

# HOME FARM PRESTBURY



*Norman J Baker  
November 2014*

# PRESTBURY HOME FARM

Home Farm is an attractive cluster of mainly Cotswold stone buildings on the corner of Mill Street and Bowbridge and has been an important and integral part of Prestbury village for over 300 years. The history of the farm as a farming unit goes back much further than that to the 13th century and possibly earlier.

The designation 'Home Farm' was traditionally applied to the farm which was in the demesne of the Lord of the Manor, usually adjacent to the manor house, and which supplied the needs of that household. There is plenty of evidence to show that the Home Farm we know, but not the current farmstead, was such.

We know that Prestbury was a Saxon manor created probably in the 8/9th Century and that from very early days the Bishop of Hereford was the Lord of the Manor. (BGAS Transactions 1956) The ownership of the Manor by the Bishop of Hereford is confirmed by the Domesday Book of 1086. There is a reference of 1209 stating that 'The Bishop had here a Park wherein stood a handsome Stone House moated about' (Bigland 'Gloucestershire Collections' part II, 322). This information, with the fact that the moat can still be seen, enables us to establish the site of the Manor House and to know that it was built before 1209.

The site is on the northern edge of the village (SO966246) with the Prestbury Park race course (part of the manor's deer park) immediately to the west. There are two moated enclosures and excavations have shown that the westernmost one enclosed the manor house referred to in the Bigland Collection.

The eastern moated area is smaller and we can find its use in a manuscript dated 1344 entitled 'Dilapidations of the Bishop of Hereford's Manor of Prestbury.

(Bodleian Library, MS. Jones 21, ff.5-6). The list of dilapidations with estimated cost of repairs, is quite extensive and provides a good picture of the estate:

The stable for carts next to the gate 2s.0

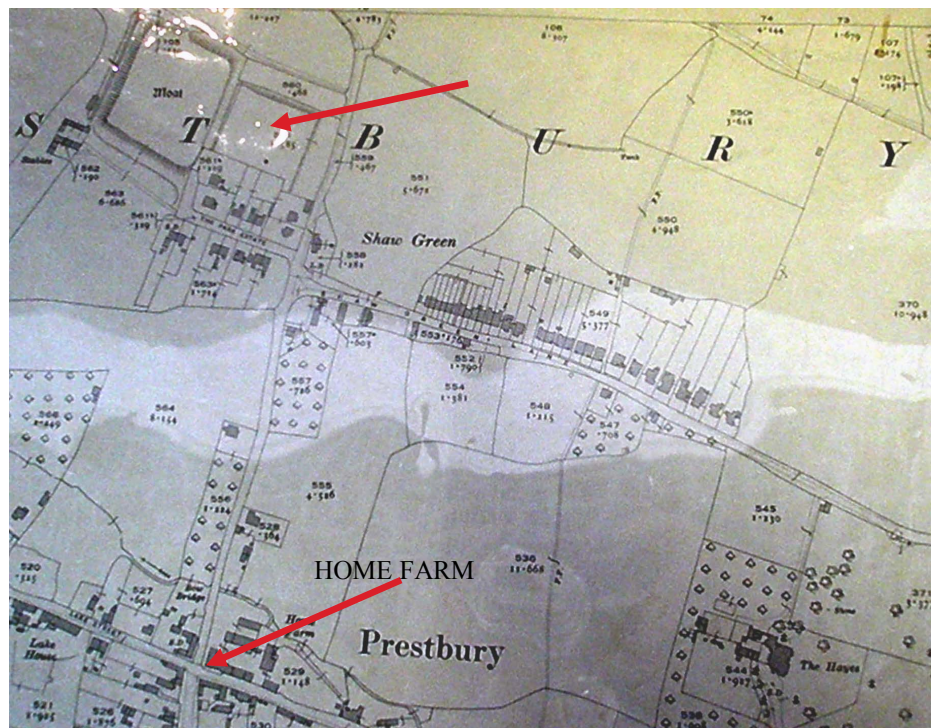
The ox-house £1.0.0

The great stable £1.10.0

The pigstye 10s.0

The cow house £2.0.0

A barn burnt down to the ground. To rebuild it would cost £20.





Another barn for straw also burnt £6.13.4

Another barn for hay also burnt. £6.13.4

The inner bridge (presumably between the two moated areas) 3s.4p

An old chamber within the inner gateway. 13s.4p

The dairy. 2s.0

A new granary needs to be built at a cost of £1.6.4

The list then moves to the manor house itself.

The picture is clear—a working farmyard with oxen, pigs, cows, horses, barns and dairy. In 1240 there were 30 cows and 3 horses. This was the original Home Farm.

The cluster of fields which form the current Home Farm lies adjacent to the site of the old Manor House so it is almost certain that the name has remained attached to the same farming unit over many centuries. Other pieces of evidence which lead us to the same conclusion are field names and the Enclosure Act of 1732. We know that the name ‘Gamage’ which is given to some fields adjacent to the Manor House and which are part of the present Home Farm, dates from the 13th Century and has particular associations with the Bishop Of Hereford. (See later reference under ‘Fields’.) Some of the other field names are referred to in the 16th Century so are also of early date. The details of Enclosure Act of 1732 show that the fields immediately adjacent to the Manor House, and which form the core of the present Home Farm, are not included. This indicates that those fields were already enclosed - because they were part of the Manor estate. This is supported by the record of a court case brought by the priest against the Lord of the Manor in 1611 (GDR114/p177) in which it mentions ‘Gamage Hays belonging to the manor of Prestbury’. It seems fairly certain therefore that ‘Home Farm’ existed as a farm of the Lord of the Manor of Prestbury probably before 1209.

The earliest reference to Home Farm by name is in the Tithe Schedule of 1841 which also informs us that the owner at the time was Susan Capel. The connection with the Capel family goes back much further. We know that in 1647 Christopher Capel purchased a “mansion-house where Robt. Brereton dwells, and various lands and tenements” (Glos Archives D1450...) Bigland (Part 3 p985) records that at that time Robert Brereton was living at the manor house of the Lord of the Manor of Prestbury. Although Home Farm is not mentioned by name in the deeds it would almost certainly have been included in the ‘various lands and tenements’ that Christopher Capel bought. There is no reference to the purchase of Home Farm at all in the Capel papers.

