

Wisson Hill, Barton,
Bidford-on-Avon,
Warwickshire

by
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Historical study

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Contents

	List of Illustrations	
1.	Summary	2
2.	Property ownership in Barton	3
3.	Identification of Wisson Hill	9
4.	Thomas and Ann Newsham	10
5.	Wisson Hill in the ‘1910 Domesday’	11
6.	Abbreviations and References	12



Fig. 1. Wisson Hill, Barton (Photo Andy Moir)

Notes: Historic units of land area are: 1 acre = 4 rods; 1 rod = 40 perches; a yardland is a conventional unit of open-field property, probably equivalent to about 40 acre; the term ‘messuage’ refers to a house and usually the land immediately surrounding it. For a glossary and information about interpreting title deeds, see Alcock, 2017.

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*List of Illustrations***Figures**

1.	Wisson Hill, Barton: exterior	1
2.	(a-b): Sketch map of Barton and Marlcliff in 1777; (c) c. 1830 map of Bidford (part).	3
3.	Map of the property of John Slatter in Barton, 1815.	4
4.	Barton in the 1909-10 Valuation Map.	11

1. Summary

This examination of the history of Wisson Hill in Barton, in the parish of Bidford-on-Avon (SP 1082 5120) has been commissioned by Amanda Billingsley, with the particular aim of identifying its ownership in the 18th century and earlier.

The house has previously been identified as owned by Alice Hiller in 1777, succeeded by Maurice Hiller and then John Goodman. The recognition of a sketch inclosure map covering both the allotments and the village closes has confirmed the identification, showing also that Alice Hiller owned three village plots, probably all with houses (though these are not shown on the map). These comprise the plots on both sides of the Stone House: Wisson Hill on the west and that immediately to its east, and a plot at the west of the village, just south of the Barton pub.

Two previous ownerships have been identified, though no original purchase deeds survive. Between 1770 and 1775, Alice Hiller acquired the right to the tithes of Barton and Marlcliff from Sir Francis Skipwith, which was accompanied by a house and one yardland in the open fields, and also a cottage with a few further open-field strips. Prior to this, by 1750, Alice (then Alice Deacon) was the owner of a house and 3½ yardlands at Barton, which can be identified with a freeholding of a house and 3 yardlands in the hands of John Payton listed in a manorial survey in 1670 as paying a chief rent of 4s, although the intermediate owners are unknown. This may also be the property in an earlier survey paying the same chief rent, held by 'Peyton of Barton'.

The specific identification of Wisson Hill as the house of this Peyton holding has been achieved with the help of a partition relating to the Stone House, which names the adjoining house to the east as Mr Kecks (identified as the tenant of the tithe estate) and that to the west as Richard Payton's house.

Evidence for the property owned by Thomas Newsham has shown that it was in Bidford proper, rather than in Barton, so he cannot have been Alice Deacon's predecessor.

In addition, Wisson Hill has been identified in the 1909-10 Valuation records, as in the ownership of Mrs Jane Slater and occupancy of J Gray.

2. Property ownership in Barton

The first undoubted reference to the ownership of Wisson Hill comes from the 1777 Inclosure Award, when the property that later became New Barn Farm was allotted to John Wright as trustee for Alice Hiller. An undated sketch map of Barton and Marlcliff (SCLA, DR203/18) has been identified as a contemporary map of the Inclosure Award.¹ This map (Fig. 1a-b) shows the location of the village closes, though it does not identify which held houses. It can be compared to a map of c. 1830 which does include buildings (Fig. 1c), and also to one of 1815 for the property of ‘John Slatter’, although the latter shows only Wisson Hill as an abuttal on the property of – Goodman Esq (Fig. 3).²

Fig. 2. Sketch map of Barton and Marlcliff in 1777 (SCLA, DR203/18): (a) detail of Barton village (N to bottom); (b) key; (c) c. 1830 map (part) (WCRO, CR797; N to top).



