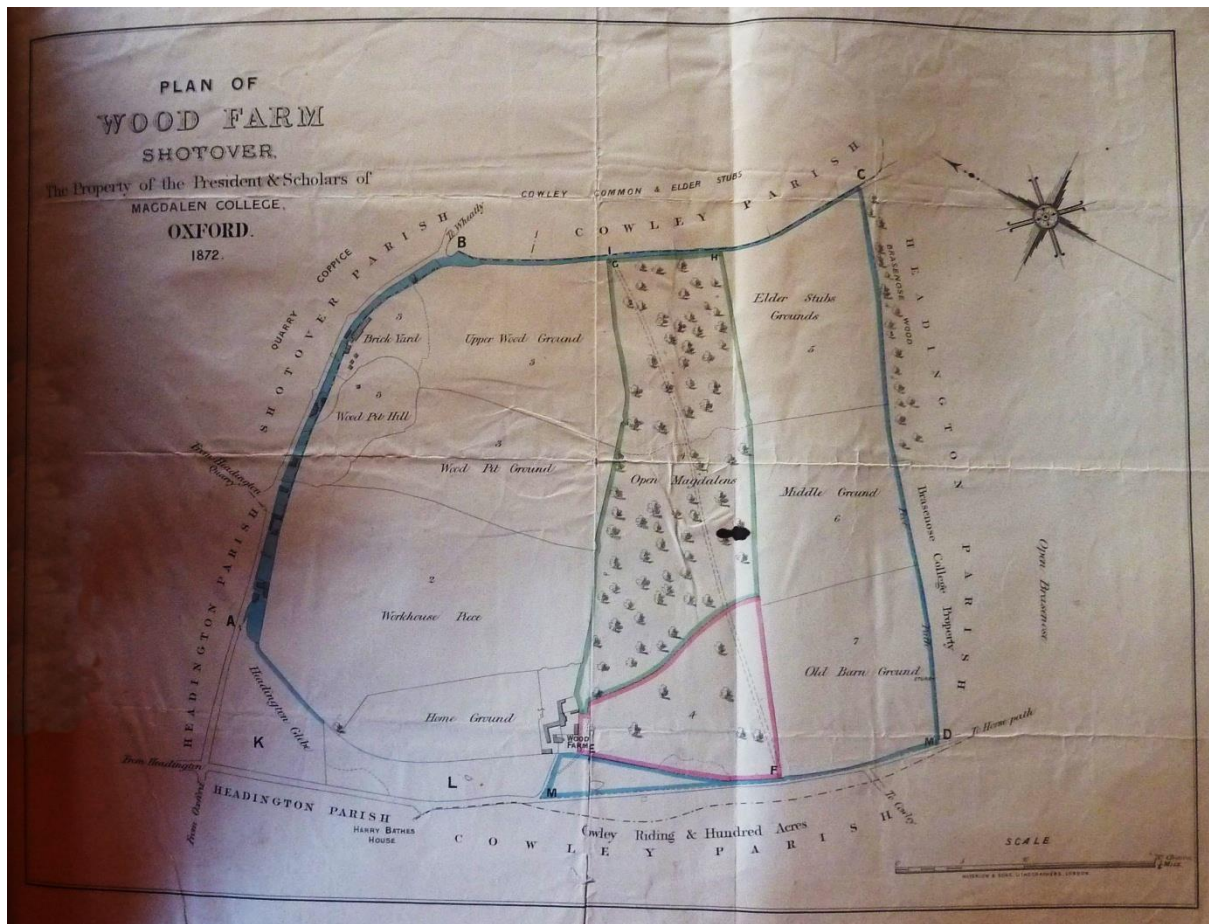
*Advertisement for an auction of oak timber from Richard Pether's farm, Open Magdalen, The Oxford Times, 8 June 1872.<sup>52</sup> It may be that Pether deliberately felled the trees in order to prevent local people using the wood, or that he wanted to clear the land for further cultivation. 'Lop and top' refers to the smaller branches.*

<sup>50</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.15.

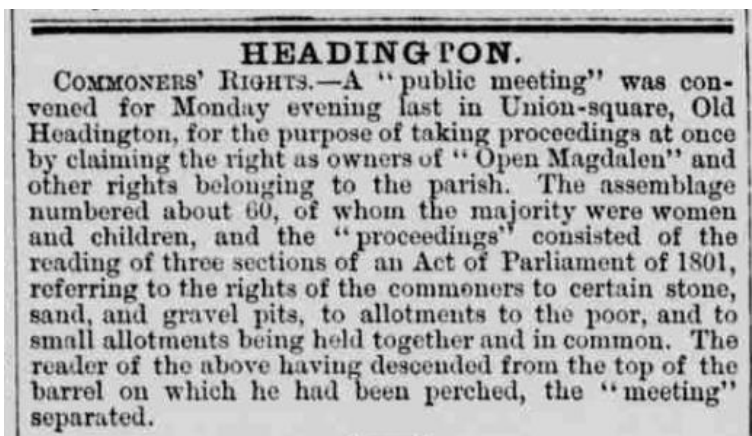
<sup>51</sup> Jack Holland, Alun Howkins, Raphael Samuel, *Headington Quarry and the Fight for the Open Magdalens* (Ruskin College History Workshop pamphlet, c. 1975), quoted in Raphael Samuel, “‘Quarry roughs’: Life and labour in Headington Quarry, 1860–1920. An essay in oral history”, in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.154. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*,

[https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>52</sup> *The Oxford Times*, 8 June 1872, p.1a.



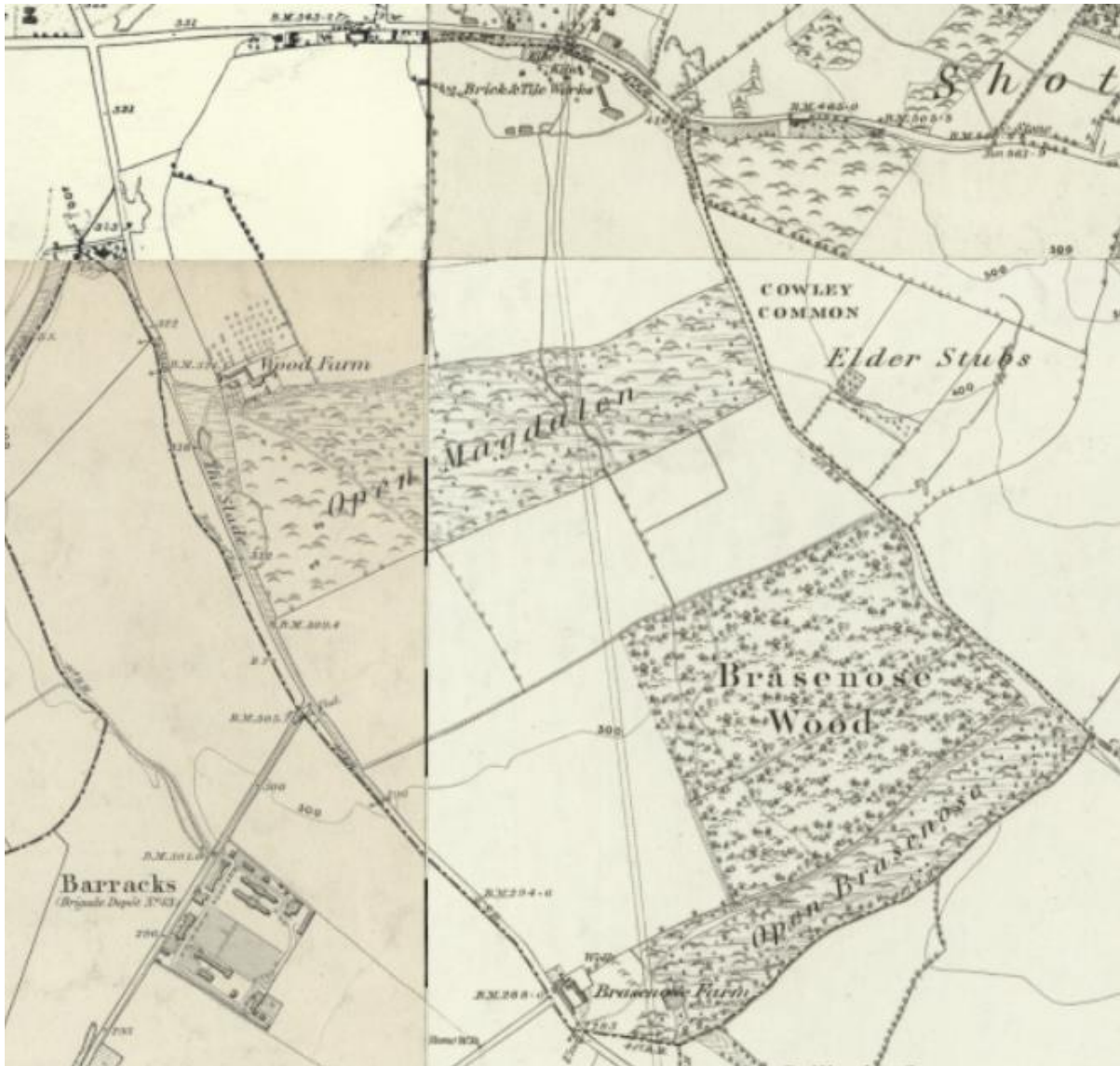
Plan of Wood Farm drawn up by Magdalen College in 1872, with east at the top. The farm's land (estimated by Magdalen to be 177 acres)<sup>53</sup> is outlined in blue, Open Magdalens in green, and what was by now separately known as 'Magdalen Wood' in pink. The former driftway or cattle road across Open Magdalens, which had "long ceased to be used as such" is indicated by two dotted lines going diagonally from points 'F' to 'G'. The Elder Stubs Grounds, Middle Ground and Old Barn Ground fields would later be the site of the Slade Army Camp (see p.34). Reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford MP/4/58a.



In 1877 Quarry Recreation Ground in Margaret Road was given to Headington people in exchange for the disputed rights on the Open Magdalens.<sup>54</sup> The disagreement rumbled on, however, as illustrated by this report (left) in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* on 19 July 1879 of an unofficial meeting of local commoners.

<sup>53</sup> Bill of Complaint, filed in Chancery on 16 August 1872 by the President and Scholars of the College of Saint Mary Magdalen in the University of Oxford. Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. b.117, p.2.

<sup>54</sup> Raphael Samuel, "Quarry roughs": Life and labour in Headington Quarry, 1860–1920. An essay in oral history", in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.155.



On this composite of the 1879/1881 Ordnance Survey maps Wood Farm can be seen at the north-eastern corner of Open Magdalen; its fields included those to the north of Open Magdalen, up as far as Old Road (which runs west to east along the top of the map), and the three to the south of Open Magdalen. Brasenose Wood, Brasenose Farm and Open Brasenose are further south. On some maps the western end of Open Magdalen, shown here as a triangle of lighter shading, is labelled 'Magdalen Wood' (see also the plan on p.16, where it is outlined separately in pink). The road on the left of the map is the Slade, off which were the barracks of the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry. The current Eastern By-pass (part of the Oxford ring road) now runs north to south through the centre of the map, roughly along the marked line of the old Roman road (which ran from Dorchester-on-Thames to Alcester), although it veers more to the west at the southern end, meaning that the surviving buildings of Brasenose Farm are immediately to the east of it. The farmhouse of Brasenose Farm still remains, but has been very much altered, and together with a barn now houses a kitchen design firm. The house and buildings at Wood Farm were demolished in the early 1970s (see p.57). The Elder Stubs on this map should not be confused with the Elder Stubbs Allotments off the Cowley Road. The definition of an elder stub is uncertain: it may have been a type of pollarded elder.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

By the time of the 1881 census Richard Pether's holdings had expanded to 370 acres, and he was employing seventeen men, three women and six boys as farm workers:

Page 8] The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Civil Parish (or Township) of	Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Ecclésiastical Parish or District of		
Headington			Headington Quarry			Headington	St. Mary's Headington Quarry		
No. of Houses	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. of NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lame
1	11111 Cottage	1	Daniel Haroey	Head	Mar	56	Shepherd, &c. Lab.	From 11111 Cottage	
			4 Alice Do	Wife	Mar	66		From Headington	
			4 Alfred Do	Son	Mar	22	Carton 2d. Lab.	Do Newtonham	
			4 John Do	Do	Do	20	Farm Labourer	Do Newtonham	
			4 William Do	Do	Do	15	Do	Do Newtonham	
1	The Woods	1	Alfred Atwood	Head	Mar	46	Farm Labourer	From Headington	
			4 Agnes Do	Wife	Mar	44	Landress	Do Headington	
			4 Thomas Do	Son	Mar	16	Farm Labourer	Do Headington	
			4 Annie Do	Do	Do	11	Scholar	Do	
			4 Annie Pugham	Servant	Do	20	General Servant (Widow)	Do	
			4 Lizzie Perry	Do	Do	20	Do	Do	
1		1	Thomas Morris	Head	Mar	40	Workyard Labourer	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Ann Do	Wife	Mar	40		Do Headington Quarry	
1		1	John Higgs	Son	Mar	8	Scholar	Do Headington Quarry	
1		1	Ann Williams	Widow	Mar	86	From Headington	Do Headington Quarry	
1		1	Thomas Morris	Servant	Do	20	Farm Labourer	Do Headington Quarry	
1		1	Joshua Skinner	Head	Mar	60	In Receipt of Poor Law	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Sarah Do	Wife	Mar	71	Do	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Sarah Do	Servant	Do	13	Scholar	Do Headington Quarry	
1	Wood Farm	1	Richard Pether	Head	Mar	64	Farmer of 370 Acres	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Annie Do	Daughter	Unmar	21	Employed as 17 hrs. & 30 mins. woman	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Bessie Do	Do	Unmar	20	Do	Do Headington Quarry	
			4 Aubrey Trafford	Servant	Do	29	General Servant in Farm	Do Headington Quarry	
Total of Houses..		6	Total of Males and Females..		13		10		

NOTE.—Draw the pen through such of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

Extract from the 1881 census, showing the Pether household at Wood Farm. Richard was 64 and by now a widower, his wife Ann having died in December 1851 aged 51.<sup>56</sup> Living with him were his two unmarried daughters Annie and Bessie, and an 'indoor' farm servant, Aubrey Trafford.

In 1881 Richard Pether's daughter Emily Ann moved from Worcester back to Headington with her husband Frederick Morris and their three children, William (aged around four), Alice (three) and baby Emily. Frederick became his father-in-law's farm bailiff, and in the late 1880s Pether's holdings were further increased when he took on the lease of Brasenose Farm from Brasenose College.<sup>57</sup> At the time of the 1891 census the Morris family can be seen living at 'Brasenose Lane' in Headington Quarry, presumably in a cottage near Brasenose Farmhouse, which was itself listed as uninhabited at the time:

<sup>56</sup> Pether family grave, Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry.

<sup>57</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

Administrative County of <u>Oxford</u>		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										Page 34			
Civil Parish	Municipal Borough	Municipal Ward	Urban Sanitary District	Hamlet or Village or Hamlet	Rural Sanitary District	Parliamentary Borough or Division	Ecological Parish or Hamlet								
<u>Headington</u>				<u>Headington</u>	<u>Headington</u>	<u>Headington</u>	<u>St. Mary's</u>								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No. of ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Persons in each	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of each Person	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	12	13	14	WHEN BORN				
											(1) Deaf-and-Dumb	(2) Blind	(3) Lame, Imbecile or Idiot		
207	Brasenose Lane	1	Alfred Austin	Head	M	72	Farm Bailiff							Oxon	Woodstock
			Agnes Austin	Wife		72								"	Wincey
			Emily	Daughter		18	Schooler							"	Cowley
			William	Son		18								"	Headington
			Alice	Daughter		18								"	Headington
			Emily	Daughter		18								"	Headington
208	"	1	Walter Oakley	Head	M	76	Blacksmith							Oxon	Cowley
			Agnes	Wife		76								"	"
			James	Son		76	Schooler							"	"
			Robert	Son		76								"	"
			Richard	Son		76								"	"
			Eric	Daughter		76								"	"
			Horace	Son		76								"	"
209	Brasenose Lane	91	Richard Pether	Head	M	76	Farmer & Brickmaker							Oxon	Cowley
			Agnes	Daughter		30								"	Headington
			Elizabeth	Daughter		30								"	Headington
			Aubrey Trafford	Servant		29	Farm Labourer							"	Headington
211	St. Mary's	1	Richard Pether	Head	M	76	"							"	Headington
			Emma	Wife		76								"	"
			John	Son		76	Farm Labourer							"	"
			Janet	Daughter		76	Laundry maid							"	"
			Thomas	Son		76	Farm Labourer							"	"
			James	Son		76								"	"
			George	Son		76								"	"
			Robert	Son		76								"	"
			Elizabeth	Daughter		76								"	"
			Edith	Daughter		76								"	"
212	"	1	Francis Pether	Head	M	76	"							"	Headington
			Emily	Wife		76								"	Headington
61	Total of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms ...		5		11		Total of Males and Females...		16		14				

Extract from the 1891 census, showing the Morris family in a property on 'Brasenose Lane' (near unoccupied Brasenose Farm), and the Pether household at nearby Wood Farm. Frederick Morris was working for his father-in-law Richard Pether as farm bailiff. He and his wife Emily Ann had had seven children, but only three – William (the future Lord Nuffield), Alice, and Emily – had survived. At Wood Farm, Richard Pether, aged 75, is described as a 'farmer and brickmaker'. He was still being assisted by his two unmarried daughters Annie and Elizabeth (Bessie), and the long-serving 'indoor' farm servant Aubrey Trafford.

With no surviving son to take over, Richard Pether decided to give up farming at the age of 76, and on 19 September 1892 a grand auction was held at Wood Farm to sell off all his stock, including animals, crops, equipment, farm vehicles and implements:

**WOOD FARM, HEADINGTON,**  
Close to the City of Oxford.

**IMPORTANT SALE OF GROWING CROPS OF CORN**  
(With all the Straw to go off).

**Messrs. FRANKLIN and JONES**

**H**AVE received instructions from Mr. Richard Pether, who is leaving, to **SELL** by AUCTION, at the Farm Homestead, Wood Farm, Headington, on Monday, August 15th, 1892, at Five o'clock p.m.,—

**100 Acres of luxuriant GROWING CORN**  
(With Straw to go off), consisting of 29 Acres WHEAT, 12 Acres BARLEY, 41 Acres OATS, and 18 Acres BEANS, all offering promise of great yield, well situated for removal, and lotted to suit all classes of purchasers.

The usual credit will be given.

