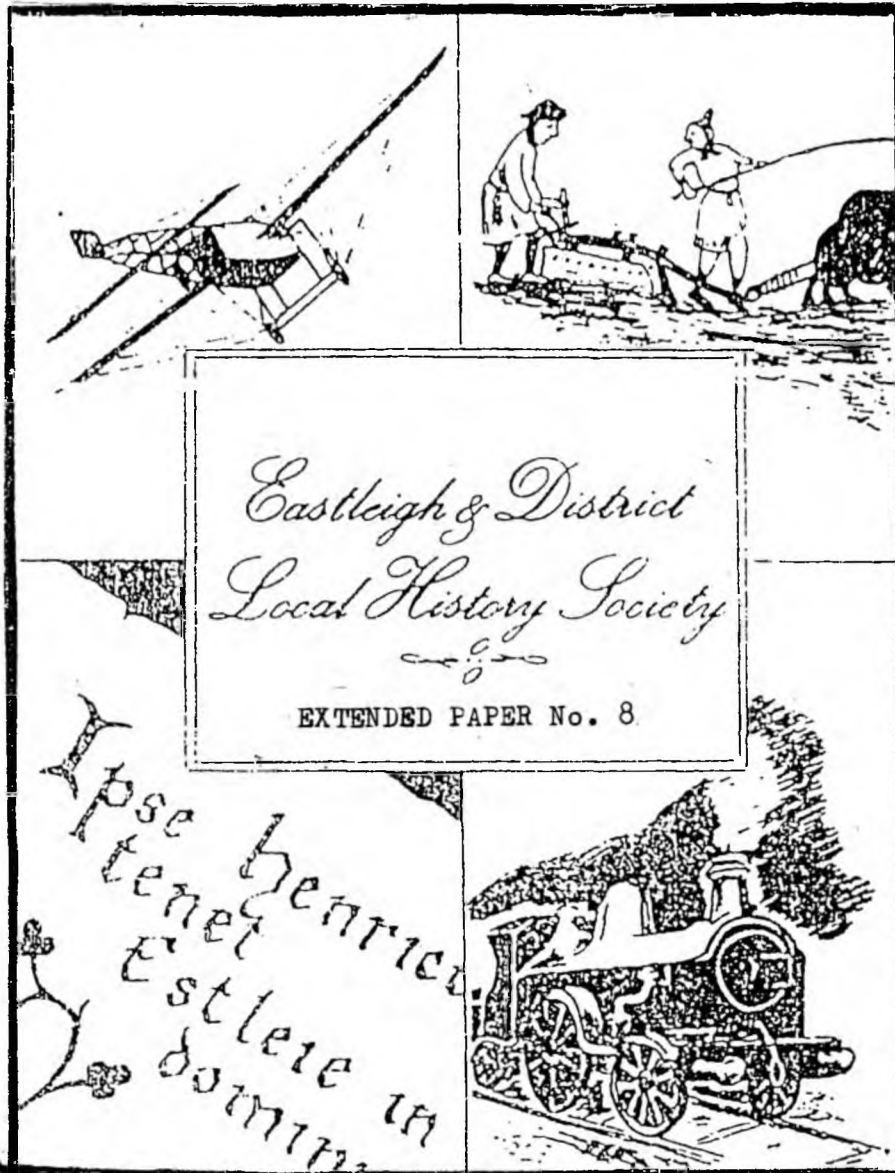


*The Story of Ampfield Vicarage, 1841 - 1968.*



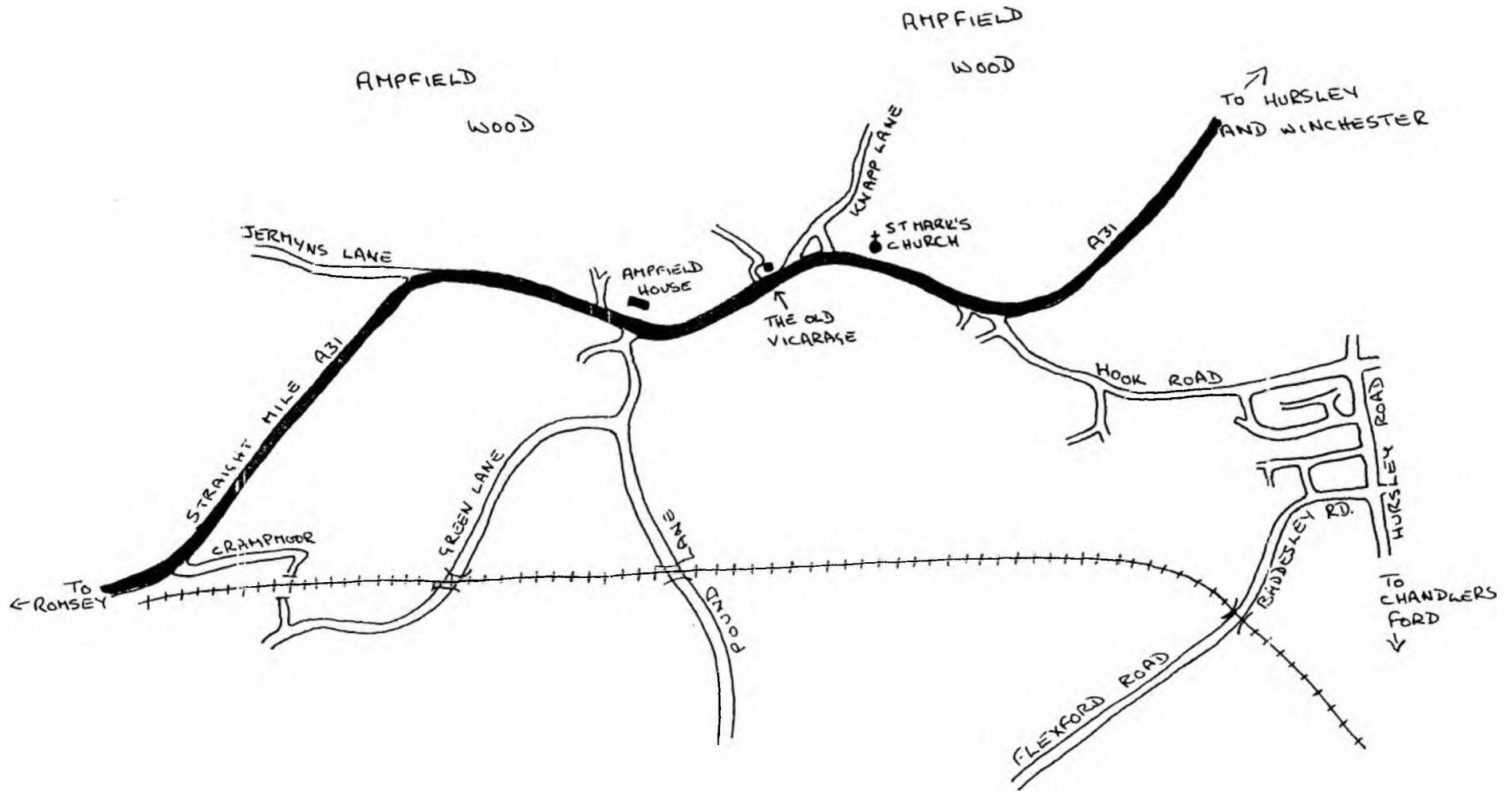
*The Story of Ampfield Vicarage, 1841 - 1968.*