(a)



(c)

N. 1	A. Bacon	2:1:0 = 2:12:6
2	Th. Slatter	0:2:35 = 0:16:63/4
3	Do	1:2:22 = 2:9:0 1/2
4	A. Hiller	0:1:05 = 0:8:3 1/2
5	Do	0:2:30 = 0:15:1
6	A. Slatter	0:0:14 = 0:2:4
7	Do	0:2:35 = 0:15:9 3/4
8	M. Mary Hillwood	0:2:22 = 1:1:9
9	A. Bacon	0:2:01 = 0:13:2 1/2
10	A. Slatter	2:1:39 = 3:6:7 3/4
11	Gavil Pit	0:1:19 = 0:10:9
12	Charity	0:3:30 = 1:0:6 3/4
13	A. Bacon (copyhold)	0:2:26 = 0:17:11
14	R. Sheaf (copyhold)	3:0:22 = 4:4:5 3/4
15	A. Slatter (copyhold)	0:0:25 = 0:3:5 1/4
16	C. W. Walsford	0:0:26 = 0:4:5 3/4
17	A. Slatter	1:3:38 = 2:11:5
	J. Fra. Shipwith	2:2:07 = 3:6:2 1/2
	W. Willis	0:0:14 = 0:1:10
	J. Joiner	0:0:30 = 0:3:1
		0:0:7 = 0:0:11 1/2

¹ It seems that this map represents a draft of the award, since not all the stated areas correspond precisely to the award, and some of the abutments are also inconsistent; however, it was compiled at a stage when the allocation of the inclosure costs had been worked out, since these are shown on the map. What is known as the ‘Bidford Parish Map in tracings (SCLA, DR165/509/12-13) can be identified as WCRO, CR797; unfortunately, the key to the map is lost, but it can be dated to c. 1830. The 1815 map (WCRO, CR 1596/Box 140/4) has a key in WCRO, CR 1596/822 which includes two sets of areas, those of Dempsey (as on the 1815 map) and those of Haynes (as on the c.1830 map), which have been pencilled onto the tracing for the ‘John’ Slatter property.

² The caption for this map firmly states that it relates to the property of John Slatter, although the Land Tax assessments still name his father, Thomas. However, in 1810, John had married Sarah Haywood and the Barton property formed part of the marriage settlement (CR2028/47/3/5a-c) so, even before his father’s death, he would have owned it in reversion.

The c. 1777 map confirms the location of Alice Hiller's house (5), next to the Manor House (7); the areas of (5) and (6+7) correspond well to those specified on the c. 1830 map. It shows a more complicated situation than appears later, with her also owning a second plot of land (4) surrounded by part of the land of Thomas Slatter, and also a small plot west of the Barton road (15). Plot 4 was presumably acquired by John or Thomas Slatter before 1830, when the map show just a single enclosure there.



Fig. 3. Map of the property of John Slatter in Barton, 1815 (WCRO, CR 1596/Box 140/4).

Predecessors of Alice Hiller as owners of Barton properties

It has previously been inferred that Alice Hiller was preceded as owner by Thomas Newsham of Chadshunt, whose 1742 will mentions his estates in (among other places) Bidford and Salford Priors – since a Salford Priors property had been sold by his widow to Henry Deacon, Alice Hiller's first husband. However, further evidence (below) indicates that Thomas Newsham's property was in Bidford itself, rather than Barton (although he held a mortgage on property there). Alice Hiller's predecessors therefore have to be identified by studying all the evidence for ownership of property in Barton (and to some extent in Marcliff).

1777 Inclosure Award

A starting point for ownership in Barton is the 1777 Inclosure Award for the two townships (typescript copy WCRO, Y1/3). This lists the allotments made to the various owners, though it is less helpful than other such awards, since it neither generally indicates the size of their open-field holdings (always expressed in 'yardlands', conventional units of very variable actual size, conventionally of 32 acres), nor does it identify if the properties were freehold or copyhold; this is an important distinction – changes of ownership of copyhold property had to be recorded in the manor court of Bidford. Fortunately, this information can, in part, be retrieved from other sources, in particular from the court rolls for Bidford,

(large numbers surviving as drafts from 1670 to the 1850s). These include several ‘courts of survey’, taken at 10-25 year intervals from 1670 onwards. They provide lists, ostensibly of everyone holding property within the manor (including Barton), although some names are clearly omitted.

