

Swaffham Prior

A History

Acknowledgement

This is a copy of a scrapbook, compiled in 1958 by Mrs Dowdeswell, one time Head Mistress of Swaffham Prior. The original is the property of the Swaffham Prior W.I.

Swaffham Prior in Cambridgeshire

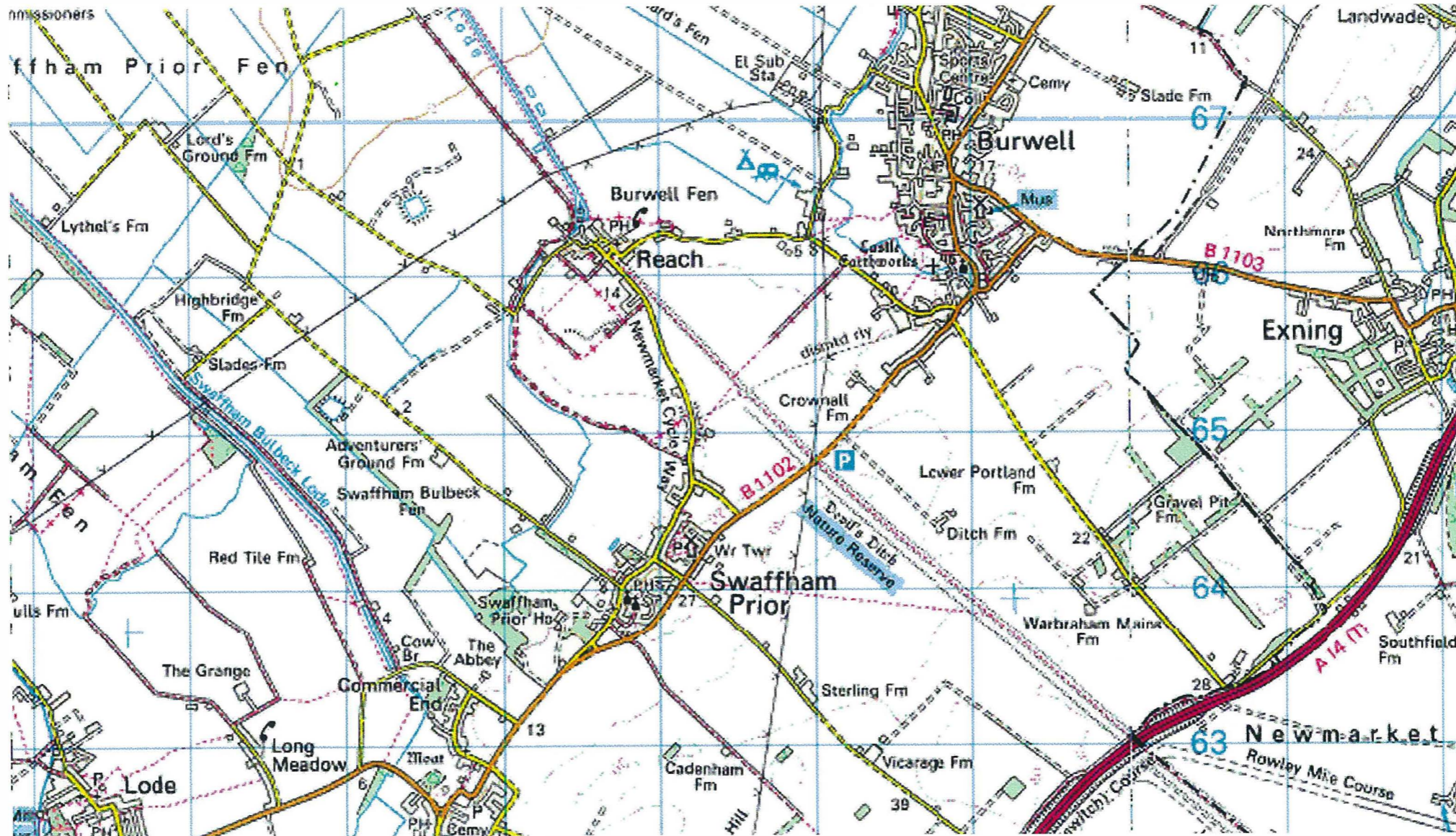
Nine miles from the City of Cambridge

The Romans settled here

Six miles from Newmarket

Bounded by that great earthwork The Devil's Dyke
And the once important waterway Reach Lode

Contains a wealth of Historical interest



Often recorded as Swaffham Two Churches

Swaffham Prior

S is For school where we go with a will

W For windmill which stands on the hill

A For the arms which turn in the breeze

F For the Fens without many trees

F For Freshwater pumped up from the tower

H For the horses which pull with great power

A is For apples whose trees top the wall

M is For Manor with chestnuts so tall.

P is For Post Office where stamps are sold

R is for relics of Romans so old

I For the ivy which clings to the wall

O For old houses ready to Fall

R is For ruins of towers so quaint

A picture an artist would just

Love to paint.

This aerial photograph is a
reproduction from the
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The village of Reach – showing the Devil's Dyke which is part of the Swaffham Prior boundary

Photograph of the village taken from the air

The Station

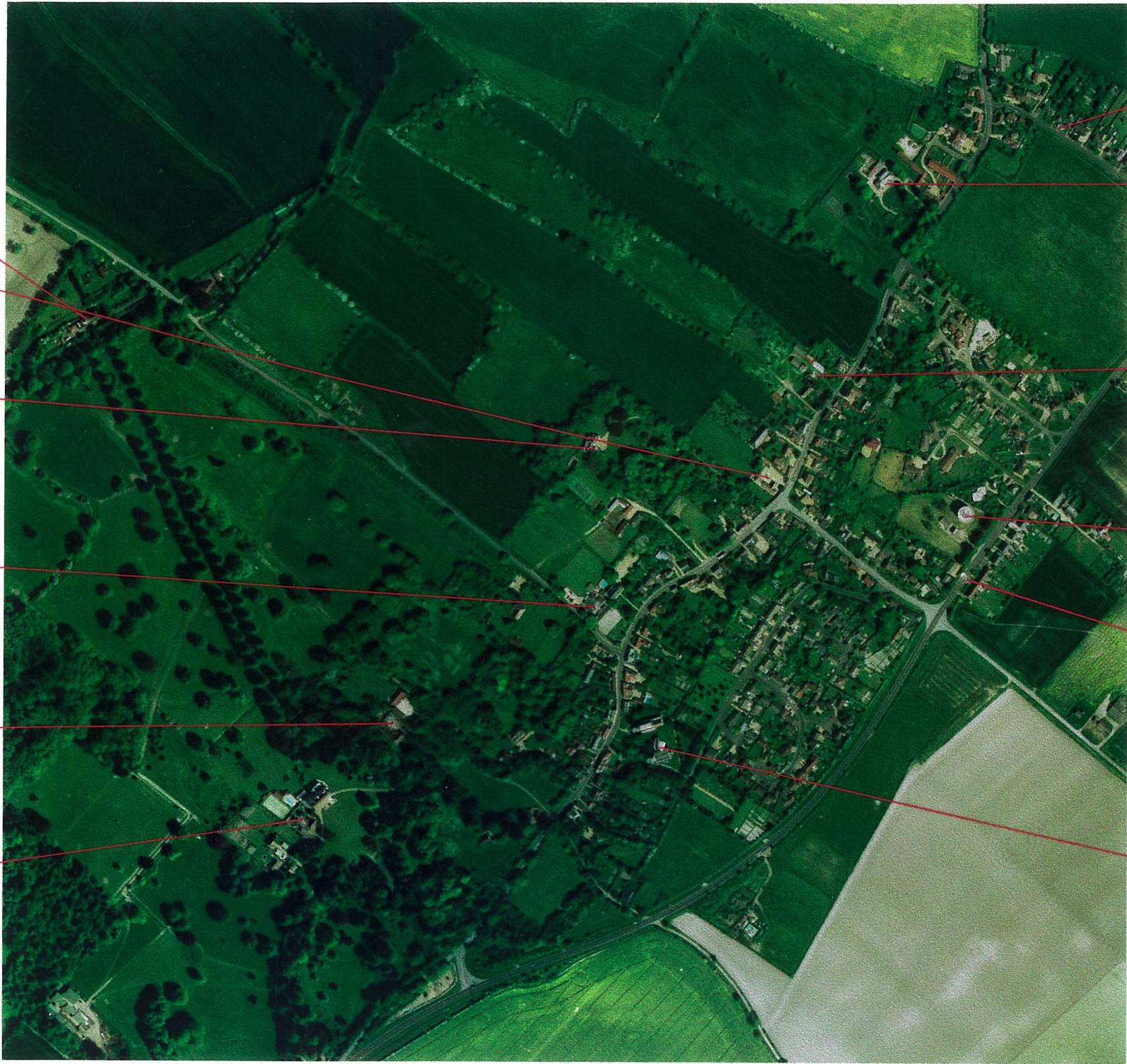
Home Farm

The Hall

The School

Baldwin Manor

Swaffham Prior House



Rogers Road

The Manor

Ivy Farm

The Water Tower

Mill Hill

The Two Churches
In Churchyard

Boundaries

The modern parish of Swaffham Prior extends from the Round Course on Newmarket Heath for rather more than six miles north-east to the River Cam, being about 11/2 miles wide. The village lies along the slope between the upland chalk and the fen about the middle of the parish. The north-eastern boundary with Burwell runs along the crest of the Devil's Dyke to Reach, and thence by Reach Lode to Upware with one small deviation: half of the hamlet of Reach is thus included in the civil parish. The south-western boundary with Swaffham Bulbeck runs from the heath by the east end of Middle Hill Plantation through the grounds of Swaffham prior House to Whiteway Drove near Adventurers Farm and along the continuing drove to the river at Commissioners' Farm. In the reign of Elizabeth I, the boundary with Burwell was apparently in dispute, but its modern position along the crest of the dyke conflicts with the claims made on behalf of Burwell in the following document:-

“27. Eliz: Whereas her Majestie ys seised in her demesne as of fee, in the right of her crowne of England, of and in three manners with thappurtenances in Burwell in the County of Cambridge, and the feildes and boundes of the sayde Towne of Burwell are devided from the feildes and Towne of Swaffham Prior by an ancient Banke and Dytche . . . wherein the farmors and Tenautes of the sayde Mannors, And all other tenautes and Inhabitanes, being howseholders of the sayde Towne of Burwell, have, tyme without mynde or remembraunce of anie man livinge, had feede and common of pasture for all manner of beaste commonable, at all suche tymes of the yeare as they might (without harme done to the corn growing in the feildes of Burwell aforesayde adjoyninge to the sayde Banke and Dytche) convergently come to feede or common there with their cattell commonable, and by all the like tyme of memorie the inhabitants and parochians of the

sayde Towne of Burwell have used their common perambulacions and processions in Rogation weeke to compass the sayde Banke and Dytche by goinge in the bottom of the sayde Dytche, And the inhabitants of the sayde Towne of Swaffham Prior, until of late yeares, never used in their common perambulacions and processions, to compass in the sayde Bank and Dytche, But allwayes made their perambulation on the brynche of the sayde Dytche towards Swaffham, and there used to make and renewe certayne crosses, by digginge and trenchinge the grounde adjoyninge to the sayde Dytche towards Swaffham, untill now of late tyme, within twenty yeares last past, that the Ihabitanes and parishioners of the sayde Towne of Swaffham have not onely compassed in the sayde Banke and Dytche by their common perambulation and procession, But also certayne of them, namely, John Ruse, of Swaffham aforesayde, gentleman, Fraunceys Tuthill, of the sayde Town gentleman, and John Chambers, of Reache within the sayde paryshe of Swaffham, have claymed the soyle, feed, and pasture of the sayde Bancke and Dytche to belong to the Lordes and Inhabitanes of the sayde Towne of Swaffham, and have putt and kepte their flockes of sheepe and other cattle upon the sayde Banke and Dytche, And also have, within these twoo yeares nowe last past, newlie erected and made a common pownde att Reache upon parte of the sayde Bancke and Dytche, to the manifest wronge and disinherytaunce of the Quene's Majestie and other the Lordes of the sayde Towne of Burwell

It was requested that a commission should report on the parish boundaries. (Fenland Notes & Queries, Vol.II, p.293)

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF SWAFFHAM PRIOR

Circa	100	Roman Villa constructed
Circa	500	Devil's Ditch probably constructed
Circa	1066	St. Mary's Church built
	1196	Nunnery founded at Swaffham Bulbeck
Circa	1260-1400	St. Cyriac's and Julitta's Church built
	1667	Benefices united and Nave of St. Cyriac's demolished
	1767	Spire of St. Mary's struck by lightning
	1791	Bells hung in St. Cyriac's tower
Circa	1809	New Nave built on St. Cyriac's tower
	1852	National school built for 150 children
	1879	St. Mary's chancel restored for public worship
		St. Cyriac's having fallen already into disrepair, in
		1878 a faculty was obtained for its demolition
	1883	Railway Station opened
	1902	St. Mary's Church completed
	1921	Bus to Cambridge once weekly
	1929	New Church School opened
	1939	Water Tower constructed
	1946	Windmill used for the last time
	1955	Street Lighting

Pre-history

The open land of the parish along the chalk was inhabited in Neolithic and later ages, but comparatively few finds can be dated to the last four centuries before Christ. This gap may indicate that the parish then formed part of a frontier zone between the Iceni to the east and their neighbours to the west. (Fox, Archaeology of the Cambridge Region). In 1892 a Roman villa was found south of the Devil's Dyke in the angle between the railway and the road from Swaffham prior to Reach; Roman remains have also been found along the causeway by Reach Lode.

The Devil's Dyke, possibly of pre-Roman origin but certainly of importance in the Anglo-Saxon period, is the most striking earthwork in the parish, of which it forms the north-eastern boundary from Reach to Newmarket Heath.

There are also four moated sites, all lying near the spring line on the north-west of the High Street.



Looking along the railway towards Burwell from Reach bridge, one sees the site of the old Roman villa.

Early History

In the Doomesday Book it is recorded that the Abbot of Ely held three hides of land in Swaffham Propr; Count Alan held three hides one virgate; Walter Giffard held three virgates; and Harduin de Scalars held one virgate. Bentham, in his History of Ely, recorded that one manor in Swaffham Prior was given to the convent at Ely about 970 by Brithnoth, it's first abbot. The rectory of St. Cyriac with St. Julitta was given by Sir Philip de Burg to the Bishopric of Ely and by Bishop Kilkenny (1254-6) to the Prior of Ely, who thus drew revenue from one of the two rectories and from one of the various manors. The other rectory, that of St. Mary's, was guven to the Prior of Anglesey about 1250 by Hugh de Crauden (Hailstone, History of Bottisham); this Hugh held 11/4 hides of land in the parish about 1236, according to the Book of Barnwell. The manor belonging to the Prior of Ely was apparently in the parish of St. Mary, and thus paid tithe to the Prior of Anglesey.

At the Cambridge Assizes of 1260, it was found that

“Walter the palfrayman and Richard the Messer, servants of John son of John de Scalars had beaten Alice the daughter of Richard Baldewin of Swaffham Prior so that she committed an abortion, to wit a male boy having one shin broken. And moreover within 14 weeks after, Alice died. Walter and Richard fled on the third day after the deed and are outlawed”.

At the same assizes, Richard of Stetchworth dwelling in Swaffham, was arrested with a stolen sheep, but he escaped from custody to St. Cyriac's Church where he abjured the realm; his chattels were valued at two shillings. Alan, son of Fred, also fled to the church of Swaffham Prior for stealing corn and there abjured the realm; his chattels were valued at eighteen pence. (Palmer & Saunders, Documents relating to Cambridgeshire Villages).