*by Elizabeth Hallett*

*Researched by Elizabeth Hallett and Anita Wood*

# Ampfield - as it is today



## *The Story of Ampfield Vicarage, 1841 - 1968*

In early Victorian times the ecclesiastical parish of Hursley covered an enormous, though not densely populated area, taking in not just the present boundaries, but also Ampfield, Otterbourne, much of Chandlers Ford, and parts of what is now Braishfield. The Revd. John Keble became vicar in 1836, and even with the help of his curates, found the distances too great. Otterbourne already had a very old church in Kiln Lane, which Keble replaced in 1838 with a new building nearer the centre of the village, one of his curates becoming the first incumbent.

Ampfield villagers, however, had only (according to Revd. H.M. Lake) "a schoolhouse in which to worship, and ... a walk of some six miles for those who desired such ministrations as could only be rendered in a consecrated church". The community was increasing, and Keble decided that it was large enough to justify its own church. Thus in 1838 the foundation stone of St Mark's was laid, on land provided by Sir William Heathcote of Hursley Park, who also gave one acre for a burial ground and defrayed all the costs of the building. John Keble's curate, Revd. Robert Wilson, came from Hursley as the first incumbent when the church was consecrated on April 21st 1841. Ampfield initially became a district church of Hursley, and its boundaries originally included those parts of Chandlers Ford, Ampfield and Braishfield which had formerly been in Hursley parish.

Although Mr Wilson was unmarried when he first came to Ampfield, it was necessary to find a vicarage, and once again Sir William Heathcote's generosity was apparent. He presented a house which had previously been a farm, and part of the Hursley estate, known as Ampfield Cottage, and this became the Vicarage. Heathcote's biographer, Sir John Coleridge, indicates that this was gifted in 1841, though the conveyance was dated 1844. The 1841 census shows Robert at the Vicarage, with Thomas, aged 70, merchant, Ann, aged 65, and Hannah, aged 40, his parents and probably his sister.

In 1847 he married Maria Trench, an Irish niece of Sir William's first wife, whom he had met during her frequent visits to Hursley Park. Maria was used to a very comfortable life - she was a member of an important family, and grand-daughter of the Very Revd. Thomas Trench, Dean of Kildare. She was not greatly impressed by the Vicarage, and considered it to be a "small cottage". The house had been described as "too remote for anyone not keeping a horse and carriage, but too small for anyone of note." The Wilsons, however, stayed there for thirteen years, their black spaniel, Bustle, becoming well-known around the parish.

They were a noteworthy couple. Charlotte Yonge described Robert Wilson as "one of the most brilliantly joyous people that ever existed, full of drollery and merriment, and with a laugh that cannot be forgotten." She mentions "the lasting work he did on the souls of the people of Ampfield, by word and deed, preaching and living", and of his special love for the village. Maria too was very gifted. Her special talent lay in her skill with pencil sketching and watercolours. Her descendants still own her painting desk and eleven books of sketches illustrating what she saw as she travelled with the Heathcotes around Europe, and of Ampfield and other Hampshire scenes. They also have an extensive collection of watercolours of birds, painted with a tangible delicacy of detail.

The two elder Wilson sons were born at Ampfield Vicarage, Francis Heathcote Wilson in 1848 and Thomas Perceval Wilson in 1850. The Vicarage became truly a family home. The 1851 census returns show a live-in staff of four, and there were no doubt two or three gardeners who came daily. Maria's sister, Elizabeth, was taken ill during a visit to Ampfield in 1849, and when she died in December, was laid in St Mark's

churchyard, one of the earliest burials.

The Wilsons were very much members of the local gentry, with their close links with the Heathcotes. Lady Selina Heathcote, in her diary, makes frequent mention of visits between the two families. Other close friends included the Moberleys of Winchester College and Charlotte Yonge of Otterbourne. Maria's Irish relations, too, came often to Ampfield and Hursley.

As the size of the family grew, the Wilsons found the Vicarage to be increasingly cramped. Since Robert's Tractarian beliefs meant that he - with Keble and his other supporters - was permanently out of favour with the Bishop, (who considered Hursley and Ampfield to be a plague spot in his diocese,) it was felt that the time had come to leave the parish. Partly, too, on grounds of ill health, the family left Ampfield in 1853, travelling abroad for a while before taking up a new appointment in 1856.

The living of Ampfield thus became vacant at just the right time to allow another member of Maria's family to come to the village. Her cousin Frances (Fan) Grimston, (whose mother had been Jane Trench, daughter of the Dean of Kildare) had just married the handsome, red-headed curate of Burton Agnes in Yorkshire. John Keble knew of the young Revd. John Frewen Moor's interest in Tractarian ideas, and offered him the living of St Mark's.

Almost immediately the Moors took up residence in Ampfield, and it is from their family papers that we have a delightful record of how the Vicarage appeared to them in January 1854. It was "most agreeable ... a picturesque house standing back from the



*View of the Vicarage, from the Moor family album.*

road behind a thick hedge of rhododendron. A vine and a Banksia rose spread their luxuriant growth over one side; ivy covered the other. While on the lawn stood an ancient oak, a Spanish chestnut and a Turkish oak. Behind was a dairy, stables to accommodate five horses, also a coach house with a harness room over it, which Frewen promptly announced he would use as a carpenter's shop. Their possessions were rounded off by a kitchen garden and a couple of meadows beyond it. There were ten rooms in the little house, a study and dining room in front, a drawing room at the side, kitchen at the back, and six bedrooms above." They had made arrangements with their cousins, the Wilsons, to purchase the furniture, and were "bitterly disappointed" on arrival to discover that Maria had removed all the best pieces; "they had been outrageously misled, and had made an atrocious bargain to which time never reconciled either of them."