The Inclosure Award does state that Barton and Marlcliff together contained 30 yardlands, that Barton contained 626 and Marlcliff 568 acres; in strict proportion, these would correspond to 15¾ and 14¼ yardlands respectively with each yardland of 40 acres, but these figures can only be considered approximate. The allotments are as follows, with the type of tenure and such open-field areas in yardlands [ydl] as are known supplied from the manorial surveys and other sources; the acres allotted related to the actual land each individual owned in the open fields (after deducting the land granted in lieu of tithes), rather than being purely in proportion to their yardlands. Alice Hiller’s allotment at Barton for ‘land’ should correspond to around 4 yardlands:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Allotted</i>	<i>Ydl</i>	<i>Ten</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Barton	a-r-p			[Information from the Award in italics]
Vicar	3-2-32			
John Wright for Alice Hiller	103-1-1			<i>In lieu of tithes</i>
same	87-2-21		F	[for land]
Duchess of Dudley Charity	127-1-30	5	F	5 yardlands in purchase deeds; tithe free
John Slatter	61-0-32	2	F	<i>For 2 ydl called Harwoods</i>
same	52-3-13	2		<i>For 2 ydl called Baylies; 1.5 ydl in 1778</i>
same	25-1-2	¾	C	<i>¾ ydl called Lowlands; 0.75 ydl in 1778</i>
Thomas Slatter	57-0-3	1	F	Quantities from 1770 survey: free
Thomas Slatter		½ + ½	C	Copyhold [F/C combined in award]
Wm Baker & Wm Bacon	62-0-14	3	F	Quantity from 1778 survey
Wm Baker & Wm Bacon	0-2-26		C	A few copyhold strips [1778 survey]
Mary Millward	23-0-28	1	C	Quantity from 1778 survey
Wm Wakefield	7-3-28			Not in 1770-8 surveys
Richard Sheaff	3-0-22			Not in 1770-8 surveys
Earl of Hertford	0-3-34			Not in 1770-8 surveys
Charles Hy Talbot	4-0-8			Not in 1770-8 surveys
Marlcliff				
John Wright for Alice Hiller	75-2-38			<i>In lieu of tithes</i>
John Wright for Alice Hiller	35-2-39			<i>[for land] Inc 4-2-24, to be sold to Lord Harrowby in lieu of his tithes</i>
Vicar	29-3-4			His glebe
Duchess of Dudley Charity	192-3-5	4¾		Quantity from 1778 survey
John Head	126-0-4	3		Quantity from 1770-8 surveys
John Ward	68-2-30	1¼		Quantity from 1770-8 surveys
John Rice	7-0-32			for ‘Chappel Lands’
Thos Beesley & others	1-1-25			Not in 1770-8 surveys
Lord Harrowby	13-1-10			Not in 1770-8 surveys

The numerous courts of survey for the Manor of Bidford (including Barton and Marlcliff) typically list holdings totalling 8¼ to 8¾ yardlands in Barton, thus must be missing some 7 or 8 yardlands. One Barton property invariably omitted from the surveys is that held by the Duchess of Dudley's Charity, although its holding in Marlcliff is included. Fortunately a very extensive set of deeds for the charity (SCLA, DR 18/2) shows that the Marlcliff property comprised 4¾ yardlands, freehold, as stated in the manorial surveys. The Barton property comprised a cottage and 5 yardlands, which was part of the manor of Bidford Grange; this was distinct from the manor of Bidford, so the charity land should indeed have been omitted from the manorial surveys.

There seems to have been a second manor of Barton, bought in 1758 by John Slatter,³ and any property associated with this manor would presumably also not be included in the Bidford manorial surveys. One such omission is the holding of William Wakefield, perhaps ¼ yardland, and another is that of Alice Hiller/Deacon, though this is mentioned once (see below), so may not have been associated with this other manor.

The tithe estate

A further omission from the manorial surveys is for properties owned directly by Sir Fulwar Skipwith and his successors, the lords of the manor, thus not held either as copyholds or freeholds. These are recorded in rentals from 1706 onwards, and in a survey of c. 1730.⁴ For Barton, the survey lists (a) Thomas Payton, tenant of a house, backside, a little close called Glebe Close and one yardland called the Glebe land, with the tithes of Barton, rent £99 4s; (b) John London, a house and some odd 'lands' [strips], rent £1 14s; for Marlcliff, John Ainge, a house and adjoining little close, 1¼ yardland and the tithes of Marlcliff, rent £69; the tithes of Bidford itself and 3 yardlands (in Bidford itself) known as the Glebe Land were held by another tenant.

