

WELFORD-ON-AVON · THE BARTON ROAD, SOUTH-WEST OF
THE VILLAGE

Cress Hill Farm

Open-field strips, a fruit close, a soldier's smallholding, two cows and a milk can, a county field sold to the village, and a farm that the records name only a handful of times.

Drawn from the Welford and Weston Local History Society archive (folder references in grey). A companion to the essay on Cress Hill itself, which deals with the river, the lock and the parish field; this one follows the farming and the farm.

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“View from Cress Hill 1910.” A commercial card printed as “River View, Welford-on-Avon”, dated and placed on its mount. The camera stands on the farm’s own ground: rough pasture falling to the river, with the orchards of the village beyond. 53/05

A farm with a borrowed name what the records actually say

Cress Hill Farm appears in the Welford and Weston Local History Society’s archive by name exactly four times. In May 1960 a firm of Stratford solicitors headed their letters “Land at Cresshill Farm, Welford on Avon”, as they handled the sale of a riverside field by Gloucestershire County Council to Welford Parish Council 57/02. In a small notebook headed “Houses in Welford about 1960”, a villager went down the Barton road writing down every house and its occupier, and near the far end of the road, just before Welford Pastures Farm, wrote “Mr Rushton, Cress Hill Farm”, with the code for a bungalow built since 1945 and the note “agricultural holding” 20/06. In the electoral register that came into force in February 1987, under the heading “Cress Hill”, are John A. and Jean M. Taylor of Cress Hill Farm 30/05. And a commentary on one of the Society’s files mentions a “Crest Hill Farm” in a manuscript history of the village, which this essay has not been able to check 58/01–09.

That is the whole of the direct evidence. There are no deeds for the farm in the archive, no sale particulars, no tenancy agreement, no farm accounts, no photograph that is labelled as the farmhouse, and no reminiscence by anyone who lived there. Cress Hill Farm has to be pieced together from what was written about the land around it, about the people who farmed on the hill, and about the county smallholdings and private holdings that lined the road out of Welford towards Barton and Bidford. This essay does that piecing together. It tries throughout to make clear which statements rest on a document and which are inferences. Where it guesses, it says so.

The name needs one warning before going any further. Welford has a much better documented “Cress Farm” in the middle of the village. Cress Farmhouse, now in Miller’s Close off the High Street, is a listed building of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “farmhouse, now house”, with a timber-framed rear wing 47/1–66. It was the home of the Jacksons and the Bromleys, its barn was where strolling players acted, it housed the Welford branch of the Littleton and Badsey Growers, and it was farmed in 1901 by William Wyatt and in 1911 by Oliver Farley 10/01, 10/32–56, 46/37–95, 48/09–10. In 1972 the editor of the parish magazine, James A. Knott, gave his address as Cress Farm House 19/51. None of that belongs here. Cress Farm stands half a mile from Cress Hill, and nothing in the archive connects the two. Everything in this essay concerns the holding on the hill road, south-west of the village, where the land falls to the Avon below the old lower lock.

A second warning concerns time. A farm called Cress Hill Farm is documented only between 1960 and 1987. The farming of Cress Hill is documented much earlier, from the open fields of the eighteenth century onwards. The earlier sections of this essay therefore describe the land that the farm later occupied, and the farms and smallholdings that worked it, rather than a farm that already bore the name. It is possible that the name is no older than the twentieth century; the archive cannot say.

Where the farm lay the Barton road, the river and the neighbours

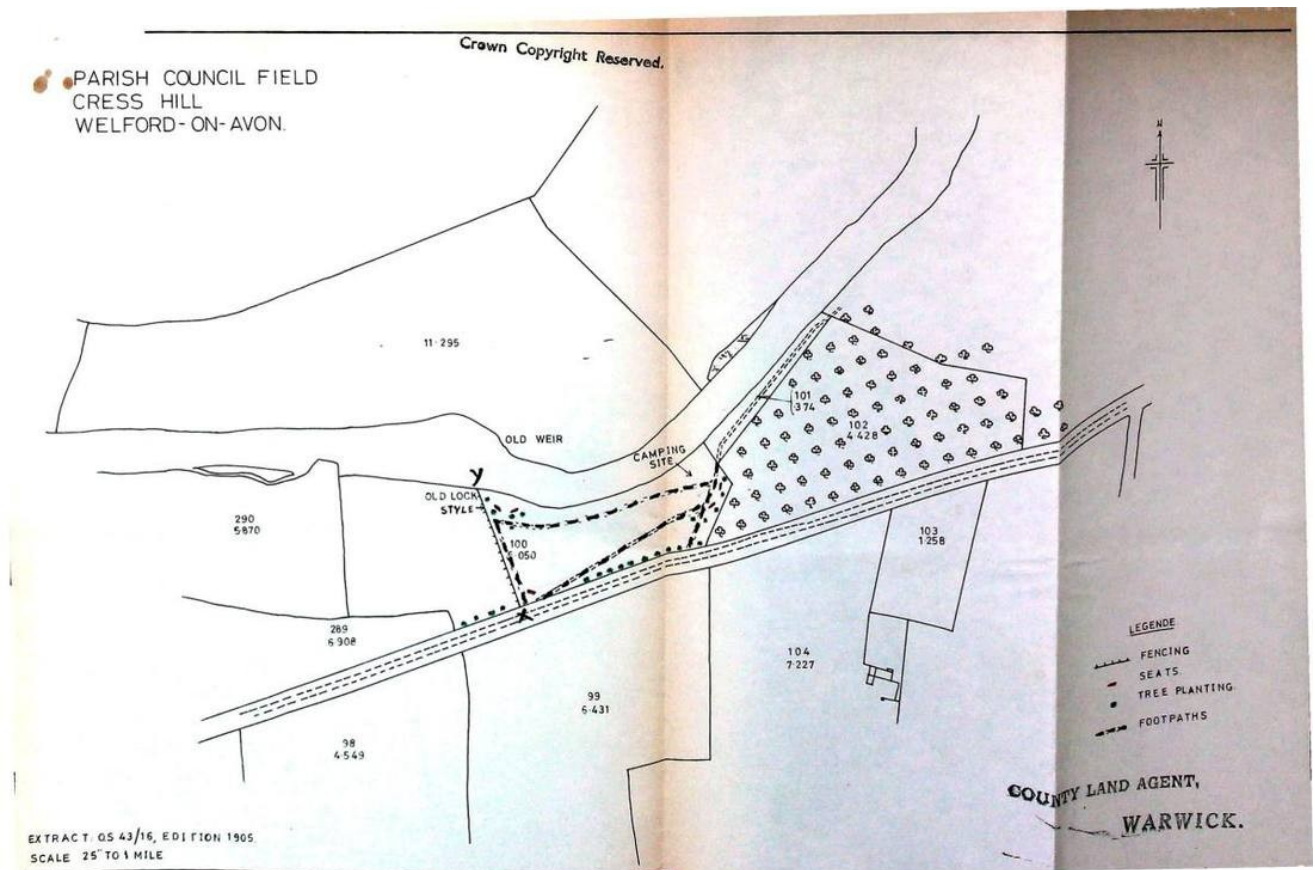
The road west out of Welford leaves the village by the Maypole, runs between what were once orchards and are now bungalows, and climbs gently over Cress Hill before dropping towards Barton and Bidford. At the brow of the hill a lane goes off south to Braggington and Dorsington. North of the road, on the right going

west, the land falls in a steep bank to the river. South of it the ground is higher and more open, rising towards Hunt Hall and Welford Hill. Further west the road passes Welford Pastures and Upper Welford Pastures, the last farms in the parish before Barton 20/06, 06/12.

The notebook of about 1960 is the only document that places Cress Hill Farm on the ground. Its compiler walked the Barton road twice, once for each side. On the north side, after the village bungalows (Fairlea, The Knap, White Orchard, Erica, Cedargates, Endon, Zelah), came "Mr Brown, One Acre — Smallholding", "Mr R. Hawkins — smallholding", "Mr B. Hawkins", "Mrs Goddard, Hawkswood", then "Mr Rushton, Cress Hill Farm — 1B — x — agricultural holding", then "Welford Pastures Farm — used for farm workers" and "Nolcham Brook cottage" 20/06. On that reading Cress Hill Farm was the last holding on the river side of the road before Welford Pastures, which puts it on or just beyond the brow of the hill, on the side that runs down to the Avon.