Their married life, however, started comfortably enough, and the family papers record two good maids, a couple of old gardeners and four white horses on which to ride around the countryside. These old gardeners were aged and simple men, but Frewen wished to find them employment to keep them from becoming residents of Hursley workhouse. In fact he did most of the hard work himself, leaving them to care for the



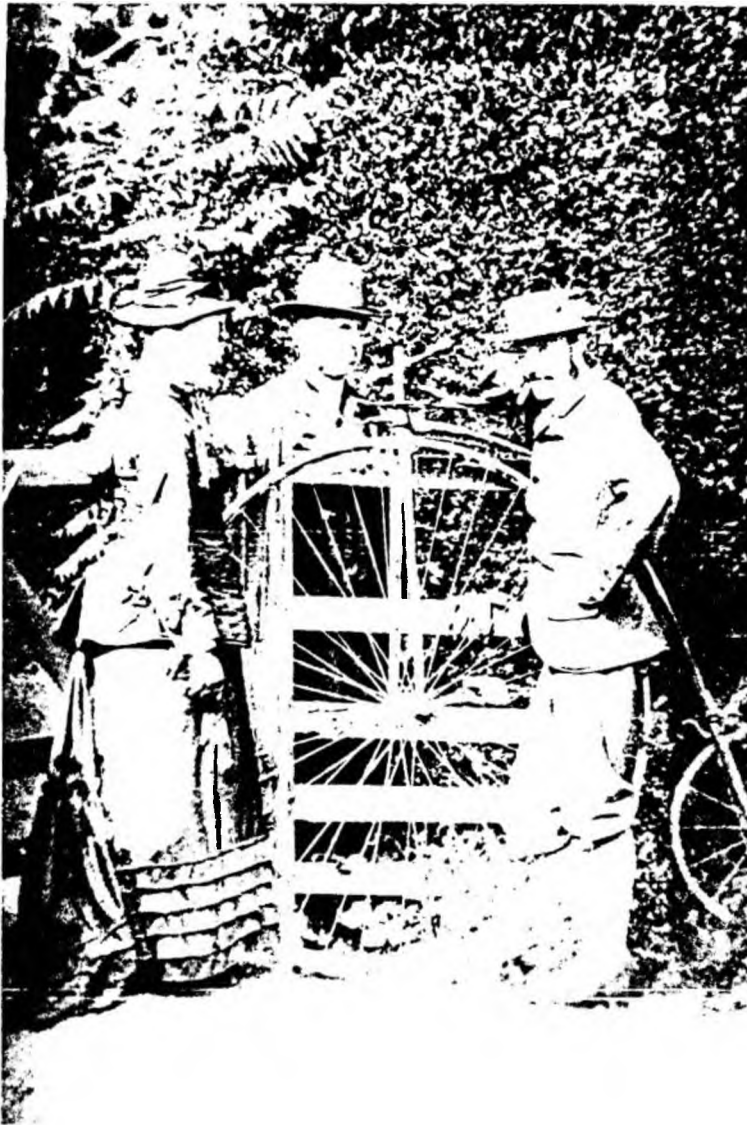
*Green Pond with the Vicarage in the background.*

horses, cows, pigs and poultry, and to do simple gardening. He himself loved ornamental shrubs, and many of our specimen trees, both in the Old Vicarage and in the churchyard were planted by him. He had a reputation among local farmers for knowing instinctively when to cut his hay, and they would follow the example he set.

Frewen Moor was greatly loved by his parishioners, and gave the rest of his working life to Ampfield, staying 41 years, until forced to retire by failing eyesight. Local people were always welcome at the Vicarage, and he would dispense homely medicines

to the sick, and soup to the poor. He took night school classes and taught regularly at the school. Frewen loved his carpentry, making boxes and tables, repairing windows, preparing and making all the woodwork for a new dairy and lofts, and many other woodwork projects. His family "lived a life of simple piety and devotion to duty."

And once again the Vicarage became a real home, as a lively family of five children grew up there: John Frewen (known as Little Frewie), Charles, Walter, Selina and Philip. The family grew up with many well-to-do connections, being related to the Heathcotes, and to the Wilsons, who by 1863 (Robert having come into the family money) were back in Hampshire at Rownhams. They were also friendly with the Reeds at Ampfield House, the Sucklings at Highwood, Lord and Lady Mount Temple at Broadlands, the Moberleys and many others. At the same time they had no pretensions to grandeur. Their children wore the rough heavy shoes made by the local village cobbler, and clothes made by their nurse, and Fan herself was thought to make up her



*Revd. John Frewen Moor with Charles and Selina  
outside St Mark's Church.*

own dresses from what she found in a chest of old clothes which had belonged to her mother and grandmother. The boys were invited to join the young Heathcotes for singing and dancing lessons, but whilst Frewen accepted the offer of singing lessons, he felt dancing, and worse still acting, to be abhorrent to his principles.

John Frewen Moor wrote a number of books whilst he was living at Ampfield. He was deeply attached to the Revd. John Keble, and in 1866 wrote a book entitled "The Birthplace, Home, Churches and other places connected with the Author of The Christian Year", bringing out an enlarged second edition the following year. He also wrote "A Guide to the Village of Hursley", "Morning and Evening Devotions for the Aged", and following an interest inspired by Lady Mount Temple in the importance of the souls of animals. - a volume entitled "The Future State of Animals".

Childhood was not without its tragedies in Victorian

times. Charles, the second son, was constantly ailing throughout his childhood, a continual worry to his parents. It was Walter, however, who died of diphtheria after a short illness whilst at school at Twyford, aged only ten, a great blow to all the family. When Charles was once more seriously ill only six months later, Fan was brought almost to a state of collapse. Further tragedy was to follow when their eldest son, John Frewen, was drowned in 1874 off the Newfoundland coast, where he was preparing to train for ordination. This bitter loss led his father to work steadfastly for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel during all the rest of his life.

Charles gradually grew stronger as he reached adulthood, and Selina and Philip thrived. Charles and Philip became very keen cyclists, and a delightful photograph exists of Selina, their father and Charles with his penny-farthing. It was on these somewhat unwieldy bicycles that the two brothers twice visited Europe, thereby causing much interest. During a third continental holiday together in 1887, in Europe and the Near East, Philip drank water from an infected fountain. They returned home to Ampfield, but it was only a few days later that he sickened and died of typhoid. As the family opened the window to allow Philip's expiring soul to fly free, they could hear the villagers celebrating the Queen's Jubilee on the common. His parents never really recovered from this final blow, which aged them both immeasurably. After a six month break in Italy, and with the help of a succession of curates, they continued in Ampfield until 1894. By then Fan's arthritis was so bad, and Frewen's eyesight so poor, that he retired, and they went to live with Selina at Chislehurst. Charles had meanwhile become ordained, and the family line has continued through him.

After so long a ministry, Mr Moor's loss was keenly felt in Ampfield, but his successor in 1895 proved to be another much-loved priest. The Revd. Vere Awdry was a son of



*Bridget and Carol Awdry on the side lawn, 1898 or 1899.*



Sir John Awdry, cousin and great friend of Sir William Heathcote, so that the links between Ampfield Vicarage and Hursley Park continued. Mr Awdry had already lost his first wife in childbirth, and his baby daughter only two years later, but had remarried, and was now the father of two children, Bridget, born in 1892, and his son, Carol, born 1894. The Vicarage remained a lively family home.



*Front view, including the extension, from the Awdry family album.*

Mr Awdry took a whole-hearted interest in all aspects of village life, almost immediately becoming largely responsible for the raising of subscriptions for the new village school being built close to the Vicarage. He was a man full of fun, and organised many village entertainments at which he would perform tricks to the delight of all. The parish teas organised by the Awdrys are still remembered. He was "like a father" to his parishioners, and loved by everyone. He, like the Revd. John Frewen Moor, was a keen carpenter, and continued to use the carpenter's shop in the Vicarage outbuildings. Some of his projects remain today - the wooden sills in the church windows for flower arrangements and the framed pictures of his son's memorial windows.