Inclusion of the tithes is particularly significant, since the tithes in Barton and Marlcliff are shown by the Inclosure Award to have been owned by Alice Hiller in 1777. The *Victoria County History* states that the tithes for Bidford were bought by Skipwith in 1708 from Elizabeth Chute, confirmed by a Chancery case of 1706 (TNA, C 5/231/20) in which she sued Skipwith for failing to complete the agreed purchase. The ownership thereafter can be followed through a series of Skipwith settlements and mortgages (WCRO, CR1596/box 132/2).⁵ Deeds of 1729 and 1734 give the same details of the Barton and Marlcliff tithe estate as the c. 1730 survey. A deed of 1770 has a long recital of earlier deeds, and also of an Act of Parliament of 1739/40 allowing part of Sir Francis Skipwith's settled estate (including the Barton and Marlcliff tithes) to be sold to pay his debts. Presumably the tithes and the associated house and yardland in Barton were sold to Alice Hiller soon after this. The sale must have taken place before 1775, since Mr Hiller is listed as the owner in the first Land Tax assessment.⁶ Since the Skipwiths received no significant allotment at enclosure and are not shown on the 1777 map (Fig. 1a-b), we can be confident that the sale included the houses and yardlands in the open fields, as well as the right to the tithes.

³ Deeds in WCRO, CR2028/22/2/9; 11-13; CR2028/22/3/4-8 CR2028/21/2/5-8.

⁴ WCRO, CR2028/1/1 [rentals, 1706-27]; CR114A/93 [1710 rental and c. 1730 survey].

⁵ Copies of these deeds were held by the Slatter family, probably in relation to their purchase of property in Salford from Sir Thomas Skipwith in 1788 (SCLA, DR165/493/2).

⁶ The 1770 deed transferred the property to trustees, so that the settlement could be discharged and then part of the estate was mortgaged, while other parts including the Barton tithes must have been sold.

Earlier history of the tithe estate

The yardland in Barton is included in the manorial surveys of 1670-1697 (WCRO, CR2028/18/1; CR2028/50/7/2), when it is described as a freehold, the property of Chaloner (1670-80) or Thomas (1697) Chute, paying a chief rent of 8d. Naturally, by 1725 this rent had disappeared, since the yardland then belonged to the Skipwiths.

The tithes were in the hands of Chaloner Chute (I) in 1646 (*VCH*), and a number of references to the family's ownership have come to light.⁷ The family was established at The Vyne in Hampshire, but the family archive (Hampshire Record Office, 31M57) apparently includes only one document relating to the Bidford tithes (31M57/804). A Chancery suit of 1659 between Thomas Levington and Chaloner Chute (II) (TNA, C 10/62/61) refers to a 1656 mortgage by CC(I & II) of land in Staffordshire and the Bidford Rectory, including the tithes and a yardland in Barton in the tenure of Thomas Kecke. The case also includes a response from Anthony Kecke, brother of Thomas, saying that he had no deeds nor any interest in the property. A Chancery case in 1681 (*Dorothy Lady Dacre v. Chaloner Chute (II)*; TNA, C 10/209/28) also mentions the Rectory, but does not provide any further details of the property itself.

The one document in the Chute archive is a recital of transactions involving Bidford Rectory, probably relating to a private Act of Parliament in 1705 (4 & 5 Anne, c. 1), permitting the sale of the late Thomas Chute's settled estate in Warwickshire and the purchase of property nearer the family's home in Norfolk; this preceded the sale to Skipwith. The deeds listed are 27-8 Sep 1686, a mortgage to one Henry Barker and 1-2 Sep 1687, the marriage settlement for Thomas Chute and Elizabeth Kevett, widow (daughter of Anthony Kecke), settling the rectory. The first deed describes the property as comprising the rectory and all tithes in Bidford, Barton, Marlcleeve, Broom, Wixford and Exhall, and a yardland of glebe and also a messuage and yardland in Barton.

For the previous owners of the tithes, the *Victoria County History* is somewhat vague, but some additional references have come to light. Before the Dissolution, the right to the tithes belonged to Kenilworth Abbey, and in 1529 they had leased them to Eustace Kyghtley (or Kightly) of Broom.⁸ The Kightlys seem to have continued as lessees until 1581, when the rectory and tithes were granted to Edmund Downing and Peter Ashton, who were probably acting for Philip Kightly as final purchaser.⁹ The latter sold them to Rice Griffith(s) in 1593, in exchange for cancelling a debt of £2,000, and Griffiths in turn mortgaged them to John Sedley in 1602;¹⁰ this apparently became an outright sale in 1607 (*VCH*). Intriguingly, in 1600, he had made a 1,000 year lease of the tithes to Robert Winter, John Reade and

⁷ Several successive members of the Chute family had Chaloner [or Challoner] as their Christian names, named after Ursula Challoner mother of CC (I). Most were lawyers and politicians of some note. Chaloner Chute (I) (1595-1659) must have been the owner in 1646, since his son, CC (II) was only 14.

