THE PARISH AND MYNSTER CHURCH OF

CHARLBURY

IN OXFORDSHIRE

BY

A FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND

Table of Contents

PREFACE.

There cannot be many Church of England parishes which have the honour of being mentioned twice in the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*! Charlbury, a somewhat sleepy village on the eastern fringes of the Cotswolds, lies only a few miles distant from the ancient royal hunting lodge of *Woodstock* and the rather more modern 'lodge' of *Blenheim Palace*[1].

Charlbury is a lovely place made warm by the honey-tints of Cotswold stone and the ample hospitality of an amusingly notable number of 'hostelries' such as the *Bell Inn*[2]. During the winter chill mists meander spectre-like along the rippling Evenlode River. Only the call of an occasional indignant pheasant cuts through the damp miasma of composting leaves that seeps out from the ancient *Wychwood* across the valley. It is a place redolent of ancient peoples and ancient times - of the *Hwicce* and *Gewisse* tribes and their pagan tales.

As its ancient name (*Ceol-burh*) reveals, Charlbury is as old as old can be. Its parish church of St Mary the Virgin still retains a row of beautiful c.12th- century Romanesque arches separating the north aisle from the nave. Its antiquity, then, is clear – it is at least as ancient as the Norman Conquest. But its pedigree is, in fact, much more ancient! It involves the very earliest days of Christianity in this part of England – known a**s** *Middle-Anglia* – and a 'Scotsman' (i.e. Irishman) called ST. DIUMA (d. 658), a missionary from far away *Iona* (*Hy*)[3].

My first encounter with this story occurred in the late 1970's when my father was Vicar of the parish and sometime Rural Dean of Chipping Norton. I must confess that, as a young student, I dismissed most of the numerous stories that I heard told of local 'lore' to be just the suspect ramblings of such village 'worthies' as Sidney Price! Now, I know better and am aghast at my youthful arrogance – *mea culpa*, Sidney!

Recently, I was engaged in a research project which aimed to collect information about a Lincolnshire hero of mine – *Turgot*, Prior of Durham, Bishop of St Andrews and supposed 'biographer' of St Margaret of Scotland. This has, necessarily, involved my referring to a list of sources of some antiquity and a foundation of this list, of course, has been the Ven.

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[1] On the outskirts of the village lies Lee Place where the Dukes of Marlborough are wont to live.

[2] In 1786, when Charlbury was much smaller, there were no less than nine inns noted including, the Bell; the Bull; the Rose & Crown; the White Hart; the Blue Boar; the Greyhound (Dog) which became the Talbot; the Royal Oak which became a Quaker coffee house. [VCH, Vol. 10, p132]

[3] In early history, Iona was called in various sources, *Hy* or *Ioua* or simply *I*, all of which signify 'island'.

Bede's extraordinary work of c.731 - *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*[4]. Now, I don't know about other students, but sometimes, simply for a break from the work in hand, I will look through the indices of the sources that I am using in order to see if there are any references to places that I recognise. When I was involved in *Artificial Intelligence* and *Expert Systems* I remember my professor introducing the phrase, "getting lost in Hyperspace". This was in the early days of *Hypertext* systems and was used to describe the trait whereby a student, having started out with a well-defined research question, would, after only a short period of time, find themselves engaged in reading material from a completely unrelated field of study. Well, here I was, having started out to research the 12th-century Turgot, diving though an intellectual 'worm–hole' to the 7th-century world of *Peada*, Prince of the Mercian Kingdom and son of the perhaps more famous *King Penda*! The rest – as they say – is history!

CUSHNIE INTER MONTES   P.D.F.

Easter, 2017

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[4] Bede, "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum" [henceforward (H.E.)].

INTRODUCTION.

The Ven. Bede relates[5] that, c. 653, the young and undoubtedly amorous Peada visited King *Oswiu* (*Oswy*) of Northumbria (642-670) in the hope of obtaining the hand of Oswiu's daughter, *Alchfled (Alhflæd)* – an interestingly political move since the Mercians had been ravaging Northumberland for the best part of the previous twenty years! Bede pays Peada's father, King Penda, a singular 'tribute', describing him as, a "barbarian more savage than any pagan!"[6] But in spite of this his son Peada had become a very close friend of *Alchfrid (Alhfrith)*, the brother of his intended bride[7]. Subject to this young man's influence and at the demand of the King, *Alchfled's* father, Peada became a Christian, being baptised by *St. Finan*, the renowned Bishop of Lindisfarne (652–662) – himself a product of Iona's schools.

Eager to give aid to Peada in bringing Christianity to the Mercians, Bp. Finan dispatched four priests to accompany the prince on his return south – *Cedd*[8], *Betti* and *Adda* who were 'English', and *Diuma*, who was, like Finan, a 'Scot', i.e. an Irishman[9].

A year later, in 654, King Oswiu (some would say, miraculously) defeated K. Penda and his allies - *K. Æthelhere* of E. Anglia and *Cadafael*, prince of Gwynedd - at a battle beside an unknown stream called *Winwæd* (believed to be somewhere near Leeds). Both Penda and Æthelhere were killed and the Welsh prince retreated ignominiously back into his own territories.

After this stunning victory Oswiu, for a brief time, extended his rule into Mercia and Bishop Finan, ever keen to exploit an opening, took the opportunity to 'turn up the heat' by consecrating Diuma bishop, to serve the *Mercian* and *Mid-Anglian* tribes. This event is notable since, as Bede tells us, "a shortage of priests made it necessary for one bishop to preside over two peoples"[10]. Not only does this reveal a shortage in man-power, but it also demonstrates clearly that there was, in these times, a tradition of appointing a bishop to a

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[5] H.E. III. 21

[6] By 'barbarian' Bede was here making reference to the Vikings.

[7] Alchfrid had already married Peada's sister, *Cyneburg*, a union that is thought to be commemorated on the *Bewcastle Cross*.

[8] *Cedd* was the brother of *St. Chad* (*Ceadda*) of Lichfield fame. Cedd's most important memorial is the church at *Bradwell*.

[9] The *Scotti* were a tribe who inhabited the NE of what is now Northern Ireland.

[10] H.E. III. 21

(tribal) group of people rather than to some ill-defined geographical area. This same tradition is to be seen in the *Episcopii Vagantes* of the early Scottish Church. The rôle and place of bishops in the early church is far too large a topic to do justice to here. It is sufficient to note that, until the *Synod of Whitby* (*Streoneshalh*) of 633/4, the traditions of these early 'northern' churchmen were very different from those of the later 'Roman' church.

Diuma's episcopate did not last long[11] but it was a very active one and Bede tells us that he converted many to the Faith before dying, "among the Middle-Angles in the district known as *In-Feppingum*"[12]. The exact location of In-Feppingum has been a puzzle for historians for many generations and it would remain so today were we to have only Bede's history as a source. Luckily, there are other, more obscure, but nevertheless well-respected, sources available to us. One such treatise, which is usually known as *Secgan*, is commonly regarded as being a product of the 11th-century and has acquired its title from its opening phrase, "*Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston*" (these are the saints of God who first rested in England)[13]. It lists a selection of the early saints along with their 'accepted' burial-places which, in some cases, grew into sites of an associated *cultus* and focus of pilgrimage. Amongst the first group of 23 entries in this list is to be found a reference to *Dionia/Dioma* a saint who is noted as resting (being buried) at Charlbury, Oxon. Scholars equate this name with that of Diuma.

In addition, this information regarding Diuma's last resting-place is mirrored in a fragmentary resting-place list from *Chertsey Abbey* and by the 14th-century copyist of the *Breviate of Domesday Book*.

We would, therefore, seem to be on firm ground if we advocate Charlbury as being Diuma's place of burial. Further, it is quite probable that a cultus sprang up focussed on his mortal remains – a minor place of pilgrimage for the local tribes-people.

Now it is very possible that the present parish church is a stone 'replacement' built over the site of a much older church of the Anglian period, which may have been a wooden structure. But this is not necessarily so for there was an Irish/Scottish tradition of building

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[11] He died in 658.

[12] H.E. III. 21

[13] Blair, J. (2002) *A Saint for Every Minster* in Thacker, A. and Sharpe, R. (eds.) "Local Saints and Local Churches". O.U.P. (2002); pp. 463-465.

churches in stone from the earliest of days. A radio-carbon date for the building of *Teampull Chiarán* at *Clonmacnoise* dates this stone-and-mortar oratory to 681-881, and, although this is considered to be the oldest building in Ireland to use such construction techniques, there are older free-stone/dry-stone structures, e.g. the stone oratory at *Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry,* produced a radio-carbon date of between 640-790. During his time at Iona Diuma would have heard from Ireland of all the very latest ideas regarding church construction techniques. However, it is interesting to note that *St Aidan*, another pupil of *Hy*, refused the excesses of building his first structures on Lindisfarne in stone, much preferring the simplicity of wood/mud-and-wattle. Of course, wooden structures do not leave easily discerned 'footprints' in the archaeological record.

Finally, we should remember that in these far-off days, it was customary practice for a bishop of renown to be buried within the precincts of the major church of his foundation. Indeed, there are many examples of a bishop's body having to be brought back over a considerable distance for 'proper' burial.

So, what does this tell us? Well, nothing for certain, but there is a strong hint that Diuma used Charlbury as his base from which he sought to evangelize the tribes of Mid-Anglia; that he built a church there; and that he was buried there.

Recent studies have revealed that Charlbury was, like many other churches of the Anglo-Saxon period, what is now labelled as a *Minster Church*. The term refers not to any architectural feature or property-holding, but rather to the fact that it acted as a 'mother church' – *Matrix Ecclesia* – within an extended area containing several smaller churches. John Blair describes both *Thame* and *Charlbury* as exhibiting, "paired enclosures in a figure-of-eight formation."[14] He also says that, "*Thame*, *Charlbury* and *Bampton* (Oxfordshire), … all have the characteristic perimeter roads," of early minster churches.[15]

The Victoria History (V.H.E.) records that Charlbury included the townships of *Fawler* (c. 1,655 acres); *Finstock* (c. 883 acres); *Walcot* (c.458 acres) as well as *Charlbury* township itself (c. 2.113 acres) – a total of 5,109 acres – also the Chapelries of *Chadlington* (3,450 acres) and *Shorthampton* (1,676 acres) – in all 10,235 acres. In Anglo-Saxon times, Chadlington, Shorthampton and Walcot(e) were not part of the *Banbury* 'hundred', as Charlbury was. I

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[14] Blair (19@@), p49.
[15] Blair (1992), p233.

believe that Charlbury, as a minster, had, certainly, *Fawler*, *Finstock*, *Cote*[16] and *Tapwell*[17] under its care and possibly one or two other hamlets too.

Regrettably, a search of *Domesday Book* will not reveal any mention of *Charlbury* at all. Historians will soon point out that this work, in its various versions, is far from a complete survey of the England of 1086-7 – many parts of the country are omitted altogether! It is thought that *Charlbury* was conflated within the information for *Banbury*, both of which were church lands of ancient standing. In the time of *Domesday Book* they were both 'owned' by the Bishop of Lincoln.

Charlbury's existence as a detached portion of *Banbury hundred* is said to reflect the *locus operandi* of the early church founded by Diuma.[18] It's situation is said to reflect the fact that Diuma's sphere of influence in the territory of the Middle-Angles stemmed from his establishment of an ecclesiastical centre here, it being moved later to *Dorchester* to replace the West-Saxon bishopric founded by *Birinus*.