That fits the solicitors' letters of 1960, which treat the riverside field the parish was buying, Ordnance Survey parcel 100 of about five acres with the ruined lock at its corner, as land "at Cresshill Farm" 57/02. It also fits a memory of the 1930s and 1940s, which places Mr Rushton's two cows "in a field on the Barton side of Cress Hill" 49/21. Whether the farm's buildings stood on the river side, or whether the notebook's two lists are less tidy than they look, is discussed at the end of this essay; the evidence is not conclusive.

The County Land Agent's plan of 1972, drawn on the twenty-five-inch Ordnance Survey of 1905, shows the shape of the land around the parish field and gives the acreage of each parcel 06/12. Field 100, 6.050 acres on the 1905 survey, is a wedge between the road and the river. East of it, towards the village, parcel 101 is a narrow strip of 0.374 acres and parcel 102, of 4.428 acres, is drawn as orchard. West of it, also on the river side, is parcel 290, of 5.870 acres, and between 290 and the road is parcel 289, of 6.908 acres. Across the road, on the south side, are parcel 99 (6.431 acres), parcel 104 (7.227 acres, with a small group of buildings at its southern edge), parcel 103 (1.258 acres) and parcel 98 (4.549 acres). These are the fields among which Cress Hill Farm must have lain. The plan does not say which of them belonged to the farm, and no other document in the archive does either.



The fields round Cress Hill, on the 1905 twenty-five-inch survey. The County Land Agent's 1972 plan of the parish field (100). The surrounding parcels, 98, 99, 101–104, 289 and 290, are the fields among which Cress Hill Farm lay; 102 is still drawn as orchard. North is at the top right. 06/12

The neighbours can be named with more confidence. Hunt Hall, on the higher ground to the south, was a farm of the Milcote estate with two estate cottages, occupied in 1916 by a Mr Hawkins 13/39. Bunkers Hill Farm, seventy-nine acres of the rector's glebe with a four-roomed cottage, had "a considerable frontage to the Main Road from Welford-on-Avon to Bidford-on-Avon" 11/30. Welford Pastures and Upper Welford Pastures lay to the west. A Glebe Farm is marked on the Society's 1924 sale plan just south of the Cress Hill cottages, and on the 1972 location plan further south again 11/30, 06/12. And by the 1980s, according to the widow of a former rector, the land of the Bickmarsh Hall estate, far away on the southern edge of the parish, stretched as "a huge acreage, stretching over to the top of Cress Hill!" 03/39.

Strips, closes and fruit before 1800 to 1849

For most of its history the land of Cress Hill was farmed in common. Welford, like its neighbours, was an open-field parish, its arable divided into great fields and those into furlongs, and the

furlongs into the strips that each farmer held scattered across the parish. A list of the old field names, compiled in 1969 from documents then at Manor Farm, from the enclosure award and from records at the Shakespeare Institute, includes a "Cress Butt" among the furlongs and meadows 08/12. A butt was a short strip, usually at the edge of a field where the plough ran out against a slope, a stream or a boundary. A hillside falling steeply to the Avon is just such a place. The name suggests that "Cress" was attached first to a corner of the open fields and only later to the hill as a whole, though the archive copy of the list is a machine reading of a typescript and the form needs checking against the original.

The enclosure of the open fields, under an award usually dated to 1800 or 1801, ended that system. The commissioners divided some 650 acres among the proprietors and laid out five public roads forty feet wide. The first was the "Bidford Road", running from Boyce's Gate "straight line Westward to Angle at South end of Briar Furlong, thence straight Westward to Pasture Gate at entrance to Barton". The second, the Braggington Road, turned off it "near South end of Briar Furlong" and ran south to the Dorsington boundary. The third, Headland Road, came down to the Bidford road "at Cross Furlong" 20/04, 47/98. These roads still frame Cress Hill. The farm that later took the hill's name lay along the first of them, at the point where the second leaves it.

Enclosure also gave the rector land instead of tithes. The 1807 glebe terrier, quoted by H. M. Woodward, records that the enclosure had given the rectory 77 acres of arable and a three-bay barn 26/10. That allotment is almost certainly what the twentieth century knew as Bunkers Hill Farm, the 79-acre glebe farm on the road to Bidford, though the archive never says so in so many words 11/30.

The new hedged closes on the hill were turned over to fruit. The first time the hill appears as property is at an auction at the Bell Inn on 11 April 1849, when George Mann offered, as Lot 2,

All that close of valuable Arable Land planted with Choice Fruit Trees called Cress Hill on the road leading from Welford to Barton...

Sale particulars, 11 April 1849, as copied into the Society's notebook of sale notices 11/30

The close measured 4 acres, 3 roods and 16 perches and was entered as "Arable & Orchard". It carried a land tax of 10s 7d a

year. Five bidders took it from £350 to £415, but the reserve was £470 and the lot was bought in 11/30. The combination is the important point for a history of farming on the hill. The close was not simply an orchard. It was arable land with fruit trees planted on it, and the ground between and under the trees was presumably still cropped. That double use, corn or vegetables below and plums or apples above, was the pattern of Welford farming for the next hundred years, and the archive's descriptions of the hill keep returning to it.

The archive does not say who owned the close, who farmed it, or whether it later formed part of Cress Hill Farm. Its position "on the road leading from Welford to Barton" would fit either side of the road. The essay on the hill discusses the auction more fully.

The farms on the Bidford road glebe, pastures and the Milcote estate

The best description of farmland on the hill road is not of Cress Hill itself but of its neighbour. On 21 September 1920 Hutchings and Deer auctioned the glebe farms of Welford and Weston at the Golden Lion in Stratford. Lot II was Bunkers Hill Farm, 79 acres, 1 rood and 32 perches, "together with 4 Roomed Cottage & Farm Buildings", let to A. T. Montague at £70 a year on a lease that ran to Michaelmas 1925. The particulars described it as a farmer or a builder would have seen it:

There is a considerable frontage to the Main Road from Welford-on-Avon to Bidford-on-Avon, is less than a mile from the former village & being situate on high ground from which there are extensive views of the River Avon & Cotswold Hills, is a most desirable situation for the erection of a residence. The greater part of this lot is also well situated for Fruit-Growing. The arable portion is productive wheat, bean and pea land and the Pasture suitable for Dairying or rearing.

Sale particulars, 21 September 1920, as copied into the Society's notebook 11/30

Bidding started at £1,000 and the farm was withdrawn at £1,900. The Weston glebe farm, 34 acres let to A. Walton, "one of the most desirable Small Holdings in the district", sold to a Mr Prosser for £1,950 11/30. Montague was still renting part of the glebe, Long Meadow, at £20 a year when the rector's income was listed some years later 02/15-25.

The particulars of 1920 describe the land of the Bidford road in four uses that run through the rest of this story: wheat, beans and peas on the arable; fruit-growing on the slopes; dairying or rearing on the pasture; and, already, the sale of frontages to people who wanted a house with a view. Cress Hill Farm, whatever its exact extent, lay among fields of exactly this kind.

The bigger farms were mostly part of the Milcote estate, which the Sackvilles had held since the seventeenth century and which covered much of Welford and nearly all of Weston. A former rector's widow, writing to the Society, explained that "all Welford land that paid tithe ... formed part of what began to be known as Lord Sackville's Milcot estate" 03/39. The estate was broken up in 1916. Its surveyor, E. B. Glasier of Piccadilly, drew up a list of its thirty-eight cottages in July of that year, grouped under the farms they went with: Milcote Hall, Milcote Manor, Weston Sands, Weston Farm, Welford Hill, Rumer Hall, Hunt Hall and Cherry Orchard Farm 13/39. Welford Hill Farm, 288 acres, went to Francis Parish; Rumer Hall to Walford Izod; Weston Sands and Nobbs Farm, nearly 593 acres, to O. W. Buttler; and Cherry Orchard Farm, a ten-acre holding in the village, to J. Turvey 13/38, 13/43–51. Hunt Hall, on the higher ground south of Cress Hill, was occupied by Mr Hawkins 13/39.

