

The History of Ashbury

Early Medieval History and Field - Names
and
Abbot Beere's Terrier and Perambulation of 1517

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June 1968

Please Note that only the Introductory Chapter and Chapters I, II, IV, V and VI have been copied here. Chapters written in latin have been omitted, as have the Introduction, Acknowledgements, Bibliography and Notes Sections.

Readers interested in the omitted texts are advised to consult the original booklet.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Although the name of Ashbury originated with the Saxons, the history of the village and parish begins centuries before their arrival and settlement. The first people we know of who lived here for a while were those whose dead were buried in the barrow known as Wayland's Smithy. Over the last fifty years the remains of over twenty people have been excavated from this New Stone Age tomb. The first scientific examinations of the site were carried out shortly after the First World War Under the direction of Mr. C. Peers and Mr. R.A. Smith of the British Museum, the burial chambers under the stones were excavated and the remains of eight skeletons uncovered. From these 'digs' and the conclusions drawn from them, a local man, the late Reverend Overy, produced a plan of the site; a plan that in the light of later, more detailed excavations, was to prove remarkably accurate.

In 1962 work began on restoring Wayland's Smithy to as near it's original Neolithic form as was possible. Two professors, R.J.C. Atkinson and Stuart Piggott, supervised the undertaking and the setting up of the stones was under the direction of Mr. T.A. Bailey of the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Ministry of Works. It was during the last moments of the restoration that another burial, this time a fifty foot long earthen barrow, was discovered to the north of the stone burial chambers.

This discovery, the smallest earthen long barrow yet uncovered in this country, was excavated the following year. The remains of over a dozen people were found, only one having been interred in a complete state. The other remains were those of bodies that had been stored in a charnel house and their bones deposited in the burial chamber in a loose state. Pottery, leaf-shaped arrow heads and a number of stone querns or hand mills were found. From the pottery and scientific analysis of carbon from trees burnt down when the site was cleared for burial, it was concluded that the gap between the building of the small barrow and the megalithic tomb could have been as little as fifty years. The date given by the radio carbon test on the charcoal was 2,820 B.C.(2).

The work undertaken at Wayland's Smithy produced further evidence of other periods in Ashbury's pre-history. A Bronze-Age farmer had dropped a piece of harness fitting when he moved some of the stones that interfered with his ploughing. Iron Age farmers had cut a boundary ditch the whole length of the site on the western side. These were probably the same people who lived at Uffington Castle. The Romans filled in the boundary ditch and robbed the tomb. During the Iron Age or Roman period another body was placed on the site, not in the barrow but on the western side. The top half of the body was found in 1920 and the legs in 1963.

The Bronze Age people erected over a dozen burial mounds within Ashbury Parish, unfortunately the majority of these have been ploughed out. Three that are still complete can be seen on Idstone Down and are known as the: Idstone Three Barrows. Locally, the spot is known as 'three hump pond'. Exactly where these people lived, if in fact they did live in Ashbury at all, is not known but there is evidence of Bronze Age occupation at Rams Hill just east of Uffington White Horse.

A few yards to the north of the three barrows, a faint dip in the ground is all that is left of a once deep pre-historic ditch. Known as 'Old Ditch' it begins slightly east of the barrows and passes over into Bishopstone where it continues for several hundred yards. In the same way as the inhabitants of Uffington Castle must have cut a boundary ditch at Wayland's Smithy, using the barrow as a siting marker, so it appears, the farmers living in Alfred's Castle used the three barrows.

The camp by Ashdown Park, known as Alfred's Castle, was originally much larger than the present banks show. Aerial photographs taken in 1936 revealed a large enclosure at the north end that cannot be seen from the ground (4). The banks of the 'castle' were once faced with sarsen stones, and in a few places traces of this facing can still be seen where cattle have worn the top soil away. The site has never been excavated but there have been a number of excellent surveys and plans made.

There are two certain Romano-British farm settlements and a possible third at Ashbury. A large site on Odstone Down was excavated in 1950 and thousands of fragments of pottery were uncovered. The pottery with nails, tiles, coins, brooches and a number of other objects, showed clearly that here was a Roman farm that had been occupied for nearly four hundred years(6) West of Botley Copse is another Roman farm site and this one can still be made out where the marks of the chalk on the ploughed field reveal the ditches and banks that surround it. The site was excavated over a hundred years ago and field surveyed as recently as 1950 (?). Aerial photographs taken in the late 1940's show that the farms mentioned were linked with a possible third at Lambourn Corner by a complex field road system that picked its way through the hundreds of small fields. Altogether the so-called 'Celtic field system' between Ashbury and Uffington covered 7,350 acres with other farms and ever, a villa, an excellent field survey of the area was published in 1950 (8).

What brought all these pre-historic, Roman and later Saxon invaders and settlers to the district and by what way did they come? The land in the south-west of England and known as Wessex has acted like a magnet to newcomers. The rich fertile land and later the religious centres of Avebury and Stonehenge were its great attractions. The valleys were then to a large extent impassable and the early settlers came by way of natural trackways on the high downs. The most famous and used of these passes through Ashbury along the foot of the downs. It is known as the Icknield Way and its winter track which is paralleled on the Ridgeway through Berkshire, runs from the Wash in East Anglia to Salisbury Plain. This trackway brought numbers of Saxon invaders and although Saxon folk-lore has it that the West Saxons came by way of the south, authorities now tend to agree that a large proportion used the Icknield Way to penetrate deep into the south-west (9).

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGIN OF ASHBURY PLACE-NAMES

The name of Ashbury comes from the entries in the Saxon land charters naming a place or camp 'Aescaesbyries'. Writers on place names appear to agree that the second part of the word, 'byries' means camp or fortified place. As to the meaning of the prefix, they fall into two arguments.

One school of thought is that there was a person named 'Aesce' and that the camp was his or named after him. It has been said that he could have been one of the first settlers in the area and also that not only Ashbury owes its name to him but also the whole range of Berkshire Downs.

The other interpretation of the prefix is that it simply meant ash-wood or ash-trees and, therefore, the original form was 'camp of ash-wood'. The latter version has strong support from almost all contemporary sources. Bishop Asser in his 'Life of King Alfred', describes the Ashdown battle and goes on to say:

"Ashdown, which being interpreted is in the Latin tongue Mons Fraxini". (Mountain of ash)

This has been dismissed by one of the country's foremost authorities on place-names as merely 'popular etymology' (1). Writing in 1911, Prof. F.M. Stenton suggested that 'Aesc' could have been the founder of Ashbury and likewise Odstone derived its name from one Ordeah and Idestone from one Eadwine (2).