Catalogues may be obtained at place of Sale; Inns in the district; Cross Hotel, Oxford; Spread Eagle, Thame; and of the Auctioneers, Ascott, near Wallingford, and Frawin-court, Oxford.

Intending purchasers are requested to meet the auctioneers at the Homestead, as above, at Five o'clock p.m. punctually.

Jackson's Oxford Journal, 6 August 1892, p.4c.

**WOOD FARM, HEADINGTON,**  
2 miles from Oxford.

Important and Genuine Sale of **FARMING STOCK**, with Ricks of **HAY** and **CORN** (all to go off).

**Messrs. FRANKLIN and JONES**

**A**RE favoured with instructions from Mr. Richard Pether, who is retiring from the farming business and leaving at Michaelmas next, to **SELL** by **AUCTION**, as above, on Monday, Sept. 19th, 1892, at Eleven o'clock punctually, viz. :—

**HORSES** (11)—9 young active working Horses, Nag Mare, and one Yearling Filly.

**CATTLE** (16)—8 Cows in milk and in calf, 3 forward in-calf Heifers, two-year-old Bull, and 2 Weaning Calves.

**SHEEP** (183)—116 young Oxfordshire Down Stock Ewes and Thomes, and 67 Lambs.

**PIGS**—1 fat Sow.

**IMPLEMENTS, &c.**—5 Wagons, 3 Dung Carts, 2 Spring Carts (with sideboards and ladders), light Spring Cart and Pony Trap, Mowing Machine, Reaper, 15-coulter Drill, Manure Drill, Horse Rake (Howard), Cambridge and other Hells, Winnowing Machine and other Barn Tackle, Bean, Oat, and Cake Crushers, Chaff Cutters (by Richmond and Chandler, and others), 4 Turnip Cutters, Ploughs, Harrows, Scuffles, Horse Hoes, Dairy Utensils, Harness, Cow Cribbs, and numerous other Effects.

**HAY, CORN, and STRAW**—3 Ricks of Meadow and Mixed Hay, 7 Ricks of Wheat, Barley, Beans, and Oats, and 5 Ricks of Straw (the whole to go off).

Also about 2 Acres of Potatoes and other items.

This is one of the best Teams of Horses in the County, and many are fit for town work. The Cattle and Sheep are exceedingly healthy, and the Implements, which are in excellent preservation, are by the best makers. The usual credit will be allowed on the Hay and Corn.

Luncheon at 1s. 6d. each to be returned to purchasers of £2 and upwards.

Catalogues may be obtained at place of Sale; Cross Hotel, Oxford; Spread Eagle, Thame; and of the Auctioneers, Ascott, near Wallingford, and Frewin-court, Corn Market-street, Oxford.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal, 10 September 1892, p.4c.*

Richard Pether appears however to have still been at Wood Farm in 1893; on 11 March of that year an auction was held at the Six Bells in Headington of “A freehold plot of building land and stone quarry with extensive frontage to two new streets”, measuring just over one acre and the property of “Richard Pether, the farmer at Wood Farm”.<sup>58</sup> But he seems to have moved away soon after, and he went to live at Unity House in St Andrew’s Lane (then Church Lane) in Headington with his two unmarried daughters, Annie and Bessie. He died there at the age of 87 on 30 March 1902 (the year his grandson William Morris produced his first motorcycle) and was buried in the graveyard of Holy Trinity Church in Headington Quarry. His effects came to £1,746 1s 4d<sup>59</sup> (about £140,000 in today’s money). The Pether family continued to own Unity House, and Emily Ann Yockney, Richard’s granddaughter, lived there with her family until 1912.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Pubs and beerhouses, The Six Bells*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/six\\_bells.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pubs/six_bells.htm), accessed 23/12/2023.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Pether, 1901 census, Church Lane, Headington; gravestone, Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry; probate, 30 March 1902, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 16/01/2024.

<sup>60</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877–1963)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/nuffield.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/nuffield.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.



The Pether family grave in Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry. Here lie Richard Pether (died 30 March 1902, aged 87) and his wife Ann Ursula (died 21 December 1871, aged 51). Also buried in the grave are three of their children: their son Richard (died 13 December 1867 aged 11, wrongly inscribed 1857); and their two youngest daughters Anne and Elizabeth, who never married but cared for their father in his old age. Anne died in 1943 and Elizabeth in 1944. Next to this grave are three child-sized graves whose inscriptions are now illegible: they must belong to Richard and Ann Pether's other three boys, who all died before their first birthdays in the 1850s: Walter, an earlier Richard, and Henry.<sup>61</sup> Image and commentary courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.

Richard Pether's son-in-law Frederick Morris also gave up farming, because of asthma, and by 1895<sup>62</sup> he and his family had moved to 16 James Street in East Oxford, where Frederick's son William began his career as a cycle (and later car) manufacturer.

## THOMAS WHITE TAKES ON THE LEASE OF WOOD FARM, 1892

Following Richard Pether's departure, the next tenant of Wood Farm was Thomas William White, who leased the sporting rights of Open Magdalen from Magdalen College in 1892, and is first listed as the farmer at Wood Farm in *Valter's Directory* of 1894.<sup>63</sup> Thomas White had been born in Ilford in Essex in 1868, but his father came from Iffley and the family returned there when Thomas was a baby. He grew up at the Tree Tavern (later 'Hotel') on Church Way, where his father was publican for over twenty years. In 1892, when he was 24, Thomas married Alice Sims, the 19-year-old daughter of an Abingdon coal merchant, and soon afterwards the young couple took the lease of Wood Farm and settled there. The family were to remain for over seventy years, and the farm became known as 'White's Farm'.<sup>64</sup>

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
235	October 25 1892	Thomas William White Alice Margaret Sims	24 19	Bachelor Spinster	Farmer -	Iffley Abingdon	Thomas White John Sims	Farmer Coalmerchant
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i> by me, <i>by licence</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Thomas William White</i>			in the Presence of us,		<i>Mary Elizabeth White</i> <i>Harry Herbert Avery</i>	

The registration of the marriage of Thomas White and Alice Sims at Iffley Church, 25 October 1892. Shortly before this, in the 1891 census, William was described as 'assistant manager' to his father at the Tree Hotel in Iffley, but by the time of his marriage he had gone into farming.

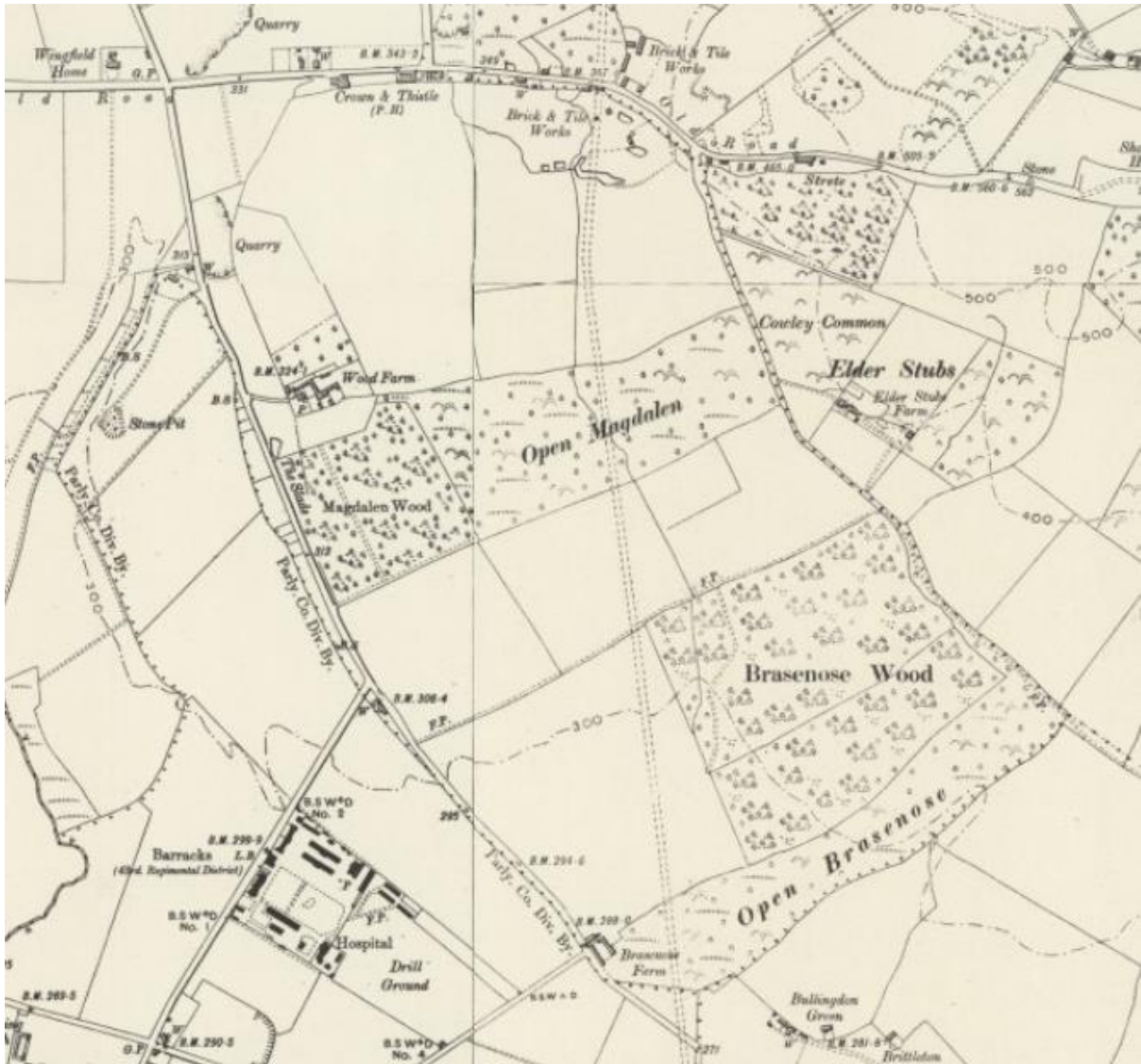
<sup>61</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877–1963)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/nuffield.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/nuffield.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>62</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1895.

<sup>63</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Non-listed buildings, Brasenose Farm and Wood Farm*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose\\_farm.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose_farm.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas William White census returns, marriage certificate, 1939 register, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 16/01/2024.





Extract from the 1899 1,2500 Ordnance Survey map, showing Wood Farm, now occupied by Thomas and Alice White, and the surrounding area. Thomas's holdings included one of the many stone quarries in Headington, Hundred Acres Pit,<sup>65</sup> which is probably the one marked 'Quarry' to the north of the farm, or possibly the one marked 'Stone Pit' to the west of it. Note that Magdalen Wood and Open Magdalen are now labelled separately. The route of the Roman road is shown as two dotted lines running north-south down the centre of the image.

<sup>65</sup> Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, 11 March 1899, quoted in Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: The quarries, The Quarries of Headington*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/quarries/index.html>, accessed 23/12/2023.

Administrative County <u>Oxfordshire</u>																
Civil Parish <u>of Headington</u>		Ecclesiastical Parish <u>(part of) of Holy Trinity</u>		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Rural District <u>part of of Headington</u>		Parliamentary Borough or Division <u>of Oxfordshire</u>		Town or Village or Hamlet <u>of Headington Quarry</u>		Page 5		
No. of House	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME OF HOUSE	Uninhabited	HOUSES	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic (4) Inebriate, feeble-minded					
24	continued			Ernest H. Pearson	Son	17	Builder's Labourer			Devon, Headington Quarry						
				Edith M. D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	10	School			do						
26	Wood Farm	1		John J. Coppock	Head	37	Horse Man on Farm			Oxford, Headington						
				Sarah A. D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	37				Essex, Epping						
27	Wood Farm	1		Thomas F. White	Head	27	Farmer	Employer		Essex, Epping						
				Alice M. D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	27				Berks, Abingdon						
				Margaret A. D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	7	School			Devon, Headington						
				Viola E. M. D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	6	School			do						
				Thomas H. D <sup>o</sup>	Son	4	School			do						
				Ellen E. D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	2	School			do						
				Annie Tombs	Servant	14	General Domestic			Berks, Priston						
28	100 Acres	1		Andreas Andreas	Head	29	Gardener Domestic worker			Devon, Exeter						
	Bygone Villa	1		Elizabeth D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	30				Surrey, Dorking						
				Lily D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	5	School			do						
29	do	1		Lancelott Bellott	Head	46	Greengrocer	Handcar over account		Devon, Cranfield						
				Anne D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	42				Devon, Exeter						
30	Branscombe Farm	1		George Brichnoc	Head	27	Farm Bailiff			Oxford						
				Rose M. D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	27				Oxford, Old Headington						
				Madame G. D <sup>o</sup>	Son	4	School			Oxford						
31	Old Road	1		Thomas Pearyng	Head	68	Shepherd on Farm	worker		Berks, Priston						
				Elizabeth D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	65				Berks, Priston						
				Jane A. D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	2	Dressmaker	own account at home		Berks, Priston						
				Jessie D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	2	Dressmaker	worker		do						
32	do	1		Stephen Jones	Head	27	Labourer for the Farm			Devon, Headington Quarry						
				Jane D <sup>o</sup>	Wife	23				do						
				Thomas D <sup>o</sup>	Son	8	School			do						
				Flora D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	6	School			do						
				Jessie D <sup>o</sup>	Daughter	4	School			do						
7	Total of Schedules of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms	1	1	Total of Males and of Females...		11	17									

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

Extract from the 1901 census showing the White household at Wood Farm. Thomas and Alice had four young children and a live-in domestic servant, fourteen-year-old Annie Tombs. Also living at Wood Farm, probably in one of the farm cottages (and listed above the Whites), were John Coppock, 'horse man on farm' and his wife Sarah. The Coppocks were a very extensive and well-know Headington Quarry family, after whom Coppock Close is named. '100 Acres' is listed after Wood Farm (though unoccupied); this may refer to the building or cottage to the west of the 'Quarry' on the map above.



Wood Farm in around 1905, with what appears to be the main farmhouse with at least two separate cottages to the left. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0128423.



Another photograph of Wood Farm in around 1905. It was often referred to as 'White's Farm', after the long-standing tenant family, and the adjoining Magdalen Wood was sometimes known as 'White's Wood'.<sup>66</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0128423.

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

Number of Schedule 284  
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after delivery.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in ink. The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of persons aged ten years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every person born in the British Isles.	INFERMITY.
			Wife	Children have since arrived Marriages				
1 Thomas William White	Head	42	Married 18		Farmer 190	England		
2 Alice Margaret White	Wife	37		8 8	Employer 2	England		
3 Margaret Alice	Daughter	17	Single			England		
4 Tom	Son	14				England		
5 Doreen	Daughter	12				England		
6 Richard	Son	8				England		
7 Amy	Daughter	5				England		
8 Richard	Son	2				England		
9 Baby	Daughter	1 mo				England		
10 Amy Harvey	Servant				General Servant 190	Wales		

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchen, Parlor, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, cloak, bathroom, and washhouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Thomas William White  
Post Address: Wood Farm, Headington, Oxford.

The 1911 census return for the White family at Wood Farm. The farm house had twelve rooms, excluding any scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, wash house or office. By this time, Thomas and Alice had had eight children, all of whom (somewhat unusually for this period) had survived. The oldest was seventeen-year-old Margaret, the youngest an as yet unnamed one-month old baby daughter (Doreen). Thomas was described as an 'employer' but we do not know how many people he had working on the farm, although Charles Wiltshire, a cowman, was living in one of the farm's cottages at the time, so was almost certainly working for the Whites. The family had a live-in 'maid of all work', fourteen-year-old Amy Harvey. Thomas and Alice went on to have two more children – making ten in total – all of whom survived into adulthood.<sup>67</sup> The couple's oldest son Tom (shown here aged fourteen) later became a successful dairy farmer at nearby Barton Farm.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Pauline Dean (former Wood Farm resident), e-mail to Stephanie Jenkins, 06/02/2024.

<sup>67</sup> White family baptism, marriage and death records, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 12/01/2023.

<sup>68</sup> Leslie and Griselda Taylor (eds), *Within Living Memory: Recollections of Old Headington, Oxford* (Friends of Old Headington, 1978), p.44.



In September 1927 Thomas White signed a new seven-year lease with Magdalen College for Wood Farm. The rent was £169 per annum (about £7,500 in today's money), though this was soon reduced to £140 per annum "during the continuance of the Agricultural depression".<sup>69</sup>



*Loading cans of milk from Wood Farm's dairy cattle into a Morris Minor van, 1930. The dairy, R Brooks & Son, was on Cinnaminta Road, not far from the farm. Nigel Jones has identified the man leaning on the doorframe as his grandfather, Eldred Dell, a long-serving cowman at Wood Farm; as a child Nigel helped him out on the farm.<sup>70</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0132322.*

In autumn 1933, Oxford City Council approached Magdalen College with a view to purchasing Wood Farm, almost certainly with the idea of building housing there.<sup>71</sup> A combination of population growth due to the meteoric rise of the Cowley car industry in the 1920s, and clearances of sub-standard housing in inner-city areas like St Ebbe's and St Aldate's, particularly under the Greenwood Act of 1930, had created a massive new demand for affordable housing in Oxford. In February 1931 there were 5,450 applicants on the City Council's housing register, some of whom had put their names down four years earlier. The Council was therefore actively seeking land on which to build more municipal housing, and new estates were being planned, for example at Marston and Rose Hill.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Magdalen College Archives, duplicate deed of conveyance from Magdalen College to Lord Nuffield, 4 April 1934, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

<sup>70</sup> Nigel Jones e-mail to Anna Clark (Oxford Preservation Trust), July 2024.

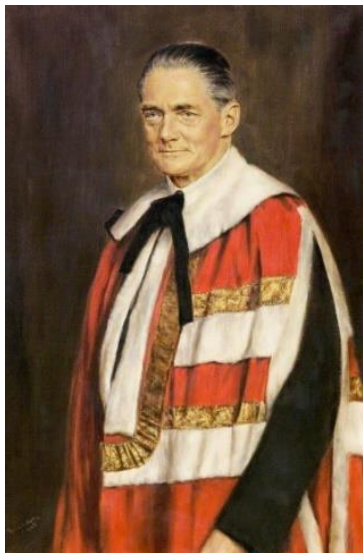
<sup>71</sup> Magdalen College Archives, duplicate deed of conveyance from Magdalen College to Lord Nuffield, 4 April 1934, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

<sup>72</sup> Malcolm Graham, *Wholesome Dwellings: Housing Need in Oxford and the Municipal Response, 1800-1939* (Archeopress, 2020), pp.36-40, 72, back cover. *Your House, My House, Oxford Suburbs 1800-2001*, Oxfordshire Studies, 2001, [www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm](http://www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/YHMH/index.htm), accessed 04/05/2021.