The Vicarage had been extended at about this time, to add a study for the vicar and an extra bedroom. There is some uncertainty about exactly when, as the date was engraved on the wall of the extension, 1901, whereas we have the photograph on page 5 of the Awdry children - provided by their step-brother - on the lawn, with the extension clearly finished. Yet in April 1900 Bridget died of appendicitis.

She was aged only seven when she died, and always thereafter a "Bridget table" was kept in a corner of the Vicarage drawing-room, containing her photograph and mementoes of her short life. Further grief came when Mrs Mary Awdry died of cancer, aged only 56, and the vicar and his son, Carol, became very close in their loss.

Vere Awdry had an all-absorbing interest in trains, and spent much of his spare time walking along the railway line from the Pound Lane bridge, being known to all the rail men, who would notify him if any special trains were due, or of any notable events in the local railway world. At home in the Vicarage garden, Vere constructed an extensive layout with forty yards of track, including a tunnel, station, and several trains, built almost entirely by himself. Carol too was an enthusiast, and as a special treat the schoolchildren were invited to come and see the layout in action.

In 1909 Mr Awdry married again, to Lucy Bury, a friend of the niece who had been keeping house for him at the Vicarage. A year later their first son, Wilbert Vere, was born, the young boy who shared the family passion for trains and who was to grow up to become the author of the popular "Thomas the Tank Engine" books. His mother

kept a daily account of his progress during his first year, illustrated with many photographs of the family in the garden. She loved to illustrate the pages with watercolours of flowers, leaves, berries etc, and also whole pages showing gifts given to Wilbert for his christening, his first Christmas and birthday - a delightful book, and very evocative of life at the Vicarage in Edwardian times. The family dog, Sprack, appears in almost every photograph.



*Wilbert Awdry "in father's chair", 1911. The only early photograph of the inside of the house.*

The Vicarage gardener at this time was Mr Jack Pack, who gave most of his life to serving St Mark's church and the successive families at the Vicarage. He was greatly loved by the Awdrys, and grew huge quantities of fruit and vegetables, not having a lot of time for such non-productive plants as flowers. One interesting comment in Mrs Awdry's baby book records a mountain ash "planted for Wilbert in pursuance of the custom of the Moors".

The family would cycle around the parish, with Wilbert sometimes sitting in a wicker seat attached to the front of Carol's bicycle. Polly the donkey, who lived in the glebe field, would also carry

them further afield in the "Pollycart".



*Junction of Knapp Lane and the A31. Taken in 1912.*

Wilbert's early memories include standing in the front garden watching as the soldiers marched by on their way to war, and saluting them as they passed. Carol joined the Royal Munster Fusiliers, and the family was devastated when he was killed in action on August 27th, 1914, only a month after war broke out. Many of the older generation in the village can still remember the terrible shock and sorrow caused by the news - Ampfield's first casualty. It was during the months which followed that the vicar realised that he could not bear to stay in Ampfield, where every corner reminded him of his beloved son. The family remained until shortly after another son, George, was born in 1916, but then he retired, and the family moved to Box in Wiltshire, where he died twelve years later.

With the arrival of the next vicar, Ampfield Vicarage became a very different place. The Revd. Richard Jones is remembered as "a very strange man", and very unpopular with many of the villagers. He had come from the East End of London, where he had seen, only too often, the terrible effects of alcoholism, and for him to come to a parish where the squire's income was derived from the brewery in Romsey, and whose donations to the church came from the same source, was not at all acceptable to him. At the same time, he made himself very unapproachable to the parishioners - often he would not answer the door to callers, and he blocked up the doors and windows. The garden became very neglected (Jack Pack was still away in the army). On one occasion his churchwarden, when visiting the Vicarage, found himself locked in the study by the vicar! The Jones' had no children, and Mrs Jones was ill for much of their time in Ampfield, probably with some nervous complaint. She was rarely seen out of doors, and always wore a strange hat with no crown, just lace on the top. She spent some time in Winchester Hospital, and Mr Jones would walk to visit her - seven

miles each way - between services on a Sunday.

Mr Jones was clearly unsuited to Ampfield, and within just over two years left the parish to return to the East End, where he remained for the rest of his life. Here he became greatly loved, and his ministry changed the lives of thousands of people in Bethnal Green.



*View of the Vicarage from the glebe field, 1912.*

His successor at St Mark's was the Revd. Hubert Murton Lake, the two men having exchanged parishes, so that the interregnum lasted less than a week. Mr Lake found himself with a considerable task to build up the well-being of the parish again. He was the right sort of person to do it - an extrovert with a large family who liked to join in all the village activities, including the cricket and football teams. He and his tall wife, Minnie, were greatly liked. They worked hard to get the garden to rights again after several years of neglect, and a photo of them taken in the front garden shows that the main drive had been altered to its present line. Originally the carriageway had entered from the side lane, crossed the front of the house, and round the side to the stables at the rear. Now it led from the front door in a direct line to the A31, as it still does today.

Up to this time the church plate had been kept at the Vicarage, since the safe at St Mark's was too small, each vicar carrying what was needed to and from each service. This rather risky procedure ended when the Archdeacon suggested, in 1923, that a larger safe in church was a necessity, and so this was purchased.

Mr Lake was the other incumbent of St Mark's to write a book about the parish. In his "Memorials of Ampfield" he gives us a glimpse of the village in the 1920s: "situated on the high road from London to Bournemouth, a ceaseless traffic passes its

doors, and yet seems unable to break its calm, or prevent its people from pursuing the even tenor of their ways! ... The traffic passes and is forgotten, but Nature remains, and here it is Nature in its loveliest aspect." What **would** he have had to say about the traffic through the village during the 1970s before the completion of the Chandlers Ford bypass and the M27 motorway!



*Mr and Mrs Lake, a photograph showing the changed layout of the front drive.*

In 1925 the family left Ampfield, Mr Lake being appointed to Catherington. After an interregnum of only two months, the Revd. Edward Hopkins became the new vicar of St Mark's. He moved into the Vicarage with his wife, Elizabeth, and their three daughters, Heather, Cecilia and Rosemary. The girls were old enough to be away at school in Malvern, but had a full social life in the holidays, especially with their cousins, the Harris family, at Gosport Farm. There were many tennis parties held on the Vicarage lawn.

It was at this time that mains water was proposed for the village, but was firmly turned down "lest it led to unsightly development." The Vicarage had its own well, the water being pumped by Mr Pack, and another well existed in the corner of the glebe field and provided a water supply for the school.

Mr Hopkins was a keen botanist and naturalist, and kept his collections of insects in his study. A lovely story is remembered of the consternation of the maids at Ampfield House, who were convinced that the intermittent lights they could see one night in the parkland behind the house must be a ghost. On investigation they turned out to be Mr Hopkins adding to his collection of moths by lantern light!

