

Benny

The Archive index has this listed
as PE22. What I am looking for
(marked PE23 in the index) is "Memories
of WW2 by Alvin Marston."

Do you have "Responses: Lands & People"
on computer? If not, I will email it to
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Ringmore: Lands and People

Land is vital to human existence. It gives space to live in, food to sustain us and wealth from its depths. Land helps to stabilise and circulate the elements that refresh all alike. And yet we take all this for granted.

It is fashionable nowadays to seek family roots, to work out a family tree and discover where our ancestors had their piece of land and how they used it, whether town house with garden front and back or a dwelling in the country with wide open spaces.

How did the land of Ringmore and its surrounding Parish come to be as it is and get occupied? Was it planned or did it just happen? What pressures and necessities fashioned it? Was this lovely village we live in subject to purposeful design or did it just happen?

It would be good to be able to answer all these questions, but our sources are not sufficient at present to do more than emphasise certain periods, although it is reasonable to accept as possibilities ideas from places which have more copious and detailed sources to enable one to picture the foundations of the present day land around us.

Beginnings

We do not need to linger over the hundreds of thousands of years it has taken for the processes of nature to throw up the coastline, streams, hills and valleys that we know. Our rocky shore contains tilted layers of slate, hundreds of thousands of years old, which contain fossils and crinoids to be seen. Some of the earliest forms of life.

Less distant in time, some 25,000 years ago, the sea level was 500 feet lower than today. Britain was part of the European land mass until about 7,000 years ago, when our last land bridges in the south-east finally disappeared. We were then on our own and the land was thickly covered with primeval forest which was occupied by wild animals such as the spotted hyena, mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers! These creatures were food for Neanderthal men and women who were hunter-gatherers and seldom settled, yet got together for shelter at cave sites (Old Stone Age, a very long period up to 4000 BC). The nearest of such sites to us were the Mitnor Cave and Kitley Caves. These hunter-gatherers were in these forest lands, but seldom seen, rather like the Wandorobo in the mountain forests of Kenya (or the Pygmies of Congo. Their feet no doubt have trodden where we live.

They were followed by Neolithic people (New Stone Age) who had a definable technology in flint and stone, and started clearing the forests 4,000 years BC and settling in family clusters (and were around to mix with the Bronze Age invasion about 2000 BC).

A person standing on Ugborough Beacon and looking towards the sea, with the intervening land covered with thick forest down to the sea shore, that would be what our Neolithic man who found himself standing at what we now call Toby's Point would have seen. The headlands might have been wind-swept, but below him our beach would have been thick forest. Submerged forests have been discovered all along our south

coast – Dartmouth, Salcombe, Thurlestone. The latest dating is 6305 BP, plus or minus 50 years off the Erme Estuary.

These Neolithic people had a developing form of agriculture and brought their type of cereal seed, which they had developed from grass seed, spelt (.....), emmer (.....), einkorn (.....), wheat, club wheat and domesticated animals. They made small clearings in the forests.

Then, around 1900 BC, the Beaker people came from Brittany and found Dartmoor habitable and colonised it. These folk may have landed along our coast and taken the "ridge" road to the moor – the valley sides were still thickly wooded and the rivers wound their way through marshy valley bottoms. Bronze was still limited to those who could afford it, and so cultivation was still mainly primitive (wooden or stone) hoe work. The Celts arrived from the continent in the Late Bronze Age (about 750 BC) and brought the first simple ploughs.

During all this long period, various types of people were mixing together. Roaming as freely as their family groups could move and other groups allowed. Simple forts and protected family settlements were appearing. Except on Dartmoor, materials used were "environmentally friendly" – in other words easily broke down into material absorbed into the soil and enriching it. For this reason we have in our Parish area no sign of these early peoples and animals, although a few may have encamped against friendly rock faces and created their own "gardens" from which to feed themselves.

By the time the Romans came, these folk had organised themselves into a tribe called the "Dumnonii", and controlled their defences against the "Durotriges" and other tribes from an administrative centre which the Romans took over and called "Isca Dumnoniorum". An easy relationship was set up, and as far as Ringmore is concerned, enough Roman influence had seeped through to influence three local landowners to create enclosed farmsteads as a protection against local or foreign violence. Aerial photography has revealed these sites[detail]

Since the coming of the Bronze and Iron Ages or, should we say, availability of metal tools, forest clearance was becoming much more prevalent, and small families or groups of families could do some effect clearing of forests. Whether there was any Dumnonii Planning Authority is doubtful!