Magdalen College instructed their surveyor Herbert Dulake to value the property at Wood Farm. He concluded that “taking into account the recent growth of the neighbourhood and also the Slade Improvement” the value of Wood Farm was £22,500 (about £1.2 million in today’s money), which included timber worth £250. The enquiry from the City Council did not, however materialise,<sup>73</sup> perhaps because in 1933 the national government cancelled the Wheatley Act of 1924, whereby it had provided subsidies to local authorities to build public housing.<sup>74</sup>

### THE SALE OF WOOD FARM TO WILLIAM MORRIS, LORD NUFFIELD, 1934

Instead, in early 1934, the college received an offer of £26,000 for Wood Farm from the car manufacturer William Morris, the newly-ennobled Lord Nuffield. He was willing to pay all the college’s conveyancing costs, and to agree to two covenants which the college was anxious to place on the land. The first of these was that “Thomas William White the present Lessee of the said property [should be allowed] to continue for not less than five years from the date hereof in the uninterrupted enjoyment of the Farm house and buildings together with an area of at least Fifty acres of pasture Land contiguous thereto at a pro rata rental”. As Dulake noted, “Mr TW White is one of [the college’s] oldest tenants”. The second covenant was that the purchaser should “at all times hereafter preserve as a permanent open space or permanent spaces not less than eighty acres of the property ... known as Open Magdalen”. This was “of some importance to the college inasmuch as the University Golf Links, of which a considerable area is owned by the College, overlooks Wood Farm and particularly ‘Open Magdalen’.”<sup>75</sup>



Dulake wrote in his report: “I understand Lord Nuffield has sentimental reasons for making the acquisition, and I consider his offer is far in excess of any figure likely to be obtained from any other intending Purchaser.” Unsurprisingly, Magdalen agreed with Dulake’s recommendation that they should accept Nuffield’s offer. Hence on 4 April 1934, the college sold Wood Farm, comprising a “farm house, useful buildings and three cottages” and just over 183 acres of land, including Open Magdalen, to Nuffield.<sup>76</sup> Nuffield now owned the land which his maternal grandfather Richard Pether had farmed for over forty years, and which he himself had known well as a child.

*Lord Nuffield in 1934 by Henry L Gates. Image © British Motor Industry Heritage Trust.<sup>77</sup>*

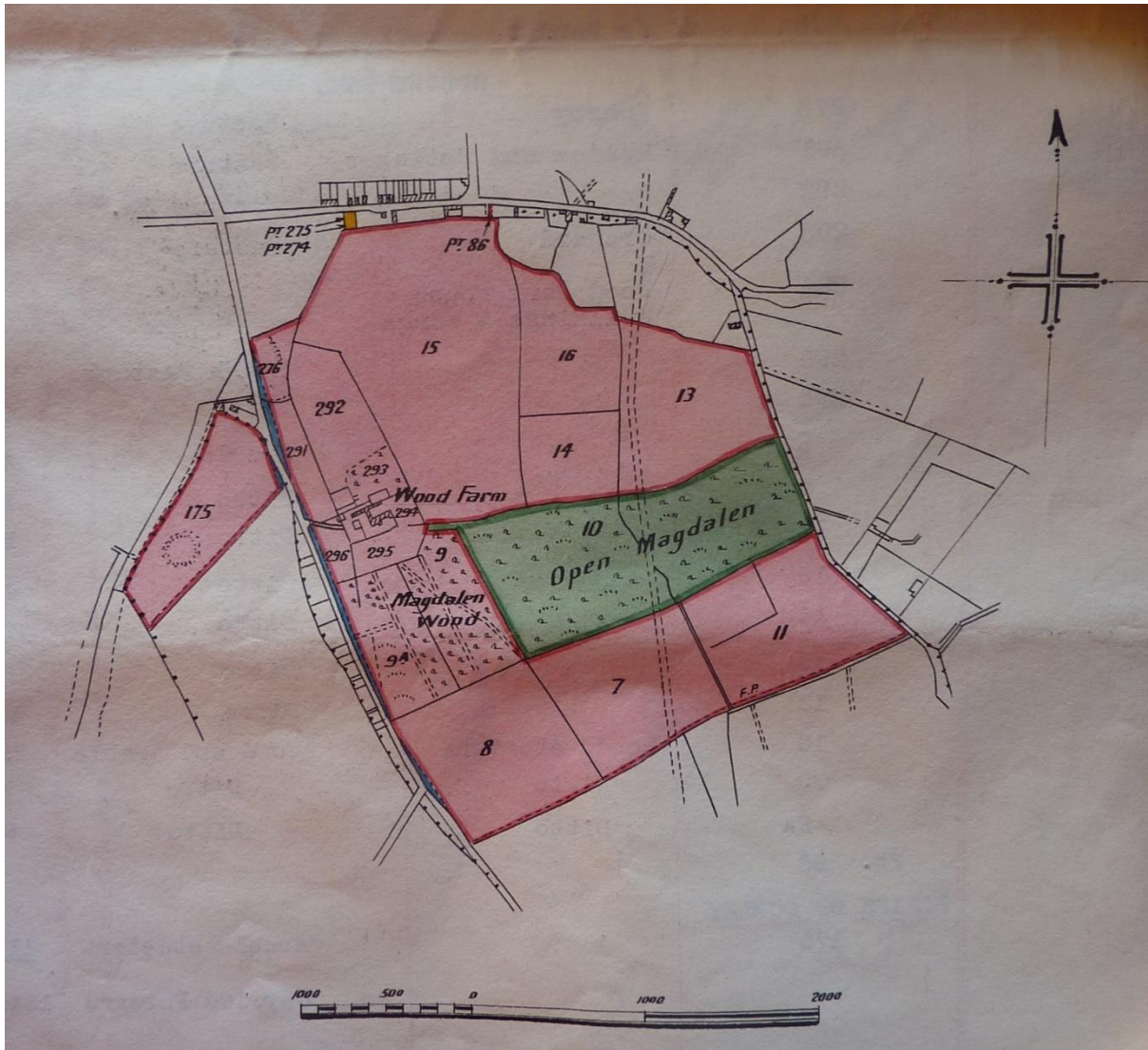
<sup>73</sup> Magdalen College archives, duplicate deed of conveyance from Magdalen College to Lord Nuffield, 4 April 1934, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

<sup>74</sup> UK Parliament, “John Wheatley and the Housing Act 1924”, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/collections/labhousing1/housea2/>, accessed 20/01/2024.

<sup>75</sup> Magdalen College Archives, duplicate deed of conveyance from Magdalen College to Lord Nuffield, 4 April 1934, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

<sup>76</sup> Magdalen College Archives, duplicate deed of conveyance from Magdalen College to Lord Nuffield, 4 April 1934, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

<sup>77</sup> Art UK: William Morris (1877–1963), Lord Nuffield, by Henry L. Gates (1872–1943). British Motor Museum, <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/william-morris-18771963-lord-nuffield-55747>.



Map of the Wood Farm land purchased by Lord Nuffield from Magdalen College, from the conveyance of 4 April 1934. Open Magdalen, coloured green, was to be preserved as a permanent open space. The thin strip of land coloured blue had already been transferred to the City Council a month earlier; for widening the Slade. The small yellow square labelled 'PT 275, PT 274' had been bought from Magdalen by Harry Neville Prior in 1910. Prior was a master cabinet maker who lived at the north-western end of the Ridings (in what is now 'Old House').<sup>78</sup> It is not clear why he wanted this tiny piece of land. Reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford, EMD/OX/HEA/9/1 (formerly EMD/79/11).

Nuffield's purchase was almost certainly, as Dulake believed, for "sentimental reasons". Even though he had moved away from Oxford in 1925 to live near Henley, his affection for his childhood and family home remained strong. Moreover, his mother Emily Ann Morris (née Pether) had died in early January 1934 at the age of 84.<sup>79</sup> In 1936 Nuffield gave an endowment of £7,500 to provide a curate for Holy Trinity Church in memory of her family from Headington.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, First World War in Headington and Marston, Oxford, Roll of Honour of Holy Trinity Church, Headington Quarry, Reginald Harry Neville PRIOR (1894/5–1917)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/war/quarry/prior\\_reginald.html](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/war/quarry/prior_reginald.html), accessed 20/01/2024.

<sup>79</sup> Emily Ann Morris, register of burials, Rose Hill Cemetery, Oxford, 10 January 1934, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 12/01/2024.

<sup>80</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877–1963)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/nuffield.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/nuffield.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.



*Composite of extracts from the 1937 and 1938 Ordnance Survey maps, three to four years after Lord Nuffield's purchase of Wood Farm. The maps show the beginnings of council housing to the west of Wood Farm, on the Bullingdon Fields Estate, which had been built in the late 1920s. In the top left-hand corner of the map, the former Wingfield Orthopaedic Hospital on Old Road had recently received a donation of £70,000 from Sir William Morris (soon to be Lord Nuffield) and had been rebuilt and renamed the Wingfield Morris Orthopaedic Hospital (now the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital).<sup>81</sup>*

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<sup>81</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Streets, Windmill Road: From the Wingfield to the Nuffield*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/windmill\\_road/11\\_wingfield.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/windmill_road/11_wingfield.html), accessed 21/01/2024. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Streets, Bullingdon Field estate (Bulan Road and Lye Valley area)*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/estates/bulan\\_road\\_lye\\_valley.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/estates/bulan_road_lye_valley.html), accessed 21/01/2024.

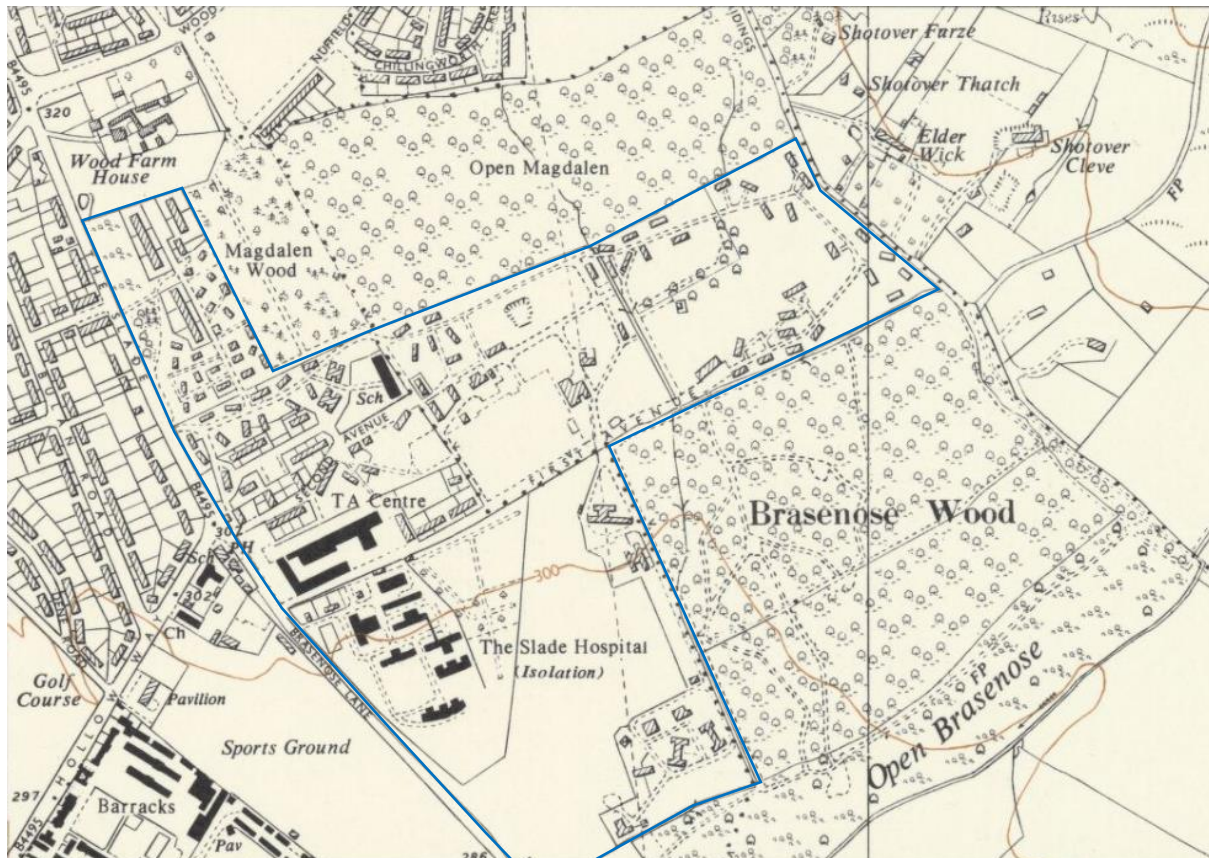


E.D. Letter Code		Borough, U.D. or R.D.		Registration District and Sub-district		S. M. W. or D.		PERSONAL OCCUPATION.		See INSTRUCTIONS.	
ADDRESS.		SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.		O. V. S. P. or I.		M. or F.		BIRTH.	
1		2		3		4		5		6	
No.		Sub No.		Day.		Year.		Day.		Year.	
67. The Slade		22	2	Repsent, Phyllis M	-	F	22	Mar	13	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Laligan Brian	-	M	27	Apr	13	S	General labourer
			4	Laligan Michael	-	M	2	Mar	14	S	do.
This record is officially closed.											
This record is officially closed.											
69. do		23	1	Sitchell Edward	-	M	29	Mar	83	M	Machine store dealer
			2	Sitchell Elizabeth	-	F	5	Jun	85	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Heavis Thomas	-	M	2	Apr	81	S	Machine store dealer later
Wood Farm, do		24	1	White Thomas W.	-	M	14	Jun	68	M	Farmer (own account)
			2	White Alice M.	-	F	27	Apr	93	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	White Julian C. D.	-	F	5	May	98	S	Helping father
			4	White Richard C. D.	-	M	20	Feb	59	S	Pressed Steel tool fitter
			5	White Doreen	-	F	4	Mar	11	S	Helping father.
Wood Farm Cottage		25	1	Wiggins Felix J.	-	M	29	Mar	81	M	Agricultural labourer
The Slade			2	Wiggins Elizabeth D.	-	F	29	Apr	83	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Wiggins Harold J.	-	M	13	Dec	11	S	Soldier for Coca Cola
Ans. June Service											
97 The Slade		26	1	Hopkins Ada E.	-	F	9	Oct	22	W	Unpaid domestic duties
99 do		27	1	Gardner Albert W.	-	M	3	Mar	93	M	Printed Machine Man
			2	Gardner Nellie E.	-	F	16	Jan	96	M	Unpaid domestic duties
101 do		28	1	Lee Lavinia A.	-	M	11	Nov	99	M	Bookkeeper Motor Works
			2	Lee Winifred	-	F	26	Apr	01	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Lee Jean M.	-	F	29	Apr	30	S	At school
			4	Lee Jean M.	-	F	11	Feb	28	S	do.
103 do.		29	1	Gordon William J.	-	M	28	Jul	93	M	Hospital kitchen boy
			2	Gordon Edith E.	-	F	28	Jul	95	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Gordon William H.	-	M	12	Jan	15	S	Leak work labourer
			4	Gordon Sarah M.	-	F	23	Apr	22	S	Shortland typist
			5	Gordon Violet M.	-	F	6	Mar	23	S	Embroiderer
			6	Gordon Desmond	-	M	20	Nov	28	S	At school
			7	Gordon Irene E.	-	F	4	Mar	24	S	do
			8	Leadley Irene E.	-	F	19	Dec	29	S	do.
1 Moor Cottage		30	1	Parsons Martha L.	-	F	6	Apr	83	W	Unpaid domestic duties
			2	Parsons Elizabeth	-	F	16	Apr	86	M	do.
			3	Parsons Frank	-	M	27	Apr	11	M	Plumber.
4 do		31	1	Denon Edwin	-	M	20	Apr	92	M	General labourer
			2	Denon Elizabeth	-	F	3	Mar	92	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Denon Harold E.	-	M	11	Feb	26	S	At school
			4	Denon Gordon S.	-	M	9	Oct	28	S	do
			5	Griffiths Lavinia M.	-	F	14	Feb	89	W	Incarcerated
3 do		32	1	King Beatrice S.	-	F	26	Apr	99	W	Unpaid domestic duties
			2	King Frank W.	-	M	23	Apr	05	S	Coach finiler
			3	King Edith B.	-	F	4	Apr	14	S	Bookshop assistant
			4	King Violet S.	-	F	25	Jun	20	S	do.
2 do		33	1	Bannister George	-	M	23	Apr	71	M	Booklayer
Hoot Farm, The Slade		24	6	White Josephine S.	-	F	75	Apr	19	S	Helping father

Extract from the 1939 register; taken on 29 September 1939, four weeks after the start of the Second World War. The information was used to produce identity cards and, once rationing was introduced in January 1940, to issue ration books. At Wood Farm were the long-standing tenants Thomas and Alice White. Living with them were four of their adult children: daughters Lilian, Doreen and Josephine (added in red at the very bottom of the page), all of whom were 'Helping father' on the farm; and son Richard, who was working as a tool fitter at the Pressed Steel factory in Cowley. Pressed Steel was engaged in vital war work and so Richard's job probably made him exempt from war service; however, he was volunteering with the St John Ambulance Brigade (SJAB). His sister Lilian was volunteering as an Air Raid Precaution (ARP) warden. The information in the register was updated for many years afterwards, so Josephine's married name of Mitchell has been added later. The next property listed after Wood Farm is Wood Farm Cottage, which had been occupied by the Wiggins family since at least 1921. Felix Wiggins (here aged 58) worked for the Whites at Wood Farm as a cowman. In 1939, two more cowmen, David Hartshorn and Eldred Dell (see p.26), lived at 'White's Cottages' further along the Slade<sup>82</sup> and were working for the White family as well.