But there is a second mention in the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* and this relates to that other part of the parish which is revealed in its full name - "*Charlbury with Shorthampton*". Now, many members of the congregation at the parish church in Charlbury will never have visited the little church at *Shorthampton* (often referred to, perhaps improperly, by an alternative name – *Chilson*). It lies to the west of Charlbury, over the river, amid ancient farmland {NGR SP 328201}. It would, I think, fall into that category which ecclesiologists call a *field church* and would have had none of the privileges that would have been jealously guarded by the parish church.[19] Services would have been taken by a cleric in lowly orders

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[16] *Cote* was a small township that disappeared in the 15-16th century. It lay ¼ mile to the north-west of *Conygree Farm* {NGR SP358211} between the Chipping Norton and Enstone roads which head north from Charlbury (B4026 and B4022). It covered two fields which slope down to the *Coldron Burn*. In dry weather house and barn sites are clearly visible, as are hollow ways. [VCH Vol.10, p.133] In 1279 the hamlet contained 13 yardlands held by 12 tenants; it suffered heavily from the Black Death in the 14th-century and probably reverted to 'waste' at that time.

[17] *Tapwell* (near Finstock) was a very small hamlet and its site is still somewhat elusive. The names *Topless Field*, *Topples Ground* and *Tapwall Field* point to its site {*Topless Wood* – NGR SP373165}. *Grant's Field* is also situated here recording a 13th-century landlord of Tapwell. Before 1279 a house and 13 acres in Tapwell were held of the king by *Robert Grant*, by serjeantry of guarding the "wood gate" of Woodstock when the king was in residence at his hunting lodge. At the foot of the lane from Topless Wood was the *Dubford* {an interestingly Gaelic-Scottish name – DUBH ~ "dark"}, still used in the 19th-century to cross the R. Evenlode {NGR SP372168}. Is Robert's very Scottish surname linked to the equally Scottish name of the ford which he would have to use to cross from Woodstock to his estate at Tapwell? It is probable that *Tapwell* lay where the ancient paths meet at {NGR SP369167}.

[18] The first Mercian diocese was established at Dorchester-on-Thames and the hundred of *Banbury* was very soon attached to it.

[19] The Parish Church reserved the right to have a grave-yard and all parishioners were to be buried within it. This guaranteed the payment of *Soul-scot* (*Sawol-Sceat* was the portion of the dead person's goods offered to the priest, at

(e.g. *acolyte*) and only occasionally by the parish clergy who were in higher orders (*priest*, *deacon*). The architecture suggests a 13-14th-century date for the present building, but many believe that there may have been a church here in earlier times.

Now, I well remember that some very old wall-paintings were found under layers of paint/whitewash during a period of restoration at Shorthampton. At first sight they were typically gruesome works and very obviously of considerable antiquity and historical interest. Such paintings are to be found in a significant number of England's older churches and cathedrals. Before the enthusiastic application of the Reformers' whitewash, the insides (and sometimes outsides) of churches were a colourful sight. Walls were covered with images of various kinds, most notably '*doom paintings'* designed to literally scare people to death! At Shorthampton, however, one of the paintings is said to depict a most untypical saint – St *Eloi* (*Eligius*) – who, although well-known on the continent, is not commonly known in England.

In his earlier years St Eloi (c.588-660), a Frenchman and a contemporary of St Diuma, was a goldsmith whose skills made him both wealthy and famous.[20] Although there are no extant pieces of work that can be reliably attributed to him, some of his works, notably a chalice at Chelles in France, are recorded in drawings.[21]

But Eloi abandoned his lucrative trade to become a priest and, in 641, he was consecrated bishop of *Noyon*. He founded monasteries at *Noyon*, *Paris* and *Solignac*, and was a pioneer apostle in much of *Flanders*. In time he became the patron saint of goldsmiths, blacksmiths and farriers although modern-day exponents would be horrified at the story told that once, in order to shoe a horse, he first removed its leg, restoring it again once shod!

Why a saint of such relative obscurity came to be commemorated on the walls of Shorthampton is something of an enigma. Was it his links with the smith's art, or, as I suspect, was it his close links with Flanders, an area famed for its wool trade? Was there, perhaps, a group of Flemings at or near Shorthampton, at the edge of the famous Cotswold wool-producing lands of the Middle-Ages?

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the side of the open grave, for the welfare of the deceased's soul). The payment of *Church-scot* (*Cyric-sceat*) and *Plough Alms* were also reserved to the Parish Church. *Baptism* was also usually only available at the Parish Church, and the *Chrism*, obtained annually by the parish priest from the bishop, was kept securely in this building.
[20] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Eligius (accessed 29 April 2018)
[21] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chelles_Abbey (accessed 3 May 2017)

Let us now turn to Charlbury's history. In order to support the arguments presented it will be of use to give a general overview of its history under the following headings:

- Pre-history
- Roman
- Post-Roman / Mercian
- Late Anglo-Saxon
- Norman

This will not be an exhaustive exercise since I do not wish to present an academic paper for consumption only by 'the few'. I shall only attempt brief summaries of some of the noteworthy aspects as they relate to Charlbury and the small section of the Evenlode valley that runs from about *Ascot-under-Wychwood* downstream as far as *Combe*.

CHARLBURY BEFORE HISTORY.

In the Evenlode valley the junction of the impermeable *lias* (mostly clays) and the *limestone* is marked by a spring-line that has attracted settlement throughout the ages.[22] Only a brief reference to the Ordnance Survey, Sheet 164: Oxford (which includes Charlbury) is required in order to reveal an impressive concentration of ancient remains in the valley of the *River Evenlode.*

There is a significant 'spread' of such sites on the south-facing slope to the north of Charlbury – *Area A*. There is also a focussed concentration centred on that part of the *Wychwood Forest* surrounding *Cornbury Park*, just to the south-west of the village over the River Evenlode – *Area B*.

Area A – the Northern Arc.   (All Grid. Ref. Nos. are of the form "NGR SP ### ###")

TUMULUS / BARROW		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
326283 (x2)		
295250		
298233		
350236		
352236		
378237	The Hoar Stone	Neolithic
305219		
297211	Lyneham	Neolithic
409200		
430210		

SETTLEMENT		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
299214	Lyneham Camp	Iron Age

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[22] I remember a very reliable spring which I uncovered in the garden of the New Rectory. It was at the foot of the 'scarp slope' which leads from the lawn down to the lower paddock area beside the river. It flowed into a gravel area which had a small surrounding wall and it grew the most wonderful water cress! This is one of the many good water sources on this spring-line which attracted settlement from the earliest times.

STONE CIRCLE		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
284241	Churchill	Neolithic

EARTHWORK		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
311274		
412196		
382209	Grim's Ditch	Iron Age
400214	Grim's Ditch	Iron Age
423197	Grim's Ditch	Iron Age
426184	Grim's Ditch	Iron Age
359184	Grim's Ditch	Iron Age

STANDING STONE		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
339235	The Hawk Stone	Neolithic
360221	Taston (beside a medieval cross)	Neolithic
295257	Churchill	Neolithic
290230	Sarsden	Neolithic

Area B – Cornbury Park Area.

TUMULUS / BARROW		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
333181		Neolithic
356181		Neolithic
332169		Neolithic
339157		Neolithic
328165		Neolithic
316154		Neolithic
339157		Neolithic
299138		Neolithic

EARTHWORK		
O.S. Grid. Ref. No.	Name	Era
311143	Lowbarrow	Neolithic

Notes:

At **Finstock**, near *Mount Skippett* {NGR SP352160}, a bi-face hand-axe of the Lower to Mid-Palaeolithic period (200,000+ →45,000 years BC) was found in 1983.

Lyneham Barrow {NGR SP297211} has been dated to the Neolithic period, but two Anglo-Saxon burials were found cut into its top surface. It has an associated standing-stone, just to the north, which may be the lone survivor of a series. Slightly further north is *Lyneham Camp* {NGR SP299214} which has been identified as an Iron-Age hill-fort.

Grim's Ditch is a remarkable feature. It is an extended earthwork parts of which are mapped from just to the south of Charlbury on the Finstock road, east through *Ditchley Park*[23] and then running south-east to the edge of the *Blenheim Palace* policies at the *Ditchley Gate*. The *dyke*, or *ditch*, is considered to be, "a pre-Roman intermittent earthwork, blocking passage through woodland and enclosing a large area".[24] It is difficult to imagine it having any other use than for hunting. Its size alone, in terms of the area that it must have enclosed, and the manpower/effort it must have taken to build it, immediately marks this area out as having been important in these very early times. Looking at a map it becomes quite obvious that *Grim's Ditch* and the *Rivers Evenlode* and *Glyme* combine to form a completely enclosed area of land. However, the section of the Ditch from where it turns south-east {NGR SP41_20_} to where it would appear to meet the Glyme {c. NGR SP44_18_} would seem, at first sight, to be 'superfluous'. Why was the Ditch not continued along its course from Ditchley to meet the Glyme at *Kiddington* {NGR SP414227} or *Glympton* {NGR SP426214}? My suggestion is that the upper reaches of the Glyme, until it is joined by the waters of the *R. Dorn* (above *Hordley Farm* {NGR SP445193}), did not provide a sufficient barrier to animals. But this is speculation on my part.

Sir Frank Stenton considered that the *Grim*, whose name is carried in the Ditch's name, is no other than the pagan god *Woden*. The popular element in his cult is brought out even more clearly by the fact that, so far as is known, he was the only god of the heathen tribes to whom the English peoples applied an alias."[25] In Old Norse mythology, which gave him the habit of appearing as a wanderer in disguise, he often appears under the by-name *Grímr*, a name

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[23] It is very likely that *Ditchley Park* is named from the earthwork.
[24] V.C.H. Oxon. Vol. 1, p.261.
[25] Stenton (1947), p.100

which literally meant a masked person. There is no direct evidence for this usage in England, but it is placed beyond serious doubt by the frequent association of the name Grim with eminent natural features, and earthworks, felt to be supernatural. The concept of Woden as the maker of works beyond mortal power was clearly known by the men who called the greatest earthwork in northern Wessex - *Wodnes Dic*. The name *Grimes Dic*, or *Grimsdyke*, which is borne by many ancient earthworks in south England belongs to the same order of ideas.[26]

The *Grim's Ditch* within our area of concern would, then, appear to be a construction of the mid-late Iron Age which, by the time of the so-called *Dark Age* period, was held in sufficient awe by the tribespeople that they believed it to be the work of the supernatural world – of *Woden*, alias *Grímr*.

Up to a dozen *banjos*[27] are now known in the Wychwood area, almost all situated on the limestone plateau. However, the distribution extends as far as *Dustfield Farm* {NGR SP380200} in Charlbury where Middle Iron Age pottery has been recovered from the surface of the site.

Wilcote: about 2km south-west of the crossing of the River Evenlode by Akeman Street. Occupation here seems to have ceased by about 360. Abundant early 1st-century coins, *Samian Ware* and amphorae indicated a high standard of living. Perhaps this was the residence of an official presence of some sort or perhaps a high-standing local personage. Excavation by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust in 2000 identified a spread of light industrial sites for metal working.[28]

Taken together, this information clearly demonstrates that the Charlbury area was of some considerable importance in pre-history. We have a rich accumulation of remains most of which bear evidence pointing to a significant concentration of inhabitants in both *Area A* and *Area B*. A comparison with adjoining areas of the O.S. Survey demonstrates quite clearly that the concentration found, particularly in *Area A,* is much more pronounced than in any other local area, with the exception only, perhaps, of the area to the west of *Stow-on-the-Wold* as far as *Winchcombe*.