Of course, as far as we know, the name Ringmore or names like it did not yet exist. So we can picture small family groups establishing clearings along the valley sides, wherever there was water, shelter and some measure of concealment. Fortunately, the Romans were not keen on the "rigours" of wind and rain in Devon and Cornwall, so the Dumnonii were as free as their leaders allowed them to be.

Trading with overseas adventurers went on all the time, and recent discoveries on the sea bed off Mothecombe would indicate that there was a brisk trade in tin from a much earlier date than usually accepted. These traders or their local agents must have passed through our area, drawn to it by the estuaries of two good rivers and a number of ridge roads which are comparatively dry and safe.

Then there was a 200 years period of "dark age" between when protection from the Romans ceased and it was picked up again by the arrival of Saxon authorities. It is not

yet known whether there was an established Dumnonii administrative system which could have been taken over by the Saxons, but a system of dividing the land into "Hundreds" and "Manors" seems to have existed, and names had been given to places and areas.

The first recording of a name with a resemblance to "Ringmore" available to us is in the Domesday survey. But the Saxons, moving westwards under population pressure, had reached our area and started to colonise it some 300 years before that. In 846AD, the Saxon king Aethelwulf assigned to himself personally by Charter land "in (?)Homine". It stretched from the River Erme to the River Dart which has been identified on the ground, and the whole of our modern administrative Parish is included in it. We are told in the Domesday survey (D.B.) that we were known as "Reimore", and the other Manor of the Parish "Ochenberie".

So who called it by that name? Was it a Celtic settler who at some time in the past climbed out of the forest onto the great headland above the forest and looked out to the seas in the distance and gasped "Ry Mawr" (great headland), now called Toby's Point? Or was it more prosaically as Ekwall would have it in Old English "hrēod-mōr" – "reedy moor"? But how came the name "Ringmore"? In 1242 (?)Fees it is "Ridmore" or "Redmore" and in D.B. "Reimore". However one likes to play around with the name, the fact is it is Ringmore, and so it shall be from now on.

We need to remember that in Saxon time, all land belonged to the king as King, or to the Church who had received their land from the king. After King Ine had pushed the Dumnonii back across the Tamar (710) and occupied the land and "dug a ditch", i.e. built a hill fort just north of Seven Stones Cross as a symbol to the local Dumnonii, he would have realised the richness of the South Hams and recorded it at Winchester. The idea of Saxon settlers moving into the "Hamms" would have occurred especially as the Dumnonii had suffered a serious attack of plague and of Celts emigrated across the sea to America in such numbers that a part of the continental land became known as "Brittany". There was much vacant land, so Aethelwulf persuaded his bishop and Thegns to let him have the land as his personal estate. He now had a power base in case of trouble.

The original Dumnonii farmers and "Saxon settlers" occupied areas which they could clear and cultivate. So when the Normans came and did as the Saxons had done, D.B. tells us that the Manor of Reimore was held by a Saxon called Hecce, a powerful Theyn who also held Loddiswell – Charleton – Eggbuckland and Langdon – Portlemouth – Gooswell. Okenbury was held by Tori, who also held five other Manors.

A powerful Theyn with so many Manors would hardly choose his poorest one to live in. So his Steward would have been in charge of the 6 large settlements (Villeins) and 6 small holdings (Borderers) and probably occupy his lord's demesne farm with its permanent labour of 2 serfs.

It is likely these would have been where there was water – shelter – and some concealment. The 6 most likely sites are Marwell (2), Lower Farm, Middle Farm, Higher Farm and where the earliest Rectory was sited. The lord's demesne farm could have been Cottage Farm (now Cross Manor). Here Saxon incomers or local Dumnonii might have been cultivating their cereals and tending their cattle – sheep – and swine. Because the villeins had the largest land holdings, they had to give the greater amount

of service to their lord. The Borderers (artisans and special office holders) with less land gave less service.

The farmers (villeins) cleared and enclosed land as they required it, and it is probable that they made banks and used simple forms of "hurdles" to contain their cattle. The Neolithic cattle were much the same size as modern cattle. But a smaller animal had been bred by the Iron Age. They had an early form of plough called an "ard" (?) An ard only stirs the soil; a more advanced plough turns the soil. Available in those days were wheats: emmer (....), spely (....), club (....), old bread (....), barleys two row (....), six (....), rye (....), oats (....), legumes, Celtic beans (....), peas (....), fat hen (....), flax (....), god of pleasure (....).