<sup>82</sup> Wiggins family 1921 census; 1939 register for the Slade, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 16/01/2024.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939 the southern part of Wood Farm was requisitioned by the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry for an infantry training centre associated with the nearby Cowley Barracks on the Slade. The three fields south of Open Magdalen, and part of the area labelled ‘Magdalen Wood’ on the map above, together with the field west of Brasenose Wood (not part of Wood Farm), became the site of the Slade Army Camp. The camp comprised numerous huts, a parade ground, a rifle range, an isolation hospital, and other amenities. After the war the camp was converted into housing for council tenants.<sup>83</sup>



*Extract from the 1956 Ordnance Survey map, showing the Slade Army Camp (outlined in blue) and its geographical relationship with Wood Farm, Magdalen Wood, Open Magdalen, Brasenose Wood, and Open Brasenose. By the time this map was drawn, the army huts had been converted into housing for council tenants, but the layout of the huts and other structures, and the avenues which connected them, is very similar to that of the army camp.*

## **THE OLD ROAD PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, 1944–48**

During the Second World War (1939–45) Lord Nuffield’s Morris car works at Cowley were turned over entirely to work supporting the war effort, and part of Nuffield’s land at Wood Farm was requisitioned for the establishment of a Prisoner of War (POW) camp. The Old Road Camp, as it was called, was constructed in early 1944 in the middle of the farm’s northernmost field. It was reached by an access road running south off Old Road, to the east of the Crown & Thistle pub, adjacent to the present 154 Old Road. The tenant farmer Thomas White was compensated £32 for the loss of land, and Oxford City Council requisitioned an

<sup>83</sup> James Cunning, *A field in England: an investigation into the history of the Slade Camp Fields, Oxford*, dissertation for the Undergraduate Certificate in Archaeology, Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 2021, pp.7-8.

additional strip for the building of the access road.<sup>84</sup> The Old Road Camp, which was surrounded by a fence with a gated entrance, was a hostel rather than a base camp. It was a satellite of the Harcourt Hill prisoner of war camp which had opened on farmland in North Hinksey in 1942.<sup>85</sup>

### **Italian prisoners of war at the Old Road Camp, 1944–46**

‘Hostel Headington’, as the Old Road Camp was known, initially held Italian POWs (as did the camp at Hinksey). After the Italian surrender on 8 September 1943 such prisoners were encouraged to become co-operators, meaning they had better conditions in exchange for working, for example on local farms. Until August 1944 all Italian prisoners in the UK were restricted to a ‘Free Area’ within a radius of two miles around their camp. Those allowed bicycles could use them there, but had to be back at the camp by 10pm every night, and were only allowed to speak to British civilians when it was necessary to do so (namely in relation to their work duties or within camp). Many people remember seeing Italians around Headington and Cowley. Connie Coppock recalled an incident when she was coming home from work after dark one night along the Slade, and in the blackout conditions bumped into someone who turned out to be an Italian POW; he claimed to be a member of the Italian football team, but when he tried talking to her, she had to tell him they were not allowed to fraternise.<sup>86</sup>

Dick Tolley remembered that the Italians “were allowed out to walk in the evenings but not in public places. They were issued with battledress with a large red patch on the back. They were made to work, but at tasks not linked with the war effort, so they dug drainage ditches and mended roads.”<sup>87</sup>

Things changed in August 1944 when Italian prisoners were allowed to travel within a radius of five miles, and to speak to members of the public and accept invitations to private houses. Christopher Payne, whose grandparents lived in a cottage 162 Old Road, remembered that “Four doors away there was a road leading up to the gates of a Prisoner of War camp. I would say from memory the gates were forty yards from Old Road. It was a large gateway with a wooden frame and heavily covered with barbed wire, with guards standing at this point. Strange because my memory of that time does not include being able to see the surrounding enclosure, which must have been there as the camp was immediately behind my grandparents’ backyard, but I guess this was because being so young (I was born in 1940), I tended not to stray out into the yard.” The Italians were allowed out fairly unsupervised and Christopher had his hair cut several times by an Italian POW. “Three of them (Antonio, Barbo, and another one whose name I don’t recall) visited my grandparents’ home and would sometimes eat with us as my Grampy kept poultry and had about six allotments, so there was always plenty of fresh produce available. After the war they corresponded with my Gran thanking her for being so kind to them and helping them to cope with missing family life back home.”<sup>88</sup>

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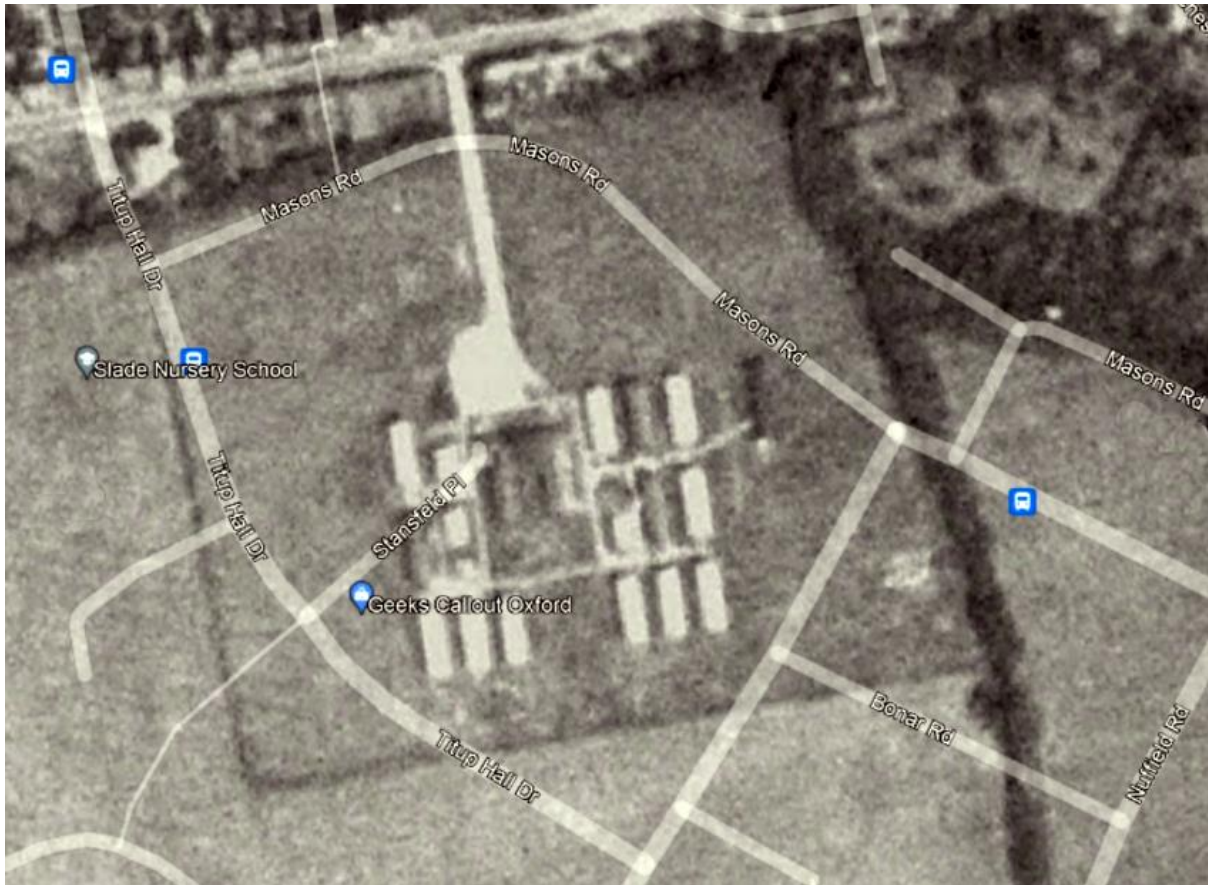
<sup>84</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023. Old Road POW camp requisition order RDG 1683, 25/01/1944, TW White (The National Archives, courtesy of James Cunning).

<sup>85</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>86</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>87</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>88</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*,



A Google Earth Historic Image showing Old Road Camp in December 1945, overlaid by a map of the roads of Wood Farm that have since engulfed it. When this photograph was taken the Italian prisoners were starting to be sent home, and the process was completed in early 1946.<sup>89</sup> Image and commentary courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.

### German prisoners of war at the Old Road Camp, 1946–48

At the end of the war in 1945 Italian POWs began to be sent home, leading to a shortage of labour nationally. The Home Office allowed suitable German prisoners to occupy the vacated Italian POW camps, and to do manual labour, though they had less freedom than the Italians and initially they were allowed to work only in agriculture and forestry. A re-education policy aimed at weakening loyalty to National Socialism (Nazism) amongst German prisoners of war had been approved by the War Cabinet in September 1944. Hence, in 1946, Old Road Camp became a ‘re-education camp’, and both it and Hinksey Camp housed Class 3 (‘white’, or anti-Nazi) and Class 2 (‘grey’, neither pro- nor anti-Nazi) German prisoners.<sup>90</sup>

[https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington Reminiscences*, Christopher Payne: *World War II Camps*, September 2021, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne\\_camps.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne_camps.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>89</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>90</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023. Emily Redican-Bradford “Re-educating the enemy: German Prisoners of War in Britain”, *Doing History in Public*, <https://doinghistoryinpublic.org/2019/06/25/re-educating-the-enemy-german-prisoners-of-war-in-britain/>, accessed 13/01/2024.

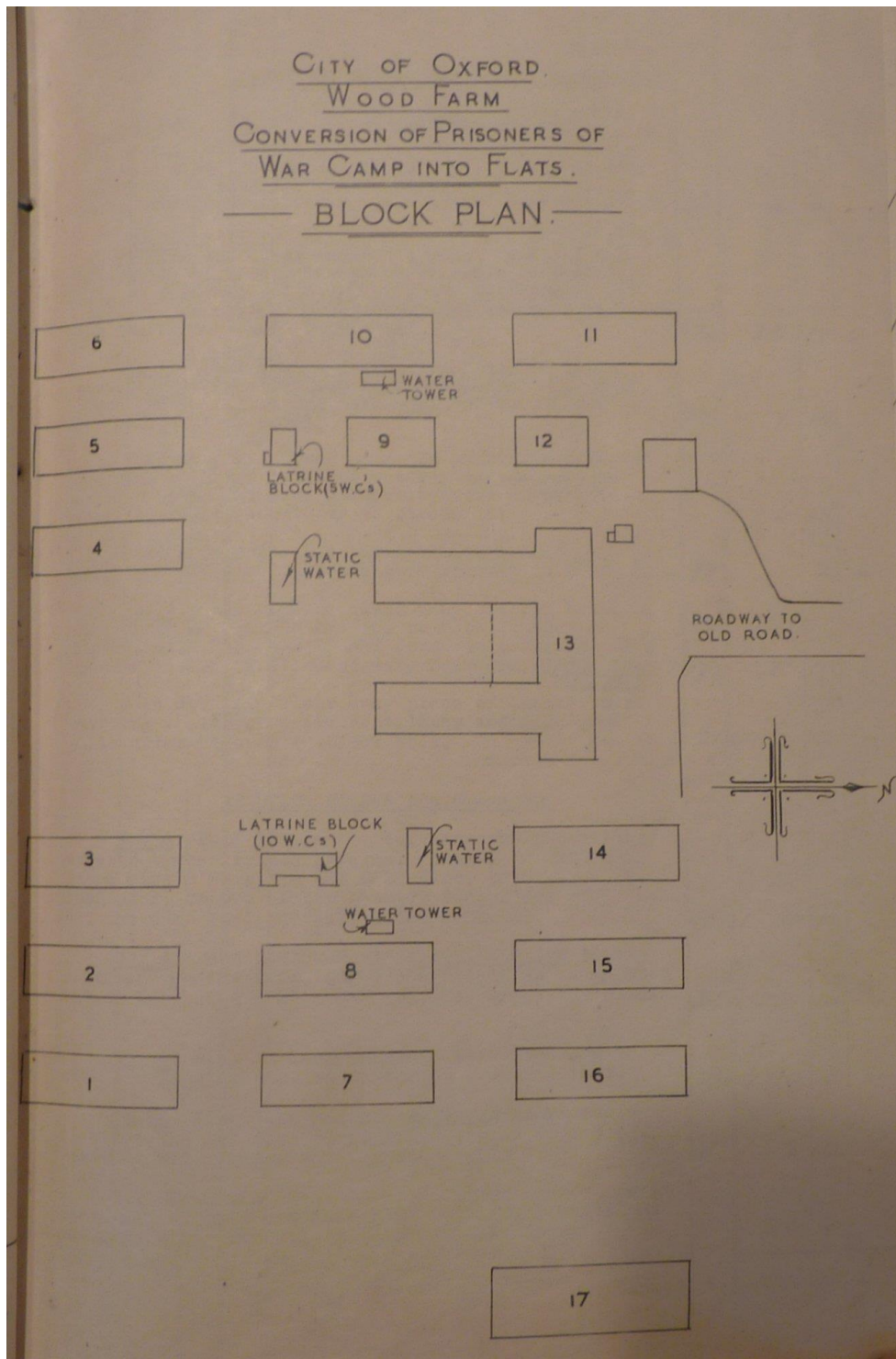


*Aerial view looking south over the Old Road camp in 1947, when it was occupied by German prisoners of war: Old Road is at the bottom of the image, with Quarry Road and York Road coming off it, and the Slade is on the right. The buildings of Wood Farm are near the centre of the image, with its fields running between Old Road and the dark area of Magdalen Wood. Beyond Magdalen Wood can be seen the scattered huts of the Slade Army Camp, which had been established on land belonging to Wood Farm in 1939.<sup>91</sup> Image EAW003903 – Source: Historic England Archive.*

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<sup>91</sup> James Cuning, *A field in England: an investigation into the history of the Slade Camp Fields, Oxford*, dissertation for the Undergraduate Certificate in Archaeology, Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 2021.

This plan of the Old Road POW camp at Wood Farm (drawn up later, when it was to be converted into housing, see p.37) shows the lay out of the camp huts, or 'blocks':



*A plan of the Old Road POW camp at Wood Farm (drawn up when it was to be converted into housing, see later); west is at the top. Blocks 1-7 and 11: dormitories; 8 and 10: ablutions; 9: welfare and dining, male staff; 12: sick bay; 13: kitchen and dining room; 14: staff; 15: drying room; 16: dormitory and carpenter's workshop; 17: recreation.<sup>92</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, B27/1/A4/4/6.*

<sup>92</sup> Estimates for conversion of POW camp at Wood Farm, July 1947–Feb 1949, Oxfordshire History Centre, B27/1/A4/4/6.

Initially, in July 1946, there were 160 German prisoners at the Old Road Camp, but by May 1947 there were 230, suggesting that each dormitory block was accommodating about 26 men. Christopher Payne recalled that German POWs worked on farms in Headington, but always as a group, supervised at all times by armed guards, and local children never spoke to them. Restrictions eased as time went on however, and in late 1947 the monthly camp inspection reports noted that German prisoners liked to go to the Headington Cinema (later the Not the Moulin Rouge) on New High Street, and that the Conservative Club, Rotary Club, and students at the University of Oxford were all inviting the Headington prisoners to visit.<sup>93</sup>



Pauline Dean (née Gibbs), who lived in Old Road as a child during the Second World War, remembered that the German POWs were friendly to local children, perhaps because they reminded them of their families at home. Pauline's grandmother bought herself and Pauline's mother fancy jewellery boxes, made of wood by one of the Germans, and Pauline herself was given a plain but beautifully-made one with her initials on it (left), which she treasured all her life.<sup>94</sup>

*Image courtesy of Trevor Coppock (via Stephanie Jenkins).*

By the end of 1947, eighteen months after the war had ended, the general feeling in Britain was that it was time for German prisoners to be sent home. Hence the remaining 37 inmates at the Old Road Re-education Camp seem to have been moved out in February 1948.<sup>95</sup>

Throughout the war the White family had continued to farm Wood Farm, but Thomas White died in July 1948, aged eighty. He was buried in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin in Iffley, the parish in which he had grown up.<sup>96</sup> His widow Alice continued to farm the land, with the help of various staff and probably some of her adult children. She is listed in Kelly's *Directory of Oxford* as 'Mrs T White (farmer)' from 1949 onwards, with her long-term employee, Felix Wiggins, still living at Wood Farm Cottage, and another long-serving cowman, Eldred Dell (see p.26), still at one of the farm's other two cottages, known as 'White's Cottages'.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Estimates for conversion of POW camp at Wood Farm, July 1947–Feb 1949, Oxfordshire History Centre, B27/1/A4/4/6. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington Reminiscences, Christopher Payne: World War II Camps, September 2021*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne\\_camps.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne_camps.html), accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>94</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Pauline Gibbs (Mrs Dean)*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/gibbs.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>95</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas White burial records, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 12/01/2024.

<sup>97</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, various dates.

## THE OLD ROAD CAMP AS COUNCIL HOUSING, 1948–56

In the summer of 1947, before all the German prisoners had left Old Road Camp, Oxford City Council began to look into the possibility of using it to house local people who were otherwise homeless.<sup>98</sup> There was a national housing shortage at the end of the war, and Oxford was very much affected, not least because of the large numbers of men and women working in the motor industry at Cowley, who needed accommodation in and around the city. In October 1940, the City Council had over 2,800 families on its housing application register, and no new houses were being built because of the war.<sup>99</sup> In 1946 the number on the register had risen to nearly 5,000,<sup>100</sup> and some people were living in virtual squatter camps around the outskirts of the city. Hence the Council was looking for ways to accommodate people wherever it could.

In June 1947 the City Architect's Department drew up plans for the conversion of the existing huts at the Old Road Camp into flats. In September a delegation of "squatters" living in Headington Hill Hall (then owned by the City Council) and Nissen huts on Cheney Lane met the city's Chief Sanitary Inspector and the Deputy Town Clerk to ask whether they could move into the Old Road Camp before winter, as their present accommodation was damp and cold, and the drainage and electricity supplies inadequate. However, they were told that they would not be able to move until the spring of the following year, but that in the meantime improvements would be made by the council to their current accommodation.<sup>101</sup>

The Town Clerk, Harry Plowman (after whom Plowman Tower in Northway was later named), oversaw plans for converting the Old Road POW Camp into housing for the Headington Hill Hall and Cheney Lane groups, including preventing "unauthorised squatters" from moving in once the work was complete. The land at Wood Farm was compulsorily purchased from Lord Nuffield, the City Architects Department drew up plans for the conversion, and quantity surveyors Watkins & Decker were commissioned to prepare a detailed schedule of works and 'bill of quantities' with which to put the job out to tender. Local building firm Symm & Co won the contract.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Old Road POW camp, Headington, correspondence of Harold Francis Hurcombe (City Estates Surveyor), May–Nov 1947, Oxford City archives (held at Oxford Town Hall), Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/2/C76.