The Hundred Rolls of 1279/80 give the following facts about the parish:-

1. The Prior of Ely held three hides of land, one fishery, one windmill and the rectory of St. Cyriac; he had 220 acres in his demesne and on the remainder 16 free socmen.
2. Lord William de Kirketot held 120 acres from Lord Richard de Freeville and 60 acres from the Count of Oxford; on his land he had 25 free men, 4 villeins, 4 bondmen and 2 cottagers.
3. Lord Gilbert Peche held 120 acres with 17 free tenants, 2 bondmen and 1 cottager.
4. Reginald de Eylesham formerly held 100 acres but had sold 60 of these to the Prior of Anglesey; he had 14 free tenants.
5. Lord John Burton held 40 acres.
6. Roger, son of John Baudewyn held 150 acres from the Bishop of Ely and a windmill; he had 8 free tenants and 8 bondmen.

It was also recorded that this Roger together with the Prior of Ely, Lord William de Kirketot and Lord Gilbert Peche had appropriated to themselves pasture from the common heath; and that other persons had obstructed that way called the King's Bank. Among those occupying land in the parish at this time were 2 fishermen, 3 men described as clerks, one described as “scolastica” and “William the brother of the vicar”. In 1316, Swaffham Prior paid 34s. 6d. in special taxes while Burwell paid 30s; in 1327 the figures were £6.6s.4d. and £4.4s.4d. so that Swaffham Prior was presumably a more wealthy parish than Burwell. The names of 54 taxpayers in the parish are given in the roll for 1327. From such evidence, the population of the parish in this period has been estimated by Dr. Palmer and Mr. Saunders as follows:-

1087	Domesday Book	140 – 150 persons
1327	Lay Subsidy	340 – 350 persons
1377	Lay Subsidy	350 – 360 persons

A hundred years later, in 1475, Richard Chamberleyne esquire, lord of one manor in Swaffham Prior, gave a licence to William Leche to rebuild a windmill on three roods of land formerly belonging to John Kinges, and to work and grind all manner of corn therein. (Calendar of Close Rolls)

At the death of Richard Chamberleyne in 1497, his manor was valued at £10 but it was not known what service he had rendered for it to his four feudal superiors, the Prior of Ely, the Earl of Oxford, Queen's College, the owner of the manor of Shadworth and the Honour of Clare.

As this enquiry showed, the various manors in the parish were becoming confused; owners had bought or leased land from each other and some manors had suffered from frequent changes in ownership. In 1519 an Edward Chamberleyne sold one manor to Thomas Sprynge; it contained in Swaffham Prior and Reach 6 houses, 10 tofts, 500 acres of land, 100 acres of meadow, 400 acres of pasture, 6 acres of wood, 500 acres of marsh, together with annual rents of £10, 40 hens, 50 capons and 20 ducks. Thomas Sprynge was buying various other properties in the parish at this time; and in 1537 Robert Sprynge bought from Edward Lee the manor of Baldwins alias Lees. A generation later, in 1582, Edward Sprynge, son and heir of Jerome Sprynge, sold the manor of Knights to Thomas Edwards; and in 1583 Francis Tuthyll sold the manor of Tuthylls alias Payne to Richard Rutter and two members of the family of Rewse from which he had taken his wife. This transaction may have been connected with the marriage of his daughter to Richard Rutter who was buried in St. Mary's in 1587; Francis Tuthyll died in 1607. (Feet of Fines, East Anglian Magazine, Vols 7,9).

The family of Tothill seems to have succeeded by that of Rant. John Rant (died 1603) was followed by Roger Rant who christened 11 children before his death in 1654. A second Roger Rant (died 1684) was followed by a third Roger Rant (died 1728) whose daughter and heiress Mary was married to William Lord of Little Hallingbury, Essex, in 1756 when she was recorded as a copyholder from the Dean and Chapter of Ely.

There are given below the owners of the manors as noted in the Enclosure Act of 1805 and in 1925 when manorial tenures were extinguished;-

Manor	1805	1925
Swaffham Prior	Dean & Chapter, Ely	Dean & Chapter, Ely
Swaffham Shadworth	Queen's College	Queen's College
Knights	Mr. Allix	Mr. Allix
Baldwins or Lees	Mr. Allix	Mr. Allix
Tothills or Paynes	Mr. E. A. Stephens	Rev. C.W.G.H. Goodwin Maldon, Essex

The manor obtained for the religious house at Ely by the first Abbot thus remained in its ownership throughout all these centuries; and Queen's College retained the manor of Swaffham Shadworth for nearly four and a half centuries, from about 1480 until 1925.

Administration of Parish Funds

The church chest contains a number of the account books of the overseers of the parish for the period from 1760 to 1830, though those for the seven years after 1785 are missing. These accounts record the levy raised on all houses and land in order to provide maintenance for those residents who were too young, too old or too sick to earn their own living, or could not find employment. A few names occur continually in these books as overseers or churchwardens of the combined parish. James Kettle, signing by mark, held one office or another from the earliest year till the end of the century, signing for the last time as witness to the audit in 1802; Robert, Francis and William Killingbeck followed each other in office over this period. John Nunn, Matthew Witt, James and Edward Stanton signed regularly in the last thirty years, as overseers or churchwardens or witnesses of the audit.

The half-yearly totals of expenditure, as recorded by each overseer for his six months in office, have been combined into an annual figure on the chart, which shows in a striking fashion the impact of social and economic events in the life of a purely agricultural parish. For the first twenty years the half-yearly expenditure never exceeded £100 for the summer six months, and only rarely exceeded that limit during the winter. The accounts show regular small payments made weekly to the widows and fatherless children and the aged. The "bie-bills" record the personal events of a small community – nursing a family through small-pox; burial expenses; the carriage of a sick person to Addenbrooke's Hospital which received an annual payment of four guineas. Every winter the poor of the village received turf brought by barge from Isleham and taken around the village ("beer for carters 3s."). Spinning wheels and clothing were also bought for them and various rents paid for cottages or lodging. Orphans were boarded out with foster-parents; when

old enough, the boys were bound apprentice to masters in neighbouring parishes, the girls went out to service with or without formal indenture of apprenticeship.

The routine was badly shaken in the two years 1795-7, when the annual expenditure rose sharply to more than £400. The scarcity and high prices of grain in these early years of the Napoleonic wars were reflected in the many men who received payments from the overseers not only during the winter but also in the months of spring and early summer when grain prices rose to their seasonal maximum. The two famine years of 1799 and 1800 brought an extension of this system of supplementing earnings; in addition from January 1800 there was a weekly payment for each child to many families until September 1801. Grain was also bought at the market price, ground at the local mill and resold at a loss to those in need; in 1800-1 such transactions cost the overseers more than £200. In this crisis year, the rates rose to 15s.6d. in the pound to meet the expenditure of £1140, but half this amount sufficed for most of the war years. In 1812-3 however, another year of scarcity and high grain prices, "children's pay" again appeared and remained until August 1817; "tatoes" were also bought in some of these years for resale to parishioners at a loss. In the autumn of 1818, after several years of agricultural depression and lack of employment, there appeared the ominous entry "Paid for stone digging" and for twelve years similar entries recurred including "beer for the road men". In the early account books, responsibility for public health seems to be limited to the annual payment to Addenbrooke's Hospital and the occasional purchase of a "birch broom for streets". But in March 1819, Dr. Norton was paid £12.7s.6d. for "vascinating 103" and in October he was paid £13 for "enoculations".

The minor entries continue to record the misfortunes of individuals and the discharge of parish responsibilities. A guinea was paid to a Cambridge shop for a wooden leg; half a

gallon of gin was bought for an ailing widow; there were journeys to escort families back to their parish of legal settlement where alone they could receive relief; there are legal expenses when the place of settlement was disputed. The constable was paid for putting out fires and "for going 7 times after Gipseys". "expenses for Irishman stocks and prison" amounted to 24s.5d. "Gleaners Bell ringing the harvest month" disappeared after 1801 when the final stage of enclosure was near; payments for hand spinning were not made after 1820 by which time the home industry had died before the factory-made product; but in 1830/1, when these books end, as in 1759/60, there remained the aged, the widows and the children in need of care and support.

After 1834, the administration of relief ceased to be the sole responsibility of each parish; it was transferred to elected Guardians operating under uniform regulations of the new Poor Law Commission, whose letter of May 1837 is in the church chest.

As a result of the new grouping of parishes for the administration of poor relief, the village workhouse was no longer needed and it was sold in 1836. The village has also benefited from the generosity of earlier residents who bequeathed certain property for charitable purposes. An Abstract of Return of Charitable Donations compiled under an Act of 1786 gives the following information:-

1. William Thompson in his will of 1491 bequeathed lands and houses whose rents were to be used to discharge the fifteenths, tenths, or tasks of the town, the medieval taxes imposed periodically by the State.
2. Joseph Heynes, in a deed of 1577, bequeathed lands to discharge Swaffham Prior and Reach of the task, in pursuance of the terms of the will of Thomas Rolfe.
3. John Newburne, in his will of 1627, bequeathed lands whose rents were to be used in paying the rents and relieving the poverty of "the poorest sort of widows and fatherless children of St. Mary's parish".
4. The division of the fens in 1663 provided lands whose rents were to be used in paying the rents and relieving the poor of the parish.

The income from all these sources has been amalgamated and is now used to maintain the almshouses.

Poor Law Commission Office,
Somerset House,
11 May 1837

Sir,

The Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 14th of January, in which you complain, that the auditor of the Newmarket Union has disallowed certain items in your accounts.

With respect to the Constable's bill of 16s.10d. for keeping order on the Fair and Feast nights, and putting vagrants into the cage, the Commissioners desire to point out to you that these are duties which are incident to the Office of Constable, and which he is bound to perform gratuitously. The only case in which a Constable is entitled to be remunerated at the expense of the Poor Rates is where he has expended "sums on account of the Parish or Township" in which case under the authority of 18 Geo.3, cap.19, sec.4, he is entitled to be reimbursed from the Poor Rates the sums so expended. But this does not apply in the present instance, and the auditor was justified therefore in disallowing the Constable's account.

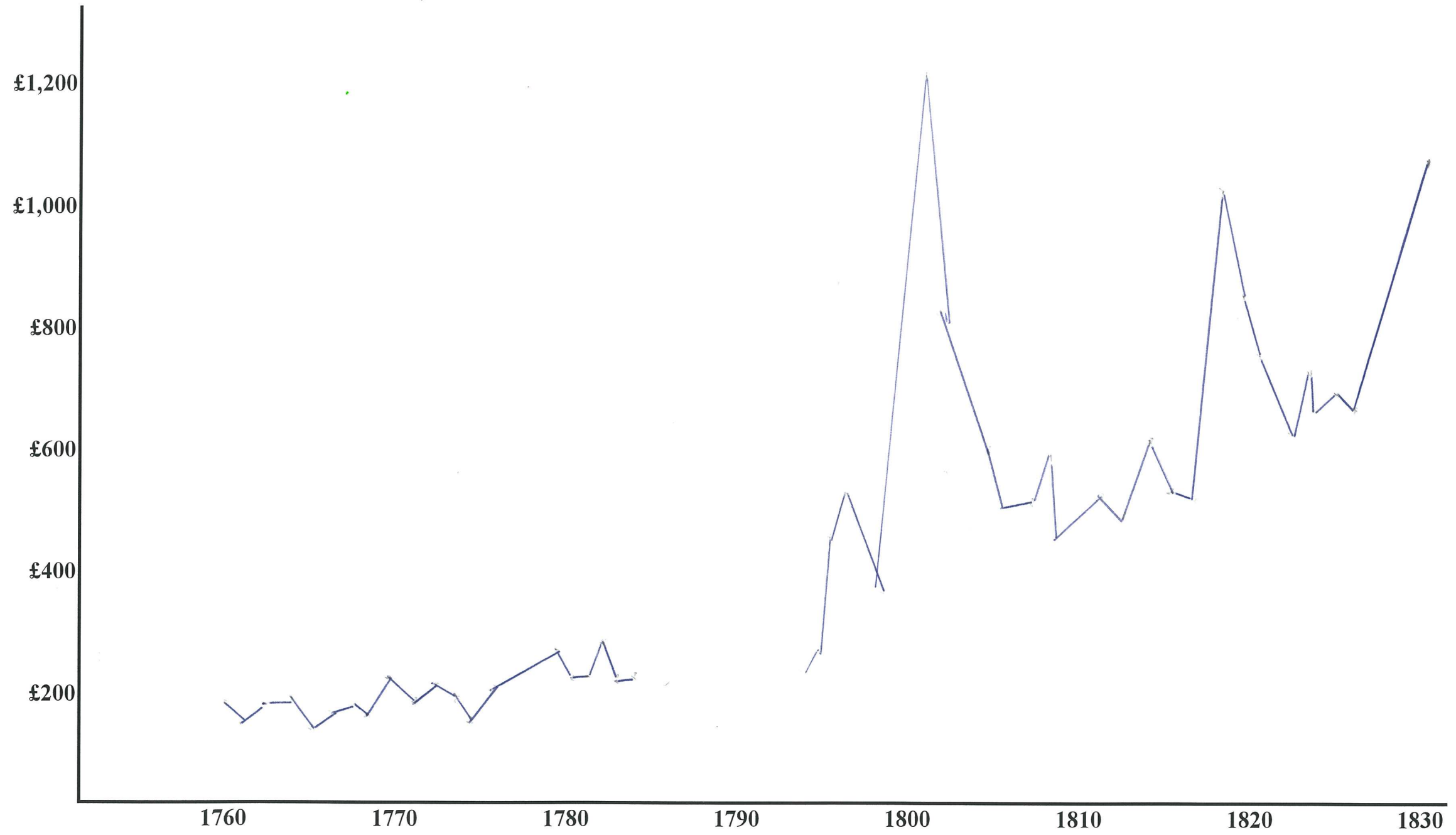
The Commissioners regret that the answer to your letter has been delayed by the pressure of business.

Signed by Order of the Board,

E.Chadwick,

Secretary.

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE BY OVERSEERS



Agriculture

The earliest records here quoted, those of Domesday and the Hundred Rolls, show that the livelihood of the village was drawn from three sources: the arable fields on the chalk soils to the south; the grazing on the heath, the droves and the arable land after harvest; and the products of the fen – fish and fowl, sedge and turf, together with the grazing in the summer months.

The rental of Brigham's Manor taken in 1347 records payments for 18 houses, 5 crofts, 3 dovecotes, 1 sheepcot and a granary; there were also 3 fisheries that had recently dried up, possibly because of improved drainage. A clearer picture of the village fields is obtained from an account of the same manor, now called Shadworth's, taken in 1491 by its new owners, Queen's College.

Beyond the closes at the back of the houses in Reach and Swaffham Prior, the arable land lay in three fields: Ditch Field to the north-east, along the Devil's dyke from Reach to the heath; Middle Field, entirely to the south of the village; and dale Field on the south and west, with a common boundary to the fields of Swaffham Bulbeck. Within each of these fields, groups of lands known as furlongs contained strips belonging to various owners and cultivated by the residents of the village as tenants holding by a variety of services or money payments. Thus the description (translated from Latin) of four of the 90 strips comprising the lands of Swaffham Shadworth in 1491 runs as follows:-

“In Ditchfield, beginning by Reach and proceeding towards the south –

First, half an acre of land in Reach Croft against the land of John Gibbon on the east and heading northward upon the public path towards Reach;

Item, half an acre in Baston Furlong between the land of William Growte on the east and the land of Burgh Hall on the west, and heading northwards upon Baston;

Item, three roods in Ditch Furlong against the cross and between the land (copyhold) of the Prior of Ely on the south and the land of William Leche on the north and heading eastward upon the great ditch;

Item, one acre in Baston Furlong at the end of the village between the land of Richard Foster on the north and the land of Richard Watts on the south, and heading westwards upon the close of Mr. Chamberleyne and heading eastwards upon Maldon Way.