⁸ This is an example of tithes being impropriated, with the right to the tithes and the associated property taken in hand by a monastery; the right passed to the Crown at the Dissolution and, as here, was then often sold to a lay person.

⁹ Downing and Ashton received a Crown grant of numerous properties including Bidford Rectory by Letters Patent on 27 Oct 1581 (Cal. Patent Rolls, Eliz, Vol. 8, 23 Eliz, no. 23. The grant was subject to a rent of £5 10s to the Crown and to a stipend to the curate of Henley in Arden (recorded in 1650 in TNA, E 367/1842).

¹⁰ These two transactions are recorded in abstracts of deeds enrolled on the Close Rolls (SCLA, DR 31, under Bidford); neither of the enrolled copies themselves have been examined.

Robert Webb – this Robert Winter was one of the chief conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, who thus at one time owned the Barton tithing property.¹¹ A Chancery case of 1619, *Sir John Sedley, Bart. v. Sir Rice Griffith*, relates to this sale and leases concealed by Griffith.¹² The Sedleys seem to have sold up in 1630, which is possibly when Chaloner Chute (I) acquired the tithes, although this is not confirmed by any documents; nor is it clear why he would have been interested in property located so far away from his home in Chiswick, London.

*Other property of Alice Deacon/Hiller*¹³

The yardland in Marlcliff that the Skiptons owned corresponds reasonably well to the 35 acres Alice Hiller was allotted there at inclosure. However, the single yardland at Barton is not enough to account for the 87 acres she was allotted for her holding in the open fields. She is not mentioned in either of the manorial surveys taken in 1770 and 1779, but the court for 1750 (CR2028/18/2) includes:

Alice Deacon the wife of Henry Deacon [later Alice Hiller] claims to hold a messuage and 3¾ yardlands in Barton, rent and heriot [inheritance dues] unknown.

This amount of land would correspond reasonably well with the amount that seems to be missing when the 8¼ yardlands listed in the later manorial surveys is compared with the information in the Inclosure Award.

What appears to be Alice's ownership can be identified by comparing the manorial surveys for 1670 (CR2028/18/1) and 1680 (CR2028/50/7/2), which list respectively holdings totalling 12 and 8¾ yardlands. This immediately reveals one major holding omitted from the later survey:

John Payton, junior, holding a messuage and 3 yardlands freehold, rent 4s.

Since the later surveys list almost the number of yardlands as in 1680 (apart from the inclusion of Alice Deacon in 1750), it is reasonable to deduce that this 3-yardland property corresponds to the largest part of her holding. It was presumably sold by John Payton between 1670 and 1680, possibly to the Skipwiths, which would account for its disappearance from the manorial surveys, though if so it must have been resold before 1707, since it is not listed in their rentals.

The naming of Alice Deacon in the 1750 survey and also in the Inclosure Award is significant, since it identifies her as the owner in her own right, not as successor to her husband Henry Deacon, who did bequeath his real estate to her, when he died in 1756-7. It is not immediately obvious how she might have become the owner (no doubt as in 1777, with a trustee holding the property on her behalf). One possibility would be that she had been bequeathed the property; it had more probably been bought for her, since she received a legacy of £1,000 was left to trustees the will of her father, Christopher Cass to buy property for her (will proved 24 October 1734).

¹¹ Recorded in an inquisition taken following Winter's attainder (TNA, E 178/4006). This was presumably a mortgage, although not so stated in the abstract. It is described in the 1619 *Sedley v. Griffiths* Chancery case (next note), as a 'concealed lease'

¹² TNA, E 134/17Jas1/Hil13 [not seen].

¹³ Alice Hiller was the daughter of Christopher Cass, an outstanding London mason/sculptor, and his wife Alice, born in about 1705. In 1730, she married Henry Deacon, a London wine merchant; he came from Oare in the parish of Wilcot, Wiltshire, where they later lived, and he bought the manor of Oare in 1742 (VCH Wilts, vol. 10). Henry died in 1757, and in 1764, Alice married Maurice Hiller, also from Wiltshire. She died in 1791, and he in 1796.