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[26] Stenton (1947), p.100

[27] *Banjo* - Dwelling area so called because of its shape on the ground. [Copeland (2002), p.50]

[28] http://reports.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/report/north-west-oxfordshire-supply-improvement-pipeline-wilcote/?report_location=unitary_authority-262&period_type&site_type&artefact_type&report_number&form_submitted=true

If we add to this the fact that a very high proportion of the remains are probably funereal in nature (tumuli and barrows), then we have unmistakable evidence for a comparatively large concentration of inhabitants in a relatively high-status area. This population can be seen to have arrived by the Lower to Mid-Palaeolithic era and, by the Neolithic period, to have reached substantial proportions.

CHARLBURY'S ROMAN HISTORY.

Charlbury all but sits on one of the most important of the Roman Roads – *Akeman Street*[29] – which, at its closest approach, runs just south of *Stonesfield*.

Several *villas* are to be found at Stonesfield and even what is considered to be a *Roman Settlement*. Some of these, when first discovered, had rich mosaic floors and, in Roman times, it is known that there was an important slate-quarry nearby. This region is the location of some of the earliest villas in Roman Britain, also the most sumptuous villas of the later period and has one of the greatest densities of villas in Britannia.[30]

Of course, not far away from the *Stonesfield* sites lies an extensive villa, at *Ditchley*. But, in comparison to some of the magnificent villas built by the Romano-British peoples, even Ditchley is described as 'modest'. It "had a granary in the 4th-century which points to an estate of c. 1,000 acres",[31] and reveals the importance of arable farming then as now.

Excavations have revealed that a timber house of a very simple rectangular type had been built there about the year AD70, but the first stone structure, a villa of 'winged corridor' type, replaced it about the time of *Trajan* (98-117).[32] There is a superb aerial-photograph of crop-marks showing the villa and associated buildings in the Ashmolean Museum.[33] It shows the villa and other areas which may be orchards, vegetable plots and/or paddocks.

Ditchley, like *Lullingstone* in Kent, has been thought to have suffered a period of desertion at the beginning of the 3rd-century and this might imply confiscation.[34] Fires were lit on the floor of a living-room marking a low-point in the standard of living of the inhabitants.[35]

Of course, it was in 383, and again in 407, that Roman legions were withdrawn from Britain and there was a final separation from Roman administration in 410. Ditchley's fate is uncertain but the pattern observed in other parts of the country shows that villas remained important sites even though the standard of living of the Romano-British inhabitants was reduced significantly. Quite often these villa sites retained quasi-royal associations and it is

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[29] *Akeman Street* connected *Exeter* to *Colchester* and linked with the equally famous *Fosse Way*.
[30] Copeland (2002), p.3
[31] Frere (1967), p.273
[32] Frere (1967), p.268
[33] "Romano-British Villa at Ditchley". Photograph by Major G.W. Allen. ©Ashmolean Museum.
[34] Frere (1967), p.275
[35] Frere (1967), p.374

very likely that Ditchley, governing a substantial estate, and set in a famously rich area for hunting (always a pastime of choice for royalty), would have proved attractive to a tribal chieftain or sub-king.

Before we leave Ditchley it is most interesting to note that amongst the archaeological 'finds' at the villa (often called *Watt's Well Villa*) was an enamelled bronze *terret*[36] thought to be from the Bronze Age.[37]

Other known Roman sites surround Charlbury include:

	Location	O.S. Grid Ref. No.	
1.	Religious site between Charlbury & Ditchley (*Lee's Rest*)	SP 376192	2km
2.	Villa at *Over Kiddington*	SP 410222	6km
3.	Roman village W. of *Finstock*	?	3km
4.	Roman village E. of *Stonesfield*	SP 401171	7km
5.	Villa at *Fawler* x2	SP 372171 & SP 379167	3km
6.	Villa at *Oaklands Farm*	SP 383168	4km
7.	Villa at *Woodlays*, S. of Ditchley	SP 401194	6.5km
8.	Villa at Ditchley, (*Watt's Well Villa*)	SP 399201	4km
9.	Villa at *Callow Hill*	SP 421195	5.5km
10.	Roman camp/hill-fort at *Knollbury*	SP 317230	5km
11.	Villa at *Stonesfield*	SP 401171	
12.	Villa a *Bridewell Farm*	SP 378146	
13.	Villa(?) at *Brize Lodge*	SP 339153	
14.	Villa at *North Leigh*	SP 397154	
15.	Villa at *Shakenoak*	SP 375138	
16.	Religious site at *Blenheim* (nr. Ditchley Gate)	SP 425179	
17.	Roman marching-camp at *Cornbury*	SP 357180	

(distances given 'as the crow flies' from the Parish Church)

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[36] A *terret* is a metal loop on a horse harness, guiding the lines and preventing them from becoming tangled or snagged on the harness.

[37] V.C.H. Oxon. Vol. 1, p.257

Notes. - *Knollbury* {NGR SP317230} is recorded as a "Roman camp/hill-fort." The description should, perhaps, be "Romano-British …," and it may be that this was a defended settlement rather than a purely military camp.

-A Roman brooch, reputedly of gold, is said to have been found in Charlbury churchyard and Roman pottery has also been found in the vicinity of the town.

Many Roman sites are located along Akeman Street, particularly where it crosses the river valleys. The two or three largest are within a mile of the Stonesfield slate-quarries, although the slates used on them were not always Stonesfield stones![38]

A Romano-British farm at Lee's Rest, Charlbury, was occupied from the first to the third century.

The picture we get, then, is of a reasonable concentration of Romano-British dwellings particularly at points close to Akeman Street. The evidence would point to the importance of passing trade, both military and mercantile, especially where the Road crosses various rivers. There was an important trade in the supply of slates from the Stonesfield quarries.

But in all this we should remind ourselves that the inhabitants and, certainly the workers, would have been, in the main, Romano-British tribes-people rather than Roman citizens or soldiers.

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[38] V.C.H. Oxon Vol. 1, p.268-269

Post Roman / Mercian History.

We have seen that after the departure of the Roman Legions, the circumstances of Ditchley and, we can assume, of the tribes-people living around Charlbury, declined significantly. Any early Christian influences would, likewise, have faded away to the extent that, with the advent of the Anglo-Saxon incursions into the Romano-British territories, the country and its people were again thoroughly 'pagan'. But this era is often called the *Dark Age* because we have no written history that has come down to us from this time and, consequently, we lack any illumination of substance.

"Any account of the territorial organisation of the Church, before the Conquest (1066), in the western parts of England needs to take account not only of the Saxon Church itself, but also of possible undercurrents of Celtic survival."[39] This observation may be particularly appropriate in the case of Charlbury subjected, as it was, to the influences of its first bishop who had been trained in the Celtic tradition on Hy. Although I use them here, I am very wary of the terms *Celtic Church* and/or *Celtic Christianity*, and the modern ideas that have become accreted to them. Indeed, I tend to agree with Professor Donald Meek's opinion that they are terms which should be avoided whenever possible. He writes that, "… the concept of the 'Celtic Church' is not easily defended even in the period before 1100 …"[40] and further, that, "Taking the evidence overall, popular 'Celtic Christianity' forms a conceptual parallel universe which should not be mistaken for the real world of mainstream Celtic scholarship concerned with the forms of early Christianity in the British Isles."[41]

The Early Church of the North and North-East (modern Scotland and Northumberland) was characterised by small communities of people (mostly lay-folk) doing their best to follow a Christian way of life. Often, these communities were associated with the *tuaths*[42] of local chieftains. In Scotland we use the word Muinntir (pronounced – *M'oon-teer*) to name them and it is very likely that this was the sort of community that would have been established by Bishop Diuma, under the shadow of Peada's royal protection.

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[39] Hase (1988), p.48.
[40] Meek (2000), p.103.
[41] Meek (2000), p.235.
[42] The village(s) and small areas of cleared land occupied by a single-family group.

Within the *muinntir*, life was very much as it would have been in any other community – the endless daily round of work and toil needed simply to survive. But in the *muinntir*, there were occasions provided for worship and instruction in Christian ways. But this was <u>not</u> a *monastery* – indeed, it was far from it. Living to a set *rule* was the objective only of the few– those such as Diuma who had taken monastic vows. Great confusion exists over this matter, even in the academic world! The unfortunate fact is that the older writers, such as Bede, restricted as they were to a Latin vocabulary, found it difficult to differentiate between regular monasteries (i.e. those living according to a *rule*) and the communities which we would better call *muinntirs*. There was only one word at their disposal, *monasteria,* and they had to use it to describe all possibilities. Indeed, this same Latin word is employed to describe the *mynster* churches of the Anglo-Saxon world, which, again, leads to much confusion if a careful interpretation is not applied.

In time, the influence of a *muinntir* would spread, as would be both expected and hoped for. Other muinntirs would spring up which, although independent, had a sort of dependency on their 'mother' muinntir – a familial link as was found all over Ireland and Scotland and is still to be found today in the *congregations* of monasteries in the Roman Catholic Church. As the concept of the *parish* developed, most particularly in the years immediately preceding the Conquest, these *mother churches* came to be known in Old English as *mynsters*.

So far as can be seen, the earliest English parishes were large districts served by priests from a bishop's *familia*, grouped round a central church. This was what was called the bishop's *paruchia*. The Anglo-Saxon *mynster church*, then, came to be a church served by several clergy sharing a communal life and often being responsible for a 'brood' of dependent chapels - in Charlbury's case, *Finstock*, *Fawler*, *Cote* and *Tapwell*, (only later were *Shorthampton* and *Chadlington* added). *Cote* and *Tapwell* were hamlets, but both have, long-since, ceased to exist. (*vide supra*.)

There is no real doubt that it was the work of Diuma which first brought Christianity to the people of Peada's kingdom of Middle Anglia, but, as we have noted, it was not the Roman form of Christianity. Bishops such as Diuma were 'wandering bishops' (*episcopii vagantes*) who moved around from village to village. They had no concern for building vast and magnificent cathedrals and there was no comprehensive parish structure as was to come in

later ages. In fact, a bishop who had been trained in the Irish tradition would see his function in quite plain terms – to teach the faith by *preaching*; to baptize converts and to supply the sacrament of *confirmation* when appropriate; to supply the sacrament of *ordination* to those he considered fit to be priests.

Charlbury, though, maintained an association with and allegiance to the very earliest attempts to bring structure to the Church of Middle Anglia. Its manor and minster church seem always to have been associated with the early Mercian diocese of Dorchester-on-Thames.

Penda did not become king of Mercia until 632 and, at the time of his triumph over *Cynegils*, King of Wessex and his son *Cwichelm*, in 628, it may be that Penda was merely a landless noble of the Mercian royal household fighting for his own hand. But it was he who afterwards brought the Saxons of the middle and lower Severn valley together under one lordship in an alliance with the peoples of the more northern parts around Worcester. Together, these two groups formed what came to be known as the *Hwicce*. These 'northerners' seem to have been mainly a Middle Anglian people who had come from a more easterly region, i.e. from the area of the people that Bede called the *Feppingas*. From this time forward, the *Hwicce* became an under-kingdom whose '*reges'*, '*reguli'*, and '*duces'* were set in power by the Kings of Mercia.