In the light of the evidence pointing to the original "Aescsbyrig" having little to do with the modern Ashbury*, we would like to put forward one further suggestion. When giving names to many of the sites in the district the Saxons fell back on their folk-lore and legends. To burial mounds and other places that they did not understand, they gave the names of gods and heroes. A good example of this is, of course, Wayland's Smithy. The same could apply with Ashbury as Skeat, the place-name writer, pointed out, Aesc was the son of the semi-legendary Hengist, the first of the Saxon conquerors (3).

The name Ashbury has taken various forms over the centuries. The first written source after the charters is the Domesday Survey and this uses a Latinised form, 'Esseburiurn'. The Great Chartulary of Glastonbury Abbey, through which the passing of Ashbury property can be followed, uses the form 'Aysheberi¹ for the principle entries but there are variations in the text, almost as if the scribe had been dictated to and used his own spellings (4). Ayssebury, Asshebur', Esseburie and Esseburium are all used in one quit-claim conducted in May 1278 at Westminster; Assebury and Ayssebury can even be found in the same document. Among other variations in early medieval documents are Essebury, Essbyr and Assebyri (5).

There are no charters for Idstone and it can be assumed, until there is evidence to the contrary, that the hamlet passed with Ashbury. In the Domesday Survey there is, in the Ashbury entry, a reference to three hides for one Alwin and this probably meant land at Idstone. In 1199 the hamlet

was called Edwinstone and in 1266 Edewynston. Other forms have been Edwynestona, Edwinstone and more recently a mixture of Ashbury and Idstone in Idsbury.

Odstone has a Domesday entry of its own and was probably a Saxon hamlet long before the Survey. In Domesday it is called Ordegestone. In the 12th century there was as witness to a number of documents a Simon de Ordington and later a Hugh de Ordestone. Another variation has been Ordieston. A charming local story is that Odstone gets its name from the manner in which the farmhouse is said to have been built. As the house has a shape similar, but smaller, in style to Ashdown House, it is said that it is made up of all the 'odd stones' left over from that building.

The earliest mention of Kingston Winslow is 12th century although the 4½ hides held by Robert de Olgi in 1086 could have meant the hamlet. In 1189 'Wendelclival' was held by a Ralph Bassett and in 1310 a mill with land was held by Robert de Knightley at 'Kingston and Wendlesclive'. Kyngeston Wyndescliffe became Kingston Winscliffe and Winsloe by the 17th century.

The origin of the name of Ashdown is dealt with elsewhere. The present Ashdown House and park are 17th century in design and style but there is evidence to show that the abbots of Glastonbury had some form of park here centuries before the Cravens arrived on the scene. In 1240, according to the Chartulary of Glastonbury, tenants were assured by the abbot that the large embankment that he was having built would not cause them harm or inconvenience. This was almost certainly the Park Pale that almost surrounds Upper Wood. There is a reference to an extensive park in 1517 known as Ayshen Parke in a land terrier or rental drawn up of Ashbury (6).

Stainswick, now a farm just outside the northern boundary of Ashbury Parish, was, in the Middle Ages, one of the small manors rented out to tenant farmers. There are a number of farms in this area that end with 'Wick' and this comes from the early word meaning dairy ('wicks and weys'). There was a thriving cheese industry in this part of Berkshire and Stainswick would have been one of the dairies. Two families of the 13th century have left their names in the parish in farm and field names. The de la Wyke and de la Stane families, both tenant farmers, were united in 1271 by the marriage of Alice de la Wyke and Ralph de la Stane. Alice was an heiress and her father, Andrew, had held land with a man named Robert Notte (in 1293 we find the manor referred to as 'Notiswyke' (7)). In 1346 the manor was simply referred to as 'La Wyke' but by 1412 we find Stainswick.

Within the Ashbury boundary, just a few yards from the Ashbury-Shrivenham road, is a close known as Chapelwick, sometimes Vicarage Close. The little meadow, surrounded on three sides by a natural moat, once held a chapel known as 'The Chapel of St. Andrew'. It is possible, although there is no documentary evidence, that one of the provisions made to Andrew de la Wyke concerning his holding was that he built a chapel there. The site was known in the 13th century as

Estwick, and the chapel was built somewhere between 1220 and 1238. Conditions laid down governing the granting of a licence for the chapel were that the chaplain would attend St. Mary's, Ashbury at 'The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin' as a form of homage to the Mother Church. In return it was laid down that the vicar of St. Mary's should celebrate High Mass in the chapel of St. Andrew on that Saint's Feast Day. After a long and involved dispute over the individual rights, the chapel was finally taken over in 1493. It was agreed that, owing to the closing of the chapel, the vicar of St. Mary's would continue to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Andrew and also offer prayers for the soul of the chapel founder, Andrew de la Wyke. It is of interest to note here that Ashbury's full title is Ashbury St. Mary's cum Chapelwick (8).

The manor house at Ashbury has the full title of the Chapel Manor House. Although the present manor dates from about 1488 we find in 1335 John de Coleshull being granted a licence for a chapel in his 'manse' at Ashbury. This was probably in the manor house. Another private chapel was granted to Adam de Wambergh in his rectory at Ashbury. This was the period when churches were being enlarged as congregations grew and private chapels and oratories were allowed as long as the families attended the major Feast Days and the full church services.

In 1340 a certain Peter de Bathon was granted a licence for a chapel in his manor at 'Idweveston' (Idstone) but we can go back another century to 1252 to find a rectory at Idstone. It is probably from one of these two that the present Rectory Farm gets its name. In 1252 we find John de Button, Rector of Ashbury, exchanging one acre of land by 'Rectory Court' for one acre of the Lords land owned by Glastonbury. In Domesday we find the priest holding one hide of land and in 1342 this had increased to a home and land at Idstone making the priest of Ashbury quite a well off tenant. On the downs above Idstone is Parsonage Hill Barn; this spot once had 15 acres of woodland - Swinley Copse is probably part of it - held by the parson of Ashbury, hence the name.

Of a far more recent origin is the name given to the house opposite Rectory Farm. 'Trip the Daisy' appears to be 15th to 16th century in design and could once have formed part of Rectory Court but the name given to the house is little over seventy years old. In 1891 the house was an inn kept by one Alexander Horsburgh. Horsburgh trained hounds that were regularly 'coursed' at Ashdown. Trip the Daisy was the most famous of these and Horsburgh named the inn after her. A picture in the hall is said to represent 'Trip' although it portrays a dog and not a bitch. The rhyme beneath the picture says:-

"A dog am I as you may see,
There can no harm be found in me.
My master he confines me here
To tell you that he sells good beer".