The Rectory of St Mary owned in 1683 about 31 acres of arable land in 61 strips scattered over all three fields and these are described in a similar way. (Ely Diocesan Registry).

The rental of 1347 indicates two methods then commonly used to maintain the fertility of the soil. Some tenants were required to fold their sheep at night on the land farmed by the owner; and one strip of land is described as abutting on the Limekilns. Three hundred years later, the vicar of St Mary's had the right every year, from the lands belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Ely, one acre of wheat and another of barley for his own use, which points to the practice of the traditional three-fold rotation of winter-sown grain, spring-sown grain and probably fallow. But at the end of the seventeenth century, some farmers had introduced sanfoin for winter fodder for their livestock. This is shown by the tithe accounts kept by the Rev. Martin Hill and now in the church safe:-

	1693	1700
Persons paid for (? Adults only)	288	244
Households paying for hens	45	35
Heifers and cows	255	169
Calves	154	111
	(5 to fall)	
Pigs	1	-
Lambs	117	256
Sheep sold	260	?
Persons titheable on wool	3	-
Wool, tods (? 28 lbs)	-	60
Dovecots	11	12
Windmill	1	1
Persons titheable on sedge or dolver	?	35
Persons titheable on sanfoin	1	4

No less than 16 parishioners were noted as owing tithe in 1700 against one or two at the earlier date, a result possibly of the seven bad harvests which marked the last years of the seventeenth century.

Shadworth's Manor Farm together with a meadow called Eustaces was leased by Queen's College in 1558/9 for a term of 31 years to John Addams for a yearly rent of £9.10s; in 1590 when this lease expired it was again let for 21 years for an annual rent of 4 qrs. 6 bushels of wheat and 6 qrs. 3 bushels of malt. Leases for the seventeenth century have not survived but in 1740 Shadworth Farm and Fustace meadow were let for 21 years for a payment of three guineas, 6 qrs. Of wheat at Lady Day; and three guineas, 4qrs. 5 bushels 2 pecks of malt at Michaelmas, "or as much money as will buy these quantities in Cambridge market".

Under the Enclosure Act, obtained in 1805, the village fields were apportioned afresh, with consolidated blocks going to the owners of the lands, the manorial dues, the grazing rights and the greater and lesser tithes.

The minute book of the Enclosure Commissioners (University Library Add.Mss.6074/5)

records that their expenses amounted to £5,082, of which £651 was paid to Mr. John Webb for public fencing along the roads. These expenses were covered by a rate levied on all land in the parish, about £1,000 being assessed on the fen lands and about £4,000 on the high lands.

In his tithe accounts, the Rev. Martin hall noted that the recent Act of 1663 on the allotment of fen lands after draining had added to agricultural use some 600 acres of "Adventurers Ground" taken out of the fen formerly used jointly by the residents of both Swaffhams. Such improvements were opposed by some who valued the products of the fen more highly than the future possibility of farming land much of which was pledged to those "adventuring" their capital in the enterprise:-

"Aug.30th 1653. . . . we found that our works had been thrown in again by a great number of people and that they had given it out in public that the towns of Burwell, Reach and the two Swaffhams and Botsham were resolved to rise and throw in our dykes upon which the Company adjourned to Swaffham, where we examined witnesses and applied to Roger Rant, the justice there. . . but we found him very cold and dilatory. . . . seeing little hope of redress there we applied to Major Tyson who. . .afforded us a guard of three of four of his men, to be kept nightly upon our works in Swaffham, and a guard was kept there accordingly.

On Saturday night, the 27th instant, 80 persons came down armed with muskets, short pikes and swords and discharged upon the guard, wounding one of them very dangerously and chased away and beat the rest, and forced them to help throw in our dykes. . . .we do not know the names of the parties but are confident that it was done by the meaner sort of Burwell, Swaffahm, Reach and Botsham, and that they

are set on and abetted by the better sort of the said towns, among which pray see what may be proved by Mr. Barnes against Edmund Drury of Swaffham”.

“Sept 5th 1653. . . .Examination of Jno. Esthers of Chatteris, labourer, before Major Swallow and 7 others. While building a hut for the troopers Mr. Drury said it would be down in a week and that the drain should not go as it was. . .and that if they did come to throw the drain in, 3 or 4 score would come with fowling pieces, and what would 3 or 4 soldiers do against such a number?” . . .

(Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1653/4)

The Company of the Adventurers was nevertheless largely successful in the great work of draining the South Level, but there were heavy costs of maintaining the new drains and outfalls. An Act of 1669 gave the Company of the Conservators of the Great Level, created in 1663, powers to levy differential rates on the new lands according to their estimated value. A hundred years later, the preamble to the act of 1767 recited that the fen lands in this and neighbouring parishes “have for several years past been and still are commonly overflowed with waters through the defects of their outfalls”. Special Commissioners were appointed, including Charles Allix, William Collier, Richard Eaton and William Poulter from Swaffham Prior, to scour and repair the lodes and sluices and to raise money by tolls on the traffic along the lodes. Each parish was also to appoint fen reeves to control the mowing and to mend the droves and ditches on the common fen lands and to levy a rate on the commoners. Two years later, the maximum tolls allowable were raised because of the heavy cost of the reconstruction of the south bank of Reach Lode. The tolls were again raised in 1819 since the Commissioners then owed £500 both

to Mr. Jenyns and to Mr. Allix for money advanced for repairs. By 1853 debts of £20,963 had been incurred, but the new steam pumps had so improved the fen lands that the differential rate was abolished and a flat rate per acre levied on all land within the fen boundaries.

Field Names

The following names relating to the fields of the parish before enclosure have been noted from the documents given below:-

1347	Rental, Queen's College
1491	Terrier, Queen's College
1537	Leases, Queen's College
1615	Terriers of St. Mary's Glebe, Ely Diocesan Registry
1638	Terriers of St. Mary's Glebe, Ely Diocesan Registry
1666	Act uniting parishes, copy in church chest
1713	Rant marriage settlement, County Record Office
1740	Leases, Queen's College
1767	Drainage Act, 7 Geo.III, c.53.

Ditchfield

Baston 1347, 1491, 1615, 1638; Baston Furlong 1491

Maldon, Maudlin, Madling Way 1491, 1615, 1638, 1666, 1713

Ditchfurlong 1491

Reach way 1491

Burwell way 1491

Church Hill 1347, 1638

Snakehole 1638

Heenes path 1666

Gallow Hill 1638, 1666

Dansway 1638

Heathway 1713

Illesdon by the Brodmere, in Ditchfield under Illesdon 1347

Middle Field

Mill Furlong 1347 Stoney Hill 1347, 1491

Checker Furlong 1491 Woodway 1496, 1666

Mill mare 1615 Market way 1615, 1638, 1666

Greenhead of Millmere way 1713 Shepperdsmere 1347

Fordinghillmere 1491

Dale Field

Woodway 1347, 1491, 1615, 1638, 1666, 1713

Neatway 1491, 1615, 1638, 1666

Wilbraham way 1666

Daleburn Hole 1638

Fen

Driest Fen 1666 Whiteway Drove 1767

Driest Droveway 1767 Low Bridge Hole 1767

Croyle Gate 1767

Other Names

Westfield 1347 Cribcorps 1347

Prestfindell, Prestwodehill 1347 Shailpostcroft 1347

Eustace Meadow 1537, 1740 Preestcroft 1347

Eakes 1767 Babyot 1347

Cattisburgh, Cattisbraynes 1347 Horsewellmede 1347

Buildings

With few exceptions, the fabric of the older houses in the village probably dates back to the last half of the seventeenth century, that period of recuperation from the Civil Wars which saw the reconstruction of many houses and the building of many new ones.

Baldwin's Manor. The records of Shadworth's manor, now in Queen's College, mention in 1491 a Magister Lee as owning land in the fields of Swaffham Prior. It is tempting to think of him as the builder of the main part of the present timber-framed structure which appears to date to the end of the fifteenth century. A fourth bay was added to the south-west a little later, possibly by the Edward Lee who sold his "manor of Baldwin's alias Lee's" in 1537; the north-west wing seems to have been added early in the next century.

The Hall. The Hall, lying behind and to the north-west of the High Street, may have been the site of the manor house of the earliest recorded manor in the village, that given to the convent at Ely by its first Abbot. The original two-storied hall rising to the rafters also dates back to the end of the fifteenth century; later the wing added to the north-east and the kitchen added to the south-west turned the axis of the house to cross the hall, over which a floor was put to carry another storey.

Goodwin Manor Farm. The building seems to have been erected in the late seventeenth century, with later additions on the north-west. The name has not been recorded before the nineteenth century, but the site, on an old drove with the remains of a defensive moat, was probably inhabited from an early date.

Anglesey House. This, originally the two vicarages, was rebuilt almost from the ground by the Rev. Martin Hill at the end of the seventeenth century, as is described in his note book, now in the church chest.



Baldwin Manor



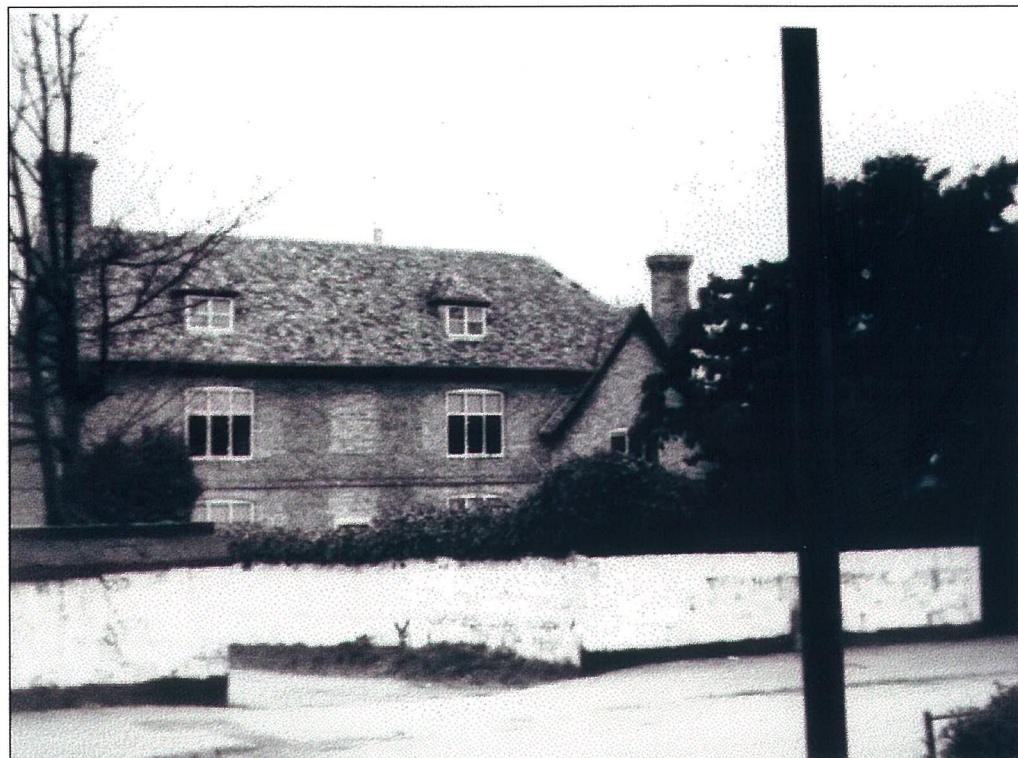
The Hall



Home Farm (Stocks Hill Farm)



Goodwin Manor Farm



Ivy Farm



**Anglesey House
(Back view, taken from the churchyard)**

Ivy Farm. The gable end to the north is possibly of sixteenth century date; the larger wing to the south was built in the eighteenth century when the front elevation and the dovecot were remodelled.

Home Farm, Cage Hill. The central part again appears to have been built in the last half of the seventeenth century, with later additions to the north and east.

Priory House. The main structure may have been built at the end of the seventeenth century but the house has been much altered in later times.

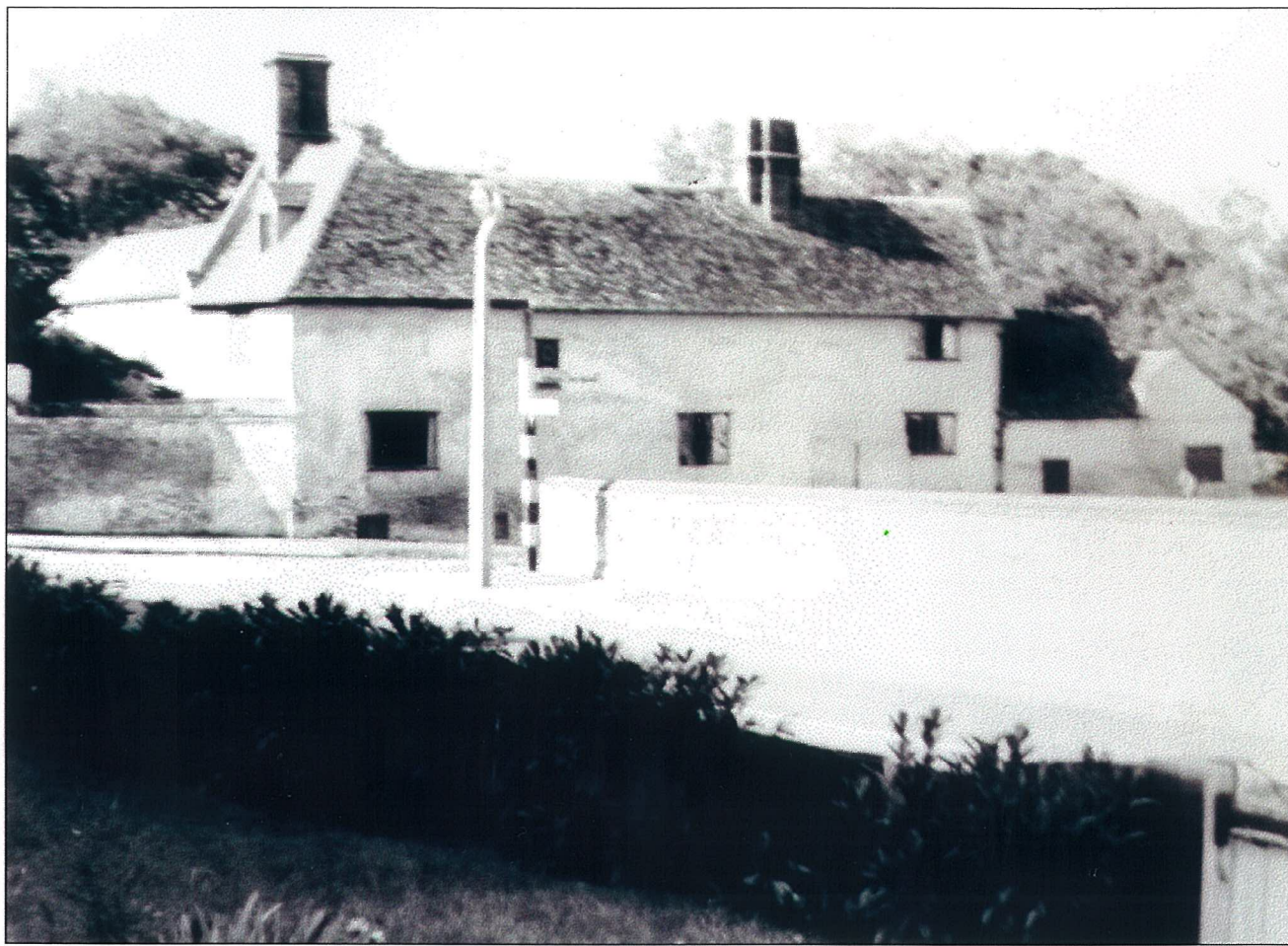
Red Lion. The main block on the street is probably of the seventeenth century; it was later extended to the east and a club room was built in the nineteenth century.