Charlbury, then, appears to be situated on the 'frontier' – a land that may have been subject to the influences of the neighbouring West Saxon *Gewisse* and the *Hwicce*. It was, however, in the area that would become the southern part of the Mercian kingdom – known as *Middle Anglia*. Even though this was only a sub-kingdom under the over-rule of Mercia 'proper', it constituted a vast territory stretching south from the Wash, west to include, in a loose confederation, the *Hwicce* and the *Magonsætan* people, (who inhabited the plain of Herford and marched with the Britons of Wales), to a western boundary marked by the *River Wye*. Even the eastern kingdom of *Lindsey* was subsumed by the Mercian kings, but it remained a separate sub-kingdom. The land just to the south of Charlbury seems to have been populated by the *Gewisse* and what is still the modern county and diocesan boundary remains to mark the divide between these people and the Hwicce. However, we should remember that this boundary may well have been an 'invention' of later ages. The truth

must be that the usual inter-tribal relations (marriage, fostering, etc.) must have resulted in an absence of active lines of demarcation within the open countryside.

Mercia, under Penda, was a thoroughly pagan country and he had a clear policy of 'expansionism' particularly into the vast Northumbrian territories. But threading through all of this was the practice of intermarriage even between 'houses' who were, to all intents and purposes, at each other's throats! *K. Oswald* of Northumbria (a Christian royal family) married, in 635, (*Cyneburh*?), a daughter of *Cynegils*, King of the West Saxons (a pagan royal family). Penda's wife was *Cynewise* whose name points to the West Saxon royal family (the union of two pagan families). *Alchfrid*, the son of *K. Oswiu* of Northumbria, was married to a daughter of Penda named *Cyneburh*[43] (a Christian husband and a pagan wife from two families who were virtually 'at war' with each other). *Peada*, the eldest son of Penda of Mercia, married *Alchfled*, a daughter of *K. Oswiu* of Northumbria (a pagan husband, who then became a Christian). It is worth noting here that the Northumbrian and the Mercian royal families, bitter and violent enemies on the battlefield, were doubly-related in marriage. It must have made for interesting wedding feasts!

It is clear that Christianity was not entirely unknown to the Mercians and, if Penda himself was willing to accept his eldest son becoming a Christian, then the province as a whole can not have been intolerant to the 'new' faith.

Since Peada's rule at the time of Diuma's mission was as 'princeps' over the Middle Anglian people, it is natural to suppose that the saint's first interactions were with these southern Mercian peoples. Bede tells us that, "at this time the Middle Angles, … accepted the faith and the mysteries of the truth under their chief Peada, who was the son of King Penda."[44] Doubtless this reflects the achievements of Diuma and his colleagues.

Both Diuma and Peada enjoyed a 'reign' that was very short. The saint, sent first to Mercia in 653, was recalled to Northumbria by Bp. Finan to be consecrated bishop c.654-5.

Very shortly after being sent south with Diuma and Peada, one of the saint's companions was summoned to return north by King Oswiu and, on arrival, was dispatched with another priest to the East Saxons at the request of their king *Sigeherht*. This was, of course,

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[43] She was possibly named after her mother who is thought to have had the same name.
[44] H.E. III, 21.

the famous St. Cedd, who with his brothers *Cynebill*, *Cæænd* and *(St) Chad*, were all, in their time, "famous priests of Our Lord, and two became bishops, which is a rare occurrence in one family."[45] It would appear that they were all products of the schools of Lindisfarne and Cedd[46] was to act as the interpreter between the disputing parties at the Synod of Whitby in 664.

Diuma died in 658 after working for only five years amongst the Middle Anglians. But Peada was in his grave before that. After only one year as King of Mercia, in succession to his father Penda, Peada was murdered in April of 656. It is commonly thought that this was at the instigation of his own wife!

Peada's brother *Wulfhere*, who succeeded him, ruled for seventeen years - sufficient time for him to become a dominant force in all the southern English lands. He died in 675

Æthelred, Wulfhere's brother, then succeeded to the throne of Mercia. He abdicated in 704 to become a monk, possibly in deep grief over the murder of his wife *Osthryth*,[47] in 697 "by her own people, the Mercian chieftains."[48]

This period, including what were for those days, two lengthy reigns, must have provided an element of political stability to the Mercians and Middle-Angles. But the church suffered a rapid turn-over of bishops which would have been very unsettling for so young an institution. *Ceolach*, another Scot (Irishman), succeeded Diuma for a very brief period (perhaps only a matter of a few months) before returning to the Island of Iona. An Englishman, *Trumhere*,[49] consecrated bishop by the Scots, succeeded Ceolach. His episcopate is said to have lasted from c.658 to c.662, wholly, therefore, during the reign of K. Wulfhere. He was followed by Bp. *Jaruman* between c.662 – c.667, again a very short episcopate. In 665 , perhaps because of the ravages of the plague, some of the East Saxons apostatized and Wulfhere, as their over-king, sent Jaruman "to correct their error and recall the province to the true faith."[50] Bede describes Jaruman as, "a good and devout man, who

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[45] H.E. III. 23.
[46] *Cedd* died of the plague at his monastery at *Lastingham* on 26 October 664.
[47] *Osthryth* was a daughter of K. Oswiu of Northumbria.
[48] H.E. v. 24.
[49] Previously abbot of the monastery of *In-Getlingum* (*Gilling*, near Richmond). [H.E. III. 24.]
[50] H.E. III. 30.

travelled far and wide and succeeded in bringing back both king and people to the path of righteousness,"[51] by his energetic preaching.

On Jaruman's death c.667, Wulfhere sent to Archbishop *Theodore* to ask for a replacement. This is most significant since it reveals a swing of allegiance on the part of the king from the northern fastness and traditions of Lindisfarne to the Roman establishment of *Theodore of Tarsus* who had arrived in England, papally appointed to the see of Canterbury, on 26 March, 668.[52] This places Jaruman's death somewhat later than 667 , and also shows that Wulfhere's change of allegiance must have taken place very soon after Theodore's arrival. It is a matter for debate whether Jaruman was of the Lindisfarne persuasion or the Roman. His episcopate seemed to start just after the deliberations at Whitby (664). But, since Wulfhere would probably have been heavily influenced by the outcome of the Synod, whilst simultaneously strongly defending his new-found freedom from Northumbrian over-lordship, he would, nevertheless, seem to have fallen into line with the Roman 'camp'. Certainly, by 668, Jaruman would have been a brave man to stand against his king and would surely not have had the measure of trust and respect that resulted in his being sent to deal with the apostates in East Sussex if he did not conform to the new Roman ways.

For the residents of Charlbury this would have meant stability of royal government but a rapid succession of bishops, all of whom, up to the time of Jaruman, would seem to have been in the true mould of the schools of Lindisfarne and Iona, i.e. 'wandering bishops'. We cannot even be certain that those bishops who followed Diuma bore any allegiance to the village, or spent much time there, but Diuma's grave must have been influential and it is possible that Charlbury continued to be a place of importance for both Ceolach and Trumhere. Bede's own words describe Jaruman as being "widely travelled"[53] and the implication is, I think, unavoidable that all three had no fixed 'locus' for their episcopates. They would be found wherever they were most needed.

As it turns out, Theodore's choice for Jaruman's successor as bishop of Mercia and the Mid-Angles was Cedd's brother *Chad*. When Theodore had carried out a visitation to his province[54] he had encountered Chad as bishop at York. Previously, Chad had been abbot of

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[51] H.E. III. 30.
[52] H.E. IV. 1
[53] H.E. III, 30
[54] At that time *Theodore* was the only archbishop in the English province.

the monastery that his brother had founded at *Lastingham*. When the king, Oswy, in recognition of the new-found primacy of Canterbury after the Synod of Whitby, chose Chad for the vacant bishopric at York, he sent him south with a companion[55] to be consecrated by the archbishop. Unfortunately, upon arrival at Canterbury, the party found that the archbishop had died.[56] In the absence of a successor[57] the party continued on to the land of the West Saxons where they consecrated Chad with the assistance of "two bishops of the British"[58] whose own consecrations, unfortunately, would be held to be irregular since they celebrated Easter uncanonically.[59] So, when Theodore met Chad at York and discovered the facts, he challenged him. Chad replied with the greatest humility that he would immediately resign and that he never thought himself worthy anyway! The notorious *Wilfrid* was appointed in his place.

Consequently, Wulfhere's request for a new bishop for the Mercians, Mid-Angles and Lindsey, to replace Jaruman, was met c.677 by a response from Theodore that they should accept Chad whose modesty had impressed the archbishop and whose 'irregularity' of consecration was corrected by him. In line with the Roman model of a bishop, and doubtless under Theodore's guidance, Chad fixed his see once and for all at *Lyccidfelth* (Lichfield).[60] The days of the *wandering bishop* were gone for good.

Theodore's reforms went further since he had determined to divide the Mercian territories into several separate dioceses. Lindsey was first separated c.677 and provided with its own bishop[61] who was based at *Siddenacester*.[62] In c.680 Theodore continued with his developments and created a diocese for the Hwicce at *Worcester* and one for the Magonsætan at *Hereford*. Charlbury lay just to the east of these new dioceses, still under the 'jurisdiction' of the bishop of the Middle-Anglians. The bishop of this diocese, from about the same period, was based at Dorchester-on-Thames, previously a see of the West Saxons.

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[55] A priest named *Eadhed* who in time was himself to be consecrated – bishop of Ripon.
[56] Archbishop *Deusdedit* died in 664.
[57] Although *Wighard* appears in the records as Deusdedit's successor at Canterbury, he had gone to Rome for consecration by the Pope and had died there, possibly of the plague. Hence there was no archbishop at Canterbury to welcome Chad.
[58] H.E. III. 28
[59] At that time there was only one bishop in England whose consecration had been canonical – *Wini*, bishop of Winchester had been consecrated in Gaul.
[60] H.E. VI. 3
[61] Bishop *Eadhed*.
[62] Siddenacester – commonly associated with *Stow*, a village between *Gainsborough* and *Lincoln*. [Bright (1888), p.319, n.5.]

Thus, the territories of 'old' Mercia were eventually divided into six portions, each a see in the Roman tradition with a bishop at a fixed location:[63]

670	Putta, bp. of Hereford	for the Magonsætan
c.680	Bosel, bp. of Worcester	for the Hwiccas
c.680	Cuthwin, bp. of Lichfield	for northern Mercia
c.680	Saxulf, bp. of Leicester	(ditto.)
c.680	Ethelwin, bp. of Siddenacester	for Lindsey
c.680	Ætla, bp. of Dorchester	for the Mid-Anglians

Dorchester, at first, had been established c.635 by *Cynegils* as the cathedral of *Birinus*, first bishop of the West Saxons. He was succeeded by the less than successful *Agilbert*. When the West-Saxon king, who was now *Cenwalh*, realised that this appointment had been a mistake he created a second cathedral at Winchester and placed *Wini* on the 'cathedra' there; this was in 662. Naturally enough, Agilbert took umbrage at this and eventually quit Dorchester and, for quite some time, he wandered among the various tribes of England – even as far north as Northumbria. He was the senior cleric present at the Synod of Whitby. Having continued his wanderings in Flanders he eventually became the bishop of Paris, France. For a time, a priest named *Lothere*, who was a nephew of Agilbert, held the see at Dorchester under the West Saxon king.

Archbishop Theodore died on 19 September, 690.[64] His mission to England must have filled him at first with fear and trepidation but its influence cannot be over-emphasised – it might even be said that its effect was at least as momentous as that of St Augustine. "He lives in history as a great ecclesiastical statesman, who gave unity and organisation to a distracted church."[65] For Charlbury the result was that it became the western frontier of the Mid-Anglian diocese of Dorchester. There can be little doubt that it lost the 'aura' that would have surrounded it in Diuma's time.

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[63] Bright (1888), p.318, quoting Florence of Worcester.
[64] Stenton (1900), p.139
[65] Stenton (1900), p.139

THE NORMAN ERA AND LINKS WITH EYNSHAM ABBEY.