Peyton property

The 3-yardland freeholding was not the only Payton property in Barton in 1670. John Payton the younger also held a copyhold messuage and yardland (rent 2s 10d), and John Payton the elder had two copyhold properties, one of two messuages and a yardland (2s 10d), the other of one messuage and a half yardland (1s 5d). By the time of the 1680 survey, the elder John had died, and his messuages had passed to John Harwood (paying 4s 3d), while the younger is listed with only the copyhold messuage. The will of the elder John Payton (proved 9 May 1673, TNA, PROB 11/342/51) reveals that he was the uncle of the other John; he left the house where he dwelt and 1½ yardlands in Barton to the younger John's sister Margery (who married John Harwood on 30 Dec 1673). One other Payton, Richard, held a freehold messuage and 1½ yardland in 1670; he was buried on 1st July 1673, and this holding had passed to William Payton by 1680. Thus, it is only John Payton the younger's three yardlands which were omitted from the 1680 survey. Confusingly, in the 1697 survey, John Payton is listed with a holding of 2 messuages and 3 yardlands, but this must be distinct from the 3 yardland holding that disappears after 1670, since it can be followed in the later surveys. It became the Bacon and Baker holding (Inclosure Award), through the marriages, both in 1723, of Ann Payton with William Bacon, and Elizabeth Payton with Richard Baker.¹⁴

The Payton family had been living in Barton since before 1555 and a series of wills survive (Worcestershire Record Office and TNA), starting with that of Richard Payton of 'Berton' (1555); his heir was his brother, William. However, apart from the will of John Payton mentioned above, only that of a later William (TNA, 1651) mentions any property; he left his son Richard a house and two yardlands in Barton that he had bought from Thomas and Richard Hiern; although the quantity doesn't match precisely, this was presumably the property that Richard held in 1670.

Two 16th century rentals survive for Bidford and Barton, though neither give very full details. That taken in 1565 (SCLA, DR5/3405) is the clearer, listing six payments for property in Barton. Only one is for a member of the Payton family

Of Peyton of Barton for lands of Mr Bushell (apparently the former owner) in Barton [rent] 4s.

The 1575 rental (SCLA, ER24/6) also lists one item for William Payton, for 'certain lands' in Barton, but the rent is smudged and is unreadable.

It is tempting to identify the property recorded in 1565 with the three yardlands paying a rent of 4s in 1670, but the property market in Bidford was clearly quite active, so this cannot be considered fully confirmed. Even if correct, how it came into the hands of John Payton the younger is unknown, as is the identity of 'Mr Bushell'. Apart from one slightly earlier court roll (SCLA, DR5/2187, 1559), no earlier 16th century Bidford manorial documents are known, that might provide further information.

3. Identification of Wisson Hill

The evidence just examined shows Alice Hiller owning a messuage with a yardland and a cottage, acquired with the tithes, and a messuage with ¾ yardlands acquired before 1750. Very unexpectedly, it is possible to identify precisely which of these corresponds to Wisson Hill. Many Slatter deeds relate to Barton, though they are rather disordered. They can be arranged into series for six distinct properties, one of which, for a messuage and one yardland in Barton, runs from 1609 to 1786 (CR2028/24/2/1/1-13). This was bought by Edmond Bartlett in 1609 and passed to his son (?) Thomas in 1651. Anne Bartlett, one of the latter's daughters, married Thomas Harbidge who eventually obtained the whole

¹⁴ A series of deeds running from 1589 to 1763 (WCRO, CR2028/22/3/1-3; 9) seem to relate to the Baker/Bacon holding, it was bought by Thomas Slatter in 1808.

property. By 1720, it was in the hands of Thomas Slatter, settled on trustees in his marriage settlement, and it can be recognised in the manorial surveys as a freehold messuage and 1 yardland held by Thomas Harbage, paying a rent of 3s (1670-97), that has passed to Thomas Slatter by 1725.