None of the surviving Milcote schedules mentions Cress Hill, and none of them includes a holding on the Barton road west of the village. Either the Cress Hill land was not Sackville property, or the schedule that covered it is not in the archive. Later writers placed the sale in 1923 or around 1924 rather than 1916, which probably means that the estate was sold off over several years 03/39, 03/04, 02/01–12.

The 1914 Kelly's Directory lists the farmers who held this ground on the eve of the war: Francis Parish and Son at Welford Hill, Walford Izod at Rumer Hall, George Ernest Postlethwaite at Welford Pastures, Lewis Hawkins at Church Farm, and Mrs John Ritchings, farmer, with no farm named. Most of the rest of the list is market gardeners: Bassons, Blundells, Broads, Bryans, Hancocks, Hancoxes, Matthews and Sabins 48/13–22. There is no Cress Hill Farm in the directory, and no farmer is listed at Cress Hill.



The village and its orchards, 1903. Detail of the Society's copy of the six-inch Ordnance Survey. The Bidford road leaves the village at the lower left, past orchards, to "Old Weir" and "Old Lock" under Cress Hill. Hunt Hall is to the south. The sheet edge cuts off the farmland west of the lock. 46/14

Labourers, shepherds and a builder 1841 – 1920

The Victorian censuses in the archive do not name a farm at Cress Hill. They do show who worked the land around it. In 1841 the parish had about 105 agricultural labourers and eleven farmers 48/01. In 1851 the biggest Welford farmer, Joseph Hughes, farmed 240 acres, and women were listed as field workers and glovers 14/12. By 1901 the balance had shifted: around 80 labourers, 19 market gardeners and nine farmers 48/08.

The outlying houses on the road towards Barton were counted in a separate enumeration district in 1891. One surviving page lists

Pasture Farm Cottage, where Eli Vale, a carter born at Broom, lived with his wife Emma and five children; two households at Pasture Farm, one headed by George Vincent, labourer, and the other by Lucy Luxton, a widow of 42 described as “farmer (employer)”, with her daughter, a nephew and a fifteen-year-old farm servant; Bunker’s Hill, with Edmund Kelsher, farm servant, born in Northamptonshire; and Hunt Hall, with Henry Basson, labourer, born at Kelmscott in Oxfordshire, his wife, a son who was also a labourer and another who was a groom. One house at Hunt Hall stood empty 48/07. That is the farming community of the hill road at the end of the nineteenth century: one woman farmer at the Pastures, a farm servant on the glebe, labourers’ families in the farm cottages. There is no entry that can be identified with Cress Hill.

The hill’s own pasture was rough. J. H. Garrett, rowing up from Bidford in the early 1900s, climbed from the ruined lock up a “fine, wild bank, partly covered with bushes”, and from the gate at the top looked across “large plantations of cherry and plum trees” with, in the foreground, “the steep slope of the rough pasture, which has sheep grazing upon it”. At quiet times, he wrote, the place was “left to the sheep” 11/33. The photograph of 1910 at the head of this essay shows the same slope, unhedged and open, with the river curving away below 53/05. Sheep on the steep bank and fruit on the gentler ground is the oldest picture of how the hill was farmed.

Arthur Matthews, born in 1902, son and grandson of the village blacksmiths, remembered that “Cress Hill to the church” had been “all a fruit orchard — plums, apples, damsons, few cherries” 08/04. A draft article written from his and other interviews adds that the land “from Cress Hill to the church & to Headland Road was orchard & market garden land. Orchards planted by Mr Hawkins” 08/07. Which Hawkins is meant is not stated. The Hawkinses were millers, builders and farmers in Welford across several generations, and one of them, Harold, appears in the next part of the story as the owner of land on the hill.

By 1911 there was a household on the hill road. The census summary book for that year follows the enumerator from the Four Alls out along the road: Hazelwood Villa (Wilson, market gardener), Wood View (Hancock, market gardener), Roseleigh (Basson, market gardener), then “Cross Hill Cottage”, occupied by a builder named Quiney, then Bushes Hill Cottage, empty, then Welford Pastures 48/09. The household schedule fills in the family: Arthur Quiney, 45, builder and employer, born at Grafton; his wife Mary, also 45; their son Percy, 18, “assisting in the business”; and two

schoolchildren, Sidney, 9, and Vera, 7. They lived in five rooms 48/12.

The transcription reads "Cross Hill". There was a Cross Furlong where Headland Road met the Bidford road 47/98, and Cross Farm was a different place again 60/01, so the reading may be right. But the cottage's position in the enumerator's route, between the market gardens beyond the Four Alls and the empty cottage at Bunkers Hill before Welford Pastures, is exactly where Cress Hill lies, and "Cress" is easily misread as "Cross" in a clerk's hand. The Society's copy is a transcription without the image, so the point cannot be settled here. If the reading is a slip, Arthur Quiney's family were the first people the archive records living on Cress Hill. A Mr Sidney Quiney was still living on the Barton road in 1950 01/56.

One other record falls in these years. On 25 May 1920 the auctioneers Kibler Morgan sold the contents of Cress Hill House on the premises: 84 lots of "furniture, bedding and various agricultural pieces" 11/30. The phrase is the only hint in the archive that a house on the hill had a working farm attached to it in this period. The compiler of the sale notebook found no record of the proceeds and did not name the occupier, and Cress Hill House does not appear in any later document under that name.

Smallholdings for returned men 1892 – 1920s

The idea that a county council might own a small farm on Cress Hill and let it to a local man goes back to the Small Holdings Act of 1892, which allowed county councils to buy land and sell or let it in small parcels. Welford Parish Council's minute books show the idea reaching the village. On 31 January 1906 the council received "a Circular Letter re Small Holdings Act 1892", and on 22 April 1908 "Small Holdings & Allotments" was on the agenda again. In October 1908 Lord Sackville offered to let or sell the northern part of a field on Mr Steadman's farm, opposite the road to Milcote, for allotments, but the applicants were not willing to work that land and no action was taken 18/13, 18/14.

The war changed the scale of the policy. Under the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act of 1919, county councils were encouraged to provide smallholdings for ex-servicemen, and many did. The archive has no papers from Gloucestershire County Council about Welford holdings, but it does have Gilda Gray's

memory of the village around 1924, written for the Women's Institute's fiftieth anniversary:

The Milcote estate was in process of sale. Gloucestershire County Council had bought certain fields for smallholdings for the returned village war heroes. There was that long list of men who had lost their lives in the war. There were those who had returned injured in health in such a way that, though they lived for almost another 50 years, were never really well again.

Gilda Gray, "W.I. – Fifty Years Old, Part I", December 1974 03/04

Mrs Gray does not say where the county's fields were. But thirty-five years later Gloucestershire County Council was the owner of land called "Cresshill Farm", which it sold in part to the parish 57/02. Welford had moved to Warwickshire in 1931 19/30, and the only obvious reason for Gloucestershire to keep a farm in a parish that was no longer in the county is that it had bought it while Welford was still Gloucestershire and had never sold it. The most likely time for that purchase is the years after 1919 that Mrs Gray describes. It is a reasonable inference that Cress Hill Farm was one of the county's soldier smallholdings. It is still only an inference: no document in the archive says when or how the county acquired the land.

Among the village's returned men were two who matter to Cress Hill. In the summer of 1917 Jim Matthews, a Welford market gardener's son serving with the 1/6th Gloucesters, wrote home to his mother at Virginia Cottage. Between questions about the gooseberries and the plums he told her who he had met in France:

Well Mother you will be pleased to hear I have met a few of the Welford boys at last, I have seen Lance Cpl George Parriss, Corporal Ernest Parriss, Corporal Reg Rushton & Spencer Bennett within the last few days... They say Arthur Johnson & Harold Hawkins are round this part somewhere but I havent come across them yet.