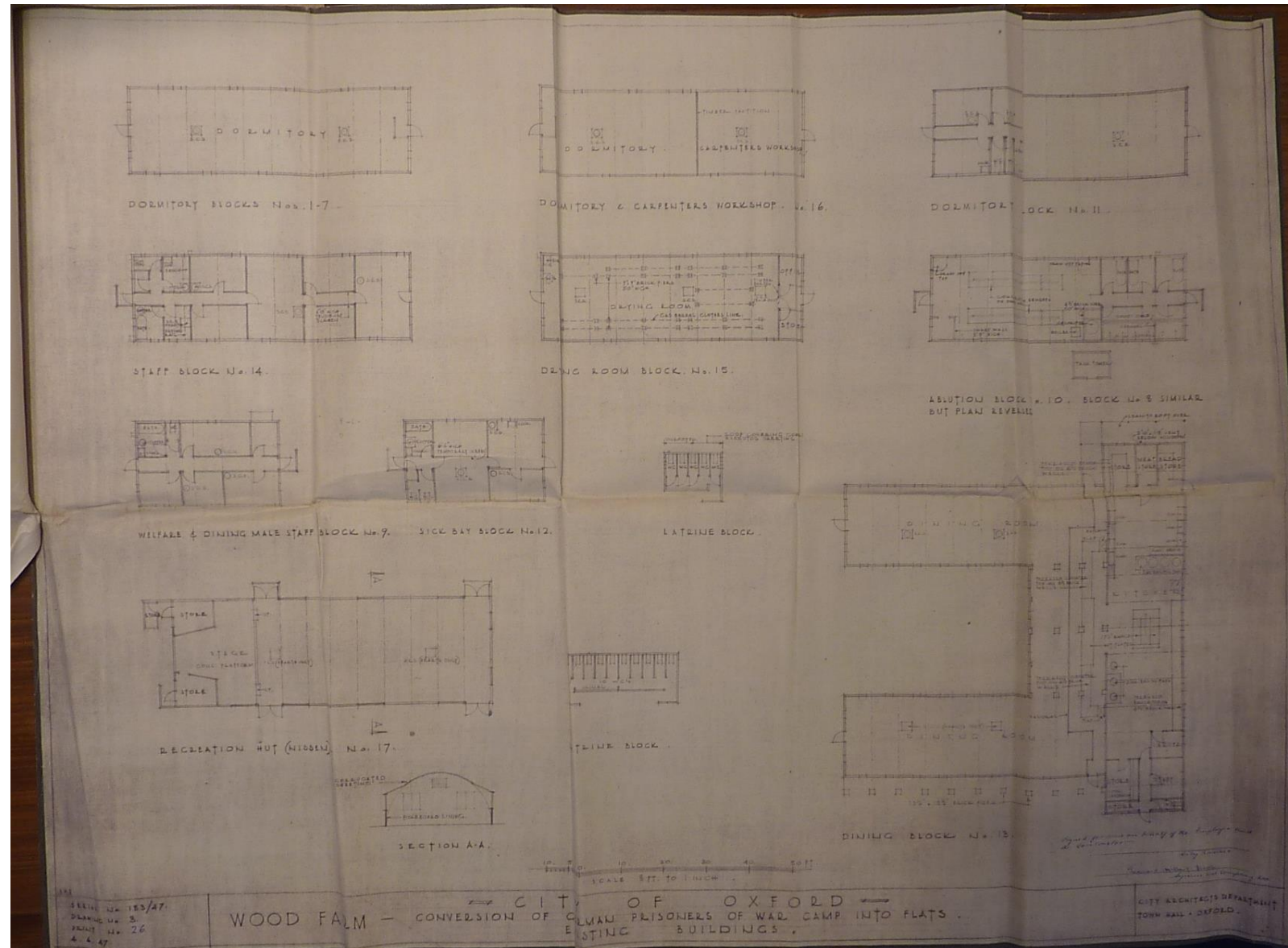
<sup>99</sup> Malcolm Graham, e-mail to Trish Silkin copied to Liz Woolley, 31/05/2021.

<sup>100</sup> Victoria County History of Oxford, *A History of the County of Oxford, Volume IV: The City of Oxford* (1979), p.207.

<sup>101</sup> Old Road POW camp, Headington, correspondence of Harold Francis Hurcombe (City Estates Surveyor), May–Nov 1947, Oxford City archives (held at Oxford Town Hall), Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/2/C76.

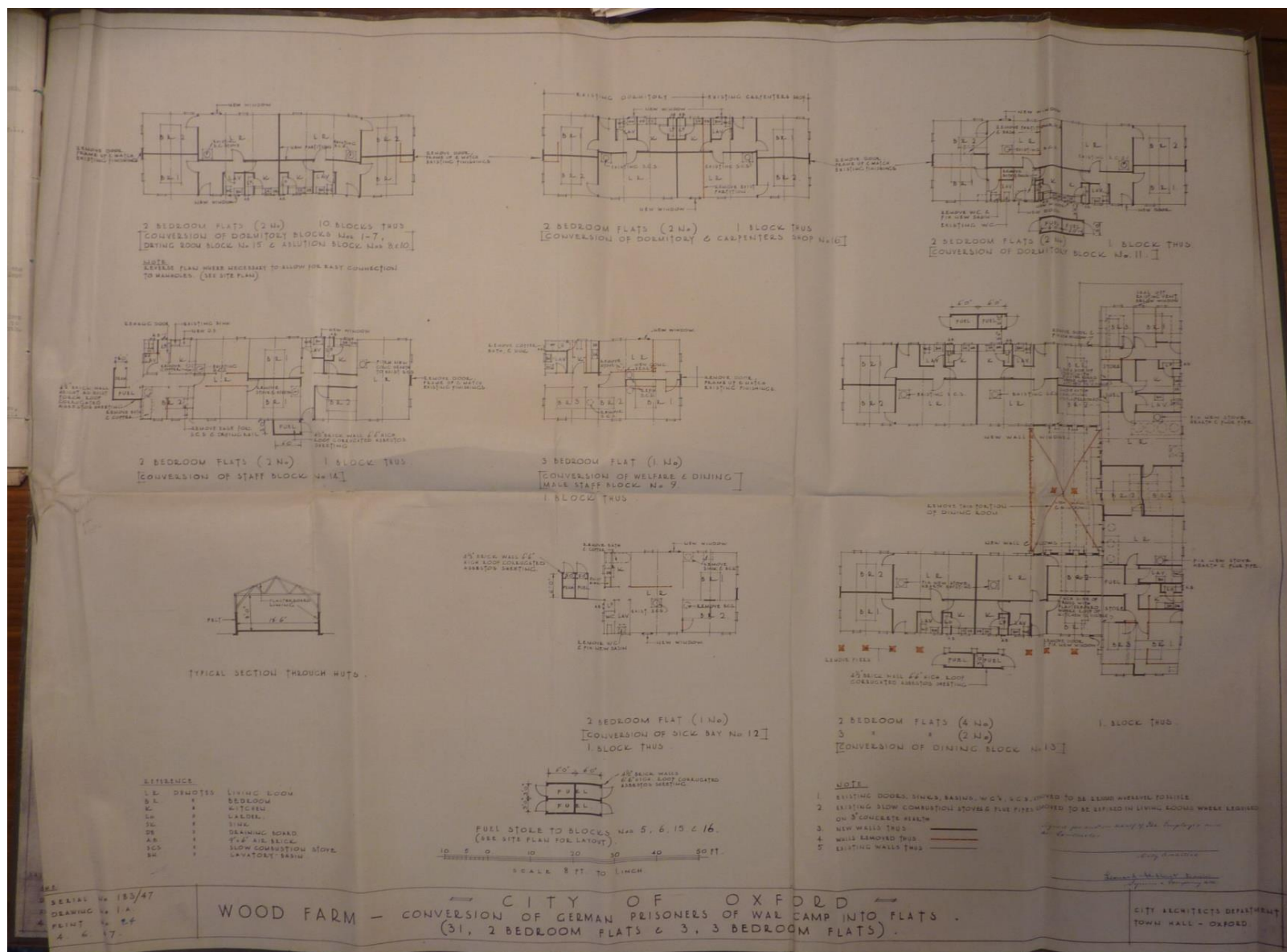
<sup>102</sup> Wood Farm, Old Road, Headington, German Prisoners of War Camp conversion into flats (Symm), 1947, Oxford City archives (held at Oxford Town Hall), Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/4/Y5/11.

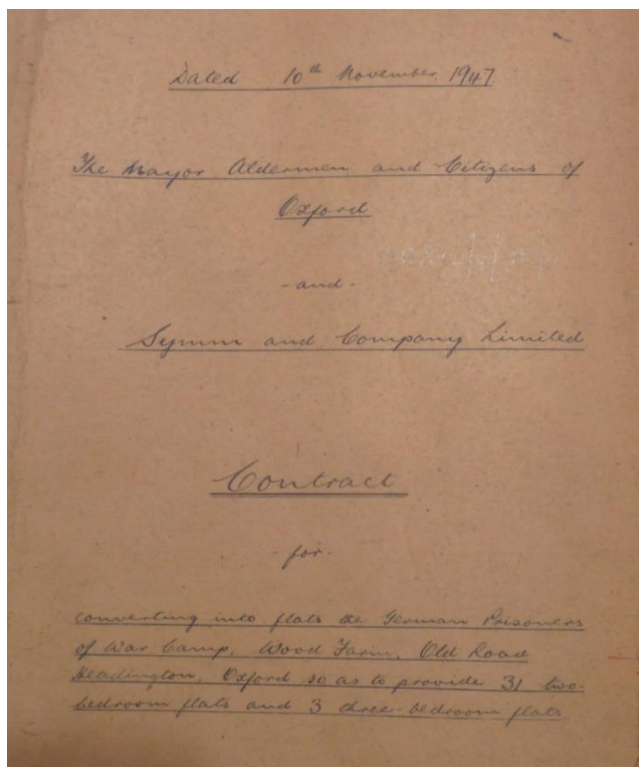




*City Architects Department plans of the existing buildings at Old Road Prisoner of War Camp, Wood Farm, June 1947, drawn up in preparation for the conversion of the camp's huts (or 'blocks') into flats for council tenants. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/4/Y5/11.*

City Architects Department plans for the proposed conversion of the blocks at Old Road Prisoner of War camp into two- and three-bedroom flats, June 1947. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/4/Y5/11.





Front cover of the contract between Oxford City Council and builders Symm & Co, 10 November 1947, for the conversion of the Old Road POW camp at Wood Farm into flats for council tenants. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/4/Y5/11.

Once the last of the German POWs had left in early 1948, Symm & Co set about converting the camp huts into 31 two-bedroom and three three-bedroom flats. Almost £23,000 had already been spent on the project, and Symm's bill came to a further £11,738. The rents were set at 8½ shillings per week, plus rates, for the two-bedroomed flats, and 9 or 10 shillings plus rates for the three-bedroomed ones.<sup>103</sup>

Kathy Turner, who lived at the former Old Road Camp when it was newly-converted, from the ages of about two to six, remembered that her family's home had three bedrooms, one double one off the sitting room and two singles off the hall. "I can't recollect it having a bath as my sister and I were bathed in the large kitchen sink. It had a stove in the sitting room and we had a settee and two old airplane seats. It had a largish front garden in which we mainly grew vegetables. We used to walk to Quarry CE Primary school where we were known as the children who lived in the huts. I remember exciting bonfire nights with a communal bonfire and also groups of us regularly walking up Shotover Hill to the scrambling. My sister and I used to play in the surrounding fields and picked mushrooms which our dad had for tea."<sup>104</sup>

Christopher Payne, whose grandparents lived at 162 Old Road, remembered visiting friends who lived at the camp. "[The houses] were made of wood that was painted green on the outside and were heated by a coal- or coke-fired heater, but at least they had a bathroom, something my grandparents did not have in their house, and they also had I think an indoor toilet, again something not found at no. 162 at that time."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Old Road POW camp, Headington, correspondence of Harold Francis Hurcombe (City Estates Surveyor), May–Nov 1947, Oxford City archives (held at Oxford Town Hall), Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 12/2/C76. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>104</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences, Kathy Turner, September 2021*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/turner.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>105</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington Reminiscences, Christopher Payne: World War II Camps, September 2021*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne\\_camps.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne_camps.html), accessed 03/12/2023



The arrival of more than thirty new families at Old Road Camp must have boosted trade at nearby Tilly's, a general store run by Matilda Kislingbury (1885–1975) at what is now 123 (formerly 109) Old Road, almost opposite the Crown & Thistle. Miss Kislingbury lived with her parents at 29 Old Road but moved to the newly-built no. 109 in 1939 and ran her shop from there until the mid-1950s.<sup>106</sup> Some of the time she was assisted by her brother Frank who was remembered with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth and an indelible pencil behind his ear.<sup>107</sup> Prisoners of war from the Old Road camp shopped there during the war, and Tim Blackmore later described it as “an Aladdin's cave of sweets for us kids ... behind the dark wooden counter the wall was lined with shelves filled with large glass jars of sweets of every description. It drew us in like a magnet on pocket-money day.”<sup>108</sup> Judith Wright remembered “...all the jars of lollies, served up in little paper bags. Sherbet dip wrapped in paper, cinder toffee was my favourite ... Crisps came in a packet with a twist of salt in blue paper.”<sup>109</sup>

123 Old Road, formerly Tilly's sweet shop, in May 2015. Image from Google Street View.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD FARM HOUSING ESTATE, 1950 ONWARDS

Between 1946 and 1950 the City Council built 1,400 new council dwellings, but thanks mainly to an influx of people drawn to Oxford to work in the burgeoning car industry, the waiting list for housing remained at nearly 5,000 applicants. By then very little suitable building land was left within the city: of an area of around 8,400 acres identified in 1948, almost half was already built up, and a further quarter was liable to flood. A 1949 council report concluded that the only option was to develop sites straddling the then city boundary, or extending beyond it. Most of the new housing estates built from the mid-1940s onwards were to the east and south-east, at Rose Hill, at New Marston, around and between Cowley and Headington, beyond Cowley at Blackbird Leys, towards Garsington, and around Littlemore.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Matilda Kislingbury 1921 census, 1939 register, electoral registers (via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 16/01/2024), entries in Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*.

<sup>107</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences*, Kathy Turner, September 2021, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/turner.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>108</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences*, Tim Blackmore, November 2021, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/blackmore.html>, accessed 23/12/2023.

<sup>109</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences*, Pauline Gibbs (Mrs Dean), <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/gibbs.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>110</sup> Victoria County History of Oxford, *A History of the County of Oxford, Volume IV: The City of Oxford* (1979), pp.207-8. John Boughton, *Municipal Dreams*, <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2020/08/04/council-housing-in-oxford-part-ii/>, accessed 23/12/2023.

As part of this development, Oxford City Council obtained Wood Farm – including Magdalen Wood – from Lord Nuffield in November 1950. It is not clear whether the council paid for the land, or whether Nuffield donated it; no price is recorded on the title deed.<sup>111</sup> The fields would be built upon, but the woodland remained – intact and publicly accessible – in line with the agreement that Nuffield had made with Magdalen College when he had purchased the land 1934.<sup>112</sup>

In May 1951 the City Council gave itself planning permission for the first tranche of housing on the new Wood Farm Estate: 116 ‘Easiform’ houses on newly-created roads which would become Titup Hall Drive, Wood Farm Road, Masons Road, Palmer Road, and Pauling Road.<sup>113</sup> Easiform was a method of in-situ precast concrete construction which the company John Laing developed from 1919 onwards; from the 1920s to the 1960s the firm built over 100,000 homes in this way, all over the country, many of them for local authorities.<sup>114</sup> Laing Easiform houses had already been erected on other Oxford council estates, for example at Barton in the late 1940s.<sup>115</sup>

Easiform houses were attractive because in the post-war period, when there was still a lack of building materials and skilled labour, they were relatively cheap, quick and easy to erect. To make the walls, concrete was poured into metal shuttering on-site; at Wood Farm, the external walls were faced with a Tyrolean ‘Cullimix’ spray to give a cream finish. The roofs were covered with concrete tiles. 101 of the houses had, as shown on the plans on p.43 below, three bedrooms, a living/dining room, kitchen, store room, bathroom and separate WC; and the remaining fifteen were four-bedroomed.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A1745/337 (51/01745/A\_H), May 1951, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=5101745A1\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=5101745A1_H), accessed 13/01/2024. Title register for Wood Farm and Slade Park Estates, Headington, Oxford (Freehold), Title number ON8255, HM Land Registry, courtesy of James Cunning, accessed 11/08/2022.

<sup>112</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Streets; Headington's newer estates; Wood Farm (from 1953)*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/estates/index.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>113</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A1745/337 (51/01745/A\_H), May 1951, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/6B053F7E2E80F79F8F04BCA7CE320055/pdf/51\\_01745\\_A\\_H--808819.pdf](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/6B053F7E2E80F79F8F04BCA7CE320055/pdf/51_01745_A_H--808819.pdf), accessed 13/01/2024.

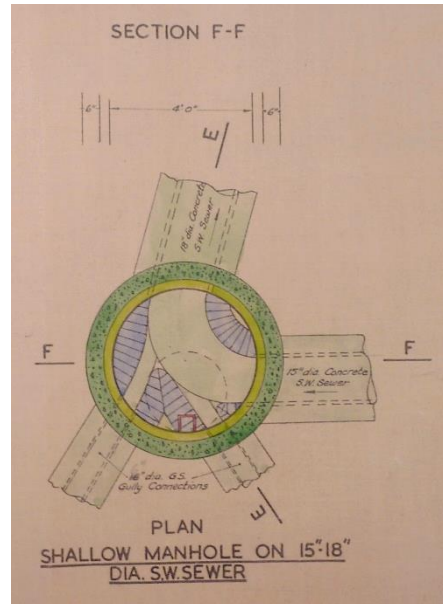
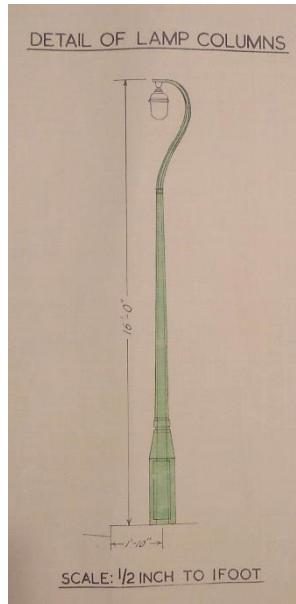
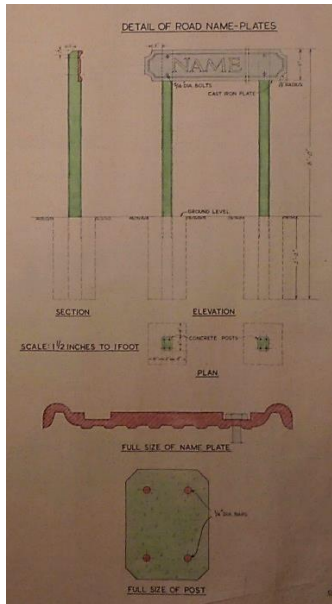
<sup>114</sup> Historic England, *Breaking New Ground: the homes that Laing built*, [https://artsandculture.google.com/story/breaking-new-ground-the-homes-that-laing-built-historic-england/KwXB41\\_p4j8CLO?hl=en-GB](https://artsandculture.google.com/story/breaking-new-ground-the-homes-that-laing-built-historic-england/KwXB41_p4j8CLO?hl=en-GB), accessed 13/01/2024.