A favourite story told of the inn is that when sporting fancy came to the place- and admired the picture of the hound, they would be sold the 'original' and then a fresh one would

be brought out to replace it! A carving over the door is also said to represent the hound.

Other place names in the parish are more difficult to trace to their origin. "Burycroft" was so named in 1517 but there are no earlier references to it. Pound Piece takes its name from the Pound family who were well known there in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Kings Close is an obscure name and does not appear to be early at all. Red Barn, now demolished, took its name from the red brick of the building but was once called Rough Thorn Farm, in the 13th century this was Rewthorne. Hailey Wood by the farm was called Hayles. Honeybunch Corner, at the end of the track from Red Barn was known as Honybytts. Another 13th century name was Lortewelle, the preset Lertwell. The quarry to the east of Ashbury Hill from which most of the village building stone was taken, was known as Le Quarre and the Winslow Combs, (locally 'Winsley Banks') was simply referred to as La Combs. Other 13th and 16th century names will be found in the Field-name chapter.

Many names have been given to places in the parish after people either concerned with or connected to the village. Roger Pages Lane, at the back of the church, is named after a pauper who died 'on the parish' a hundred years ago. The Pound family has already been mentioned and there is also Baker's Bottom, another personal name. Zulu buildings on the road to Shrivvenham took their unusual title from the visit to Idstone of three famous soldiers at the time of the Zulu and South African campaigns: Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir Redvers Buller and Lord Methuen stayed at Rectory Farm between the two Boer wars. It is said that a picture of the three men once hung on the drawing room wall at Rectory Farm, but it has now unfortunately disappeared.

Undoubtedly, with the new council houses, the homes for old people and other buildings in the parish, new names will come and some of the old ones will disappear. It would be a worthwhile and valuable pastime for some native of Ashbury to keep a record of these for future villagers to look back on.

CHAPTER 11

THE "ASHBURY" CHARTERS

(Part 1 of this chapter deals with a number of charters that have been generally considered as belonging to Ashbury. Part 11 deals with the charters naming Ashbury and belonging to Glastonbury Abbey. The reader uninterested in the arguments of Part 1 can pick up the story of Ashbury from Part 11).

Part 1

Saxon land grants are the source for the early history of any parish fortunate enough to possess them. Although dated in the 10th century and even earlier, the majority left today are of 12th and 13th century origin. Sometimes they are copies made during the middle ages of earlier lost or damaged grants, but all too often they are nothing more than forgeries*. A monastery owning a piece of land might concoct a charter to prove ownership or again to make their own foundation appear more ancient. In the case of copies of earlier charters the scribe would merely transfer the details of the grant into the register or Chartulary of the monastery. In this case, sometimes the spelling would be altered and 'modernised' to the manner of the contemporary scribe, thus Aescsbyrig of the Saxons would become Ayssebury of the Norman French.

The charters have a set pattern in layout: first comes the dedication in Latin and this is followed by what is most important for the historian; the boundaries of the land granted written in the native English or Saxon. Finally comes the names of the signatories and witnesses, usually priests, clerics and noblemen. One charter for Uffington adds a sombre clause, a threat of hell fire for anyone who should break or alter the boundaries as laid out!

There are altogether ten Saxon land charters that have at some time or another been subscribed to Ashbury. Two refer only to Ashdown, one to Ashdown with a scribal note naming Ayssebury as the place concerned in the grant and one naming the 'vill of Essebiri' **

Four charters with their boundaries included have been claimed to detail land at Ashbury, another for Uffington has identical boundaries to one of these four and the last is a grant for restoration of land forfeited at Ashbury. This, simply, is what the researcher into the Saxon history of Ashbury is presented with.

A number of authorities have, over the years, attempted to identify boundary markers named in the charters and relate them to the present day topography of the parish. The most thorough of these has been G.B. Grundy. Writing in the Berkshire Archeological Journal over a number of years, he has analysed each of the charters and the majority of the conclusions expressed by him have, in the main, been accepted (1).

* Glastonbury Abbey, where many early Ashbury documents would have been kept, was burned out in 1184.

**See list at end of chapter.

The late Rev. Overy of Compton Beauchamp and Shrevenham, none the less, did not fully agree with the interpretations as they stood and expressed his doubts to a number of authorities including the late eminent archaeologist O.G.S. Crawford (2). Unfortunately, Overy never produced a publishable analysis and his theories remained in note form up until his death when his manuscripts and diagrams went to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It had been the Rev. Overy's intention to one day write a history of the Vale of the White Horse and it was to this end he studied the Saxon grants. Although very incomplete, we can only agree with the central thesis outlined by Overy, that the name Aescesbyrig, from which the present name Ashbury derives, was in the 10th century, the name given by the scribes to Uffington Castle. From this it is clear that four of the grants that in the past have been referred to as Ashbury do, in fact, outline land at Woolstone and Uffington.

Acceptance of the charters interpretations as they stand would leave us with a number of unacceptable points.

1) That Ashbury, as we now know it, was owned by Abingdon Abbey and Glastonbury Abbey at one and the same time. That land outlined in three of these grants was also owned by St. Swithuns of Winchester.

2) That one of the boundary descriptions ran anti-clockwise, which against all the 'rules' of charter grants.

3) That at the same time as there were five (probably seven, taking into account the evidence of the Domesday Survey) Saxon holdings between Ashbury and Uffington, there was one large holding enveloping all the others with only the same number of boundary marks named as those it contained.

The last point against the accepted interpretation is the number of 'hides' or 'cassatos' involved. Compton Beauchamp: viii cassatorum. Hardwell (no number). Aecesbyrig (in fact the west half of Woolstone) xx hida. Aecesbyrig (this time the east half of Woolstone); xx hida. Finally Uffington, Aescesburh in another grant, with the same boundaries, is interpreted as enclosing all the others with only xxxiii cassatorum. Therefore, 33 cassatos are expected to cover the same as 40 hides, plus the eight for Compton and the un-numbered amount of Hardwell, Odstone and Knighton, the last two both holdings, according to Domesday, at the time of Edward the Confessor.

The usual practice is to list the 'Ashbury' charters chronologically, but for the purpose of this study they are dealt with from West to East. At the end of the chapter, instead of the boundaries being written out as they appear at the end of the charters, they are listed in columns, this way the common boundary marks between each land area can be seen more clearly. What follows is best read in conjunction with the lists for clarity.