It is significant that one field in the Tithe Assessment was called Rye Field and that this last season (1997) the area behind the barns of Lower Farm has been thick with Fat-hen. It is believed to have been a serious prehistoric food crop. The leaves could be eaten, the whole plant cut and dried like hay for winter fodder and the seeds can be ground into flour for bread.

The Borderers, people who had skills to service others, might well have been clustered together and perhaps they, with the lord's Steward and 2 serfs, were the beginnings of Ringmore village, with their primitive lean-to rooms along the escarpment leading to Rocky Path and the similar one where Well and Spring Cottages are today.

The lord and his steward being Saxons would have wanted to introduce the large open field and strip form of cultivation in contrast to the small enclosed fields of the Dumnonii. On available maps there are areas which could have been such as used this strip form of cultivation, as Mill Hill (some strips could still be seen only 12 years ago) and an area on the Eastern slopes of the village.

So this sets the scene for the Domesday Survey of Reimore (Ringmore).

The forest is unaccounted for, but much land would have been secondary growth and termed waste. Where firewood was collected, swine herds and even at times cattle grazed. Today we think of herds of cattle being large numbers, even 100s. But not so in the past, as recently as the 18th century holdings of cattle may have been only 2 or 3 and at most around a dozen.

With the coming of the Normans, Hecce was displaced by Rudolph, a Norman, and no doubt some of Rudolph's friends could have displaced a Dumnoni or Saxon. We don't know. All we do know is that settlement by more "incomers" went on until in 1332 there [were] 20 taxpayers.

But still no maps or farm plans. However it is reasonable to suppose that some of the smaller enclosures around villain farm sites are of Celtic or Saxon origin, and any unexplained banks of earth need to be looked at carefully. Some of the smaller enclosures in the marshy valley bottoms may represent attempts to obtain cattle feed in dry weather, or storage feed in winter. Breeding cattle had to be kept alive somehow for at least 2 or 3 years.

All land holdings were held from the Monarch. The Tenants-in-Chief, Lords of the Manor and labourers all lived under a cloud of insecurity, and owed service to the

person above them or, in the case of Tenants-in-Chief and Lords, to the Monarch direct. So a great deal of thought and effort was directed to win freedom. In Norman days it is reckoned over 90% of the population lived servile lives.

The Lords of the Manors may have given much time to overseeing their manors, or even farming themselves, but many were away in the service of their Tenant-in-Chief or the Monarch. If so, their appointed Steward took overall charge, with a Bailiff (accountant) and Reeve who organised the agriculture of the Manor and servicing of the Lord's land. Stewards and Bailiffs were freemen. The Reeve was usually a villain appointed by popular choice.

So Ringmore's Lords of the Manor:

Hecce, Rudolph (1086), then William FitzStephen (1205). Testa (?) de Neville 1244 shows Cr (?) FitzStephen as Lord of the Hundred of Ermington. It is he who may have built our present church. Gilbert Fitzstephen (1243) through to Thomas Kirkham (15th) and Rose (1759) controlled the occupation of the land for better or worse. Then James Fellowes, Baron de Ramsey of Huntingdon (1885?) and Coyte. Coyte and Poole of Modbury (1907) became the Lords of the Manor.

Life for the farm labourer was hard and unpredictable, except that the basic sequence of natural production and fulfilment continued year in and year out.

The Black Death (1348) which started in Salcombe Regis(?) (Weymouth) wiped out nearly half the population. By Christmas 1341(?) one quarter of the clergy had died.

It is an ill wind that blows no good, and the Black Death heralded the beginnings of emancipation from serfdom. Labour became in short supply, farms became untenanted, and supervision grew laxer. Labourers were able to demand higher wages and better terms of service, and farmers were able to extend their land holdings and all grew richer.

Yet still Ringmore has no discovered records until the 1524 Hay Subsidy Roll and subsequent rolls, but no maps to equate names and taxes to land holdings. But at least we can follow (even though fitfully) the fortunes of certain Ringmore families as documents became more frequent.

Apart from our list of Rectors, Ringmore Church can provide no records until the 17th century when the registering of baptisms began. Deaths and marriages again fitfully, and we have a few Church Terriers which give our parish boundaries and a few other facts.

Then in the 18th century, on the transfer of the manor from Kirkham to Roe, we have a list of tenements and cottages, but no map, until at last in 1841, the Tithe Commission gives us a detailed list of all land, values and a map.