During all these years, necessary repairs to the Vicarage were carried out partly by the Diocesan Delapidations Board, but also by contributions from the parish itself. Since

church finances were always shaky, with very small surpluses in the bank, this was not easy, but support was given wherever possible in appreciation of the work done by successive clergy.

In 1937 Mr Hopkins was succeeded by Revd. Herbert Ridsdale, who, having retired a few years earlier from a busy parish at Harrow, was delighted to be offered a small country parish. He was a countryman at heart, enjoying ferreting with the local young men, and other country pursuits. He and his wife were considered quite grand, employing a maid and a cook at the Vicarage at a time when this was no longer necessarily expected of the parson's family. He also had a car - the parting gift of his previous parishioners - and this, too, was considered unusual. They both enjoyed gardening, and Mrs Ridsdale especially, kept busy around the home.

The Ridsdale's had four adult children, living away from home. Their son, Philip, now a retired bishop, has preserved the letters his mother sent him in Africa, where he was a missionary, and had been trapped by the War. These gave him all the news about life in Ampfield during the early War years. The Ridsdales themselves had a family of evacuees billeted on them, three young children and their mother, as well as members of their own family who spent part of the War with them at the Vicarage. There were frequent aerial dog-fights over the village, and the air raid siren was a common sound, sending everyone into shelter until the all-clear sounded. An electric pump had been fitted to the well, allowing water to be pumped up into a tank in the roof, but then - as now! - the power kept failing, and Mr Pack was grateful that the old hand-operated system was still useable. He must have been sad to see the beautiful wrought iron Vicarage gates taken for scrap to help the war effort.

Another change directly attributable to the War came because the annual fete could no longer be held in the grounds of Ampfield House, which had been requisitioned. The church was so dependent financially on the fete proceeds that the Ridsdales offered to hold a mini-fete, including as many of the usual features as possible, in the Vicarage garden. This proved a great success, given the shortages of the time, and it created a precedent, so that the church fete continued - apart from a short period in the early fifties - to be held in the garden thereafter, right up until the time the Vicarage was sold.

Sadly Mr Ridsdale, already 69 when he came to Ampfield, became ill in late 1941, and died the following March. He was the first vicar to "die at his post, and to be laid to rest in the shadow of the church he served."

During the war years the children of Ampfield School used part of the glebe field as allotments, and grew potatoes. This was a part of their school curriculum, and they spent two weeks in the spring planting, and two weeks in the autumn harvesting their crop. The scheme was abandoned - with some relief - at the end of the War.

The worst of the aerial warfare was over by the time the Revd. Alan Brown was appointed to St Mark's in September 1942. He and his wife, Helen, had one daughter, Verity, but their number was soon swelled by the addition of two children, Peggy and Ian, whose parents were rubber planters, interned by the Japanese in the Far East. The three children grew up together for several years, the girls attending St Swithin's School in Winchester, while Ian was away at boarding school. It seems to have been a lively household, with an unruly corgi, Gelert, who took every opportunity to chase and bark at the cows in the fields in Knapp Lane. The Browns also kept a goat in the glebe field, and Peggy enjoyed growing flowers in the garden, being unswayed by Mr Pack's

preference for tidy rows of useful vegetables. The War was still causing problems - a shell fell in the Vicarage garden in May 1944, and troops and army vehicles, British and American, were stationed throughout the village in the build-up to D-Day. Verity can remember an aeroplane crashing in Ampfield Woods in July 1944.

Mr Brown had a car, with a small petrol allowance, essential by this time, as he was in bad health, and, in addition to St Mark's, had also been given the care of the parish of Farley Chamberlayne several miles away. During one of his spells of illness, his churchwarden, Mr White, took the car to collect a deputising clergyman, and was involved in a serious crash on the way.



*An undated photograph of the Vicarage, taken some time between the arrival of electricity in the village and 1957, when Revd. J.W.Evans came to Ampfield.*

Mrs Brown was a relative of Sybil Thorndike, and bore strong family likeness to her. She played a very active part in parish life, especially during her husband's long spells in King Edward VII Sanatorium at Midhurst. It was she who started the Young Wives' organisation in the Diocese, and she did much for the Mothers Union as well. She continued holding not only the fete, but also missionary sales in the Vicarage garden, and also held a big V.E. Day party there on 12 May 1945.

Mr Brown's health had become so bad that he was less and less able to perform his duties as vicar. When he was out of hospital, people remember him sitting in an upstairs window waving to passers-by, too ill to come downstairs. He was forced to interview the new headmistress of Ampfield School in his bedroom. In August 1946 he resigned, living only until 1951, when he died aged 51.

His successor was the Revd. J.A.S. Griffiths, who had spent the war years as a chaplain

in various parts of Switzerland. He was a Welshman who had spent much time in Yorkshire, marrying Gladys Guy, a Canon's daughter from Harrogate. They had two adult daughters, who were only occasionally able to visit their parents at Ampfield. When the eldest, Barbara, returned on furlough from her missionary work in Ghana, however, there was a wonderful meeting of all the family - "a real reunion".

Mr Griffiths became a familiar figure, cycling around the parish in Norfolk jacket and cycling breeches. His wife kept the house immaculate. They had two ginger cats, one of which was injured on the road, (which by now was becoming increasingly busy,) but they were able to nurse it back to health.

The Diocese called on the parish once more for an increased contribution towards the upkeep of the Vicarage. The PCC felt unable to help this time, as it was already committed to major repairs to the church fabric. It was now that the first murmurings were heard about the possibility of the Diocese replacing the Vicarage with a much smaller, easier-to-run house, probably built in the glebe field. When Mr Griffiths handed in his resignation in 1951, the main reason he gave was the difficulty of maintaining such a large house and grounds whilst living on such a low income. This was a far cry from the early complaints that the Vicarage was a "small cottage" and "too small for anyone of note". The clergy of the mid twentieth century were no longer the sons of landed gentry, with plentiful means to ensure a comfortable life! Be that as it may, a new vicarage was not to materialise for many years yet.

The Revd. Owen Joce, an ex-army barrister who liked to be known as "the Colonel" became the next vicar of Ampfield, and he and his wife, Evelyn, moved into the Vicarage in January 1952. They were a childless couple in their fifties, and Mr Joce applied himself with great vigour to building up the pastoral and spiritual life of the parish. Mrs Joce did not find the adaptation from colonel's lady to vicar's wife very easy. However, they enjoyed the garden, and were keen tennis players. He was a good musician, and the church choir thrived, and he also enjoyed painting. Mrs Joce, too, enjoyed sketching, and produced an illustration of St Mark's which was used for many years as the cover illustration for the parish magazine started by her husband.

It was during Mr Joce's time in Ampfield that the glebe field was first rented out to Mr Bill Griffin, who used part of it as a market garden. Over the years he had a variety of crops. One year he put in 300 Christmas trees, then had a log business, later keeping first chicken and then pigs. He continued to use the land until the new vicarage was built in 1968. The other part of the glebe remained as a field, and was rented out as grazing for horses.