Boundary markers found in the charters have often been identified with features found today. We only intend to do this when there can be little or no doubt as to what the Saxon compiler meant. The most reliable points are those that appear

more than once and pass parallel across the land involved. These markers are passed twice in each as the boundary completes a full circle. The Icknield way and the Ridgeway are two excellent examples of this, another two are the 'Swine Brook' and 'Rush Field'. The brook must re been the stream that rises just west of the Ashbury/Compton boundary and runs in an easterly direction to Cowleaze farm and then turns north. The rush field must have laid by the stream and been typical of the type field found on the marshy ground. In the grants nearer to Uffington a meadow and dyke or ditch are often met with and these were know as 'Bulendic' and 'Bulan madae'. These too must have passed in the same west-east direction.

The Compton Beauchamp charter granted in A.D.955 gives a number of easily identifiable boundary markers. The 'hricg wege', 'icenhilde weg' are two and even more important the finishing point which was 'east of welades smidthan'. This is the first time that the burial mound was recorded. Half-way round and on the eastern boundary, the line passes over the 'risc raethe' (rush field) and across 'swynbroc'.

The charter for Hardwell, granted in A.D.903, begins its boundary at the swine brook and then passes over the rush field, this being the common boundary causes it to pass in the opposite direction to that of Compton's.

Two charters for land at 'aescesbyrig' containing 20 hides, have identical boundaries. One was granted in A.D. 856 and the other in A.D. 944. The land involved, however, has no relation to Ashbury as we know it and it is, in fact, the west half of modern Woolstone that is outlined. Apart from the evidence of the boundaries, the origin of the charters themselves confirms the fact. The two grants are to be found in the Chartulary of St. Swithuns of Winchester. This is the A.D. 688-1046 section now in the British Museum (3). St. Swithuns owned Woolstone for centuries and the name probably derives from the 944 grant which was to a Saxon thegn or lord called Wulfric. Grundy recognised that the 856 grant comprised land at Woolstone from the boundaries but did not appear to know of the St. Swithuns chartulary. The Victoria County History of Berkshire pointed out that three of the charters could be found in the chartulary but did not relate this to the fact that the land involved was Woolstone as at the time they were referring to Ashbury and listed them as Ashbury grants.

The swine brook and rush field are met with again on the common Woolstone/Hardwell boundary, this time read back in the same direction as the Compton grant. There are four markers of interest, first 'Hordwyllae' (Hardwell Roman Camp) then the 'old hord wyllaes waeg' then the rush field and the swine brook. These four can be found in the Hardwell grant of A.D. 903 in the opposing direction. Thus far we have the common boundary Compton and Hardwell on the west and Hardwell and Woolstone on the east.

A further grant made to Wulfric in the early 950's was for land at Aescesbyrig, this is the third charter from the St. Swithins chartulary and the land involved comprised the

east half of modern Woolstone.

The west half of the c.950 grant has seven common boundary markers with the eastern boundary of the earlier and other half of Woolstone. It is the 950 grant that Grundy and others have suggested went in reverse and that led Overy to first realise that the land mentioned was not Ashbury but further to the east. Only by placing it there could the boundaries make sense and all fit into place.

The 950 boundaries read southwards on the central Woolstone West/Woolstone East boundary. Once below the Icknield way the 'bulan madae' and dyke are met with, the boundary then turns south again and obviously reads going back up the slope to the downs. A 'pyt' or 'hring pyt' (round pit) is passed, then 'Aeceles beorh' (the burial mound of or named after one Aecele) and then the boundary goes into the north gate of a camp and out of its south gate. From this south gate it passes on to a long dyke or ditch, then to a short one (probably boundary ditches). From the dykes it goes to a marker stone named after someone who probably owned the land on which it stood, 'Taettucaen stan'. The important point crossed was the camp with its north and south gate. Until now, this has been identified as being somewhere in the south-west corner of Ashbury. The medieval Park Pale and Alfred's Castle have both been candidates, as has the settlement west of Botley Copse, a theory we subscribed to in Volume 1. The Reverend Overy concluded, however, that the camp was, in fact, Uffington Castle and the round pit the 'manger' in front of the White Horse. Coming in at this point by way of the north gate makes it quite clear that he was right and conclusive evidence of this comes with the next three charters.

In A.D. 931 a grant was made by Aethelstan to Abingdon Abbey of land at Uffentune, the modern Uffington. Not twenty years later, exactly the same land was granted to a thegn Aelfsige -and his wife Eadgifa. The second grant, however, did not refer to land at Uffentune but land at Aescesburh. The boundaries of each grant are identical except that the Aescesburh grant begins at the 'suth geate' and passes out through the north gate, whereas the Uffington grant reads as reaching the south gate half way round. Altogether there are seven common boundary markers reading in opposition to each other as they pass each other on the common Woolstone east/Uffington Aescesbyries boundary.

The final piece of the jig-saw is the eastern side of the Uffington grant where the boundary meets that of Sparsholt. In A.D. 963 Sparsholt was granted to a Saxon chamberlaine called Aethelsie. The western boundary of Sparsholt comes south from the downs through a camp known as 'Hremnes byrig' (Rams Hill - the Bronze Age camp) to the 'tealeburnanl (a stream) to a thorn stub and onto Bulan Dyke. The common boundary of Uffington and Sparsholt merges on six markers along this line.

This completes the pattern of land charters from Ashbury in the west to Sparsholt in the east and only once does the present day Ashbury touch upon them. Even here there would not have been a common boundary with the modern parish for Odstone

must have had its own boundaries alongside those of Compton Beauchamp. At some time between the years of A.D. 953 and 1086, the date of the Domesday survey, the name the Saxons gave to the Iron Age fort overlooking Uffington passed to the present village of Ashbury. Full credit for this observation must rightly go to the late Reverend Overy.

Part 11

This brings us to those charters held by Glastonbury Abbey almost as title deeds to the village. Entered in the early 14th century chartulary of the Abbey are two copies of Saxon grants made, not for land at Ashbury, but for land at 'Asshedoune' ('at Aysshedun'); the spelling alone shows that they were not completely faithful copies of the originals. The only real indication that they concern Ashbury is a scribal note to the second grant stating that Edrig, the receiver of the land, granted it with the charter to Dunstan, the Abbot of Glastonbury.

The first grant is that of King Ethewulf granting ten measures of land to his minister Dudan, (there is a Dudmore Lodge on the downs west of Aldbourne). This was granted in A.D. 840. There are no boundaries given.

The second grant, that of King Eadred to one Edrig, has a boundary inscription with it and is dated A.D. 947- Unfortunately the boundaries described have no relation to the topography of Ashbury. The names of the markers do not resemble any of the field names of the same period from which the charter was obviously copied and lastly the finishing point of the boundary causes it to sound very much as if the land described is at Ramsbury, a few miles south of Ashbury.