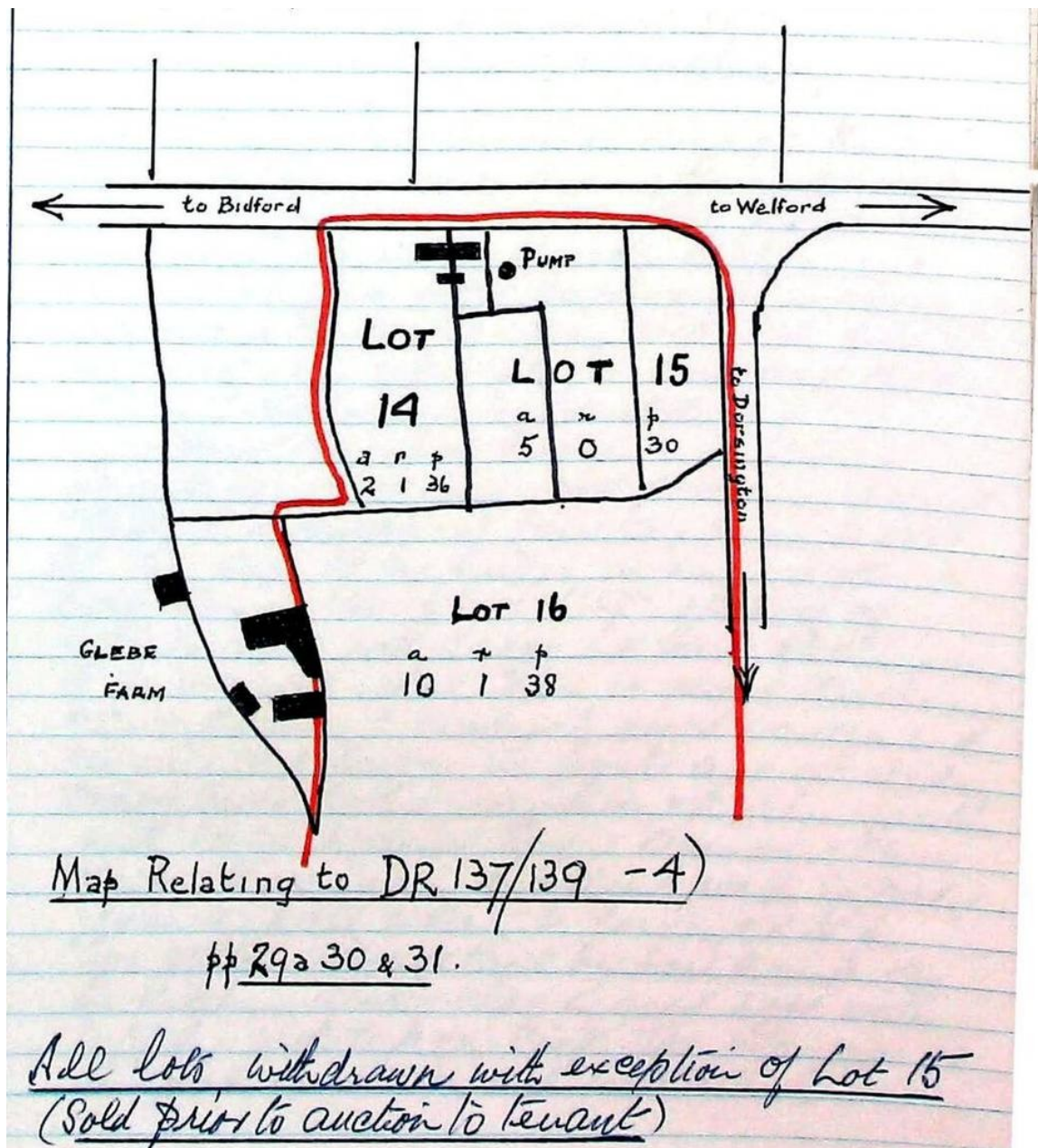
Jim Matthews to his mother, 29 July 1917 43/02-84

Jim Matthews was killed ten days later, on 9 August 1917 43/85-103. Reg Rushton and Harold Hawkins came home. In 1914 the directory had listed Reginald Rushton as the village mail contractor 48/13-22. Ten years later a Mr R. Rushton was the tenant of a five-acre smallholding on Cress Hill; and by the 1930s Harold Hawkins owned land on the hill and had built a house there 11/30, 08/07. The

archive does not say that the R. Rushton of 1924 was the corporal of 1917, or that he was the Mr Rushton of Cress Hill Farm in 1960. The initial, the name and the place make it likely that the same family is meant, but the papers never join the dots.

Avon View, 1924 a five-acre holding on the hill

The fullest description of any farm property on Cress Hill comes from a sale held on 15 March 1924. Edwards, Son and Bigwood offered "Freehold Building Sites, Freehold Small Holdings & Pasture Land" at The Bungalow, Headland Road. Lots 1 to 13 were building plots and new roughcast bungalows on the Bidford and Headland roads, the first wave of the ribbon development that would line the road out of the village after the Second World War. Lots 14 to 16 were on Cress Hill itself 11/30.



The Cress Hill lots, 15 March 1924. The Society compiler's copy of the sale plan: Hill Crest (Lot 14), the smallholding called Avon View (Lot 15) with its pump, and the ten-acre orchard field (Lot 16), between the Bidford road and the lane to Dorsington. Glebe Farm is at the lower left. The note at the foot reads "All lots withdrawn with exception of Lot 15 (Sold prior to auction to tenant)". 11/30

Lot 15 was "the adjoining Freehold Small Holding known as Avon View, Cress Hill": a brick and slated cottage like its neighbour, with garden, pasture and arable land "having long frontages to the Bidford Road and the road leading to Dorsington". It was let to Mr R. Rushton on an annual tenancy at £20 8s a year, the landlord paying the rates. The particulars break the holding down as follows 11/30:

USE	ACRES	NOTES
Cottage and garden	0.237	Brick and slate; shares a pump with Hill Crest
Pasture	1.591	
Pasture (II)	2.154	
Arable	1.210	
Total	5.192	Given as 5a 0r 30p; let to R. Rushton at £20 8s a year

The figures describe a small mixed holding: three and three-quarter acres of grass, enough for two or three cows or a few sheep, and an acre and a quarter of ploughland for vegetables, fruit or fodder. The cottage had the same plan as Hill Crest next door, with an entrance lobby, a living room and kitchen each with a range, a pantry and three bedrooms. Water came from “the Pump in the enclosure”, and the buyer of Avon View had to allow the owner of Hill Crest “free access to and use of the Pump” 11/30. There was no mains water in Welford until after the Second World War, and even in 1962 about eighty of the parish’s 340 homes were not on the main 06/09.

Lot 14, Hill Crest, was the same kind of cottage with 2 acres, 1 rood and 26 perches of garden and pasture, offered with vacant possession and “with view of River Avon”. Lot 16 was a “valuable Freehold Field of Old Turf Land” of just over ten acres, with a long frontage to the Dorsington road, “a part ... being planted with choice Plum and Apple Trees”, let to Christopher Parriss of the village stores at £15 10s 11/30. Together the three lots made about eighteen acres, very nearly a small farm in themselves.

The auction failed. Hill Crest and the orchard field were withdrawn. Avon View had already gone: the compiler’s note says it was “Sold prior to auction to tenant” 11/30. In March 1924, then, R. Rushton became the owner of the smallholding he had been renting. That is the earliest secure date for a Rushton farming on Cress Hill, and the only point at which the archive records anyone buying farmland there.

The vendor is not named, and nothing in the particulars connects the sale with the county council or with the Milcote estate. Avon View was a private freehold sold to a sitting tenant. If Gloucestershire County Council owned land on Cress Hill at this date, it was not these lots. The sale plan does show what lay on the other side: the Bidford road along the top, the lane to Dorsington down the right, and the buildings of Glebe Farm at the bottom left 11/30. Hill Crest survived as “Hillcrest”: in 1987 the Hands family

lived there, under the same “Cress Hill” heading as Cress Hill Farm 30/05.

Two cows and a milk can 1930s – 1940s

The one account of Rushton farming on Cress Hill comes from a woman whose family moved to Welford in 1929, writing many years later to the Society about village life before and during the Second World War. Under the heading “MILK” she wrote:

Mr Rushton kept 2 cows in a field on the Barton side of Cress Hill and he cycled round the village with two milk cans on the handlebars; knocking on the kitchen window he filled jugs straight from the churn; this was still going on during the war until eventually bottled TT milk was delivered from the village shop but I remember a medical student friend was horrified to discover how her rather warm milk had been delivered.