Rose Cottage. Dating probably from the first half of the seventeenth century, the end nearest the street was rebuilt about a hundred years later to provide a chimney and gable.

Almshouses Those in the High Street seem to have been built in the early part of the eighteenth century; those at the Reach end of the village are somewhat later.

The Fountain. This conical brick structure was built by Mr. Allix about 1860 to provide a wayside drinking place on the Cambridge road just outside the village; it was fed from a reservoir belonging to Swaffham Prior House. After a period of disuse and decay, it was pulled down in 1957.

The Cage. This originally stood on the village green at the bottom of Cage hill; it is not known when it was moved to its present site on the south side of the hill, but this may have been done when it was adapted to house the fire engine. This was given by the Allix family in 1791 for the use of the village.



Rose Cottage



Red Lion



Almhouses in the High Street



The Fountain



The Cage (Pound and lock-up)



Swaffham Prior House – 1753
Home of the Allix Family



The house is built of yellow brick – has nine bays, two stories, top balustrade. Doorway with Tuscan Columns, metope frieze and pediment.

The whole building was built on the site of an Elizabethan mansion, a portion of which it incorporates.

The Allix Family

The Reverend Pierre Allix, afterwards known as the Learned Dr. Peter Allix, D.D. was the first of the family who settled in England. He came from the Parish of Vingt Hanaps, near Alencon in Normandy.

He fled from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and took refuge in London, leaving houses, lands, kindred and preferment for conscience sake. Large offers were made by King Louis XIV to induce him to return to France and abandon the Huguenot faith, but without success. The degree of D.D., honoris causa, was voluntarily conferred upon him by both the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and he was presented by Bishop Burnet to the Treasurership of Salisbury Cathedral with a Prebental Stall.

He was born at Alencon in 1641 and died in London in 1717, and is buried in St Sepulchre's Church, Holborn.

THE CHURCHES

The remarkable fact of there being two churches for so small a population gives the village of Swaffham Prior its chief distinction; but for many centuries only one church has been in a fit state for worship and at times both were ruinous.

The exact reason for two churches in one Churchyard is not known, but in the Hundred Rolls (1279/80) mention is made of "the Church of St. Mary of Lord Benton" and of "the Chapel of the Lord William Kirkect".

The older Church of St. Mary, that is now in use, was begun about 1066 in Norman times.

The tower of this church (or what is left of it) is unusual in starting square, becoming octagonal, and then sixteen-sided, culminating in a tall spire which was struck by lightning in 1767, and unfortunately deliberately demolished by the villagers who considered it "unsafe". However they were unable to complete the demolition as the structure was too solidly built.

The gift of the Rectory of St. Mary's to the Prior of the Abbey of Anglesey was made by Hugh de Crauden about 1250. About the same time the Bishop of Ely, who was responsible for the spiritual care of the parishioners, came to an agreement with the Prior concerning the provision to be made for the Vicar.

"concerning the house to be built for the use of the vicar, or concerning the injury which the vicar has hitherto sustained by the non-building of his house, a tax of 4 marks shall be paid to the same vicar at two terms of the first year only; but the old house with the loft where as arranged the priest of the church was accustomed to inhabit, shall for ever remain for the use of the vicar. The vicarage shall be endowed with all the obventions of the altar and tithe

of hay, wool, milk and flax and with other small tithes as well as the principal tithe of the curtilages, in lease with 2 acres of land from the Priory of Ely, and also 15 acres of land of the church and 12 acres of land of the prior and convent assigned to the vicarage".

(Hailstone, History of Bottisham p.208)

The same source records that at about 1318 the tithes of St. Mary's came from two manors, that of the Prior and Convent of Ely and "Cotellys". (probably a corruption of Tothills).

The oldest parts of St. Mary's Church are the lowest stage of the tower and the chancel walls, dating from the late eleventh century; the two upper stages of the octagonal tower were probably added during the twelfth century, the aisles and nave were rebuilt in the fifteenth century.

The Tower and Chancel of the Church dedicated to St. Cyriac and Julitta (son and mother, Roman martyrs of the early Christian Church), was built around 1300. The nave was not completed until 1500. The rectory is said to have been given by Sir Philip de Burg to the Bishop of Ely, and by Bishop Kilkenny (1254-6) to the Prior and Convent there.

An inventory of the property of the two churches has survived from about 1338. (Vetus Liber Arch. Ely ed. Feltoe & Minns).

St. Mary's: One missal, one antiphonarium, one legend in two volumes, two psalters by themselves, one martyrology, three graduals with Tropers, one manual, two sets of vestments with appurtenances, another for feasts, three chalice veils, two chalices, one brass pyx, four flasks, three surplices, two robes, a good censer, one lantern, font with cover, one banner.

St. Cyriac's: One missal, one manual, one antiphonarium with psalter, two psalters by themselves, two legends, two graduals with Tropers, one proper by itself, one martyrology,



This print was taken before 1767 when the spire of St. Mary's was struck by lightning



one ordinal, three sets of vestments with appurtenances and tunic, two chalices, three silk frontals, ivory pyx, chrismatory with cover, three crucifixes, four flasks, two censers, one lantern, font with cover.

This property accumulated through the years as a result of gifts and bequests such as that of Thomas Elles, alias Baker of Reche, whose Will was proved in 1517.

“I Thomas Elles otherwise called Baker of Reche in the parish of St. Ceryc Swafham Prior make my will in the presence of Syr. Wm. Gaysley, Parish Priest here. My body to be buried in the Church of St. Ciric nigh the Tabernacle of St. James. To the high altar of St. Ciric 10s. To the altar of St. Mary's 10s. for tythes forgotten. Also to paint St. Ciric's Tabernacle, to Priest, Clercs, Poor at my burial 17th and 30th days £3. To buy a cross for the church of St. Ciric with Mary and John silver and gilt to be borne in procession on the high feast of the year £20. To St. Ciric's Church £20 to buy a cope and a vestment. To buy a Monstre of silver and gilt to St. Ciric's to bear the Blessed Sacrament on the high feasts of the year £4. To Margery my wife all my household stuff and £20, and if she die before the £20 is spent, the remainder to be spent in masses for her and my souls at the discretion of Syr. Wm. Gaysley.

(Cole-s MSS. copy by the Rev. L. Fisher in Church chest)

During the Civil War and Commonwealth, when so many churches, including Ely Cathedral, were damaged and robbed of their ornaments by over-zealous puritans, many of the pictures and ornaments were destroyed. In the present church of St. Mary there is a window commemorating the destruction of 20 Cherubims in this church by W. Dowsing, on

3rd Jan. 1643 “The rails we brake in pieces. . . . and a grate many pictures”. Possibly the cherubims were similar to those looking down from the roof in the Cathedral at Bury St. Edmund's, but we shall never know.

The maintenance of two vicars and two churches often led to difficulties. Mr. Jonathon Jephcott, vicar of St. Mary's from 1633-1662 received but £30 a year and also taught in a school at Thurlow in order to support his family. When Mr. Richard Peacocke, the vicar of St. Cyriac's, was ejected from his living on account of his Royalist sympathies, Mr. Jephcott held both parishes for a time. In 1645 the parishioners petitioned for the amalgamation of the two parishes but the disturbances of the Civil War seem to have delayed action. On the return of Richard Peacocke in 1660 Jonathon Jephcott resigned from St. Mary's and went Boston Free School. He was described by his predecessor at S. Mary's as “Eminent for his unusual accuracy in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin Tongues, Philosophy and some parts of Mathematics. . . .”. When he lived at the vicarage he was robbed in the night by four men, of which three broke into the house and one held the horses. When he perceived how it was, which was not until they were coming up the stairs, he said “The Will of the Lord be done. They took away some Plate, some money and a watch or two; but 'tis likely expected more. Mrs. Jephcott began to speak to them of the day of Judgment; but they said they were gentlemen and must live”. (Calamy Life of Baxter, vol. 2 p.112, vol.3 p.150)

The two benefices were united in 1667, probably because by this time there was not much left of S. Cyriac's. The nave had been considerably damaged.

For the benefit of his successors in the parish the Rev. Martin Hill recorded the custom of small tithes:

For every calf	6d	
For every cow	4d	(the same for every heifer of 2 years)
For every colt	1d	(if sold within a year after foaling, then the 10 th penny of what it is sold for)
For every hen	1/2d	
For every cock	1d	(and where there are hens kept, the custom is to pay for a cock though there be none; or if the party pays eggs in kind then 2 eggs for every hen and 3 for every cock.
For every goose	1d.	
For every turkey	1d.	

Ducks tithable as hens

Every house paies 2d. viz. one penny called hearth penny and another penny called garden penny: the same due at Easter. If coves be pasture coves viz. depastured in the closes and meadeway adjoining to the town then the custom is to pay 1s. for every calf. The windmill payes 14s. per annum

All tithe of Hay Hemp and coleseed belongs to the vicar. All tithe of sedge viz. 3d. for every hundred of sedge mown in the sedge fen and 2d. for every hundred mown in the turf bay.

My way of tithing coleseed was to take the 10th penny of what the same was sold for only subtracting the 10th penny for the charge of threshing it and of water carriage.

For every lamb the custom is 4d, due at shear day Wool is tithable in kind, the 10th pound according to weight. The custom for cullets taken in is at the rate of eight pence for three months for every score. If lambs from abroad be brought hither to summer the custom for

them is 2d. for every lamb.

If any of the closes or fen grounds be plowed and sown with corn the tithe thereof is paid to the Rectory. But if any of the corn ground in the field be turned into grass ground the tithe thereof is paid to the vicarage. Pigeons are tithable in kind, only my way hath been to agree with the owner of each dovecote for a yearly summe. Hony is tithable in kind”.

A hundred years after Mr. Hill was collecting his custom of small tithe, tithe payments were commuted for a grant of land under the Enclosure Act 1805.

In 1767 the tower of S. Mary's. was struck by lightning. Apparently there were some people in the village who were not as good as they might have been, because some folk saw this as a “judgment of God” owing to the wickedness of the parishioners and their vicar. In spite of the offer of the Squire (one of the Allix family) to repair the damage at his own expense, nothing would satisfy but the demolition of S. Mary's and the using of the spoil to erect a brick nave to be attached to the ancient tower of St. Cyriac. This was so badly done that in 100 years it was a ruin.

St. Mary's had proved too well built for total destruction, and although roofless, the tower, walls and pillars remained. Once more the Allix family came to the rescue and the restoration of the present church was begun in 1897 and completed in 1902. It has been used for worship ever since.

The Cherub window has already been mentioned; the window, illustrating the 91st Psalm was put in 1909, the Benedicite windows in 1914 and the War and Peace windows after the 1914-1918 War as a memorial to the men of Swaffham Prior who died at that time. The

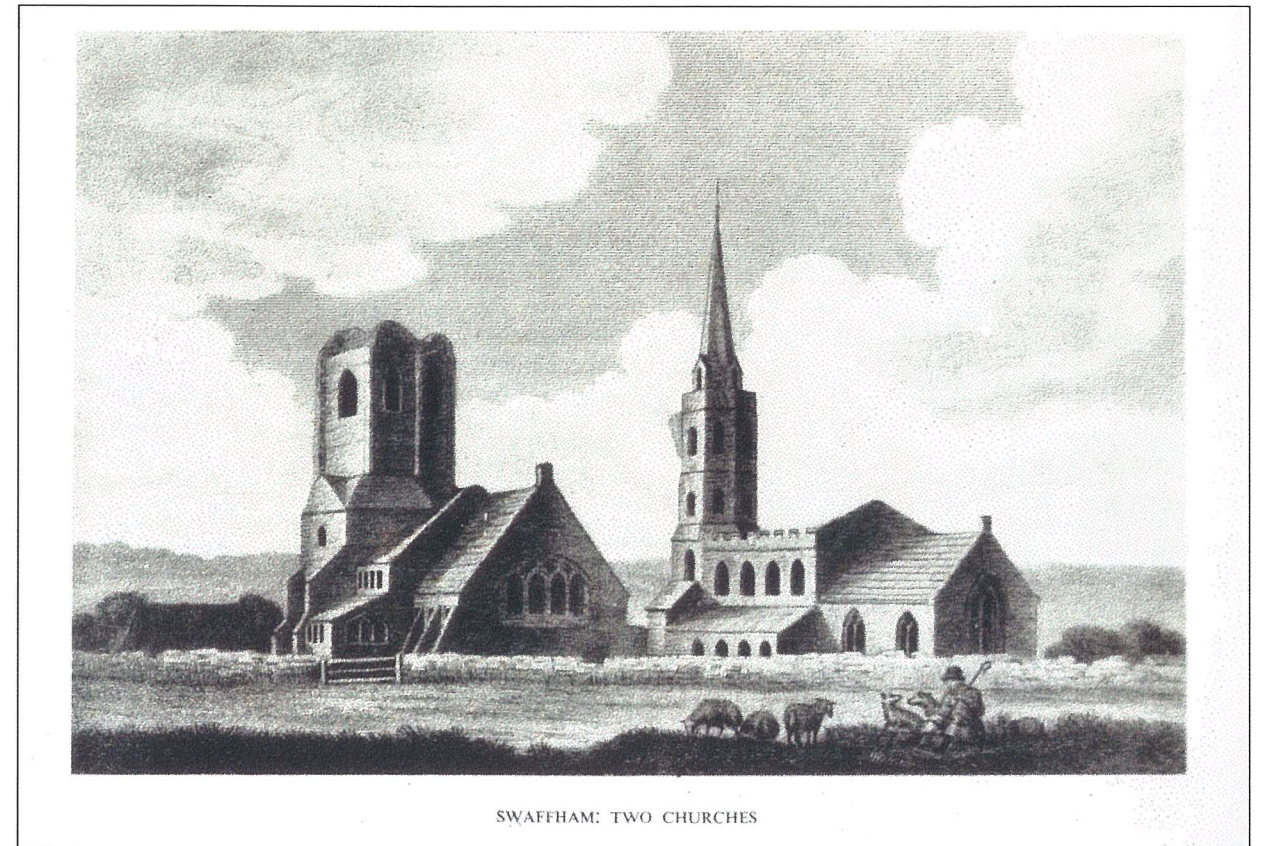
other windows were removed from St. Cyriae's at the restoration of St. Mary's. The Rood Screen was added in 1902.

There are several interesting brasses. That of John Tothyll 1463 with his wife and dog; William Water, his wife and seven sons, a man and wife of 1530 and Robert Chambers, gent., a cavalier in top boots and clothes of the early 17th century.

St. Cyriac's nave is a ruin, but the tower with its ancient clock still stands, a landmark for miles around and a home for six fine bells, made by John Briant of Hertford; the third bell is inscribed with the date 1791 and the names of the churchwardens for that year Samuel Hart and John Nunn. The clock bell is inscribed W. Killingbeck, C.W. dated 1793.

The registers of the two parishes date from 1559.