The final conclusion must be that either the original charters of Ashbury were lost, perhaps in the fire at Glastonbury, and these used as substitute, even in genuine error, or they are examples of the many forgeries that litter the 'Saxon charter' field of the middle ages.

CHAPTER 1V

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ASHDOWN

"Ah, Zur, I can remember well
The stories the old voke do tell-
Upon this hill which here is seen
Many a battle there have been"

Job Cork.

Today the name Ashdown means the charming Dutch-style house, gardens and park two miles south of Ashbury village. To the Saxons Ashdown or Aescsedune, meant the whole ridge of downs that passes through Berkshire.

Each invasion of Britain by fresh settlers left a mark on the downs above Ashbury and to the first superstitious Saxon warriors a disturbing mark it was. The stones of Wayland's Smithy, the great white horse into the grass at Uffington and the deserted camps surrounded by banks and deep ditches; to the Saxons who lived and farmed in the valleys, in the dense forests, these places on the downs were to be avoided as the homes of gods and demons.

Once settlement was complete and small war parties merged into tribal units and then into kingdoms, the natural feature of the downs made them an obvious boundary line. Between Ashdown and the river Thames the broad strip of land called the Vale of the White Horse became contested ground between the kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex.

The principle source for the history of this period is the so-called Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (1). This Chronicle records the history and folk-lore of the early Saxons and later the story of the Norman conquest and the first years of Norman rule. The Chronicle was started during the reign of King Alfred, some authorities believe at the instigation of the king, and it was continued at a number of monasteries over several centuries. The manuscripts we have today are not the originals but fair copies made during the early part of the middle ages. There are seven chronicles altogether and the term 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' is the collective name given to them. One of the seven was started at Abingdon Abbey and the Chronicle read with the Chartulary of that monastery present for us the story of Saxon Ashdown (2)*.

One of the earliest land grants recorded in the Chronicle was made in the year 648:-

"In this year Cenwalh gave his kinsman Cuthred 'three thousands' of land by Ashdown: that Cuthred was the son of Cwichelm, the son of Cynegils."

* To avoid confusion the Chronicon de Abingdon will be referred to in this chapter as the Chartulary and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as the Chronicle.

The 'three thousands' of land, although not a set measure that we can understand today, must have been quite considerable. It was certainly the land north of the downs in the Vale of the White Horse and could have been, as one authority has suggested, the origin of Berkshire (3). Stevenson, in his translation of the 'Life of Alfred', theorised that the grant found its way into the Chronicle by virtue of Alfred on one hand being the instigator of the Chronicle and on the other the land involved was to a large extent retained by his own family.

All those mentioned in the grant figure prominently in Saxon history, Cwichelm was said to have been baptised into the Christian faith in 643 and died the same year. Cenwalh then succeeded to the kingdom.

Twenty years went by until Ashdown warranted mention again:-

"...and Wulfhere, son of Penda, ravaged as far as Ashdown. Cuthred, son of Cwichelm, and king Coenberht passed away in the one year "

Cuthred could have died in defence of his grant when Wulfhere broke through the natural frontiers of Wessex and penetrated as far south as the Isle of Wight.

The monastery at Abingdon was founded towards the close of the 7th century by a Saxon nobleman called Hean. There is in the chartulary of that abbey a mention of Ashdown in the alleged will of the founder. Hean made arrangements in the testament for his sister, Cilla, to inherit land at a number of named places including 'Escesdune'. If there is any basis of truth to the document the land involved could be that between Woolstone and Sparsholt, which has a long association with Abingdon Abbey.

The Chronicle somewhat casually records a victory for King Offa of Mercia at the small village of Bensington in Oxfordshire for the year 777. The Abingdon Chartulary deals with this a little more fully because for them the victory must have meant great hardship and a complete change of overlord. Offa of Mercia defeated Cynewulf of Wessex and extended his kingdom south over the Thames to the line of Ashdown. The Chartulary tells us that Offa set his new boundary from Wallingford on the Thames along the Icknield Way as far west as Ashbury:-

"Waingefordiae in australi parte ab Ichenildestrete usque ad Esseburium."

The Chronicle at about this time records less of Saxon slaying Saxon and begins to note the raids of the Vikings. These voracious plunderers from the north struck terror into the hearts of the monastic scholars for it was the abbeys that they sacked with terrifying regularity: "From the fury of the Norsemen, good Lord deliver us", became a standard prayer. The war parties grew larger with the passing of the years. Whole armies settled in for months at a time until they were either

driven out or, as was more often the practice, bought off by the English. Many times the local army or 'fyrd' of Berkshire and Hampshire were called out against the Danish 'host'. In 871 a great Viking army came down the Icknield way, built a defensive camp at Reading and prepared to strike into the rich farmland of Berkshire. After two battles near Reading the Danes felt confident enough to move again, this time along the ridge called Ashdown:

".... and four days later King Aethelred and Alfred, his brother, fought against the entire host at Ashdown; and they were in two divisions: in the one were Bagsecg and Halfdan, the heathen kings, and in the other were the jarls. And then fought the king Aethelred against the division of the kings, and there the king Bagsecg was slain; and Alfred, his brother, against the divisions of the jarls and there jarl Sidroc the Old was slain and jarl Sidroc the Young and jarl Osbern and jarl Fraena and jarl Harold, and both the hosts were put to flight, and there were many thousands of slain; and fighting went on until nightfall."

A great deal of ink has been spilt over identifying the site of this great battle. Writers from novelists to soldiers have given fanciful suggestions or learned treatises on the subject. Now a little more ink is to be spilt without adding anything new to the story. Really it is now hard to see if anything new can ever be added; there are two vivid accounts of the battle, the one above from the Chronicle and one in the 'Life', but neither give a real clue to exactly where on Ashdown the Saxon victory happened. No burial pits have been discovered nor any discarded arms or armour at any one point but then neither have the burial pits from the battles of Stamford Bridge or Hastings.

Local talk has it that the battle was fought at the back of Ashdown park on Swinley plain. The association of Alfred's Castle (this is a name that only dates from the 18th Century) is probably responsible for this. The writers of the 19th Century had the whole affair rationalised to the point of the ridiculous: the battle was fought on the site of the present Ashdown, the White Horse was cut to commemorate the victory, Bagsecg was buried at Wayland's Smithy and the five Danish jarls, or earls, were buried in the seven barrows at Lambourn! Even the stones at Ashdown park called the 'Greywethers' were dragged in as either a memorial or as the grave stones of the Saxon dead. Alfred was said to have built the castle named after him and the king used Hardwell camp. Unfortunately archaeology shows that all these sites were here long before Alfred and the Danes!