It seems probable that the Capels moved the site of the farmstead (using some of the original building material?) to its present position near to their new home of Prestbury House. It would have also made a statement perhaps that the Capels, having their own ‘Home Farm’, were the de facto Lords of the Manor of Prestbury.

In the Enclosure Act of 1732 the Capels were recipients of allotments from the previously open field of Berryfield, which included one field which remained in their ownership until the 20th century. There is no record of any other sales or transactions involving Home Farm in any major way until 1950.

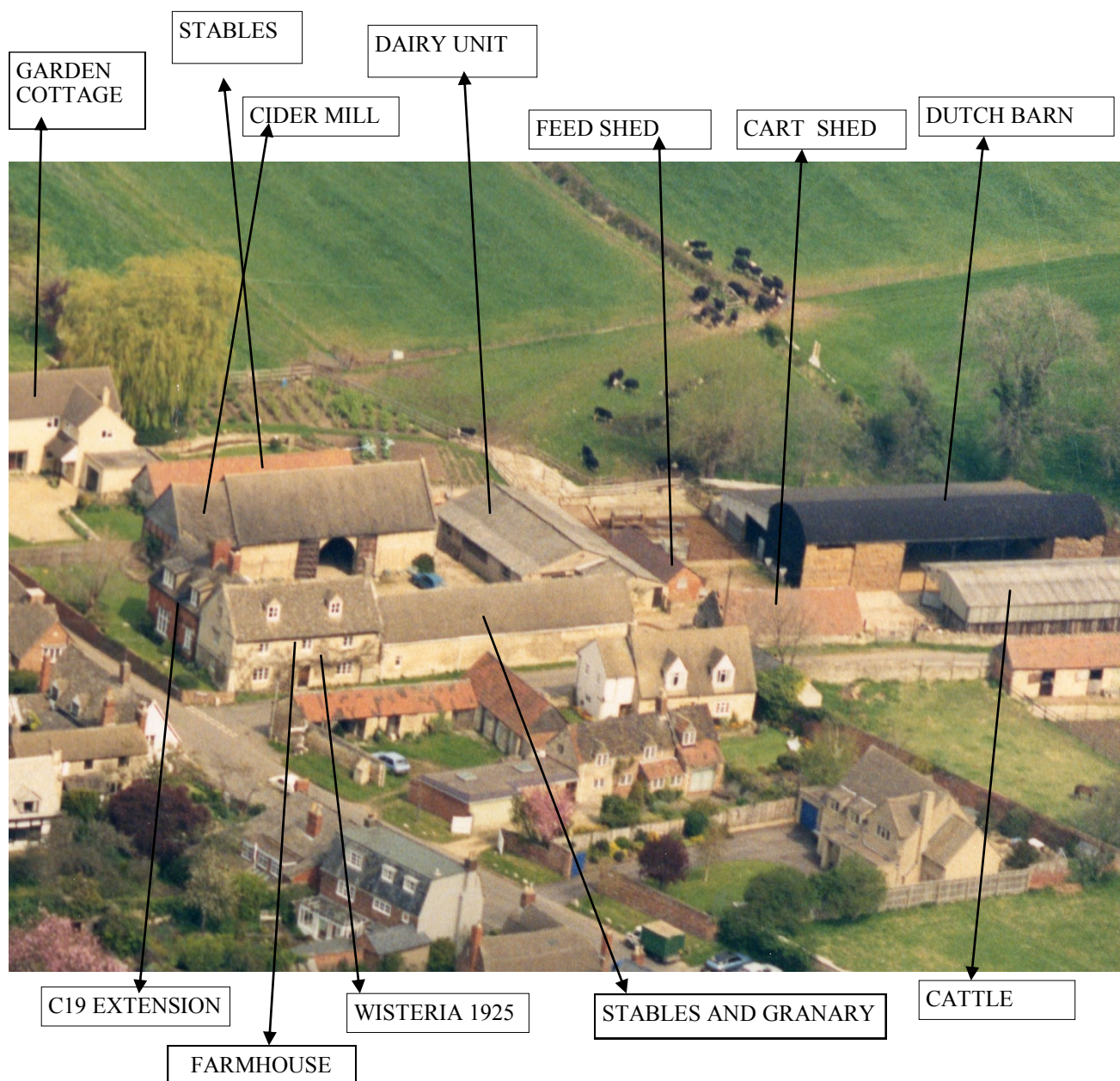
The Capel seat, Prestbury House in the Burgage, Pevsner records as having been built for the Capel family in the 18th Century, so it is much the same period as the date he gives for Home Farm.

The farm continued in the ownership of the Capels until 1950, i.e. about 250 years. It was then sold to its sitting tenant, Maurice Chamberlayne. His son, Alfred John (Jack), later wrote in "Prestbury Memories, *"Until 1950, Home Farm was owned by Major Capel of Prestbury House. The land includes fields at the rear of the farm adjacent to Shaw Green Lane and the Hayes and a larger piece of land behind houses in Shaw Green Lane, with access from Spring Lane. It was farmed by the Wiggett family from 1890 until 1924 followed by the Chamberlayne family up to the present day. Milk was produced and retailed in the village and Cheltenham until 1973. Then calves were reared for beef until 1990. Since then some of the old stone buildings have been converted to residential use and the other buildings are let for horse stabling with grazing. Some cattle grazing is still carried on."*

The cluster of fields which form the basis of Home Farm are all pasture which indicates that the farm has mainly been a cattle/sheep farm. An aerial view of the fields to the north east of the farmhouse show clear traces of ridge and furrow which would indicate the land had been ploughed over a long period in years gone by and would therefore have produced crops. The outlying fields which are included as part of the farm are in the Sandfield area which is good arable land and would have been used for crops.