Copy of a sketch of The Two Churches (before 1767)



The original sketch was done before 1767 when the spire of St. Mary's was struck by lightning. Note – St. Cyriac's appears to be without its battlement and to have a two-gabled roof instead! There also appears to be no roof to the nave of St. Mary's. It is possible that the artist was not accurate in his sketch.



The interior of St. Mary's Church



**The Two Churches
(Taken from the High Street)**



**The Two Churches
(Taken from the Old Churchyard)**

VICARS OF SWAFFHAM PRIOR

Both the original churches were probably built between 1066 and 1130

Church of St. Cyriac and Julitta

1251 Richard de Kyrkham
 1299 Willian de Paylington
 1309 John de Mildenhall
 1339 John Matthew
 1355 Thomas de Copmanford
 1358 John attee Hall de Stockton
 1373 Henry Elys
 Nicholas Blunden
 1384 John de Wesenham
 1385 John de Corby
 1393 Lawrence Styward
 1397 John Rouland
 1398 Richard Ffulhood
 1400 Henry Ffychet
 1403 John Bury
 1418 Richard Yungman
 1433 John Gotobedde
 1458 Thomas Wele
 1468 John Bernis
 1478 James Halden
 1481 Richard Lancaster
 1485 Robert Porter
 1489 John Thore
 1491 William Stubbys
 1497 William Ffayrhayr LL.D
 1519 William Ffayrhayr B.A.
 1526 Richard Dale
 1551 Richard Bland
 1567 John Fuller
 1591 William Tye
 1592 Nicholas Barrett
 1618 Edmund White
 1619 Nicholas Payne
 1640 Richard Peacocke
 1662 Anthony Nethercott
 1663 William Shephard
 1664 Martin Hill

St. Mary the Virgin

1260 Robert de Crauden
 1290 Henry de Bradeker
 1340 Hugh
 John de Downham
 1375 Thomas de Broughton
 1439 John Norton
 1498 Edmund Campion
 1506 William Ffayrhayr LL.D
 1519 William Claybrugh
 1526 James Clerk
 1539 Geoffrey Crispe
 1551 Robert Burton
 1554 Thomas Heyssham
 1561 John Gefford
 1567 William Bowmere
 1589 Owen Rowland
 1590 William Newman
 1598 Richard Thurnall
 1616 Thomas Macarnesse
 1617 Edmund White
 1620 Alexander Bold
 1626 Edmund Calamy
 1630 John Elderred
 1633 Jonathan Jephcott
 1662 Gibson Lucas
 1664 Robert Darley

The two Churches and the two Vicarages were united by Act of Parliament in the year 1667.

VICARS OF THE UNITED CHURCHES OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN AND ST. CYRIAC AND JULITTA

1667 Martin Hill
 1712 Peter Allix
 1753 William Collier
 1789 George Leonard Jenyns
 1848 Joseph Maddy
 1856 Thomas Preston
 1897 Lawrence Fisher
 1932 Herbert Hills
 1952 Martin Thornton
 1958 Francis Hicks

Population of Swaffham Prior

1801	791	1871	1369
1811	803	1881	1078
1821	979	1891	1006
1831	1102	1901	950
1841	1226	1911	934
1851	1384	1921	892
1861	1329	1931	866

In 1803 when invasion by Napoleon Buonaparte was expected, 82 men of Swaffham Prior parish joined the Cambridgeshire Volunteers and many of their family names are repeated in the Roll of Honour for subsequent wars.

By 1897 the population had decreased owing in part to the low wages paid to agricultural workers and opportunities for work in towns. By this time the Railway had provided an opportunity for travel hitherto unknown, but in general the villagers were accustomed to hard work and few treats. An account, taken from the Cambridgeshire Chronicle, of the Jubilee celebrations gives an idea of the simple pleasures of that time.

Early in the morning a peal of bells rang out from the old tower of S. Cyriac's, and when the ringers were exhausted by their efforts breakfast was provided by Mr. Hawkes. Between 9 and 10 o'clock the streets were thronged with children carrying bunches of wild flowers and toys for the competition for home-made toys and wild flowers, which were

judged by Mrs. Allix and Miss Fiddian of "the Retreat". Prizes were awarded. In the afternoon there were Children's Sports followed by tea for the children. Old people also had a tea and a present each of tea or tobacco. tea for parents followed, then general sports and races for all. Supper for children and as a final treat Fire balloons and a bonfire at 10 o'clock, surrounded by a "merry crowd".

The Cambridgeshire Directory for 1847 gives the population as 1226. St. Mary's church is now a "ruinated but picturesque Object". St. Cyriac's a "neat edifice".

Vicar The Rev. G. Jennyns. Curate The Rev. T. Fenner.

"Gentry": J. P. Allix, the Rev. T. Fenner, I.N. Wilkinson.

Public Houses: Rose and Crown, Crown and Woolpack, The Cock and Red Lion.

Trades Bricklayers (2)
 Farrier
 Plumber
 Tailors (2)
 Shoe-makers(2)
 Baker
 Beer-retailer
 Watchmaker
 Wheelwright
 Blacksmiths (2)
 Millers (2)
 Butchers(2)
 Carriers.

By 1858 there were 6 gentry or private residents, and among the inhabitants were an animal doctor, a schoolmaster and schoolmistress, a solicitor, a policeman, a horse-clipper and a seedsman.

Village Fires

The following information was obtained from a hand-made book written by one Walter Poulter, and inscribed "In Memory of two Dreadful Fires that Happened in Swaffham Prior".

The account begins "The first fire that happened was at ye Hall Bearn by Litening on ye 15th July, 1722, which consumed 2 very large bearns and a stable. The second and Most Lamentable One that happened was on ye 29th August, 1733 which begun at one Mrs. Manning Eattons which consumed in less than 3 Hours time 23 dwelling houses and bearns, stables and all other outhouses besides corn and utensils in Great Quantity".

The sequel to this calamity is unfolded in the pages that follow. The names of five Justices of the Peace who "ordered and appointed the Trusties for ye late Fire" are given, also the "cash keepers for the moneys garthered by the Letters of Request in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely". These Letters were, apparently, a formal appeal for help, and the contributions they brought in were handed to Roger Rant, Esquire and Mr. Brittain Warren for sharing out to the victims. The sum amounted to £211. 00s. 09d. Then follows a list of the total number of persons who suffered in the fire and an estimation of their total loss, which amounted to £1225. 00s. 09d.

Obviously the cash in hand was not nearly sufficient to compensate, and the problem was how to distribute it fairly. If, in the opinion of the Trustees, any particular loss was over-estimated, the sum allowed was drastically cut. Well-to-do people received nothing.

Thomas Eaton, whose loss was estimated at £20. 5s. 0d., "he being worth two

Thousand pounds we did not think him an object of Charity, so we did not allow him anything". Widow Hazlewood, on the other hand, suffering a loss of £6. 04s. 0d. was allowed £3. 9s. 10d. Fire insurance was, obviously, almost unheard of. Only one person, a William Eastwell, is mentioned as having some of his goods insured against loss by fire. An entry of £00.00s.04d. to one Widow Dawson for Running of Errands when the Trustees divided the money stimulates the imagination.

This document, preserved for two and a quarter centuries in the village where it was written, is evidence of that real sense of community which has been a civilising influence in rural life. By mutual help the disaster which deprived so many people of their homes and goods was alleviated and a new start made possible. No doubt neighbours who escaped the conflagration provided help and accommodation for the unfortunate ones.

Possibly with this disaster in mind, the squire's wife, Mrs. Allix in 1791 gave a manual fire engine for the benefit of the parish. It was in use until the time of the first World War, and is still housed in the village pound on Cage Hill.

THE VILLAGE FIRE ENGINE

As stated on the previous page, Mrs. Allix presented the parish with a manual fire engine in 1791.

It was small, and proved easy to move about fairly quickly. There are four leather hoses, each fifteen feet in length. Two of these are riveted and two are beautifully hand-stitched.

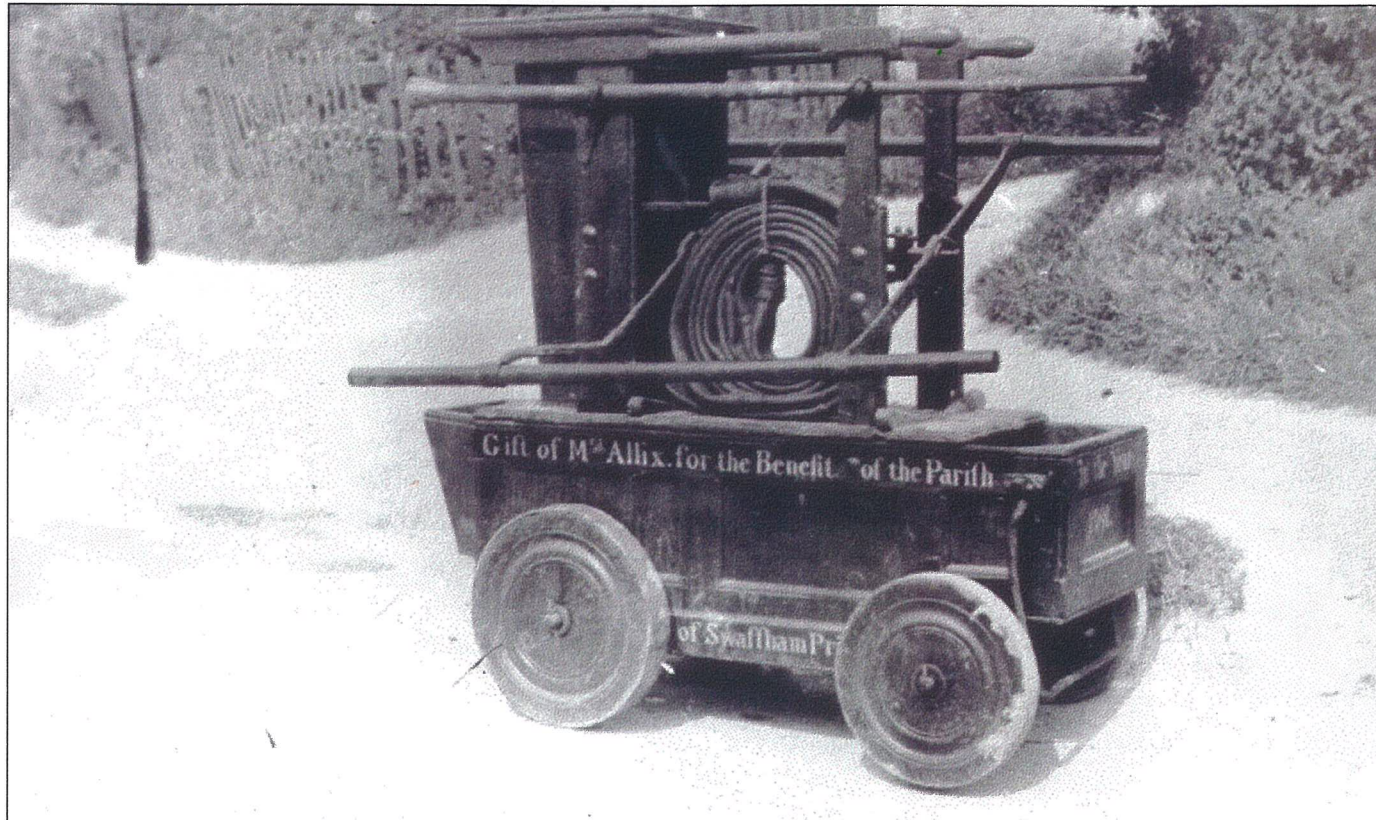
This engine was in use up to the First World War. Repairs upon same were met by the Parish Council.

When more modern equipment replaced the manual it was moved into the Cage and nearly forgotten.

During the anxious weeks of 1939, before the declaration of War, the Air Raid Precaution workers of the village remembered their ancient fire engine. Although it had not seen daylight for more than a quarter of a century it was found to be in good working order.

Under the Act of Parliament in 1940 Rural Councils were appointed as fire fighting authorities. Each parish declared any equipment in its possession. The much prized fire engine was valued at £2, and in spite of strong protest it was taken away.

In 1951 an observant man spotted the old engine on a Newmarket Rural District Council rubbish dump, and informed local inhabitants who went post haste to claim this relic. It was a proud moment when they returned this object of historical interest to its resting-place, the Cage, where it will remain for the benefit of interested spectators.





THE SCHOOLS

The first mention of the education of children in the village is found in "A Topographical Account of the County of Cambridgeshire by Lysons. (Published 1808).

"Some fen lands having been allotted under the draining act in 1663 for the benefit of the poor, the sum of £5 per annum was appropriated as a salary for a school master who teaches ten poor children. There is a good house for the master near the churchyard gate".

1852 A National School was erected in 1852 for about 150 children: the average attendance being 120.

One of the first Headmasters: W. Staples Pratte M.A. (about 1899)

Mistress: Mrs. Pratte and other help.

The school was partly supported by funds under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners.

As the years went by the school buildings became unsatisfactory through lack of keeping in repair etc.

A Government report on the buildings (June 1920, April & May 1922) reads: "The unsatisfactory nature of the premises renders the task of the Staff very arduous". Separate communication was sent to the Local Education Authority with reference to the overcrowded state of the room occupied by the older children. Many conferences were held between the L.E.A. and the School managers.

First decision reached was to transfer the children over 11 years to join children of the same age at Burwell Central School.

April 1923 Fifteen children who were transferred continued to present themselves at the local school a.m. and p.m., but were refused admission. Parents would not co-operate.

This state of affairs went on until July 1924, when a private school was opened during mornings for children who were excluded from Swaffham Prior School on account of their being eleven years of age. This school was closed on 20th May 1925.

Parents of 11 plus persisted in sending their children to the local school again, only to be refused admission.

1925 Eight children still did not attend Burwell School.

1928 National School was demolished.

September 1928. School re-assembled in the Reading Room.

Mr. C.I.L. Allix, squire of the village in addition to providing a site, offered a generous donation of £500 to open the list of subscriptions towards the Building Fund for the new school which was to remain a Church School. The Foundation Stone was laid by the Right Rev. Bishop Price D.D., Archdeacon of Ely, on the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, 1928. At Easter 1929 the children under eleven years of age were housed in the new premises with ample accommodation. Three roomy classrooms, cloakrooms and staff room made life pleasanter for staff and pupils.

The average number on the roll during the peace years was sixty-five, but during the 1939-1945 War it rose to over 90.

Unfortunately during the succeeding years and especially after the 1939-1945 War the School Managers found the financial burden of structural repairs too high to meet, and in 1947 the School became a controlled school, but remains Church of England.

A New Church School



The Right Rev. Bishop Price laying the foundation stone of the new Church of England School at Swaffham Prior on Saturday 29th September 1928. This important ceremony evoked considerable interest in the District and attracted many people to Swaffham Prior. The service was held in church at 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon and then a procession led by the Cross was formed and went to the new site. The order was: choir; clergy and Bishop Price; Archdeacon of Ely; Children and teachers of Sunday and Day Schools; Church and school officials; and the general congregation. The stone bore the following inscription:

**This Foundation Stone
Was laid by
The Right Reverend Bishop
Horace McCartie Eyre Price, D.D.
Archdeacon of Ely
On the feast of
S.Michael and All Angels
1928**

A special service was held and the Bishop was presented by the architect with a handsome plated trowel with abbreviated inscription; with this he laid the cement as the masons lowered the stone into position, the Bishop saying "in the Faith of Jesus Christ we fix this stone on this foundation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". He then gave an address; a hymn was sung, and after the benediction, a verse of the National Anthem. As already stated, the site of the school was given by Mr. Charles Allix, the owner of Swaffham Prior Estate. Mr. G. Banyard, of Cambridge is the architect and Messrs. Goodchild and Martin, of Burwell, are the contractors. A public tea was held after the ceremony, the proceeds of which, together with the collection, came to £11, which goes towards the building fund. Other contributions will be very welcome and may be sent to the Rev. L. Fisher R.D., Swaffham Prior Vicarage; or, to Barclay's Bank, Cambridge (for "Swaffham Prior New School Building"). Other clergy present on Saturday were: Rev. A.L. Woodard (Sutton), Rev. A.G.W. Sayer (Burwell), Rev. C.B. Prior (Fordham), Rev. H.W. Flory (Isleham), Rev. T.W. Coombe (Burwell), Rev. J.D. Stewart (Wentworth), Rev. W.F. Hicks (St Giles, Cambridge, became Vicar of Swaffham Prior in February 1958). Considerable local interest was displayed in Saturday's important proceedings.