So what has been happening to our land and people since 1086, when we had one lord, 6 villeins, 6 borderers and 2 serfs, possibly a population of about 70, with Okenbury manor another 5 villeins, 2 borderers and 1 serf, making another 40 or 50. We have no idea how large the villein's holdings had become. The limit was how much they could clear, till or plough with the ard, or more advanced plough. No forest is listed in the Domesday Book for either manor, even though the steep valley slopes were unlikely to

have been cleared. Evidently more incomers had settled, because in 1332, just before the Black Death, 18 men and 2 women were paying tax according to the Hay Subsidy Roll (Tax Roll) of 1332. Presumably, Normans or Saxons or Dumnonii from elsewhere.

The Black Death (1349) is said to have wiped out half the population and it took till 1524 to recover and increase the tax-paying population of the parish, which by then was 34. Again, we are frustrated because we do not know whether these were all separate heads of families or not. If they were, the population of the parish had been increasing quite considerably.

The Domesday Book listed in terms of a Manor, which was rather vaguely quantified in Hides, which could be almost any area of land from 30 acres to 160 acres. It was supposed to represent the land necessary for a family to maintain itself, so it could vary depending on the productivity of the land concerned and the importance of the appointment.

But now, subsidies or taxes were in terms of parishes. Ringmore parish contains two Manors, Ringmore and Okenbury. We need to be more specific. The parish also differentiates between Church land (glebe land) and Manor land within the parish. The Church's land (glebe) and its other possessions are from time to time listed in a "Terrier", drawn up by the Rector and his wardens.

We do not know exactly when the glebe land was given to the Church, and by whom. In 1354, Sir Edward Champernown and his wife Olive hold the Manor and the Advowson of the Church (authority to nominate the Rector). When in 1428 the Manor and Advowson passed to the heirs of Kirkham, one quarter Knights fee had been taken from the Manor land. It is not known for certain, but it is thought that this might represent a gift of glebe land to the Church. However, this did not alter the parish boundaries which, in a Terrier of 1613, defined them as they are today, with a modern amendment around Okenbury Farm buildings which has been transferred to Kingston. The parish was estimated to be 1,000 acres, which included the glebe of 24 acres plus 3 tenements making a total of 80 acres. So there is approximately 920 acres divided between the two Manors. The Survey of 1758, when Ringmore Manor was sold to Roe, indicates about 477 acres (excluding cottages). So Okenbury Manor was approximately 443 acres.

The boundaries of the parish start from our magnificent coastline of cliffs and rocks and sandy coves in the south. In the east it follows the Cockle stream northwards, till it branches to the left towards Houghton. At a place picturesquely called "Cockle Hole" (unidentified) it breaks left through a small coppice and follows hedges (one already ploughed under) across fields to Old Castle Lodge, down to Nodden Mill – along the mill stream and up the small tributary to Nodden Farm and Marwell Nursery to a boundary stone on the road Kingston to St Anne's, up the field hedges to join Blackberry Lane and so to the main road; right fork up the farm land (...) to cut Seven Stones Cross corner and along a hedge to the main road at Landscope, part of Ine's Ditch (fort). These perambulations are described in the Terrier as "bending upon Bigburie until the utmost corner at Seven Stone Downe". Then back along the main road to Langston Cross and thence to Okenbury Farm via the second existing boundary stones at "Gabbawell" ("Gabba" is Celtic for horse) and down Wiscombe (West Combe) stream to the sea.

It is a good thing that it is marked on all modern maps, since today's local knowledge could not identify all the places referred to in the Terrier.

SURVEY.

When Kirkham sold his Manor to Roe in 1758, a survey was made and listed 20 land tenements and 22 cottages. The land tenements were by name of tenement, not the occupier:

Cotley's	24 acres	Mill Hill	30½ acres
Sherrow	27 acres	Flood Gates	28 acres
Lower Ground	28 acres	Anthony's	28 acres
Oliver's	22 acres	Late James Hooppell's	30 acres
Prideaux's	24 acres	Brown Park	7½ acres
Cleave	6 acres	Froude's	40 acres
Coyd Park	17 acres	Terry's	21 acres
Cox's Corner (Fox's)	9 acres	Marwell	21½ acres
Elliott's	28 acres	Marwell	40 acres
Brown Park	8½ acres	Marwell	36 acres
Quarry Park	11 acres	TOTAL	477 acres

The soil has recently been described as "typical alluvial gley soil most likely Conway screes". The proportion of soil perhaps 90% brown earth and 10% combie (?) alluvium. Whether our early settlers were concerned with classification is questionable, but they would have noticed that the soil was not very deep and because of steep slopes much land was hard to work. There were water meadows in the valley bottoms.