<sup>115</sup> Oxford City Council estate records (Town Hall collection), “Barton No 4 Estate, erection of 124 Easiform type houses (John Laing), 7 Mar 1949”, OCA12/4/Y2/68, <https://heritagesearch.oxfordshire.gov.uk/records/OCA12/4/Y2/68>, accessed 20/01/2024.

<sup>116</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A1745/337 (51/01745/A\_H), May 1951, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/6B053F7E2E80F79F8F04BCA7CE320055/pdf/51\\_01745\\_A\\_H--808819.pdf](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/files/6B053F7E2E80F79F8F04BCA7CE320055/pdf/51_01745_A_H--808819.pdf), accessed 13/01/2024.



*Plan of the Wood Farm Estate, 1951, by the City Engineer and Surveyor JC Riddell, showing proposed roads (numbered but not yet named), sewers and footpaths, overlaid with the existing field boundaries. The Old Road Camp can be seen upper centre, and the buildings of Wood Farm itself are lower left. Sections 1 and 2 of the estate, north of Wood Farm Road, are shown coloured on this plan; section 3, south of Wood Farm Road, is shown in black and white. Notice that the city boundary ran through the estate. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 3/2/Y3/26/1.*



Street Name-plates:

31. The street nameplates shall be of cast iron, Oxford Corporation pattern, as manufactured by The Hub Ironworks Company Ltd., Chipping Norton, and equal in all respects to a sample to be seen at the Corporation Highways Depot, Nelson Street, Oxford.

The posts supporting the plates shall be reinforced concrete, 4 ins. by 3 ins. in section, 3 feet long, reinforced with four  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter mild steel bars. The arrises shall have  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. chamfers, and the tops of the posts shall be splayed on the back, recessed on the front, and have two holes to take  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. dia. bolts.

Concrete Street Lighting Columns & Brackets:

32. The columns and brackets, where specified for Concrete Columns, shall be of spun reinforced concrete, as manufactured by the Standard Ironworks Co. Ltd., Type 7A, or by other approved Manufacturer, ground to a smooth granolithic finish. They shall be 16 feet from ground level to point of attachment, with no ladder arm, and fitted complete with hardwood switchboard panel.

Steel Street Lighting Columns & Brackets:

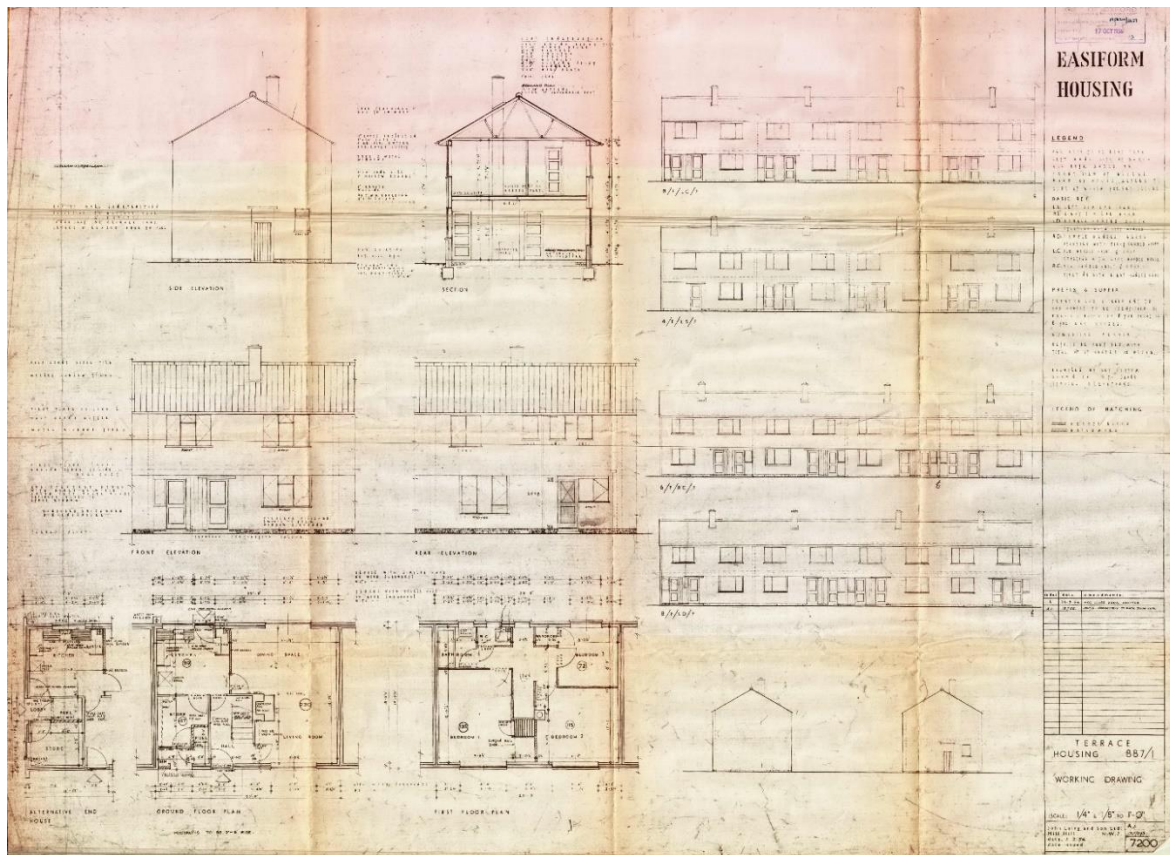
33. The columns, where specified for Steel Columns, shall be tubular steel similar to that manufactured by Messrs. Stewart & Lloyds Ltd., Group B fluted, type S ref. Gb 512 complete with doors, foot and middle collar.

The mounting height of the column shall be 15' 0" and shall be bedded on concrete with sufficient concrete surround to prevent columns moving out of position. The Column shall be coated inside, and the ground portion, outside, with approved bituminous solution. The remainder of outside and whole of bracket arrangement shall receive after preparatory rust removal one priming coat of Atlas Ruskilla - Primer No. 11. After erection, the column and bracket shall receive an undercoat of 'Ruskilla' Grey No. 3969A, and a finishing coat of 'Ruskilla' Grey No. 3969. The steel brackets short length manufactured by Messrs. Lucy & Co. Ltd. shall be of the pattern as supplied to the Oxford Corporation.

Street Lighting Lanterns:

34. The lanterns shall be of the type ref. Z5545. S.B. as manufactured by The General Electric Company and fitted with 150 watt tungsten filament lamps or other type lamps as instructed by the Engineer.

*Enormous care was taken over the planning and design of every detail of the Wood Farm Estate. Images courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre; above: OCA 3/2/Y3/26/1 and OCA 3/2/Y3/27/1; left: OCA 3/4/Y10/39.*



Plan for Easiform houses at Wood Farm, provided by John Laing & Sons Ltd in February 1954. Oxford City Council planning application A5634/6837 (56/05634/A\_H).

Erection of the council houses at Wood Farm began in 1953. The new houses gradually encircled the Old Road Camp, whose flats were still occupied by council tenants. Kathy Turner remembered that “They built Wood Farm Estate around us and this became a new exciting play area for us, among the scaffolding and bricks.”<sup>117</sup>



Aerial view of 1953, looking north over the new estate taking shape at Wood Farm. Old Road Camp can be seen in the centre of the image, with new houses around it on Masons Road and Titup Hall Drive, and further to the west on Pauling and Palmer Roads, and to the south-east on Bracegirdle Road and Chillingworth Crescent. Magdalen Wood is in the foreground, and Wood Farm itself is to the south of Pauling and Palmer Roads. Image: EAW049095 - Source: Historic England Archive.

<sup>117</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences, Kathy Turner*, September 2021, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/turner.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.





Laing's 30,000th Easiform house was completed on the Wood Farm Estate on 1 May 1953. There was a ceremony to mark the occasion, attended by Ernest Marples MP (Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government), Sir John Laing, and various civic dignitaries, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Oxford, William Walker (seen here giving a speech) and his wife Clara. Walker was a friend of Lord Nuffield's, and managing director of Benfield & Loxley, the Oxford building firm which over a period of several decades erected almost all the buildings at Nuffield's car works at Cowley.<sup>118</sup> On the right of the picture is a group of workmen who were, presumably, working on the site. Image jlp01\_08\_008584 - © Historic England Archive. John Laing Photographic Collection.

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<sup>118</sup> John Boughton, *Municipal Dreams*, <https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2020/08/04/council-housing-in-oxford-part-ii/>, accessed 23/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Oxford History: Mayors & Lord Mayors, William Charles Walker (1882–1966), Mayor of Oxford 1952/3*, [http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1836\\_1962/walker\\_william\\_1952.html](http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1836_1962/walker_william_1952.html), accessed 21/01/2024.



Plan showing proposed tree planting on the estate, June 1953, with exact species of trees labelled and named in the table at the top left. By now the roads had been named and sites for a school, children's playparks, homes for old people, shops and a church had been designated; the latter was never built. Note the site of Old Road Camp, between Titup Drive and Masons Road, labelled 'This area cannot be developed while camp is in existence'. On the western side, the site of Wood Farm itself, still occupied by the White family, was also untouched. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 3/2/Y3/28/6.

By 1954, 257 houses had been built and occupied on the Wood Farm Estate. Of these, 104 were on Chillingworth Crescent; 22 were on Bracegirdle Road; four on Wood Farm Road; 49 on Masons Road; eight on Titup Hall Drive; 40 on Palmer Road; and 30 on Pauling Road. Five more roads – Atkyns Road, Bonar Road, Calcot Close, Nuffield Road, and Rede Close – had been laid out but were as yet unoccupied. There were 26 families still living at the Old Road Camp, eight of the original 34 huts having been demolished in 1953 when Titup Hall Drive and Masons Road were laid out. The White family continued to farm at Wood Farm, albeit on a reduced scale, with their long-serving cowman Felix Wiggins still at Wood Farm (or White’s) Cottage.<sup>119</sup>

<b>PALMER ROAD,</b>	
Wood Farm Estate, Headington.	
From Wood Farm road to 22 Pauling road. Map I 7.	
North side.	
2	Smith Wm
4	James Wm. R
6	Allum Fred
8	Panting Donald
10	Sawers Albt
12	Ferguson Ronald
14	Morris Mrs
16	Hill Owen F
18	Drewitt Frank
20	Thomas Rt
22	Rawlins Jn
24	Phillips Wm
26	Palmer Hy
28	Evans Evan
30	Sammons Basil
32	Tanner Albt
34	Robinson Roland A
38	Risk Wm
40	Baughan Jn
42	Browning Stanley
44	Long Gordon
46	Phillips Arth
South side.	
1	Osborne Peter
3	Trueman Basil
5	Pumphrey Thos
7	Charlett Albt. J
9	McPherson Archbld
11	Davies Leslie
13	Gibson Rd
15	Smith Clive
17	Owen Danl
19	Havens Geo
21	Ashcroft Mrs
23	Whelan Wm
25	Gardner Raidie
27	Morgan Sidney J
29	Roby B
31	Ratliffe Gilbt

Martin Ferguson and his family were one of the first to move into the new Wood Farm Estate. Martin’s father Ronald worked at Pressed Steel’s private hospital at Cowley. The family had lived for a while at Slade Camp, the army camp which had been turned over to council housing after the war (see p.34). Then they had moved to a disused airfield at Berinsfield, a village seven miles south-east of Oxford, and lived in a Nissen hut adjacent to a gypsy encampment. In 1953, when Martin was five, they got a new council house at 12 Palmer Road on the Wood Farm Estate. Martin has fond memories of growing up playing in nearby woods, and at Shotover “where, aged fourteen, I kissed my class girlfriend June Rouse from Pauling Road in Wood Farm”.<sup>120</sup>

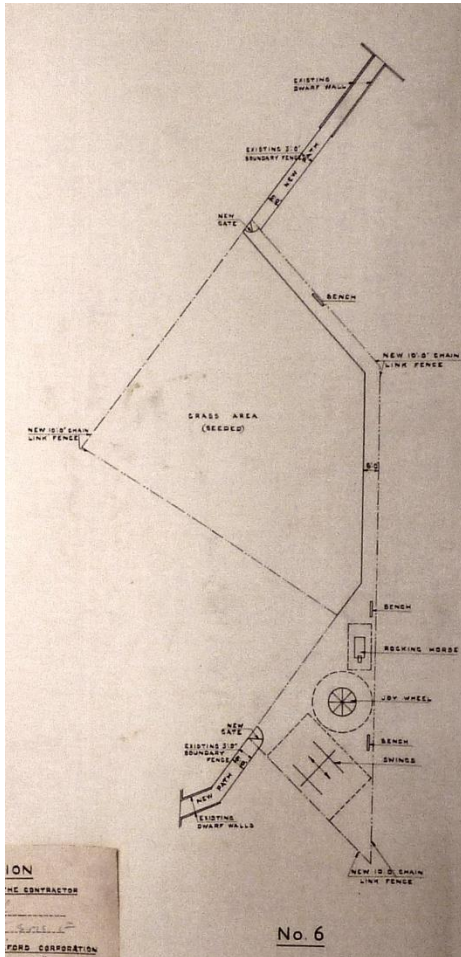
*Extract from Kelly’s Directory of Oxford for 1954, showing the heads of households on newly-completed Palmer Road, with Martin’s father Ronald Ferguson at no. 12.*

Tim Blackmore came to live with his aunt and her family at 29 Masons Road in the summer of 1955, following the death of his mother. He was five, and lived there for four years. The house was next to one of the recreation grounds, with swings, an old tractor cemented into the earth, and a few other things to play on. To the front of the house was a grassy patch which was a communal play area for all the kids in the road. “Here we could play marbles or whip and top. Hula-hoop was another favourite, also jacks or five-stones, and we could pedal around on our trikes, scooters or roller skate. Traffic in those days was light so we were quite safe. Come the weekend we might all venture up to Shotover and spend a morning or

<sup>119</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1954.

<sup>120</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences, Martin Ferguson, January 2018*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/ferguson.html>, accessed 23/12/2023.

afternoon having great fun in the woods. Care would be taken to avoid bumping into the ‘Slade Park Gang’, or there would surely be a violent clash between us.” Tim also remembered that street traders toured the area from time to time, including the Corona lorry selling pop, a travelling knife sharpener, and the laundry service. The rag-and-bone man came round with his horse and cart calling “Rag and bone!”, and would exchange a goldfish in a plastic bag, or perhaps sixpence, for some unwanted clothing.<sup>121</sup>

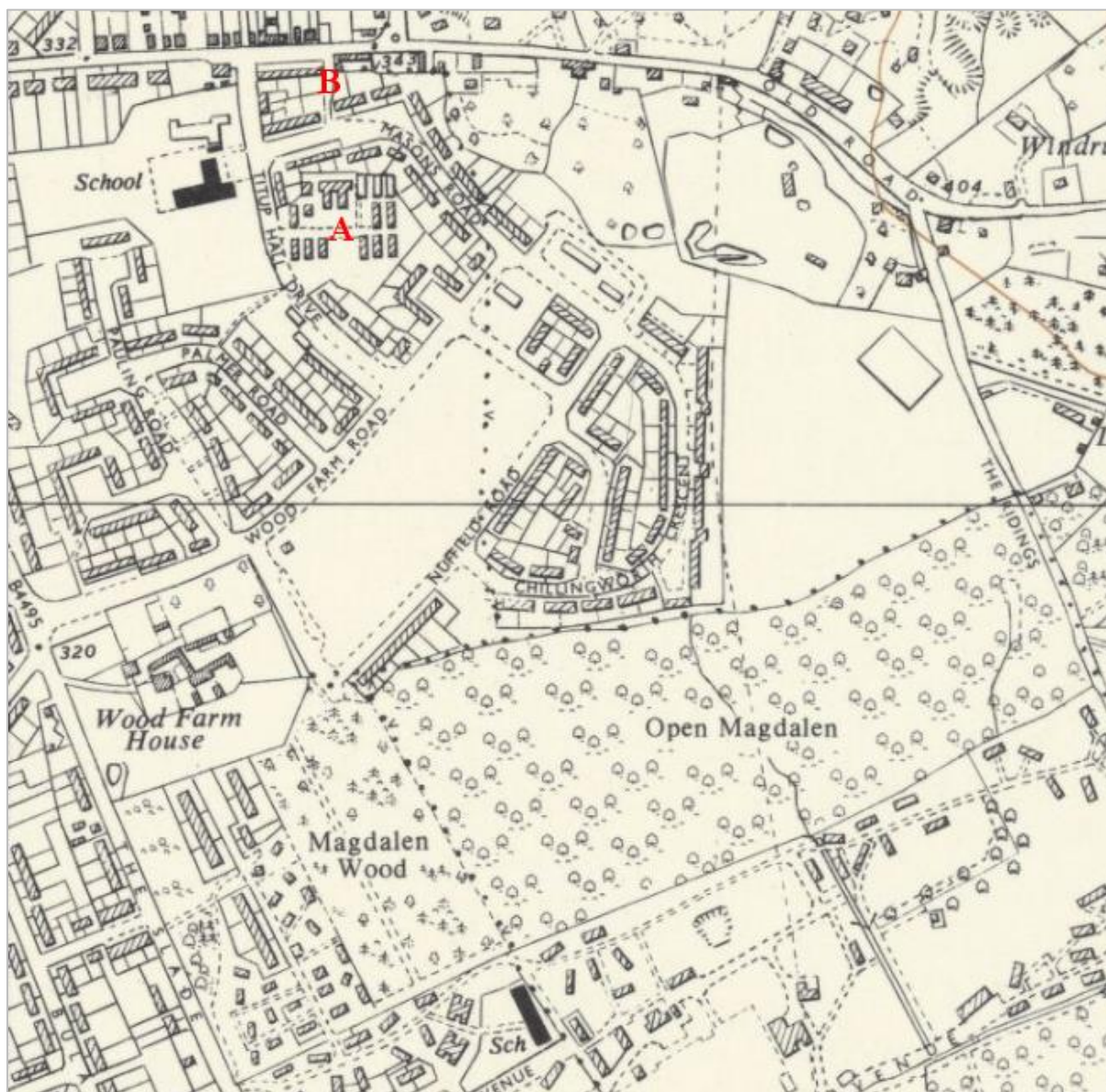


*Proposed layout of one of six children’s fenced and gated play areas planned for the Wood Farm Estate, with a grassed area, benches, and equipment including a rocking horse, a joy wheel and swings. Originally this play area was to be built at the far eastern edge of the estate, between Bracegirdle Road and Chillingworth Crescent, but later it was decided to build it south of Wood Farm Road, near where the recreational area is now. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, OCA 3/2/Y3/29/1.*

As the population of the Wood Farm estate expanded rapidly, a junior school for 320 pupils aged seven to eleven was opened in April 1955 on a six-acre site on Titup Hall Drive. Its grounds incorporated a field behind the Crown & Thistle pub which had been used by Stays Stables for grazing their horses. The adjoining infants’ department, for 240 pupils aged five to seven, opened in September 1956. Wood Farm Junior Mixed and Infant School, as it was now called, catered for children from the Wood Farm Estate, and soon afterwards for those from the neighbouring Town Furze Estate, which was built on the western side of the Slade from 1958 onwards.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, Headington Reminiscences, Tim Blackmore, November 2021*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/blackmore.html>, accessed 23/12/2023

<sup>122</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Schools, Wood Farm School*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/schools/woodfarmschool.htm>, accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Streets; Headington’s newer estates; Wood Farm (from 1953)*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/estates/index.html>, accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington Reminiscences, Christopher Payne: World War II Camps, September 2021*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne\\_camps.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/reminiscences/payne_camps.html), accessed 03/12/2023.