In 1663, this property was the subject of a dispute between Thomas and Anne Harbidge and Humfry Fairfax and Eleanor his wife, who was the widow of Thomas Bartlett. The latter had obtained a judgement on a ‘writ of dower’, that she was entitled to a third of the property for her life, as her dower. An agreement on 28th April 1663 (CR2028/24/2/1/5b) set out her portion in a terrier (schedule of property), and a separate terrier (/5a) lists another third, presumably Anne’s; the final third must have belonged to another daughter, whose name is unknown. However, in December 1663, the Fairfaxes sold their life interest in Eleanor’s share to Thomas and Anne (with her terrier repeated), and the whole must have been reunited before it passed to Thomas Slatter.

As well as listing the strips in the open fields, the two terriers describe how the house was to be divided. Humfrey and Eleanor were to have four rooms (two ground floor and two above) next to Richard Paytons, and ‘the west part of the backside, the well yard, well and garden and all trees next to Richard Paytons backside; another portion (probably that of Thomas and Anne) comprised the kitchen and another room, with two rooms above them, the east part of the backside ‘as allotted and set forth with the trees and apple tree next Mr Keckes house’. Presumably the third share comprised the middle of the house and backside.

Thus, these terriers describe three houses in an east-west row in Barton, with the central one later belonging to Thomas Slatter. Comparing this with the 1777 map (Fig. 2), these can only be plots 4, 3(part) and 5.¹⁵ Mr Kecke, holding the easternmost house is identifiable from the 1659 law suit referred to above as the tenant of Chaloner Chope’s yardland. As part of the tithe estate, by 1777 this was indeed in the ownership of Anne Hiller; although we have no direct links for it, the house and land held by John London in 1730 as part of the tithe estate must surely be plot 15, where the name Goodman is marked in 1815.

Thus, Wisson Hill is the westernmost of the three described in 1663, so must be the house associated with Alice Hiller’s main property.¹⁶

4. Thomas and Ann Newsham

Thomas Newsham’s will mentions property in Bidford, but the court records indicate that this lay in Bidford proper, rather than Barton. He did, however, hold a mortgage on Thomas Slatter’s Barton property (a messuage, a barn and 2 * ½ yardlands). The identified references are given in the table below. The one substantial freehold farm (in Bidford) was bought in 1736 and then sold in 1763; this farm was probably that tenanted by John Hurst.

Table 2: Property of Thomas Newsham in Bidford

<i>Date</i>	<i>Details (all from DR203/1 unless otherwise noted)</i>
1729, 25 Apr	Conditional surrender by Richard Brandis, brother/heir of John Brandis, and Ralph Huband and Mary his wife, of moiety of messuage & 2 ydl called Yardling Holt lands, to Thomas Newsham [presumably this was not redeemed].
1732, 7 Oct	Thomas Slatter and Ann for (a) £120 and (b) £30, conditional surrenders to Thomas Newsham of (a) messuage & ½ yardland & (b) barn & ½ yardland.

¹⁵ The north side of the street has only two house sites, whose history is known, belonging respectively to Bacon and Millward.

¹⁶ Unexpectedly Richard Payton is named, rather than John; he may have been the occupier rather than the owner (as for Mr Keck).

Date	Details (all from DR203/1 unless otherwise noted)
1743, 12 Oct; 1744, 26 Oct	Death of Thomas Newsham presented, holding messuage & 2 yardlands called 'Yardling Holt lands', Ann, his widow holds in reversion for life; Clement Newsham, his eldest son, is heir; Also seized of a messuage & ½ yardland & a barn & ½ yardland in Barton, held conditionally as a mortgage
1732- 63	Deeds (WCRO, CR114A/95) for part freehold/part 3000-year leasehold property in Bidford, bought in 1736 by Thomas Newsham of Warwick, and sold in 1763 to Charles Henry Talbot; then in 1815 to the Marquess of Hertford. In /93 & /94, docs for Newsham copyhold, surrendered by Clement Newsham in 1778.

5. Wisson Hill in the '1910 Domesday'

Following the 1909-10 Finance Act (the Budget), an *Increment Value Tax* was imposed, which required all property in the country to be valued. The records arising from this valuation, are particularly informative for house history, comprising the maps showing the 'hereditament numbers', the Field Books with property descriptions, and the 'Domesday' Books summarising the valuations (WCRO, CR1978/1/2).¹⁷ The map sheet (Fig. 4) identifies Wisson Hill as Hereditament 1668, which included also the orchard further east on Welford Road (OS 436). Surprisingly, the map shows Wisson Hill and the adjoining 'Stone House' as part of the same property, although in both the 1870 and 1925 sale maps, the two are separate. It also shows the forecourt to the west of the house as part of the Manor House (hereditament 1646).¹⁸

The Field Book (Fig. 5) identifies hereditament 1668 as owned by Mrs Jane Slatter, occupied by Mr J Grey, and describes the house as:

Partly stone & partly brick and tiled, containing Dining & Drawing Rooms, Pantry and 3 Bedrooms, wash-house, also red B[brick] & corrugated cowshed. Cart hovel.