Generally there are two schools of thought as to the battle site. The western school which favours present day Ashdown and the eastern school which favours the ground on the Ridgeway near to East Ilsley. All we can be sure of is that it was fought somewhere on 'Aescsedune' between Reading and Ashbury. It is odd that the Abingdon Chartulary barely records the battle but it has been suggested that although there are claims for Alfred instigating the Chronicle at Abingdon, for one reason or another Alfred was not generally liked by that

monastery. Perhaps they felt that singing his praises twice was over-indulging.

The final entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle concerning the name of Ashdown is again in connection with the Danes. As late as 1006 a party of raiders came along the Ridgeway but at the point known as Cuckhamsley or Scutchamer Knob, near East Hendred, they stopped. The Danes had a legend that, should they reach this point (named after Cwichelm, mentioned in the first Ashdown reference) and pass it, they would never again see the sea.

There is another of the points raised in the siting of the battle argument: if their forefathers had suffered a great defeat near to or past this point Danes would not wish to go much farther. The rich lands of the Vale must have been a great temptation but either from fear of the legend or their greed satisfied, they turned south and passed Winchester, heavily loaded as the Chronicle attests.

Material finds of the Saxon period at Ashbury and Ashdown are few. Lord Craven in the late 1800's had in his collection a sword and axe said to be Saxon and also one or two brooches; these all went to the British Museum. Fragments of Saxon pottery have been recovered from the ploughed out mound fifty yards north of Alfred's Castle.

Today, as we said at the beginning, the name Ashdown is confined to a few hundred acres. Its name inspires thoughts of Restoration ladies and gentlemen, coursing and the Craven Hunt, but these belong to another chapter in the history of Ashbury.

CHAPTER V

ASHBURY AND THE DOMESDAY SURVEY

It is quite possible that men from Ashbury fought and died at Hastings in 1066. A large part of the Saxon army was made up of local levies like the Berkshire fyrd, called out during a national emergency to serve the king they returned to the land afterwards. Those parts of Berkshire that were owned by members of King Harold's family were heavily penalised after the Conquest. Ashbury manor was the only estate in Berkshire owned by Glastonbury Abbey at the time. Glastonbury, with other foundations, suffered little in fresh fines or taxes as William had preached a kind of holy war against the English king and, therefore, could not offend the established church.

Ashbury would have felt little effect at first from the invasion. The abbot's reeve would still supervise the running of the manor and only the passing of the Norman knights with their demands for food and possibly their arrogance against a defeated people would have been known to the villagers. To the villein and serf the land was still the master no matter if its administrator spoke a new language.

Nineteen years after Hastings King William, with his typical Norman efficiency, decided that he should have an account of his new domain. The account was to be so thorough and its findings so binding that it would become as awesome as the Day of Judgement and men would call it the Domesday Survey. The monastic scribe wrote into the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the year 1085:-

".... After this the king had important deliberations and exhaustive discussions with his council about this land, how it was peopled, and with what sort of men. Then he sent his men all over England into every shire to ascertain how many hundreds of 'hides' of land there were in each shire, and how much land and live-stock the king himself owned in the country, and what annual dues were lawfully his from each shire. He also had it recorded how much land his archbishops had, and his diocesan bishops, his abbots and his earls, and though I may be going into too great detail - and what or how each man who was a landholder here in England had in land or in live-stock, and how much money it was worth. So very thoroughly did he have the inquiry carried out that there was not a single 'hide', nor one virgate of land, not even - it is shameful to record it, but it did not seem shameful to him to do - not even one ox, nor one cow, nor one pig which escaped notice in his survey. And all the surveys were subsequently brought to him." (1).

The country was divided into circuits, and parties of Lords, Judges and Clerks visited each town, village and monastery. For their survey of Ashbury they probably went to Glastonbury and also to the manor court which was held in Ashbury manor. In a wooden hall, surrounded by men at arms,

monks and villagers, they took down their findings for Ashbury in the year 1086:-

The land of the Church of Glastonbury
In Hilleslaue Hundret

The Abbey of Glastingeberie (Glastonbury) holds EISSESBERIE (Ashbury) and held it T.R.E. and since (semper). T.R.E. it was assessed at 40 hides; now (it is assessed) at 16 hides and 2 1/2 virgates. There is land for 30 ploughs. On the demesne are 3 ploughs; and (there are) 13 villeins and 26 bordars with 5 ploughs. There are 5 serfs and a mill worth (de) 10 shillings, and 200 acres of meadow and a little woodland.

Of the land of this manor Robert de Olgi holds 4 1/2 hides of the abbot, and Alwin 3 hides and Edward 2 hides. There are on the demesne 5 ploughs, and (there are) 2 villeins and 7 bordars with 1 plough. A church is there, and a priest having 1 hide, and 4 serfs, and a mill worth (de) 12 shillings and 6 pence.

The whole T.R.E. was worth 35 pounds; afterwards 20 pounds; what the abbot holds is now (worth) 20 pounds; what the (abbot's) men (hold is worth) 12 pounds.

Today Ashbury is in the Hundred of Shrivenham but in 1086 it was contained in the much smaller Hundred of Hilleslaue. Named after the burial or natural mound used as a marker in a number of the Saxon charters the Hundred took in those villages between Ashbury and Uffington. The Hundred Court was held at Ashbury Manor.

The Survey tells us that the Abbey of Glastonbury owned Ashbury and that it had held it at the time of the death of Edward the Confessor (T.R.E.). At that time the assessment was for a higher figure than at the time of Domesday. The 'hide' is considered by most authorities to have been a unit of taxation although a few have suggested that it meant about 120 acres.

Land for 20 ploughs meant the amount of arable land, 1 plough team being equal to a certain area or number of farm strips in the two common fields.

The villeins were small landowners with their own smallholdings (sometimes called crofts) around their homes. With the bordars, a lower station in feudal society, they rented and worked the strips in the fields and paid for it by money and service in the lord's demesne or home farm. The serfs were little more than slaves and could not own land.

The mill was certain to have been a water mill and could have stood on the site of the present Upper Mill. It was a valuable source of income to the Lord of the Manor as all the villagers were compelled to use it.

* This translation is from the Victoria County History of Berkshire, also that for Odstone.

This led to people using hand-mills in their own cottages, for parting with any part of their precious grain could mean life or death in a bad winter.