With the arrival of the victorious forces of William of Normandy the whole of England was faced with a major programme of change and in the ecclesiastical world this was particularly marked. Some would say, in hind-sight, that much of the alterations were for the better and some would counter this view strongly. Of course, as with all such instances, both views have their attractions and it is perhaps best to allow history to simply record and not to sit in judgement. It is useful to remember that, for most villagers, little appeared to change in the day-to-day routine of common life. Lengthy periods of sweat and toil were only broken by the welcome respite of markets, fairs and religious festivals. Levies and tithes were as much of a burden whether they were due to a Norman lord or an Anglo-Saxon thegn.

Charlbury, with its manor, was gifted to the newly formed, and first, Mercian bishopric of *Dorchester*. It was a notable gift comprising as it did the 'estate' of *Banbury* to which Charlbury was included as a detached portion. Some suggest that the gift simply mirrors those areas within which Diuma's influence held sway.

As already noted, a search of *Domesday Book* reveals a complete absence of any reference to Charlbury itself and most scholars consider that this is because it was subsumed within the entries for Banbury. *Cornbury Park* was also included with Banbury in Domesday Book (632 acres; 50 persons)[66]. Indeed, "in origin, the hundred {of Banbury} seems to have been made up of the north Oxfordshire estates of the Anglo-Saxon {Mercian} see of Dorchester."[67] These lands comprised the two estates of *Banbury* and *Cropredy* (each of 50 hides). This, "probably represents two ancient estates exempted from royal dues for the benefit of one of the early bishops of Dorchester."[68] I believe that they probably do represent a much earlier gift to Diuma himself and his followers.

Eynsham Abbey was first founded under the Anglo-Saxon kings. In 1005, one *Æthelmar the Ealdorman* established the abbey on his own manor of Eynsham which he had obtained by exchange with his son-in-law *Æthelward*. He endowed it with the additional manors of *Mickleton*, Gloucs.; *Esher and Ditton*, Surrey; *Marnaclive* (?Marcliff*) and Beonetlege* (?Bentley),

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[66] V.H.E. Vol. 10, Oxfordshire, p.1.

[67] V.H.E. Vol. 10, Oxfordshire, p.1.

[68] V.H.E. Vol. 10, Oxfordshire, p.2.

Warwickshire.; and *Rameslege* with its harbour or landing-place (*Ramsey*, Kent). Throughout its history Eynsham was a Benedictine house.

Such monasteries were a feature of the early dioceses and acted in a 'support rôle' for the bishop.

At the time of the *Conquest*, the monks fled from Eynsham because it was an Anglo-Saxon foundation. Initially, its estates were used by the Normans to endow the see of Dorchester. But the bishop (*Remigius of Fécamp*), who was also acting as abbot of Eynsham, re-established the community and the monks set about recovering their property.

At some date c.1073, Remigius, determined to move his *cathedra* to *Lincoln*,[69] and, not surprisingly, he decided to take 'his' abbey with him and re-establish it at *Stow*, a little distance to the north-west of Lincoln. Remigius' new cathedral was not ready for use when he died only a few days before its dedication service was scheduled to take place.[70] A new bishop, *Robert Bloet*, was consecrated to the see – in December 1093. Within only a few months he had obtained the king's permission to return the community from Stow to Eynsham. To 'sugar' the pill, the Bishop, having retained to himself the monks' manor of Stow, gave to them, in recompense, his manors of *Histon*, Cambs., *Charlbury*, Oxon., and *South Stoke*, along with other smaller gifts.[71] But the Bishop retained such strong links with 'his' abbey that, when he died[72] , his bowels were buried at Eynsham, whilst the rest of his body found its peace in Lincoln Cathedral!

So, in or about 1094, Charlbury manor was firmly in the hands of the monks who had returned to Eynsham. However, their situation was far from settled until they received a confirming charter of King Henry I granted to them at Westminster on Christmas Day, 1109.[73]

A second charter granted at *Handborough* gives that, "whenever his household is resident in the neighbourhood the men of Eynsham should be exempt from *stabilito*."[74] This charter is

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[69] Probably after the decision of the Accord of Winchester (1072) that cathedrals should be in cities not towns or villages. Remigius is a signatory of this charter.

[70] Remigius' bones, which had been thought to have been buried beneath the nave of his cathedral were found, with his chalice, paten and half his pastoral staff, under a slab of black marble, in the angel choir of the cathedral, in 1927

[71] Cart. Eyn. I. no VII, p. 9-11.

[72] 8 June 1123.

[73] Cart. Eyn. I. no VII, p.36.

[74] *Stabilito* - the duty of joining the chase and beating the woods.

significant in that the grant is made at the time when Woodstock was imparked. Also, it reveals a 'residence' at Handborough that was large enough to house the king and his party. The witnesses signing this charter are –

R. (Robert Bloet} bishop of Lincoln and W. de Werelwast.[75]

It has always been assumed that the Minster Church of Charlbury passed to Eynsham Abbey with the manor.[76] However, as we shall see, the advowson (rectory) remained separate from the manor up to 1296.

During this period Charlbury's ecclesiastical and lay 'authority' expanded to include not only the 'burgh' itself but also *Finstock*, *Fawler*, *Cote* and *Tapwell*. The chapelries of *Chadlington* and *Shorthampton* (*Chilson*) also became part of the Abbey properties by 1293.[77] However, we read that, "in the manor of Charlbury there was a portion retained by the king, called *Cornbury*." [78] This, in turn, was a part of the king's hunt/forest of *Wychwood*. The exemption of Cornbury from Charlbury Manor was known during its ownership by the bishop of Lincoln, before c.1094.

On 7 February 1256, we find a charter of King Henry III titled "*Nota pro Mercato apud Cherleberiam*." In it the king grants the right of holding a market at Charlbury – weekly, to be held on Mondays in the manor of Charlbury; and, a yearly fair of four days duration, namely, on the Vigil, and the Day, of the Assumption of the B.V.M. and the two days following (i.e. 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th August.) This was a great gift not only in terms of the revenue that it would produce for the Abbey but also because of the extra trade that it would attract to Charlbury, producing profits (and entertainment!) for the local people.

There are several other minor charters preserved in the Eynsham Chartulary that relate to Charlbury. Amongst these are:

1160-80 The abbot of Eynsham grants half a hide in Charlbury to *Gilbert Taylard*.

1251 (6 September) The King (Henry III) 'asks' for 15 oak trees from the forest of Wicchewde
of the abbot of Eynsham.[79]

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[75] Cart. Eyn. II. no. 698, p.155.
[76] Cart. Eyn., I, 46.
[77] See Appendix H for a list of these abbey possessions.
[78] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xxxvi.
[79] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 588, p.401.

1325 (20 May) Eynsham's possession of the woods/forests of Charlbury is confirmed.[80]

1332 (12 July) *Walter of Shobindone*, knight, for 20 marks of silver, has 'Licencia assartandi', of the woods of Charlbury. (Given at Woodstock.)[81]

1332 (30 August) *John de Lewknor*[82] agrees that for the period of his life Eynsham should keep their wood enclosed at Charlbury.[83]

1353 (20 March) King Edward's charter shows that Cornbury was a royal park – '*parcus noster*'.[84]

The Manor and Ecclesiastical Estate.

From very early times the manor encompassed the following settlements.

Chadlington.

Chadlington was certainly 'under the wing' of Charlbury Minster, but in the 13th century a dispute arose between the Abbey and the family of *Whitfield* [85]who claimed the advowson, and, by implication, that Chadlington was a church separate from the minster church. The Abbey claimed that "since time before memory" it had been a dependency of Charlbury and the Abbey's claim was upheld in a judgement of 1291.[86]

Shorthampton.

The situation of Shorthampton is less easy to determine. There is no record of when it was founded but, I would suggest that from its earliest days, it was dependent on Charlbury. *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* asserts that at the time that the Abbey proved its claim to Chadlington, Shorthampton was also included.[87]

In 1292, on the resignation of the last rector of Charlbury, the Abbey appropriated the *rectory* and, in its place, instituted a *perpetual vicarage*. This was widespread practice in appropriated livings across both England and Scotland. The Abbey made provision for a vicar and one chaplain for Charlbury itself – or two chaplains if the vicar was unable to

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[80] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 560, p.382.
[81] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 564, p.385.
[82] Presumably Sir John de Lewknor of Heythrop, (d. c.1381).
[83] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 558, p.381.
[84] Cart. Eyn., I. no. 577, p.393
[85] A *Ricardam Withfeld* (Whitfield) was a resident in Chadlington in 1389 [see Appendix H.; Cart. Eyn. II, 732, p.178]
[86] Hundred Rolls, ii, 747
[87] V.H.E II, p.###

serve the church. In addition, Chadlington was provided with one chaplain. The Charlbury priests were also to serve the chapel of Chilson (Shorthampton) with the assistance of two clerks. The priests at Charlbury were to provide mass at Shorthampton on 3 days per week. The chaplaincy at Chadlington was augmented by the service of a clerk also. The vicarage as instituted by the Abbey was endowed in 1296 with the altar fees of Charlbury, Shorthampton and Chadlington (worth £17 6s. 8d.); the tithes of hay (worth £ 8); and a glebe of about 65 acres.[88]

Finstock and Fawler.

Finstock and *Fawler* were small townships in early medieval times and neither had a church. (They became a separate parish only in 1860.[89])

Cote and Tapwell.

Cote was a small agricultural settlement whose location has been noted already (*vide supra*). *Tapwell* was a small settlement near *Fawler* whose location can only be hinted at (*vide supra*). Both were hard hit by the outbreak of the *Black Death* which ravaged the area in 1349, and it is quite possible that these two settlements ceased to be inhabited at this time. Certainly, c.1360, Cote had only three tenants remaining, named:

> John Aluyon
> John Golde
> Robert Touy (?Tovey)[90]

It is tempting to ask here whether the Abbey was a 'good landlord'? There is a very revealing entry in the Abbey's own records which R.A.R. Hartridge drew to attention in 1930.[91] He wrote that, "as against this {evidence for the adequate maintenance of the poor} may be quoted the case of Charlbury, appropriated to Eynsham Abbey, where, in 1296, of the appropriated revenues, near 40% went to the monks' creature comforts and little more than 10% to the actual poor."[92] He is making his opinion clear that the poor, at least, were

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[88] V.H.E. Vol. 10, Oxfordshire, p.148.
[89] V.H.E. Vol. 10, Oxfordshire, p.148.
[90] Cart. Eyn. II, p.12.
[91] Hartridge (1930), p.196.
[92] Cart. Eyn. I, p.340.

not being provided for as was the duty of the Abbey under the laws of 'tithing'.[93] However, this conclusion of Hartridge may be a little unfair. Writing some twenty years later, Sir Frank Stenton comments that by the time of King Edgar's law codes, "… passages … show that tithe was becoming reserved to the use of parish churches. Pilgrims and the poor have fallen out of sight."[94] It seems possible that Eynsham Abbey was not remarkable in this respect although it meant that the less well-off members of Charlbury's population (the majority) were faced with an even harder life.

During the 15th and 16th centuries it was found more convenient, not only by monks but by landowners generally, to grant leases to resident yeomen or squires; and although, at first, canon law stated that leases of tithes might not be held by laymen, Papal permission was subsequently granted freely – if somewhat expensively!

One result of this was that when the monasteries were dissolved and their lands and tithes confiscated, in many localities there was no change that would be noticed, as far as the residents were concerned; for some generations the monks had had no meaningful connection with their lands or their churches, and the man who held them by lease before the *Dissolution* continued to hold them afterwards.[95] These arrangements represent the last strained chords of the Minster establishment at Charlbury.