1754: no map. Still the problem; however, by picking up every possible clue and working out endless combinations of acres, a rough map of locations to fit in with the enclosures shown on the Tithe Map (1841) has been drawn. It is generally accepted that nearly all existing banks/hedges are very old, not later than 15th century, so it has been necessary to work within that pattern. One question which nags all the time: were tenements all one block? Good for the occupier of good ground; hard if on the worst ground. All the tenements had been absorbed into larger holdings by Tithe 1841, but our neighbouring parish, Bigbury, still had over 30 tenements shown on the Tithe Map and these seemed to be single blocks of land, many with some access to a stream, so we assume our tenements were single blocks of land.

We have no information about tenements in Okenbury Manor, so we have to wait till 1841 before we can include them. South of the Manor House of Okenbury Farm the land is one long ridge and steep valley down to the Westcombe Stream. North of the Manor Farm the land is much kinder. One farm is called "Renton", which means "level ground".

Can we find out how old these tenements were? One remarkable fact that stands out is the number 20 which goes right back to the Hay Subsidy Roll of 1332. It is possible that the isolation of Ringmore protected its people from the Black Death (the Great Plague). Our Rector survived! There is a rumour of a plague burial upstream from Nodden Mill, but the "plagues" were later. So perhaps these tenements are very ancient with the same family holding the same tenement for more than one 99 year "Chattle" (?) Lease. It is generally accepted that the land pattern in the South Hams was completed by early 16th or 18th Century. The name Ellyott appears in the 1524 Lay Subsidy and subsequent ones; Hooppell in 1600, Cotley in 1623. Whether Sherrow is a variant of

Sheriff is not known, but Sheriff appears in 1640. If we look at the dates of leases, the oldest at the time of the Survey was 16th June 1699. For one, Cotley's, the counterpart lease was missing. The custom in Devon of leasing land was 99 years and 3 names more or less ensured that a family would go on farming the same land for 100 years, and as the Kirkham family held the Manor Farm about 1420, it would not be unreasonable to think that the Tenements were at least as old as that. Hedge counts might help.

When we look at the names of occupiers and their supporting names, we find Coker, Rowe, Hatch in 1524, Adam and Palmer in 1576 and others. One could even play around with Hecce and Hatch! If we extend our search to names connected with the cottages, here are more still which seem familiar.

Lower Ground is almost certainly the valley below Lower Farm, Cleeve the steep wooded slope in Middle Manor's garden, but would not have been wooded then. Coyde – Coyte? Mill Hill must get its name from Noddens Mill. Froudes is an ancient family which got a special write-up in the Mills Questionnaire [?] of 1750 as being a very good tenant, and again quoted by F.C.H.R. Terry is a name known to us; Mrs Terry had some articles in our Newsletter in 1996. Prideaux is a very ancient family of Modbury.

The 1613 Terrier says that the tithe as "one bushel of oats, one peck [?] of barley, one peck [?] of wheat for every Farthing (30 acres) of land yearly lying within the Parish". Were they still growing Emmer and Spelt wheat? Part of the glebe land which lay next to Coyde Park was called "Rye Hill". So rye was another cereal sown.

Historically we are (at this point) in a period when England was on very bad terms with France and Spain. The Militia were called out frequently to do some training and to help maintain morale. Several of the tenement holders were Militia Men, because they were "thabell [?] menne within the saide Parishe of Rydmore". Robert Froude, Robert and Roger Cawker [?], Blanche Ellet were among these tenement holders who had to provide items of equipment (bows and arrows, etc.): the Browne brothers William and Richard were Rydmore's archers; 9 others with Froude and Cawker were Pikemen, 10 were Billmen – 35 people were on the Muster Roll. The tenement holder and his labourers were on call for the defence of the Realm.

In 1600 John Howpy (Hooppell) was the highest tax payer. It is possible that John, William and Benjamin, who held 3 tenements all in the valley down to Ayrmer Cove in 1754, could be partners with John and successors of his. Holding all that ground would have made it possible, with their neighbour Lethbridge, to have established the two leats, one each side, in the valley. John of 1600 might have built the "threshing barn", now a ruin, which is beside the one leat still in existence.