The recording of the number of meadow acres is considered significant in that it shows a thriving and profitable dairy farming was being practised in this part of Berkshire. The main produce would have been cheese and most of this would have been carted to Glastonbury Abbey, either for consumption by the brothers there or for resale.

Ashbury has the only return in north-west Berkshire that mentions the small or little wood (*parva silva*). This is thought to be an omission on the part of the others and not that Ashbury was the only place with taxable woodland. Woods were important not only for timber but for swine that lived off the roots and nuts found there; this way they cost little to maintain. Later Ashbury woodland was to become revenue when the abbey sold it off at an acre a time.

Parts of the manor were let off to knights and successful villeins. Small farms like these were probably the origin of the hamlets Idstone and Kingston Winslow. The 4 1/2 hides held by Robert de Olgi are thought to be Kingston and Alwin's 3 hides Idstone. The 2 hides held by Edward could have been the origin of the estates at Stainswick.

Arable land for a further 5 ploughs on the abbot's demesne are recorded and a further 2 villeins and 7 bordars had land enough to call for the use of one plough.

The church in Ashbury in 1086 was large and valuable enough for the priest to have 1 hide of taxable land; today this would be Glebe Land. The church building almost certainly stood on the site or near to the present one and it would have been built of wood. The church today has remains of Norman work in parts of its stonework. The best example of this is the 'dog toothed' door on the south side of the building. This archway once covered a door at the west end of an aisle-less church, the mass or scratch-dial on its left side could then have been seen by the villagers as they passed the doorway from the fields. Inside the church, at the south-west corner of the nave, can still be seen the remains of the Norman archway with parts of its companion opposite. The aisles and tower were added to the church in the 13th century when the population was on the increase, religion was undergoing a sudden fervour and the profits from the manor could be put back into the village to some extent by Glastonbury.

Four more serfs were added and also another mill. This mill could have been at Kingston Winslow or on the site of the now demolished North Mill. The position of these 11th century mills can only be supposed but with regard to tradition, volume of water at certain points, and other factors, they could well have stood near their modern counterparts.

The taxable value of Ashbury to the Normans was £32 with the abbot's and tenants lands combined. This was a drop in value to that of Edward's time but an improvement on the period immediately after the Conquest. It reflects the

feelings at the time, the loss of value during the unsettled time of invasion and then the gradual rise again as it became clear that the monasteries were not going to suffer unduly under the new masters.

The Domesday Survey gives us a picture of Ashbury as it was nearly a thousand years ago. There was a substantial manor farm which must have had a manor house with the abbot's reeve to look after it; a number of smallholdings or crofts probably alongside a single street. Behind the crofts would have been the two open fields with their farm strips or furlongs. There were two mills and, therefore, enough villagers to warrant them.

The woods were large enough to tax and in them would be found pigs rooting for food. The whole pattern of medieval life could be read from the physical lay-out of the village: between the church on the hill and the manor below lay the peasantry and they were tied to the soil beneath them.

Entry XXV111 of the Berkshire Domesday is the land of William Fitz Richard. William held Coleshill and Childrey but it would appear that his other holding was overlooked at first for in the Domesday manuscript we find a further entry added at the foot of the page pressed up into three narrow lines; the entry is for Ordegeston or Odstone.

"The same William holds ORGEGESTON. Osgot held it of King Edward alod. It was then assessed at 10 hides; now it is assessed ,at 5 hides. There is land for 7 ploughs. On the demesne are 2 ploughs; and 18 bordars with 3 ploughs. There are 5 serfs and 200 acres of meadow. T.R.E. it was worth 12 pounds; and afterwards 8 pounds now 10 pounds."

The holder was William Fitz Richard or William son of Richard. It is quite probable that either the father or the son, or even both, came over with William the Conqueror. Perhaps two of the many who came in the hope of rich manors and lands. There is evidence to suggest that William was the ancestor of the Scroop family which became quite influential in the middle ages (2).

The same interpretation applies to Ashbury. Odstone was held in alod by its Saxon owner which meant he could dispose of the estate by gift or sale as suited him. The meadow land is noted again for its obvious value in pasture and dairy farming.

The Domesday survey is the first documentary evidence we know of to show that Odstone was a separate holding to that of Ashbury. There is evidence later to show that Odstone could be classed amongst the large number of deserted medieval villages. Aerial photographs taken in 1946 which show the present Odstone Farm and its fields reveal a vague outline consistent with a low bank encircling the farm and the fields to the west and south of it. The banks could have been formed by the early ploughs reaching the end of their furlongs and then turning and throwing up the earth. According to the

Ordnance Survey records at Chessington the field to the west when ploughed in 1963 uncovered traces of building platforms. Unfortunately when the present authors inquired about this to Mr. Mawle, the owner of Odstone Farm, he knew nothing of the finds. Mr. Bresford, the authority on deserted medieval villages, considers Odstone to be one (3).

CHAPTER VI

THE FIELD NAMES OF ASHBURY

"O noble shepherd, can you tell
How long you kept sheep on this hill?
'Zeven year in Zundays I have been
A shepherd on this hill so green'."

Job Cork.

For over five hundred years Ashbury manor was under the control of Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset. It is from records kept by the monastic scribes that we learn the names given to the fields and farms in Ashbury during the middle ages.

Although it is not our intention here to deal in any great detail with the medieval life and community of the village, a little of the background to the field-names would not be out of place.

An 'Inquest' or enquiry into the value of the manor was made in 1135. None of the field-names are given, only details of the animals and the value of the corn that was stored. There were eight ploughs, each drawn in the usual fashion by eight oxen. There were 36 cows with their calves and 3 draught-beasts. One bull was kept on the manor with 20 pigs and 840 sheep - Ashbury already had quite a large wool producing industry. The corn stored was to the value of £14. Thirty years later a further inquest shows that the unsettled times had led to the manor depreciating considerably. In 1171 the number of ploughs, each with their eight oxen was down to five although there were a further 3 oxen with 1 draught-beast. The number of cows had fallen to 20 and sheep down to 630 along with what they chose to call 35 'idle sheep'. There were 12 pigs with 2 sows. To farming people today the figures alone should give some idea of the size of the manor farm, taking into account of course, the fact that the agricultural system was far more primitive (1).

The printed edition of the 'Great Chartulary of Glastonbury' gives us many of the field-names of the 13th and 14th centuries. The Chartulary recorded the pleas in the manor court, the quit-claims or exchange of land and many other business affairs of the early manor (2).

