BRIZE NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

APPENDIX 06

DOCUMENT I

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VILLAGE HISTORY

"our village our community our future"

DOCUMENT I

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Section 1 *History of the village*

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HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

PRE-DOCUMENTATION

The village of Brize Norton has been recorded since the Doomsday Book in 1086, however, evidence from numerous aspects shows that there were settlements here before then.

Archaeological evidence shows that there have been settlements here well before the Doomsday Book. Neolithic farming tools have been found to the east of Astrop and Romano-British pottery shards to the west. A 7th or 8th century burial site was also found near Astrop which included a human skeleton with an iron knife. However, one discovery allows for a much more accurate dating, a gold coin with the ruler Epaticcus on it, dates the area to AD30.

Referring to the etymology, many of the village names derive from Saxon origins. Astrop is derived from 'As' and 'Thropp', which is old Saxon for East and Village respectively. This naming convention by Saxons was common, so shows that Astrop was the eastern satellite settlement to the primary settlement of the area: Brize Norton. The name Norton is also thought to be of a similar Saxon makeup: Not Tun, being the North Town to Bampton, a known religious and royal powerhouse in the area during Saxon times.

Transport links were very important too. In Roman times, there was a road that linked Cirencester and Alchester (near Bicester). This ran from south west to north east, just north of the Parish boundary and was known as Ackerman Street. The Anglo-Saxons then added a road to make the gravel pits in the north of Brize Norton more accessible.

DOOMSDAY TO MID-17th CENTURY

In 1086, the Doomsday Book recorded Brize Norton as solely Nortone and was under the control of Roger d' Ivri. There were 48 people split into 39 households, and 16 taxable Geld units. A Geld was an Anglo-Saxon tax that the Normans continued with and it taxed the Hides of the area, a Hide being a standard area that could support one household (about 120 acres). This meant that at the time, Nortone was a very large village.

By the 1200s, the village had become known as Norton Brun, after the Brun family, the manorial family, which was based in the north of the village (now thought to be the Manor House on Manor Road, although this cannot be confirmed). By the end of the century, Norton Brun had also become Brunesnorton. The names would change through the ages until about the mid-17th century.

St Britius church, originally of Norman construction, was upgraded in the 13th Century. The Norman nave and chancel gained an additional north isle and tower.

In the Middle Ages, the village diversified into gravel. Several quarries opened to extract both gravel and stone, particularly in the North of the village. Evidence of this is visible today in both the geography of the land (now in private hands) and the naming of the public house, The Masons Arms.

1800s TO PRESENT

Thanks to accurate maps and improved record keeping, details of the village improve from the 1800s onwards. In 1811, William Standley's map of Brize Norton (so named now) shows the village as a linear settlement spread out along what is now Burford Road, Manor Road and Station Road, in three definite areas, situated around the three pubs at the time: The Masons Arms, The Chequers and The Carpenters Arms (now The Carpenters B&B).

Ownership of land had changed over the years. The manorial family was replaced with other landowners, specifically, Christ Church College Oxford who remain prominent land owners to this day.

PUBLIC HOUSES

There are currently three buildings in the village that either are or were public houses:-

1. The Axe and Compass which dates from 1782. In 1842 it became known as The Carpenters and in 1991, it became a B&B.
2. The Chequers which dates from 1774.
3. The Mason's Arms which dates from 1881.

However, according to 'British History On line', in 1774, there were three named public houses in the village: -

1. The Crown (1774 – 1782).
2. The Orange Tree (1774 - ?)'
3. The Chequers (1774 to present).

The Chequers still stands in the village today but unfortunately, the location of The Orange Tree is unidentified. However, it is known that The Crown stood at the north end of the village at the south end of Ting Tang Lane. Today, the south end of Ting Tang Lane is located at the junction of Minster Road, Brize Norton Road and Monahan Way. However, referring to the map below from the 1911 Ordnance Survey Civil Parish Boundary Map, it can be seen that Ting Tang Lane actually ran further south to Chapel Hill. A lane then ran eastwards towards Astrop Farm and finally south east on Abingdon Lane, all of which were part of a drovers trail between Worsham Mill and Abingdon.