Extract from the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map, updated 1956, showing the Wood Farm housing estate three years after building had begun. The map shows the farm house, Magdalen Wood and Open Magdalen. Once Titup Hall Drive had been created in 1953, a vehicular entrance was made from it to the Old Road Camp (labelled 'A'). The former camp access road, next to 154 Old Road, was now blocked off to vehicles, but a footpath leading from Old Road to Masons Road was retained and still survives today (B).<sup>123</sup> The map also shows the estate's new school, with the infants' department still under construction. The buildings immediately to the south of Wood Farm House and west of Magdalen Wood were part of Slade Camp. At this time they were on Fifth Avenue of the camp which, when Leiden Road and Holland Place were built in this area in the 1970s, was renamed Peppercorn Avenue.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>124</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Slade Camp/Slade Park*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/slade\\_camp.html](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/slade_camp.html), accessed 14/01/2024. Ann Spoke Symonds and Nigel Morgan, *The Origins of Oxford Street Names*, second edition, Robert Boyd Publications, 2011.



Looking north-west over Wood Farm School in 1958. The juniors were in the blocks nearer the camera, with the infants' accommodation behind. The Crown & Thistle pub is north-east of the school, on the corner of Old Road and Titup Hall Drive, and to the south-west of the school is Pauling Road. Masons Road leads eastwards off Titup Hall Drive. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0600476.

Pauline Dean (née Gibbs) remembers that on May Day the infants at the school took part in a parade. “The May Queen and six maids were dressed in pretty dresses and the rest of us were put in pink smocks and we had to walk around the playground in double file.” She also recalls that in the infants’ class there was a set of handmade alphabet posters; the one for the letter ‘E’ had a drawing of a medicine bottle pouring contents on to a spoon with the word ‘Egh’ beside it. “We all had to line up every morning for a spoonful of cod liver oil from the same spoon; it kept us healthy in war time I presume.”<sup>125</sup>



Miss M Cordingley was the first headmistress of the junior school, a role she fulfilled for eighteen years. When she retired in 1973 she was showered with gifts.

*Oxford Mail*, 14 July 1973, p.3.

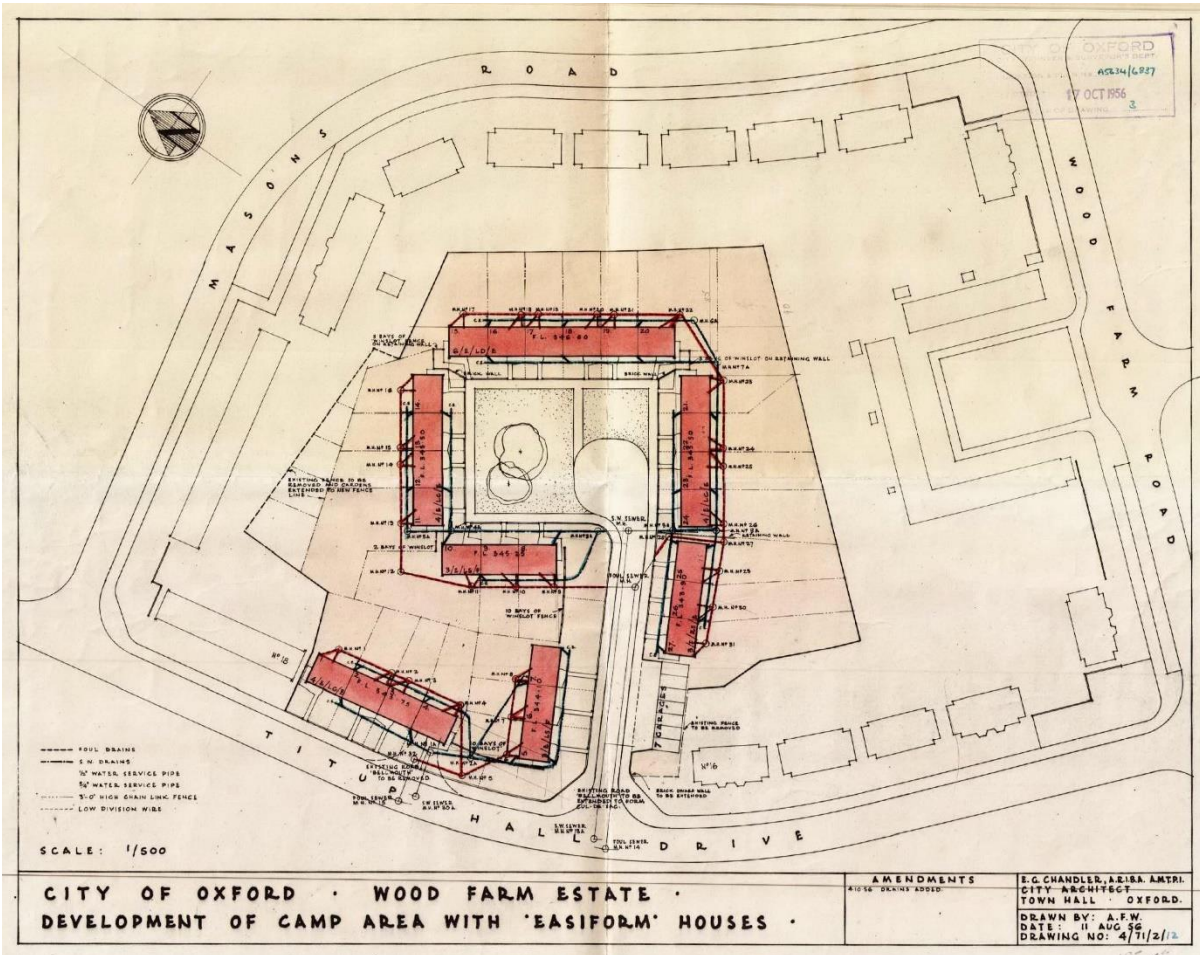
<sup>125</sup> Pauline Dean (née Gibbs) e-mail to Stephanie Jenkins, 06/02/2024.

**OLD ROAD CAMP,**  
 Wood Farm Estate,  
 Headington.  
 From Titup Hall drive.  
 Map I 7.

7 Colwell Dennis  
 8 Dawson Thos  
 9 Jones F  
 10 Simcox Harold  
 11 Fallows Jn  
 12 Jamieson J  
 13 Driver Wm  
 14 Lacamp Leon  
 15 Winter G  
 16 Roberts Douglas  
 17 Barnett V  
 18 Griffins Eric  
 19 Rose L  
 20 Burden Cecil  
 21 Bower Norman  
 22 Harris Rt  
 23 Bonner Rt  
 24 Simmonds J  
 25 Bowden Mervin  
 26 Sallis Leslie  
 29 Howard Jas  
 30 Barney Edwin F  
 31 Clarke Ronald  
 32 Bartlett Jn  
 33 McLoughlin Patrick  
 34 Jacobs W

Eight of the former huts on the Old Road Camp, at the north-west and north-east corners of the site, were demolished in the early 1950s to make way for Titup Hall Drive and Masons Road, but 26 households (shown left) remained living in the camp – whilst new houses were built all around them – until late 1956. When they moved out, some families went to new council houses at Wood Farm, Barton, and Rose Hill.<sup>126</sup> In October 1956 planning permission was granted to build 27 Easiform houses on a new road, Stansfeld Place, in an “area off Titup Hall Drive, Wood Farm Estate, until recently occupied by hutted camp”,<sup>127</sup> and the remains of the Old Road Camp were erased forever.

*Extract from Kelly's  
 Directory of Oxford, 1956.*



Plan by the City Architect EG Chandler for 27 Easiform houses on a new road, Stansfeld Place, to be built over the site of the former Old Road Camp. Oxford City Council planning application A5634/6837 (56/05634/A\_H), August 1956.

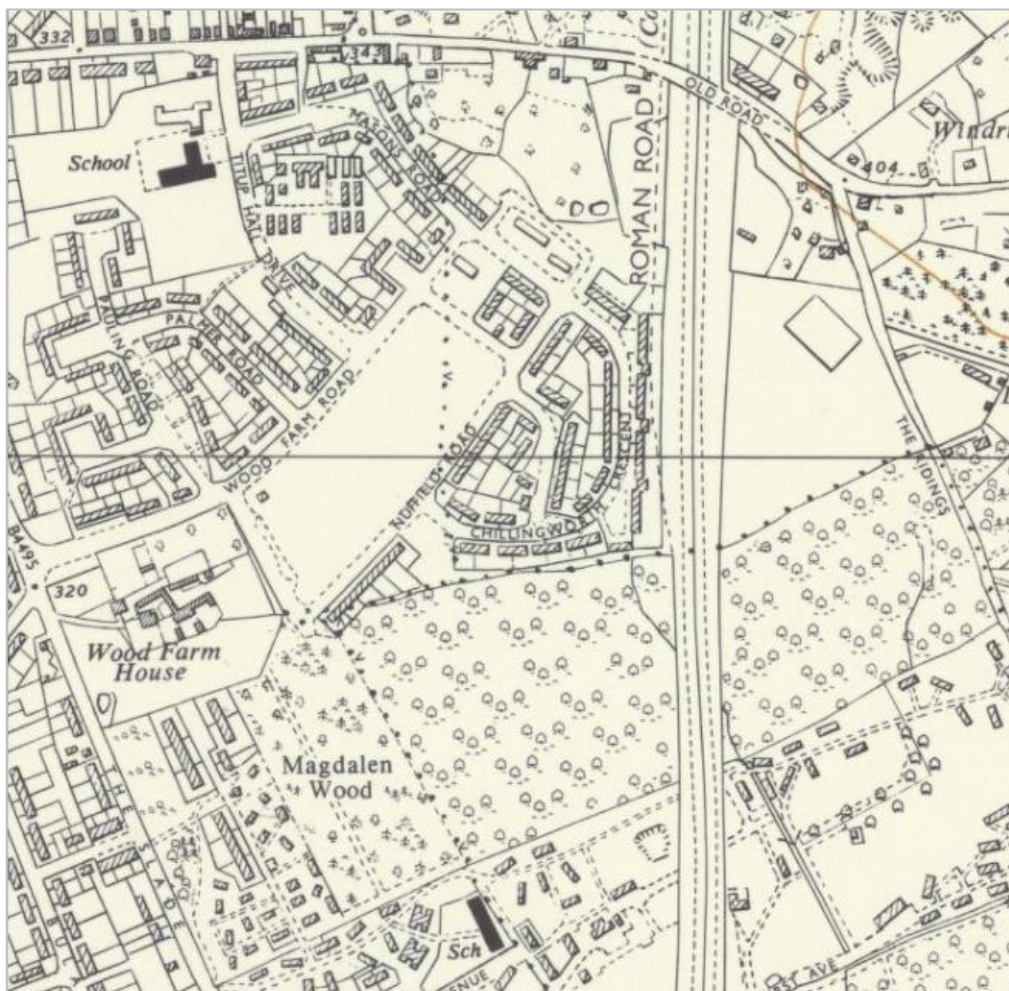
<sup>126</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Old Road Prisoner-of-War Camp*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old\\_road\\_camp.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/old_road_camp.html), accessed 03/12/2023.  
<sup>127</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A5634/6837 (56/05634/A\_H), [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=5605634A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=5605634A_H), accessed 14/01/2023.



Alice White continued to farm at Wood Farm until her death in 1957, aged 83. She was buried with her husband in Iffley churchyard; their gravestone (left) is carved with ears of wheat.<sup>128</sup> Thereafter her son Richard White took over the farm.<sup>129</sup>

At rest  
 Thomas William White  
 1868 – 1948  
 Also  
 Alice Margaret  
 (wife)  
 1873 – 1957

In 1959 the Eastern By-pass, part of Oxford's ring road, was built immediately to the east of Wood Farm, cutting Magdalen Wood in two.



*Extract from the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map, published in 1960, showing the newly-built dual carriageway of the Eastern By-pass, part of Oxford's ring road. It runs just east of Chillingworth Crescent in Wood Farm, and sliced through Magdalen Wood and (near the bottom of the image) Slade Camp. This stretch of the by-pass runs roughly along the line of the old Roman road.*

<sup>128</sup> Alice White burial records, via Ancestry.co.uk, accessed 12/01/2023.

<sup>129</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1960.

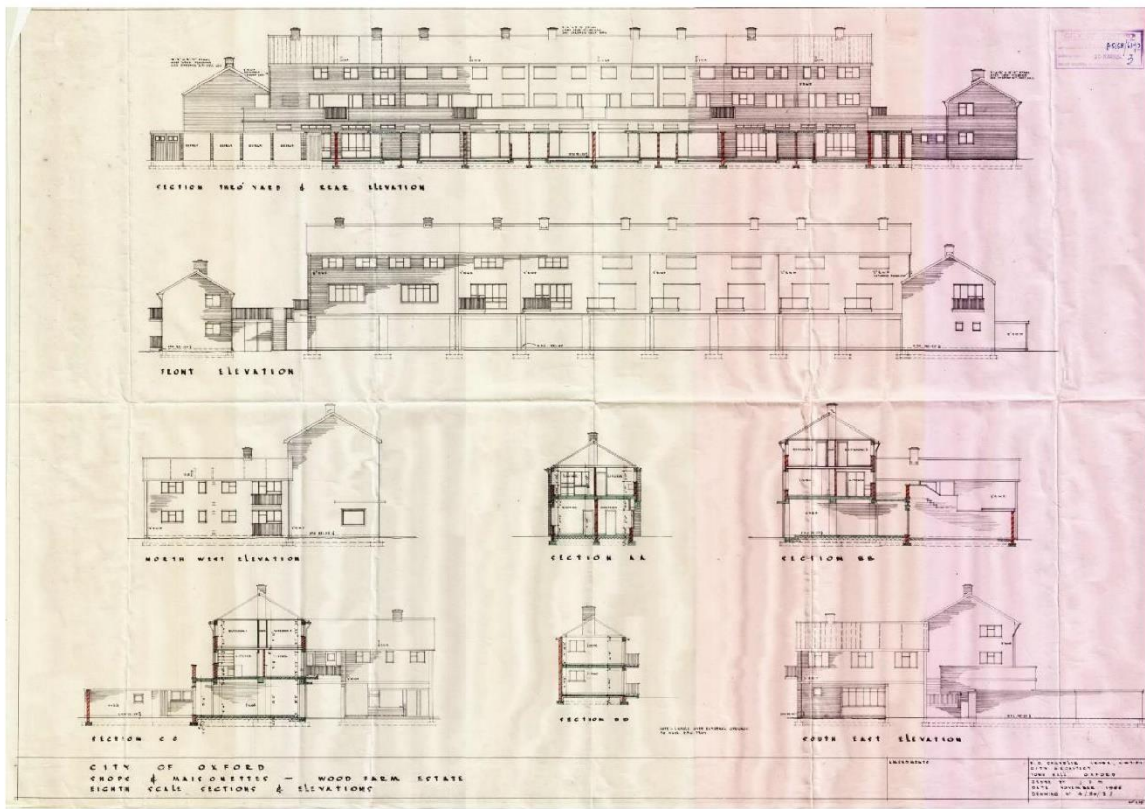


## ATKYN'S ROAD,

Wood Farm Estate,  
 Headington.  
 From Wood Farm road to  
 Nuffield road. Map I 7.  
 1 Chesterman Norman W  
 3 Good Cheer Cellars, wine  
 & spirit mers  
 5 Thakker T. greengro  
 7 Amos A. R. domestic  
 stores  
 9 **BALLANTINE D. LTD.**  
 dispensing chemists.  
 Tel. Oxford 62282.  
 11 **COURSE PETER J.**  
 newsagent, stationer,  
 confctnr. & toy dlr.  
 Tel. 63089  
 13 Smith V. shopkpr  
 15/19 Oxford & District Co-  
 operative Society Ltd  
 21 Hulme Mrs. F. H. con-  
 fectioner & tobecnst

By 1960 there were 479 houses on twelve roads on the Wood Farm estate, plus the farm itself, which was still operating, albeit with much reduced land. A small local shopping centre had opened on Atkins Road, with eight shops beneath a new row of maisonnettes (left).<sup>130</sup>

*Extract from Kelly's Directory of Oxford, 1960.*



*Plan for nine shops with garages, nine maisonnettes, two flats in two storeys, doctors' surgery with flat over and four garages on Atkins Road, by the City Architect BG Chandler, November 1955. Oxford City Council planning application 56/05158/A\_H.*

<sup>130</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1960.