In 1954 steps were taken to reduce the extent of the Vicarage outbuildings. The stables, together with a fifth of an acre of land were sold off for conversion to a private residence, and the money used to build a double garage for the Vicarage. Three years later the Vicarage became a listed building.

In September 1956 the Joces left Ampfield, when he accepted an appointment as vicar of Yateley. It was now that the problems caused by the poorly maintained, rambling old Vicarage became really evident. The clergy stipend was in no way adequate to care for such a house, which was always desperately cold in winter, and the Diocese, which was considering replacing it, was less and less willing to carry out anything other than essential maintenance. At least five clergymen considered the living of St Mark's during the ensuing interregnum, and in each case turned it down after making a realistic assessment of the cost of upkeep.



However, this was shown to be part of God's plan for the parish, as the man eventually appointed, the Revd. Ivor Evans, who arrived in June 1957, was one of the most loved of all the vicars this century. He came with his wife, Margaret, and their baby daughter, Sarah, who was to spend all her childhood in the village. For some years Mr Evans' aged father also lived with them. Ivor Evans was a Welshman with a delightful sense of humour and the most caring, pastoral concern for his parishioners, especially the sick and bereaved. He was known affectionately by the village as "Good 'Eavens'.

Mr and Mrs Evans' tackled the problems of Vicarage maintenance by letting off part of the house as a separate flat for several years, but further pressure was put on the Diocese to take action in the matter of the new Vicarage.

Another way of bringing in an increased income, and one which provided Mrs Evans with a great interest, was the nursery school which she started in the Vicarage. This grew and thrived, moving with Mrs Evans when eventually the new house was built.

Meanwhile the church fete continued to be held in the garden each year. Mr Evans had moved the date from a Wednesday to a Saturday, thus enabling more people to attend, and so it continues to this day (though in a different venue), a highlight of the village social calendar. For a number of years one of the churchwardens, Mr Rowland Procter, brought his model steam trains along, giving rides to children on a length of specially laid track. How the Revd. Vere Awdry would have approved! Mrs Evans is remembered for her dedication in attending evening classes in woodwork especially to learn how to repair and renovate old toys for the magnificent toy stall which she ran each year at the fete. She and Sarah were much in evidence around the village, and it was good to have a young child once again at the Vicarage.



*The house as it is today, viewed from the back.*



*A present-day view of the carpentry shop  
where Mr Moor and Mr Awdry spent so  
many happy hours.*

we are fortunate indeed as a parish that the present owners of the Old Vicarage invite us into their home each year for a Christmas social event. It is not hard to visualise the generations of children who have grown up here, nine of them born in the house, and to imagine Bustle, Sprack, Gelert, Sheba, and all the other family pets.

At last the decision was taken, and a modern vicarage began to rise on part of the glebe field, close to the old house. Mr and Mrs Evans were allowed some say in the design, and were chiefly concerned to have a home that was easy to maintain and heat. They moved into the new house on October 18th 1968, and the old Ampfield Vicarage was sold by auction the following week at the Royal Hotel, Winchester.

The rest of the glebe field continued to be used for grazing land, moving from the authority of the Bishop in April 1977, when all glebe land became invested in the Diocesan Board of Finance. In 1982 the Diocese sold the remaining glebe as a building plot, and a large house has now been erected on the field.

The Old Vicarage is now once again a gracious well-kept family home, its fabric greatly improved. The modern Vicarage has nothing of the same character and feel of history about it, and

*Elizabeth Hallett*

OCTOBER, 1990

*Researched by Elizabeth Hallett and Anita Wood*

### Sources

Our information has come from many sources, notably:

St Mark's church records and other documents held by the Hampshire County Record Office.

*The Birthplace, Homes, Churches and other places connected with the author of "The Christian Year"*, by Revd. John Frewen Moor, 1866/67.

*Hursley, the Home of Keble*, by Revd. John Frewen Moor, 1869.

*Ampfield* by Rosalie Moor 1967

*Grimston* by Rosalie Moor, 1967

*Erminois* by Charles Moor.

*The Diary of Selina, Lady Heathcote*, edited by D.L. Peach.

*Kebleland* edited by William Thorn Warren, 1900.

*Memorials of Ampfield* by Revd. H.M. Lake.

*A Memoir of the Trench Family* by Thomas Richard Frederick Cooke-Trench, 1896.

*John Keble's Parishes*, by Charlotte Yonge, 1898.

*A Memoir of the Rev. John Keble*, by Sir John T. Coleridge, 1869.

*A Country Gentleman in the Nineteenth Century*, by F. Awdry.

*Dulce Domum*, by C.A.E. Moberley, 1910

Ridsdale family papers.

Wilson family private letters etc.

Family documents belonging to the Awdry family.

The Ampfield Messenger.

Rownhams parish magazines.

We also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to past clergy and their descendants, and the many residents of Ampfield - past and present - who have shared their memories with us, and allowed us to use their photographs. Notably:

Mrs K. Wilson, granddaughter-in-law of Revd. R.F. Wilson; Mr O. Moor, grandson, and Dr J.F. Moor, great grandson of Revd. J.F. Moor; Revd. W.V. Awdry, son of Revd. V. Awdry; Mr N. Thompson, grandson of Revd. H.M. Lake; Bishop Philip Ridsdale, son of Revd. A.H.W. Ridsdale; Miss V. Brown, daughter of Revd. A.H. Brown; Sister Barbara Griffiths, daughter of Revd. J.A.S. Griffiths; Revd. and Mrs I.W. Evans.

Mrs J. Rose, Miss M. Euston, Mrs H. Burgess, Mrs M. Earle, Mrs N. Cartwright, Mrs S. Marsh, Mr and Mrs R. Cartwright, Mr W. Griffin, Mr and Mrs A. Griffin, Mrs N. Loader, the Read family, Mr W. Pack, Miss J. Cornwell, Mrs F. Campbell, Mrs M. Hill. Mrs B. Havlin, Mr R. Procter, Mr L. Bright, Mr J. Harris, Mr C. Kebby, Canon and Mrs S. Boothman, Mr W. Eades, Mr C. Bramhall, Sir Niall and Lady Lynch Robinson.

We have also received considerable help from a number of the present-day clergy of some of the other parishes in which the vicars of Ampfield also served incumbencies.

### Appendix

The document of 1844, by which the house known as "Ampfield Cottage" was given by Sir William Heathcote to Revd. R.F. Wilson and his successors, that it "shall, and may for ever after the execution of this present Grant and Conveyance, be the Parsonage House of the said District of Ampfield", contains a plan of the plot and the buildings upon it. By means of this, and also the tithe map of 1839, it has been possible to ascertain the names of the various parcels of land which made up the estate.