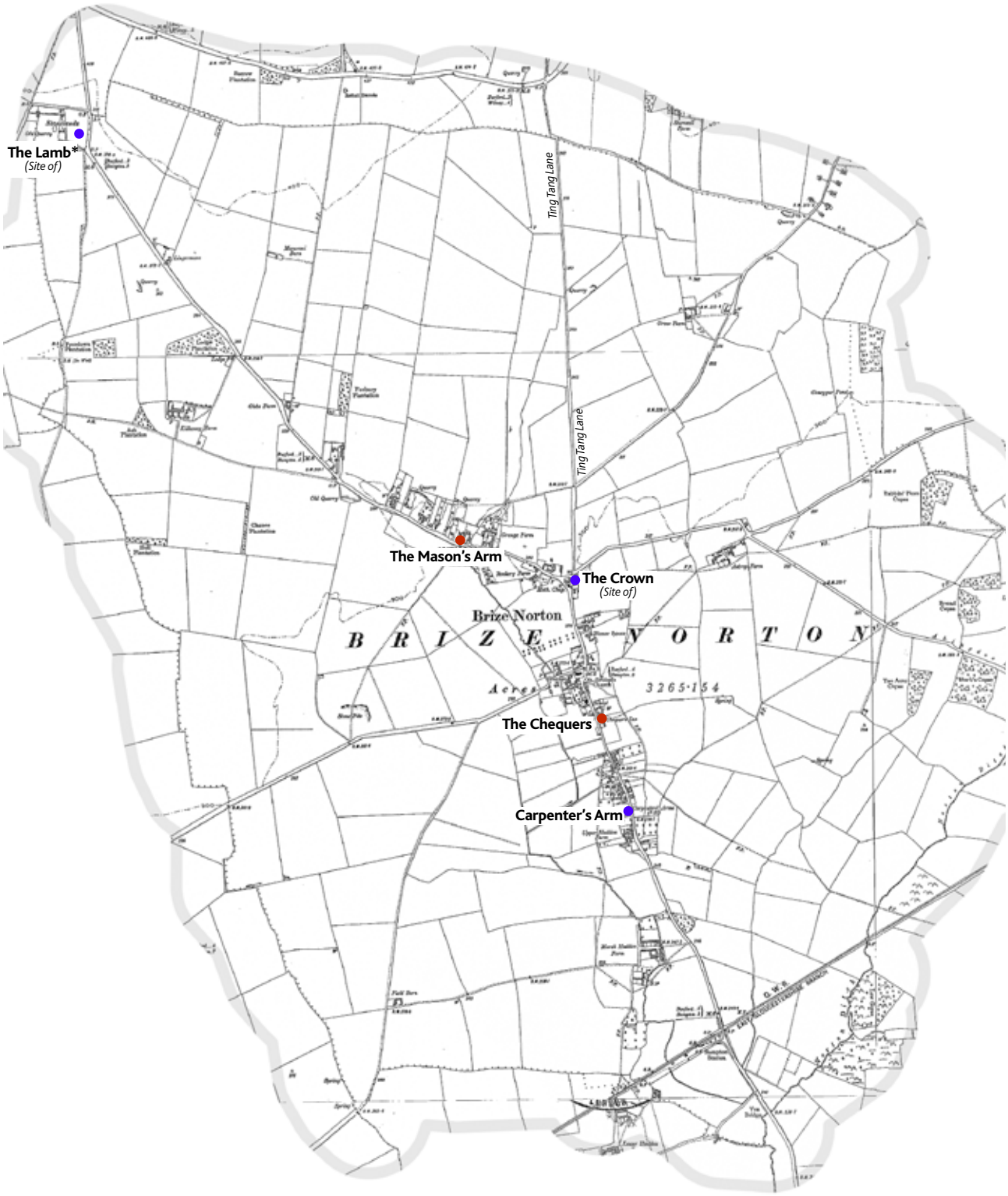
Whilst researching the deeds of The Cottage, a building which stands on the east side of Chapel Hill, it was discovered that this converted malthouse was at one time, a public house. From this data, it can be deduced that this is the location of The Crown public house.

The Masons Arms in Burford Road and the Chequers in Station Road (north), are the last two surviving and working public houses. The Chequers is first recorded in 1774 and was used to hold numerous meetings and auctions in the village. In 1881, The Masons Arms was opened by Thomas Akers, a renowned beer seller of the time. The Axe and Compass in Station Road (south) was first recorded in 1782 but it was renamed The Carpenters Arms in 1846, although it was still known locally as "The Axe". It also held meetings and auctions. It became a B&B in 1991 and the long adjoining building running northwards, which was the original skittle alley, is now used as a separate dwelling.



Carpenters Arms - 'The Axe'

Public Houses through the ages - Map ref 30



Brize Norton 1911 Civil Parish Boundary

* In 1753 an Inn license was granted and renamed The Lamb, (this assumes that a public house of sorts already existed on this site). It was renamed The George in 1782, The Fox in 1783-4 and The Shakespeare Head in 1791. The actual site of this notoriuos dwelling is unclear.

DEVELOPMENT

Since the Doomsday book, the village has grown and engulfed other settlements. The modern village is actually a combination of Brize Norton, Astrop and Marsh Haddon. It has been argued that Caswell Farm was associated with Brize Norton, but its geographical location would have it more as a stand-alone settlement/ farm by modern standards and is now part of Curbridge.