Reminiscence of Welford in the 1930s and 1940s 49/21

It is a small business, and a typical one. Two cows would produce more milk than one household needed, and in a village of about 700 people with no dairy of its own there was a living to be made selling the surplus door to door. The detail of the field “on the Barton side of Cress Hill” matters, because it places the grazing west of the brow, towards Welford Pastures, and so more likely on the farm that the 1960 notebook calls Cress Hill Farm than on Avon View, whose land fronted the Dorsington lane on the village side of the hill. TT, or tuberculin-tested, milk came from herds certified free of bovine tuberculosis. Its arrival, bottled and delivered from the shop, is what ended Mr Rushton’s round. The archive does not say when that happened, only that the round was “still going on during the war”.

The Rushton name runs all through mid-century Welford, but the archive never sets out how the various Rushtons were related, and they should not all be assumed to belong to the farm. A Cyril J. Rushton was the village baker and grocer, and his wife Emma Carrick Rushton was among the trustees of village property 49/07, 60/04. Mrs Rushton and a Gerald Rushton lived at 11 Headland Close in 1950 01/56. An E. P. Rushton, probably the Eric P. Rushton

of Millers Close in 1987, won prizes at the village shows of the 1940s and 1950s for eggs, rhubarb, potatoes, broad beans, French and kidney beans, shallots and marrows, which suggests a keen grower if not necessarily a farmer 54/01, 30/05. A Mr and Mrs Rushton lived at Manor Cottage 01/56, 20/06. Miss Gwen Petit Rushton (1892-1974), who bought The Gables in 1935, made a celebrated English garden there and later gave the field for the churchyard extension, is commemorated by a screen in the church 21/22-66, 19/55, 29/28, 29/14. Her father's family are not linked to the farm in any document, and the memorial papers give no hint that they were.

Gerald Rushton is the one other Rushton who can be placed near the hill. In the notebook of about 1960, two bungalows in Braggington Lane, the old enclosure road that leaves the Bidford road at the top of Cress Hill and runs south to Dorsington, are bracketed together as "small holding": one is Mr Rushton's and the other Mr Czapko's 20/06. In 1987 Gerald Rushton was living at The Bungalow, Braggington Lane, next door to Doris and Stephen Czapko 30/05. In 1960, then, there were apparently two Rushton holdings on the hill: Cress Hill Farm itself, and a smallholding a few hundred yards down the Braggington lane.

Asparagus and pigs across the road 1932 – c.1960

The most detailed account of farming on Cress Hill in the whole archive is not about Cress Hill Farm. It is about the land opposite, on the higher ground towards Hunt Hall, and it comes from an interview with Mr Lively, a market gardener born in 1899, recorded by the Society in the 1970s and written up twice 08/05, 08/07. It is worth giving in full, because it is the only first-hand description of what working the hill involved.

In September 1932 Mr Lively took "7½ acres of land on Cress Hill which runs from the Whynes to Zara House & back to Hunt Hall Farm". He rented it from "Mr Harold Hawkins (who also built Zara House)"; the first draft of the interview has "Mr Harold Hawthorn[e]", but the fair copy corrects it, and Hawkins fits the orchards "planted by Mr Hawkins" 08/05, 08/07. The land had evidently been grass or neglected, because he and his brother dug the whole of it by hand:

Mr L. dug the land by hand with a two-tine fork with his brother — took them 7 weeks. Then they hired a caterpillar tractor to break it down. Used to work up to 11 p.m.

Interview with Mr Lively, fair copy 08/07

They planted asparagus, of the varieties Connover's Colossal and Late Giant Mammoth, in beds three feet by six, and grew other crops in the rows between. Asparagus is a long-term crop. A bed took three years from seed before it could be cut, and then lasted sixteen. At its height the Livelys had three and a half acres of it, with cereals on the rest of the holding 08/05, 08/07. About 1948 he started keeping pigs on a further three and a half acres, in a shed "behind the spinney", and sold them at Stratford market either as stores, at about eight weeks, or as porkers, at fourteen weeks or more 08/05, 08/07.

The produce went to Birmingham. It was collected by Mr Wilson Matthews's motor lorry, garaged on the Matthews ground where Aldwich Cottage later stood, and taken to Messrs Daniels in the Birmingham vegetable market 08/07. That was the old Welford route to market in motorised form. In the nineteenth century growers had driven their carts through the night, stopping at the Bird in Hand at Henley-in-Arden until midnight so as to pass the last toll gate after it changed day and reach the Birmingham market about five in the morning 54/105, 20/01.

Mr Lively's holding gives a sense of scale for Cress Hill Farm. Seven and a half acres, later eleven with the pig ground, was enough to support two brothers working long hours on a high-value crop with a reliable route to a city market. Avon View's five acres was smaller still. Whatever Cress Hill Farm's exact size, it belonged to the same world of family holdings measured in single figures or low tens of acres, not to the world of the 300-acre farms on the Milcote estate.

Harold Hawkins's Zara House reappears twice. Bernard Harris, remembering the Second World War, watched "the fires and searchlights" of the worst night of the Coventry blitz "from a bedroom at (now) Zaria on Cress Hill" 36/11-13. In about 1960 a Mr Ager lived at Zaria, and in 1987 Ronald and Susan Ball 20/06, 30/05. The "Whynes" at the other end of Mr Lively's land is less certain; a house called The Wynns stood in Chapel Street 20/06, so the name may belong to a field or to a different house of the same name.

A road of smallholdings 1950 – 1964

Two house-by-house notebooks in the archive record the hill road in the middle of the twentieth century, a decade apart.

The first, “People in Welford 1950”, lists the Barton road in two parts. Beyond the village houses come Mr and Mrs Wood at One Acre, Mr and Mrs Bert Hawkins at The Gravels, Mrs Cooper, Mr Chad Johnson, Mr and Mrs Hawkins at Bartondene, and then “Mr & Mrs Jack Ayer — Cress Hill”. Then the Hunt Hall cottages, then a second Barton road section: Alec Bryan in Braggington Lane, the Pennys, the Blissés, Roger Roberts at Bunkers Hill with three families in the Bunkers Hill cottages, the Baylisses at Upper Welford Pastures, the Newmans at Welford Pastures and the Giles family at The Trees 01/56. There is no Rushton on the Barton road in 1950 and no Cress Hill Farm. The Jack Ayer at Cress Hill may be the “Mr Ager” at Zaria ten years later; the spelling is the compiler’s.

The second notebook, “Houses in Welford about 1960”, is more useful, because its compiler noted what each property was for. The Barton road beyond the village was a road of smallholdings 20/06:

SIDE	OCCUPIER AND HOUSE	NOTE IN THE NOTEBOOK
North	Mr Brown, One Acre	bungalow since 1945; smallholding
North	Mr R. Hawkins	bungalow since 1945; smallholding
North	Mr Rushton, Cress Hill Farm	bungalow since 1945; agricultural holding
North	Welford Pastures Farm	used for farm workers
South	Mr Sumner, Westview	business premises; poultry farm
South	Caravan site (20)	seasonal licence
South	Mrs Crosley; Mr Basson, Roseleigh	small holding (both)
South	Mr Matthews, Long Cast; Mr Tom Hunt, Wilwyn	smallholding (both)
South	Mr Ager, Zaria	house
South	Mr Winter, Green Acres	smallholding
South	Mr W. Hawkins, farm buildings	agricultural holding
South	Mr Bliss; Mr Coven[?]	small holding (both)
Bunkers Hill	Mr Hahn, Bunkers Hill	agricultural holding
Braggington Lane	Mr Rushton; Mr Czapkof	small holding (both)

The list shows something the other records do not: in about 1960 almost every property on the Barton road beyond the last village

bungalows was a working holding. Most were smallholdings, a few acres of fruit, vegetables, poultry or pigs worked from a bungalow. Three were called “agricultural holding”, the larger category: Cress Hill Farm, Mr W. Hawkins’s farm buildings on the south side, and Bunkers Hill. Welford Pastures Farm was no longer a farmer’s house but was “used for farm workers” 20/06.