## THE FARM BUILDINGS



THE FARMHOUSE is described in 'Prestbury, Our Heritage' as, *'Built 18th century of stone with Cotswold stone roof. Mullioned windows in the front only. Three storey. Stone flag floors in the hall and kitchen. Band course at floor level with stone surround to door. Oak beams in rooms. Cupboard under the stairs still has brick floor.'*

It is thought that the red brick wing which faces on to Bowbridge dates from about 1870. However the 1841 Tithe Map shows an extension in the same spot which, being depicted in red on the map, is part of the residence. There is a further addition to that wing which appears to be a shed or other farm building.

The wisteria, which adorns the front of the house, is known to have been planted in 1925 by the gardener of Prestbury House.

THE BARN Pevsner suggests is 18th century. It is a grand stone structure with a Cotswold stone roof. The weather vane is 14th century and came from Musselburgh town hall, Scotland. The farm owner, Jack Chamberlayne, purchased it in 1967.

THE CIDER MILL is at the western end of the barn and is half-timbered . Two of the fields nearest the farmhouse were orchards (referred to as Bowbridge Orchard and Orchard). Their use is shown in the Tithe Schedule as orchard and pasture. Cider must have been a feature of life on this farm as many others. The mill would probably have been donkey powered and the stone and its trough are now a feature in the farmyard.

THE STABLE AND GRANARY were built to the east of and adjoining the house. They back on to Mill Street and face the barn and thus create the farmyard.

THE DUTCH BARN was a more recent building and the CATTLE SHED was built in 1979. They were both converted/rebuilt as residential buildings in 2004/5..

THE GARDEN COTTAGE was built in 1979 for Jack Chamberlayne's retirement.



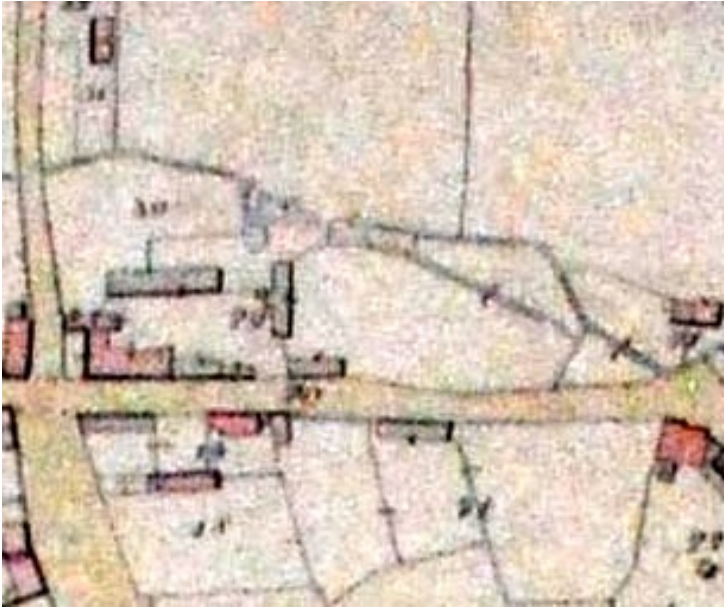
## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARM BUILDINGS

The barn has been retained with the same external appearance even though it is now a residence. The large barn doors have been retained. There is a change in the appearance of the Cider Mill in that the fill between the main beams was black and it is now white. In the left foreground of the old photograph we see the mill wheel and its trough. In the modern photograph below it is in the centre of the yard just visible on the left.



Photo: Geoff North





The Tithe Map of 1841 (*GA P254/SD2 reproduced with the permission of Gloucester Archives*) shows clearly the farmhouse (dwellings are coloured red) with the stable and granary adjacent, the barn, and a further building approximately where the later cowshed stood, and one more unit on the road-side where the cart shed stood.



The OS map of 1883 shows considerable development. Adjoining the house are now three units, a new stable block has been added north of the barn, and an extension built between the cowshed and the barn



By the time of the OS map of 1923 the barn extension has been reduced and attached to the barn which has also gained a small shed/porch on the southeast corner. The Dutch Barn and the cowshed were built some time after this map was produced.