Astrop was an independent settlement in 1086 and expanded into a budding hamlet soon after in 1316. However, records cease to exist in the Middle Ages. Astrop is now a farm to the north east of the village on the Brize Norton to Curbridge road.

Marsh Haddon was actually two hamlets combined into one. Found to the south of the village, Marsh Haddon has its roots in Anglo-Saxon times like the other settlements in the local area. 'Marsh' referred to an area of common land and 'Haddon' means "uncultivated hill slope". Although Marsh Haddon was linked to Brize Norton, and Lower Haddon was linked to Bampton, they were finally combined in the 16th century into one manorial estate. In 1937, much of Marsh Haddon's land was acquired by the MOD and levelled. Marsh Haddon and its adjoining cottages were demolished in 1943 to make way for a new runway extension.





Marsh Haddon + Upper Haddon Farms

The village originally grew up around the main revenues or hubs of the time; the gravel pits to the north from Saxon times and onwards, the church in the centre from a similar period, and the manorial farms in the south. The layout of the village remained unchanged until the growth of the first developments around the village in the 1800s. The buildings in this period were constructed out of locally sourced materials and these form the majority of the older buildings seen today in the village.

The next style of development commenced in 1926 and continued after the end of WWII which saw the introduction of 'Council' (Local Authority) housing as well as a few private houses. Although these buildings were built to the conventional style for this period, they gave no consideration to follow, or complement, the style and character of the original village.

From the 1970's onwards, more private developments occurred replacing orchards and back land with small housing estates, which has virtually closed all the open spaces which were evident in the original village layout especially between the church and the south entrance to the village.

It is a combination of these three time periods (pre 1926, 1926 to 1971 and 1972 to present) that is most evident when looking at the village architecture today.

EDUCATION

As with many other aspects of Brize Norton, there are very few records of the education before the 1800s. in 1725, there was provision for someone to teach the poor children of the village basic reading, writing and arithmetic. This responsibility was passed to the church towards the middle of the century. Two private schools appeared in the early 1800s, but standards were low. By 1819, education in the village was deemed 'insufficient'. By 1824, children were taught to read and basic mathematics, but not how to write. The girls were taught to sew instead. If villagers wanted to educate their children, they would have to pay for it.

Between 1860 and 1870, the then vicar George Fereman tried to build a school for the village. He managed to acquire both the land and the funds, but the project did not come to fruition..

However, in 1874, a school board was created to build a new school.. Whether they were inspired by the vicar or built on his original works is unknown. The school opened its doors on 8th May 1876. Built by Joseph Timms using stone from the family quarry in Burford Road, the new Tudor Gothic style building could hold 123 children, which were split into three classes. Attendance was low at first, with only 15 registered children in 1878, but that increased until it reached 105 in 1907. Numbers then declined as two World Wars took their toll, but numbers were still steady in WWII as evacuee children and teachers came from East Ham. In recent years, a new extension was built in 2006 and the school still thrives today. It was awarded an Outstanding rating by Ofsted in the last review in 2013.



Primary School pupils - 1950s

Later in the century, the East Gloucestershire Railway (EGR) had a train line installed from Witney to Fairford with the intention of linking to Lechlade. The station was sited between Brize Norton and Bampton and was originally called Bampton Station. However, with the opening of RAF Brize Norton in 1937, it was renamed Brize Norton and Bampton. The station had such an impact on the local population that they renamed the ancient road that ran from Bampton to Brize Norton from Bampton Road to Station Road.



Railway station - 1920/30

Alas, the railway line was a victim of the Beeching Cuts in the 1960s, and the line closed. Whilst some at the time criticised the decision to close the line, Beeching claimed that as the line had yet to be finished, it was not operating efficiently. The area which was the station and goods yard, is now Viscount Court, the business estate at the south of the Parish. The old bridges and foot prints of the tracks are still visible today between Curbridge and Brize Norton.

In the early 19th century, the census shows that the village was predominantly agricultural in nature with elements of stone work still in existence. 120 labourers, 11 plough boys and 11 masons called the village home, but that was to all change in the next 100 years, starting with the creation of Carterton.

In 1902, William Carter bought a 740-acre parcel of land, acting as a prospector for the Marlborough's estate. The town of Carterton, which was named after him and started around Rock Farm and grew from there.

In 1937, the RAF arrived at Brize Norton and a full history can be found in Document J. [1]

POLITICS

Politically, except for the airbase, the village of Brize Norton has stayed out of the limelight, with very few notable additions to history, and those that have not always been on the right side. In 1329, three men from Brize Norton joined the rebel Henry, Earl of Lancaster only to be defeated in Bedford by Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. In 1643, Royalist troops were stationed in Brize Norton during the English Civil War, one of them being a local man, who was then killed at the battle of Preston in 1648.

[1] Appendix 06 Document H Section 1 RAF Brize Norton