Church Tithes.

The Abbey's officers collected tithes from the lands of: Charlbury, Chadlington, Childeston (Chilson), Thurne (this must be Tapwell?), Shorthampton, Walecote, Finstock, Fawler and Cote.[96]

In 1353 the King increased this income by granting the tithes of the wild beasts and animals in Cornbury Park, "being within the parish of Charlbury".[97]

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[93] Initially, at the time that the tithe system came to replace *church-scot*, it was a voluntary payment. Archbishop Theodore (668-690), "whose canons are the earliest authority for the history of *tithe* in England, ruled that tithe could lawfully be given only to the poor, to pilgrims, and by lay-men to their churches." [Stenton (1950), p.154] "It was not until the tenth-century that an English ruler ventured to appoint penalties for refusal to pay tithes." [Stenton (1950), p.155]

[94] Stenton (1950), p.154

[95] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xx.

[96] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xxxi.

[97] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xxxiii.

Farmland.

In the valuation of the manor that was carried out in 1363, the farmland is listed as:

Meadow - the meadow next to the meadow of *Sedenham*, 2 acres – the first 'uestura'[98] v s. viii d.

   - The meadow of *Mulleham*, 9 acres 1½ rods. – v shillings an acre

Arable - A field called *Sedenham*, in the upper part being a field stretching along the lane to Fawler {B4022} – 4 acres, 1 rod and 3 perticas.[99] There is another stretching along the ditch {called} *Sedenhamegge*, 2½ acres, ½rod and 14 perticas. There is another field here held as part of the manor containing 3½ acres, 1½ rods and 14½ perticas. There is a field stretching along *Putteslane* beside the royal highway, containing 5½ acres, ½ rod and 14½ perticas.

   Total - 16½ acres, ½ rod and 6 perticas, @ iii d. an acre → v s. vi d. {It is difficult to make these figures add up!}

   - A field called *Hundley*, containing 20 acres, 1½ rods and 15 perticas @ iii d. an acre → ii s.

   - A field called *Ankusdene*, containing 8 acres and 6 perticas @ iii d. an acre → ii s.

   - A field called *Makerelshauwe*, containing in total 14½ acres, 1½ rods and 9 perticas @ iii d. an acre → iii s. viii d.

   - A field called *Dedelonde*, containing 6 acres, ½ rod and 11 perticas @ iii d. an acre → xviii d.

   - A field called *Shepecroftfurlong*, containing 13½ acres, 1 rod and 4 perticas @ iiii d. an acre → iiii s. vii d.

   - A field called *Hemelond* {? Homeland}, containing 8½ acres, ½ rod and 12 perticas @ iii d. an acre → ii s. ii d.

   - A field called *Wythylond*, the upper part between two brooks, containing 2½ acres and 18 perticas; that below 3 acres ½ rod 17 perticas – iii d. and acre → xvii d.

   - A field called *Whytefurlong*, a part above *Efurlong*, containing 6 acres, ½ rod and 11½ perticas @ iii d. an acre → xviii d.

   - A field called *Efurlong*, containing with "les buttes" 8½ acres, 1½ rods 13 perticas @ iiii d. an acre → ii s. xi d.

   - A field called *Blountescroice*, containing 3 acres @ iii d. an acre → ix d.

   The total arable land = 113 acres, ½ rod and 9½ perticas, valued at 31s. 6d.

Pasture - One called "*le Merske*" containing ½ acres ½ rod 12½ perticas divided from its 'originator' field – value [blank].

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[98] In Old English law *Vestura* was a crop of grass or corn. https://dictionary.thelaw.com/vestura/ (accessed 30.04.2018)
[99] In old documents a *pertica* (pl. *perticas*) is equivalent to a *perch* of land. (1 perch = 1 square rod; 1 furlong = 40 rods).

- One at *Hollebroke*, containing 1 acre, 1 rod – value [blank].
- One between "*le Merske*" and *Sheepcroft* containing ½ acres 8 perticas – value [blank].

Fish Farm -   A fish (molendinum) farm, value, with the fish, lxvi s. viii d.

Woods. The woods of Charlbury were divided, following forest tradition, into seven '*Quarterons*'. The routine of the forest was that one *quarteron* would be 'harvested' per year so that each had 6 – 7 years to recover and grow again ready for the next harvest. This 'rotational felling' also allowed the forest animals a continuity of cover within which they could feed and breed – a matter of paramount importance in a hunting forest.

Income was gained from selling -   *furse* or undergrowth;

coppiced wood;

'*sidua silva*', a limited number of mature trees.

Each *quarteron* averaged 46 acres and produced an income to the manor of about £15 6s. 8d.

Charlbury Forest, as will be seen, was not extensive and was predominantly on the 'town side' of the River Evenlode. There is often confusion regarding whether it was a part of the Wychwood and the matter has no certain answer. One thing that is clear is that the land of Cornbury which the King made a point of keeping to himself when the abbey lands were being dealt with, was considered a part of the old 'manor' lands of Charlbury and, somewhat later, they are described as being part of the parish of Charlbury when it was created. Although the 1300 perambulation of the Wychwood seems to leave all Charlbury Wood outside the royal forest, in 1325, part was reckoned to be within Wychwood.[100] Of course, the boundaries of the royal forest were something of a 'moveable feast' – at one time stretching up to an extreme limit near Spelsbury where they marched with the land of the bishops of Worcester.[101]

(In order to satisfy the interests of researchers whose studies focus on old place names I have included, in Appendix G, the names of the seven quarterons of which Charlbury Wood was comprised.)

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[100] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xxxvi.
[101] Tyzack (2003), p. 1, (quoting a charter of 841.)

Charlbury Manor, then, was inextricably linked with the Church: first as the property of the early bishops of Dorchester and Lincoln and then of the abbey of Eynsham. The abbey links were strengthened by the appropriation of the mynster church in 1296 and this situation continued up to the Reformation – a period of some 473 years, from 1093 to c.1560. To keep this in perspective we should understand that an almost equal period has elapsed from the time of the Reformation to the present day!

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that Charlbury possessed a minster church that stands amongst the most important in the history of the Early Church in this frontier area. It played a part in the very first days of the Christianizing of the Anglian-Mercian peoples who inhabited these lands. But it is hard not to concede that Christianity would have made its first appearance amongst the Romano-British tribespeople who left such a heavy 'footprint' in, and close by, the Evenlode Valley.

I believe that the 'minster' status of the Parish Church is irrefutable. All that remains is for all those who are now part of the life of this holy place to put aside any remaining hesitancy and celebrate its high status as it deserves.

But I also believe that there is one further task that should become something of a *cause célèbre*.

I would urge the present congregation of the parish to consider that an act of re-dedication would be an appropriate if long-overdue re-balancing of history. At the least it would present the Bishop and Archdeacon with a novel case to consider with the Chancellor!

I would entreat all concerned to allow this venerable and historic church to recover its deserved and noble heritage, its famous lineage and ancient tradition … let it become known henceforth as:

"THE MYNSTER CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN AND ST DIUMA."

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APPENDIX A: THE CHARLBURY NAME.

CHARLBURY – CEOLBURGH

…BURGH (O.E. *burh*) signifies a 'fortified place'.

Traditionally, the first part of the name, CHARL – CEORL – CEOL, has been translated as *Ceorl*, a term found in *Kent*, *Wessex* and *Mercia* and used to describe a *free peasant* or *rustic* and this has seldom, if ever, been challenged. But these people were concerned with the names of individuals, or gods, or tribes, not a particular societal position. There were *ceorls* everywhere – why should Charlbury, in particular, commemorate them? Nearby *Spelsbury* (*Speolsburh*) is named after an eponymous hero called *Speol*. Do the records give a similar hero for Charlbury?

Well, as it happens …! In 591 a certain *Ceol*, whose actual relationship to *Ceawlin* the King of the West Saxons, is uncertain, succeeded to that kingdom and began a reign which is said to have lasted for six years.[102] And, as if that is not enough, the earliest king of the Mercians mentioned by Bede[103] is *Cearl*, whose daughter *Cwenburh* married *Edwin*, the future King of Northumbria, when he was in exile (bef. 616). It was this Cearl who was king immediately before Penda 'assumed the throne'.

Personally, I believe that it is very much more likely that a Middle-Anglian settlement would be named after one of these two kings and, if so, it supports, still further, Charlbury's royal heritage. This, in turn, would enhance the arguments regarding Diuma's choice of this settlement as a base for his missionary work.

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[102] Stenton, p.30.
[103] H.E. II. 14.

APPENDIX B: THE QUESTION OF DEDICATION.

In Scotland, early churches were not 'dedicated' as such by any formal process. The ancient custom was that what would start as a (very) small community of *religious* (often living with their families) would, in time, arrive at a point when a building specifically reserved for services would be a desirable addition to the community's resources – but by no means a necessity. Religious activities could be, and were, carried out *al fresco* perhaps in an open-air location which had been used for pagan ritual.

These early church buildings which were almost without exception of a wooden construction (*vide supra*) have naturally left little or no trace in the archaeological record. There is a clear parallel here with the early church in Mercia.

These early churches were usually referred to by future generations by the name of the individual to whom the *muinntir* (community) could trace its allegiance. But this individual was often not the actual founder of the *muinntir*. Hence, we could have a reference to *Diuma's Church* as being quite usual in the common conversation of the local tribes-people and their ealdormen.

Many of these individuals became, in time, known as 'saints' – by popular acclaim. There was, in these days in Mercia, no Roman church of any consequence and certainly no official processes of *canonization*. But, in the course of this early history, a muinntir (and its church) may have come to be known as *St Diuma's Church* or *the Church of St Diuma*.

As the power and influence of the Roman church came to spread and increase across the country so the process and act of *Dedication* became to norm. But in so doing, the names of the early (often local) 'saints' were either replaced, or at least augmented, by one of a more 'acceptable' (i.e. Roman) pedigree, which often meant one of the characters from within the pages of the Bible. Foremost amongst these was a dedication to the *Blessed Virgin – St. Mary*. It is possible that it was at the time that the manor and church were gifted to Eynsham Abbey that the church was 'properly' dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin. In such situations the local saint was regularly side-lined and eventually forgotten as part of the *spin* operations of this new church organisation. This, surely, is a great tragedy at the least and perhaps, at most, an act of historical vandalism if not heavenly 'genocide'. It often acted

(quite intentionally) to sever the links to the older church and its 'champions', and place the new name in the place of honour and (of course) supremacy!

In the more enlightened times in which we are told we now live, surely it is a duty of the current church to reverse this quasi-criminal procedure?

I would urge the present congregation of the parish to consider that an act of re-dedication would be an appropriate, if long-overdue, re-balancing of history. At the least it would present the Bishop and Archdeacon with a novel case to consider with the Chancellor! I would entreat all concerned to allow this venerable and historic church to recover its deserved and noble heritage, its famous lineage and ancient tradition ….. let it be known henceforth as:

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APPENDIX C: A PERAMBULATION OF THE FOREST OF WYCHWOOD.

Within the Charters of the Abbey of Eynsham there is a copy of a 'perambulation' carried out on the ground of the borders of the Forest of Wychwood.[104] The perambulation was carried out on 31st July 1300.