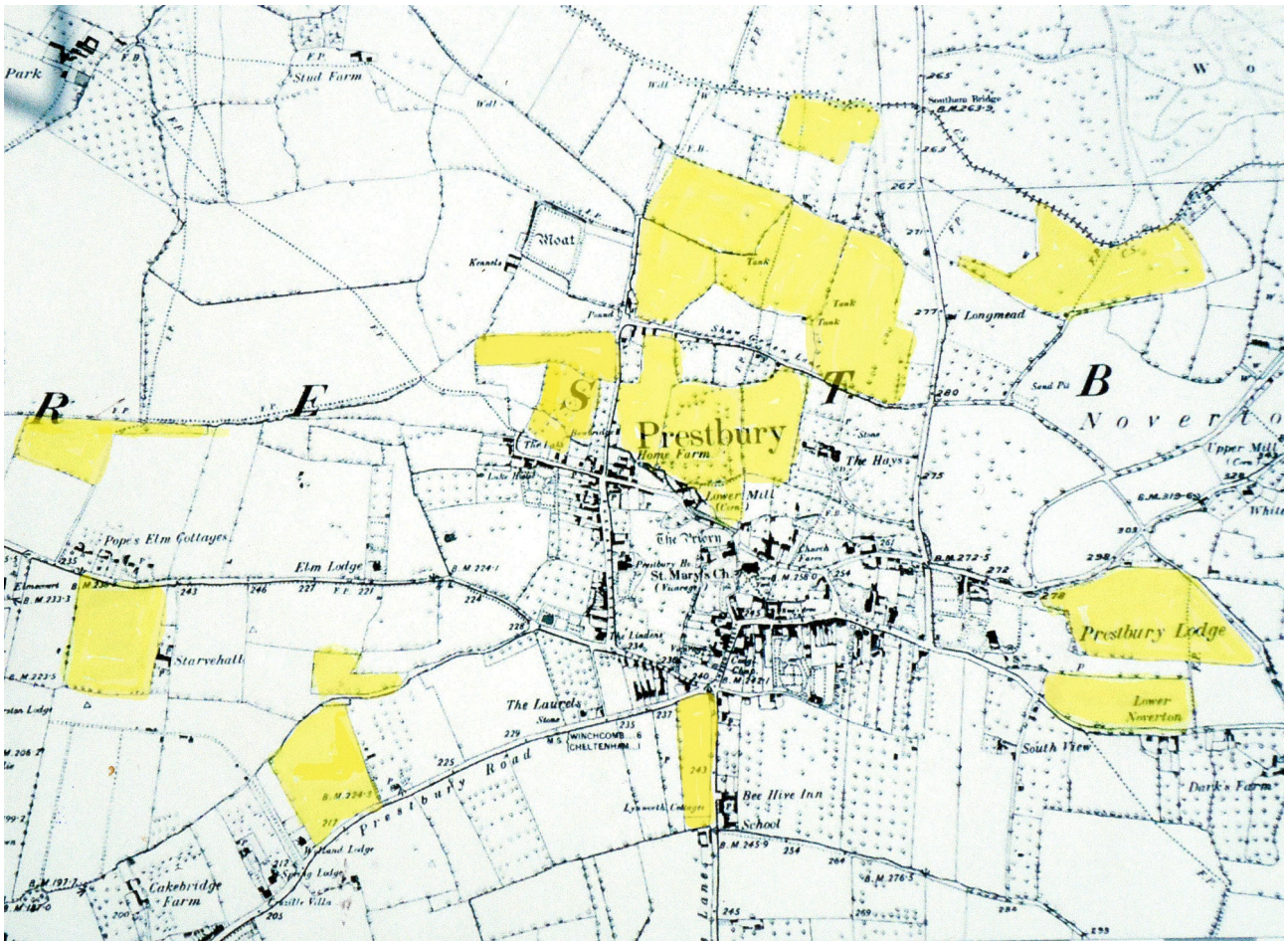


The old photograph has a caption 'The Granary, Home Farm'. The further end of the building was a stable. In the 1883 map a letter 'P' indicates that a pump stood in the yard at this point. The buildings now provide an attractive residence.





# THE FIELDS



**HOME FARM** The fields shown in yellow are those which were in the ownership of Susan Capel and in the occupation of James Villar in the 1841 Tithe Map Schedule. (The map shown is a copy of the 1885 OS map.) Home Farm is at the centre of the map. The cluster of fields to the west and to the north east have been integral to the farm since before the 18th Century Enclosures. Other fields have been added and disposed of at various times. The fields to the west and south of the main cluster, are arable and all the rest pasture. The three separate field east of the village were eventually sold on. The rest of the fields in that section along with the fields south of Shaw Green Lane are not referred to in the Enclosure Act and were therefore probably already enclosed.

There was a great revolution in the 1730s when the major landowners of Prestbury, including the Capel family, agreed the terms of the Enclosure Act and it was passed by Parliament. The effect was that the large fields and open commons which accounted for a large proportion of the land in Prestbury parish were enclosed into the fields which are our present landscape. Existing land owners were allotted portions of land in proportion to their current holdings. They were then required to enclose their separate fields.



Although a map was required to be made of the Enclosures it cannot be found but we do have a copy of the Act and can deduce much from it. Prior to the 1732 Act there were eight open fields in Prestbury parish. Each field was divided into ‘ridges’ (selions, ruddes, strips) i.e. strips of land which can often still be seen in the ridge and furrow pattern of some fields. The strips were usually in groups which were referred to as furlongs and were in effect unenclosed small fields. Individuals owned strips and furlongs in separate fields. In earlier days this was seen as a way to enable each owner to share in the rotation of crops and of fallow, and in the variety of soils and productivity. By the 19th century this was seen to be inefficient so the Enclosure Act was a move to greater efficiency and production.

The fundamental documents for tracing the history of the fields are the Enclosure Act 1732 and the 1841 Tithe Map and Schedule. The Tithe Map and Schedule are available and show by name and a reference number each field and piece of property in the parish, along with the name of the owner and the occupant. It also lists the acreage of each field and indicates whether it was pasture, arable, orchard, wood etc.

The Tithe Schedule lists the following fields as owned by Susan Capel and occupied by James Villars (107 acres in total):

**The first group lie immediately to the north east of the farmstead. It is probable that all of these fields were enclosed before the Enclosure Act.** Green Close was enclosed and named by 1575 (PNG = Place Names of Gloucestershire).

Green’s Close 1575 reference to *le grene close* (PNG)

Little Green

Doctors

Orchard

Bowbridge Orchard

**The second group are to the north of Shaw Green Lane with two to the west of Bowbridge.**

Gamage Hay (1) 196 (=Tithe ref numbers) area = 5a.3.1 There is a reference in the Gotherington Enclosure Awards (GA. Q-R1-71 dated 1808) to an exchange of land between Lord Craven and William Capel which gave William Capel ownership of this Gamage Hay field.

Gamage Hay (2) 197 8a.1.20. Awarded to Christopher Capel in the Enclosure Act of 1732. Identified by ‘in Berryfield’ and acreage—Enclosure Act gives 8.1.32

Gamage Hay (3) 222 3a.5.35 West of Bowbridge

*See also the paragraph on Gamage earlier in this article.*

Normids (1) Also known as Cricket

Normids (2) The name itself derives from ‘northmead’ and probably indicates an older close. PNG cites a 1575 reference to *Normede*

Coppice in Northmead.

Upper Northmead

Daniels Piece

Lower Orchard

**The third group are fields at a distance from these two main clusters.**

Green Piece            North of New Barn Lane

Popes Elm            North of Prestbury Road. Mentioned by name in the Tithe award. PNG suggests that it was named after the family of Sarah Pope and refers to 1663 Parish Registers.

Hencroft            Referred to in PNG 1575. *Hencrofte*

Sandfield            On the north side of Prestbury Road

Occupation Road    This is the name given to lots 423 and 424 in the Tithe Map of 1841. Though shown as 'P' = pasture, it is the road from New Barn Lane, probably the present New Barn Close, and serviced the fields between New Barn Lane and the Prestbury Road. The name is interesting but other than access to occupied land I can find no explanation for it.