The Railway Station

The village remained truly rural, as the Cambridge to Mildenhall line was situated a good distance from the village. For many years villagers had petitioned for transport to Cambridge, and were wildly excited when they were informed that their wishes were to be fulfilled. It is interesting to note today (1958) that our present squire, Mr. Charles Israel Lorraine Allix, at ten years of age turned over the first sod near Reach Bridge. The Great Eastern Railway presented him with a small spade and barrow. The station was opened in 1883 and Mr. Allix holds the first ticket No.0000 3rd Class Swaffham Prior to Cambridge dated June 2nd 1884.

A substantial building was erected, consisting of the station with house attached. The only platform was covered with a glass roof, but this was removed in 1927. Across the line was a good signal box.

The road linking the village with the Fens crosses the railway line and the level crossing gates have always been operated by the station staff, which at one time numbered four . . . the Station Master, always resplendent in uniform and wearing a "half high hat", a clerk who was usually young, and two porter signalmen.

In 1924 the Great Eastern Railway became the London & North Eastern Railway, and the name was changed to British Railways in 1947.

In 1921 buses were in operation between Burwell and Cambridge - at first only one weekly.

The bus service affected the number of rail passengers, as the station is half a mile from the village. Buses ran more frequently, with the result that the railway was rarely patronized.

Rail excursions were frequent before the buses came into operation.

Types of Goods leaving the station:

Grain (less since 1930's when the farm to mill lorry collection started), mustard seed, wool, sugar beet, potatoes, carrots and celery.

Types of Goods arriving:

Coal, coke, fertilizers, seed potatoes, sugar beet seed.

During 1958 5,000 railway sacks were hired from the station by farmers for threshed corn.

When emptied they are returned to the station. Moderate charges are made according to the condition of the sacks and the time hired.

The number of passengers has greatly diminished, and only one train daily takes passengers to Cambridge in the morning, to catch the Fenman to London. A return train arrives at Swaffham Prior at 4.50pm.

The station in the 1950's is staffed by the Station Master. British Railways lorries deliver all luggage, parcels etc from the Barnwell depot, thus relieving the work of the local Station Master.

The last passenger train ran on 18th June 1962.



View of the only platform approaching the station from Cambridge



**Old snaps showing the glass roof over the platform.
(this roof was removed in 1927)**

THE MILLS

The present Windmill was built just over 100 years ago by Fisons, a Soham firm of Millwrights, for a Mr. Harry Galley. Before then a Post Mill stood on the site. Harry Galley worked the mill until his death in 1896, when Mr. Foster who already owned the other Windmill in the village, bought it. The village in those days was much more self-contained, so that the inhabitants were to a great extent dependent on the Village miller who ran a thriving business. The arrival of mechanical power and improved transport facilities brought about great changes, and the industry gradually died out. The wind was a very precarious source of power, and long periods of calm resulted in complete inactivity. Naturally no wind was allowed to be wasted and sometimes the men worked days as well as nights. Usually two men were employed actually in the Mill, but the strength of the wind governed the amount of work. There were two pairs of stones in each mill, of "French Burr" quarried in France. One pair was for grinding cereals for cattle, the other pair for the much finer work of grinding wheat for flour. The wheat-meal was put through a very fine cloth called a "Bolting Cloth", which revolved at a rapid rate on a centrifugal machine. This separated the flour from the Offals, or Bran and Pollard. The flour, the finished product, was genuine "Stone-ground flour", containing the germ of the wheat and all its nourishment. Apart from work for the Miller's own trade, grinding corn for cattle food was undertaken for farmers. Housewives as well as farmers would send wheat to be made into flour, often wheat that the women had gleaned. Output might vary from two to five tons a day, according to the wind and other factors. Present prices compared with those before the First World War are about four times as much.



SWAFFHAM PRIOR CHAPEL

This chapel situated at the entrance of the village (from Cambridge) is a Union Church (Baptist and Congregational).

It was built in 1862 and has had only one Minister the Rev. C.J. Fowler who conducted services for eight years 1920 – 1928.

Among the first Trustees (mostly Cambridge businessmen) were Stephen Chivers of the well known firm of jam makers, James Nutter of the Milling firm of Granchester and L.L. Bull of Burwell.

Before the Chapel was built the non-conformists met in two barns in the village and later in the Red Lion clubroom.

In the early days of the Chapel adults were taught to read.

The following, taken from the Chapel minutes of 1887 is interesting:

“The treasurer read a statement of the Church finances which, owing to a very trying circumstances, the death of a horse of the value of £20 and which people held themselves morally bound to replace, left the Chapel in debt. A most hopeful tone pervaded the meeting that the current year would see the balance on the right side”.

The “very trying circumstances” was caused by a swing being left on a tree all one night after a Sunday School treat. During the night a horse became entangled with the ropes of the swing and was apparently strangled.

Services are conducted by Ministers from Cambridge, lay readers and theological students and all are excellently supported.

This Chapel has achieved a great deal in the religious upbringing of the village children, both Church of England and Non-conformists.



**The Chapel
(Baptist and Congregational)**



**A lane leading to The Vicarage lies
alongside The Chapel**

ZOAR CHAPEL

Situated in the lower end of the village this small church was, and still is in 1958, of strict Baptist denomination.

The land was purchased in 1820 and the Chapel was built in 1821. The first Minister preached there for forty years until the Chapel was out of debt. The second Minister preached for twenty years.

A few faithful members still make a congregation in 1958.





MAY DOLLING

On the first day of May the girls dressed up their dolls with fresh flowers and in great numbers proceeded round the village collecting pennies.

It proved great fun and up to 1958 the girls still go round in little groups.

Through Act of Parliament they are not allowed to collect money as it is considered wrong.

A few continue to sing:

Sing a song of May-time

Sing a song of spring

Flowers are in their beauty

Birds are on the wing

May-time, play-time

God has given us may-time

Thank Him for His gifts of love

Sing a song of spring

PLOUGH MONDAY

This old custom dated back many years and took place on the second Monday in January to commemorate the sowing of the seed in the fields.

Men dressed themselves gaily as horses and wooden ploughs were taken through the streets. Anyone, young and old alike, who cared to join had to blacken their faces.

School children were given a holiday on that day.

Lusty voices could be heard singing:

A sifting (sieve full) of chaff

And a bottle of hay

See the poor colts

Go wagging away

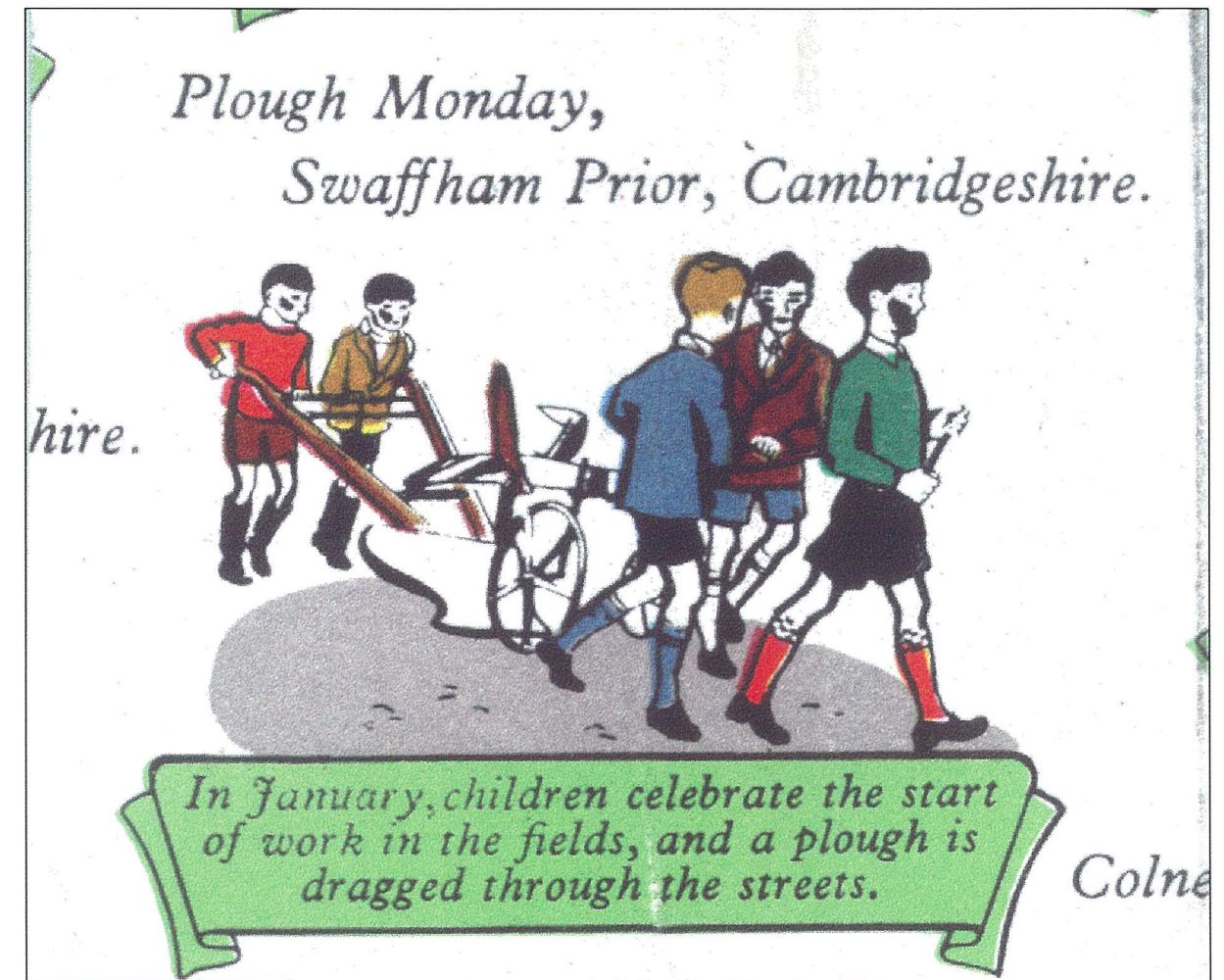
Squeak, boy squeak

And wag your tail

Hi! Ninnany norny

The money collected was spent on merry making in the local public houses.

After the 1920's the men ceased to go around, but the children continued to do so, until the outbreak of war in 1939 and the old custom ceased altogether.





**An interesting old photograph showing William Ambrose Esq.
a farmer of Swaffham Prior, paying the last toll at the Burwell Ness Toll Bar on December 1st 1905.**



The Reading Room – presented to the parish in 1868 by Miss Marianne Allix, Mrs. Roberts and Miss Julianna Allix, under the control of C.P. Allix Esq.



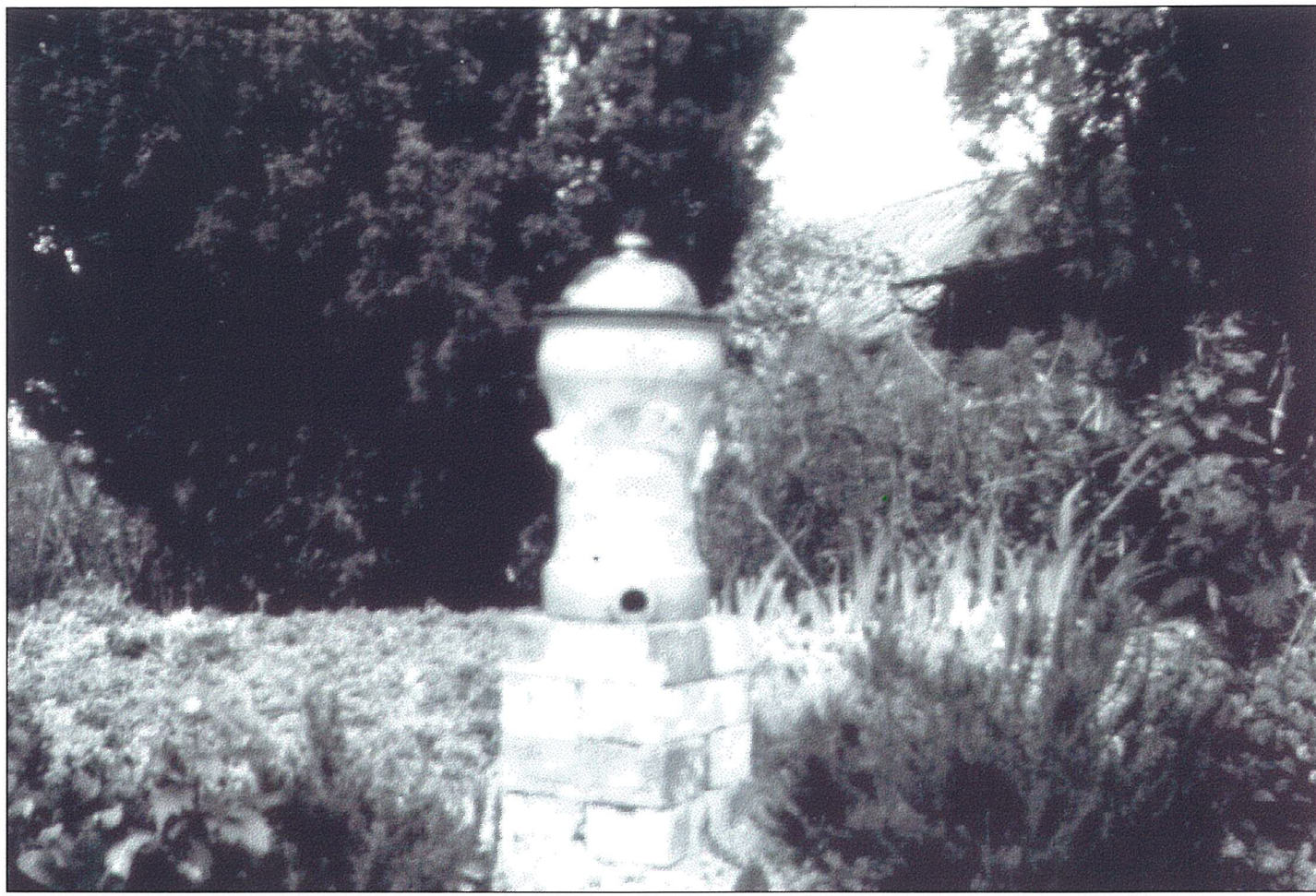
A group of old cottages (situated opposite the Chapel) – soon to be demolished. (1958)



The low one-storey cottage which was used as a Workhouse for many years.