The de la Stane and de la Wyke families already mentioned appear frequently in the quit-claims. In 1273 Ralph and Alice gave up their right to pasture 1 boar and 8 oxen in 'the Old marsh', a right that they had held by the medieval law of 'Mort d'Ancestor' or death of an ancestor. An area known today as Ashbury Marsh lies on the east side of the B.4000 road opposite Zulu Buildings. Four years later they surrendered further rights in a meadow called 'la Wykhullemede', including the thorns and thickets said to grow there. The present Wickhill meadow lies north of the disused canal and by Longmead plantation.

Land enough for four named fields was granted to Andrew de la Wyke in about 1244. The rent was 3s. a year but unfortunately the names given to the fields have long since

fallen into disuse and all we can tell today is that they were on the eastern side of the village. The fields were called Laucelenesbreches, Lancelezesham and two areas of water called Kirewirewere and Morewereslake.

The acre of Land at Idstone exchanged by the rector of Ashbury for land on the demesne was called Hollenoreth. A meadow called 'Linchacr' or Lyncheacre at Idstone is another field without a modern comparison. Two fields at Idstone that can be traced with some certainty were La Gore and La Hamme. La Gore was half a virgate of land and today there is a Gore Lane that enters the parish of Ashbury at the south-west corner of Idstone, on the downs. There are a number of fields known today as 'the Hams' but Ham meadow lies a little to the west of Berrycroft; nearer to Idstone is Ham Copse.

Many early villagers took their names from the village or hamlet where they were born. La Hamme meadow had 3 virgates of land held by one Simon de Ayssebury, son of Robert the Black of Idstone. There was also a Hamo de Ayssebury and a William. The hamlets were used in the 13th century names of Hugh and Simon de Ordeston and Matilda de Edwinestone.

Towards the close of the 13th century Glastonbury Abbey drew up a great rental of their property (3). Ashbury is dealt with, as are the other manors, in great detail. The first folios or pages of the now bound manuscript deal with the medieval services due to the Abbot as lord of the manor in return for the use of the land. The rental shows that there were two common fields, West Field and East Field. The demesne or lord's home farm consisted of 667 acres spread out in these fields and they varied in size from 1 to 34 acres. The demesne also had meadow land. A little more is added to the picture of the village that we know from the Domesday Survey. The mill was still functioning and the manor house had a croft of two acres with a fish pond. Another source, the 'History of Glastonbury', tells us that two Abbots had instigated building at the manor (4). This included between 1261-74 (Abbot Robert) a kitchen and an outbuilding, the dovecote. The present dove-cote or pigeon-cote is of more recent origin, probably 15th-16th century, the brickwork is much later, 1625. Abbot John (1274-90) added another room inside the manor house that could have been used for the manor court which was held there once every three weeks ('Item cameram de Assebury').

On page 167 of the manuscript a complete list of the field names begins. It is all in Latin but quite simple to follow. The first letter is a large one in red ink and each entry begins with the word 'Item'. Then follows the field name, the acreage, then the value, usually per acre. There are nearly 150 entries over 4 1/2 pages although much of the arable land is in fields of the same name.

The only familiar name is 'Hayleges' which is the early form of Hailey Wood at Ashdown. Amongst the other names that can be recognised today are:- Richweyeforlang, Ykenildeweeye, Lortewelle (Lertwell), Surehull (Sour Hill), Cumba de Wendelesclive (Winslow Bank), La Dene (Dene Bottom by Botley Copse), La Wytelond (Whitelands west of Ashbury Hill). Those

who are familiar with the present day Ashbury field names may recognise others from the list.

The meadow land appears as the last 20 entries and this is of a higher value than the arable. Recognisable names include:- Up mede (Upper meadow), Drof acr' (The Drove is in Idstone making it the only certain identifiable medieval road in the parish). Northmede, Estwyke (Chapel Wick) and La Pride (Priden).

Two hundred years after the rental had been drawn up a further survey was made (5). Referred to as a land terrier the document drawn up in 1517, goes much further than its predecessor. It lists all the tenants by name along with their land and rent. Each of the fields are named and they are still contained in the two common fields. By this time part of the manor with its revenue went to the monastic scholars at Oxford. Parts of the demesne were let out to tenant farmers. Services were not always paid for by actual service by the tenant, often he would employ labourers to carry out such duties as carting. Some of the field-names are those of the 13th century, many are new and a few could be recognised today. One of the first entries in the terrier reads:-*

"This tenant holds 415 acres of arable land in 2 fields. In the east field in Darksfyld, 7 acres by Whele Acre, 4 acres in Burycrofte, 14 acres below Clyve Acre, 7 acres Bytwene Townes, 18 acres in Overlonds, 14 acres in Ecclesiam, 5 acres in the Wayte, 14 acres in Ryggewey Furlong, 7 acres in the southern part of Ryggewey, 14 acres in Myddelfurl, 14 acres in Grenebaroghfurl, 14 acres in Rewthornefurl, elsewhere Haylesfurl, 14 acres in Honybytts and Hardyngs Bore, 10 acres in La Deane near to Hales, 10 acres in Mawnden, 14 acres in the western field above Puddlebey, 7 acres in Myddelwey and Malwey, 9 acres in Lortwell and Hedlond..."

Darks Meadow and Darks field are on either side of the Ashbury to Shrivenham road. Berrycroft has altered in spelling only. The fields south of the Ridgeway are easily recognised today. The farm that once stood by Hailey Wood (Haylesfurl) and known as Red Barn was, up until a few years ago, called Rough Thorn Farm. The field north of the farm has two very large ploughed-out barrows or burial mounds from the Bronze Age. At the time of the terrier and earlier they would have been large green mounds, thus Grenebarough-furl. Honey bunch corner, its ancient dew-pond now filled in, was called Honybytts. Lortwell, like Berrycroft, has altered only in its spelling.

In 1539 Glastonbury Abbey with all its manors was taken over by the Crown. In 1543 Ashbury was granted to Sir William Essex and later it was sold to William Craven. Much of the land and property remained in the hands of the Craven family up until the last few years. In 1777 Ashbury was enclosed and the common fields gave way to squares, hedges banks and ditches we know today.

* This is not an exact translation but only gives the essential details of the fields.

There is no Enclosure map as such for Ashbury but in 1775 Lord Craven had an estate map drawn up with a numbered list of field names corresponding to the map. Quite a number of the fields are those of the 1517 terrier with their spelling modernised. Many are repetitive such as West meadow, East meadow and Crooked meadow. The word 'Close' is used many times, Hew Close, Corn Close, and Brook Close are examples. A few names have been changed or added, for example where new people have come into the village. Pound Piece is perhaps the best illustration of this although there are Baker's Bottom, Tanner's Pond, Roger Page's Lane, Drew's Hill, and Brown's Orchard to name but a few.