Part Skinners Piece Adjacent to Bouncers Lane and Prestbury Rd

Dormands piece    South of Mill Lane

Shepherds Close    East of Southam Road

Long Mead            East of Southam Road

Maurice Chamberlayne purchased Home Farm from Christopher Capel in 1950. The Home Farm element of the sale was a little over 106 acres and consisted of the cluster to the north east on either side of Shaw Green Lane. Other properties in the purchase included Robert's Farm (Knoll Hill) on the hillside but these were sold on.

The fields belonging to Home Farm varied over time. The Capel's estate included many other properties so there was opportunity at the end of tenancy agreements to move fields from one farm to another.

When in 1864 Christopher Capel was in need of £6500 he leased the farm to J F Rowlands over the tenant's head. (GA [D1450/T24](#)) The Indenture shows Home Farm was tenanted by Joseph Etheridge and lists the fields. In this deed two small fields have been added but the three easterly blocks have been removed.

A further field known currently as The Glebe shows on the Tithe Map as two separate fields: 'Berryfield Cottage and Garden', and 'Daniels or Vicarage'. 'Daniels or Vicarage' was purchased by Jack Chamberlayne and Charles Banwell from the Church Commissioners in 1987 and added to their existing property of Berryfield Cottage and Garden.





**The 1910 Valuation Office Survey Map**  
By kind permission of the National Archives. (...)

The 1910 Valuation Office Survey map shows Home Farm as number 344. The two red lines leading off the map go to other fields which formed part of the farm at that time.

In the years 1910-1915 the Liberal Government (Chancellor Lloyd George) agreed a survey of all landholdings for tax purposes - The Valuation Office Survey. The plan was to establish the value of all property so that a tax could be imposed on any increase in value which was not attributable to the owner's work and improvements. It was a costly white elephant but did give us a picture of landholding at the time. For Home Farm it shows a Gross value of £7600, paying a tithe of £450 and with an agricultural value of £4375. it was then occupied by Mr A Wiggett and had an area of 84 acres 3 roods 3 perches. The survey also produced a map of which a detail is shown above

# PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

## THE CAPEL FAMILY

The Capel family, originally from Normandy, first held the Manor of How Capel, Herefordshire, from the 12th to the 16th Century. A son of the family moved from How Caple to Painswick and the family spread around Gloucestershire arriving in Prestbury in the 17th Century. They purchased their first land in 1647 which included the Manor House.



The Parish Registers show baptisms and deaths from the 17th century onwards. There are several family monuments in the church.

The Capel family subsequently built Prestbury House in the Burgage. The House dates from about 1700 but parts are possibly much older. The grounds occupy almost the whole east side of the Burgage and reach nearly to the churchyard. It was the home of the Capel family for nearly 300 years.

The Home Farm was one of several owned by the Capels and rented out to tenant farmers. By 1737 13 people held estates as Capel tenants. By 1831 the Capel family had 327 acres in the parish, and up to the Second World War remained one of the principal landowners. The last member of the Capel family to occupy Prestbury House died in 1964 by which time most of the estate had been sold.

## JOHN DE GAMAGE

A very early name associated with the farm is Gamage. Three of the fields which form part of the farm have the name Gamage Hay. The Gamage family came from Normandy in the wake of the Norman Conquest. There is a 12th century reference to people of the name in Herefordshire. In the 13th century there was an Abbott of Gloucester named John de Gamage and some of his story is told in *A Roll of the Household expenses of Richard de Swinfield Bishop of Hereford during part of the years 1289 and 1290.*

(GA>>>>) From this roll we get the account of the visit to Prestbury of the Bishop and his retinue for Christmas 1289. On the way to Prestbury the party stopped at Highnam. This was normal because John de Gamage had previously been Prior of St Gulthlac in Hereford so would have been well known to Bishop Richard. The account reads,



*“The abbatt of Gloucester was lord of this manor. John de Gamage who held that post ever since the year 1284, is a great favourite with the chronicler of that house. He was descended from an honourable family that came in with the Conqueror, and were established in Herefordshire where in Mansel Gamage their name exists to the present hour. His government of the convent was distinguished by piety, charity, and discretion in the management of their temporal affairs. He found them, distressed, and left them affluent. He liquidated their debt of a thousand marks, increased their revenues and the stock upon their estates, and raised their sheep alone to a flock of ten thousand. In every way he seems to have discharged the duties of a faithful governor and steward, and to have exercised his authority with the feelings and conduct of a gentleman. His personal appearance was answerable to his birth and noble qualities, and procured him respect and honour. In 1291, at the funeral of the Queen Dowager at Amesbury, where a multitude of the dignitaries of the church were assembled, the meek expression of his ruddy countenance, set off by his snowy hair, attracted the notice of Edward I, and drew from him this commendation: ‘There is not a prelate in my kingdom that appears to me so venerable as the abbat of Gloucester.’*

*“As previous to his elevation he had been Prior of St Guthlac, in Hereford, at the beginning of Swinfield’s episcopate, they could not have been strangers to each other, and indeed appear to have been on the best terms. He presented the bishop with two palfreys, the first of them being returned. On the day of their sojourn at Highnam he gave him hay and oats for his forty horses. They trespassed on his hospitality no further. The farm servants had their customary reward of drink.” (GA. P254 MI 1. Quoted by kind permission of Gloucester Archives)*

In view of that account it seems more than likely that the Bishop’s friendship and the generosity they showed to each other, led to the Bishop leasing a close adjoining the manor house to his friend. ‘Hay’ would refer to a ‘close’ i.e. an enclosed field not part of the open field.

## **JAMES VILLARS**

From the Prestbury 1841 Tithe Map Schedule we see that at that time James Villar was the occupant of the Home Farm ‘house, homestead and garden’, and Susan Capel was the owner.