The code beside Cress Hill Farm is “1B x”: one bungalow, built since 1945. Whatever house had served the holding before the war, by about 1960 the farm was run from a new bungalow. The notebook’s totals, dated September 1964, explain the context. The village had 302 houses, 89 bungalows and 108 occupied caravans, and the Rectory was writing to object to yet another caravan site 20/06. In 1962 the County Planning Committee had inspected Welford’s new bungalows at the Parish Council’s request and found them cramped, too numerous and too flat-roofed. Its report proposed that outside a “green line” round the village, new houses should be allowed “only for agriculture” 06/09. A bungalow for a working farm on the Barton road was exactly the sort of house that policy allowed. Whether Cress Hill Farm’s bungalow was built under it, or a few years earlier, the archive does not say.

Bernard Wilkes, who in 1950 lived with his family on the Barton road, was remembered by the bell ringers as a pig farmer and market gardener who made cider as a hobby and kept “the Veg Shed at bottom of Cress Hill” 01/56, 29/28. Mr E. J. Winter of Cress Hill, presumably of Green Acres, won second prize in the 1957 river carnival’s raft race with an entry called “Mayflower III” 01/18, 20/06. In 1954 the Coronation committee chose Cress Hill as the site for one of its two memorial roadside seats, and the county laid a hard standing for it the following year 55/05. The hill road was a working place with a view, and people stopped there.

The field the village took 1959 – 1961

The documents that give Cress Hill Farm its name in the archive were written because the farm lost a field. The story of the purchase is told in detail in the essay on the hill. Seen from the farm’s side, it runs as follows.

In September 1959 word reached Gilda Gray, chairman of Welford Parish Council, that someone was enquiring about buying Cress Hill “for a commercial enterprise”. The council asked her to approach Gloucestershire County Council “unofficially”, to ask whether it was selling the field and, if so, to give the parish first refusal. The

county's Land Agent replied that the council would sell to the parish for £100. On 26 November Mrs Gray asked the Welford-on-Avon Trust to put up the money, pointing out that the field was "a favourite with village children giving safe access to the river" and that "so little of Welford's natural beauty remains". On 1 December the trustees agreed, on condition that the field was "retained as an open space and preserved in its natural beauty" 57/02, 60/01.

On 13 May 1960 G. F. Lodder and Sons of Henley Street, Stratford, wrote to the Trust's chairman, Alderman Walter Dingley, about the "Land at Cresshill Farm, Welford on Avon". The title was registered at the Land Registry, a transfer was being prepared for the council to sign, and completion was fixed for 24 May. Their statement, under the same heading, totalled £107 18s: £100 for the land, £6 6s for their charges, £1 8s for search fees and 4s for registration. Dingley paid on 23 June 1960 57/02.

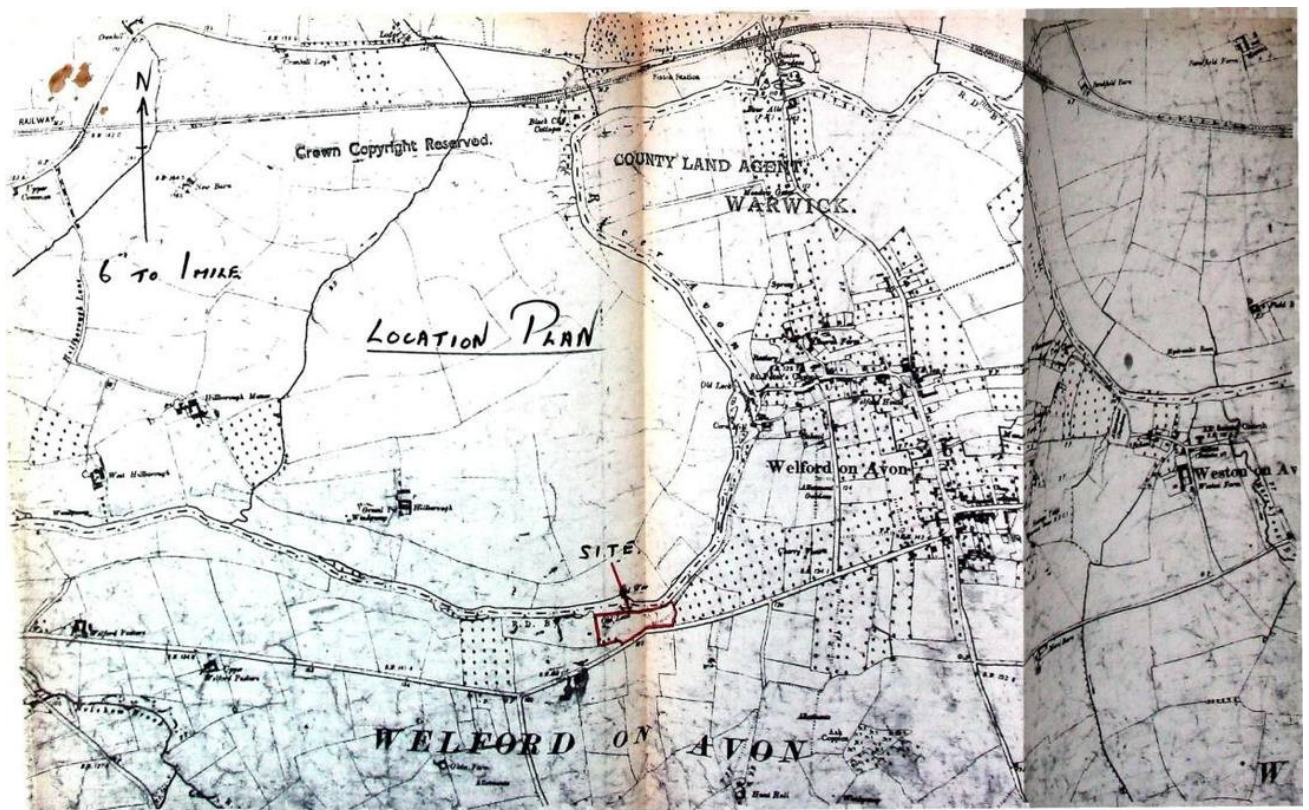
The heading is the important thing for this essay. The solicitors were not inventing a name. They took it from the documents the county sent them, and those documents described the field as part of a holding called Cresshill Farm. In 1960, then, Gloucestershire County Council owned a farm of that name in Welford, and the riverside field below the hill was part of it. The sale did not end the farm. The county sold one field, and Mr Rushton's bungalow and "agricultural holding" went on.

It was a small field in a poor state. The County Land Agent described it twelve years later as overgrown with thorn and, on its western half, thistles 06/12. A steep riverbank with a ruined lock at its foot is not good grazing, and its value to a county smallholdings committee was probably small. Its value to the village was large: it was the only place where the parish could reach the river without crossing private land, as everyone discovered in 1977 when the owner of the old mill walled off the path to the weir 12/05.

The first thing the parish did with its new land was to fence it off. In January 1961 the Clerk forwarded two bills to the Trust, and Dingley paid them on 1 March "in complete and final settlement in respect of the purchase and work done". The Trust's minute book gives £49 16s to Tom Hawkins for labour and nails for fencing, and £22 4s 10d to Peter Hartwell, timber merchant of Weston-sub-Edge, for gates, posts and pales 60/01. A pencilled note on Rectory paper, mostly illegible, shows Mrs Gray working out the cost of posts at 7s 6d and 8s 57/02. A new fence along a field boundary is the kind of thing that happens when a field is taken out of a farm whose stock

has been grazing it. It marked the line between the village's land and the county's.

One small puzzle surrounds the address. The Trust's copy of a January 1961 letter from Dingley is addressed to the Clerk of the Parish Council at "The Homestead", and the archive commentator suggests that a second line may read "Cresshill Farm", though the transcript is not clear 58/01-09. If that reading is right, it may simply be the subject heading of the letter carried into the address. It does not mean the Clerk lived at the farm.



Location plan, 1972. The County Land Agent's six-inch plan, with the parish field edged in red where the Barton road meets the river south-west of the village. The farmland of the hill lies around it: Welford Pastures to the west, Hunt Hall and the glebe to the south, the village orchards to the east. 06/12

Grazing, thistles and sheep 1972 – 1990s

Once the riverside field was parish land, its management became the parish's problem, and the papers about that problem are the best evidence for how the surrounding land was being farmed in the 1970s and 1980s.