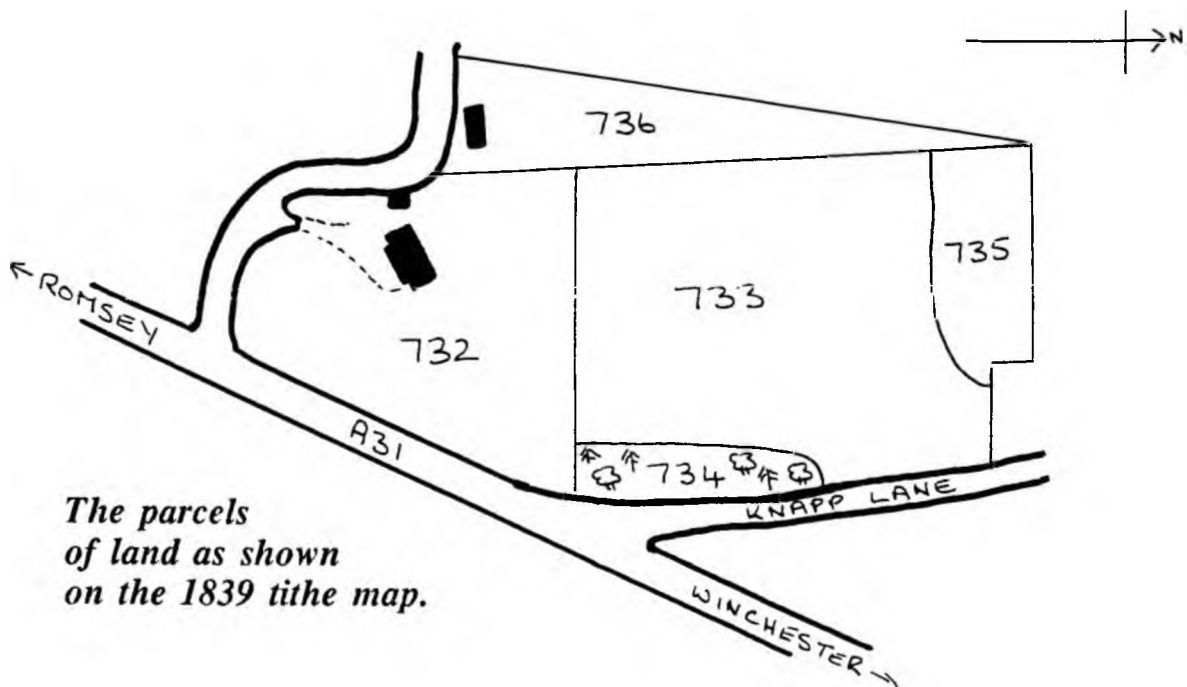
The Conveyance lists the following:

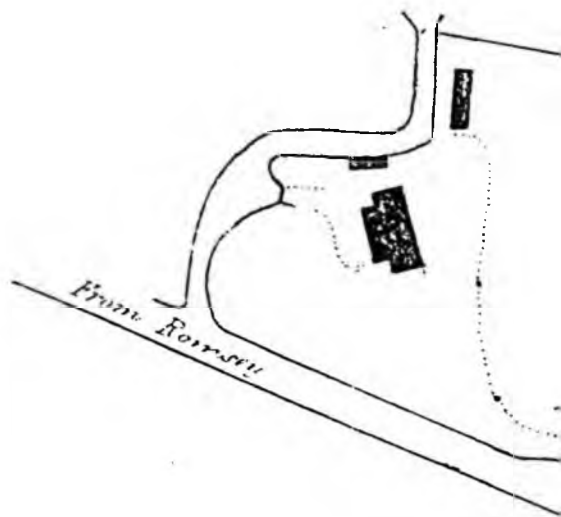
1. Messuage and dwelling house known as Ampfield Cottage, containing 1 rood and 28 perches, and numbered 732 on the map.
2. Adam's Close, containing 3 roods and 30 perches, numbered 733 on the map.
3. Shrubbery to the said dwelling house, adjoining and belonging, containing 30 perches, numbered 734 on the map.
4. Garden and yard to the said dwelling house, containing 30 perches, numbered 735 on the map.
5. Part of the little Stony Lands (sic), containing 1 rood, numbered 736 on the map.

The total came to 2 acres, 2 roods and 2 perches. The map referred to above is the 1839 tithe map for Hursley parish.

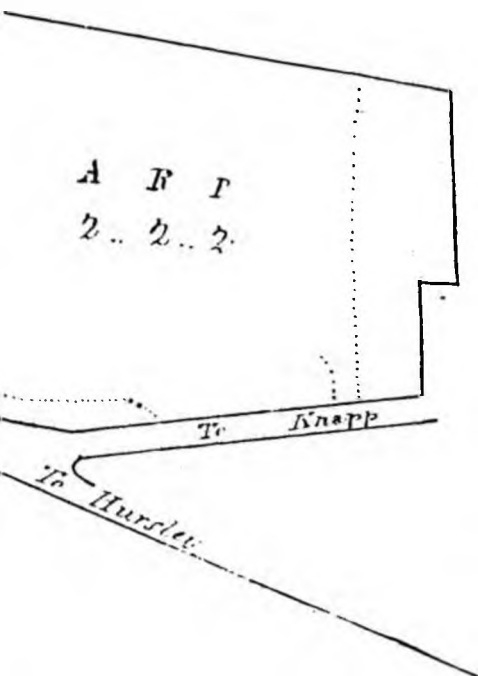
The land was bounded on the north and south parts by lands belonging to the said Sir William Heathcote, on the east by a public highway leading from Romsey to Knapp, and on the west by land belonging to Joseph White Esq. In typical legal language, it was conveyed complete with "all houses, outhouses, edifices, buildings, ways, paths, passages, waters, watercourses, easements, profits, commodities, advantages, emoluments and appurtenances whatsoever".

The attached maps show the Vicarage grounds as they appeared in 1839, 1844, 1871 and 1909. It is interesting to note the changes made to the field boundaries and the extent of the outbuildings.