The picture drawn by the 1841 census is that the occupants of the homestead are an incredibly young family with the head, James being 20, (born 1821) and Mary also shown as aged 20 but born in 1811! If the ages shown are correct (but in the 1841 Census ages

were often rounded down) then we have a household of siblings aged from 8 to 20. (Cornelius 8, Arthur 10, Julie 14, Emma 15.)

According to the Tithe Schedule 1841 James Villar (if it is the same person) was farming three farms—at 20? In addition to Home Farm he was also farming Piccadilly Farm and Drypool Farm both of which belong to William Agg.

James (1821) married Mary Bridgewater in 1844 and they had 8 children. Although some of his children were attending Hygeia School in Prestbury in the 1850s the family were then no longer at Home Farm. James moved from farming into estate agency and eventually built up a large and successful business. However in 1851 before he became a successful businessman he was involved in bankruptcy hearings. His residence on the night of the 1851 census was Worcester prison.

*The following PRISONERS, whose Estates, and Effects have been vested in the Provisional. Assignee by Order of the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors, and whose Petitions and Schedules, duly filed, have been severally referred and transmitted to the County Courts hereinafter mentioned, pursuant to the Statute in that behalf,--are-ordered to be brought up before the Judges of the said Courts respectively, as herein set forth, to be dealt with according to Law: Before the Judge of the County Court of Worcestershire, holden at the Guildhall, Worcester, on Wednesday the 12th day of March 1851, at Ten. o'clock in the Forenoon precisely. James Villar, formerly of Piccadilly Farm, Prestbury, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, Farmer, then of the same place, and of Leckhampton, near Cheltenham aforesaid, Farmer and Dairyman, then of Leckhampton, near Cheltenham aforesaid, Farmer, Dairyman, Corn and Hop Dealer, and Maltster, having a malthouse in Gloucester-place, Cheltenham aforesaid, then of Close-cottage, Shurdington, near Cheltenham aforesaid, out of business, and late in lodgings at the Royal Oak Inn, Bredon, Worcestershire, out of business, his wife during the same time being in lodgings at Close-cottage, Shurdington aforesaid."*

(<http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/21184/pages/484/page.pdf>)

Subsequent proceedings revealed that the petition was fraudulent: the petitioner was his own brother-in-law.

James achieved an annulment and by 1852 was back at Leckhampton Farm and pursuing a new career, as an auctioneer and appraiser, land and general agent, with an office at 1, Portland Street in Cheltenham. The business prospered and eventually James purchased Newcourt House in Charlton Kings as the family home. James became a highly



respected member of society, Director of the Plough Hotel Company, and Treasurer of the Cotswold Hunt.

The business was in James' name until 1879 when he brought in his three unmarried sons and the business became James Villar and Sons. James retired in 1882 and died in 1884.

The business by then was in the hands on one son, Harry, and within weeks of his Father's death he was declared bankrupt. In the Charlton Kings Local History Society Research Bulletin 58, 2012, there is a very informative and interesting article by David O'Connor and others entitled 'The Two Lives of Harry Villar' from which some of this detail is taken. Harry was a rogue, deeply enmeshed in the shady world of horse race gambling. Until Harry took over the business it was regarded as a thriving and profitable concern but Harry lost it by gambling.

Of James Villar's family one, William, remained in Prestbury all his life and became a horse dealer and steeple chaser.

In the 1851 census the Villars had gone from Home Farm and the occupants were John Johnson (born at Seven Slaughter) aged 70 and his wife Elizabeth (born at Stanton) 73. John is shown as a farmer of 28 acres. This is a considerable reduction on the area James Villars was farming. The fields immediately adjacent to the farmstead amount to 14 acres so one only needs to add Gamage Hay and Normids to make 28. Presumably there was some good reason for an elderly couple to be leasing the homestead and 28 acres was much as they could manage. The larger part of the normal farm estate would clearly have been in some-one else's hands.

The next census in 1861 shows yet another change of occupant. The entry for Home Farm shows William Robinson as head of the household. He was unmarried, aged 34, and was born in Prestbury. He is shown to be a farmer of 150 acres, employing 5 men and 3 boys. With him is his brother Charles, also local and unmarried, and their mother Ann Robinson a widow aged 65 who was born in 1796 in Cirencester.

Their staff was James Messenger, a single 24 year old who came from Reepham and was employed as a Carter. James Stevens single aged 18 who came from in Bredon was the Cowman.

Emma Pocket single aged 20, born in Prestbury of a well known local family, was employed as a servant

The Robinsons were still there ten years later but there appears to have been a swap in the family. The older, William, is now shown as 63 and the younger, Charles, as 36. On the face of it an older member of the family, another William, has taken over with Charles staying in place.

There is a paper amongst the Capel Family records (G Archives D1450/T24) which is an Indenture dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1864 showing that Home Farm was then in the occupation of Joseph Etheridge. A pencilled note is added: 'inter alia'. Since this date is clearly within the time that the Robinsons were in occupation it is difficult to know what to make of it. The later pencilled note reflects some-one else's theory that the farm was somehow in multi-occupation.

In 1881 the Pumfrey family were tenants. Henry Pumfrey, aged 32, was born at Church-down. He was shown as a farmer of 83 acres employing 2 men. With him is his wife, Mary A Pumfrey aged 28 who came from Cheltenham, and two children, Harry aged 2 and born in Prestbury, and Mary born in Prestbury just before the census was taken. It would seem that both children were born at Home Farm.

They employed a servant Alice M Vallinder aged 15 who came from Staffordshire.