John Hooppell (1600) died in 1620 and we have a copy of the Inventory attached to his Will, but not the Will " ... ? by Richard Nosske (?) and Henry Elliott and John Yolland" on 15 June 1620. It tells us that John Hooppell had 12 acres of corn, 2 acres of wheat, 2 acres of oats, 8 acres of barley and 2 acres of oats and peas (26 acres) "rated at 5 Nobles and 10 Groats". All this came to £22. He also had "three score sheep wanting three. rated to the value of fifteen pounds ten shillings". He had a horse, 2 heifers of a year old, and a store and ? rated at £3. A cow, six hogs and five lambs. His total possessions were rated at £73 and 23 shillings. He was taxed at £6. The lowest tax was £3.

If the Hooppells were working together, they had 72 acres at their disposal.

These farmers were living in the days of smuggling, the Press Gang and a brutal judicial system where a man could be hanged for poaching a rabbit. Smuggling was both inwards and outwards. Items varied from military clothing (inwards) to wool (outwards).

CONSOLIDATION

Before the time of the 1754/8 Survey, the small tenements were being gradually absorbed into a new grouping, until by 1841, when the Tithe Commission drew up a reasonably accurate map showing every enclosure great or small, named and valued it for rent (cash), so that the cumbersome system of rent by tithes in kind could be phased out, there were only 8 farms within the area of the 20 Manor tenements. This happened gradually, and the only information we have are the Government Land Tax and Churchwardens' Accounts to show how this came about.

By 1754, the Hooppell family had 4 tenements (Ayrmer Cove valley 3), Thomas Adam had 2, the Wakeham family had 6, Coker 2, Gilbert 2, leaving only 5 individuals holding tenements (21 tenements in all).

We have Land Taxes for the years 1780, 1781, 1785, 1805-30, 1831, 1832.

Two local farmers were appointed Assessors to draw up the lists and decide the sum for each holding at 4/- per £ value. The only land holding where there was no change was the glebe land.

By 1780, only 25 years after the Survey, the only original names of occupiers left were Adams, Hooppell, Coker, Lambell, Gilbert. The new names were "Occupier" (did this mean a vacant tenement or did they not know the occupier? Hardly the latter).

Stidston, Woodmason, Knapman, Hurrell, Legasick (Gent), Cornish, Goss, Ryder.

The old names, however, were still kept to identify holdings: Coyte Park, Lethbridge's, Prideaux's, Froude's, Cotley's, Quarry Park, so these tenements had not yet been absorbed.

In 1781, some more names of incomers appear. They were to become big holders. The Sparrow family has a whole row of graves now in the Church Acre designated Yoeman, Yabsley and Randle, whose family will play a big part till late in the 19th century. Hamblin, Oliver, Stidstone, Hawkings.

In 1785, more names: Collings, Rev George Sullock (?) Kerswell (the curate of Ringmore and Bigbury), Collyer, Hatch appear, and Thomas Randle is building up his holding. John Flinstaff (Gent) has taken over from Cornish, who took over from Hooppell, but does not occupy. Colliver is the occupier.

By 1831, Sparrow and White have taken over nearly all Okenbury Manor. Randle has established himself in Cotley's, Lethbridge's, Woodmason, Elliott's, Quarry Park. Ryder is increasing his holding.

In 1832 we find Crimp, Randle, Hooppell, Coker, Stidston and others. Onw wonders how the fertility of the land is fairing with all these changes, and what causes the changes. This requires much more technical research than an amateur can give.

In 1841 we get the Tithe Assessment and the Census of 1841. We find at the:

Parsonage	Gilbert Butland
Marwell	Thomas Stidston
Renton	William Birchford
South Langston	John Sparrow
Okenvury	John White
Cottage Farm (Cross Manor)	Robert Hooppell
Lower Farm	John Crimp
Higher Farm	Peter Randle
Part of Middle Farm	Benjamin Crimp
Mill Hill, part of Coyte Park	James Triggs

From now on the old nuance of Tenements gradually disappear, and new names are given to individual fields. The old holdings have been absorbed and only the Coker family managed to hold out until 1911 on their strip of 6 acres on Mill Hill. Katrine Coker died in 1911. The first Coker who appears in the Coker family tree is Leofwin Coker, recorded in a Pipe Roll dated 1175; there are long gaps from Lay Subsidy Rolls from 1333 to 1545, and so on to Katrine Coker died 1911. The descent is by no means direct!

Although it is quite reasonable to accept that many of the ancient tenements with their banks and hedges have existed since Norman, or certainly late feudal times 700 or 800 years ago, the names of their founders are not so easy to trace. At least some of them need to be recorded for posterity.