Beginning at the bridge called *Bladenebrugge* {Bladon Bridge – NGR SP440142}.

the head/top of the ville of *Haneburghe* {NGR SP415140}

from there descending by the *Water of Bladene* to the enclosure of the mill pools called *Egnesham Mulne* {Eynsham Mill – NGR SP415150}

from there directly by 'sickettu[m]'[105] by some called *Cauerswelle Broke* {Carswell Brook?}

and so to the long ford ('ad longum vadum')

and so there by the 'eundem sickettu[m]' all the way to the field called *Caverschulle*

so between the '*le Frythe*' and the wood called *Mousele*

and so direct to the residence of *Walter le Wyneter* (Vineter) {Winter/Vintner?} in the said ville of *Hanebergh* partly south of the said house

and from that house up to the *Grange* of *Robert le Eyr* partly south

from there to *Blwynd*, partly to the south of the '*bercar(ie)*' and *croft* of the Abbot of Osney

and so to the middle of *Roule* (Rowleye) all the way to the spring which is the source of *Leyhambroke*

so descending by the *Leyham Broke* as far as *Colnham*

and from *Colnham* from where Colnham descends to the water of Bladene

{the *Water of Bladene* is the *Evenlode*[106]}

along the Evenlode as far as *Stuntesforde*

and from there just as the valley of *Neteldone* extends along *Stecheye* (Stokhey) and the flat land of *Stuntesfelde* {Stonesfield}

thus between the assarts of the Abb. Eynsham and *Gernerswod* (Gerneleswode)

and thus to *Ruthereswelle*.

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[104] Eynsham Charters vol. ii., p.92, carta 649.
[105] Sikettum = a burn
[106] Cart. Eyn. Vol. 1, p.16, n.2.

from there directly between the wood which is called *le Erleswode of Bloxham* and *le Forsakenho*

and from there always by *le Mereway* in that wood as far as middle *Dustesfeld* {Dustfield Farm – NGR SP380200}

from there as far as *Grymes Diche* {Grim's Ditch – NGR SP378208}

thus directly by the *Grim's Dyke* between *Bloxham Wood* and *Spellsbury Wood*

and so by the *Grim's Dyke* by the 'cornarium' of the wood of *Bloxham* next to the wood of *Spellsbury* as far as *Dychelehegge* {Ditchley}[107]

and so in Ditchley in fact the 'haya' stretches between the land of *Henry de Ditchley* and the land of *Agnetis of Bloxham*

all the way from the foresaid *Grim's Dyke* in Ditchley just as the 'bunde' (division) extends between the said wood of *Bloxham* and the *Wood of Enstone*, which is called *Boxwood*

and so all the way to *Felleyehegge* as far as 'sikettum' extending between the lands of the *Abbot of Eynesham* and the land o the *Abbot of Wynchecombe*

and so between the wood of *Almarici of St Amando* and the wood of *Cudyngtone* in *Boxdene*

and so as far as '*le Frithe*'[108]

and so between *le Frythe* and the *Wood of Wottone* as far as *Poumerleye* {Poddeleye}

and so directly by way of the King's highway extending as far as the residence of *Iohannis de Slap* in *Woodstock Weye*

and so between the fields of *Wooton* which are called *Eldefelde* {Oldfield} and *Gunnyldegroue*

and so as far as the wall of *Woodstock Park*

and so by the said wall as far as the river called *Glyme* and so descending by *R. Glym* to the river called *Bladon* and so as far as the *Bridge of Bladon.*

This perambulation, though of interest and obviously of some considerable antiquity, does not correspond with modern notions of the extent of the Wychwood, particularly within Cornbury Park.

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[107] Hegge = hedge.
[108] Frithe = sanctuary or woodland.

APPENDIX D: THE ABBOTS OF EYNSHAM.

The following is a truncated list of those who held office as abbot of St. Mary's Abbey, Eynsham. The house was first founded in 1005, was re-founded in 1086 and was moved for a while to Stow, Lincolnshire, by the then bishop when he moved his 'cathedra' to Lincoln from Dorchester. He wished to have a monastery to add to his new diocesan organisation. But this did not work out to anyone's benefit and the monastery was moved back to Eynsham c.1094

→ c.1010	Aelfric	
→ 1092	Remigius	As bishop of Lincoln, he retained the abbacy himself up to Jan x Sept 1091. (He died 1092).
1091 → ?	Columbanus	
? → 1128	Nigel	d. 9 May 1128.
1129 → 1139x50	Walter I	
	Walter II	
? → 1151	William	Occ. 1151.
1150x1 → 1195	Godfrey	Probably previously prior of Eynsham. Died {as abbot} in 1195 in his 44th year of age.
1195 → 1197	(Vacancy)	
1197 → 1208	Robert	Previously sub-prior of Canterbury Cathedral. Died 1208 (prob. 8 Sept)
→ 1213	(Vacancy)	
1213/14 → 1228	Adam	Sub-prior and possibly prior of Eynsham. Deposed 1228 by Hugh, epis. Lincoln and became a monk of Crowland Abbey. He wrote the *Magna Vita* of St. Hugh.

Data from Knowles, D. (1972)

APPENDIX E: CHARLBURY RECORDS IN THE EYNSHAM CHARTULARY.

There is a collection of rolls among the *Harleian Rolls* at the British Museum, 150 of which belonged to Eynsham Abbey.

Of these, a considerable number relate to Charlbury –

B. 23 – 42.   C. 1 – 26.   G. 2 (3), (4).

(Those records marked with a '*' are from the Record Office Ministers' Accounts, 957.18-26.)

The Bailiffs of Charlbury.

The *Bailiff* had charge of the Abbey lands and manor of Charlbury. He was the senior officer employed by the Abbey. He accounted for the rents collected and the 'perquisites' of the courts.

1354 (29 September) *John Wrench*. (The Bishop of Lincoln was making a visitation at this time.) [B. 26]

1365 (7 July) *John Carpenter*. [B. 28]

1367 (September) John Carpenter. [B. 30]

1380 (29 September) An unnamed Bailiff gave the accounts of the demesne farm and of the woods.

1431 (29 September) An unnamed Bailiff gave the accounts for the tithes of Charlbury, Chadlington, Fawler, Finstock, Walecot, Shorthampton, and Chilson with Thurne.

1448 (24 June) *William Downesley* – Bailiff of the manor of Charlbury, who was in charge of the demesne. He also accounts for the tithe corn received from Charlbury and Fawler. [C. 2(1)]

The Reeves of Charlbury.

1355 (29 September) *John Cubbyl*. [B. 27]

1373 (29 September) *John Sclatter*. [B. 33]

The Beadles of Charlbury.

1373 (29 September) The Beadle gave account for the 'perquisites' of the courts and the profits of the woods.

1394 (29 September) *William Pomeray* gave the profits of the courts and of the woods. [B. 35(2)]

1396 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. [B. 37]

1406 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. *

1412 (29 September) *William Pomeray* gave the profits of the courts and the woods. [B. 40]

1414 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. *

1416 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. *

1418 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. *

1420 (29 September) *William Pomeray*. *

1426 (29 September) … *Snareston* – 'beadle of Charlbury'. [B. 41(2)]

1431 (29 September) *William Weller* – 'beadle and woodward'. [B. 42(2)]

1448 (24 June) *John Grey* – 'beadle and woodward.' [C. 1(2)]

Collectors of Charlbury.

1367 (September) *John Cubbyl* – collected assize rents of Charlbury and assart rents of Charlbury and Spelsbury. [B. 29]

1373 (29 September) *John Swayne* – collected assize rents of Charlbury, Chadlington, and Cote, and assart rents of Charlbury, Cote, Chadlington, Fawler, Finstock, and assart rents of Charlbury and Spellsbury. [B. 31]

1394 (29 September) *John Baldock* – collected assize rents of Charlbury, Cote, Chadlington, Fawler and Finstock and assart rents of Charlbury, Fawler, Finstock, Stonesfield and Spellsbury. [B. 35(1)]

1409 (29 September) *William Baugh* – assize of Charlbury, Cote, Chadlington, Fawler, Finstock, an assarts of Charlbury, Fawler, Finstock, Stonesfield, and "the tenants of Stonesfield and Cote".

1448 (24 June) *Richard Asshe* – assize rents in Charlbury, 'the vill of Coote', 'the vill of Finstock', and assart rents in the fields of Charlbury, Fawler and Finstock , and from the tenants of Stonesfield for lands assarted in the fields and lordship of Charlbury and Fawler, and from assarts in the fields of Cote; including a rents of three barbed arrows from the tenants of Charlbury for an acre of land called "Playing place". [C. 1(1)]

1528 (29 September) *William Sheparde* – of rents in Charlbury and its hamlets. [C. 3]

1406 (29 September) *William Baugh*. *

1414 (29 September) *John Maynard*. *

1416 (29 September) *John Maynard*. *

1418 (29 September) *John Maynard*. *

1419 (29 September) *John Maynard*. *

1422 (29 September) *John Martyn*. *

1442 (29 September) *William Drinkwater*. *

1457 (29 September) *Thomas Pauley*. *

Other details from the 'Rental' of the Abbey.

c.1310 (Rent was) collected from "Charlbury and its hamlets"; viz.

<div style="text-align:center">

Charlbury

Fawler

Finstock

Tapwell

Cote

Chadlington   [B. 23]

</div>

1448 (24 June) *Thomas Brynn* and *William Wrench* are named as the farmers of Chilson and Thurne. [C. 2(2)]

1448 (24 June) *William Bekyngham* is the farmer of *Pudlicote*. [C. 2(3)]

1448 (24 June) *Thomas Serchedan* is the farmer of Walecote and Shorthampton. [C. 2(4)]

1539 (1 September) A court of *George Darcy*, knight, for Charlbury, Fawler and Finstock. [C. 4]

APPENDIX F: A SECRET MONASTERY WITHIN THE MANOR.

Hidden within the pages of history that have been written about Wychwood there lies a little-known gem – the small monastery cum hermitage of St. John that was referred to as *Pheleleie* (or *Felelia*). It exists like a mere wisp of smoke drifting through the early annals of Eynsham Abbey.

During the reign of King Stephen, the abbey was allowed to absorb a small establishment which belonged to *Bloxham*. Nothing appears to be known of it beyond what we learn from Charters 32, 33 and 34, where the spelling is, in all three cases, Felelia. It was a 'gathering' of Benedictine monks, under a *prelatus*, presumably a prior, situated, it is said, in Bloxham Wood.[109] In Charter 32 it is called "the church of St. John of the forest of Bloxham"; in Charter 34 the *Count of Meulan* describes it as "*in nemoreham*".

In actual fact it was situated in that part of the Wychwood lying near Stonesfield, many miles from Bloxham itself, but appendant to the manor of Bloxham. Although it is described as a hermitage (*heremum*) it was not the abode of a solitary ascetic, for we read in Charter 34 that there were several brethren. The position of head of Pheleleie was of sufficient dignity to be coveted by a monk of *Tewkesbury Abbey*.

From Charter 33 we learn that King Henry I (1100-1135) had assigned it as a cell to Eynsham, and the two next owners of Bloxham, Stephen of Blois and the Count of Meulan, renewed the grant. In its final years, when there was need for a new head of the community, the Count of Meulan asked Walter, abbot of Eynsham, to take charge of it; and apparently the monks and their endowments were transferred to Eynsham.

In 1231 a chapel of St. John still existed at the spot;[110] but in 1315 it is known by the name of "La Forsaken Ho" (i.e. *the forsaken hoke* or enclosure).[111]

It is not easy to determine the endowments of the old community. But no doubt the land in Bloxham, worth £3 10s a year, which appears in Eynsham abbey's *Taxatio* in 1291, was one part.[112] Perhaps some of the endowments which we afterwards find in the possession of Eynsham, but for which there is no mention in the chartulary as having been part of a gift or donation – for example the tithe at *Appleton*, Berks., and *Naunton*, Gloucs., - originally belonged to Pheleleie.[113]

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[109] Cart. Eyn. I, p.xiv.
[110] Cart. Eyn. I, no.717.
[111] Cart. Eyn. I, no.535.
[112] *Taxatio*, p.43.
[113] Cart. Eyn. I, p.xiv.