It also records (under Hereditament 1495), that nos. 1495, 1667 and 1668 (and 166-8 in Welford) had been sold in March 1907 for £2,000 (for one half share).

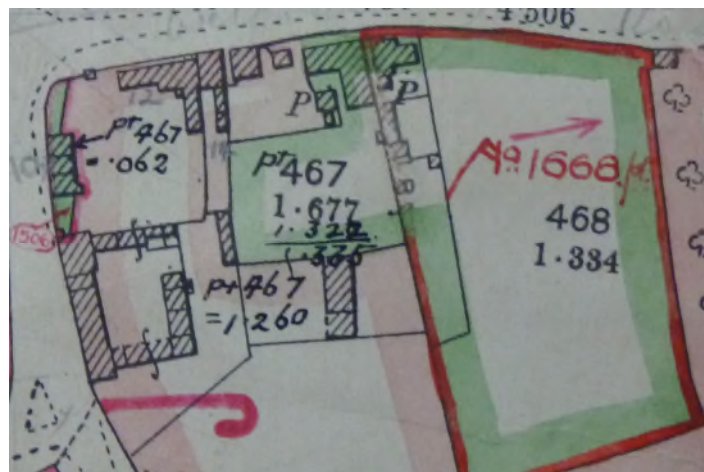


Fig. 4. Barton in the 1909-10 Valuation Map (TNA, IR129/8/202).

¹⁷ Another national source, the 1942 Farm Surveys proved not to be useful, since by this date the house had been separated from the farmland.

¹⁸ Although the map is clear, it is possibly incorrect, since the Field Book for no. 1646 has a sketch plan of the Manor House which does not include the part adjoining Wisson Hill.

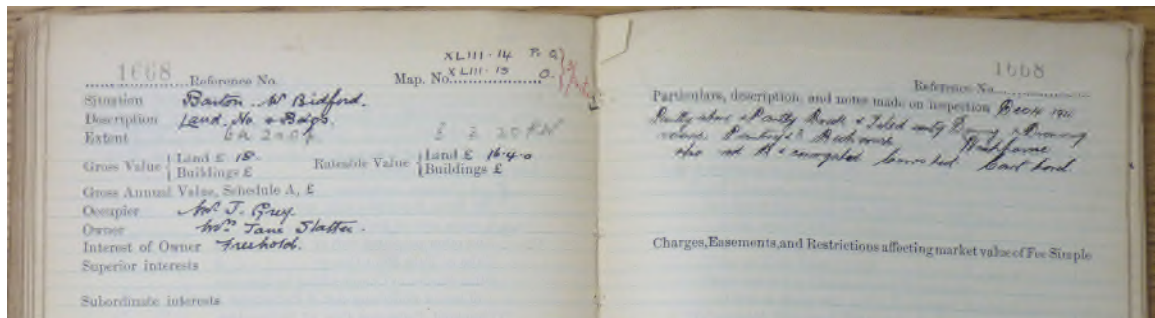


Fig. 5. Wisson Hill (hereditament 1668) in 1909-10 Field Book (TNA, IR58/89167).

The Field Book information has led to the identification of what should be the correct 1910 Census record, though it is in the name of Charles Field, 'for Mr Gray'. Robert Gray had been living in Barton since at least 1861 until his death in 1903, and he had children John and James; presumably one of these is Mr J. Gray. However, both Gray and the previous person in the Census listing, Gerald Thesiger, are listed as being at 'Barton House', so the latter may possibly have lived at Wisson Hill, with Robert Gray at the Stone House.

6. Abbreviations and References

SCLA Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon

TNA The National Archives (Public Record Office)

VCH *Victoria County History*, vol * (19*)

WCRO Warwickshire County Record Office

Nat Alcock, *Tracing History through Title Deeds*, National Archives and Pen & Sword, 2017.