In February 1972 C. G. Birt, the County Land Agent at Warwick, sent the Parish Council a report on what to do with Cresshill. Much of it was overgrown with thorn, he wrote, and "thistles have gained a firm control of the western half of the land – complaints from adjoining landowners could be expected if control is not undertaken" 06/12. Thistle seed blows downwind, and a farmer next to a field of thistles has every reason to complain. The western half of the parish field adjoined the land towards Welford Pastures, the side where Cress Hill Farm and its grazing lay.

Birt's remedy was farming. The western half should be mown, with a hand flail on the slopes and a scythe on the steepest parts, then sprayed with a Dicamba, 2,4-D and MCPA mixture against thistles and nettles at about £2 an acre. After that,

A local farmer can be encouraged to stock the area, which must be fenced first, grass growth can be controlled this year, and at the same time encourage the better grasses. Grazing would have to be rent free for the first few years until reasonable grass growth is re-established.

C. G. Birt, County Land Agent, 9 February 1972 06/12

Stock would have to be moved off for two weeks during and after spraying. The costed appendix priced post-and-rail fencing along a line X-Y on the west side of the field, 90 metres of oak posts and softwood rails, to hold the stock in the grazing area and give walkers a handrail on the path 06/12. The report does not name the "local farmer", and nothing in the archive says whether the council found one in the 1970s. The obvious candidate was a neighbour with stock, but that is a guess.

By 1988 the council certainly had a grazing tenant. In September that year Councillor David Wilshaw showed a council meeting "a smashed-up sign which had been recently erected to warn dog owners of sheep grazing on Cress Hill". The chairman said that it had to be replaced "for legal responsibility reasons to protect the livestock belonging to the tenant of the parish council", Councillor Anne Wright undertook to replace it, and the council agreed to discuss in private how to find and prosecute whoever had done it

59/11, 59/01–15. The tenant is not named. Sheep were back on the steep bank where Garrett had seen them in 1906.

The grazing did not keep the scrub down. In May 1989 Don Hildred of Church Lane reported to the council on the parish's wildlife. He praised "a few old meadows that seem to have escaped from the common fate of sprays and fertiliser", with "a good example at the top of Cress Hill". That unimproved meadow at the top of the hill was presumably farmland, not the parish field, since he went on to say of the parish's own land that "it has not been managed and is now largely overgrown with a dense hawthorn/elderberry scrub", and that "the large elms in the lower corner are sadly missed" 05/13. If the meadow at the top was part of Cress Hill Farm, it is the only description in the archive of the farm's grassland, and it suggests a farm worked in an old-fashioned, low-input way in the late 1980s. But Hildred does not say whose meadow it was.

Twelve years later Hildred, writing about a dispute over fruit trees on the Shorthouse allotments, offered his view of what had happened to holdings like these:

Welford used to have many smallholdings, and these fell out of fashion, largely, I presume, by failure to keep up to date with modern practice in replacing the orchard stock. Growers nowadays need to be trained and educated to cope with the imports that flood into the UK.

D. W. Hildred, letter, early 2000s 59/01–15

It is an outsider's explanation and a partial one, but it is the only contemporary verdict in the archive on the decline of the smallholding world to which Cress Hill Farm belonged.

Cress Hill Farm in 1987 and after the register and the silence

The register of electors for 1987–88, with a qualifying date of 10 October 1986, is the last document in the archive to name Cress Hill Farm. By then “Cress Hill” had become an address in its own right, printed as a separate heading between Bunkers Hill and Welford Pastures. Under it were ten electors in four houses 30/05:

HOUSE	ELECTORS	EARLIER RECORD
Greenacres	Michael J. Eynon; Rita D. and Nellie Gossage	Mr Winter’s smallholding c.1960 (20/06); Eynon had run the Four Alls (03/141)
Hillcrest	Michael, Pamela J. and Anthony M. Hands	Probably Hill Crest, Lot 14 in 1924 (11/30)
Home Farm	Raymond H. and Jean M. Sellars	Not identified; possibly Mr W. Hawkins’s holding c.1960 (20/06)
Cress Hill Farm	John A. and Jean M. Taylor	Mr Rushton c.1960 (20/06)

On the Barton road listing nearby were Cress Hill View, where Deborah Cooper was registered, and Zaria, with Ronald and Susan Ball 30/05. Cress Hill View had once belonged to John Wilson, the carrier who had landed at the old lock as a boy around 1841; the Booth family’s account book records paying the tithe redemption on it 44/01–41, 31/01.

By 1987, then, the Rushtons had gone from Cress Hill Farm, and a John and Jean Taylor lived there. Nothing else in the archive mentions the Taylors, and nothing says whether they farmed the land, rented it out or simply lived in the house. The register does not say whether the county still owned the farm. Many county councils sold off their smallholdings estates in the later twentieth century, but the archive has no record of what Gloucestershire did with Cress Hill Farm after 1960.

After 1987 the farm disappears from the archive altogether. A Society talk in the mid-1990s mentioned “the problems the Parish Council has had over the years clearing Cress Hill”, meaning the parish field 38/01. A survey of the village in 1992 recorded the remnants of the old orchards and the glasshouses at Manor Farm

but does not mention Cress Hill Farm 15/08. If the farm survives today under that name, the Society's papers do not record it.



“The Old Lock at Cress Hill, Welford-on-Avon.” An “Adona” real-photo postcard of about 1912–35. The ruined lower lock marked the river boundary of the land below the hill; the county sold the field above it from Cresshill Farm in 1960. 52/88

Which farm was it? weighing the evidence

The documents leave a real puzzle about what Cress Hill Farm was. There are two ways of reading them, and the archive does not decide between them.

The first reading is that Cress Hill Farm was a Gloucestershire County Council smallholding on the river side of the Barton road, west of the parish field, formed after the First World War from land the county bought for returning soldiers. Its tenant by the 1930s was Mr Rushton, who grazed his cows “on the Barton side of Cress Hill”. After the Second World War the county built a bungalow for the holding. In 1960 it sold the steep riverside field at the eastern end of the farm to the parish, and the rest of the holding went on. This reading fits five pieces of evidence: the county was the vendor of “Land at Cresshill Farm” 57/02; Gilda Gray remembered the county buying fields for soldier smallholdings 03/04; the 1960 notebook lists the farm on the north side next to Welford Pastures, as a post-war bungalow and an “agricultural holding” 20/06; the cows grazed on the Barton side of the hill 49/21; and the 1972

report warned of complaints from the landowners next to the western half of the parish field 06/12.

The second reading is that Cress Hill Farm grew out of Avon View, the five-acre freehold smallholding that R. Rushton bought from his landlord in 1924, on the south side of the road at the corner of the Dorsington lane. On this reading the Rushtons later added land, perhaps renting the county's fields across the road, called the whole "Cress Hill Farm", and eventually replaced the old brick cottage with a bungalow. The county's riverside field would then have been "at Cresshill Farm" because it was let to, or farmed with, the Rushtons' holding. This reading fits the continuity of the Rushton name on the hill from 1924 to about 1960 11/30, 20/06, and the fact that by 1987 Cress Hill Farm was grouped with Hillcrest, the old Lot 14 next door to Avon View, under the single heading "Cress Hill" 30/05.

Each reading has a difficulty. Against the first, nothing in the archive says the county owned anything on the hill apart from the field it sold, and the 1960 notebook's division into "north side" and "south side" may be looser than it looks: it lists Zaria and Green Acres, which the 1987 register groups with Hillcrest and Cress Hill Farm, on the south side. Against the second, Avon View was a brick and slated cottage in 1924, not a bungalow, and the notebook explicitly records Cress Hill Farm as a bungalow built after 1945; and Avon View's land lay on the village side of the hill, not the Barton side where the cows were.

On balance the first reading fits the documents better, mainly because the county, not the Rushtons, was the owner of the land the solicitors called "Cresshill Farm". But it is an inference from scattered sources, and the second reading cannot be ruled out. The papers that would settle it are almost certainly at the Warwickshire County Record Office, where the Parish Council's file on "Welford on Avon Parish Council's purchase of land at Cress Hill, 1959-1980" is item 12 of deposit CR3640 50/41. The transfer of 1960 would name the farm, describe the land retained by the county, and very likely show it on a plan. Gloucestershire County Council's own smallholdings records, wherever they now are, would show when the farm was bought, who its tenants were and when it was sold.