On 18 June 1235, King Henry III grants a 'lawn' (unam landam[114]) in Bloxham Wood adjacent to the Chapel of St. John.[115]

In 1279, the holding of Eynsham in Fawler was exactly 15 virgates.[116] The tenants of Stonesfield leased "assarts in the fields of Fawler." This '*assart of Stonesfield*' may be identified with the site of the small monastery of *Pheleleie* which was evidently situated just on the border of Fawler and Stonesfield.[117]

On 9 August 1315, a report was given following an investigation held in the presence of *Johanne de Westcote*, "forester in the king's forest of Wychwode". It appears that although Bloxham Wood was part of the Queen's manor of Bloxham, it was, in fact, geographically within the abbot's manor of Charlbury.

Two months later the king again confirms the abbey's right and possession of '*La Forsakenho*' as a part of the monks' manor of Charlbury.[118]

This is the start of what could be a great detective story for a researcher with an interest in local history. Can the location of this little house or chapel of St. John be determined from old estate maps? I lay down the challenge!

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[114] Landa – is a piece of grass ground in a wood.
[115] Cart. Eyn. II, no. 717, p.168.
[116] Hundred Rolls, ii., 709.
[117] Cart. Eyn. II, p. xxxv.
[118] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 536, p. 365. (Dated 13 October 1315, at Thames Ditton.)

APPENDIX G: THE QUARTERONS OF CHARLBURY WOOD.[119]

1) There is there one quarteron the southern part, beyond *Meredene*, containing 17 acres, ½ rod, 5 perticas.

2) There is there in another way a quarteron all the way to *Londonesart*, *Horsemanwalle* and the fields of Fawler, containing 62 acres, 10 perticas.

3) A quarteron situated beyond the southern part of *Portrude* and *Londonesart*, stretching towards *Faulourhemhache* and *Le Croiceryding* {Crossriding}, containing 70½ acres, 1 rod.

4) One quarteron beyond the north of *Portrude* and *Ruschemere*, containing 42½ acres, xvi perticas.

5) One quarteron called *Myngeputtes Quarteron*, containing 25 acres, 1½ rods.

6) One, called *Uassemere* Quarteron, stretching towards *Ryschemereslade*, containing 87½ acres, 1 rod.

7) One quarteron among {within?} *Le Styequarteron*, containing 4½ acres, 15 perticas.

Total acreage of the woods of *Uppewode* - 321½ acres, ½ rod, 6 perticas, valued with the ridings, value of *sidua silva* mature wood – vi s. viii d. an acre.

Which forest is divided into seven parts, one being felled and sold each year, yielding an income on average, for each quarteron there, (46 acres), £15 6 s. 8 d.

In an Eynsham Abbey charter of 30 May 1306, giving the verdict of an inquisition, it is commented that, "the 'big' wood of Charlbury is divided into three quarterons and within it is found game. The smaller wood of Charlbury is a single unit and in it is found much game." The Abbey also had another piece of woodland within the manor of Eynsham itself but, "in it game is rarely found."[120]

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[119] Cart. Eyn. II, p. 25.
[120] Cart. Eyn. II, no.760, p. 210.

APPENDIX H: EYNSHAM ABBEY'S POSSESSIONS.

The Abbey's possessions were confirmed in 1189-91 by Bishop Hugh of Lincoln, amongst which were the following churches in Oxfordshire[121]:

> Church of *St Æbbe* in Oxford.
>
> Church of *Stanton*, gifted by John of St John.
>
> Church of *Merton*, gifted by David I, King of Scots.
>
> Church of *Suleporne*, gifted by Jordan de Sai (According to *Gallia Christiana*, the abbey of *Aunay* {Calvados, Normandy} was founded 15 July 1131 by Jordan "de Saio prope Argentomum" and Lucy his wife. "*Iordanus de Sai*" donated "*ecclesiam de Sulethorn*" to Eynsham abbey, for the soul of "*filii Willelmi*" on his burial at the monastery, by charter dated to [before 1161].)
>
> Church of *Newentone*, gifted by Hugh de Cheisn[ei].
>
> Church of *Bertona* {Barton}, gifted by Alexander de Bertona.
>
> Half the church of *Heiforde* {Heuford}, gifted by Peter de Mara.
>
> Church of *Norton*, gifted by Walchelini Hareng.
>
> Church of *Cornwell*, gifted by Stephen de Punsold and his wife Alicie.

Churches in the manorial possession of the abbey were:

> Church of *Eynsham* with its chapels.
>
> Church of *Stowe*.
>
> Church of *Cherlberia* {Charlbury}.

A much older charter of King Henry I, dated 25 December 1109, at Westminster, confirms Eynsham in possession of Charlbury {manor}, as gifted by Robert {Bloet}, bishop of Lincoln, "in siluis and pratis and agris and aquis." {in woods/forest, meadow, farm-land, fishing.}[122]

Sarsden: Some time c.1186, Hugo Gulafre and his wife Sibilie gift their chapel of *Sarsden* (Capella de Cherchesdena), the tithes of 'fermi' in his manor of Sarsden, the tithes of his mill, and "unum bordarium (cotagium)" which Alard is tenanting.

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[121] Cart. Eyn. I, p.45
[122] Cart. Eyn. I, p.36

Pudlicote: *Philip de Pudelicote* granted the tithes (*decimis de Pudelicota*) to Eynsham before 1167. The gift is confirmed by Baldwin, 'minister' of Winchester, on 15 May 1181.[123]

Since the tithes of the demesne of Pudlicote, claimed by the rector of Sarsden, were confirmed to Eynsham in 1181[124] it would appear that Pudlicote chapel had ceased to exist and that its endowment had never been more than the tithes of the demesne.

In a charter of 30 May 1270, Pudlicote is included with Charlbury in a list of tithes 'owned' by the Abbey. It is signed at Stowe Park. {*Stowe Abbatis* was a manor of Eynsham and this would, I think, have been the manor-house in which the abbot would have resided at the time of his holding manorial courts.}[125]

The last reference to Pudlicote in the Eynsham Chartulary dates to 1448. "It may have been alienated, or, more probably, merged with the rectory of Charlbury."[126] The existence of a Pudlicote Aisle[127] within the parish/mynster church is a strong indication of the truth of the latter and may also indicate that one of the priests/clerks of St Mary's was supported by these tithes – a form of 'prebend'.

The abbey lands of Pudlicote included half the meadow of *Wolgersham*, given by Alexander de Rumeli, c.1180-97. His charter is witnessed by Roberto Chevauchesul {the same individual who gifted 2½ hides in Fawler}; Willelmo de Rumeli {Alexander's son}; Randulfo de Rumeli {another son?}; Stephano de Spelesberi; and Henrico Banastere. This meadow appears in the 'rental' of Chadlington – "de prato de Wolgaresham."[128]

It would appear that Philip de Pudlicote first gave half of this meadow of Wolgersham before 1167 {he was Alexander de Rumeli's father}, and Alexander's gift represents the other half of the meadow. The first 'half' is reckoned to have amounted to 40 acres.

Philip de Ramelly {Rumeli} held one knight's fee {in Pudlicote} under William de Curci {d'Courcy} in 1166 – William holding the barony.

Chadlington and Shorthampton: In a charter of 16 August 1293, Philip, dean of Lincoln, when referring to Eynsham's possession of Charlbury, adds, "… prefatam ecclesiam de Cherlebyri cum

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[123] Cart. Eyn. I, 162, p.123, n.5
[124] Cart. Eyn. I, p.123
[125] Cart. Eyn. I, 402, p.274-6
[126] Cart. Eyn. II, p.lxiii
[127] I understand that the Pudlicote Aisle is now known as the Memorial Chapel.
[128] Harleian Rolls, B23

suis de Chadelyngtone and Shorthamptone capellis …"[129] This shows that both Chadlington and Shorthampton were churches/chapels which were considered to be dependent on Charlbury, the mother church or mynster.

This western portion of the parish of Charlbury (Chadlington, Shorthampton, and Spelsbury) was part of the *hundred* of Chadlington, whereas the 'eastern portion' was in the detached part of the hundred of Banbury.

In Chadlington the abbey possessed:
  A. ½ virgate, granted about 1173;
  B. c.100 acres granted by John Henyon before 1264.

Entries in the 'rentals' show that the total was reckoned to be c.5 virgates.[130]

The abbey {holding the Rectory}, and the then perpetual vicar of Charlbury {Thomas}, agree to Chadlington having its own rights of Sepulture and a cemetery. This agreement was reached on 25 July 1389.[131] This piece of evidence clearly shows that even at this date Charlbury's 'mynster rights' were still being enforced over Chadlington. Even more importantly, Charlbury is described as "ecclesie eorum **matrici**[132] & parochiali de Cherlebury." It is clear that, even in 1389, Charlbury's ancient 'mynster' status was recognised and was of consequence.

At this time, the inhabitants of Chadlington who sign the agreement are named:

> Margaretam Appulby, widow of John Appulby
> Ricardum Withfeld
> Rogerum Badford
> Reginaldum Stacy
> Willelmum Martyn
> Johannem ate Yate
> Johannem Shepherd

Finstock and Fawler: These lands, owned by the bishop of Lincoln, were not given to the abbey by him. By 1094 the two manors had been granted by the bishop to some of his knights, amongst whom were the families of *le Chevalchesul* and *Wicham*.

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[129] Cart. Eyn. I, 503, p.336-7
[130] Cart. Eyn. II, p.xxxvii
[131] Cart. Eyn. II, 732, p.178
[132] In old records the term *matrix ecclesia* is regularly used for a mynster church.

In the hamlet of Fawler there were:

A. 2½ hides of the fee of *Robert le Chevalchesul*. This was, in turn, divided between *Robert Danvers* and *Peter Talemasche*, the heirs of Robert le Chevalchesul, and was later given by them to Eynsham, c.1220.

B. 2½ hides of the fee of the family of *Wicham*. *Thomas Caperun* held five virgates under Robert de Wicham and he gave/sold this land to the abbey about the same time {c.1220}.[133]

In 1279, the holdings of Eynsham in Fawler amounted to exactly 15 virgates.[134]

The *terra de Finestoches* {Finstock} was given to Eynsham before 1154-61 by *Radulfus Basset*.[135] These lands were held of *Reginald de Sancto Walerico*,[136] who confirmed Radulfus' gift for payment to him of 10 marks of silver and 2 marks of silver to his son Bernardo.

In 1205, *Peter Thalesmache* quitclaimed to Eynsham half a knight's fee in Finstock.[137] This was confirmed at a meeting of the *royal curia* held at St Bride's, London, June 1205.

A third holding in Finstock was called *Tapwell* and was given to the abbey by the family of Grant.[138]

Under the abbey there were no manorial courts held in either Finstock or Fawler – the inhabitants would have had recourse to those held at Charlbury.

Spelsbury: On 17 June 1305, the abbey grants to the Earl of Warwick ten acres of *waste* in Charlbury, adjacent to his wood in Spelsbury. The earl of the time was Guidoni de Bello Campo. The waste was called *Normanesgrove*, beside the wood of the aforesaid earl's demesne.

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[133] Cart. Eyn. II, p.xxxv
[134] Hundred Rolls, ii, 709
[135] Cart. Eyn. I, no. 70
[136] This is the famous Norman family of *St. Valery*.
[137] Cart. Eyn. I, 183, p.134
[138] See Appendix F: A Secret Monastery within the Manor.