In Lay Subsidy Rolls, Robert Elliott is found in 1524, Robert Froude in 1576, John Howpyll in 1600, in 1623 John Brown and John Cotley. Sherrow might be a clerk's misspelling of Thomas Sheriff, whose name appears again in the lease of Ringmore Vean. Fox is recorded in 1647. Some occupiers' names also appear in the Lay Subsidy Rolls. Coker is in the 1554 Roll, but has also been traced to Thomas Adams appears in 1576 and William Gilbert in 1647.

The lease of Elizabeth Terry occupying Terry's Tenement (21 acres) goes back to 7 December 1720, and we know that an Elizabeth Terry married James Beer in Ringmore Church in 1742. She may have been Elizabeth Terry, daughter of Nicholas Terry. She was baptised in 1720 in Ringmore.

Who was Anthony or Oliver? Their tenements seem to have been given their baptised names, since there are no such family names in our records. The lease of Anthony's tenement goes back to 1699 (Fox or Cox), and was renewed at the time of the Survey 1748 for Philip Gilbert, who must have paid the Herriot £3.6.8d. Williams Woodmason (a very ancient 13th century name in Bigbury) still held his lease of Flood Gates dated 1720 (28 acres) at the time of this Survey.

There had been a steady process of consolidation before 1745 and this Survey. The Hooppell family – James, Nicholas, William, Benjamin – between them had got the leases of 4 good tenants, including all the meadows above Ayrmer Cove to Lower

Farm, collecting 80½ acres. These tenements formed the basis of Lower Farm of 1840. Similarly Andrew Wakeman has six tenements amounting to 135 acres which formed the core of Upper Farm. Thomas Adams had put together two tenements to make a holding of 51 acres along the boundary with Okenbury Manor.

Gilbert, Bardens and Lambell held onto their holdings in Marwell until Stidston collected them up into one farm by 1841, the tithe Assessment date.

The lands that have belonged to the living of All Hallows, Ringmore are spread over the heartlands of Ringmore Parish. They stretched from a few hundred yards north of the Church to just north of Seven Stones Cross, where the parish boundaries of Bigbury, Kingston, Modbury, Aveton Gifford and Ringmore all meet. These lands were known as the Glebe, and comprised 80 acres. They are not recorded in the Tithe Map, which leaves a discreet gap into which they fit. In the 19th century, the rector of Ringmore still claimed Tithe from a few acres in Kingston. The Glebe was divided into land kept by the Rector (23 acres) for his own use, and three tenements leased to local farmers. In the early 17th century (1601), these tenements were leased to Thomas Wolesone (22 acres, rent 185s p.a.), John Williams (20 acres, 165s p.a.), Ann Wakeham (widow, 17 acres, 13s and 4d and four "fleeses" of wool). Total Glebe 80 acres. By 1616 this tenement (Seven Stones) was leased to Nicholas Wakeham. Our Church registers do not go back as far as that, so their deaths are not on record for us. However, it does show that Wakeham was a long lasting Ringmore family. There is a tracing of the Glebe lands available in RHS archives.

In the 19th century, when Preb. Hingston-Randolph was Rector, he retained only 17 acres which included Mill Meadow, Rock Meadow, Rye Hill. It was mainly pasture and meadow with Willow Spot, orchard and garden.

The Tithe Assessment and map are considered to be reasonably accurate, and from the wear and tear of most Tithe Maps, including our own, it must be assumed that they were used in many cases of land tenure and allocation of Churchwardens' Taxes. The Ringmore map is drawn to a scale of [12 inches to the mile? Check]. The object of the Assessment was to provide an acceptable money substitute for the complicated assessment of tithe in kind. (See earlier in this paper). Every field, or parcel of land or cottage, was recorded, numbered, the fields named and the acreage and value recorded. This was a great achievement, and from the time of its publication until there was a reliable Ordnance Survey and land registration, the Tithe Map numbers were used as reference. Whether the names of the fields were of long standing and commonly used, or whether the Commission arranged with the land users and Lord of the Manor to give them these names we don't know. Many of the names are a bit too tidy [?] to convince us that they were of ancient usage. Most of the names are practical and helpful, but whether anyone could remember them all is another matter.

One would like to know who or what is a Spert [?] (Outer and Inner Spert)? Gull Park, Parsons Park, Dinney, Beacon, Nursery are all evocative. But who was Harner [?] of Inner Loser Harner and Outer Lower Harner? What was Lane Bars? Sow Park probably refers to the sow thistle. "Elliott's Cocklewill" conjures up all sorts of possibilities.