**Tall Trees
A delightful old cottage (modernised) nestling at the bottom of Vicarage Lane.**



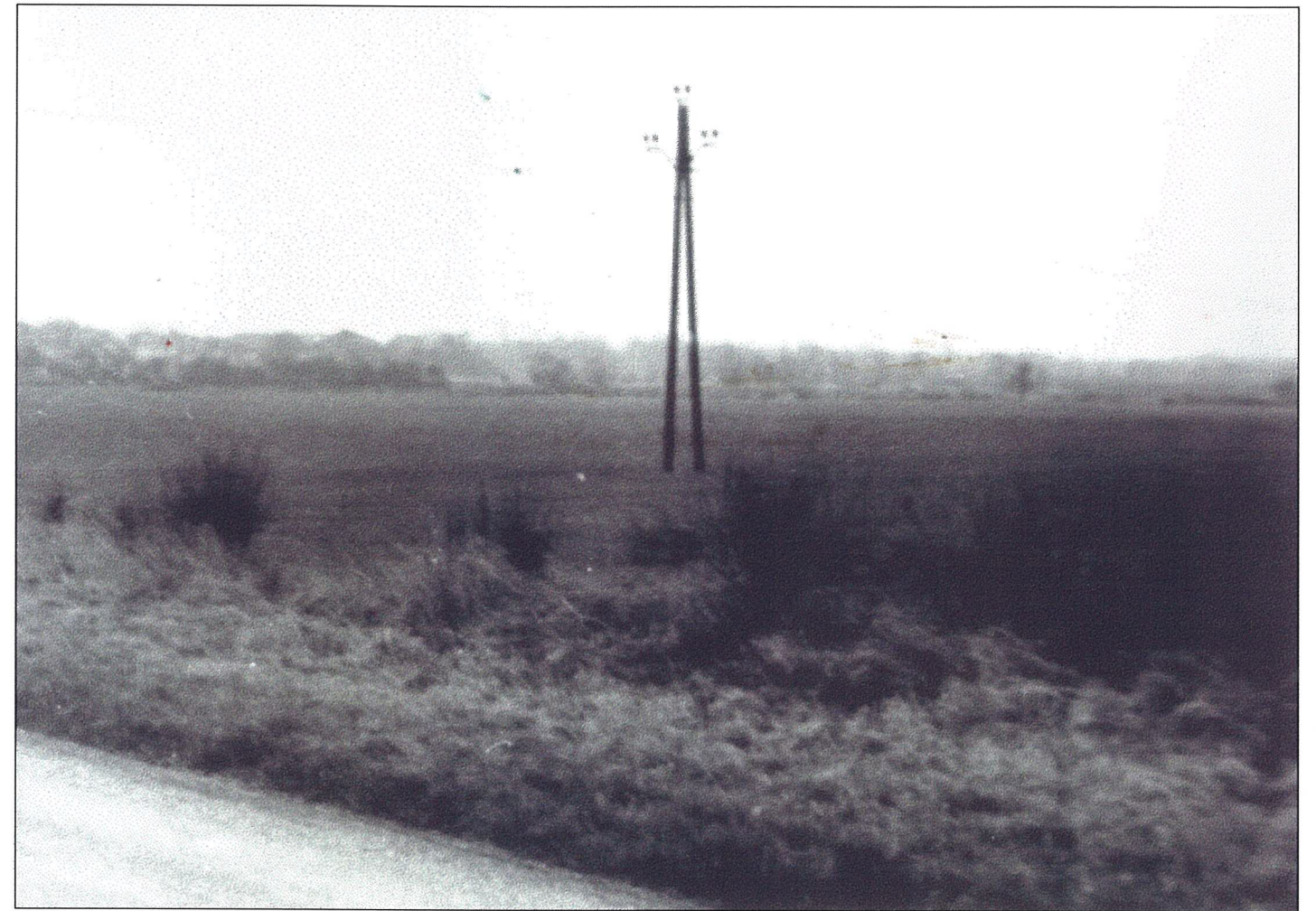
The Water Filter

The above filter is now placed in a local garden.

WATER FILTER

The above "Water Filter" was in use down in the Fens. When workers needed a drink they took water from the ditches, poured it into the filter which contained charcoal.

Some process filtered and purified the water for drinking purposes.



**The bleak windswept land of the
surrounding landscape.**



Swaffham Prior Village

Social and economic change, the decline of the agricultural industry as a major employer of labour - these and other factors have changed the village at a faster rate than ever before.

Where there were farmyards, barns, shops and businesses there are now houses, some cleverly converted from the previous buildings

In an endeavour to record the way the village has changed throughout this century, we have asked and listened to many of the village elders. The one complaint we have is that we haven't had enough time to ask more people to contribute. No doubt they will when they read this, and we will have to publish an amendment.

We are especially grateful for help received from:

Mrs Annie Lowe	Jack Whitmore
Frank Symonds	Wilf and Doll Newman
John Clarke	Jack Camps
Harry and Elsie Smalley	George Palmer
Mrs A Dowdeswell	Ron Fordham
Duncan Menzies Kitchin	W.I. records

and many others whose comments have helped to build up the picture.

The village continues to change. A wide range of new home based industries is springing up; perhaps someone should record these for posterity - they may provide the structure for a new village society.

The accompanying map was reproduced from the 1920 Ordnance Survey Map

Key to the Map

1. Rogers Road; Once part of a drove leading from Lower End to Exning, the main local market before the plague. The part beyond Burwell Road has disappeared. Before the road was made up it was called 'Meeting Lane' possibly because of a 'meeting house'.
2. Farm buildings now demolished - had cows and a dairy and milk was delivered.
3. Cottages, which once stood in what is now part of Rogers Road, and the Almshouses opposite have been long demolished.
4. Blackfriars: it is not known whether these cottages were once used by the Dominican order of Blackfriars.
5. Zoar Chapel: Strict Baptist - now only infrequently used by a group of people who visit, in turn, a number of similar small chapels.
6. Sheldrick's Cottage (once 4 cottages): was once a garage with petrol pumps closed in the early 1970's.
7. Yule House: Once a hardware shop (Stinson's) which seems to have had a good paraffin trade; they had a horse drawn van delivering in the area. Later it was a

butcher's shop' owned by Jack Hurrell who then moved the business to its present site in Burweil. More recently it was a carpet shop and store.

8. Barns: Planing permission granted Ir 1987 for conversion into 4 dwellings.

9. Manor Farm: on the site of Shadworth Manor, owned for over 400 years (until 1925) by Queen's College, Cambridge.

10. Beech Terrace. Built in the early 1890's the seven small cottages were demolished in the early 1970's and replaced by the spaced out modern bungalows of the present 'The Beeches'.

11. Corona.' Once a dairy; cows were grazed on the land near the bridge on the Reach Road. The garden appears to have been duq out for clunch. During the war, brick buildings were added to increase the number of cowsheds, more recently these were used as a garage workshop. The barns and workshop were demolished in 1987.

12. The White House: Included, at various times, a vet's surgery, a carrier's yard and a sweet shop. A room was also used during the war as a doctor's surgery once or twice a week.

13. The Gables: once two cottages, one lived in and one used as a workshop by shoemaker Bob Galley, more recently a vet's surgery until the 1970's.

14. Gutheridge Close: Until the 1960's there was a clunch wall bordering the road. There was a door in this wall adjacent to what is now a paddock. The Badcock family who lived across the road in 'Corona' used this to get to the meadow to hang out their washing. The meadow was a popular place for village children to play; the moat (now difficult to trace) was once used by them for swimming.

15. Most of these cottages have been demolished, some were shops selling such things as fish and chips, sweets and fireworks.

16. Primrose Cottage (replaced two cottages) was used as a 'temporary' vicarage between the Old Vicarage and the new one in Greenhead Road.

17. The site of The Cow and Calf pub, which after its closure, was used as a vet's surgery. Was mostly demolished in the 1920's.

18. Ivy Farm: Used to supply many Newmarket stables with straw - has been a Caravan Club site for many years.

19. Meadow House: once a general stores kept by Tom Cooper (an excellent photographer), who sold food, hardware, and, seemingly, everything else! He also hired out cycles. The shop was organised in sections with a separate till for each counter. More recently, used as an antique shop and an electronic workshop.

20. A carpenters and joiners yard. Mr Javens built farm carts etc., wheel hubs were turned on a foot treadle lathe using timber seasoned in the yard. He did all sorts of repairs and also cured hams and bacon over smouldering sawdust as well as being the village undertaker. Later this was carpenter Webb's yard - now a small garden centre

21. Caxton Cottage: once the village workhouse but was sold off in 1836 when it was no longer needed.

22. The 'Railler': a private roadway used by many pedestrians - origin of name unknown.

23. Home Farm Barn: now converted into two dwellings.

24. Cottages now demolished; one had a coal yard owned by Cephos Misson who was a turf cutter and smallholder. The middle one sold sweets (owned by Frank Hawkes who had a nasty habit of putting the names of anyone in debt to him, in his window) and the other

was once the Post Office run by Mrs. Clark, Ted Milgate's grandmother. She had the first telephone in the village. The middle shop was previously a barber's shop.

(Foulsher's/Foulsharn's?)

25. Home or Stocks Farmhouse: almost derelict in the 70's, restored when the barn was converted. The farm also had cows and sold milk in the village.

26. Village Green: there was a small green in the centre of the road junction and the Cage (cells) once stood here. Nearby is the Village Sign, erected in 1986, carved by Ron Morris of Reach, unveiled by Cyril Rowlinson and funded by the Fenland Country Fair.

27. Ye Olde Inn House includes a vet's surgery and general stores cum post office. It was once the Rose and Crown pub which also had a shop, both entered through the same front door. There was an earlier pub here called The Harrow. After the Rose and Crown closed the premises included for a time, a cafe and the yard was used for selling secondhand cars.

28 The Croft. Once the White Hart pub, also a vet's surgery, more recently an Old English Sheepdog breeding kennel and a cattery (Closed in 1977).

29. Old barns which have now been converted into a house incorporating the remains of an old lime kiln. The area was once used by Mr. Willis as a coal merchant's yard. (He lived in the cottage on Mill Hill known as Sunnyside).

30. A public footpath (invisible) which was once a busy drove between the village and Exning. Was used by people who worked in Newmarket until the early 30's. The Parish Council at one time walked this path to ensure it would be kept as a public right of way.

31. One of the two windmills built in the mid 1800's - a post mill had previously stood on the site. Owned and worked by Mr. Galley until 1896, then bought by Mr. Poster, who owned the other mill - last used in 1946, now being restored and may be in working order again in 1988.

32. Mr. Foster's Mill, now partly demolished. Possibility of permission to convert into a house ('87).

33. Heath Road: referred to on all old maps and by all the elders of the village, as Swaffham Field Road - why the name was changed is not known.

34, Cottage used by Sam Day as a shoemaker.

35. The Pound containing the Cage and the Fire Engine. It may be that the gift of a fire engine by the Allix family caused the Cage to be removed from the Village Green to the present site so that a fire engine shed could be added. Restored in 1986.

36. The Fencock: once The Cock pub. May have got its name from the practice of keeping a horse (called a cock horse) to help coaches up a hill. Had a clubroom upstairs with a snooker table etc. The home of The Land and Plenty, a loan and social club until the 1940's. The Cock closed in 1970.

37. The Hall. On the site of what was probably the principal manor of Swaffham Prior. Part dating from the late 15th C.

38. The cottages at the side of the Bakehouse have been demolished.

39 The Bakehouse: now converted into a house (kitchen was once the oven!) still owned by Mrs Lowe whose husband baked bread here until 1955, the business having previously been at map No 55. Bread was delivered in Burwell, Reach, Wilbraham, Six Mile Bottom, Swaffham Bulbeck and round the village.

40. Granta House (so called because the owner, Herbert Lowe, was born in the Mill House

on the river Granta in Granchester). Was the shop for Lowe's Bakery.

41. Town Close: (The Village Meadow) Once the scene of a large scale, three day fair for the Feast Day). Almshouses now demolished. The Youth Club, erected in 1985, is a reconstructed disused farm building.

42. Stables and barns (now converted into houses - won a design award) were used by Clem Wadham, agricultural contractor for his implements and machinery which included a threshing machine. A pony and governess cart 'taxi service' was based here whose customers included the famous cricketer Maharajah 'Ranji' of Nawangar, when a rather sick man, shooting on the estate.

43. Kent House. Clem Wadhaw's house part of which was used for brewing beer. Another building at the back was used as a fish and chip shop.

44. Bondgate where the Day's kept the Post Office. Bert Day was also a carpenter, wheelwright and undertaker. Two small cottages next door were demolished and replaced by a house where Mrs. Day still lives, celebrating her 101st birthday in July 1987 having walked to the polling station to record her vote on June 11th of that year.

45. Almost derelict but carefully restored in 1986, now called Carter's Cottage after the previous resident Susie Carter.

46, 'The Old Barn House'. Was called 'The Home' when the Adams family, two sisters and two brothers lived there. The brothers were builders and carpenters and stalwart members of the church choir for over 60 years.

47 The Forge where Mr. Bailey did the shoeing of wheels made by Mr. Javens and Bert Day, all the ironwork required for the waggons, shod horses and repaired farm implements. Horses left at the Smithy, having been shod would be sent off to find their own way back home.

48. Knight's Manor. Once three cottages, two on the road and one 'end on'. Once called 'Bye's Yard' probably because a Mr. Bye looked after farmhorses in what was a farmyard. There was a footpath through this yard leading to the top path for estate workers use It was not a public right of way. One of the seven Manors of Swaffham Prior was called Knight's Manor but it is not known where it was sited.

49. Reading Room, given to the Parish by members of the Allix family, has been used as a Village Hall since the early 1970's,

50. Camping Close - a recreation meadow taking its name from the fen game of Camping - bearing some similarity to football. It used to be a very wet meadow which must have added to the fun!

51. Disused footpath, (The Croyle) once a well used short cut for those who worked on the estate and part of a route to the station from Commercial End. It was closed for a day each year.

52. Goodwin Manor. It seems almost certain that one of the seven Manors of Swaffham Prior stood in the grounds of this house; part of the moat still survives. Unfortunately what it was called is not known. The existing house, built on the edge of the moated site, has parts dating from the 1600's

53. Called Station Road after the railway was opened in 1884, it was previously known as White Droveaway. These droveaways have wide verges and cattle were driven along them to feed on the grass. Some called this 'grazing the long meadow'. Driving down Station Road, there is now little evidence of the days of steam but, off the road, the disused Station, now

used as a house, retains many of its original features. The village sign stands on a signal post from the old railway. The Allix Arms, built as a hostelry to serve railway passengers, continued to be used as a pub (and as a coal merchant's) after the railway closed, until the late 1970's. It is now a private house.

54. Once a 'lovely' bacon and cheese shop; they used a pony and trap to deliver round the village.

55. Once Lowe's bakery (until 1900) and then owned by Lanes until they moved to Burwell. More recently it housed a small engineering business

56. Palmby's grocers and general stores; they sold many items including boots and shoes.

57. The Red Lion whose clubroom housed agricultural workers union meetings, annual horkeys, dances on the three days of the Feast (at one time to the music provided by a harp player) and where the early Chapel meetings were held. Visiting preachers and some children from the Fen while they were at school, stabled their horses here.

58. Now called Shadworth House. Once the John Bull pub; an end room was let for various purposes – Godfrey's butcher's shop, Miss Benstead used it as a dress making's workshop and later it was Saunders' Greengrocers and Fish shop.

59. Oak Cottage was once Sturgess' Butchers shop with a slaughter house attached to the barn which has recently been converted into a house.

60. Now called Well House, was once Asbee's general store run by three maiden ladies, Miss Nellie, Miss Minnie and Miss Emily. They sold everything including clothes, paraffin and pork at the weekends! They ground coffee, wrapped sweets in a cone and weighed every item while you waited. A thriving shop during the 1939-45 War.