In the Cheltenham Mercury of November 1st 1884 is this interesting titbit:

*"Harriett Langley, a domestic servant, aged 18, was charged on remand with stealing from a box at the Home Farm, Prestbury, within the last month, a flannel petticoat, apron and two collars, value 4s., the property of Elizabeth Davis.*

*"The prosecutrix is a young girl who was nursemaid in the same service as the prisoner, namely at the Home Farm at Prestbury. She left last Wednesday, and when she got home the articles named in the charge were missed from her box. She had seen them safe some time before she left, and now identified them.*

*"PC Selwood produced the articles. He approached the prisoner on Saturday night, and when he told her the charge she said she knew nothing about anything but the petticoat. He searched her room and found the two collars. She afterwards gave him the petticoat and admitted that she had taken the things from the other girl's box,*

*Mr Pumfrey, in reply to the Chairman, said the prisoner had transgressed before and had been forgiven. He had no desire to press for any severe punishment.*

*As this was the first offence she was sent to gaol for seven days only; but the Chairman cautioned her as to her future conduct, telling her that if she came up again she would*

*be sent for trial”*

Henry Pumphrey was clearly a kindly and understanding man and employer.

By the time of the 1891 census the farmhouse was filled with the Stephen family — Father, Mother and seven children. Ed Stephen the head was aged 54 and came from Broadway. His wife Jane Stephen was 52 and came from Meon Hill. The children range in age from 9 to 24. the two older boys, Ed and Robert, are shown as ‘farmer’ and ‘saddler’. There is no occupation given for their 17 year old sister Rhoda or 15 year old brother John. The younger ones, Alice 13, Frederick 11, and Herbert 9, are shown as ‘scholar’. All the children were born locally, the older three in Prestbury and the younger ones in Cheltenham. There are no servants or live-in staff shown.

In 1901 John Harvey, 27, his wife Sarah 27, and his very young family, Muriel aged 1 and Fanny born just before the census date. John and Sarah came from Cleeve and Cowley respectively. Muriel was born in Leckhampton and Fanny at Home Farm. They employed three living in staff: Kathleen Hunt aged 16 of Cowley, George Purvey 20 of North Cerney who was the carter on the farm, and Walter Humphries 16 from Westbury on Severn who was the milkman. Pam Parkin (nee Pockett) lived in Prestbury as a child and remembers George Purvey and his wife and daughter living near the present Bay Tree Court.

The census returns give us an occasional glimpse of the people living at the farm as tenants of the Capels. Sometimes there is a reference in a deed which adds a little more information. The impression is that the tenants changed quite often as did the acreage being farmed.



## WIGGETTS, CHAMBERLAYNE AND BANWELL

According to Jack Chamberlayne's notes Home Farm was farmed by the Wiggett family from 1890 to 1924, followed by the Chamberlayne family who were related by marriage. (From 1900 to 1932 the Wiggetts also farmed Church Farm just along Mill Street.)



THE WIGGETT FAMILY

Alfred Ethel Lilian Alfred Charlotte

Alt-

though Alfred Wiggett farmed Home Farm from 1890 to 1924 he was not resident there for most of that time. The census returns show that the Stephens family were living at Home Farm in 1891 and the Harvey family in 1901. A deed of 1905 quotes Joseph Eldridge as the occupant. We know from Alfred Wiggett's obituary notes that the Wiggetts moved in 1900 into Church Farm though we do not know whether they were occupying Home Farm for some period prior to that date. It is clear from the census that the Harveys, listed as occupants, were farming and employed a milkman and a carter which would indicate that at least the farmhouse and part of the farm unit was sublet by Alfred Wiggett.

**Alfred Wiggett** came to Prestbury from Temple Guiting to farm first of all at White Hill and then at Home Farm. In 1891 the Wiggett family were shown at White Hill. He

moved to Church Farm in 1900 and remained there until 1932 when he retired to The Uplands, Noverton Lane where he died 10th February 1951 at the age of 90.

Alfred Wiggett married Charlotte Aldridge, of Bishops Cleeve in 1886. They had three children, Ethel, Alfred and Lilian.

Alfred Wiggett gave much of his time to public works and from 1901 to 1946 was a member of Cheltenham Rural District Council being its vice-chairman for 10 years before his retirement.

He was a member of the Cheltenham Board of Guardians for 30 years, a prominent Prestbury Parish Councillor and also for 30 years one of the Prestbury School Managers.

He also served for seven years on the Cheltenham Rural Food Control Committee.

The Wiggett family link with Home Farm continued when Maurice Chamberlayne married Lillian Wiggett, daughter of Alfred and Charlotte Wiggett.

**Maurice Chamberlayne**, was born in 1893. He was the fifth child of Frederick and Louise Chamberlayne of Abloads Court, Sandhurst, Glos.

Maurice and Lilian came to Home Farm as tenants in 1925 from a rented farm at Elmore which frequently flooded. This brought Lilian back to Mill Street and near to her parents at Church Farm. Maurice farmed Home Farm from 1925 and was widely known and respected as a dairy and beef farmer. During their occupancy they were able to purchase the farm from the Capel Estate in 1950.

Maurice was a founder member of the Cheltenham Horse Show and was also active in both the Cheltenham and Winchcombe Branches of the National Farmers' Union. He was a founder and the chairman of the Cheltenham and District Wholesale Meat Co Ltd.



He died in 1965 on his 72nd birthday after a lifetime associated with farming.

Maurice and Lilian had two children, Alfred John (Jack) and Mary.

## **Jack Chamberlayne**

I am very grateful to Bernard and Pam Parkin, close friends of Jack, for the following tribute and photograph.

*Jack Chamberlayne was my son's Godfather. A close family friend since the mid 1940's he, with his father Maurice, ran both Home Farm (on the corner of Mill Street and Bowbridge) and Priors Farm, close to the Foreign Office at Oakley. Home Farm was the property of Major Capel who lived at Prestbury House in The Burgage and the Chamberlaynes were tenant farmers until they were able to purchase the farm in 1950.*



*Jack was the hardest working of people, milking a large herd by hand in the early morning and constantly at it one way and another throughout the day. It was not unknown for him to fall asleep on the stairs up to his bedroom at the end of the day. He was very loyal to The Crown and was determined to see the Queen at Royal Ascot a week or so after the Coronation. My wife, Pam, and I went with him in his father's old Ford Popular which was the cheapest car on the market and a sandy colour. It had a top speed of about 40m.p.h., although I cannot remember Jack ever reaching that speed.*