*An aerial view of Wood Farm taken on 12 May 1961. Old Road runs along the top of the image, with the Slade on the left-hand side and the recently-completed Eastern By-pass to the right, cutting through Magdalen Wood. The white buildings of the Junior and Infants School can be seen near the top of the image. Almost dead centre is the diagonal row of newly-built maisonettes and shops on Atkyns Road and, immediately to the west of them, Wood Farm itself. To the north-east of Atkyns Road is the open area which would soon be the site of Foresters Tower. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0450625.*

The idea of building a tower block at Wood Farm was first mooted in around 1960, when Oxford's first two towers, the Windrush and the Evenlode, were being built by Laing at Blackbird Leys.<sup>131</sup> Planning permission was granted for a tower on Wood Farm Road in

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<sup>131</sup> University of Edinburgh, *Tower Block UK*, <https://www.towerblock.eca.ed.ac.uk/development/blackbird-leys>, accessed 19/01/2024.

January 1961.<sup>132</sup> However, the project was delayed and it was not until 1965 that work began on Foresters Tower, a fifteen-storey block containing 57 two-bedroom flats, 28 one-bedroom flats, and 62 stores.<sup>133</sup> “Having regard to the shortage of garage accommodation in the area”, planning permission for the tower was conditional on “the erection of an adequate number of garages for use by occupants of the proposed flats” (to be ready for use at the same time as the dwellings), and in May 1966 planning permission was given for the layout of these garages, the surrounding roads and the parking areas.<sup>134</sup>



*Newly-completed Foresters Tower, Wood Farm Road, May 1967 (photographed by Howard Crawley). The tower was constructed by building contractor Truscon, who built Plowman Tower on Oxford's Northway Estate at the same time, and to the same design.<sup>135</sup> Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0110200.*

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<sup>132</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A10079 (61/10079/A\_H), [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6110079A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6110079A_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>133</sup> Oxford City Council planning application A10079A/14523 (65/10079/A\_H), [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6510079A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6510079A_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>134</sup> Oxford City Council planning application 66/17606/E\_H, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6617606E1\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6617606E1_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>135</sup> University of Edinburgh, *Tower Block UK*, [https://www.towerblock.eca.ed.ac.uk/search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=oxford&f%5B0%5D=field\\_original\\_tb\\_commiss\\_auth%3A58650](https://www.towerblock.eca.ed.ac.uk/search?search_api_views_fulltext=oxford&f%5B0%5D=field_original_tb_commiss_auth%3A58650), accessed 19/01/2024.



*Three-storey houses built on Pether Road, near the foot of Foresters Tower, and completed soon after it. Image courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre, POX0035540.*

Whilst new housing was being built all around him, Richard White continued to occupy Wood Farm itself. The White's long-serving cowman Felix Wiggins was still living at Wood Farm Cottage when he died in October 1964, aged 82. Richard White finally left Wood Farm in 1969 or 1970; he died in 1999, aged ninety. In 1971 Wood Farm house and cottage were still listed in Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, but were unoccupied.<sup>136</sup> By the time the photographs below were taken in 1971 by the City Council's Conservation Officer John Ashdown, the farm was becoming derelict, and it was demolished soon afterwards.



<sup>136</sup> Felix Wiggins probate record, via Ancestry. co.uk, accessed 17/01/2024. Richard White death record, via Ancestry. co.uk, accessed 17/01/2024. Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1970 and 1971.



*(Previous page and left) Wood Farm house and farm buildings photographed by John Ashdown in 1971, shortly before demolition. Previous page, left to right, top to bottom: view from the east (POX0032761); from the south-east (POX0032763); from the south-west, with Foresters Tower in the background (POX0032762); and from the north-east (POX0032764). This page (left): from the north-west (POX0032765). Images courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire History Centre.*

Outline planning permission had been given in 1968 for housing development on the site of the farm and to the south of it,<sup>137</sup> and in November 1973, once the farm buildings had gone, a full application was approved for 54 houses, 48 flats and three bungalows for disabled persons on Atkyns Road, Leiden Road and Holland Place.<sup>138</sup> Leiden Road was laid out around the northern and western boundaries of what had been the farm site; to the south, it ran parallel to, and between, the Slade and Fifth Avenue of Slade Camp. Pre-fabricated aluminium bungalows had been erected on Fifth Avenue and around the entrance to the camp (further south on the Slade) in 1950, when the former army camp was given over to housing for council tenants.<sup>139</sup> These bungalows still exist on what is now called Peppercorn Avenue, though all but one (no. 41) were clad in brick and given tiled roofs in 1994.<sup>140</sup>

## **MAGDALEN WOOD TODAY**

In 1959 the building of the Eastern By-pass split Magdalen Wood (or, strictly speaking, ‘Open Magdalen’) in two, to become Magdalen Wood West and Magdalen Wood East. As the field between the latter and Brasenose Wood is now also wooded, the area to the east of the by-pass is all loosely termed ‘Brasenose Wood’, and it is part of Shotover Country Park.<sup>141</sup>

Magdalen Wood West, an area of just over ten hectares, is an important resource for the residents of Wood Farm, accessible from Atkyns Road, Peppercorn Avenue and the Eastern By-pass. Like neighbouring Brasenose Wood, it still retains ancient woodland species, with small open glades, and it has accredited Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Oxford City Council planning application 68/20426/A\_H, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6820426A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=6820426A_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>138</sup> Oxford City Council planning application 73/01537/A\_H, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=7301537A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=7301537A_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>139</sup> Oxford City Council planning application 50/01232/A\_H, [https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=5001232A\\_H](https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=5001232A_H), accessed 19/01/2024.

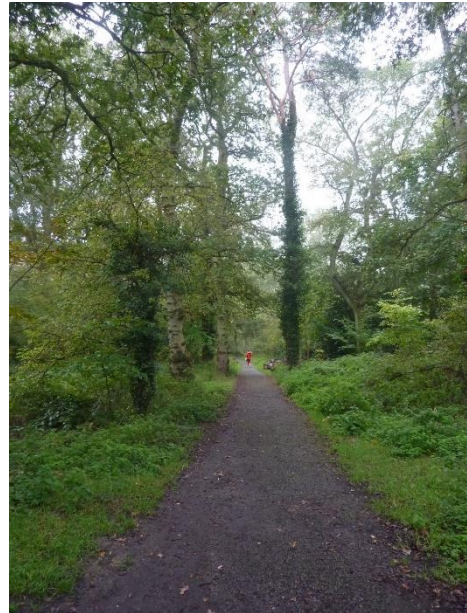
<sup>140</sup> See for example Oxford City Council planning application 94/00050/GF, <https://public.oxford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=9400050GF>, accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>141</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Open Magdalen, Open Brasenose, and Brasenose Wood*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen\\_brasenose\\_woods.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/magdalen_brasenose_woods.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>142</sup> Oxford City Council, *Countryside and nature reserves – Magdalen Wood West*, [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/directory\\_record/898/magdalen\\_wood\\_west](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/directory_record/898/magdalen_wood_west), accessed 03/12/2023.



(Above) Magdalen Wood Open Day, 19 March 2005. Image courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.<sup>143</sup> (Right) Looking south into Magdalen Wood from the Atkins Road entrance, October 2023.



In April 2012 Wood Farm residents formed the Friends of Magdalen Woods West group to promote the woods as a community asset,<sup>144</sup> and in 2015 the Magdalen Wood Dragon was installed as part of the Playful Woodlands Project (a partnership between Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire Play Association). The dragon, designed by sculptor Stuart Turner, comprised a carved wooden head with a 150-foot long tail of woven coppiced hazel and willow, and it was awarded an Oxford Preservation Trust Certificate. The tail was intended to grow, but unfortunately it has now deteriorated; however, the handsome carved head remains.<sup>145</sup>



The Magdalen Wood Dragon (left) in 2015 and (right) today. 2015 image courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Magdalen Wood Open Day, 19 March 2005*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/news/items/2005/wood\\_farm.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/news/items/2005/wood_farm.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>144</sup> Oxford Mail, "Getting together to save woodland" 23 April 2012, <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/9663557.getting-together-save-woodland/>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>145</sup> Oxford City Council, *Countryside and nature reserves – Magdalen Wood West*, [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/directory\\_record/898/magdalen\\_wood\\_west](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/directory_record/898/magdalen_wood_west), accessed 03/12/2023. Stephanie Jenkins, *Art in Headington, The Dragon in Magdalen Wood, off Wood Farm (2015)*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2015\\_dragon\\_magdalen\\_wood.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2015_dragon_magdalen_wood.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>146</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Art in Headington, The Dragon in Magdalen Wood, off Wood Farm (2015)*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2015\\_dragon\\_magdalen\\_wood.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2015_dragon_magdalen_wood.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

## OTHER PUBLIC ART IN WOOD FARM

The mural in the passageway beside 21 Atkyns Road (below) was painted in 2000 by Paddy and Ian for the Wood Farm Forum and Tenants' Association.<sup>147</sup> It includes scenes of the coaching road to London (Old Road), the Crown & Thistle pub, and Foresters Tower.



The adjacent mosaic (left) was unveiled on 14 March 2017. It illustrates the history of the area, depicting ancient oaks, agricultural fields, birds including circling kites, a deer and a fox. The City Council's communities team worked in partnership with the Workers' Educational Association to consult local people on the design and to recruit volunteers to create the mosaic. Artistic direction came from Clare Goodall, and it was funded by the City Council.<sup>148</sup>




*Ornamental privet hedging at the western end of Wood Farm Road, at the entrance to the estate. Photograph taken in 2012, courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.*

<sup>147</sup> As recorded on the mural itself.

<sup>148</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Art in Headington, Mosaic at 21 Atkyns Road, Wood Farm (2017)*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2017\\_wood\\_farm\\_mosaic.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/art/2017_wood_farm_mosaic.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

## THE MEANING OF THE STREET NAMES IN WOOD FARM

Unless otherwise stated, this information comes from Ann Spoke Symonds and Nigel Morgan, *The Origins of Oxford Street Names*, second edition, Robert Boyd Publications, 2011.

Atkyns Road	After a former tenant of the land. Named in 1953. <sup>149</sup>
Bonar Road	After a Headington landholder called Bonar, referred to in the Magdalen College calendar of deeds. <sup>150</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>151</sup>
Bracegirdle Road	<p>After Dr Bracegirdle, a physician who in 1630 erected a mounting stone (right) on Old Road at the foot of Shotover Hill “out of good intent to ease passengers there to mount their horses”. This was when Old Road was the main route from Oxford to London. The stone still exists, though it was moved slightly when the Eastern By-pass was built in 1959.<sup>152</sup> Named in 1953.<sup>153</sup></p>  <p><i>Image courtesy of Stephanie Jenkins.</i></p>
Calcot Close	After a manor, tenement or farm called Caldecote, Calcot or Caldcott, referred to in the Magdalen College calendar of deeds. This is a common name which means ‘cold cottage’, though there is debate as to its significance. <sup>154</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>155</sup>
Chillingworth Crescent	Either after William Chillingworth (c.1577–1653), the son of a Headington yeoman, who was Mayor of Oxford in 1644/5 <sup>156</sup> or after John Chillingworth, the tenant at Brasenose Farm in the 1880s. <sup>157</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>158</sup>
David Steel Close	<p>After local youth worker David Steel, who led a three-year campaign to get a youth centre built in Wood Farm; he died in November 2006, two days before it was finished.<sup>159</sup></p>  <p><i>Image courtesy of the Oxford Mail.</i></p>
Dorchester Close	For its proximity to the Roman road running from Dorchester-on-Thames to Alcester. Named in 1994.

<sup>149</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>150</sup> Katie Hambrook (expert on Oxford field names), e-mail to Liz Woolley, 21/12/2023. Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>151</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>152</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Oxford History: Oxford mounting stones: Old Road, Headington*, [http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside\\_stones/mounting/headington.html](http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/streets/wayside_stones/mounting/headington.html), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>153</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>154</sup> Katie Hambrook (expert on Oxford field names), e-mail to Liz Woolley, 21/12/2023.

<sup>155</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>156</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Origins of Headington Street Names*, <http://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/general/streetnames.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>157</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Non-listed buildings, Brasenose Farm and Wood Farm*, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose\\_farm.html](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/buildings/brasenose_farm.html), accessed 21/01/2024.

<sup>158</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>159</sup> Oxford Mail, “Community mourns youth champion”, 1 December 2006,

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/1046451.community-mourns-youth-champion/>, accessed 03/12/2023.



Godfrey Close	After a local brickmaker, as advertised in <i>Jackson's Oxford Journal</i> in 1772. There were brickworks on adjoining land in the 18th to 20th centuries, and several ponds remain from this use. Named in 2001.
Holland Place	After the 1946 twinning link between Oxford and Leiden in Holland, one of the oldest links in England. Named in 1976.
Joan Lawrence Place	After Joan Lawrence, who was the head teacher at the Slade Nursery School for thirty years; she died in 1988. Named in 1992.
Leiden Road	After the 1946 twinning link between Oxford and Leiden in Holland, one of the oldest links in England. Named in 1976.
Masons Road	Named to commemorate the stonemasons who worked here in the 15th century, including William Beckley who lived in the vicinity of what is now Wood Farm. Named in 1953. <sup>160</sup>
Nuffield Road	After William Morris, Lord Nuffield, who bought Wood Farm from Magdalen College in 1934. William Morris spent part of his childhood living in a cottage associated with nearby Brasenose Farm, where his father was farm bailiff. <sup>161</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>162</sup>
Old Road	The old coach road from Oxford to London, which ran up St Clements, Cheney Lane, Warneford Road, Old Road, over Shotover Hill to Wheatley. 'Old Road' first appeared in street directories in 1930 and officially replaced 'Shotover Road' in May 1946.
Palmer Road	After James Palmer, the curate of St Andrew's Church, who defended the people of Headington Quarry (which then included Wood Farm) against Joseph Lock of Bury Knowle House when he tried to block off the funeral path from Quarry to the church in 1804. <sup>163</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>164</sup>
Pauling Road	After mercer (or draper) Robert Pauling (or Pawling) (1635–1709) who was Mayor of Oxford in 1679/80. He was the tenant of Magdalen (now Mather's) Farm in Headington. <sup>165</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>166</sup>
Peppercorn Avenue	After William Peppercorn (1805–1864), Steward of the Manor of Headington and, from 1849, Lord of the Manor of Headington. He was a major local landowner. <sup>167</sup> Formerly Fifth Avenue of Slade Camp; renamed in 1977.
Pether Road	After Richard Pether, tenant farmer at Wood Farm from 1850 to 1891, whose grandson William Morris, Lord Nuffield, later bought Wood Farm. <sup>168</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>161</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People*, William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (1877–1963), [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/nuffield.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/nuffield.htm), accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>162</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>163</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People*, James Palmer (1772–1808), [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/palmer.html](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/palmer.html), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>164</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

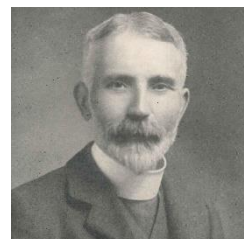
<sup>165</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Oxford History: Mayors & Lord Mayors*, Robert Pawling (1635–1709), Mayor of Oxford 1679/80, [http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1603\\_1714/pawling\\_robert\\_1679.html](http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/mayors/1603_1714/pawling_robert_1679.html), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>166</sup> Kelly's *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>167</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People*, Lords of the Manor 3: 1849–1917, [https://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/lordsomanor3.htm](https://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/lordsomanor3.htm), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>168</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous*, *Origins of Headington Street Names*,

Rede Close	After Katherine Rede who owned land here at the beginning of the 16th century. Named in 1953. <sup>169</sup>
Stansfeld Place	After the Revd John Stedwell Stansfeld (1855–1939), vicar of St Ebbe’s in Oxford’s city centre from 1912 to 1926. In 1918 he bought twenty acres of land off Quarry Road in Headington to give the children of St Ebbe’s a chance of camping in the countryside at the weekend. This land, which he called St Ebba’s after his church, later became known as the Stansfeld Outdoor Centre. <sup>170</sup> The area is now home to the Wood Centre for Innovation and the Science Oxford Centre. <i>Image courtesy of the Oxford Trust.</i>
The Slade	The word “slade” corresponds to the Old English <i>slæd</i> meaning a slope or hollow (although the Danish dialect word <i>slade</i> means a piece of level ground). According to the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> the meaning of the word varies in different localities and can be any of the following: “A valley, dell, or dingle; an open space between banks or woods; a forest glade; a strip of greensward or of boggy land”. None of them quite fit the nature of the Slade in Headington, which today runs south from the Old Road crossroads down to the junction of Hollow Way and Horspath Driftway. From about 1876 to 1930 the ancient name of the Slade was abandoned and it was called Barrack Road (after the barracks of the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry), so that the houses built there in the late 1920s began life with that address; but in 1931 it was renamed the Slade. <sup>171</sup>
Titup Hall Drive	After the hamlet of Titup Hall, and the inn of the same name, which stood on the site of the Crown & Thistle pub on Old Road. ‘Titup’ or ‘Tittup’ was also a Barton field name. After an old English word ‘tittup’ meaning to move in a lively fashion or to canter (Oxford English Dictionary), applied here to horses pulling the Oxford to London coach which had to increase speed for the ascent of Shotover Hill. This was also the first straight part of the road on which riders could canter. <sup>172</sup> Named in 1953. <sup>173</sup>
Upper Meadow	Probably after a field name; named in May 2004.
Wood Farm Road	Because the estate occupies the former site of the farm of that name.



<http://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/general/streetnames.html>, accessed 03/12/2023

<sup>169</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

<sup>170</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: People, John Stedwell Stansfeld (1855–1939)*, [http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous\\_people/stansfeld.htm](http://www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/stansfeld.htm), accessed 19/01/2024.

<sup>171</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History, The Slade north of Wood Farm*, <https://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/quarry/slade.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>172</sup> Stephanie Jenkins, *Headington History: Miscellaneous, Origins of Headington Street Names*, <http://www.headington.org.uk/history/streets/general/streetnames.html>, accessed 03/12/2023.

<sup>173</sup> Kelly’s *Directory of Oxford*, 1952 and 1954.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

- Ordnance Survey maps, 1876-1960, [National Library of Scotland, historic maps on-line](#).
- *Kelly's Directory of Oxford*.
- *Jackson's Oxford Journal, The Oxford Times, Oxford Mail*.
- Graves in Iffley Cemetery and Holy Trinity churchyard, Headington.
- Census returns 1841-1921; 1939 register; electoral registers; records of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials; probate records, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).
- Oxford City Council [planning applications](#).

### Oxfordshire History Centre:

- Oxfordshire County Council image archive, via [Oxfordshire Heritage Search](#).
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