What the farm tells us a summing up

Cress Hill Farm is a minor place even by the standards of a village history. It was never a manor farm or a great tenant farm of the

Milcote estate. It left no house that anyone thought worth listing, no account books, no photographs, and only four mentions by name in an archive of nearly a thousand files. Yet the scraps that survive tell a story that is typical of a great deal of English farmland in the twentieth century, and they tell it with unusual clarity because of where the farm happened to be.

The land itself was farmed for centuries before it had a farm. It was a butt at the edge of an open field; then, after 1800, a hedged close on a new forty-foot road; then, by 1849, arable land “planted with Choice Fruit Trees”, too valuable to sell at £415. At the start of the twentieth century its steep bank was rough grazing for sheep, and the gentler ground above was plums, apples and damsons. All of this is ordinary Welford farming, and the hill was simply one corner of the fruit belt that wrapped round the village.

What changed the hill was the arrival of the small holder. Avon View in 1924 was five acres with a cottage, a pump and a sitting tenant who could afford to buy it. Mr Lively’s seven and a half acres in 1932 were dug by hand and planted with asparagus for the Birmingham market. Mr Rushton’s two cows supplied the village with milk on the handlebars of a bicycle. By about 1960 the whole of the Barton road beyond the village was a line of smallholdings and agricultural holdings, each with its bungalow. The county council, it seems, owned at least one of them, and called it Cress Hill Farm. The people who worked these holdings were the market gardeners, carriers and returned soldiers of the village, and their names, Rushton, Hawkins, Basson, Matthews, Hunt, Quiney, run through every other part of the Society’s archive.

The farm’s one moment of importance came when it gave something up. In 1960 the county sold a steep, thorny field from Cresshill Farm to the parish for £100, and the village gained the only stretch of riverbank it owns. Every later document about Cress Hill as a public place, the Land Agent’s report, the angling rules, the sheep sign, the complaints about scrub, exists because of that sale. The farm’s name survives in the archive almost entirely because a solicitor in Henley Street needed a heading for his letters.

By 1987 the Rushtons had gone, and by the 1990s the smallholding world that Cress Hill Farm belonged to had largely disappeared, overtaken by imports, supermarkets and the value of a house with a view. The sale particulars of 1920 had already seen it coming, when they said that the high ground on the Bidford road, “from which there are extensive views of the River Avon & Cotswold Hills”, was

“a most desirable situation for the erection of a residence”. The view from Cress Hill was always the hill’s chief asset. For most of the twentieth century it was looked at by people who were working the land below it.

Gaps and conflicting sources

GAPS

- **No farm papers.** The archive has no deeds, tenancy agreements, sale particulars, farm accounts, crop returns or photographs for Cress Hill Farm. It is named only in the 1960 solicitors’ letters 57/02, the house survey of about 1960 20/06 and the 1987 register 30/05, plus one unchecked mention noted below.
- **“Crest Hill Farm” in 39/66.** The commentary on 58/01–09 says that a manuscript history of Welford mentions “Crest Hill Farm” at paragraph 39/66. The archive’s copy of that history (39/01) is a three-page summary without the manuscript images, so the reference could not be checked or dated.
- **How and when the county acquired the farm.** Gilda Gray’s memory of soldier smallholdings 03/04 is general. No document links it to Cress Hill. The link made in this essay is an inference.
- **The farm’s extent and buildings.** Which of the parcels on the 1905 survey belonged to the farm 06/12, and where its bungalow stood, are unknown.
- **Which Mr Rushton.** The R. Rushton of 1924 11/30, the Corporal Reg Rushton of 1917 43/02–84, the Reginald Rushton of the 1914 directory 48/13–22, the milkman of the 1930s and 1940s 49/21 and the Mr Rushton of Cress Hill Farm in about 1960 20/06 may be one, two or three men. The archive never gives a first name for the farm’s occupier.
- **After 1960.** Whether the county kept the farm, when the Rushtons left, who the Taylors were and whether they farmed the land, and what became of the farm after 1987, are all unrecorded.
- **The 1972 grazier and the 1988 tenant** of the parish field are not named 06/12, 59/11. They may or may not have been the farmers at Cress Hill Farm.
- **The vendor of Avon View in 1924** and the owner of the 1849 close are not named 11/30.
- **Cress Hill House**, whose contents and “various agricultural pieces” were sold in 1920, cannot be identified with any later house 11/30.
- **Where the papers probably are.** Warwickshire County Record Office, CR3640 item 12, “Welford on Avon Parish Council’s purchase of land at Cress Hill, 1959–1980” 50/41, and the records of Gloucestershire County Council’s smallholdings committee, which are not in the Society’s archive.

CONFLICTS AND UNCERTAIN READINGS

- **Cress Farm and Cress Hill Farm.** These are different places. Cress Farm (Cress Farmhouse, Miller’s Close, off the High Street) is a listed village farmhouse 10/01, 13/02, 47/1–66. Nothing in the archive connects it with Cress Hill.

- **“Cross Hill Cottage”, 1911.** The transcription of the census summary book reads “Cross Hill” 48/09. The position in the enumerator’s route suggests Cress Hill, but the archive has no image to check, and there was a Cross Furlong nearby 47/98.
- **North side or south side.** The 1960 notebook lists Cress Hill Farm on the north (river) side of the Barton road 20/06, but Avon View, the Rushtons’ 1924 holding, was on the south side 11/30. See “Which farm was it?” above.
- **The date of the Milcote sale.** The estate surveyor’s papers date the break-up to 1916 13/39; a rector’s widow gives 1923 03/39; Gilda Gray describes it as “in process of sale” around 1924 03/04. The sale was probably spread over several years.
- **Mr Lively’s landlord.** The first copy of the interview has “Mr Harold Hawthorn[e]”, the fair copy “Mr Harold Hawkins (who also built Zara House)” 08/05, 08/07. This essay follows the fair copy.
- **Ayer and Ager.** “Mr & Mrs Jack Ayer — Cress Hill” in 1950 01/56 and “Mr Ager, Zaria” in about 1960 20/06 are probably the same family, spelt differently by different compilers.
- **The 1960 address.** The Trust’s copy of a January 1961 letter is addressed to the Clerk at The Homestead, and possibly “Cresshill Farm”; the transcript is unclear 58/01–09.
- **Size of the parish field.** About five acres in the 1959–60 papers and the 1972 report, but 6.050 acres for parcel 100 on the 1905 survey 57/02, 06/12.

MAIN SOURCES

- 57/02, 58/01–09, 60/01 — Welford-on-Avon Trust papers and minute book: the purchase of “Land at Cresshill Farm”, 1959–61
- 20/06 — “Houses in Welford about 1960”, house-by-house survey with totals for September 1964
- 30/05 — Register of Electors, 1987–88
- 11/30 — Society notebook of sale particulars: 1849 Cress Hill close; 1920 glebe farms; 1920 Cress Hill House contents; 1924 Hill Crest, Avon View and orchard field
- 06/12 — C. G. Birt, County Land Agent, report on Cresshill, 1972–73, with 25-inch and 6-inch plans
- 03/04, 03/39, 13/38–51, 18/13–14 — Gilda Gray on soldier smallholdings; the Milcote estate and its 1916 sale; the Small Holdings Acts in the Parish Council minutes
- 43/02–84, 43/85–103, 48/13–22 — Jim Matthews’s letters of 1917; Kelly’s Directory 1914
- 49/21, 08/04, 08/05, 08/07, 36/11–13 — memories of Mr Rushton’s milk round, Arthur Matthews and Mr Lively’s interviews, Bernard Harris
- 48/07, 48/09, 48/12, 01/56 — censuses of 1891 and 1911, “People in Welford 1950”
- 08/12, 20/04, 47/98, 26/10 — field names, enclosure roads and the glebe terrier
- 05/13, 59/01–15, 59/11, 06/09 — Hildred’s reports, the 1988 sheep sign, the 1962 planning report
- 53/05, 46/14, 52/88 — photographs and the 1903 map