*After Ascot he motored into the West End of London to see the Coronation decorations before they were taken down. The return journey was a nightmare. Jack kept falling asleep and Pam and I had our work cut out digging him in the ribs whenever his head began to sag which was often. We arrived back at Home Farm at about 6a.m. next day and Jack went straight out into Capel's field to bring in the cows. He then began milking.*

*Maurice Chamberlayne, his father, seemed to do little or no manual work. He was an astute judge of cattle and made good money buying and selling at Gloucester Market. Always he wore breeches and gaiters, even when he visited the hostelrys in Cheltenham in the evenings where he no doubt did good business with other cattle dealers. His son Jack was required, all the time that I knew him (and Maurice was alive) to take and col-*



*lect his father from The Fleece and The Plough Hotels in Cheltenham at closing time. All in the little sandy-coloured Ford Popular.*

*Jack Chamberlayne, until just after the war, attended the Chapel in Deep Street and then he switched completely to St Mary's which was, and always has been very high church. From one extreme to the other, one might say.*

*I first became friendly with Jack in 1945 when I was 15 and enrolled as a bell ringer at St Mary's . Jack wound the clock, did some ringing and was a choir man, server and thurifer down in the church. I took over the clock winding for a period of ten years, joined the choir in 1946 and also became a server alongside Jack. He was master at swinging the incense and we carried out our duties alongside each other for ten years.. He was devout and took his religion very seriously as we all did under the wing of the vicar, the Revd Henry Wilmot Hill. I met my wife Pam in 1947 in the choir—she in the ladies' choir and me in the men's. Jack became, very quickly, a firm family friend and we all took a great deal of active interest in the village and its history. Jack, especially, knew more about Prestbury and its inhabitants than anyone. He never stopped helping people and was loved by all.*

*Jack's mother's maiden name was Wiggett and her sister lived in Noverton Lane. Jack visited her every day in her old age and after his parents had died.*

*Jack eventually married but not until he was 'free' of his demanding parents. I think he would have been in his early sixties. She was a lady from a farming family high up in the Welsh hills and her name was Gwen. They were not married for very long before she had dementia and died. After that Jack was a lonely man.*

*Jack's schooling was at the Boy's Grammar School in Cheltenham High Street. The Chamberlayne's came from Sandhurst, near Gloucester and his sister, Mary, married a farmer from Hasfield and their son took over the Home Farm, Prestbury.*

Bernard Parkin.

Jack inherited Home Farm in 1965 on Maurice's death in 1965 . He married Gwendoline Powell in 1966.

In 1980 Jack and Gwen moved into the newly built Garden Cottage and, as Jack and Gwen had no children, Jack's nephew Charles Banwell, newly married to Jane, moved into the farmhouse to help with the running of the farm.

Jack Chamberlayne died 11th October 1999.

## THE FARM

Records of the work of the farm are scant. All records show that Home Farm was run as a dairy farm with crops grown on 'offsite' fields for animal feed. In earlier centuries, when the demand for dairy products was essentially local and wool prices high the farm would surely also have been a sheep farm. The fact that there was a market established in 1249 in The Burgage (Victoria Country History) would indicate that even then there was an outlet for the dairy products of the village farms such as Home Farm.

The 1941-3 Land Survey (TNA/GR/41/35/13) recorded that the owners were Major Capel and Mrs. De La Bere of The Cottage. This is the only instance I have found of the De La Bere name appearing on the Home Farm records. But the record also shows that: *"Home Farm and Priors run as one unit. Priors Farm occupied at Michaelmas 1942, then in poor condition. Farm House and buildings at Priors Farm bad. No electric light, and spring water supply."* It therefore seems quite likely that Mrs De La Bere was the owner of Priors Farm which had 86 acres. Priors Farm was just outside the parish to the south of the Cheltenham Cemetery. Mrs De La Bere had obviously made an arrangement with Maurice Chamberlayne which meant that the land of Priors Farm was productive, especially during the war years.

The Land Survey record also shows that Maurice Chamberlayne was rated as a farmer as the highest 'A' Class. He is shown as a full time farmer with 'other occupation' listed as 'Retail Milk'. His arable and pasture land was rated as 'good', the farmhouse 'good' and the other buildings 'fair'. The farm had 145 acres and was described as a 'dairy and arable' farm. The only crop shown for 1940 and 1941 is oats. There is a negative return for fruit and vegetables for human consumption. At the time there was a store of 5 tons of hay.

A newspaper report of a fire in the Dutch Barn in June 1973 says that Jack Chamberlayne had about 100 head of cattle, including 30 dairy cows plus calves. We know from Jack's notes that milk was produced and retailed in the village and Cheltenham.

In October 1973 there was a sale of 50 dairy cows, heifers, and a Hereford stock bull plus milking equipment. This marked the end of dairy farming at Home Farm though farming carried on with calf rearing for beef until 1990.

The changes in farming in the past fifty years have meant that dairy farming on the scale of this farm was uneconomical and thus led to its demise as a working farm, as it did to the other dairy farms of Prestbury. The removal of subsidies and guaranteed prices for milk must have been a heavy blow. The costs involved in purchasing new breeds and

feeding methods, which have led to greatly increased yields, has also been a major factor leading to the loss of thousands of dairy units.

The farm has provided a home and a living for its occupants for more than 300 years and has supplied the people of the locality with dairy products and beef for generations. If, as seems likely, Home Farm was the farm of the manor, then it is likely that it has been farmed for several hundred years! The buildings continue to be an attractive corner of this picturesque crossroads at the heart of the village. They stand as a witness to centuries of the farming life which was the essence of Prestbury across the ages.

#### REFERENCES:

Bigland. Historical Monumental and Genealogical Collections.

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Tithe Map and Schedule. GA.P254/SD2

PNG: Place Names of Gloucestershire

The 1941-3 Land Survey TNA/GR/41/35/13

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GA: Gloucester Archives

TNA: The National Archives.





According to Braunnoltz “The weather vane on the barn is 14th century and came from Musselburgh town hall, Scotland. The farm owner, Mr. Chamerlayne put it there in 1967.” Photo kindly supplied by Geoff North.