Certainly later 20th century farmers have not used many of the names; they have only identified a few fields or woods.

Final Consolidation

During the middle of the 19th century, when American hard wheat came into England, and thousands of farmers had to give up and emigrate (or reverted to labourers, or re-trained), the land had to be re-arranged.

Sale of Leases

By 1864, when there was a sale of the leases of the Manor Farm, consolidation had gone so far that there were only 6 farms:

Lower Farm	Crimp [?]	209 acres	£346.5.0 + £17.0.10½d
Middle-Farm	George Kelly [?]	87 acres	£70 + £2.10.0d
Higher Farm	Peter Randle	125 acres	£204 + £10.2.1d
Cottage Farm	Robert Randle	31 acres	£73.14.0d
Mill Hill Farm	James Coker	6 acres	£12 + 9.3d
Marwell Farm	Gilbert [?] Taylor	118 acres	£180 + £9.7.3d

Re-arrangement of 1876

A further re-arrangement of farms without a public sale took place in 1876, which resulted in a change in the Tithe Rent:

Lower Farm	Mr Harries	£44.19.10d	£41.13.6d
Higher Farm	Mr Ash	£27.8.8d	£47.0.9d
Middle Farm	Kelly	£8.7.2d	
Cottage land		£7.4.6d	15.3d
Mill Hill	James Coker	£1.9.4d	
Marwell	Mr Baker	No change	£22.2.7d
Okenbury	Mr White	No change	£55.8.9d
Langston	Mr Worth	No change	£38.3.8d
Renton	Mr Edwards	No change	£23.12.10d
Glebe	Mr White		£160.0.0d

This seems to have resulted in Ash of Higher Farm taking over much of Lower Farm, Middle Farm and Cottage Farm.

These figures seem to indicate that the massive abandonment of the land by the small one "Furling" [?] family holding in the middle third of the 19th century was a reality ("deserting the land in droves" as one writer put it).

This change of landholding coincided with a change in agricultural methods, and the beginning of "industrial" agriculture.

Between the publishing of the Tithe Map in 1841 and 1993, 7 miles of banks and hedges were removed in order to accommodate the modern methods of farming. However, the hedge clearance was 3 miles north of the St Ann's – Kingston road ("Highway", as it was called in the 18th century).

South of this road, 4 miles of banks and hedges were removed, and the protection of the ... [?] Brunting has played an important part, and since the National Trust bought up the farmlands in the Coastal Conservancy Area (Lower Farm and Higher Farm), the leases have had very tight restrictions applied to his cropping plan in order to preserve the right environmental conditions for those birds which still nest in this area.

The re-arrangement of 1876 was a "stop gap" arrangement to keep the land from going derelict. Middle Farm slowly reinstated itself, and during World War 2 became a large enough unit to accommodate a displaced farmer from the "American Zone" at Slapton, east of Kingsbridge. The Parnell family were established in part of Middle Manor Cottages, and were allocated land between it and Smugglers Lane. After World War 2 this was absorbed into Lower Manor Farm.

This is by way of a digressions, as this paper can be closed conveniently with the purchase of the Manor of Ringmore by Coyte – Coyte and Pode [?], who then sold off the land as modern freehold in various lots from 1907 onwards.

The purchase from James Herbert Nenyon and Harry Cosmo Orme Bonson Esq. MP was on 23rd March 1907.

The major land holdings were (delineated according to the Tithe Map):

Higher Farm: In occupation: William Hubert Baswell [?] Ash. All the land to the east of the ridge line from Toby's Point, and included the present day Manor and the fields to the east of it across Church Lane. The Tithe Map acreage was 214.1.38 [?].

Lower Farm: In occupation: George Frederick Baker. This farm comprised all the remaining Manor land west of the Toby's Point ridge paths, other than gardens and orchards attached to residential buildings, and Marwell lands. The Tithe acreage was 189.2.22.

Marwell Farm: In occupation William George Baker. This farm consisted of all the three Marwell tenements. The Tithe Map acreage was 118.0.30.

The 21 tenements had become 3 farms. So the full cycle of lands and land holdings has been accomplished, from long ago when all land was divided up and held from the Monarchy through Tenants-in-Chief who held the lands from the Monarch, to whom service was rendered. From him the Lords of Hundreds and Lords of Manors to the "Villein" or "Border" all owing homage to the Monarchy of the day and giving service to his lord. Now in 1907, Ringmore lands, as purchases are completed, become truly freehold and are registered in the name of the new owner.

The Glebe land is still the Rector's land and belongs to the Church.