61. There were two schoolrooms in front of the churches, one of which was declared unsuitable for senior children in 1923 and these older children were transferred to Burwell. Some families, however, refused to send children there even risking being sent to prison, as happened to 'Pincher' Heffer who had a month in Bedford goal. The situation was not entirely resolved until 1928 when the old buildings were demolished and the younger children attended school in the Reading Room. A foundation stone for the present school was also laid in 1928 and it was opened in 1929 for children under 11.

62. Anglesey House, built by Martin Hill, first vicar of the combined churches in 1667 on the site of the two former vicarages.

63. Bramble Tye Cottage replaced three cottages.

64. Once three cottages with high steps leading to only two doors, two cottages sharing a door leading into a shared hall. The cottages were later used as one by Walter Gilison who was a butcher. His shop window had no glass but a wooden lattice through which he once threw a pail of water over one of our contributors who was making too much noise! The end nearest to the church was used as a sweet shop. A lane at the side led to four cottages (now demolished) known as Mutton Row. Why they were so called is not known

65. Old Vicarage built by the Rector, Dr John Peter Allix first of the Allixes to live in the village.

66. Baldwin or Lees Manor, one of the seven Manors of Swaffham Prior. The adjacent barn has recently been converted into a house.

67. Zion Union Chapel, built in 1862. Behind the Chapel there were two cottages (now demolished but planning permission is currently being sought to build on the site). One of the old cottages housed a shoemaker.

68. The old schoolhouse where the Master of the school lived, in what was once called Schoolmaster's Lane.

69. Laundry Cottage, part of the estate. Although it ceased to be fully used when the Allix family no longer lived in the village, it was called into service when they came on holiday and a pile of washing would be brought up on a station cart. It had a very deep well and a hand pump which could pump water directly into the copper in the wash house, A large box mangle (a weighted box which travelled along rollers squeezing water out of clothes), was dismantled at some time after 1914 and a large piece of mahogany from it was used to make a table for the family living there. Ironing was done using flat irons heated on stoves. More recently the cottage was lived in by the estate's gamekeepers.

70. The reservoir which served Swaffham Prior House, the Fountain, the horse trough and Baldwin Manor.

71. The Fountain, an intricate brick structure, erected in 1874, was demolished in 1957. This was followed by a storm of protest from villagers and others culminating in a packed meeting in the Reading room. It was said that the structure was in a dangerous state, that it was no longer needed because a main water supply had been installed and that Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge Preservation Society had shown no interest in it. Mr. Woollard, acting for Mr. Allix, had had it demolished, regarding it as a private matter for the owner and not one for the village. One opponent outlined the architectural merits of the Fountain which was so wantonly destroyed'. It was, he said 'a period piece reflecting Victorian taste - one of the nicest example of Victorian architecture I have ever seen". However, another speaker said that it was everyone's fault, the village knew it was in a poor state; something should have been done about its repair.

72. Swaffham Prior House built on the site of an Elizabethan Mansion, extensively altered and enlarged by the Allix family, now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Marshall who are restoring parts of the house and other buildings in the grounds. At one time these building were used for such purposes as brewing, an icehouse or to house grooms and other estate workers. For a short time at the beginning of the war some conscientious objectors were housed in the Chapel but were rehoused in wooden huts behind Goodwin Manor. The House was requisitioned and about 60 Land Army girls were billeted here for the duration of the war. About a dozen of them married and still live in or near the village.

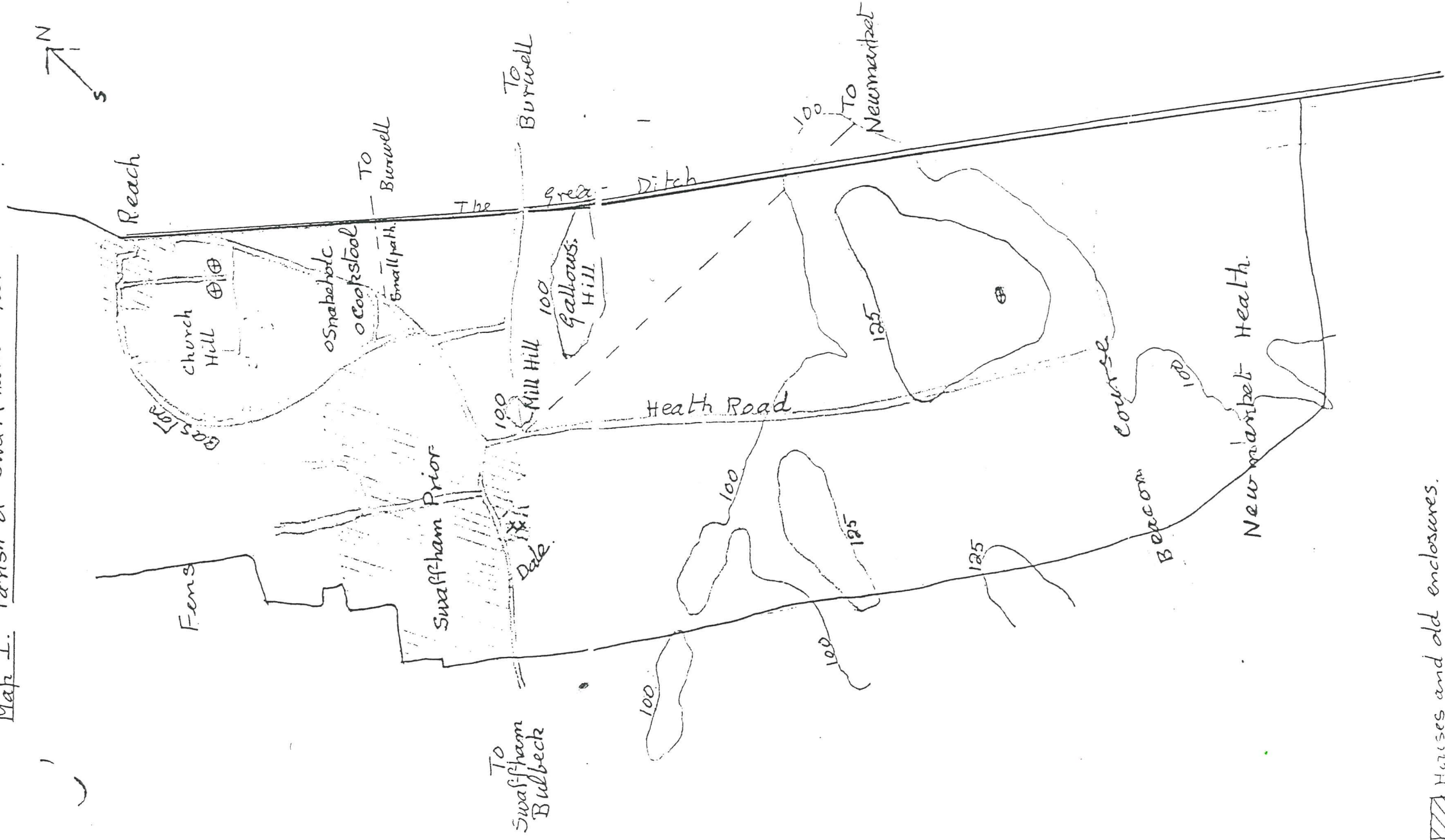
The Changing Face

of

Swaffham Prior

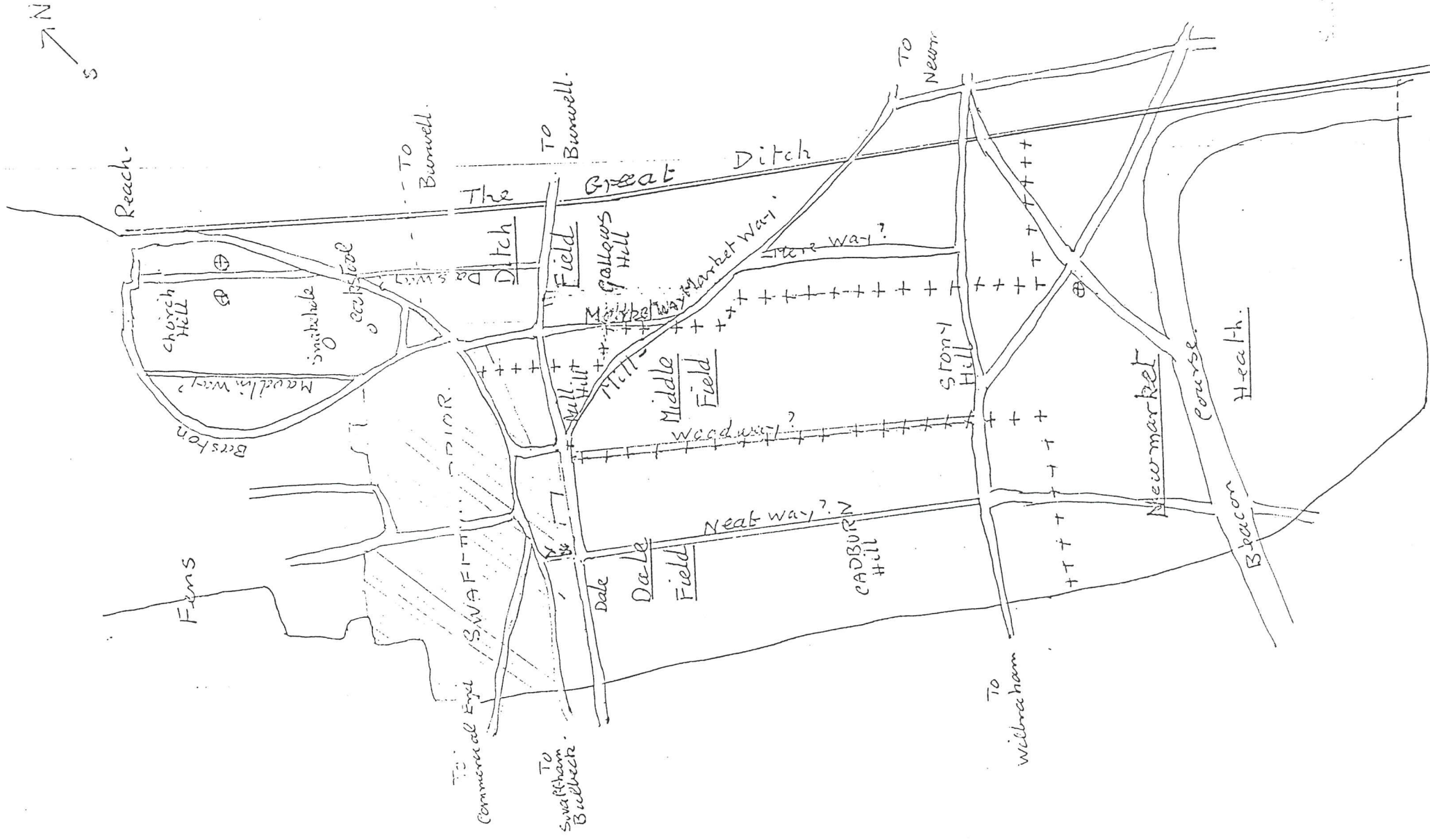
1988

Map I. Parish of Swaffham Prior.



- ▨ Houses and old enclosures.
- ⊗ Gravel and lime pits
- Fair paths
- 125 Contours in feet.
- + church

Map II. The Open Fields of Swaffham Prior

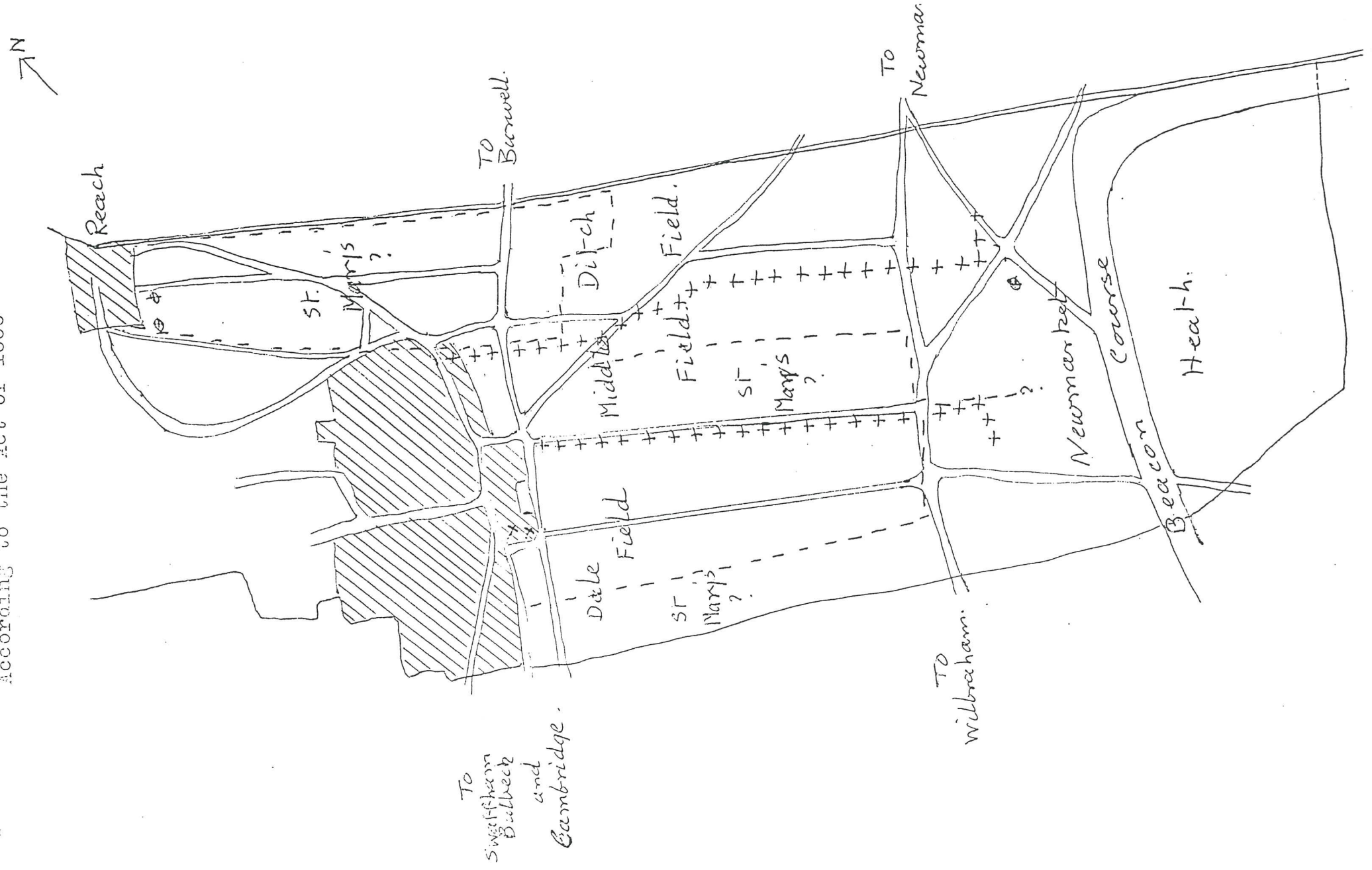


▨ Houses and old enclosures

⊕ Gravel and lime pits

+++ Suspected boundaries between Dale, Middle and Ditch field indicated by the dotted lines on the Enclosure Award, 1814.

Map III. Suggested Boundary of the Rectories in the Open Fields According to the Act of 1666



--- Possible boundaries of Dale, Middle and Ditch Fields

- - - Possible boundaries of the two rectories