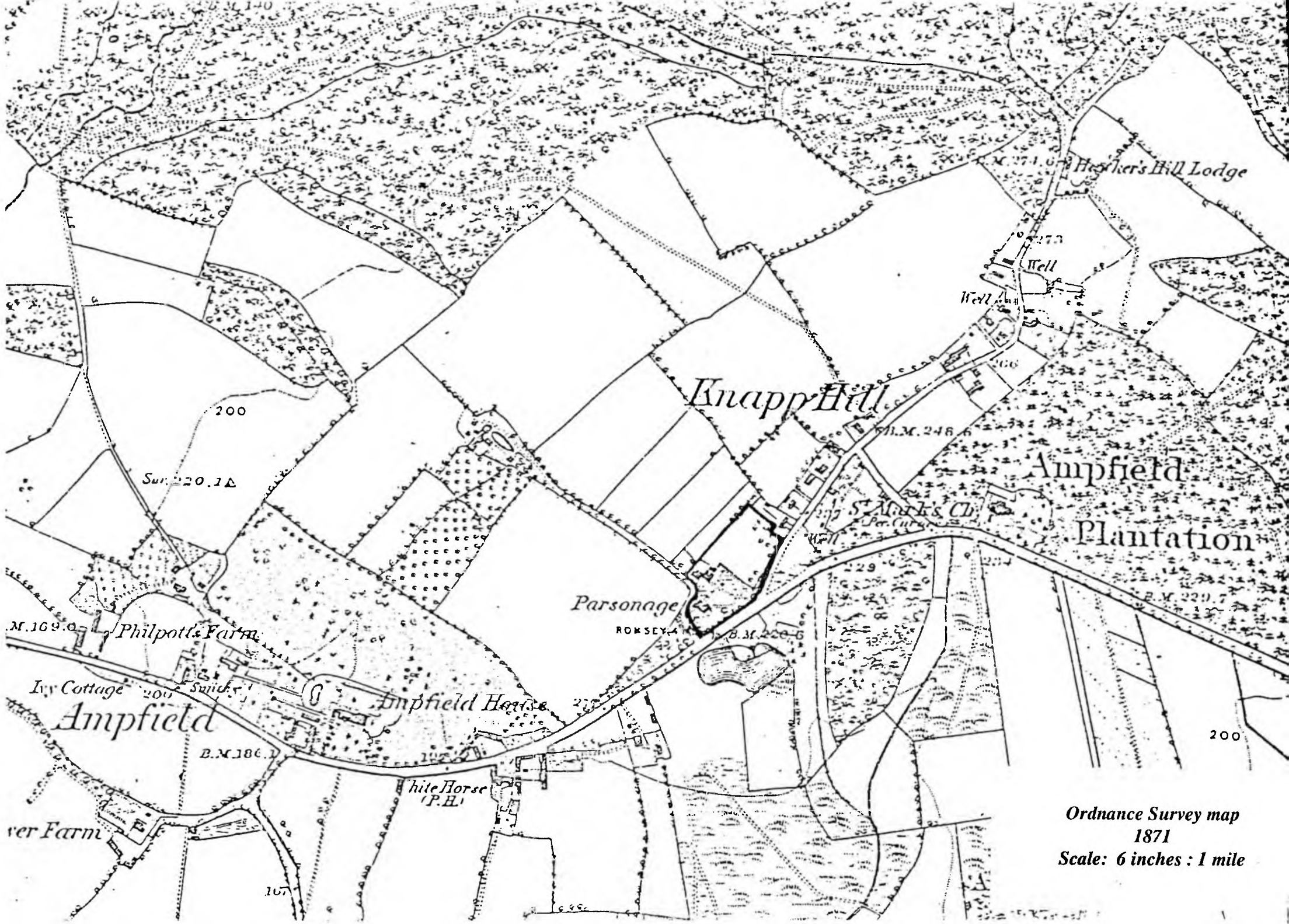




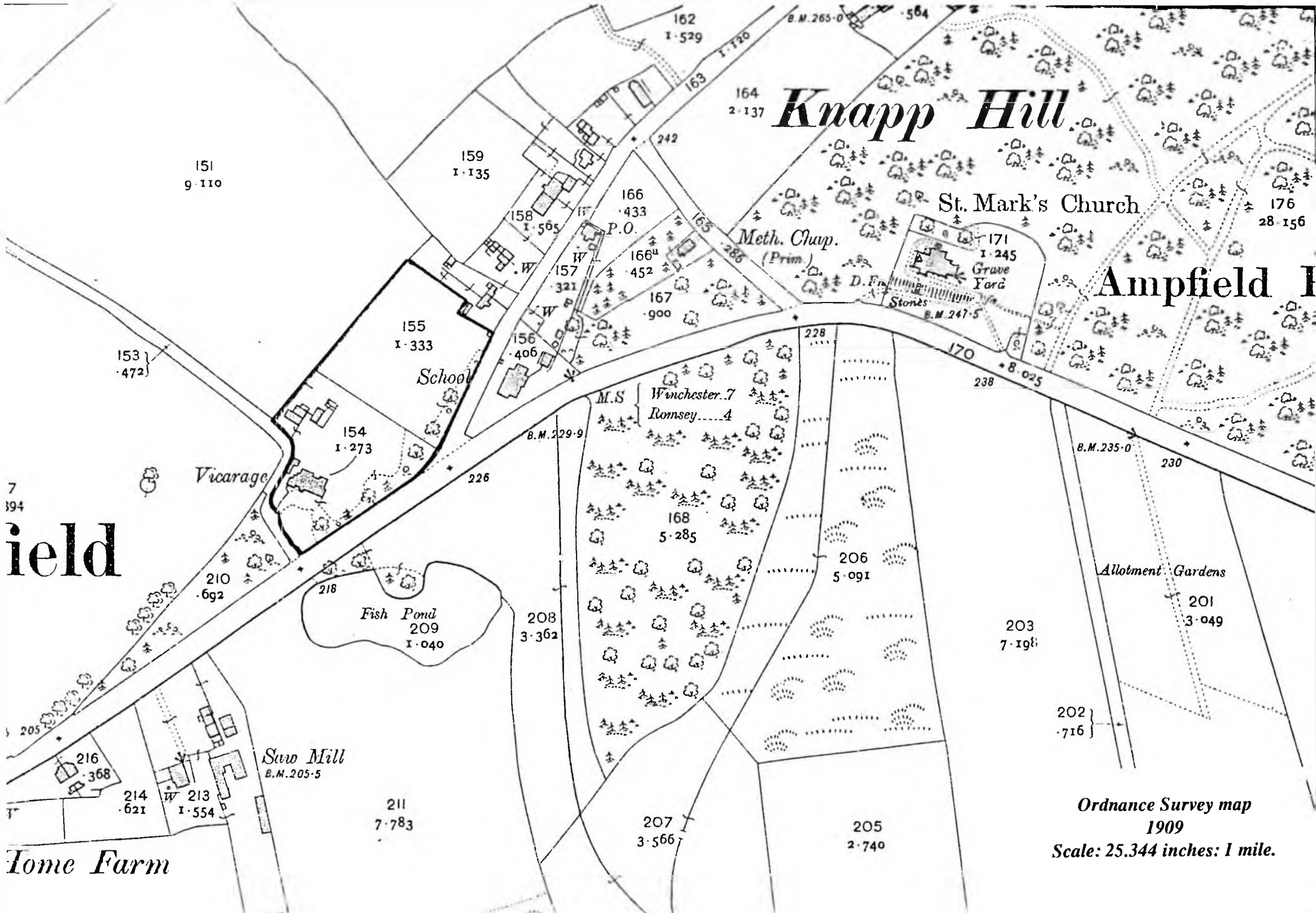
Scale 2 Chains to  
the inch.



*Copy of the plan shown  
on the Conveyance of  
1844.*



Ordnance Survey map  
1871  
Scale: 6 inches : 1 mile



Ordnance Survey map  
1909  
Scale: 25.344 inches: 1 mile.